SORCERER'S HANDBOOK

Chapter 601: The Influence of the Blood Seed

Ashe leaned against the wall of the passage, sitting in the shallow waters of the Golden Flow. Vesser still had her back to him. If it had only looked like an "embrace" before, now she was completely lying in Ashe's arms.
It was over.
The power of the Blood Seed was far more violent than Ashe had imagined.
Although Silver Lantern was still only sucking blood from his fingertips, the blood energy within Ashe was desperately escaping through this opening, flowing into Silver Lantern's mouth.
The rate at which he was losing blood was no slower than if Silver Lantern had cut open an artery.
Ashe had a moment of clarity: perhaps the prototype of the Dragon Blood Cultivation System was to place the Blood Seed on a virtual realm creature like the Blade Fish Dragon, and then absorb the energy of other creatures through "complete consumption," thereby condensing upper-tier dragon blood.

Both the Dragon Blood Cultivation System and the Blood Saint race likely originated from the miracles of the Gluttony Sect. The Dragon Blood Cultivation System Silver Lantern used was a perfect foolproof version. She didn't have to lift a finger; the Blood Seed would deliver the nutrients directly into her body. It was like a keyboard that could type on its own-as long as the author had an idea, it would automatically write a bestseller. But the Blood Seed still retained its primitive feeding instincts. When Ashe offered himself to Silver Lantern, engaging in close contact, the Blood Seed quickly turned him into food. After losing a certain amount of blood, Ashe no longer had the strength to stand and could only barely sit against the wall in the Golden Flow. He had some ability to resist before, but now, whenever he tried to act against Silver Lantern, the Blood Seed would maximally restrict his physical reactions. It was like when he ate Lala Fatty-Lala Fatty wouldn't jump up and punch him. Fortunately, the flow at the end was slow, and more importantly, his will wasn't weakened by the blood loss. Silver Lantern was the same. Ashe could vaguely sense her excitement, whether it was the Blood Seed stimulating her appetite or some other influence. Although their bodies were growing weaker, their spirits were becoming more and more exhilarated, to the point where the Golden Flow couldn't wash away their intense

thoughts. They sat there at the end of the Golden Flow, waiting for the hungry Circle Cicada to come and take its meal.
Silver Lantern's head rested against Ashe, her hair tickling his nose. It was hard for him to move away, and he thought to himself that this was all the influence of the Blood Seed.
When he felt Silver Lantern stop biting his fingers and instead began to play with his hand, he asked, "Are you giving up?"
"I'm bored," Vesser said. "I've bitten all ten fingers, every fingertip, every knuckle I've completely memorized the feel of your hand. I'm tired of it."
"Then where else do you want to eat?"
"Would you give it to me if I told you?"
Ashe mimicked her tone: "Do we have any other choice?"
Vesser didn't answer. Instead, she said, "Even if I stop sucking your blood, your life energy will continue to flow into me If you hold me tighter, it'll happen faster."

After a while, Ashe still didn't move. He was still resisting any unnecessary contact. So Vesser grabbed his hand and wrapped it around her waist, leaning slightly into his embrace, like a foolish lover being intimate in the wrong place.
Except her wrist was still dripping silver blood, staining Ashe's clothes and falling into the Golden Flow, rushing toward the Circle Cicada. Ashe's face grew paler, and silver flakes kept falling from his body, merging into Silver Lantern.
This was their true portrayal-as long as Silver Lantern lived, Ashe would remain trapped in the curse of the Blood Seed. And Silver Lantern wouldn't mind others bleeding; she was willing to offer all living beings as sacrificial offerings to the grand cause she aspired to.
The surroundings suddenly grew very quiet, except for the increasingly close sound of cicadas, like the countdown to a funeral bell.
"The difference between delusion and reality," Vesser suddenly said, "is that in delusion, we'll eventually come to an end."
"But in reality, we can stay like this forever."
"Spare me. I haven't really done anything bad enough to deserve this," Ashe said. "Being with you forever would probably count as the cruelest punishment even in the Sixfold Hell, right?"

"Oh?" Vesser's fingers lightly traced his chest as she whispered, "Do you really hate being with me that much?"
"Of course," Ashe said seriously. "I despise people like you-ruthless villains who stop at nothing. My companions and I have been dragged into this curse because of you. You're cruel, selfish, and heartless Who would want to be with someone like you?"
Instead of getting angry, Vesser seemed even more amused. "But you're still going to die with me, and then we'll step into eternity together."
Ashe suddenly asked, "You keep talking about eternity in the Virtual Realm. What do you plan to do once you reach it?"
Silver Lantern fell silent. Ashe thought she didn't want to answer, but after a moment, she suddenly said, "I don't know. After all, how can you know what eternity is like unless you reach it? Making plans now is pointless. Only when we reach eternity can we set goals"
"Unlike you, I've already made plans for after eternity," Ashe said. "Since I'm dying with you, the first thing I'll do in eternity is check if you're nearby. If you are, I'll get as far away from you as possible."
"Then I'll set a small goal for eternity too," Vesser said. "If you're right beside me when we get there, I'll grab you. If you're not"
"I'll find you. Until eternity."

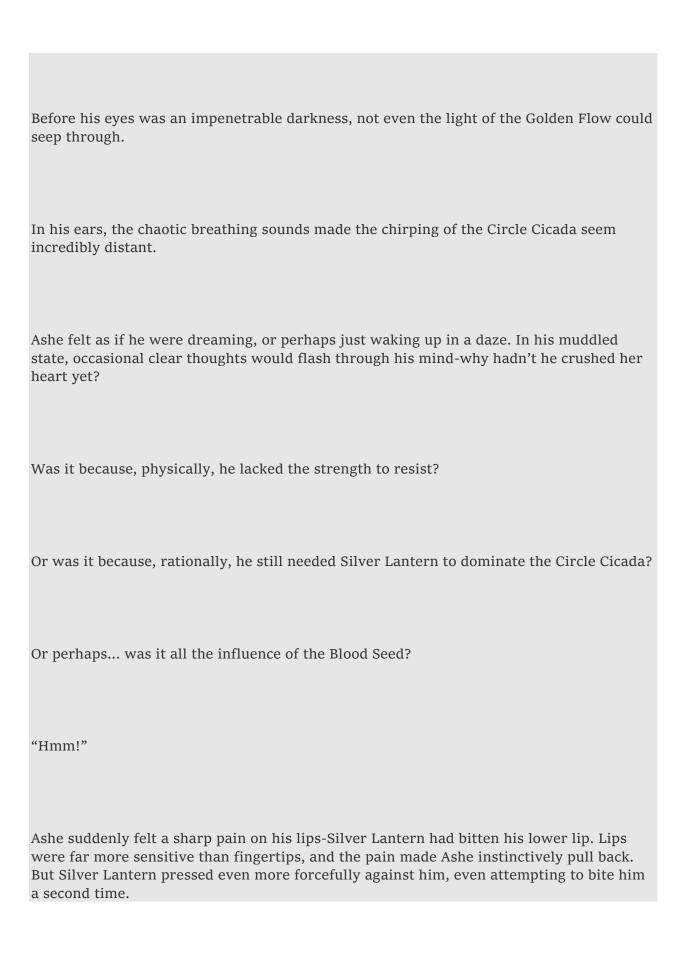
"That's a truly vicious curse," Ashe sighed, glancing at the Circle Cicada as it drew closer. "Meeting you is the second most unfortunate thing that's ever happened to me."
"Don't worry, we still have eternity," Vesser said, raising her hand to gently caress Ashe's face. "I'll work hard to become the first."
Seeing this, Ashe suddenly felt a stirring in his heart. He also raised his hand and reached into the fox mask, his fingers brushing over Silver Lantern's moist lips, smooth skin, delicate nose, and-
Smack!
Vesser slapped his hand away and looked up at him calmly. "What are you trying to do?"
"I'm just doing what you're doing," Ashe replied.
"You're lying," she said. "You're touching my face more to figure out what I look like than out of desire."
Ashe didn't deny it. "We're about to die. Aren't you going to take off the mask?"

"My name and my face are mine alone. Even in eternity, I won't reveal them," Silver Lantern said seriously. "No one will see my face or know my name."
Ashe fell silent and didn't touch her face again. He simply closed his eyes, a sense of detachment radiating from within.
Vesser watched him for a long time before asking, "Do you really want me to take off the mask that badly?"
Ashe opened his eyes and stared into the eyes behind the fox mask.
"But if you want me to take it off, you'll have to pay a painful price."
Ashe couldn't help but laugh. "We're about to die. What else can you possibly take from me?"
Vesser studied him for a moment, then smiled. "Don't regret it."
As Silver Lantern placed her hand on the mask, Ashe's pupils constricted.

Did he really want to see Silver Lantern's true face? Of course, but that wasn't the main reason. Or rather, the significance of Silver Lantern willingly removing her mask far outweighed the importance of her actual appearance.
Now, this murderer who had killed everyone she once knew, destroyed countless cults, aided the Four Pillars Cult in its tyranny, and spread disaster across the Senlo Wasteland, was finally about to reveal her most authentic self to Ashe.
He watched as she slowly lifted the mask, revealing the outline of her chin, and held his breath in anticipation.
Then everything went dark. He couldn't see a thing.
Silver Lantern had covered his eyes with her hand.
"I've taken off the mask, but whether you see it or not is another matter."
How infuriating. She was still playing word games at a time like this?
Ashe immediately tried to push her hand away, but he felt a weight press down on him. Silver Lantern had climbed onto him, her cold body seeming to merge with his. Then he felt a warm breath against his earlobe as she whispered, "It's time to pay the price."

"You asked me earlier what I wanted to eat if I got tired of fingers, didn't you?"
"Now, I'm going to answer."
Ashe froze. His eyes were still tightly covered, the world plunged into darkness, but then he felt the warmth of another pair of lips against his own.
He immediately reached out to push Silver Lantern away, but she caught his hand, rendering him completely immobilized. Both of them were weak, but Silver Lantern, with her superior physical condition, could overpower him-or rather, the Blood Seed was forcibly suppressing his ability to resist, ensuring he would quietly accept his fate as her meal!
Ashe felt Silver Lantern's breath lightly brush against his face. "I'll give you one last chance. Right now, you're holding my heart. If you just squeeze a little harder, you can kill the Silver Lantern you despise most with your own hands."
"Either you kill me now," Vesser said, leaning in closer.
"Or," she kissed Ashe, "let me love you to death."

Chapter 602: Rust, Lemon, and Sweet Orange



This lunatic!
Already weakened and with his vision limited, Ashe was extremely unsettled. Now, with Silver Lantern daring to act like this, he immediately used the only weapon he could wield-his teeth-to bite back!
Silver Lantern didn't dodge or resist, allowing him to bite her lip, and then she kissed hin tenderly.
As the liquid flowed, Ashe's tongue tasted something different. His blood was the authentic Blood Moon human blood, carrying a hint of metallic sweetness, while Silver Lantern's was silver dragon blood, tart yet distinctly sweet, like lemon with sugar.
After a moment, Silver Lantern lifted her head and asked, "What does my blood taste like?"
Ashe didn't want to answer, but he felt that not responding would make her even more extreme, so he said, "Lemon and sweet orange."
"Do you like it?"
"I'm not a Blood Saint."

Vesser leaned close to his ear and whispered, "I don't know if you've ever kissed anyone before, nor do I care who you'll be intimate with in the future"
"But I want you to remember my taste," she said. "It's rust, lemon, and sweet orange."
This reason threw Ashe into chaos. He could only struggle as much as possible, muttering softly, "You're truly a lunatic."
Vesser seemed to particularly enjoy watching him resist. She lowered her head once more to savor him.
Boom!
Suddenly, a loud noise from nowhere jolted the weak and disoriented pair awake. Vesser still covered Ashe's eyes, seeing the golden dome above them shaking violently.
"What's happening?"
"Ashe, it seems you have quite the group of companions," she said, turning her gaze toward the Circle Cicada. "But for us, it might not be a blessing."

The tremors had the greatest impact on the palace's drainage system. With the rumbling vibrations, numerous new drainage outlets opened in the palace's passageways. The Golden Flow Water, no longer a straight stream, quickly dispersed and began to dry up!
The Circle Cicada immediately grew frantic. It was already only a few dozen meters away from Ashe and Vesser, and now, as the Golden Flow's water level dropped, it swiftly raced along the river toward the source of the flow-right where Ashe and Vesser were.
Or rather, it was charging straight toward them. If the Golden Flow Water was akin to air, an essential for its survival, then Ashe and Vesser were at least emergency oxygen tanks!
Its newly awakened survival instincts and predatory drive made it realize it had to consume the two of them to prepare for the Golden Flow's depletion!
Ashe heard the cicada's shrill cry rapidly approaching and felt Silver Lantern's body trembling. He hesitated for a moment, sighed inwardly, and gave up on pushing her away, simply sitting there in silence.
Vesser, sensitive to his subtle shift, pressed her face against his, finally able to suppress the fear born of her survival instincts and face eternity with dignity.
Crack!

Suddenly, the torches on the pedestals burst into roaring flames. The fierce fire erupted like an explosion, instantly filling the entire passageway. Vesser instinctively shielded Ashe, only to find the flames had no effect on them.
Instead, the Circle Cicada let out an ear-piercing screech. Its shadow stretched long-so long that it crossed the entire passageway, imprinting itself on the wall at the passage's entrance!
Then, like ropes, the shadows pulled the Circle Cicada back toward the wall!
"Zhi-"
"Le!"
No longer the naive Demi-God, the Circle Cicada seemed to recall the countless years it had spent embedded in the wall. It summoned all its strength to resist being buried back into the wall once more. Its body flickered incessantly, and the surrounding Golden Flow Water rapidly dried up, indicating its desperate attempts to traverse time-escaping into the future or retreating into the past-to evade the Miracle Trap left behind by the Gray Fox sorcerer.
Yet Vesser saw it clearly: this Miracle Trap was likely a convergence of miracles from multiple Sects-Shadow, light spells, Truth, fate, and more. Most importantly, the core miracle of this trap was the Time Miracle, specifically designed to counter the Circle Cicada's various spellcasting abilities!

It seemed the Circle Cicada cult had long anticipated the possibility of the Circle Cicada transforming into a spirit, even foreseeing its ferocious instincts post-transformation. That's why they had meticulously designed this retrieval mechanism.
But the Golden Flow's channel was clearly prepared for the Circle Cicada's feeding
The ever-scheming Vesser immediately realized that the Circle Cicada cult must have had multiple plans when they recruited legends into the Cicada Sound Project. If the project succeeded and everyone could share the Circle Cicada, that would be ideal. But if it failed, these legends on the verge of extinction would become materials for a second plan.
But that was over two hundred years ago. No matter how much Vesser speculated, it was merely a reflection on the past. Instead, a peculiar thought arose in her mind:
If a Demi-God transformed into a spirit could possess such a strong will to survive and intelligence, then the deities ascended by Demi-Gods likely wouldn't be inferior either. Would the Demi-Gods who ascended in the past truly be willing to serve as deities under the Divine Sovereign of Senlo?
At that moment, the Circle Cicada seemed to realize that it couldn't escape the Miracle Trap on its own. It pressed itself against the ground, absorbing the water flowing into its body-or rather, it was actively drawing in the silver dragon blood still flowing from Vesser.
"Ashe."

"We're not going to die?"
"No."
"That's good news," Ashe said slowly. "But for you, it might not be."
"I understand what you mean," Vesser replied. "But for me, it's also good news."
Thud!
As a massive stone fell from the golden dome beside them, the two immediately felt the heavy chains binding them vanish into thin air-
The seal on their spirits and spellforce was broken!
Sanctuary!
Ashe and Vesser instantly expanded their Sanctuaries, and in an instant, they separated to opposite sides of the passageway, just like before, just like always.

Spellforce rapidly replenished their weakened bodies. Ashe stood up and saw a familiar silver lantern.
It was exactly the same as the countless times he'd seen it before-stunning, mysterious, and dangerous. She had removed her mask, but she had also put on the most familiar one.
The moment Vesser regained her spellforce, she immediately used a miracle to complete her disguise, and her Gate of Truth automatically closed. The moment the environment shattered, the divine fire seed and her extreme time talent began to rapidly diminish. How much of it would remain as their power depended entirely on luck.
Vesser turned to look at the Circle Cicada. It was no longer bound by the Miracle Trap, but its condition was far from good, lying weakly in the water.
With a gentle wave of her hand, the Circle Cicada fluttered toward her.
Had Silver Lantern really succeeded in dominating the Circle Cicada!?
Ashe's mind was instantly flooded with a strong sense of danger. Even without the Golden Flow, the Circle Cicada was an extremely dangerous Four-winged Spirit. If someone like Silver Lantern truly gained control of it-
At that moment, Ashe also felt a faint connection with the Circle Cicada. With a thought, he reached out toward it, and the cicada immediately halted, its compound eyes flickering uncertainly between Ashe and Vesser.

This could work!
Silver Lantern had used too much of Ashe's blood, so the Circle Cicada was essentially nurtured by both of them. As a result, Ashe also had a certain degree of domination over the cicada!
Seeing this, Vesser was somewhat surprised.
She naturally understood why she could suddenly dominate the Circle Cicada-or rather, why the cicada had actively sought the protection of a sorcerer. The Miracle Trap wasn't designed to hunt the Circle Cicada itself but to capture wild spirits. As long as it had no master, it would inevitably be buried back into the wall.
This also revealed that the Gray Fox sorcerer of the Circle Cicada cult had long prepared for the possibility of dominating the cicada.
The Circle Cicada had no choice but to submit through the silver dragon blood, pledging its loyalty to Vesser. Of course, it didn't fully become her spirit. As a Four-winged Spirit, i instinctively resisted becoming the pet of a three-winged sorcerer.
At the same time, Vesser could sense that her authority over the cicada was far greater than Ashe's. If she wished, she could completely seize control of the Circle Cicada. However

After a brief hesitation, the Circle Cicada suddenly split into two-a square cicada and a round cicada. The square cicada flew toward Vesser, while the round one drifted toward Ashe.
Vesser caught the Square Cicada in her hand and looked up at the gaping hole in the collapsing dome. She spread her virtual wings and took flight. Even if she couldn't reach the surface directly, her mastery of the Earth Sect allowed her to navigate through the underground.
"What's your real name?" Ashe suddenly asked, panting heavily.
Vesser looked at him and shook her head. "I told you, my name belongs only to me."
She paused, then added, "But Silver Lantern belongs only to you."
With that, she flew into the hole, cast a miracle, and vanished in the blink of an eye.
A moment later, a loud crash echoed nearby as a section of the golden dome collapsed, revealing a passage leading straight to the surface.
Igor and the others jumped down from above. Seeing Ashe leaning against the wall in a daze, Igor raised an eyebrow. "What happened?"

"A lot of things," Ashe replied, turning to look at them. He glanced at the round cicada perched on his shoulder and wiped his lips with the back of his hand.

"But it was all just a delusion."

Chapter 603: 3 Seconds of Cicada Lurk

Harvey pulled back the curtains and glanced at the street outside the inn.

Even though it was deep into the night, the entire town was shrouded in darkness. There were no candles or lighting, and one had to rely on the miracle of spirit to gain night vision and move around in the night. Despite this, there were many people on the streets, shopping and even doing business. In the darkness, countless whispers and footsteps could be heard.

Blind Town, the core stronghold of the Blind Sight Cult, was also one of the most famous trade centers in the Qinyi Alliance.

The most distinctive feature of this town was that everyone had to pretend to be blind and could not create any source of light. Even during the day, a barrier blocked the sunlight, ensuring that the town remained in complete darkness at all times.

Although it was dark and devoid of light, as the cult's stronghold, it naturally could resist the Choking Green of the night. Due to the unique nature of Blind Town, even the Green Calamity dared not approach it. Despite the bustling streets, no sorcerer dared to fight here, making it one of the top five safest places in the Qinyi Alliance, second only to Black Robe Town in terms of prosperity.

The rules of Blind Town were unbreakable. If you revealed that you were not blind or created a source of light, you would become truly blind, permanently losing your vision. No miracle could restore it, and you would even forget what "eyes" were, as the area where your eyes should be would be smoothed over.

The reason for this was that Blind Town harbored a piece of the gray fox heritage. Unfortunately, it was also related to the Misty White Demi-God.

After all, the Misty White Demi-God had once pursued physical enhancement and conducted many experiments. One of these experiments was to determine whether losing one sense could permanently enhance other talents.

The results of the experiment are unknown, but the Blind Sight Cult was derived from this experiment. They pursued the idea of "completely losing all senses to become one with the world and achieve Immortality." All their followers were residents of Blind Town who had willingly lost their sight. Moreover, every Blind Seer who reached adulthood would, without exception, become a sorcerer.

Without exception, not even a single one with a mental disability.

However, the Blind Sight Cult was not considered a powerful cult because self-mutilation was very common among its members. For instance, Harvey now saw someone grinding their hands on the street until the wrist bones were exposed, a sight that made Harvey feel a pang of pity.

The Blind Seers do not pursue pain; they seek to "reduce information." As if to provide theoretical support for "losing all senses," the Blind Sight Cult proposed the "Theory of Emptiness as Bliss," which posits that human suffering stems from what one knows and obtains. If a person receives no information, they become "empty" and thus achieve "peace of mind."

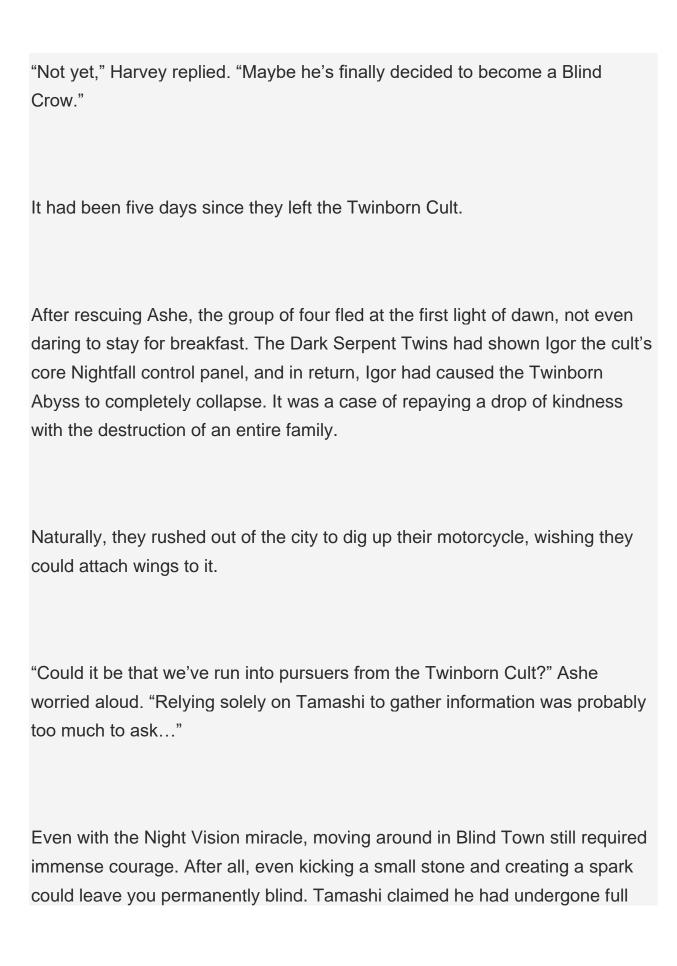
Simply mutilating their senses is meaningless. What they truly desire is to "forget their senses," much like how Blind Town has made them completely forget their eyes. The Blind Seers are constantly searching for other ways to "forget their feelings." They even regard "forgetting oneself" as the ultimate pursuit, calling it "forgetting both self and the world, achieving unity with the cosmos."

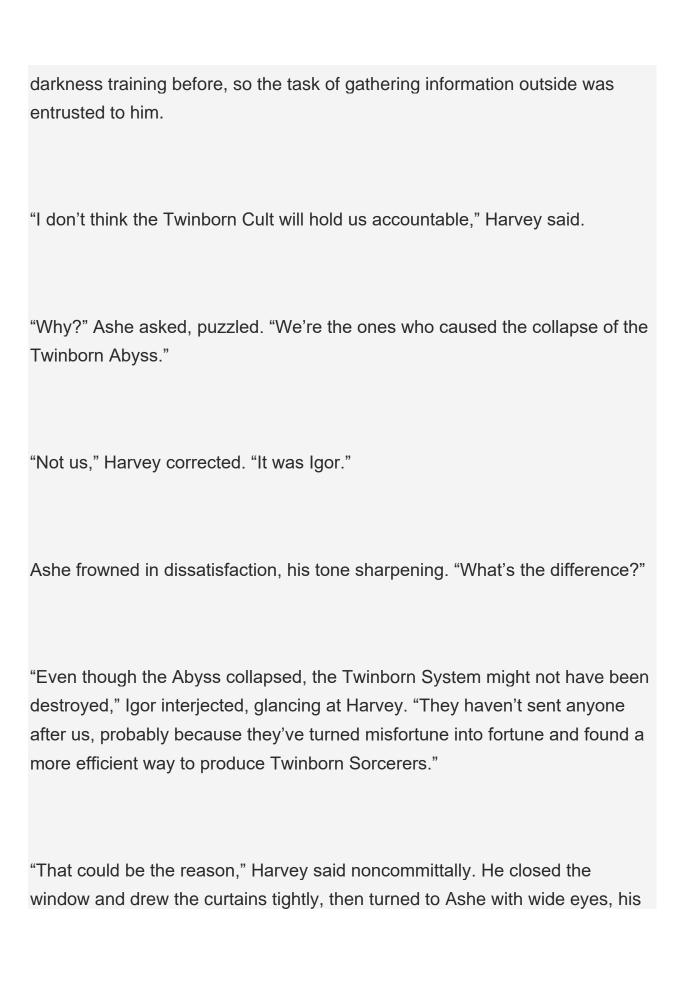
Because of the Blind Seers' inward-focused nature, they never pay attention to outsiders in Blind Town. As long as you don't claim to see things or create light, they will ignore you. If you want to become a Blind Seer, all you need to do is produce some light.

Due to these rules, sorcerers in Blind Town dare not fight, as even a minor collision could spark a flame. As long as you don't want to join the Blind Sight Cult, you must behave yourself in Blind Town. This fulfills the Senlo Wasteland's key requirements for a trading hub, making it a natural choice as a trade center.

For Harvey, however, the greatest advantage of Blind Town is that he can keep Alice by his side without having to apply makeup every day. Harvey is actually a very meticulous necromancer. To care for his teammates' feelings, he almost daily tends to Alice, as "corrosive aura," "fear aura," and "negative energy invasion" are innate traits of every necromancer. Only by applying

makeup can these combat passives be nullified. Others who see Alice without makeup dare not speak up, though they may feel aggrieved.
As for Ashe and the others, they have gradually grown accustomed to it, to the point of indifference.
"Has he not returned yet?"
The sound of a door opening echoed in the darkness as Ashe and Igor entered the room, accompanied by the flapping of wings.
When they saw Harvey and Alice in the room, they instinctively shifted their gazes slightly, ensuring that the unaltered Alice was no longer in their line of sight.
They had grown used to averting their eyes just enough so that neither Harvey nor Alice would notice.





necromancer's face showing a strangely human expression of longing. "Hurry, hurry," Ashe patted the Round Cicada beside him, and the cicada slowly emitted a golden light, illuminating the entire room.
On the walls, the floor, and every blank surface, blood-red words appeared: "Don't tell them you can see," "Don't create light," and so on.
Yet Ashe and the others were already accustomed to this environment. Their tense expressions instantly relaxed.
After staying in the darkness for so long, their bodies felt parched, desperately in need of light to nourish them.
In theory, nothing in Blind Town was allowed to emit light, including spirits, since spirits are connected to their sorcerers' souls. It's like how if your pet dug up someone's ancestral grave, you, as the owner, would undoubtedly be held responsible.

But the Round Cicada was different.
Because strictly speaking, it wasn't Ashe's spirit.
Unless a spirit willingly submits, a lower-tier sorcerer simply cannot accommodate an upper-tier spirit. The Round Cicada clearly had no intention of becoming Ashe's pet. It had merely used Ashe to escape from a Miracle Trap and hadn't reached the point of pledging its life to him.
However, the Round Cicada didn't abandon Ashe after using him.
In its naive, newly born mind, it likely developed a mental imprint that "leaving the sorcerer would lead to being sealed again," which is why it chose to continue staying by Ashe's side.
After several days of observation, Ashe had begun to vaguely understand the extent of his control over the Round Cicada. First, he didn't need to provide spellforce to use it (his Prismatic spellforce couldn't sustain the Round Cicada anyway). However, the Round Cicada could only cast spells for him three times a day, with the effect of "stealing the fate from three seconds ago and

replacing the current fate with it." Ashe called this ability the "Three-Second Cicada Lurk."

In simple terms, it allowed him to escape any harm by reverting to a state three seconds prior.

This wasn't exactly a healing ability, as it did nothing to address existing injuries. Moreover, it was highly time-sensitive-once the three-second window passed, it became useless. Therefore, Ashe had been training diligently with the "Three-Second Cicada Lurk" these past few days. If he could use it in a critical moment, it would be nothing short of a lifesaving miracle.

Ashe also knew that the Square Cicada, which Silver Lantern had taken, likely had the effect of "stealing the fate from three seconds in the future and replacing the current fate with it." Compared to the Round Cicada, the Square Cicada seemed even harder to use. But Ashe was certain that with Silver Lantern's intelligence, the Square Cicada would become a trump card capable of turning the tide at some point in the future.

The Round Cicada's food was Golden Flow Water, which naturally forms as the world flows and changes. This meant the Round Cicada could sustain itself, which was a relief for Ashe, as he had no idea how to feed a Fourwinged Spirit otherwise. If he had to continue using gold coins for its sustenance, the daily cost would have bankrupted Ashe in no time.

One-Winged Spirits are fed with silver coins, Two-Winged Spirits with gold coins, and Three-Winged Spirits can barely be sustained with gold coins. But for a Four-Winged Spirit, gold coins are far from sufficient. Fortunately, the Round Cicada was exceptionally easy to care for. If it had been any other legendary spirit, Ashe wouldn't have been able to afford it at all.

Since it didn't drain Ashe's spellforce, only offered limited spellcasting, and didn't require feeding, the Round Cicada couldn't really be considered Ashe's spirit. If anything, it was more like a stray cat that lived nearby-it occasionally let Ashe pet it and was willing to catch mice in the area, but it would never truly enter Ashe's home.

Thus, when it emitted light, it was akin to a stray cat's mating call. No matter how much the gray fox heritage of Blind Town might want to hold someone accountable, they couldn't pin it on Ashe. And since there was no way to blind the Round Cicada, Ashe and his companions were able to enjoy the blessing of light within Blind Town.

The three sanctuary sorcerers squinted their eyes, gathered around the golden-glowing Round Cicada.

Only through loss can one truly understand how precious certain habitual things are.

Chapter 604: Tit for Tat

"Yeah," Ashe nodded. Three days ago, Mercury Trojan Horse had informed them that Silver Lantern had passed through Blind Town, but by the time they arrived, Silver Lantern had already fled. So, they had no choice but to wait here for the time being.

"You gained quite a lot from the Divine Fire Trial. For you, it was just an improvement in physical fitness or talent enhancement, but for Silver Lantern, it means she's one step closer to her goal," Igor said. "If you hadn't snatched Round Cicada, she would have had a complete victory."

disappeared. Perhaps his time talent had improved slightly, but it wasn't reflected in Aurora's Sorcerer Handbook, indicating that his cultivation speed still wasn't as fast as sharing the Witch's cultivation.

However, the quality of his soul had fundamentally improved.

For example, before, his spirits would spend about half their time sleeping within his soul. Now, they were like they were on adrenaline, constantly dancing and playing music in his soul.

If the soul quality of an ordinary sorcerer is categorized as 'One-Winged thatched hut,' 'two-wings sweatshop,' 'three wings office,' or 'Four Wings villa,' then Ashe's current soul could be described as an 'office filled with stimulants,' where the spirits never want to clock out.

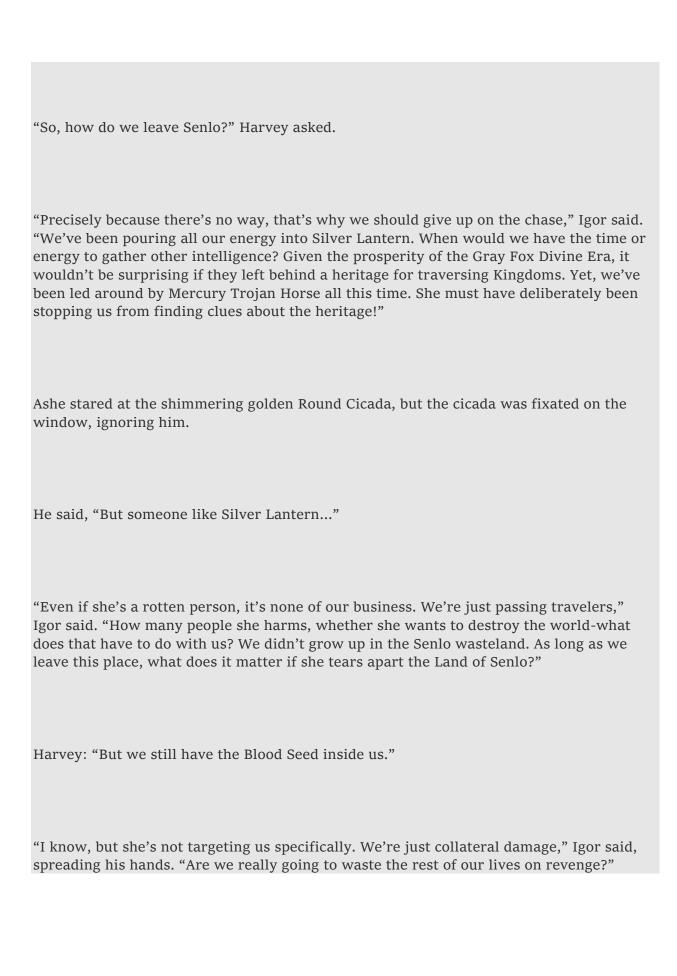
In this state, Ashe was certain that if he died, he would definitely become a Demi-God. Even if his obsession was 'wanting to indulge in lust,' he would become a 'Demi-God of Lust.'

But Ashe didn't care about what would happen after his death. For him, the only benefit of improved soul quality was that his spirits' effects had become stronger (though they also consumed more). For Silver Lantern, however, becoming a divine fire seed undoubtedly accelerated her plans significantly.

Ashe remained silent for a moment, then nodded. "Silver Lantern is becoming harder and harder to deal with."

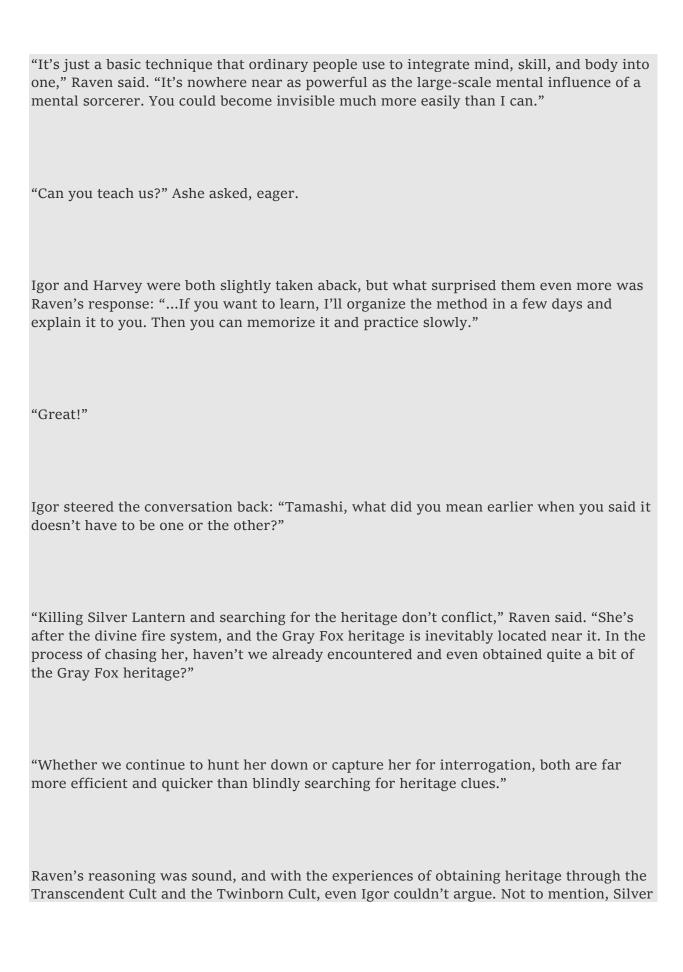
"Actually, I've been wanting to say this for a long time," Igor said. "Compared to chasing Silver Lantern, leaving Senlo would actually solve more problems. As long as we keep feeding, we can basically offset the curse of the Blood Seed, not to mention that the distance between different Kingdoms would significantly weaken the Blood Seed's effects. As for your Half Tactile Sense, Ashe, I remember Mercury Trojan Horse mentioned that the Four Pillars Cult's tactile sense is one per Kingdom. If you leave Senlo, Silver Lantern would naturally become the complete tactile sense, and you could escape the gaze of the Four Pillars."

"So, let's give up on chasing Silver Lantern," the Con Artist said. "Let's find a way to head to another Kingdom."



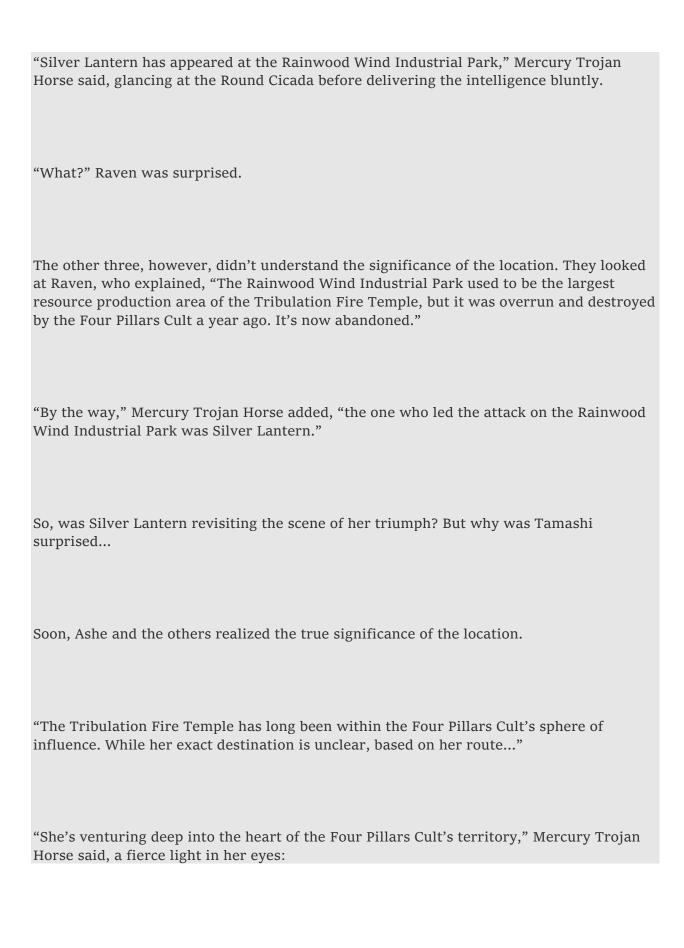
"Isn't that kind of nice?" Harvey said lazily.
Igor ignored the necromancer and looked at Ashe. "We've already wasted enough of our lives, Ashe."
"Lise, Annan-they're waiting for you," he paused, hesitating for a moment before adding, "And I owe Anfel an explanation too."
Ashe stared blankly at Igor. That's right, they had promised to return as soon as possible
"It doesn't have to be one or the other."
A voice suddenly came from the window. The three sanctuary sorcerers immediately turned their heads and saw the Death Raven sitting on the windowsill, unnoticed.
Harvey and Igor's faces instantly darkened-Harvey had already closed the window earlier!
Which meant that Tamashi had opened the window from the outside, closed it, and then sat down, all without anyone noticing!

"Tamashi, when did you get back?" Ashe asked in surprise. "I didn't notice you at all. Have you gotten stronger?"
"Yes."
The black raven nodded. "I've been training with the Blind Sight Cult these past few days. Finally, I've made some progress."
Training with the Blind Sight Cult? Everyone blinked. While they finally understood why Tamashi had been so elusive these days, the reason was utterly terrifying-like seeing a gas canister volunteering to be a firefighter.
Igor said coldly, "Being able to move without even sanctuary sorcerers noticing-that's practically a Miracle, isn't it?"
If it were just about being good at stealth, that would be one thing. But the problem was that Raven was not only skilled in stealth but also excelled at close-range, lightning-fast assassinations! Previously, he needed to set up an ambush to take down a sorcerer, but now he could simply walk up and kill one. Even Igor, who had recently solidified his Sanctuary, couldn't help but feel a deep sense of unease toward Raven.
He even suspected that one day, not even a Sanctuary might be able to stop Raven's blade!



Lantern had the [Dragon Array Shopping Card]. If they could get their hands on it, they could unlock many Gray Fox products from the vending machines, which would be extremely beneficial for traversing Kingdoms.
"Ashe, you haven't brought it up, so I haven't asked," Raven said. "During the four days of the underground Trial when you had to face Silver Lantern alone"
"You didn't develop a fear of her, did you?"
"Of course not," Ashe shook his head.
"Then, the next time we encounter her"
"I'll work with you to kill her," Ashe said, lowering his eyelids. "To put an end to everything."
Raven added, "Actually, capturing her alive would also work. After all, you need her intelligence."
The room fell into silence, and then Ashe stood up. "I'm heading back to my room. Leave the Round Cicada here. If you don't need it, just tap it, and it'll return to my side."

With that, Ashe turned and left.
Once the door closed, Igor also stood up. As he walked to the door, he suddenly spoke:
"Tamashi."
"Yeah?"
The Con Artist said, "I still really dislike you."
Raven replied, "The feeling's mutual."
Harvey said to Alice, "See, this is the downside of being alive."
Alice tilted her head.
Just then, the door opened from the outside, and Ashe walked back in. This time, however, he was followed by an unfamiliar woman.



"She's back in my domain."	
Chapter 605: Sword Peerage Sonya	
Stars Kingdom, Swordflower College.	
"From today onwards, I am part of the nobility."	
Sonya stepped out of the administration building and opened the red velvet bo hand. Inside, resting on pink satin, was a heavy sword star badge made of stai devoid of any additional patterns or jewels.	

Despite its plain appearance, this sword star badge represented the foundation of the

Though this was just a line used by the upper-tier individuals to motivate and placate the lower nobility, it also showed that only by becoming a Sword Peer could one truly step

entire Stars Kingdom: the Sword Peerage.

A million Sword Peerages, guarding the Stars.

onto the stage of the Stars.

Non-noble commoners were like fragile rice stalks, livestock to be raised, and parts to be maintained-but they were never considered people who could have a voice.

In addition to her noble title, Sonya also took on a part-time role as a 'Swordsmanship Researcher.' Her mentor was still Professor Trozan, or rather, this was a position Professor Trozan had specifically applied for her to take advantage of state benefits. Every year, she could apply for certain subsidies, which included not just money but also quotas for Miracles and spirits. Though the amounts were small, it was better than nothing.

The most significant meaning of being a 'Swordsmanship Researcher' for Sonya was not only elevating her status within the college but also unlocking her faculty permissions on the college forum.

Though she couldn't ban accounts, she could easily mute someone for 24 hours-unfortunately, it was unlikely that anyone on the forum would dare to insult her now.

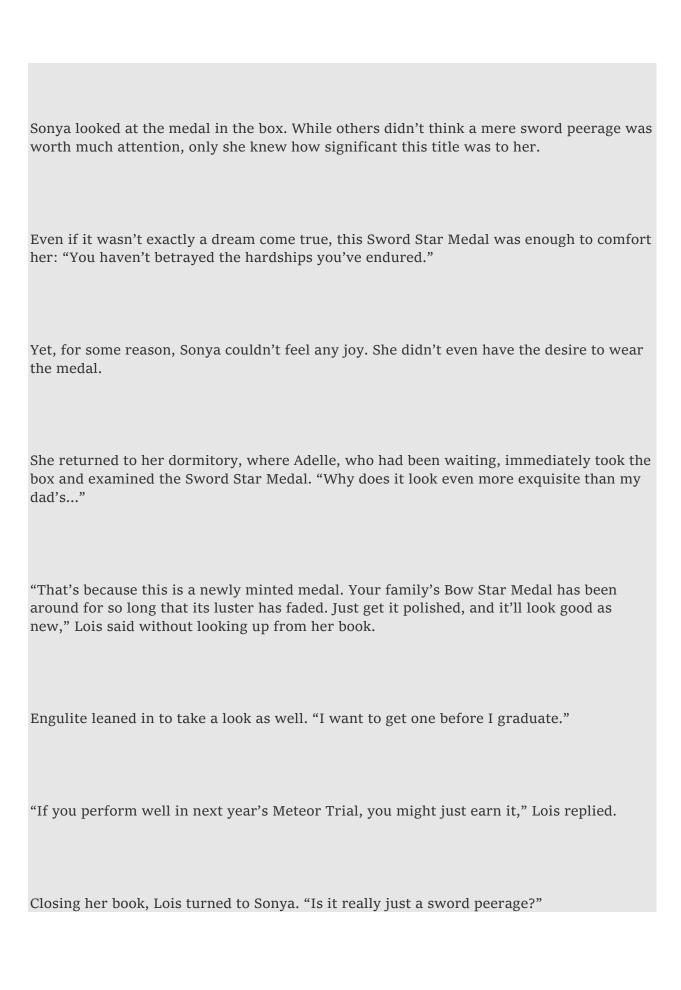
After the Meteor Trial, all of Sonya's detractors had vanished. Now, the forum was abuzz with discussions about which lucky man could become Ms. Therave's dog.

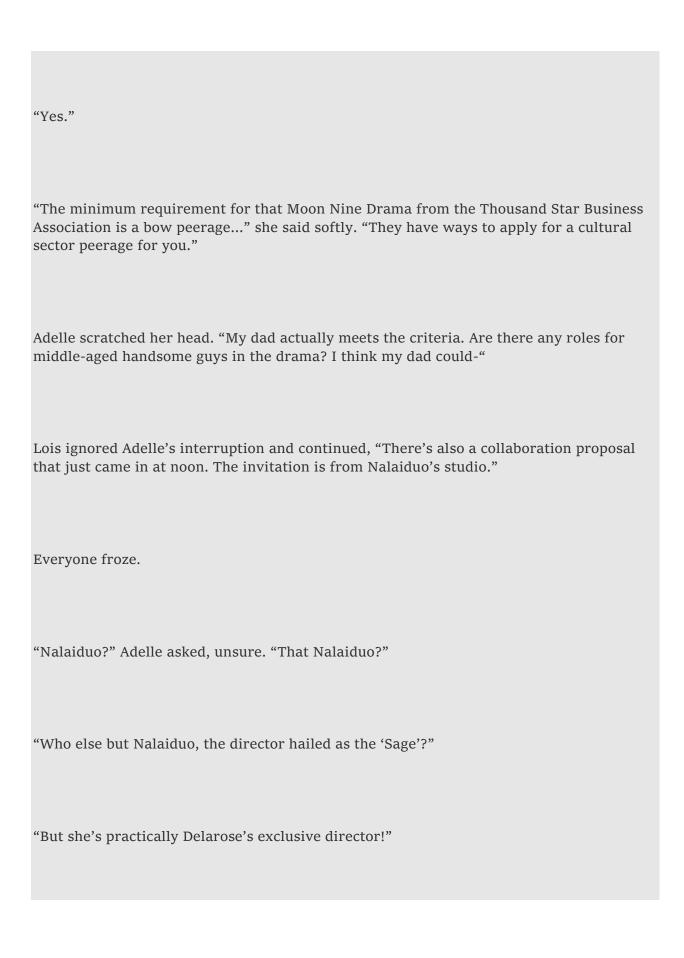
"Even if you're just a Sword Peer, a sanctuary sorcerer can still make money from noble consultations, national research, and business association inquiries," Professor Trozan spoke without reservation on these matters. "I can help you make connections, but you can also figure it out on your own-or wait for someone to offer you money."

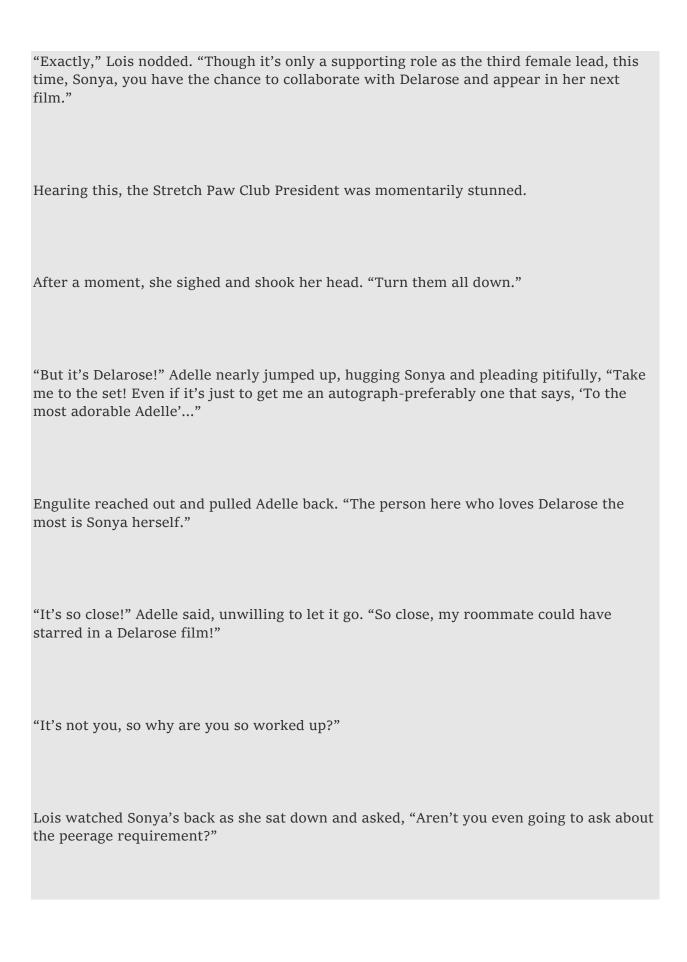
Sonya had initially thought that a sorcerer like her, who only wanted to remain a Sword Peer and not accept the blessing of the Stars, would face subtle societal ostracism. However, after discussing it with Sister Trelozan, she realized that sorcerers like her were not uncommon-or rather, it was only natural for sanctuary sorcerers to resist being controlled.

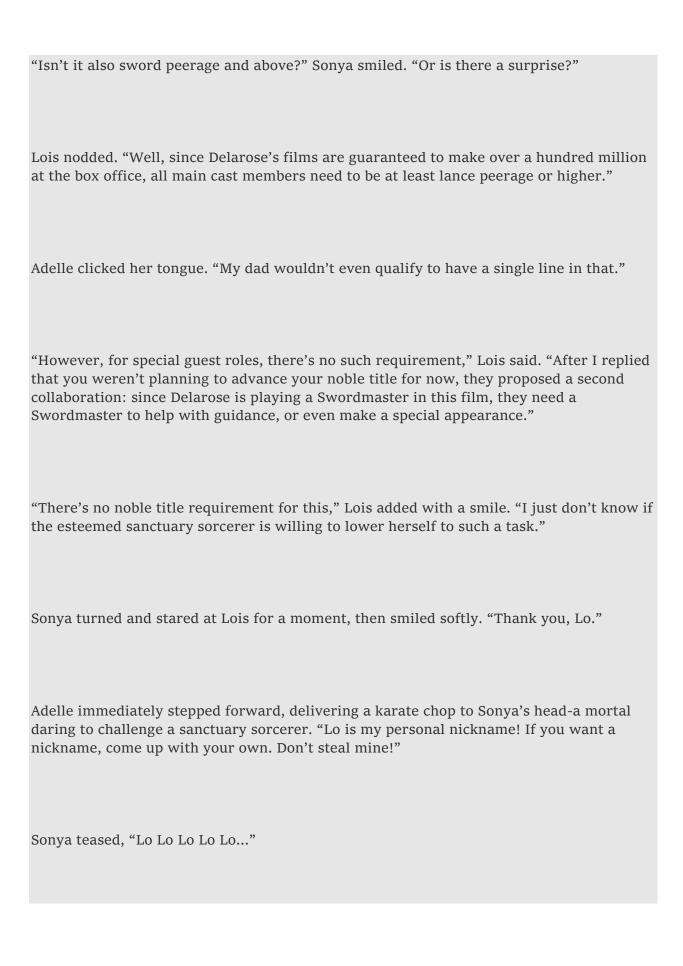
No matter how wonderful the effects of the Stars' blessing or how righteous the cause, it still forcibly turned people into slaves. Without even mentioning how much sanctuary sorcerers cared about national concepts, the mere addition of the attribute 'compulsion' was enough to make anyone resentful and resistant.
Not to mention, sanctuary sorcerers are essentially tactical weapons capable of ensuring their own safety-before the sanctuary, no matter how hard a sorcerer's skull was, it couldn't withstand a bullet; but after the sanctuary, no matter how much you bombard them, the sanctuary remains unshaken.
Of course, some might doubt, "Can't the state control you, a newly ascended sanctuary sorcerer?" If faced with the full force of the state, Sonya certainly couldn't resist. But the problem is, the state apparatus is made up of individual components.
Setting aside Trozan, a sanctuary sorcerer close to her, even unfamiliar sanctuary sorcerers wouldn't hold any grudge against her.
It's precisely because of 'wild fox sanctuaries' like Sonya, who refuse the blessings of the Stars, that the 'domesticated dog sanctuaries' appear more valuable to recruit.
Even the most enforced justice has gaps for personal interests.
Not just Sonya, even Dimy, the eldest son of the Stargazer Duke, is only a sword peerage. Though he can't directly inherit his family's noble title, he could easily take the highest-

tier guard palace title of 'armor peerage.' Yet, he deliberately delays accepting the blessings of the Stars.
It's almost an unspoken consensus among upper-tier sorcerers to resist the blessings of the Stars.
If even the great nobility are doing it, why can't Sonya?
Who wouldn't want to control their own fate?
As for the Royal Family of the Stars, they likely don't care much. They hold the most critical social resources. If the 'wild fox sanctuaries' thrive, so be it. But once they hit a bottleneck, they'll naturally turn their gaze toward the blessings of the Stars and advanced resources.
Taking a step back, even if a wild fox sanctuary truly ascends to become a wild fox legend the Royal Family of the Stars surely has other ways to recruit them.
In an era where nations don't interact, all talents eventually remain within their own borders. They're in no hurry-after all, there's nowhere to run.
However, due to the oversaturation of sword peerages, there's naturally no formal knighting ceremony. The village girl simply went to the school's administrative building and received her medal and researcher contract. From that moment, she became a noble of the state.







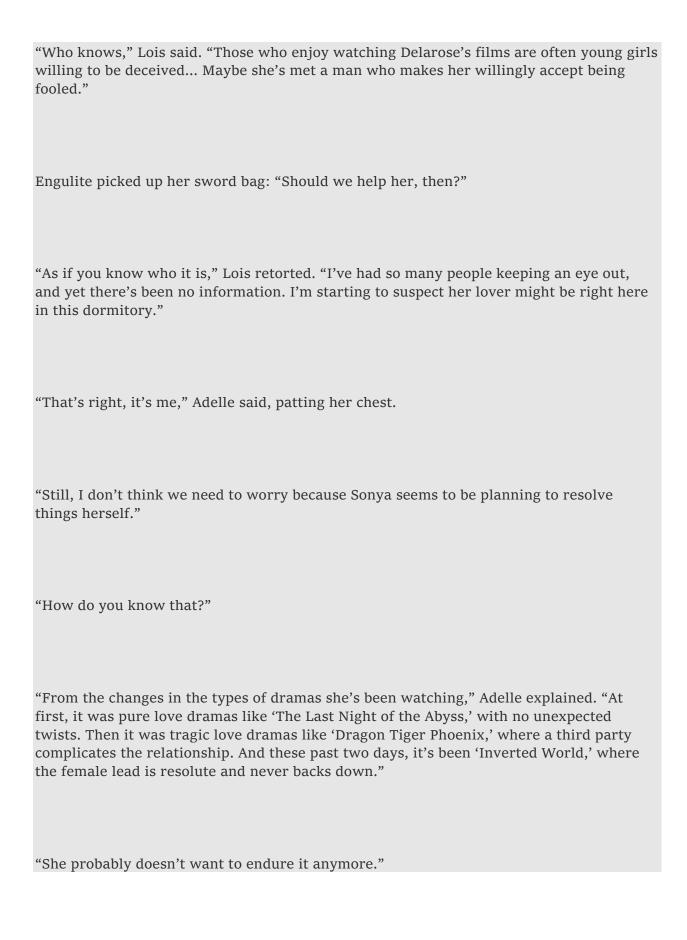


"Don't think I won't hit you just because you're a sanctuary sorcerer!" Adelle rolled up her sleeves, but Engulite quickly grabbed her and pulled her back.
"Enough joking around," Sonya said. "Lois, it's really unfair and troublesome for you to be my manager."
Lois nodded calmly. "What can I do? I've got a village girl artist who's completely hands-off."
"But," Sonya lowered her gaze, "I still have to turn down this collaboration."
Lois was taken aback and quickly added, "Even though it's a special guest role, they're offering a rate befitting a sanctuary-level consultant. It wouldn't demean your status-"
"No, it's not about the money. I'd be willing to pay to collaborate with Delarose," Sonya said. "I just don't want to test myself."
"Test yourself?"
"I don't want to test whether I can resist the temptation to advance my noble title," Sonya said softly. "I have reasons for not doing so."

The others sighed but didn't press further. In fact, when Sonya wasn't around, Engulit had explained the concept of a 'Wild Fox Sanctuary.' They all assumed that Sonya, a genius sorcerer, didn't want her freedom constrained by the blessings of the Stars.
But that wasn't the case.
Sonya didn't mind serving her country. For her, almost everything was negotiable, including her freedom.
To her, trading the freedom of 'loyalty' for full access to advanced social resources was the most ideal deal imaginable.
She really wanted to say yes. She wished she could become a professor at Swordflower College today, star in Delarose's film tomorrow, and reach the pinnacle of her life.
However, within the laws of the Stars Kingdom, there are two rules:
One cannot leave the Stars Kingdom for an extended period, and if accidentally leaving, one must return as soon as possible (those inside are not allowed to leave).
Kill any visitors from exotic lands (those outside are not allowed to enter).

If there were only one rule, Sonya might have found a loophole. But these two rules together completely extinguished the village girl's ambition to become an upper-tier noble.
The lawmakers probably never imagined that these seemingly insignificant regulations would become the primary reason sanctuary sorcerers abandon their allegiance.
Nevertheless, although Sonya believed she could resist the temptation of ascending her noble title, the recent events in the Virtual Realm made her unwavering heart waver.
That's why Sonya dared not accept Delarose's invitation to collaborate, fearing it might be the final straw.
She was afraid of developing a longing and even more worried that she might start to feel resentment.
In the afternoon, she didn't go to training but continued watching TV dramas with Adelle. She had been rewatching Delarose's films for several days in a row.
"Should we watch 'Blade of Shifting Time,' 'Bouquet in the Stars,' or 'Inverted World'?" Adelle asked.
"'Inverted World,'" Sonya replied.

After spending the entire afternoon and evening rewatching the seven-episode drama, Sonya left her dormitory and headed alone to the Meditation Building.
Although both Engulite and Lois were sorcerers, they had recently died. Engulite was killed by a sorcerer projection, while Lois met her end at the hands of the Blade Fish Dragon.
The new assassin, Blade Fish Dragon, certainly lived up to its fearsome reputation.
Adelle ran to the balcony and watched Sonya leave the dormitory area before starting to gossip: "I feel like Sonya has recently fallen into an emotional whirlpool."
"Honestly, I don't really care," Lois said. "We beautiful girls always end up in emotional whirlpools. Adelle, you probably wouldn't understand, right?"
"Well, that's true It's just that I have a fiancé, so I don't! If I wanted, the line of suitors would stretch from here to the school gate!" Adelle grinned.
Engulite seemed puzzled: "Sonya is so wonderful; could there really be someone who wouldn't cherish her? And with her good judgment, would she really fall for someone who doesn't appreciate her?"



Virtual Realm, Distant Sky Domain.
Tonight's initial phantom seemed to be a research facility. They appeared in a clean, white-walled, and empty laboratory.
Sonya watched expressionlessly as Deya, as usual, clung to Ashe's arm. After Ashe distributed the initial collection, Sonya took a deep breath and said, "Observer"
"Before we begin tonight's exploration, Sword Princess, Witch," Ashe looked at them, "there's something I want to tell you."
Chapter 606: True and False Kill
Chapter 606: True and False Kill

"Vesser," Ashe apologized, "Could you perhaps..."

"Of course, no problem, Captain."

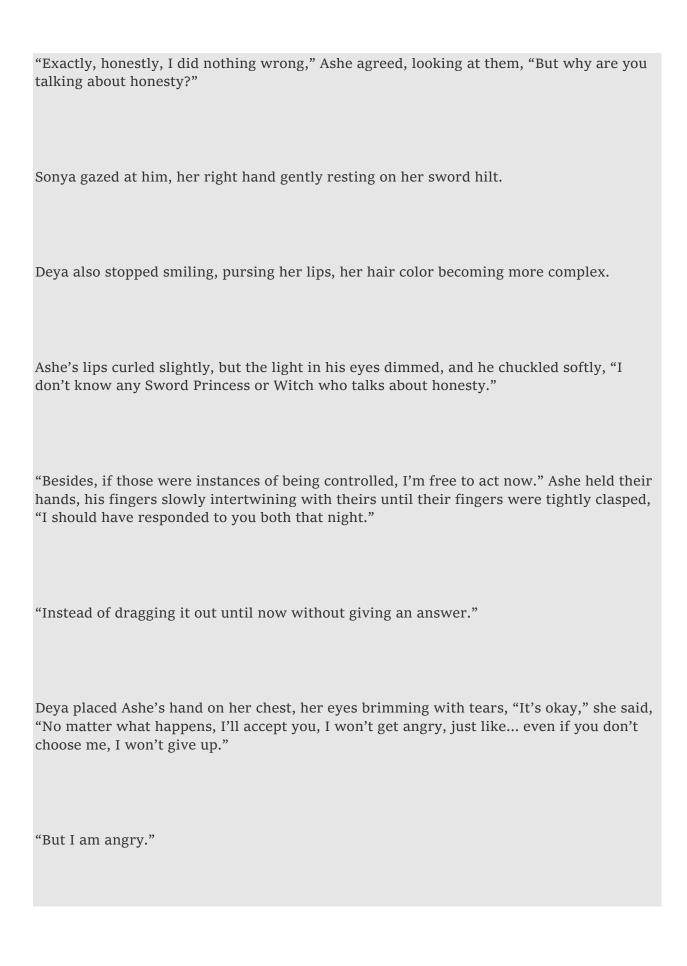
Vesser feigned surprise as she pushed open the door and moved to another room. Yet, deep down, she had anticipated tonight's events for quite some time. Or rather, this was her original plan.

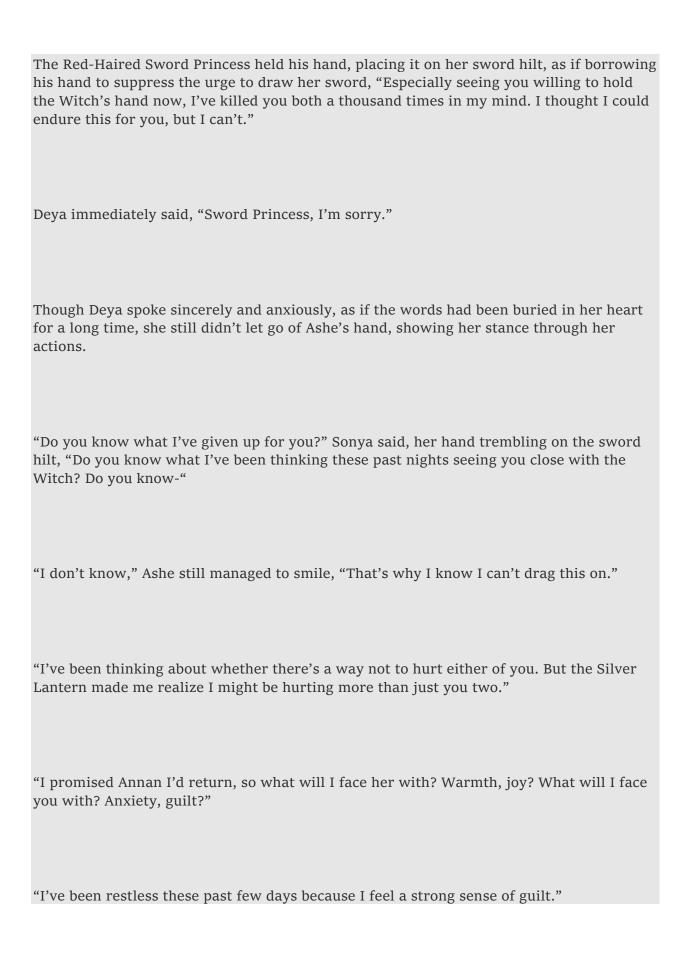
From the moment they met, Vesser knew that the Sword Princess and the Witch could never coexist peacefully. Previously, because Ashe was in danger, they refrained from arguing to avoid adding to his burdens, as if they were under the "lover without benefits" affix, growing closer to Ashe without any quarrels. If everyone acted purely rationally, this situation might have continued indefinitely. After all, beyond emotions, there were pursuits like 'spellcasting,' 'future,' and 'power' that held more significance in realizing life's meaning, with the Virtual Realm team being their most steadfast chain of interests. The best-case scenario was for the Sword Princess and the Witch to maintain an ambiguous relationship with Ashe, with the team atmosphere being competitive yet unbroken; Ashe shamelessly enjoying this bittersweet dilemma, gradually becoming the leader of the team. However, the Sword Princess and the Witch were not purely rational beings. More importantly, Ashe couldn't bring himself to act in such a manner. When leaving Nightfall, Vesser had predicted tonight's events, though she hadn't expected them to unfold so quickly. She thought Ashe and the Sword Princess and Witch could endure for about a month, but it only took five days to reach the final stage. Even if she couldn't witness the scene, Vesser knew what kind of conflict and opposition was about to erupt. After all, this was the trap she had planned countless times from the start, the most crucial step in tearing apart the team.

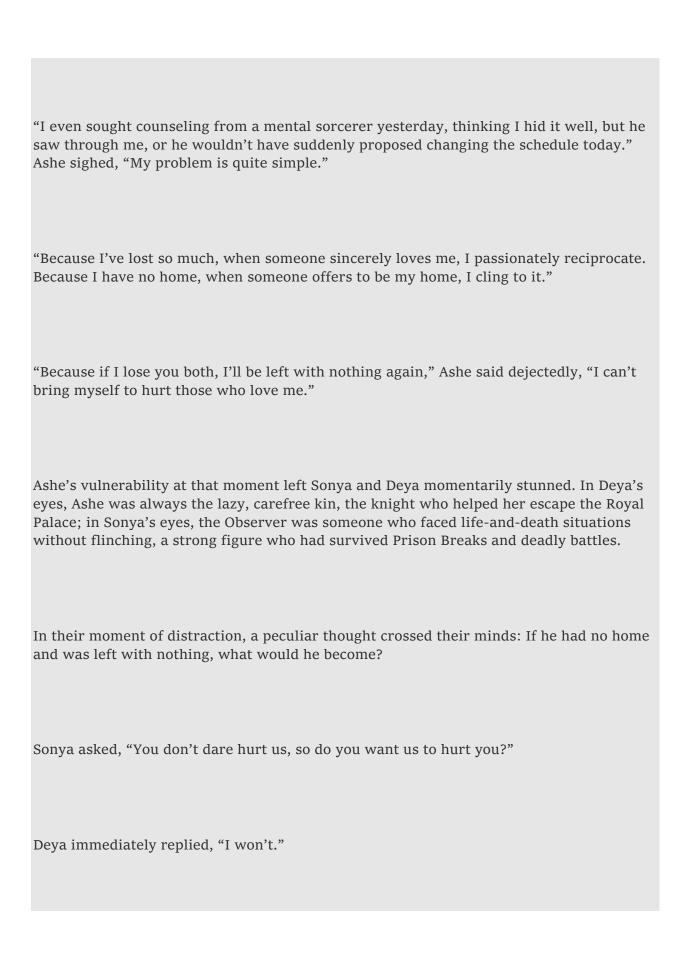
Regardless of the outcome, it would inevitably destroy the team, causing Ashe to lose the Virtual Realm team, his most important bond and support.
Yet
She sat by the door, gently biting her finger. She could have tormented Ashe further, but for some reason, she felt uneasy and a bit heartbroken.
Ashe sat in the corner, with Sonya on his left and Deya on his right. Even the usually lively Deya was sitting quietly now. She was inexperienced but not foolish, and even if she were the White Queen and Black Butler would remedy it. So when Ashe calmly said he wanted to talk, she knew something was amiss, her hair showing hints of color from nervousness
If anyone in the team wanted to maintain the current atmosphere, it was undoubtedly Deya. This way, she could continue to act spoiled around Ashe without restraint. More importantly, she knew Ashe's feelings for her weren't as deep as those for the Sword Princess, meaning if it came down to choosing one, she'd likely be the one left behind.
So she looked at Ashe pitifully, her eyes welling up with tears, her fingers lightly touching Ashe's, making a final effort.
Sonya, on the other hand, remained calm, not out of arrogance from having the upper hand, but more like she had made up her mind.
"Do you remember Annan?" Ashe unexpectedly brought up someone not present.

Deya hesitated, while Sonya said, "The woman who dominated you in the Gospel Kingdom?"
Ashe nodded, "Although our initial encounter was akin to a slave meeting a master, as we got to know each other better during our adventures, our relationship gradually improved."
"Before attempting to assassinate the Gospel Princess, we were in Nabistin's underground city gathering Intelligence. One night, while discussing the future, she said she wanted to paint a picture for me, mimicking the Gospel Ranking."
Ashe briefly recounted that night's events, "Due to the Pact, I couldn't control my body and had to go along with her"
"Did you two?" Sonya asked calmly.
"No," Ashe shook his head, "We were interrupted."
Deya blinked.

However, Ashe continued, "But if we hadn't been forcibly transported to the Senlo wasteland, perhaps"
He paused, then said, "A few days ago, during the final Trial with the Silver Lantern, I triggered a special mechanism and was engulfed by the Golden Flow."
"Because the Blood Seed nearly turned me into her prey, I lost most of my ability to resist her"
Though Ashe only briefly mentioned the events in the Golden Flow, he didn't omit important details, including the bloody kiss, which made Deya blush.
Sonya listened quietly and asked, "And then?"
"There are a few more," Ashe hesitated, "But they're not as significant as these two."
"These two events don't really matter," Sonya lowered her gaze, "You were forced, beyond your control."
"Yeah, yeah!" Deya nodded repeatedly, "Honestly, weren't those two bad women's fault?"

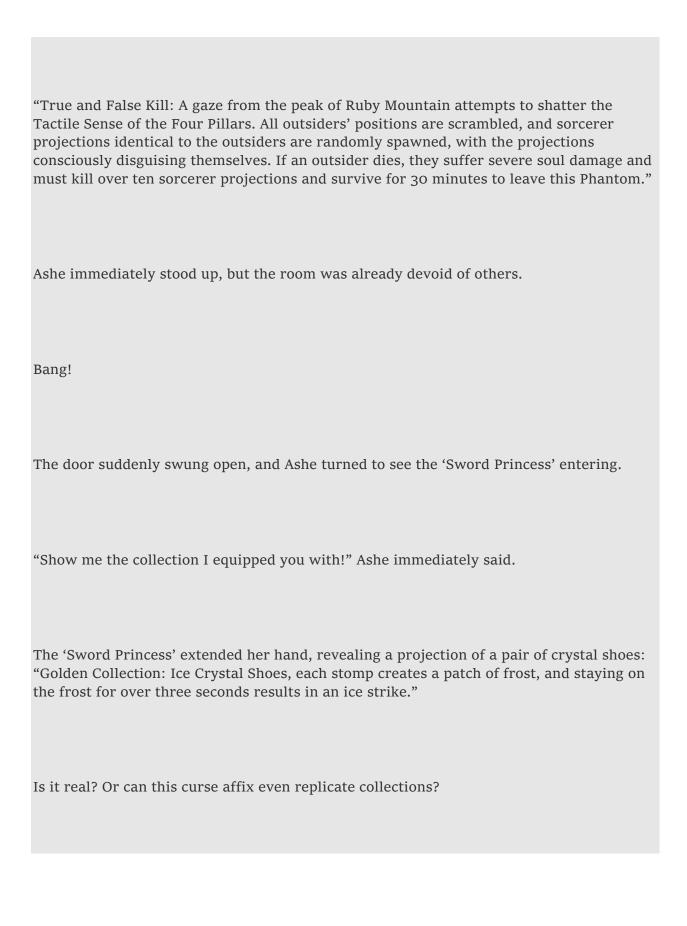


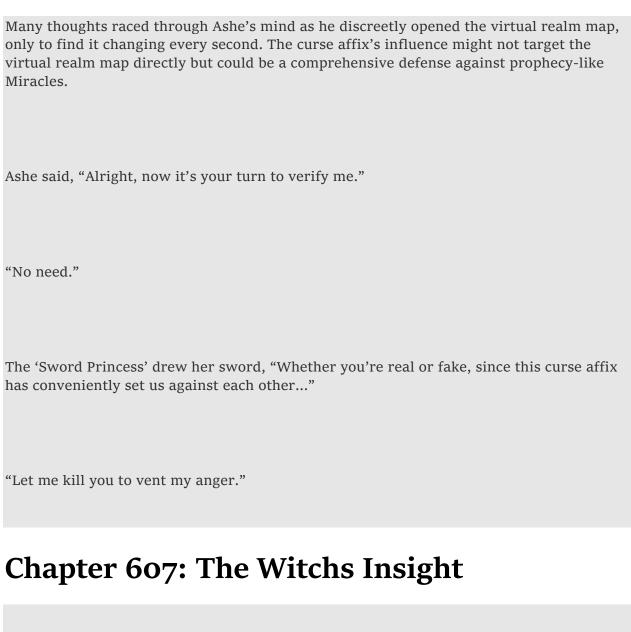




"But I will."
Sonya said softly, "Do you know, I've been very afraid lately. Afraid of seeing you and the Witch close, afraid my efforts won't be reciprocated, afraid I'll hate you."
"You know, I'm the type to resent the world if I can't have what I want," she said, "I know all my achievements are thanks to your help, and I'm grateful to have met you. But when I see myself losing more opportunities, when I remember what I've given up for you, I'm afraid I'll think-would it have been better if I only saw you as a teammate?"
"I know," Ashe smiled, "Even though those things have nothing to do with me but you're just not someone who talks about honesty."
"Yes, I'm just that unreasonable," Sonya looked at him, "Even if you've given me 100%, if I give you 110%, you need to give me back 1000% for it to count."
"And that 1000% has to be your all, even if you have extra, you can't give it to anyone else. Not the Witch, not Annan, not anyone you meet in the future."
The Red-Haired Sword Princess's eyes welled up with tears as she held Ashe's hand tightly, her heart filled with bitterness, "But you can't promise that, can you?"
Ashe didn't speak, only tightened his grip on her hand, his face showing a prepared expression.

Sonya pursed her lips, tilting her head slightly back, then said, "Why didn't you pretend to be oblivious, pretend not to notice my and the Witch's feelings, pretend to know nothing, and drag it out until we become legends, until we're so deeply entangled we can't extricate ourselves, until we all become yours?"
"Why couldn't you deceive us for a lifetime?"
Ashe blinked, showing an expression of surprise as if saying, 'Oh, there's that option too.'
But he quickly smiled, "But I can't pretend not to see you both in pain."
The village girl's tears flowed uncontrollably, but she took a deep breath, her face showing determination, and then-
Click!
In a distant place, the gears of fate turned once more.
The room began to dissolve, scents twisted, lights danced, and everything started to reorganize.



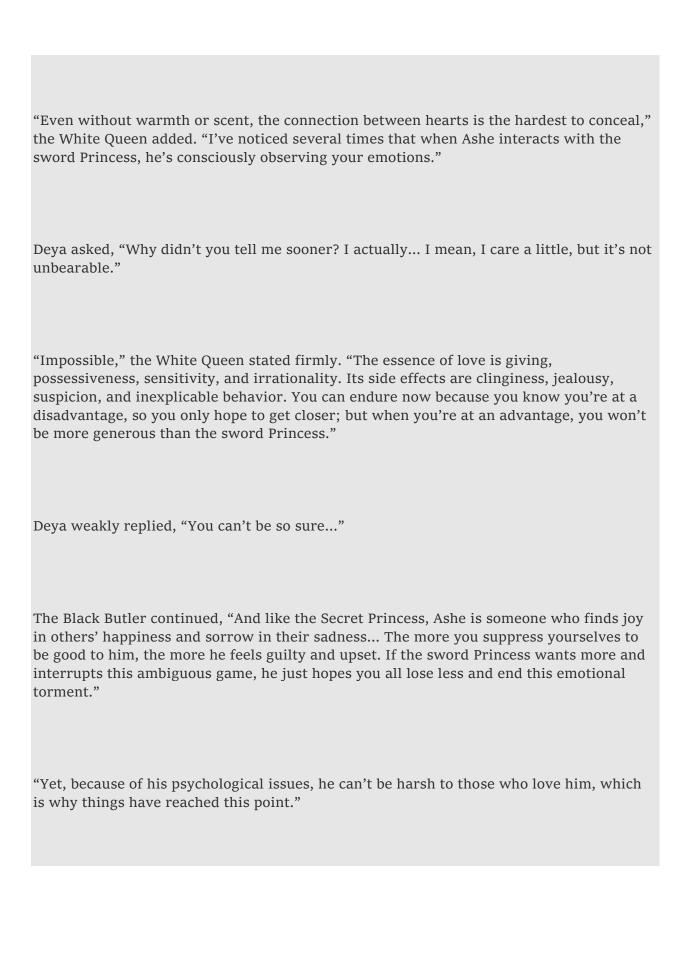


"Good thing that curse affix appeared," the Black Butler remarked. "Otherwise, I wouldn't know how to wrap this up."

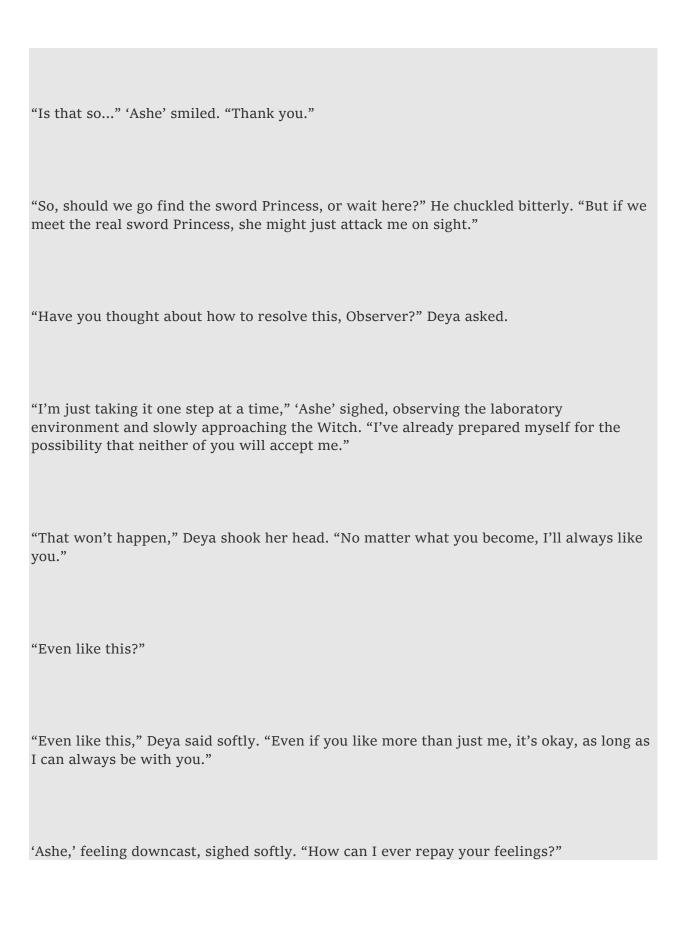
"It's just a delay," the White Queen replied. "Eventually, we have to face the problem."

The moment the curse affix information flowed into her mind, Deya found herself transported to an unfamiliar room.
Compared to the sword Princess and Ashe, she was the most grateful for the curse affix.
Because she wasn't mentally prepared at all.
She really thought the "lover without benefits" status could continue indefinitely and felt it was quite nice. Although she liked Ashe, she didn't dislike the sword Princess. After all, for Deya, friends were far too few.
In a way, she was similar to Ashe, trapped in the Tower for over a decade, eager to cling to anyone who could protect her. Yet, after finally escaping the Tower, she found herself confined in an even larger Royal Palace.
She willingly bore the responsibilities of a ruler, which also meant she had to endure the loneliness of one.
Her relationships were ultimately cemented during those two months of wandering.
She hadn't truly considered how their relationship should develop. Though she was a bit older than Sonya, she was still the princess in the Tower: innocent and naive.
She had her favorite person and her favorite color.

As long as she could be with Ashe, as long as everyone was happy, that was enough.
However, it seemed everyone but her was in pain. If she had anticipated the sword Princess's anguish, Ashe's guilt was something she couldn't comprehend.
"I thought he'd be happy" Deya murmured. "After all, having two super cute girls like us who like him"
The White Queen said, "He was happy at first, but then it became painful."
Deya asked, "Why? We haven't even argued."
The Scarlet Dead Apostle replied, "Because he sensed your sadness."
Deya questioned, "Am I sad?"
"You and the sword Princess are both good at hiding your true feelings," the Black Butler explained. "She deceives others by pretending she can endure; you deceive yourself by pretending not to care."
"You like to act spoiled because you sense you'll be favored; you act sensible because you're afraid of being abandoned."



"If he could be ruthless, we wouldn't have had a chance from the start. No matter how much better, more beautiful, or stronger we are than the sword Princess, the order of arrival is the rule of emotions."
The Scarlet Dead Apostle remarked, "It's funny, and it's sad."
Yes, it's funny and sad.
If Ashe didn't have these issues, Deya wouldn't have been able to break through the boundaries of being just a teammate and occupy a place in his heart, forcing him to care about her feelings. But because he has these issues, he only has the courage to hand them the blade, unable to make the decision himself.
Bang!
The laboratory door suddenly opened, and Deya looked up to see 'Ashe' entering.
"I equipped you with the 'Colorful Collection: Night Comet,' which makes every directional Miracle unleash a comet riptide, enough to instantly kill any normal enemy when combined with your dense threads." 'Ashe' began by proving himself, then asked, "Witch, I've been wanting to ask you for a long time Why do you like me?"
Deya was taken aback and shook her head. "I can't tell you, but I genuinely like you."



"What about the sword Princess?" Deya asked. "She's not like me; she puts her feelings or par with yours."
"I don't know," 'Ashe' murmured. "But if she can't accept me no matter what, I'm prepared to cut ties with her. We'll go back to being the most familiar teammates, the most distant friends-"
Boom!
As 'Ashe' drew his sword, Deya had already activated the Miracle "Empress's Gaze," with threads emerging from 'Ashe,' each accompanied by a comet riptide capable of piercing a Sanctuary, instantly reducing 'Ashe' to foam.
"Ashe would never give up on the sword Princess," Deya said softly. "Because that would cause the deepest hurt to her."
The Witch composed herself, no longer lingering, and opened the door to explore other areas. Soon, she opened a door to find 'sword Princess' waiting inside.
The 'sword Princess' silently summoned the "Ice Crystal Shoes," and Deya summoned the "Night Comet."

But they both knew this gesture wasn't enough to convince each other.
"Sword Princess, before we were separated," Deya asked, "had you already made a decision?"
The 'sword Princess' nodded. "I intended to force the Observer to choose tonight, or rather, to choose me and abandon you."
"Just didn't expect he had similar plans," the 'sword Princess' said, her hand on her sword hilt, her face full of bitterness. "Even more unexpected, he didn't choose me."
"But he didn't abandon you either."
"But how is that different from abandoning me?" the 'sword Princess' said with a bitter smile. "I can't keep playing this jealous, ambiguous game with you If this continues, I'll end up resenting both of you. Whether it's you, who intruded, or the Observer, who can't refuse you."
"I don't want to spend the rest of my life soaked in resentment, even sacrificing everything to take revenge on you two," the 'sword Princess' murmured. "I read somewhere, 'Anything that harms you is a relationship you need to let go of."
Deya asked, "Sword Princess, are you saying"

"You two lovebirds can stay locked together; I won't disturb you anymore," the 'sword Princess' said coldly. "Without love, I'm still a sanctuary sorcerer. Without the Observer, do you think I can't find someone who likes me?"
This was the best outcome Deya could imagine.
The sword Princess steps back, and she has Ashe all to herself-at least temporarily in the Virtual Realm-until Ashe returns to the Gospel, and they can move towards a happy ending.
And this fits the sword Princess's character; she's always been the jealous and decisive type, trying every way to speak ill of the Observer in front of Deya on the Time Continent, afraid Deya would develop any affection for him, just to have the Observer all to herself.
Now that she knows she can't have a unique love, giving up is only natural. Besides, she's accomplished in her Kingdom and a young female sanctuary sorcerer; would she lack admirers?
But
Boom!

With the comet's bombardment, Deya withdrew her threads, not even glancing at the 'sword Princess' who had turned to foam, and pushed open the door to leave the laboratory.
"The sword Princess wouldn't give up on the Observer," the Witch said. "Nor would she admit defeat to me."
Chapter 608: You Are Not Allowed to Fall in Love
Is even the Virtual Realm helping him?
Sonya gazed at the empty laboratory, taking a deep breath to calm the ripples in her heart.
Before entering the Virtual Realm, she had already prepared for the worst.
Although logically, the Observer should choose her no matter what, Sonya had sensed the Observer's psychological flaws as early as in the Sea of Knowledge.
"Feeling as light as a balloon, yet tethered to the ground by a single thread."

He never felt a sense of belonging to this world.
His reckless pursuit of adventure, his indifference to his own circumstances, and his yearning for affection all stemmed from his flaws.
Sonya was the luckiest because she appeared during Ashe's loneliest time, becoming the person he needed most, the one who tethered his balloon; but she wasn't lucky enough because she wasn't by Ashe's side.
Not only did she want to feel Ashe's warmth, Ashe also yearned for her comfort.
The survival instinct Ashe exhibited when facing danger was largely driven by his attachment to the Sword Princess. Even the mere prospect of meeting in the Virtual Realn tonight was enough reason for Ashe to keep living.
But ultimately, she wasn't the home Ashe could reach out and touch.
Sonya was confident that if she could meet the Observer in reality, she could definitely tame him completely, and if he dared to glance at another woman, it would mean Sonya had lost.
But the problem was, there was a distance between their Kingdoms.
Sonya's life was indeed more than just love; she had her mother, her career, her aspirations, and even her country.

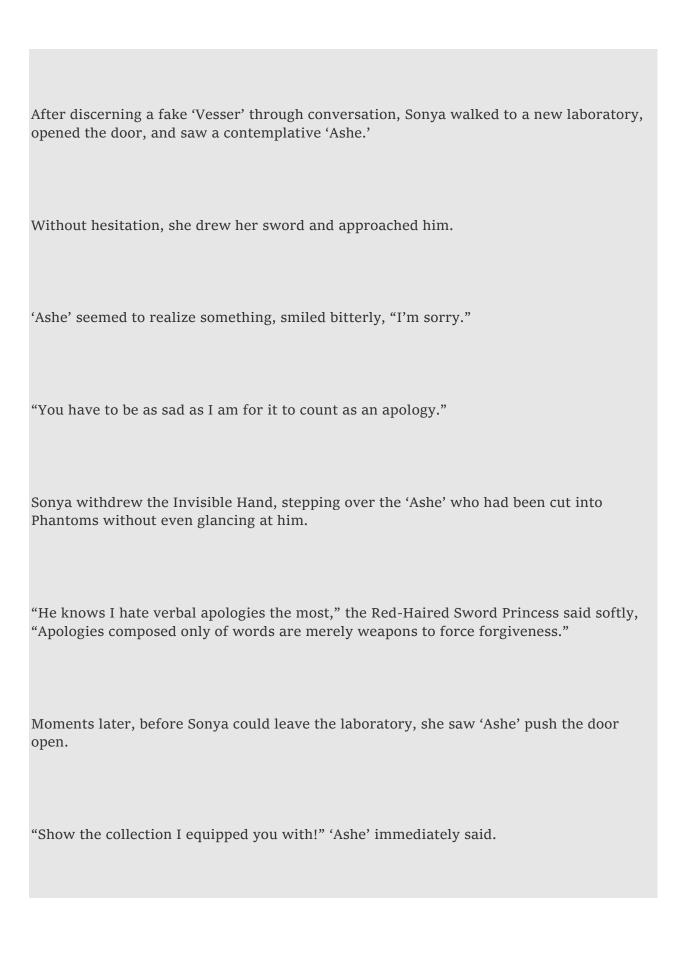
But Ashe had none of these things; he had nothing at all.
He hadn't stayed in one place for more than a month; he didn't even have a 'home' in the physical sense.
If Sonya couldn't give him what he yearned for, even if he wouldn't actively seek it, how could he possibly refuse someone else's genuine affection?
Sonya knew he was trying to find a way to the Stars Kingdom, and she herself was looking for a way to Senlo. But the journey between Kingdoms was inherently difficult, and even if they became legends and found a way to meet, by then, Ashe might have already been consumed by the bad women in reality.
The village girl had always thought she could endure until the day she met Ashe, which was why she tentatively shared Ashe with the Witch.
Because she knew she had to maintain the team's atmosphere, because she didn't want to trouble Ashe.
Wasn't it just sharing a paramour? Sonya initially wanted to marry into a wealthy family and had long been prepared for her partner to have dozens of lovers; could she not tolerate even one Witch?

She really couldn't.
When you truly like someone, you wish their eyes were filled only with you.
And it wasn't just the Witch; actually, the Observer had been acting a bit unusual these past few days. Even though he hadn't said anything, Sonya could sense his remorse.
Sometimes she hated herself for being such a sensitive person.
But even these things she didn't know, things that hadn't happened before her eyes, could make her heart ache for a long time. It was at this time that Sonya began to revisit Delarose's TV dramas seeking answers.
Because she knew she couldn't continue like this.
Her dignity wouldn't allow her to be dragged into the mire by emotional entanglements, wasting time and energy on something that would only bring her more pain.
When watching TV dramas, one of the character types she hated most was those who were hurt by the person they liked but still clung on, hoping the other would regret and return, viewing their own pain as a noble sacrifice, seeing their broken relationship as great love The funniest part was that some TV dramas even glorified such relationships, as if they were truly some kind of passionate romance.

However, when Sonya watched, she only thought the people inside were foolish, the people inside were weak.
So when it was her turn, she absolutely wouldn't be the female protagonist in a bitter romance.
For this reason, she deliberately watched many of Delarose's TV dramas, using Delarose's image to inspire herself. The independence and confidence of the female lead in "The Last Night of the Abyss," the kindness and determination of the female lead in "Dragon Tiger Phoenix," the resolute pride of the female lead in "Inverted World" These were the female protagonists she aspired to be.
So
Sonya gently stroked the sword hilt, murmuring, "You can cry under the covers, you can drink, you can even try smoking But you mustn't feel undue sympathy for him."
She took a deep breath, and at that moment, the laboratory door was pushed open, and the 'Witch' walked in.
The 'Witch' immediately displayed her Colorful Collection, seeing Sonya's lack of reaction she smiled bitterly, "Whether I'm real or not, do you want to kill me?"

Sonya shook her head, "I just don't think a curse affix would have such an obvious flaw; a fake would definitely replicate the collection."
"And a fake would pretend to be real, saying things the real person wouldn't say, even saying things the fake person would say. Sometimes, encountering a fake isn't necessarily a bad thing."
"You're right," the 'Witch' nodded, saying, "Whether you're real or fake, I want to tell you I've given up."
Sonya: "Oh?"
"I just like him, I never thought of hurting him," the 'Witch' slowly walked over, saying, "I originally thought you would tolerate me, thought he would enjoy the sweet trouble of being liked by two beautiful girls I never thought he would be pained by it."
"And I know, the most important person in his heart is you."
"Since he can't make a choice, let me do it." The 'Witch' showed a relieved expression, "If you were to leave, he would continue to be pained because of you; if I were to leave You would surely make him stop worrying about me."
Sonya was slightly lost in thought.

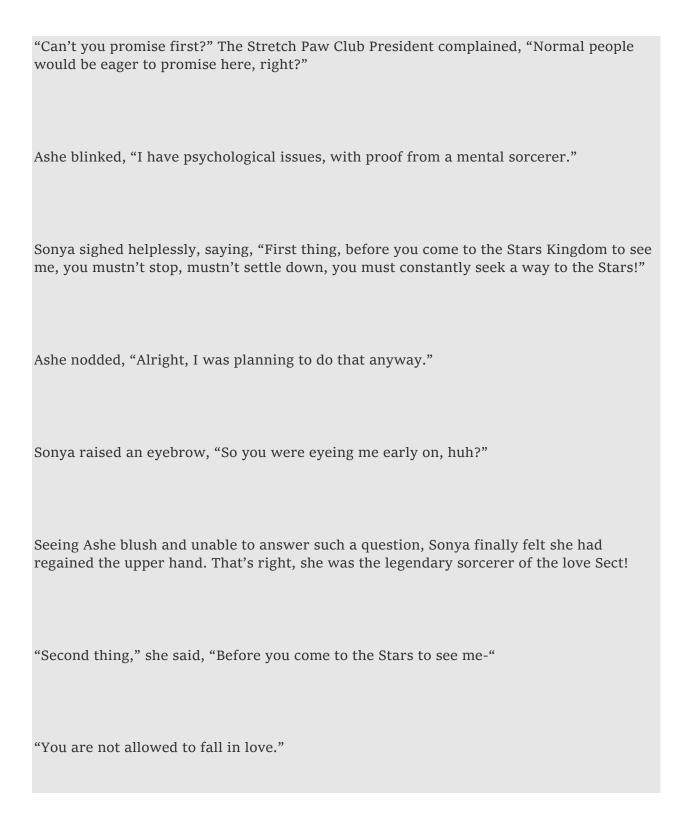




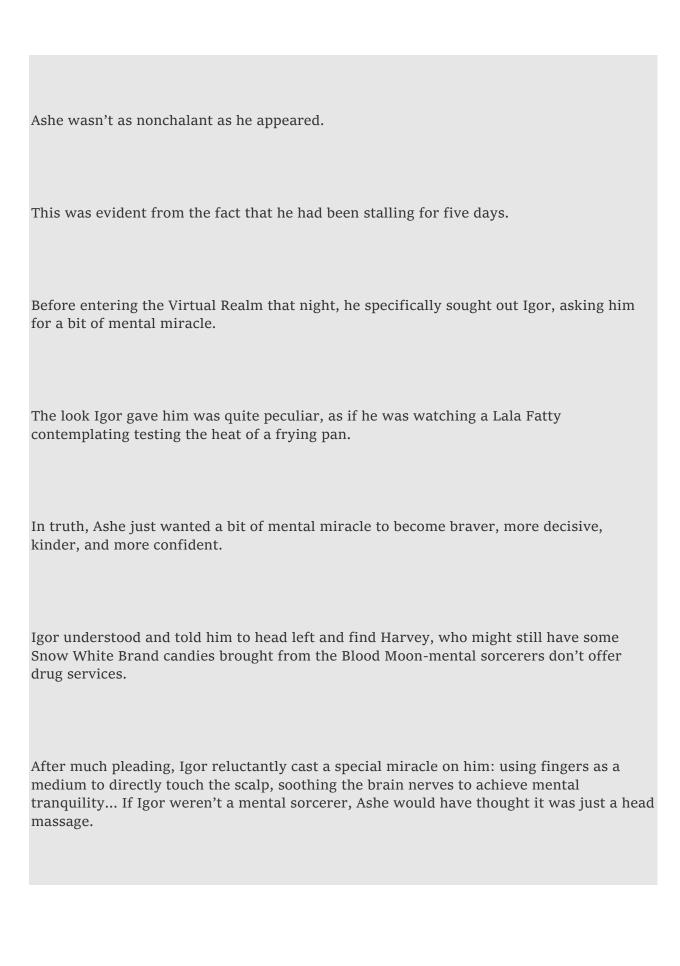
Sonya thought for a moment, then displayed her "Ice Crystal Shoes," though 'Ashe' didn't seem entirely reassured, he still said, "Alright, now it's your turn to verify me."
"Even if you're fake," Sonya asked, "What would you say to deceive me?"
'Ashe' seemed a bit puzzled, a bit helpless, he sighed softly, "Alright, whether you're real or fake, I want to tell you…"
"Let me go," he said, "You'll find someone better than me."
Sonya shook her head, smiling as she swung "The Invisible Hand's Secret Blade."
"But I'll never be this good to anyone again."
She stepped over the phantom that had turned to foam, whispering softly, "How could he bear to let me go?"
The Stretch Paw Club President passed through several rooms, seeing three more 'Ashes,' but she killed them upon sight, not even bothering to ask.
Until she opened a door to enter a laboratory and saw another 'Ashe' walk in through another door.



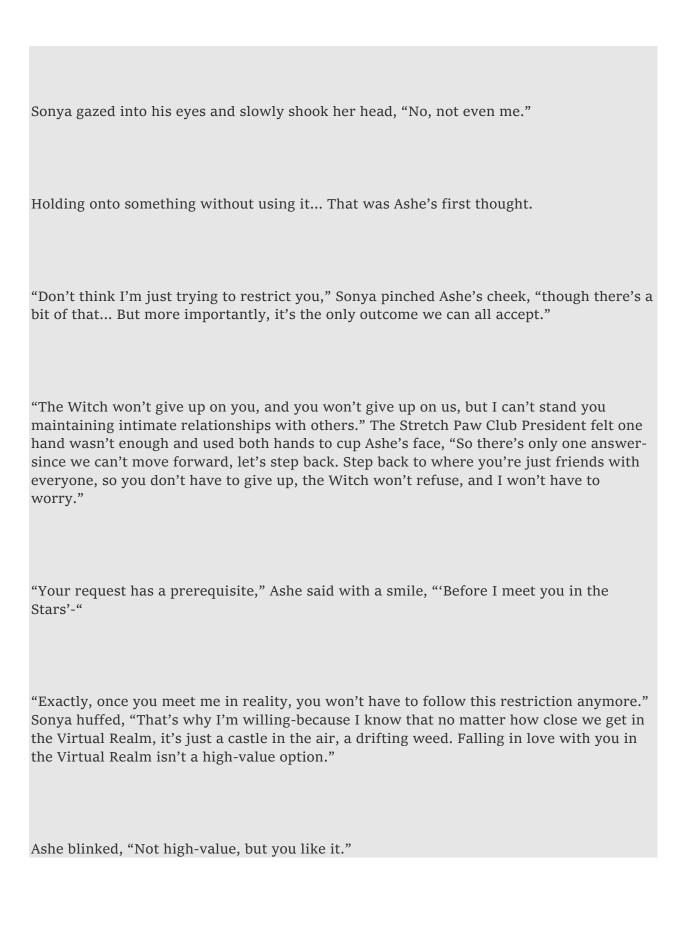
Ashe tilted his head, thought for a moment, and said, "I actually didn't think much just now, just when I recognized you, my body moved instinctively, and by the time I realized it, I was already hugging you. If I had to say"
"Just like I can recognize the true Sword Princess," he said, "You can surely recognize the true Observer."
Sonya stared at him blankly, then shook her head, her face showing a 'you're hopeless' expression. Then she leaned back slightly, her body like a slingshot, suddenly crashing her entire red-haired head into his chest.
"You, oh you" Sonya buried her head in his chest, her small hands began to gently pound his abdomen, but the Sword Princess's attack speed grew faster and faster, until later her hands had become a blur, shaking Ashe's very soul.
Ashe dared not raise a Sanctuary now, only smiling bitterly as he took the beating. He had to be grateful this was the Virtual Realm, where the soul felt no pain; if it were reality, his duodenum and twenty-four ribs would have shattered.
After Sonya finished venting, she lifted her head to hug Ashe's neck, saying, "Promise me three things."
"Mm, I'm listening."



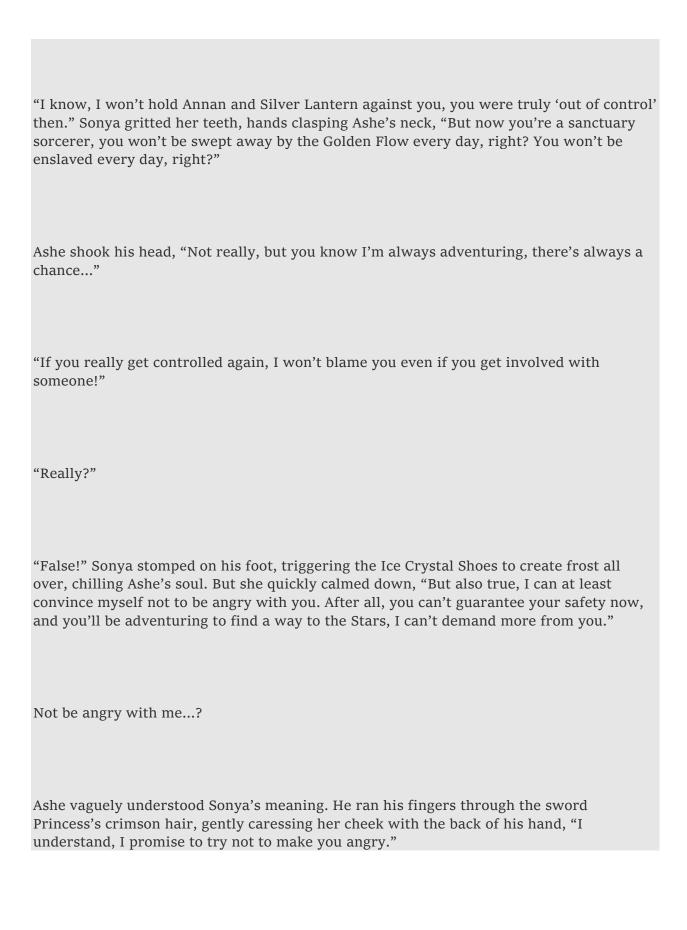
Chapter 609: The First Initiative

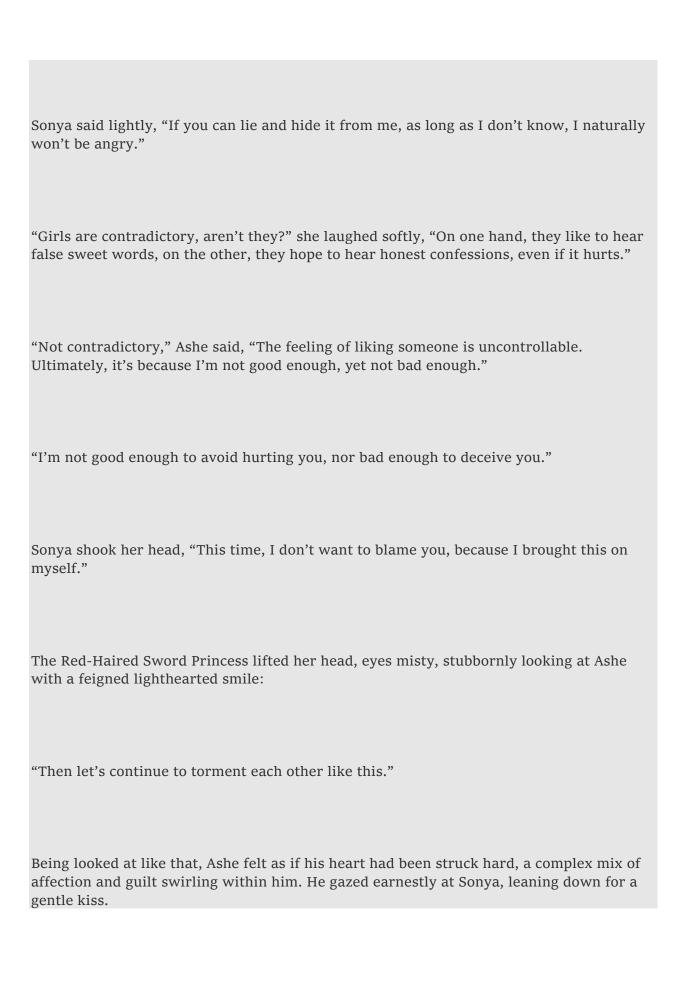


But the effect of this mental miracle was indeed excellent. Ashe felt much calmer inside and was mentally prepared for the worst-case scenario, allowing him to face the sword Princess and Witch with composure.
No avoidance, no evasion, bringing everyone's unspoken anxieties to the forefront.
Yet, despite all his preparations, when the sword Princess said, "You can't fall in love," Ashe was left bewildered.
He pondered for a moment and asked, "Do you mean I'm not allowed to fall in love with anyone?"
"Yes."
"Like Annan, whom I met in reality?"
"No."
"The Witch I only see in the Virtual Realm?"
"No."
"What about you?"



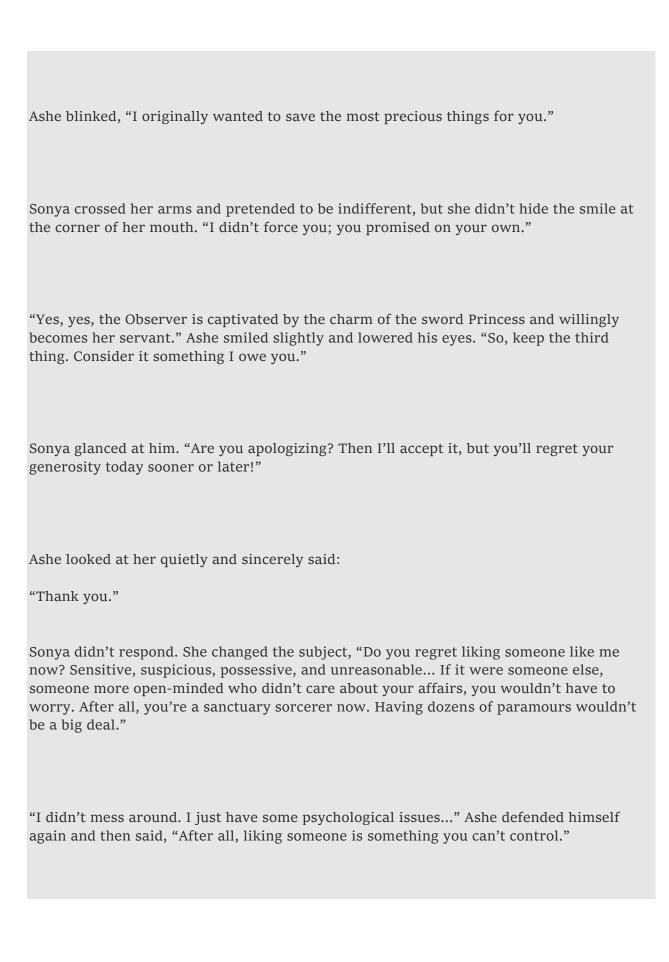


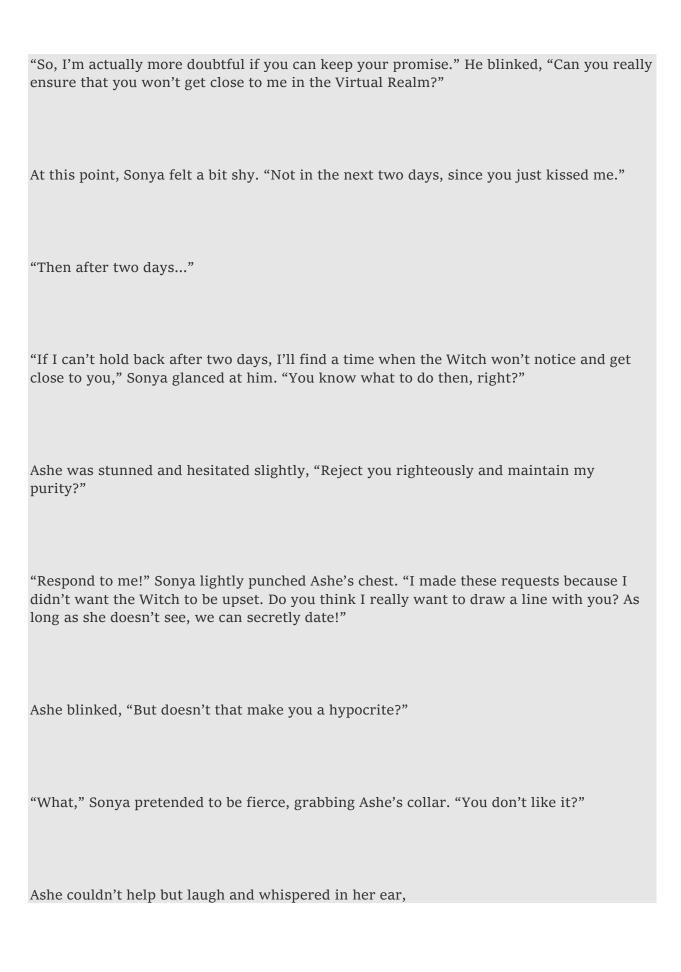


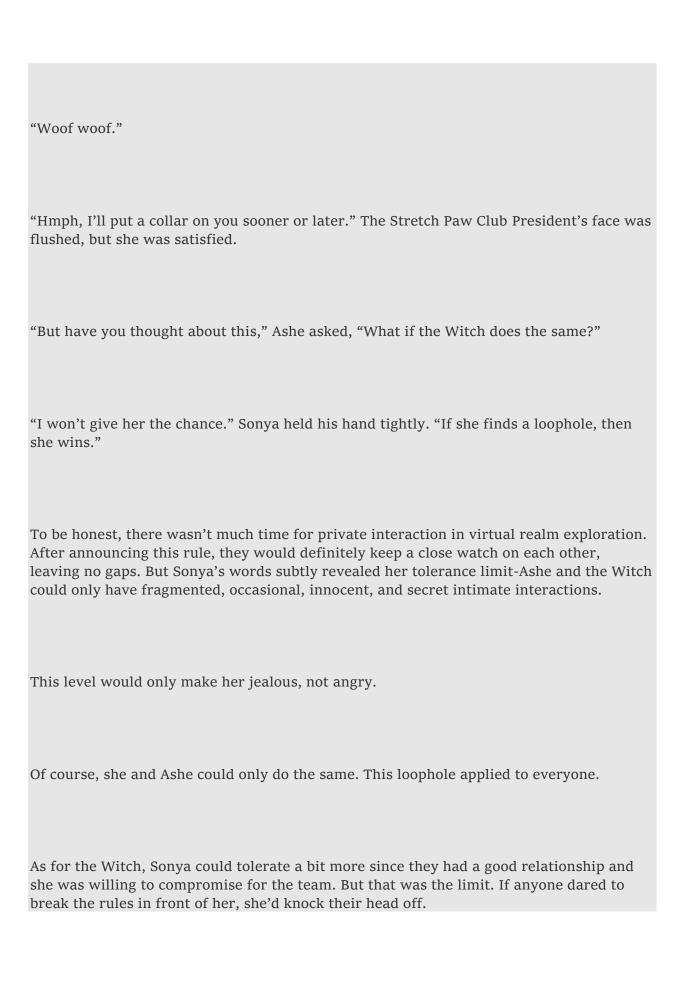


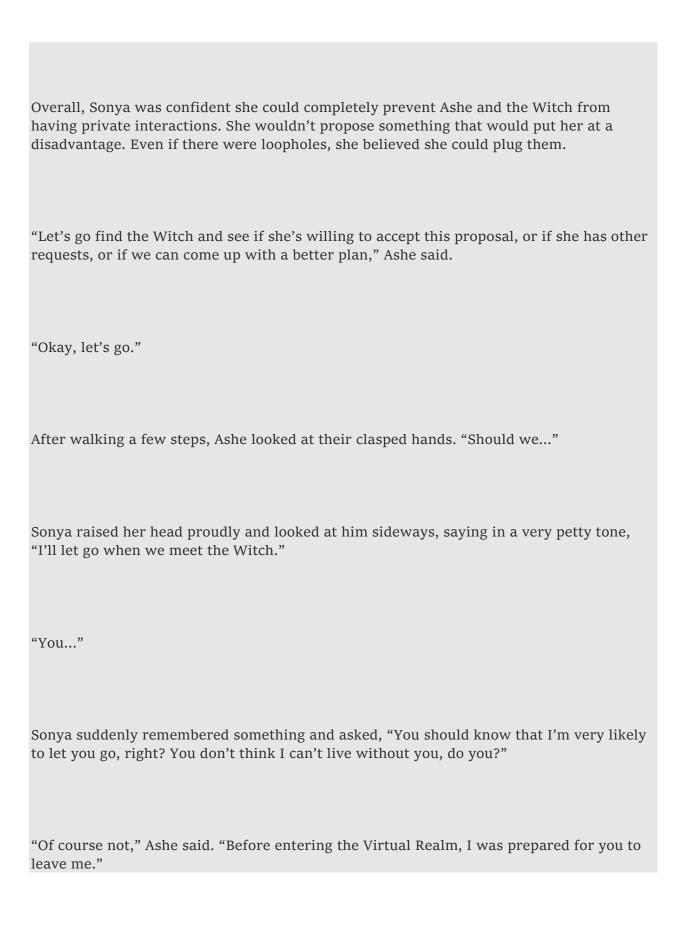


of the love sect. Her soul, swayed by her emotions, caused her pupils to nearly turn heart-shaped.
Pfft.
Ashe couldn't help but laugh, then looked at her seriously and shook his head.
"No."
Chapter 610: The Couple
Although he refused the third request, Ashe didn't dare to tease the sword Princess. He quickly explained:
"Your first condition is that I must go to the Stars to see you. The second condition is that I can't fall in love before I see you. This means that before I see you, I can't take the initiative with anyone else."
"Even if you don't make the third request, all my first initiatives will be reserved for you."
"And"











Ashe said, "If you're not married, I'll pester you until you come back. If you're about to get married, I'll ruin your wedding and take you away. If you're already married, I'll have an affair with you every night until you fall for me."
"You scoundrel," Sonya said, both angry and amused. "You never thought of letting me go, did you? Meeting you is like being bitten by a dog."
"If you truly love something, only a fool would let it go."
Sonya pretended to be angry, "I'm not a thing!"
Ashe held back his laughter, "Then what are you?"
"I'm…"
Sonya wrapped her arms around Ashe's neck and gently bit his earlobe:
"Woof woof."
Gospel, Yisuo Royal Palace.

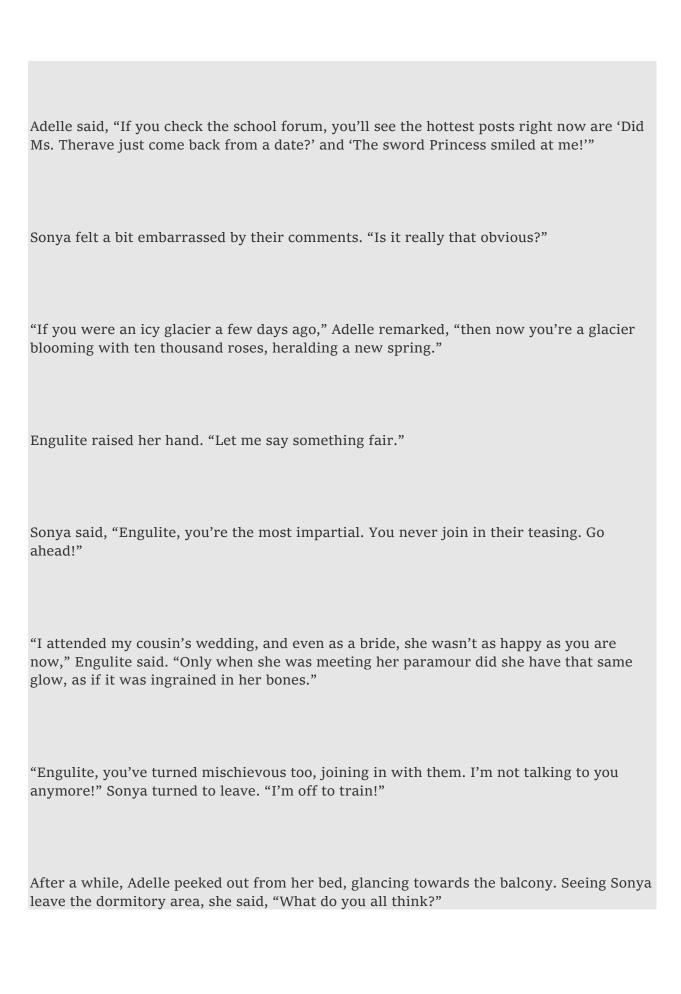
Annan had returned to Nabistin two days ago after finishing her field research. Naturally, Lise continued to have her elder sister Annan accompany her to sleep, currently nestled in the arms of the Purple Moth.
The great Empress rubbed her eyes, sat up, pushed away the stuffed animals, and yawned as she went to the restroom to wash up. Although there were maids in the palace to assist the Empress with washing and dressing, the elder sisters insisted that Lise complete these daily tasks on her own. At most, she could act spoiled and have Annan help, but she couldn't use her royal authority for personal gain.
They didn't want to raise Lise to be a spoiled child.
Lise was still half-asleep, but when she looked in the mirror and listened to her sisters recount what had happened in the Virtual Realm, her eyes slowly widened, and she accidentally swallowed the mouthwash.
When the sword Princess proposed the new 'team affix' to the Witch, the Witch naturally agreed.
Deya didn't have the courage to break the relationship like Sonya did. She was the one most hoping to drag things out.
Moreover, delaying the problem suited her interests, as she needed time to master the 'Gospel' deity. Before she could fully utilize the 'Gospel,' Deya could only touch and nudge Ashe, not daring to reveal her secret.

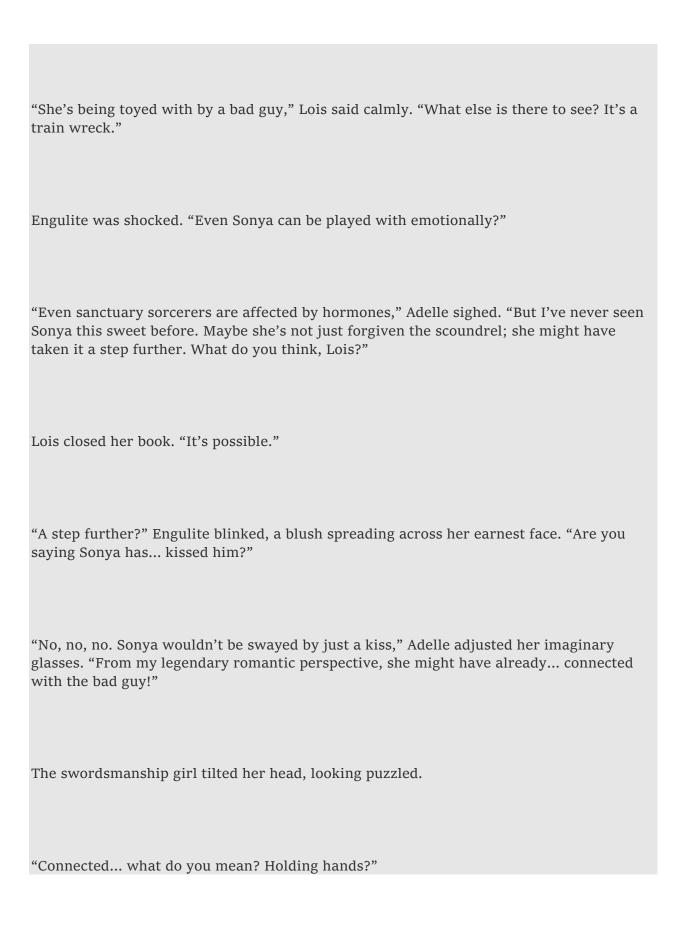
The Witch sisters naturally understood the sword Princess's little schemes, knowing that the red-haired girl never intended to give up Ashe. If Ashe reached the Stars, he might end up locked in a dark room.
But first, Deya felt a bit guilty facing the sword Princess, so making a small concession here was fine. Second, by the time she mastered the 'Gospel' deity, the sword Princess would at most be a legendary sorcerer. Third, the probability of Ashe returning to the Gospel was much higher than him finding the Stars.
At that time, whose dark room Ashe would live in was still uncertain!
But there was a small problem
Lise quickly dried her face and ran back to bed to hug Annan.
After half an hour, Annan exited the Virtual Realm and returned to reality. The Purple Moth opened her eyes to see Lise staring at her with bright eyes.
The Purple Moth sat up and kissed Lise's forehead, "Good morning, Your Majesty."
"Annan, I have a question!" Lise didn't hide anything. "If Dad comes back, what will you do?"

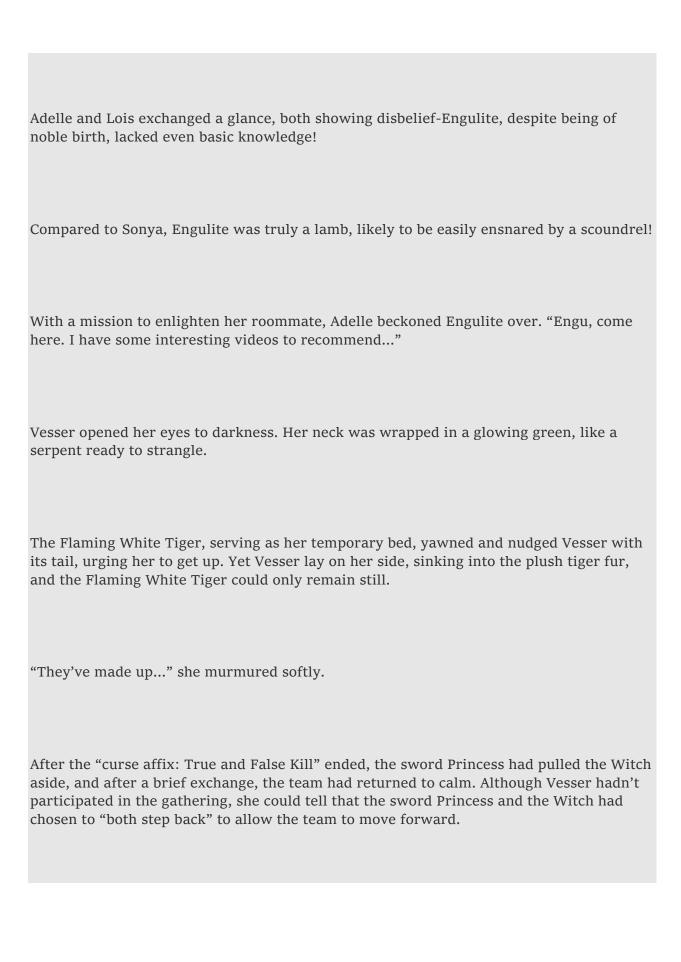












Though they had returned to a respectful teammate mode, avoiding overstepping boundaries, their relationship hadn't regressed; it had, in fact, deepened.
Vesser had thought this would surely hurt them, but she hadn't expected that a group of people unwilling to let go could also choose not to hurt others. In the past, she couldn't understand their mindset, but now, she vaguely grasped their inner turmoil.
Just like her now, feeling a twinge of regret that Ashe hadn't severed ties with the sword Princess and the Witch, yet unable to suppress a hint of joy at hearing Ashe's voice no longer filled with melancholy.
Only, Ashe's happiness had nothing to do with Silver Lantern.
I can only watch your life from the sidelines, feeling bittersweet that your emotions aren't for me.
Knowing it's all just a delusion, knowing I never cared about these things
"Turns out I do care."
She stared blankly into the night, her eyes growing more and more teary, yet she refused to wipe them, letting the tears escape down her cheeks until her vision blurred. She didn't notice the Choking Green around her neck slowly tightening.

At this moment, a square cicada at the Flaming White Tiger's head suddenly lit up. Through her tear-filled eyes, she saw the golden light ripple in her tears, like a golden river filling her vision.
Golden River.
She quickly wiped her tears, biting her lip, her eyes shedding their weakness, replaced by infatuation and determination.
"Ashe"
The Choking Green stopped tightening, returning to its original state.
"Turns out I do care about you liking others," her face flushed, her breath quickened. "But it's okay"
"Because only I can have you."
The night in Senlo had yet to break.