

Sorcerer's Handbook

Chapter 61

Ashe picked up the towel covering his face and sat up, supporting himself with his hand.

His first reaction was to feel his neck, but he didn't find any scars.

"Strange, you didn't use me as an experimental material and operate on me."

"I already did it," the medic [222] said without looking up, flipping through a book with his crow-like beak.

"The surgery was very successful. You're a handsome guy now."

"What!"

Ashe hurried to find a mirror to look at himself, but there were no mirrors around. The medic chuckled, "Just kidding. Repairing your throat was too simple and didn't take much time. So I took the chance to do a few minor surgeries on you while you were unconscious. No major remodeling."

Ashe breathed a sigh of relief.

"What minor surgeries did you do then?"

"Dafi-style eye corner opening, Ebo-style brow bone adjustment, Loja-style chin reshaping, Ailas-style natural curling of eyelashes,..."

Ashe was more and more confused as he listened.

"How much of the old me is still left?"

"Should be quite similar. You still have two eyes, a mouth, and a nose after all."

"You call this 'no major remodeling'? What would count as major then? Changing my whole head?"

"Not that extreme. Brain transplants are still quite risky. For major surgeries popular among sorcerers, at most they would change all your facial features. For example, replacing your eyes with hawk eyes, teeth with shark teeth, nose with wolf nose, ears with bat ears... It's also common to replace limbs and internal organs. Mechanical prosthetics are a very hot trend in enhancements recently."

Wow, so sorcerers have already unlocked the tech tree for biological augmentations?

No wonder Ashe saw a prisoner with rabbit ears and boar fangs. At that time he thought, how could a rabbit and boar cross species barriers to mate?

Turns out it wasn't the wild kind, but the sorcerer kind of wild.

Ashe looked curiously at the medic, "Have you done such major remodeling on yourself?"

The medic hesitated for a moment, "I guess you could say so."

"Oh~" Ashe stared at the medic's crow mask, "I see..."

The medic knew what Ashe was thinking and said indignantly, "I'm not as ugly as you. My face has always been perfect, no need for replacements."

"Oh, so you didn't replace your face." Ashe glanced over the medic's body, but the medic's loose robes hid any telling contours.

"What are you looking at?"

"I'm checking if your fingers can extend into philips screwdrivers."

"No screwdrivers, but I can lend you an ear pick if you want to try."

"I do."

"Enough nonsense. Here."

The medic took out ten silver coins from his pouch and placed them on the bedside table, waving his hand.

Ashe pointed at the pile of coins, "Why?"

"Didn't we agree? You let me practice surgeries on you, and I pay you. I practiced ten surgical techniques, so ten silver coins. Very reasonable."

"No, I meant why not gold coins like before?"

"I asked other medics about this. They all said no one pays gold coins for practice surgeries! At most some silver coins."

"You're too easily swayed by others. Never just blindly follow the crowd. If others eat shit, does that mean you should too?"

"You make a good point. I actually still don't want to pay you. I can't fall for your tricks again."

"But occasionally listening to others' advice is also a good quality." Ashe quickly pocketed the silver coins.

The medic had to smile at that, but the smile soon faded. "You've truly become famous this time. In the history of Caimon City, you're the only criminal ever injured but survived the Blood Moon Tribunal."

"The only one? No death row convict has ever been hurt by mistake during the tribunal before?"

"There were some, but they couldn't be saved and were directly torn apart by the executioners. A case like you, killed by another death row convict but with wounds shallow enough to be saved, that would be equivalent to violating the Life Saving Act. It's unheard of."

Ashe still couldn't get used to how this world classified injuries. A head nearly decapitated was seen as a minor wound that could be healed with just a bandage.

"When you get out, remember to earn more contribution points somehow. Don't get picked for the next Blood Moon Tribunal. There won't be an elf blocking for you next time."

Ashe looked at the medic curiously, "Why do you care so much? Did healing me make you emotionally attached?"

"You come to the infirmary almost every day. If the prison had a few more model inmates like you, I might be able to leave this place after a grueling month or two."

The medic shrugged. "Thanks to you, I've gotten quite proficient at many techniques."

"When you leave, can you take me with you? At most I promise to be your experiment subject for three years, that's a good deal right?"

"Sure."

"Really?"

"If you're willing to be packed in three different boxes and taken out that way, I have no problems. The prison would be happy to let you go too."

Ashe clicked his tongue, "Can you piece me back together after taking me out?"

"If I was a legendary four-winged sorcerer, I could probably manage that and even install some plugins for you."

"Are you one then?"

"If I was, I wouldn't have time to chat about this crap with you."

The medic put his hands on his hips. "And you're still thinking about escaping? Tsk tsk, even after experiencing the Blood Moon Tribunal, you haven't given up on such childish ideas?"

"What fine young man doesn't dream of escaping at night? And after seeing the tribunal firsthand, who can stay here any longer?" Ashe clenched his fist. "This prison, I'm more determined than ever to break out!"

"Go for it, just remember to stay safe when escaping. Best if you can keep your corpse intact."

Ashe leaned in close to the medic. "Do you have any good escape ideas?"

The medic glared at him with his beak. "Don't think I'll go easy on reporting you just because I made you a bit more handsome."

"No need to be so tense. We're just having a post-op chat since you've already done your work on me." Ashe waved it off casually. "Think of it as a decryption game. Pretend you were falsely charged as the leader of the Four Pillars heretics. The Inquisition doesn't dare search your memories. You're locked in Shattered Lake Prison. How would you plan to escape?"

"Are you really falsely charged... Nevermind, just a thought game! But I've heard medics aren't that great at logical thinking. Is this game too hard for you?"

"You think I'd fall for such childish provocation? What am I, a kid?" The medic huffed and turned his head away. "The path to escape is obvious anyway. It's just that someone like you wouldn't realize it."

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

Chapter 62

"How you got in is how you'll get out," said Ashe.

Gerard nodded. "Shattered Lake Prison is located in the center of Shattered Lake. Aside from ships and flying, there are no other means of transportation. However, the nearby airspace is a military restricted zone. Any flying object will be scanned and shot down by the prison's Lexus Rapid Fire Cannons if they don't have clearance. The waters are also filled with swarms of finger sharks, so unless you're a fishman, even a skilled defensive mage would have difficulty swimming out.

"The only way to escape has always been by boarding the ship used to transport death row inmates out. Even guards and staff like me have to take that ship to and from Shattered Lake Prison, no exceptions. Supplies are also delivered when prisoners are being transported.

"Though it's obvious the ship would be heavily guarded and inmates have no chance of sneaking aboard, at least it provides a direction to consider instead of digging escape tunnels and disturbing the sharks' dinner."

Ashe asked, "Are there really no other options?"

Gerard thought for a moment before nodding. "There is one case - if the mayor is accused of serious misconduct during his term but key evidence like memory recordings can't be found, he must immediately resign, relinquish all duties, and be temporarily confined in the nearest Blood Moon Prison - Shattered Lake Prison for Caimon City - for isolation until the Heresy Court investigation concludes for him to either resume office or be imprisoned there."

Ashe was surprised. "If no evidence is found, doesn't that prove innocence?"

Gerard nodded and shook his head. "Usually yes, but some magic spirits like 'Rewrite,' 'Clip,' and 'Erase' can alter memories. Though memory tampering is a serious felony for both mages and subjects, shady politicians and councilors often edit their memories, which the Heresy Court can't immediately verify as real or fake."

"Thus, investigations on important figures will usually scan the memories of those close to them too, since others' recollections can also provide incriminating evidence. If nothing is found, then it indicates a false accusation."

"Has a mayor been imprisoned before?" Ashe asked.

"Around three to four times in history I believe? I only remember each time the mayor resumed office with increased fame and even won re-election afterwards."

"So that proves the mayor was innocent?"

"That's the general perception," Gerard said mildly. "The process itself has no visible flaws."

"But even the best systems are executed by people."

"Is that what you told the hunters when you got caught?"

They quickly moved on from that topic. Cases like a mayor's imprisonment were too rare to consider for Ashe's plans.

Ashe suggested a few other outlandish ideas - impersonating guards, clinging to the ship's exterior, hiding in waste barrels - which Gerard shot down while expressing disturbance at the last one.

Their discussion was interrupted by the sound of bells chiming midnight. Gerard exclaimed, "It's 12 already, hurry back to your cell! Just say treatment delayed you if guards ask, and don't take any detours or you'll lose contribution credits."

Ashe nodded and donned Na'vi's 'Shadow King' boots, feeling they clashed with his prison garb. With such cool boots, he ought to have a matching stylish outfit too, right?

"Wait," Ashe suddenly realized something. "What time is it now?"

"12 o'clock sharp. That was the bell signaling mages to enter the virtual world - our connection strengthens after midnight under the Blood Moon, so soul energy recovers faster there." Gerard shrugged. "But that's irrelevant to you."

Ashe froze as a bead of cold sweat rolled down his forehead.

He and Iris had always agreed to enter around 10pm. So now...

The virtual world, the Sea of Knowledge, the Isle of Inheritance.

Zzzt zzzt zzzt -

Thunder roared wildly, restrained by iron whips. The unbreakable whips conducted stray arcs of electricity, crystallizing sand into glass!

"Striving for justice, I sense dreams and channel spirits."

The lightning wielder chanted strange, cryptic poems in a hoarse voice. Bare-chested, his brown skin was covered in geometric black tattoos. His face was hairless, eyes bloodshot. He manipulated the spinning thunder whips, twin walls of lightning protecting his sides!

Sonya gasped for breath, using her wooden sword to prop herself up. Scorched ashes still clung to her hair. She looked haggard and dim, as if the fog would swallow her any second.

'Will this be my first death so soon? Felix hasn't died even once yet. If I fall behind, Professor Trotzam will see me as inferior!' Though senior Leone said she died her second time here, who knows if that's true...

Sonya did not fear death itself. Dying in the virtual world was inevitable, even Metas the legendary Binding Mage of Starrealm boasted of dying twenty times - 'That's quite low among us Four Wings.'

To mages, virtual deaths were like taking leave from work. Undesirable but unavoidable, to be accepted gracefully and used to ponder how to spend the upcoming break from virtual punching-in.

Sonya knew her first death would not impact Professor Trotzam's assessment. Early deaths were just bad luck, late ones not necessarily good.

Some losses and lessons had to be experienced firsthand.

But like all youths, Sonya harbored a fantasy -

'Maybe I can become the first undefeated mage.'

Now on the cusp of having that dream shattered, Sonya felt no disappointment. Reaching her fourth entry before dying was already beyond 99% of mages.

Most died on their very first visit, drowning being the most common - despite repeated warnings not to enter the Sea of Knowledge, the allure of gazing into its depths often proved irresistible.

Sonya knew a quick first death said nothing about aptitude. Arriving precisely at 11pm, she found no Observer or boat, so tread water directly.

Sitting in a boat she felt nothing, but afloat Sonya could barely resist looking down - were there fish? The seabed? Sunken treasure?

Curiosity overflowed in mages.

After resisting that temptation, Sonya cast her sights on the fog.

Shouting produced no reply. Accepting the Observer's absence, Sonya prepared herself - solitary exploration was routine, their joint adventures a miracle, like bringing a teacher to one's exams!

Yet Sonya felt no unease, rather an excitement akin to a child escaping parental supervision to explore alone.

Soon confusion set in. Without guidance, visibility was poor. Sonya swam randomly for over an hour, more tired than harvesting wheat for her mother. She considered voluntarily exiting.

But the virtual world rewarded effort - incredibly, her floundering uncovered an Isle of Inheritance!

Sonya immediately accepted its trial, brimming with confidence. The secret skill 'Moon Reflection' could even counter senior Leone! She thought no region beyond her reach now.

Then she was utterly thrashed.

The Isle mage wielded twin nine-section steel whips. Lightning and swords both emphasized raw offense, with no elemental relation.

Yet at first contact, the lightning wielder lashed Sonya like a spinning top.

He used few magic spirits, but his battle experience and tactics steamrolled Sonya completely. His whips struck as spears from afar and iron bonds up close. Attacks roared like thunder, defense stood like castle walls!

When he spun the thunder whips, Sonya didn't dare approach.

Vibration swords were nullified by the whips' shields, moon silk shredded easily. Even Moon Reflection, Sonya's trump card, was pierced by the extended spears - for all its speed and power, the skill's range was still too short.

No wonder the virtual world was called the greatest teacher. Sonya had to acknowledge her limits. She'd thought swordsmanship merely a conduit for spirits, but the perfected nine-section whip skills opened her eyes - true mastery should handle any situation, unlike her current helpless flailing.

Yet Sonya did not resign herself to death.

From the corner of her eye, she glimpsed the Isle's edge not far behind.

A window to flee might appear if she timed it right.

The lightning wielder would doubtless give chase, but never leave the Isle. Sonya could only hope the seawater slowed him enough for escape. Once in safer waters, she could deploy the virtual escape portal from her spirit roster and return to reality.

She silently swore to enroll in swimming lessons tomorrow - the doggy paddle was just too slow!

Zzzt zzzt zzzt -

The wielder's right whip shifted into a thunder spear and lunged!

Now!

Sonya fired off a vibration sword, ready to backpedal and dive.

But her foe predicted this - his left whip spun out, twirling through the air as a thunder boomerang to sweep Sonya's legs!

Too late.

She had to jump or be bound and stunned by the electrified coils!

But that would play right into his follow-up impaling spear!

Her only chance was to jump higher than the spear could reach!

Teeth gritted, Sonya pushed off with all her might, barely clearing the extended spear's range - then the wielder twisted his wrist, detonating the spear in a spiraling thunder blast! The foremost whip section accelerated like a flying knife toward Sonya!

"Damn you!" Sonya cried out, praying for a miracle.

And one happened - she collided with something in midair, stopping short!

What could be floating on the open sea? Search* The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

A mudskipper dragon surfacing to breathe, leading to an accidental maritime crash?

Zzzt zzzt zzzt -

Paralyzed by impending doom, Sonya's mind went blank, eyes instinctively squeezed shut.

Clang!

"Hm?"

After two seconds of continued existence, Sonya realized she still hadn't left the virtual world. More importantly, she stood on solid footing rather than plunging into the sea. Opening an eye, she saw a sword-like aura barrier emerge before her, rippling from the whip strikes but not penetrated.

Glancing down revealed a familiar boat beneath her feet.

"Lucky I'm here. You're so fortunate."

Turning back, Sonya saw the Observer materializing from the fog and thought -

Damn, he equipped it.

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

Chapter 63

Zzzz zzzz -

The Thunder Wielder recalled his flying nine-section whip, and by now the small boat had arrived at the shore, still within his attack range. He grabbed one end of the nine-section whip and swung it around, lashing dark scars into the sandy ground, then abruptly took a step back.

Seeing this, Sonya's face turned pale. She quickly hid behind Ashe and said, "Be careful!"

But it was too late. The Thunder Wielder strode forward and crossed his arms to swing the two nine-section thunder whips. Like scissors snapping shut, they viciously chopped towards Ashe!

This was the vicious move that had left psychological trauma on Sonya when she was nearly whipped out of her mind. Although it couldn't even be considered a miracle, because of the kinetic energy of the spinning and swinging whips and the special properties of lightning magic, its destructive power was enormous and extremely difficult to dodge. Getting hit by it would inflict pain that made the soul quiver, comparable to kicking a cabinet and shattering your toenail in the process.

"Quiet, you're disturbing my contemplation of the ultimate mysteries of the world."

Ashe raised an eyebrow and stabbed the small boat fiercely with his sword. The sword barrier enveloping them immediately glowed with faint golden light, directly clashing head-on against the Thunder Wielder's lethal thunder shears!

Zzzz zzzz zzzz!

The nine-section whip coiled around the outside of the sword barrier but was unable to break through the transparent shield. The long sword Ashe was leaning on, however, inexplicably cracked and broke in several places. But due to the properties of the virtual world, the long sword quickly restored itself to its original form.

"Adorned magnificence indulges the beauty, the dragon's selection and the phoenix's glory."

The blood vessels in the Thunder Wielder's eyes grew even more pronounced as he chanted unintelligible poetry. Lightning swirled around his entire body and his veins bulged as he seemed to enter a frenzied state. He whipped the sword barrier relentlessly with his nine-section whips.

Calming down, Sonya observed the sword barrier carefully and immediately noticed many details she hadn't paid attention to before. This transparent shield was actually composed of extremely sharp sword qi. Not only did it have defensive capabilities, it could even injure enemies at close range by reflecting attacks, breaking their weapons!

However, this would be difficult to demonstrate in the virtual world, because weapons there were products of the sorcerer's consciousness. As long as the sorcerer's consciousness persisted, weapons had unlimited durability.

Similarly, there was no distinction between superior and inferior weapons in the virtual world. Virtual world battles were contests between arcane energies, so even if Sonya materialized a wooden sword, she could still cleave mountains and crush rocks. On the other hand, artillery mages who were quite formidable in reality would see their manifested artillery's might plummet linearly if they didn't deeply comprehend their weapons.

This sword barrier that incorporated both offense and defense wasn't something a single spirit could conjure. It was a miracle composed of composite spirits!

Thinking of this, Sonya couldn't help feeling somewhat vexed. She had originally wanted to show off the power and potential of her Moon Reflection on Water miracle and demonstrate her combat power, while also warning the Observer not to manipulate her like that again. But now, not only had the Observer saved her, he had instantly used a miracle on par with Moon Reflection on Water!

Was he deliberately waiting until I was in mortal danger before popping out to mess with me mentally?

Sonya grumbled inwardly, while Ashe watched the familiar sword barrier with an inexplicable sense of irritation he couldn't put into words.

"Sorry, I'm in a really bad mood right now."

Ashe raised a finger.

"So what I'm about to do next to you is purely venting my emotions."

Clang!

When a sword cry drowned out the thunder roar, the Thunder Wielder immediately retreated, swirling his whips into two thunder shields to block the flash of light flying through the air!

"Heart Sword spirit!"

Sonya immediately recognized this signature spirit of the sword arts. Her eyeballs practically bulged out. "Where did you get a Heart Sword spirit? Do you know the Heart Sword forms? Please teach me, I'm begging you!"

She was like a child encountering their most beloved bubble gun, barely able to conceal her thirst for this spirit.

In the sword arts, there was a legend of the 'Peerless Secret Swords Five Spirits'. It meant that possessing any one of these five spirits would allow you to build a perfect sword art system with it as the core.

The Heart Sword spirit was one of the Peerless Secret Swords Five Spirits.

There were also the 'Arcane Swords Twenty-One Spirits' and 'Wondrous Swords Fifty Spirits'.

Sonya's Vibration Sword spirit was one of the 'Wondrous Swords Fifty Spirits'.

However, even the lowest tier of the 'Wondrous Swords Fifty Spirits' should not be looked down upon. The first Duke Vlozrada had relied on the Vibration Sword system to establish his status as the 'Swordsman Noble'. In Cailleach, the number of swordsmen who sold themselves to House Vlozrada just to obtain the Vibration Sword spirit was not small.

As a sorcerer who wielded the Vibration Sword spirit and personally experienced its power and potential, how much more powerful would the superior 'Arcane Swords Twenty-One Spirits' and 'Peerless Secret Swords Five Spirits' be?

Seeing the usually arrogant swordswoman so awed by him, Ashe felt quite smug. "Don't rush, let me get rid of this circus performer first before we slowly chat."

"Okay!"

Sonya watched the Observer display his prowess with great anticipation, watching the Heart Sword attack and be deflected, the Heart Sword thrust and be knocked away, the Heart Sword stab from behind and be parried...

"Your swordsmanship has much room for improvement."

"I've already worn him down and exposed many flaws for you. Go on, don't waste this revenge opportunity I specially prepared for you."

Sonya became more and more convinced the Observer was an ancient monster revived.

Without a few thousand years of tempering, how could anyone cultivate skin this thick?

She silently complained inwardly, then leapt forward to kill the Thunder Wielder. Ashe wasn't idle either, summoning another sword-wielding doppelganger. Along with his Heart Sword, the three of them surrounded and attacked the Thunder Wielder together.

In the end, the Thunder Wielder only had two nine-section whips. He could defend the front but not the back, defend the back but not the sides. Two whips were no match for three swords. The strong hero met an army, and with a final strange poem, he gave a mournful cry before dissipating on the spot into light smoke, leaving behind two spirits and a .

「Thunder Departing」

「Single-Wing Spirit」

「Limitation: The medium used must have a certain degree of conductivity.」

「Basic Effect: Unleash a bolt of lightning.」

「Passive Effect: The conductivity of the body gradually increases.」

「Fire is the enlightener of wisdom, lightning the defender of reason. So when you encounter an unreasonable fool, you know what to do, right?」

「Glyph」

「Single-Wing Spirit」

「Limitation: Glyphs must first be drawn on the object with the spirit's excrement in advance.」

「Basic Effect: Cause most spirit effects to flow along the glyphs.」

「Passive Effect: The glyphs gradually become fixed, eventually becoming ineradicable.」

「The path lies beneath your feet, upon your body, within your heart.」

'Thunder Departing' looked like a praying mantis, while 'Glyph' resembled a silkworm baby. Undoubtedly, these two spirits comprised a very simple miracle combination: first draw glyphs, then let lightning flow through them, turning disposable lightning bolts into a persistent empowered state. A very simple yet practical miracle idea.

No wonder that Thunder Wielder was covered head to toe in all kinds of chaotic tattoos - so he had etched electrical circuits into his own body!

However, compared to this miracle, Ashe was more concerned with a certain piece of information revealed in the spirit descriptions.

"Spirits can poop too?"

"Why wouldn't they? You've seen spirits eat gold and silver coins, right? The coins get consumed, so if spirits didn't poop, then a link would be missing from the circulation system and there would be fewer and fewer coins in the world."

Sonya said matter-of-factly: "It's precisely because spirits can poop that coins can keep circulating. The white silver coins you're feeding spirits now might be poop from some spirit thousands of years ago."

"Good thing I'm not a spirit." Ashe muttered. "So when do spirits poop? I should let them out in advance."

"How would I know? I don't have that kind of voyeurism hobby."

"Huh?"

"You don't need to prepare in advance either. Spirits will sneak out on their own to relieve themselves when you're not paying attention. Basically no one can discover it since their excrement blows away with a gust of wind. If you need to collect a spirit's poop, just summon it out, feed it, then cover it with something and wait."

"Sneak out... without the sorcerer's permission, how can they sneak out?"

"Spirits have their own thoughts and lives."

Sonya shrugged. "When you need them, of course they'll obey the sorcerer's commands, but when your consciousness isn't focused, like when sleeping, meditating, reading, they'll have some free rein and take the chance to sneak out for some fresh air when you're not noticing. Some sorcerers find their spirits very slow to respond after

indulging in something for a long time - that's basically because the spirits have wandered too far to rush back in time."

Ashe understood. So this was just slacking off!

Although he had tried his best to view spirits as intelligent beings, he hadn't expected them to be this intelligent, even picking up human vices like slacking off. But seeing as they were using their slacking off time to poop instead of using pooping as an excuse to slack off, Ashe didn't mind.

After simple discussion, the 'Thunder Departing' and 'Glyph' combo spirits seemed able to fetch a high price at Sonya's school, so those two went to her.

Neither felt any desire to keep them for personal use - the lightning elemental branch was known as the most bitter, tiring, painful and frenzied system. The thought of starting from zero to cultivate lightning arts made one shudder instinctively.

As long as they sailed far enough in the sea of knowledge, opportunities to pick up complete spirit sets like this would arise frequently. If sorcerers tried to master every handy spirit set they came across, even endless energy wouldn't be enough.

Learning to prioritize was essential sorcerer training.

Naturally, the went to Ashe again. Sonya took one look at the first page and outright retreated, even running to the side to retch.

In Ashe's opinion, it wasn't too bad, just a 'Heretical Cult's Sacrificial Records', though the methods inside were somewhat cruel.

It almost matched the evil once committed by Heath.

It seemed among heretical cults, the Four Pillars heretics were an especially ferocious batch.

After reading through the Thunder Wielder's sacrificial records, Ashe naturally learned a new skill - 'Skinning Mastery'.

Luckily there were no restrictions on targets, so it should come in handy for skinning small critters to eat when escaped into the wilderness.

After dealing with the spoils, Ashe sat at the prow of the small boat, utterly serene.

Sonya sat at the stern without a word.

Even when the Inheritance Isle completely sank away, silence still reigned on the boat.

After a long time, Sonya still couldn't endure it and squeezed out a few words from the corner of her mouth: "Where did you get those sword spirits?"

"Well, since you've sincerely asked, I can magnanimously tell you-"

I knew it, Sonya viciously thought to herself, gave him another chance to show off!

In fact, Ashe had been wanting to flaunt for a while too. Lightly clearing his throat, he extended a hand to summon three spirits. From left to right: a golden single-winged sword, a clay-sculpted dual-winged swordsman, and a light green single-winged bird.

"Heart Sword, Earth Sword, Wind Wall - these are spirits I just obtained. Heart Sword and Wind Wall are single-wing, Earth Sword is dual."

"Just obtained? Does that mean you were late just to get these three spirits?"

"You could say that."

Ashe gazed into the fog's depths, as if watching a fleeting phantom.

"After all, their original owner had just killed me once."

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

Chapter 64

Medical Officer [222] was right.

The Blood Moon Tribunal was indeed the only chance for death row inmates to trade spirit techniques.

Looking at the three spirit techniques in his hand, Ashe could still see Valkas' grim and gaunt face.

The sword that pierced his throat contained five spirit techniques that Valkas had just dissolved the contract with.

If Ashe had been a little slower, if his consciousness had faded a little faster, all three of these spirit techniques would have fled at the fastest speed possible by now. Even though Ashe had moved as quickly as he could, two spirit techniques still managed to

escape, who knows if they were currently riding Finger Sharks and enjoying surfing freedom in Shattered Lake.

As for why Valkas did this, there were far too many reasons.

Because Ashe had defeated him,

Because he wanted to get back at Professor Sylin,

Because he was grateful for Ashe's compassion at the end,

Or possibly just because he enjoyed causing trouble...

As a dying elf, there was nothing Valkas did that surprised Ashe, other than getting his throat pierced by Valkas - Ashe strongly suspected this was borne out of resentment and Valkas wanted to avenge having his throat slashed during their deathmatch.

However, this action by Valkas presented Ashe with a dilemma.

Although he hadn't been in this world for long, Ashe was acutely aware that he didn't belong here.

Yet, he also had no intention of assimilating.

He couldn't change the world of sorcerers, nor did he want the world of sorcerers to change him.

There was no family here, only strangers he would meet in the future.

Even though the powers of sorcerers were unpredictable and bizarre, it wasn't impossible that a spirit technique miracle could send Ashe home, but he didn't hold out much hope for that.

He wasn't the sort of person who needed hope just to survive.

Plus with the life-threatening Blood Moon Tribunal and the suffocating absolute control of Shattered Lake Prison, Ashe had always held a mentality of 'living one day at a time'.

After all, if he could cross over once, who's to say he couldn't cross over a second time? Arriving in the sorcerer's world this time, maybe next time he would end up in the technician's world - Ashe was blindly optimistic about his adventures across the heavens.

Precisely because of this optimistic mentality, possibly generated from suddenly not having to go to work anymore, Ashe held an 'observer' attitude towards everyone he

met. He would sympathize with other people's plights, lament their life and death, but then forget about it immediately, as if he had just watched a movie.

Observer, this name was quite fitting for him.

Observing without acting, observing without speaking, observing without remembering.

He was like a drifting lone boat, going with the flow of the waves, intimidated by the sight of land.

And now, the boat had gained some baggage, his memories marked by an imprint.

Although sorcerers didn't need to sleep, Ashe felt that he would certainly dream of Valkas' final gaze when he had nightmares.

Of course he didn't think he needed to take any responsibility for Valkas' death, but Valkas' parting gift compelled Ashe to do something in return as gratitude.

He didn't like owing people, nor owing favors.

He had to escape from prison, he had to find Professor Sylin, he had to survive.

Otherwise, it would feel like he had failed Valkas' goodwill, failed the three spirit techniques he had bestowed.

Perhaps this was his true revenge?

Sacrificing his life as the ritual, using death as the ceremony, silence as the incantation, spirit techniques as the bait, Valkas exhausted everything, cursing Ashe to live on.

For them, the Shattered Lake death row inmates, there was no more vicious curse than 'to live'.

"He was a true swordsmage. "

After listening to Ashe's surreal Blood Moon Tribunal experience tonight, Sonya couldn't help but sigh, then added: "And a generous good elf."

"He was generous, but definitely not a good elf. He was locked up in Shattered Lake Prison for good reason after all," Ashe said: "But elves and humans alike, cannot be simply divided into 'good' and 'bad'. Only gods or devils can possess pure goodness or evil... The ones wavering in between, those are humans."

"So many sentiments, is this the first time you've seen a dead person since losing your memory?"

Losing his memory? That's right, former Ashe had personally caused many deaths... Ashe nodded: "You could say it's the first time I've seen someone die right in front of me."

"So you don't have any intelligence on the Heart Sword stance either?"

"Of course not."

"Damn it!" Sonya looked at the Heart Sword spirit technique in Ashe's hand resentfully: "Such a good spirit technique, wasted in your hands... But doesn't this mean you only need one more spirit technique for your Severing Miracle?"

"That's right, if we're lucky, we may be able to gather all the required spirit techniques tonight."

Ashe let out a soft sigh: "Only then is there a glimmer of hope for escape."

The Severing Miracle needed three types of spirit techniques, with multiple options for each type, not restricted to any specific spirit technique. Most miracles could achieve similar effects by substituting spirit techniques of the same category, with differences only in the strength and scope.

If spirit techniques were building blocks, then miracles were buildings of a certain appearance. As long as you could construct the building, whether with cubes, triangles or cones, it would count as achieving the miracle.

Heart Sword and Body Double were spirit techniques that met the criteria, with Body Double being average and Heart Sword overkill, the creators of the Severing Miracle probably never imagined someone would be extravagant enough to use one of the 'Peerless Hidden Swords Five Spirits' as a component spirit technique.

As long as they found the last type of spirit technique, Ashe would be able to use the Severing Miracle to purify the Chip on his neck.

"Escape..." Sonya murmured: "So your real body is in the prison of the Blood Moon Kingdom, under threat from the Blood Moon Tribunal, and without your former memories..."

Without his former memories? Hmm, it was true he didn't have Ashe's former memories.

Ashe looked at her strangely: "Didn't you already know? My real body was identified as the cult leader of the Four Pillars heresy, and captured by the hunters after holding an illegal gathering in the basement, though this frail body was clearly just a scapegoat."

That's right, the Observer had told her before that he was locked up in some prison, she had assumed it was some hidden mystical dungeon, she didn't expect it to be a prison

in the Blood Moon Kingdom - although the Blood Moon Kingdom was also just a term that only existed in books, it was at least something she had heard of, giving Sonya a feeling of 'so much for that'.

"With your abilities, you can't even escape from a Blood Moon Kingdom prison?"

"What do you mean my abilities - don't you know I'm useless?"

"Haha, useless? A useless person who could force me to challenge Leone? What does that make me then, a pitiful thing controlled by a useless person? A toy that could be tricked to death by you anytime?"

Although she had learned the Moon Reflection miracle from that misfortune, Sonya was still furious.

Challenging Felix was one thing, after all the gap between Felix and her wasn't too big, she at least had a slim chance. But this time the gap between Leone and her was simply outrageous. If Leone hadn't deliberately shown mercy, Sonya wouldn't even have had the chance to use Moon Reflection.

She was lucky to meet Leone this time, but what about next time?

And the time after?

There were no shortage of ruthless experts among the sorcerer community. Student-level young sorcerers were still manageable, but many older sorcerers, after experiencing so much danger and death during their long and lonely explorations of the virtual world, had their conscience whittled into twisted shapes by the frigid winds of the sea of knowledge.

They gradually lost the ability to distinguish between reality and the virtual world. Facing enemies, they would subconsciously strike ruthlessly, as if killing the enemy would make loot burst out, and some even degenerated into "Lost Souls", treating reality as the virtual world and massacring everywhere.

Although Sonya objected to the forced training, she could at least convince herself it was for her own good and accept it, but now the Observer actually made her voluntarily participate in dangerous battles, at this point Sonya could only convince herself to at least refrain from smashing the Observer's head in first - because it seemed she might not beat him.

"Is it really that serious..." Ashe tried to equivocate.

"I'm the one fighting life and death battles, I'm the one getting injured, I'm the one facing death, so I'm the only one with the right to say how serious it is!" Sonya suppressed her

anger as much as possible: "Are you going to wait until you see my corpse to sigh 'Looks like I misjudged'?"

Surely it wasn't that serious, it's not like you would actually die... Just as Ashe didn't take it too seriously, a thought popped up in his mind: would the Swordswoman really not die?

There were precedents of game characters dying and reviving when defeated in the mobile game, who's to say the company wouldn't implement this to try and milk players for revival coins or something.

Also, the Swordswoman had stated multiple times that she wasn't attached to Ashe's existence, she had her own life and university she attended, friends she knew - she existed in reality. And reality was the furthest thing from immortality.

Even if the Swordswoman could revive after dying in battle, would that revived Swordswoman still be the same person who had spent days getting to know him?

Ashe couldn't take the risk of losing the Swordswoman.

And not just because of her strength.

More because the Swordswoman was the only one he could trust and confide in.

Even the smallest boat would feel too spacious for one person.

"Alright, you make a good point, I apologize." Ashe carefully chose his words: "But you should know, I only want what's best for you. If not for my arrangements, you wouldn't have created the Moon Reflection miracle so quickly, right?"

"What does that have to do with your arrangements - "

"Because I knew that when you fought that, uh, Leone, you would enter an awakened state due to the overwhelming difference in strength, thus creating your own miracle, and you wouldn't be in any danger. Everything was within my plans."

"You clearly even got her name wrong!"

"That's not important - the key is that I was confident in letting you obtain great benefits by only paying a small price."

Seeing that the Swordswoman still looked uneasy, Ashe thought for a moment, then said: "How about this, in the future if I want to arrange for you to participate in battles that are higher risk, I'll discuss it with you beforehand, alright?"

Now that was more like it.

Seeing the Observer finally willing to compromise, Sonya was already very satisfied. In fact, even if the Observer insisted on messing with her, she was powerless against him. And since he had backed down once, there would certainly be a second time. Eventually Sonya would have the Observer completely obedient.

She was also at ease with the Observer's promise. Although the Observer was usually unreliable, he could be counted on when it mattered. Plus there was his alleged reincarnation background, his judgement and foresight should be decent.

If Sonya knew Ashe's method of judging danger levels was just reading the event card descriptions, and the duel with Leone was only rated medium danger, she probably would never feel at ease again.

"Speaking of which, how did you find me?" Sonya suddenly recalled this matter.

"I entered the virtual world through the Truth Gate you left behind, then traced you all the way here. "

Returning to his quarters, Ashe opened the light screen and as expected, the Swordswoman hadn't waited for him, her status showed 'Exploring Virtual World'.

Ashe had assumed he missed the ride, but fortunately there was still the 'Join Midway' option, although not appearing directly by the Swordswoman's side, instead starting from the location she had entered the virtual world from tonight.

Entering and leaving the virtual world had to be through Truth Gates, that was the rule. Without bonded connections, Ashe wouldn't have been able to pass through the Truth Gate left behind by the Swordswoman and sneak into the virtual world.

Sonya wasn't surprised that the Observer knew where she was, she just had one doubt: "But I wandered the virtual world for nearly two hours, how did you catch up so quickly?"

"Two hours? But you were only one region away from the starting point, I sailed over in just over a minute."

"How's that possible!?"

"Why would I lie to you? Wait, you said you wandered for two hours, could it be that you..." Ashe blinked, "Were going in circles around this area the whole time?"

Sonya blinked, calmly sat down, gazed at the distant fog sideways and said: "I was just exploring the vicinity because I figured you wouldn't be absent for no reason."

I'd almost believe you if your ears weren't blushing red.

Ashe snorted, then opened up the virtual world map under Sonya's resentful stare.

With the Virtual World Telescope equipped, he could now observe information about the 24 surrounding grids, most were ""Don't Waste Your Effort", one was "Worth Checking Out", Ashe was in no hurry, leisurely sailing around taking in the sights.

"What about the miracle you used just now?" Sonya suddenly recalled, "Valkas gave you spirit techniques, but no miracle formula right?"

Ashe casually replied: "I saw him use it once before, just combined Ground Sword and Wind Barrier. But I'm not a dual-wing sorcerer, so the defensive power is far lower than his original version."

Saw it once, combined it a bit, and it worked?

Is creating a miracle really so simple?

Ground Sword was a sword technique and Wind Barrier was a wind technique. Cross-system miracles had always been very difficult...

Sonya felt something was off, at this time Ashe discovered a flashing golden legendary hint on the map - "Maelstrom".

"Do you know what Maelstrom means?"

Sonya was startled: "You found a Maelstrom?"

"Probably - "

"Go, hurry over there!" Sonya rushed up instantly, grabbed Ashe and shook him violently, excited as if she had found a winning lottery ticket in the toilet: "If we're lucky, we may be able to condense the Silver Wings tonight!"

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

Chapter 65

The whirlpool, also known as the destiny shortcut, the stairway of advancement, and the last stroke of luck for the cursed, is an extremely rare natural wonder in the sea of knowledge.

Natural wonders are completely different from other existences in the virtual world. Knowledge creatures have habitats, legacy islands and adventure islands remain unchanged for thousands of years unless a sorcerer steps in, while natural wonders appear randomly in time and location, and disappear after a period of time, almost like the most made-up rumor in the legends of the virtual world.

Even the most unlucky sorcerer would eventually encounter knowledge creatures, legacy islands, and adventure islands in their lifetime, while even the luckiest sorcerer may never encounter a whirlpool in their entire life, truly the ultimate luck detector.

The reason why those who have seen a whirlpool are so envied and jealous is the whirlpool's tremendous power - virtual world transfer!

Sorcerers who step into the whirlpool will emerge from another whirlpool somewhere else in the sea of knowledge.

Although it sounds incredible, a simple spatial transfer, how could it arouse the sorcerers' craving?

This is because the whirlpool does not simply transfer, but allows the sorcerer to pass through the mysterious passage in the whirlpool, traversing countless areas of the sea of knowledge in just a few seconds; at the same time, the basic rule of "the farther the sorcerer sails in the sea of knowledge, the more arcane energy they absorb" does not fail either!

If two whirlpools are separated by ten thousand miles, then the sorcerer only needs to pass through this whirlpool passage, which is equivalent to sailing ten thousand miles in the sea of knowledge, directly absorbing enough arcane energy to condense complete silver wings!

How could this not drive the sorcerers crazy?

In theory, an ordinary sorcerer only needs two to three years of sailing to condense the silver wings, but the premise is that the sorcerer does not die in the sea of knowledge - in addition to the "death cooldown" where the more arcane energy, the greater the death penalty, sorcerers actually have a Damocles sword hanging over their heads: the more arcane energy, the greater the danger sorcerers will encounter!

Every time sorcerers open the Gate of Truth and enter the virtual world, the locations they descend to are actually different, not the end point of the previous exploration.

The more abundant the sorcerer's arcane energy, the closer their landing point in the virtual world is to the core areas of the sea of knowledge. The legacy islands and knowledge creatures in the core areas not only burst out more generous spoils, but are also more dangerous!

Countless formal sorcerers, on the verge of condensing the silver wings, were attacked by knowledge creatures as soon as they entered the virtual world, and when they turned to flee, they encountered even more ferocious knowledge creatures, getting taken care of by several knowledge creatures in turns, happily exiting the virtual world directly.

Exploring for a few minutes and cooling down for more than ten days is often the true portrayal of these "half-step grandmasters".

Therefore, the whirlpool is jokingly referred to as "the last stroke of luck for the cursed": not only referring to the sorcerer who encounters the whirlpool exhausting the luck of their lifetime, but also referring to the suddenly increased arcane energy making it quite difficult for the sorcerer to explore the high-risk areas of the sea of knowledge, and may even be beaten into depression by playing ranked matches in high elo after being in low elo.

That said, no sorcerer would not crave the whirlpool. And in places with a large enough sorcerer population, whirlpool lucky ones will occasionally appear one or two - for example, the senior who beat up Sonya this morning, Leone, her speed of condensing the silver wings was indeed a bit fast, and many students felt that she had encountered a short-distance whirlpool, everyone was so jealous they turned sour!

After listening to Sonya's introduction, Ashe was also excited. He was the one who needed strength most urgently now, and the more powerful he became, the more hope he had of breaking out of prison!

Also, with the sudden addition of three spirit weapons, his arcane energy was clearly insufficient.

The sword heart and wind wall were fine, but the earth sword spirit was a two-winged spirit weapon, consuming arcane energy like a gushing faucet, but its effect was less than one-fifth of its potential.

Just now Ashe was able to show off in front of the swordswoman, creating an impenetrable sword wall that the Fulgurator could not break through, but the price was that his arcane energy was now less than one-fifth, and he would have to think about how to trick the swordswoman into fighting harder later.

The boat passed through layers of mist, and soon the whirlpool appeared before them.

True to its reputation as a natural wonder, the whirlpool was indeed very strange - although it was a swirling vortex that kept spinning, the surrounding waters were as calm as spectators, completely undisturbed by the whirlpool.

Even when the boat was less than two meters away from the whirlpool, it did not feel any traction. If a sorcerer with poor eyesight passed by the whirlpool, they might not even notice the natural wonder next to them.

"Go, go quickly, the whirlpool can disappear at any time!"

"Wait."

Ashe noticed that when they entered the whirlpool area, the exploration range of the map suddenly extended two very long routes, and at the farthest ends of the two routes, there were two tips: "Wait a moment" and "No danger but you may not get teleported here randomly".

"I think we'd better wait a moment."

"Is this the effect of your detection ability?"

"This whirlpool seems to randomly lead to two other whirlpools, one of which requires waiting, the other is safe."

Since waiting last time allowed them to take advantage of the sleeping fox dragon, Sonya naturally believed the Observer's judgment.

However, after waiting for more than ten seconds, she saw the whirlpool getting smaller and smaller, and couldn't help getting anxious: "Being able to enter the whirlpool once is worth it even if you die! It's just not being able to enter the virtual world for a few days!"

Ashe glanced at her, "If I can't enter the virtual world for a few days, the probability of me gathering all the Miracle spirits of Slash Sword will be even more slim."

Sonya was speechless.

Compared to life, the increase in arcane energy was indeed negligible, but...

She looked at the shrinking whirlpool, hesitant to speak.

"Do you want to go in first yourself? Let me wait until it's safe to go in?" Ashe saw her thoughts at a glance, "It sounds feasible, but it actually won't work - did you forget? I can't open the Gate of Truth in prison, if you die, I still can't enter the virtual world. You and I are bound together, we prosper and suffer together. "

"However, I'm not sure if my judgment is correct either, after all there's a 50% chance it will lead to a safe whirlpool, and even if we're unlucky and it randomly leads to a dangerous whirlpool, it may not necessarily lead to death. But missing the whirlpool is really missing it."

"If you want to go, I don't mind."

"You really don't mind?"

"I don't mind."

"You won't secretly resent me and take revenge on me?"

"I won't."

"You won't suddenly bring this up to accuse me someday?"

"I won't."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Observer, you are so dishonest, even deceiving a college girl like me." Sonya sighed, lowered her head dejectedly and stared at the whirlpool: "If we really miss this whirlpool, I will definitely bring up this old incident every time you do something wrong in the future."

"I really don't mind."

"I don't believe it, if it were me I would resent it for the rest of my life, and still remember on my deathbed that I missed a whirlpool opportunity."

Ashe was speechless: "That's you, not me, I'm not as...petty as you."

"I only believe in myself, so I believe you are that kind of person too."

Sonya pouted.

"I'm not selfish enough to think others are selfless. Anyway, I'll remember that I made a big sacrifice to accompany you this time, you'd better write it down in your little notebook and remember to give me a share of any benefits you get in the future."

Ashe was slightly startled, and suddenly felt that he had another reason to break out of prison.

Were there really no strangers worth caring about in this world? It didn't seem so.

"Of course, in the future whenever I have a piece of meat to eat, I will definitely call you over to smell the aroma."

"You little chatterbox..."

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

Chapter 66

"Urgh..."

In the meditation chamber, Felix let out a muffled groan as he clutched his stomach and pinched his nose, with crimson blood flowing out ceaselessly and cold sweat covering his entire forehead.

His abdomen was filled with the feeling of death.

Yet it was not pain, but emptiness.

It was as if a gap had suddenly appeared between his upper and lower body. Even as he hugged his stomach, it felt like he was hugging a piece of pork, completely devoid of the sensation of touching his own body.

This was the aftereffect of death in the virtual world - severe damage to the soul, to the point of losing senses from reality.

With a faint wail, the red gemstone on Felix's necklace shattered explosively, and a spirit entity composed of radiance and a single wing dissipated in the air.

This was the artifact spirit 'Dragon Belly Scale', whose effect was to transfer all death damage suffered in the virtual world to the abdomen. It was also the secret behind the enduring prosperity of the Vlozrada family.

When a sorcerer dies in the virtual world, the lethal blow they suffer feeds back onto their soul, causing loss of soul energy.

With an incomplete soul, it becomes impossible to cross the Gate of Truth. Naturally, the sorcerer would be unable to enter the virtual world until their soul energy recovers.

Moreover, the soul is intrinsically tied to the body. No matter which part of the soul energy is lost, it would cause the sorcerer to suffer temporary 'disabilities of the soul'.

Simply put, if it was the chest region of the soul that was damaged, the sorcerer's heart would maintain a low heart rate for an extended period, rendering them unable to engage in any physical exertion.

If it was the limbs that were damaged, the sorcerer would likely lose control over their hands and feet.

And if it was the head that was damaged, the sorcerer would directly lose consciousness.

Only when the soul energy recovers would the sorcerer's bodily functions also recover to normal.

Thus, for many sorcerers, the seemingly unchallenging goal of sailing the Sea of Knowledge for thousands of miles is in fact an unreachable horizon - not every sorcerer can take time off for cultivation. Aside from worrying about the far future, they have to tend to the present trivialities of life too. Each death in the virtual world would result in massive losses for the sorcerer.

While death and soul damage are unavoidable, sorcerers still rack their brains to minimize the losses as much as possible.

For example, concentrating all death damage onto a non-critical body part each time.

The 'Dragon Belly Scale' was the Vlozrada family's secret miraculous technique, allowing family sorcerers to extract the miraculous effect and seal it into a gemstone, forming a temporary 'artifact spirit'. When a family sorcerer dies in the virtual world, the 'artifact spirit' in the gemstone would activate, transferring all death damage onto the abdomen.

Other than a sharp decline in gastrointestinal functions, forcing the sorcerer to subsist on liquid food for days, there would barely be any price to pay.

On top of that, the Vlozrada family also had another miracle called 'Dragon's Banquet', which could swiftly recover soul energy in the abdomen through eating, reducing the cooldown before re-entering the virtual world.

With these two miracles, Vlozrada family sorcerers could minimize losses from virtual world deaths, greatly enhancing exploration efficiency and increasing the frequency of Gold Wing and Saint Realm Three Wings sorcerers. This was the foundation for the family's enduring prosperity over hundreds of years.

The other duke families also had similar means - an excellent sorcerer nurturing system was practically a given for century-old noble families. Otherwise, just a single break in succession could spell the end of a once illustrious stellar noble family.

Before the virtual world, sorcerers were equal, but some sorcerers could fight for more equality.

Even so, reducing death penalties was the limit - unavoidable losses would still occur.

Felix took an inward look at his spirit and nearly fainted from shock.

The Murderous Sword spirit - gone!

When sorcerers die in the virtual world, they have a high chance of losing spirits. This is because spirits are hidden within the soul. When part of the soul energy is lost due to death, the missing portion might just contain a certain spirit, causing it to dissipate along with the energy.

The more spirits one has, the higher the chance and quantity of spirits lost!

Despite mentally preparing himself to lose spirits, Felix had not expected to lose his most important Murderous Sword spirit on his very first death!

That was the heirloom his mother left him, rumored to be one of the 'Twenty-One Mysterious Swords'!

A spirit of this level was practically impossible to obtain through purchase. Even if it could be bought, there was no way the out-of-favor noble scion Felix could afford it!

Moreover, he had yet to fully grasp the knowledge within the Murderous Sword. In other words, he could not summon the Murderous Sword by himself!

The one thing that gave Felix some comfort was that his Silver Wings were already half-formed, shortening his cultivation time by over a year.

He also did not expect to encounter the natural wonder of the Maelstrom barely days after entering the virtual world.

No sorcerer would miss out on such an opportunity, let alone the power-hungry avenger Felix. But after traversing thousands of miles through the maelstrom, what appeared before Felix was an adolescent Swordfish Dragon!

In the Virtual Lifeform Compendium, Swordfish Dragons were already considered a stronger tier. Let alone an adolescent one!

Virtual lifeforms were divided into several stages like infancy, adolescence, maturity, prime, etc. In the outer seas of the Sea of Knowledge, usually only infant forms appear. Adolescent forms only show up in the inner seas, with mature forms having a chance to appear in the core seas. As for prime forms, they would not be found within the Sea of Knowledge.

Knowing that death was certain, Felix went all out in a life-or-death struggle to kill the Swordfish Dragon first. But in the end, with too few spirits and inadequate skills, Felix suffered a grievous loss under the sharp fins of the Swordfish Dragon despite inflicting heavy injuries on it.

"Lost the Murderous Sword, half-formed the Silver Wings..."

Felix sighed. It was hard to say if it was a gain or loss.

Arcane energy was naturally of utmost importance to sorcerers, but to Felix and his current predicament, the Murderous Sword was his lifeline - without its assistance, he would not have dodged so many assassination attempts.

"But this way, I can inherit more of my mother's legacy."

Felix's expression darkened as he clenched his fists. "Just you wait, Bessel. One day, I'll make you kneel before my mother and apologize..."

Due to physical frailty, in addition to not moving at all for the entire night, her chest felt a little uncomfortable and she was unable to breathe smoothly. Anyway, there was no one else in the meditation chamber, so she loosened her breast binder and let the two big white rabbits bounce out to breathe the fresh air. She completely relaxed and rested against the wall for a good while.

After half an hour, Felix left the meditation building and stepped into the dazzling sunlight.

However, having just gone through his first death, Felix suddenly lost control of his lower body after walking for a bit. He staggered and nearly fell, quickly using his sword case to support himself.

"Oh? Young master Vlozrada, why the foul mood so early in the morning, taking it out on the ground?"

A hand reached out from behind and pressed down on Felix's shoulder, helping steady his stance.

Glancing back, Felix said calmly, "You seem to be in good spirits, reaped quite a harvest?"

Sonia walked briskly past him with her head held high and eyebrows raised. "I suppose you could say that. This afternoon at Professor Trotzam's office, you'll find out."

Uppity bitch.

While Sonia's swordsmanship talent was undoubtedly one in ten thousand, Felix could also see her character flaws - vain, insecure yet arrogant, clever but unwise... Without her talent in swordsmanship, Sonia would be no different from those vulgar female sorcerers he had met.

And now, she was at most a talented yet boorish country girl.

How very...enviable.

Others might think Felix was a genius at swordplay too, but he knew clearly that without the help of his mother's 'Emotional Resonance' spirit, he would not have been able to cultivate the Vibration Frame stance to the level of summoning spirits so quickly.

He had paid a heavy price for it too - back then, with no arcane energy, just to catalyze the 'Emotional Resonance' spirit he could only keep changing girlfriends to stimulate the spirit's resonance. As a result, he was notorious to the point of becoming an embarrassment to the Vlozradas.

But it was different now.

After traversing the maelstrom, Sonia had been left far behind and had no right to be his rival.

His goal should be the orange dancer Leone, and those monsters at Trinity College—

"Hm?"

Felix sensed a familiar flow.

He looked up and noticed many students secretly watching Sonia.

The news of Sonia 'defeating' Leone had spread through every sorcerer university in Cailleach yesterday. Without a doubt, Sonia had become the most attention-grabbing student, and she seemed to relish in the limelight too, maintaining a pretense of aloofness as she sauntered off unhurriedly.

Yet Felix felt that from such attention, Sonia seemed able to draw a kind of energy that was most familiar to him!

'Blindsight' spirit, activate!

Felix closed his eyes. In that instant, the world disappeared before him. Within the dark void, he saw wisps of blood-red mist flowing into Sonia's location!

That was killing intent!

And the passive effect of the Murderous Sword was precisely absorbing killing intent directed at its wielder!

While there were many spirits that could absorb killing intent, Felix knew not why, but he was absolutely certain Sonia had just obtained a new Murderous Sword spirit!

Could it be that the Murderous Sword she got was the one taken from me by the Swordfish Dragon?

This thought had barely surfaced when Felix rejected it - how could it be such a coincidence?

Moreover, his battle against the Swordfish Dragon took place near the maelstrom. If it really was such a coincidence, wouldn't it mean Sonia had traversed the maelstrom too? But Felix clearly saw the maelstrom shrink to the point of nearly vanishing before his death.

Sonia must have simply gotten lucky and obtained another wild Murderous Sword spirit.

Felix was so envious he felt hungry - that was another side effect of soul damage. Any fluctuation in his emotions would directly feedback onto his abdominal organs. Positive emotions sated his hunger while negative ones made him ravenous, yet he could not indulge in rich foods or risk constipation.

After calming down, Felix considered if there was a way to obtain Sonia's Murderous Sword.

But he soon shook his head.

If stealing, Sonia had Professor Trotzam backing her.

If buying, there were countless others who wanted the Murderous Sword and he lacked the capital to compete.

Yet the Murderous Sword was of utmost importance to him. While having no hope was one thing, having a chance to salvage his loss before his eyes...

Felix gritted his teeth and opened his eyes, yelling loudly at Sonia who had not gone far, "Sonia!"

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

Chapter 67

Shattered Lake Prison, Blood Moon Nation

"When hurt enough, take a pair of hands, slash away the curses of yesterday. Wait for daylight in the night, leaving behind only scars..."

Igor awoke from the velvet bed, yawning as he went to the bathroom to take off his pajamas and nightcap. He first tested the temperature with his toes before lying in the bathtub filled with warm water on timer, enjoying a comfortable morning bath.

Just to be able to bathe anytime, Igor paid the price of 1 contribution point per 3 days to live in this luxury dormitory. As such, his contribution points were quite tight, after all living here for five months would cost 50 points, equal to the total initial contribution points of a death row inmate.

However, he felt it was worth it, because bathing was not only Igor's hobby, but also seemed to be the hobby of his 'Contract' spirit.

Once while bathing, Igor fell asleep due to exhaustion. In his dim consciousness, he vaguely saw the 'Contract' spirit riding a rubber duck, playing in the bathtub.

Although the 'Contract' spirit immediately disappeared without a trace when Igor opened his eyes, as if it had never appeared, Igor was convinced of his judgment that the 'Contract' spirit really enjoyed bathing.

If this was outside, it would at most be an amusing topic of idle chat, with no practical significance.

Although spirits were undoubtedly intelligent and had their own moods and preferences, most mages rarely paid attention to the spirits' situation. After all, as long as the arcane energy output was sufficient, the spirits had to obey the mage's commands regardless of their unwillingness.

However, in Shattered Lake Prison, where no one could output arcane energy, whether the death row inmates could evoke the spirits' resonance became a very critical factor in order to cast spells!

Although Igor still could not confirm whether his near 100% success rate in evoking the 'Contract' spirit in prison had anything to do with him frequently bathing to please the 'Contract' spirit.

But better safe than sorry, the prison was no place for research. As long as Igor had surplus contribution points, he would not change this slightly 'extravagant' way of life.

After resting in the bathtub for a while, Igor got up without putting on any clothes, wiped himself dry and went to wash up directly. He tried to empty his mind, not think of anything, making himself dull and blank as he mechanically brushed his teeth in front of the mirror. He brushed very hard, with toothpaste foam splattering onto the mirror.

Soon, the toothpaste foam that splattered on the mirror flowed along the mirror in winding trails, forming words.

This meant that Igor had successfully evoked his other spirit, 'Insight'.

The 'Insight' spirit was spoils of war Igor had found in the virtual world before. It had very wide versatility, you could say before doing anything you could first evoke the 'Insight' spirit to check the situation, and then the surroundings would change, giving you some useful reminders.

After being imprisoned, Igor had tried many methods before finding the right way to evoke the 'Insight' spirit: Empty the mind as much as possible when brushing teeth, but not completely empty, still maintaining a little thought like 'I want advice', in order to evoke the spirit's resonance.

The balance was difficult to grasp, and Igor didn't succeed every day either. He was lucky today.

But Igor only treated this process as a little diversion in prison life, because most of the suggestions given by 'Insight' were trivial things like "Don't eat oily food for lunch", "Remember to bring tissue", "Don't wear underwear".

These suggestions were indeed useful, but only a little bit useful.

Even if Igor ignored them, there would be no real harm.

But this was also normal, after all Igor had never studied prophecy, being able to utilize the 'Insight' spirit to this extent was already not bad.

If someday the 'Insight' spirit gave a very stern warning, Igor would be scared instead - because that would mean Igor had arrived at an extremely important fateful fork in the road, with the unknown veil of intertwining destinies right before his eyes, to the point that even the 'Insight' spirit reacted!

Like, right now!

In Igor's gradually horrified eyes, the toothpaste foam left a ghastly white warning on the mirror:

"Do not respond! Do not respond!"

This was the first time Igor had seen punctuation marks in the prompts, and even exclamation marks!

He quickly calmed down and considered whether he should follow the insight's guidance.

Because the insight's guidance was not always correct.

Or rather, the concepts of "right and wrong, pros and cons" were themselves cultural concepts of human society, very private and obscure. The same thing could be viewed differently by different regions, races, and even individuals, for example "sleeping in". Some people felt it was bad, while others enjoyed it very much.

For such a small matter as "sleeping in", it was fine, but even for big matters like "life and death", many people had differing views. Some thought dying young led to reincarnation sooner, some felt a miserable life was better than a good death, some people wanted to die at times and to live at other times.

When humans themselves could not distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, how could spirits make the distinction?

Therefore, the guidance given by 'Insight' was often extremely short-sighted. It used the mage's current state as the benchmark - any accidental change to the mage's current state was judged as harmful.

For example, on the day 'Insight' suggested "Don't wear underwear", a guard came to Igor, wanting to consult him on how to pursue girls, since Igor was handsome and charming, and had some succubus bloodline - at a glance he was a womanizer.

That guard had delicate features, and also long hair, giving off an indescribably androgynous and bewitching aura. Although Igor's sexual orientation was still normal, his succubus bloodline not only made him omnivorous but also easily aroused, and he ended up scaring the guard away by getting excited, missing the opportunity to establish good relations.

Now 'Insight' was warning him "Do not respond" - could this make him miss another chance to establish close ties with the guards?

But Igor soon made up his mind - better safe than sorry!

After all, he was living quite comfortably now. Other than not having the freedom to curse, he was not really badly off, eating well, sleeping well, regular routine, recreational facilities complete. [search the novelFire.net website](http://novelFire.net) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Moreover, he had been imprisoned for over a year now.

Prison was a strange place. At first, you detested it; later, you got used to it; in the end, you couldn't leave it.

Igor had already grown accustomed to this kind of life, and had no motivation to change reality.

Funnily enough, when watching the live Blood Moon Tribunal last night, Igor felt a surge of disgust when the death row inmates cursed. That was not disdain for vulgarities, but rather a subconscious feeling that "foul language is wrong".

Igor the "Fraud" who specialized in exploiting legal loopholes, was gradually becoming a supporter of the law. When you get used to shackles, you start to recognize and even glorify the meaning of shackles - this was the significance of Shattered Lake Prison, this was the might of the chip modifications.

Leaving his room, Igor walked briskly to the cafeteria, determined to not utter a word outside, ignoring anyone who looked for him. He would finish breakfast then go back to his room.

He also considered directly spending contribution points to order meals and hiding in his room the whole day. But because he had lost to Ashe once before, his contribution points were a little tight, unnecessary spending like meals should still be conserved as much as possible.

Igor didn't believe he couldn't keep quiet during a meal!

Igor found a corner to sit with his tray, but the next second someone sat opposite him.

"Good morning my friend Igor! Wow, your lobster balls look great, may I have one?"

The corner of Igor's mouth twitched, he silently watched Ashe use the relatively rare chopsticks to pick up a lobster ball.

However, Ashe didn't seem very skilled either, unable to pick it up, the lobster ball flew out of the plate, onto the table.

Ashe blinked, tried again, still unable to grab it, flying out again.

On the third try, he finally accurately picked up the lobster ball, then put it back into Igor's plate before picking up another clean lobster ball to eat.

"You don't mind right?"

The corner of Igor's mouth spasmed, but he still didn't speak, only ate faster.

While eating, Ashe made a very exaggerated gesture and knocked over his cup, spilling milk all over the table, dripping onto his clothes.

"Ah sorry sorry, let me wipe you, okay?"

Ashe used napkins to wipe Igor's clothes. Igor silently pushed his hand away and directly went into the cafeteria's restroom.

After washing the milk stains off his clothes, Igor thought since he was already here, he might as well pee.

But Ashe appeared next to him again: "What a coincidence Igor, you also came to pee huh."

Igor stayed silent, speeding up his stream.

"Ah, didn't wipe my mouth just now. Igor could you hold it for me while I grab some tissue?"

Igor almost couldn't hold it in, but he recalled the warning on the mirror and clenched his teeth, forcibly swallowing back the words in his throat.

"No towel after washing hands, can I wipe with your clothes?"

"You finished breakfast already? Let's go to the deathmatch society, could you introduce me to the strong guys there?"

"Did you watch last night's Blood Moon Tribunal? I have some questions I want to consult you about. Of course, in exchange, you can also ask me questions."

"Don't rush off so quickly, wait for me okay?"

Igor ignored Ashe as if he was farting all the way, never responding to Ashe's requests, walking swiftly back to his room.

Seeing Igor's hurried back, Ashe was naturally very puzzled.

He had revealed so many flaws, how could Igor still not take the bait?

Igor Bukin, who had the notorious titles "Fraud" and "Beast Tamer", was a wicked man whose nature was to take advantage of the kind and bully the weak. How could he be so well-behaved today like a kitten who had yet to be weaned?

No, he had to use his trump card!

Ding!

Hearing the sound of a gold coin falling to the ground, Igor subconsciously looked over due to professional instincts. His ears catching a sound like heavenly music: "Could you help pick up the coin for me?"

"No problem." Igor instantly shook out from his sleeve a copper coin painted gold that could pass off as a gold coin. Only after he had switched the coins did he react that he had spoken.

But Igor was not flustered either. Looking at Ashe he said: "Although I don't know why you insist on making requests of me, but now as you wished - the Contract spirit has taken effect. I fulfilled your request, so you must also fulfill my demand."

In Shattered Lake Prison, no one dared to agree to Igor's requests, and no one dared make requests of Igor - because under the influence of the Contract spirit, no matter who established a "transaction" relationship with Igor, Igor could force them to uphold their promise through the contract, while he himself did not need to be responsible.

And the best contract was the other party making a request of Igor, but not stating what "compensation" they would provide. This was like giving Igor a blank check, for Igor to fill in whatever demand!

Therefore, Igor had exercised tremendous self-control earlier to suppress his urge to respond to Ashe, because as long as he agreed to Ashe's request, he could make an unconditionally demand of Ashe - even specifying that Ashe lose the next deathmatch to him.

Igor was already aware that Ashe was deliberately doing this, but he was not afraid at all.

Even if Ashe really had some plot, now Igor had one chance to make a wish of Ashe, what did he have to fear?

To intimidate Ashe, Igor specially summoned out his Contract spirit.

The Contract spirit was a devil with wings holding chains. Its illusory chains kept extending until wrapped around Ashe's neck, as if ready to strangle Ashe's throat at any time.

"I advise you to be honest, Ashe Heath." Igor narrowed his eyes: "I can now make an unconditional wish of you, and you must fulfill it."

"Any wish at all?"

"Of course, even asking you to do a handstand while shitting." Igor arrogantly said: "Ashe, you're already my 'good friend' to order around as I please."

"That's really great then."

Ashe stretched out his hand, and a single-wing spirit appeared in his palm.

The spirit looked like a single-wing scale. When it appeared, part of the chains extended by the Contract spirit suddenly fell onto the left side of the scale. To keep the scale balanced, identical chains also appeared on the scale's right side, extending all the way to Igor's neck!

The Contract spirit's chains bound Ashe, while the scale spirit's chains bound Igor!

"Balance exists in all things."

Looking at Igor's increasingly ugly distorted face, Ashe laughed and said: "Igor, helping each other is what 'good friends' do, right?"

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

Chapter 68

This new spirit was naturally the spoils from last night's virtual world exploration.

It turned out that Ashe and the Swordswoman's wait was worth it.

Just before the whirlpool was about to disappear, Ashe finally saw the map prompt change from "Wait" to "Go Now!", so he hurriedly pulled the Swordswoman and jumped into the whirlpool.

After traveling thousands of miles across the sea, what appeared before Ashe and the Swordswoman was an injured Slash Fish Dragon.

Dealing with such a knowledge-based lifeform, Ashe and the Swordswoman naturally would not speak of any chivalry, and took advantage of its weakened state to burst out a whopping five spirits, though unfortunately no experience orbs, but these five spirits all had their uses, and could be called a great harvest.

The reason why Ashe was desperately trying to establish a "trade" relationship with Igor was because the newly obtained "Scales" spirit had given him ample confidence.

"Scales"

"Single-Wing Spirit"

"Restriction: The sorcerer must master basic mathematical knowledge such as trigonometry, sequences, probability theory, etc."

"Basic Effect: Reflect any effect at a certain ratio back to the caster."

"Passive Effect: Greatly enhances the sorcerer's sense of balance and ability to adjust center of gravity."

"Balance exists among all things."

At first Ashe was going to use the Scales spirit as a damage reflector, and didn't think much of it, but after he left the virtual world and returned to reality, he suddenly realized he could easily invoke the Scales spirit's resonance.

Perhaps it was because he had mastered all the basic mathematical knowledge required by the Scales spirit. After all, those were the test topics in math exams. Although after four years of college degeneration he could no longer do the questions, he could still understand the basic concepts.

This was the first time Ashe had seen a spirit that required knowledge, according to the Swordswoman, it seemed that only spirits associated with "fate", "prophecy", and "truth" would have knowledge requirements. These spirits were rarely useful for combat or production, but they often played unexpected roles, and prophecy-type sorcerers also had high social status.

Being able to invoke the Scales spirit's resonance at any time meant that in addition to the virtual world, Ashe could also take advantage of the Scales spirit for profit in Shattered Lake Prison, this "civilized society".

However, the Scales spirit belonged to the kind of "if you don't move, I don't move" holy mother police, it would only take action when others used spirits for spells. In a prison where no one could use spirits at all, the Scales spirit actually didn't have many objects to target.

Except for this "good friend" Ashe had just met.

"Not bad, Ashe." Igor tried his best to sound nonchalant and said, "Since you have my wish, and I have your wish, then we have reached a balance of wishes at this time. From now on I will live my life, you live yours, we coexist peacefully without encroaching on each other, and jointly build a harmonious prison. How about it?"

"No, not good at all." Ashe smiled slightly, "I'm going to use up my wish right now."

"Think it over!" Igor spoke ominously, "Once you use up your wish, you will have no means left to threaten me! By then I can make you do whatever I want, let alone make you do a handstand and shit then roll on the ground, even make you intentionally lose a deathmatch will be no problem!"

"Of course I've thought it through." Ashe took a step forward, closer to Igor.

Igor backed away with a vague sense of unease, advising as he retreated, "Ashe, really, there's no need to take it this far. Or don't use the wish, just discuss it with me, I'm your good friend, if I can help you, I definitely will help..."

"I don't want 'if', I need you to 'wholeheartedly' fulfill my wish."

"I'm just an ordinary fraudster, my abilities are limited. Ashe, you think too highly of me. How about this, I'll try to establish a contract with another death row inmate, whatever you need, I'll have him satisfy you, okay? Anything is fine, and no limit on frequency!"

"No, it has to be you."

Igor's back was already against the wall, nowhere to retreat. Ashe leaned one hand against the wall, looking at him and said, "Igor, my wish is—"

"I'm not listening, I'm not listening!"

Igor immediately covered his ears and ran away, but since he couldn't use spirits either, and their physical abilities were comparable, Ashe caught up to him and grabbed his arm, shouting loudly:

"Igor, I want you to help me escape from prison!"

The patrolling guard glanced at the two of them, shook his head, and left whistling.

Remarks like "I'm going to be the prison escape king" had been heard hundreds of times by the guards, of course they wouldn't take it to heart.

In his heart, he even felt a little sympathy for these death row inmates. After all, having pipe dreams right after breakfast really looked pitiful.

But the parties involved didn't think these were just empty ramblings.

Igor looked at Ashe, his expression as ugly as if he had been punched, his back was soaked in cold sweat without realizing it.

He knew it! He knew it!

What other wishes could a man who had just survived the Blood Moon Tribunal have? Other than the usual in-and-out business, it could only be escape, right?

When Ashe held his wish in hand, Igor knew he was finished this time. It seemed that only good swimmers drown, only lustful ones die in bed, and even he, a fraudster who had harvested countless IQ taxes, would have a day of being duped.

As for using his own wish to resist Ashe's, it was impossible - because that would violate the "help Ashe" restriction, Igor simply couldn't do it!

The wish Ashe made prevented Igor from doing anything to "stop Ashe from escaping"!

He sighed, "Come with me."

Igor took Ashe to his room. Shattered Lake Prison did not prohibit inmates from visiting each other, they could even sleep and chat together if they wanted - after all, other than sleeping, they couldn't do anything anyway, the chip restrictions included "intimacy".

Only the lovers' rooms could temporarily unlock the "intimacy" restriction, only the Deathmatch Society could temporarily unlock the "combat" restriction, and even only the toilet could unlock the "excretion" restriction - yes, the death row inmates didn't even have the freedom to take a public shit.

Or rather, death row inmates actually had the same freedoms as normal people, it was just that before doing certain things, you had to report and apply to the prison, and once the prison allowed it, then you could do it.

The difference between death row inmates and free men was perhaps the difference between "nothing is permissible unless permitted by law" and "everything not prohibited is permitted".

"Your room is quite big."

Ashe plopped down on the velvet bed, leaned back and sank into the bed. Igor, who had just moved the chair aside, couldn't help but twitch his mouth when he saw this scene.

Ashe glanced at him and waved his hand, "Don't be so restrained, sit anywhere, I'm not a stickler for etiquette, no need to pour me water."

What a pity, I was just about to scoop some water from the toilet to quench your thirst, and if I hadn't just peed I might even have added some ingredients... With a stomach full of resentment, Igor sat in the chair, fingers interlaced, staring at Ashe.

"You really want to escape?"

"What kind of question is that, who here doesn't want to escape?"

"Many don't." Igor said lightly, "For example, 'Diamond' Taig doesn't want to escape. He offended too many people outside, it would be even more dangerous to go out. Besides, apart from being thugs and bodyguards, masochist mages don't have other ways to make a living. As long as he's not selected for the Blood Moon Tribunal, Taig's days here are actually more comfortable than outside."

"There are quite a few people like Taig. Or rather, basically everyone who has lived here for a few years has found a new way to survive, and has no longing for the outside. For them, the outside is just a slightly bigger prison."

Igor looked at Ashe, secretly activating the "Resonance" spirit, and said in a tempting voice, "Since you survived the first Blood Moon Tribunal, if nothing unexpected happens, you will participate in the Blood Moon Tribunal according to contribution rank just like us in the future. As long as your contribution is high enough, you won't be selected. "

"Your strength is pretty good, victory probability in deathmatches is high. In other words, you also have the ability to live comfortably here." He spread his hands, "If you wish, you can also live in such a big room, eat whatever you want the cafeteria to make, read books, watch movies, drink alcohol, dance, even take moon sugar if you want. If you have any requests, you can give suggestions to the prison, the new skating rink was built because some inmates liked skating."

"In the eyes of people outside, this place may be the ideal world - no crime, no vulgarity, no competition, not even work, just a regulated, spirited life every day."

"Life here is no worse than outside."

Seeing that Ashe seemed somewhat moved, Igor was secretly excited and couldn't help applauding his own wit.

Ashe's wish was not without loopholes. The premise of "help Ashe escape" was that Ashe wanted to escape. Therefore, as long as Igor persuaded Ashe to give up the idea, he naturally wouldn't have to fulfill the wish.

But this was also Igor's true thoughts.

Escape was a thorny dead-end road, fleeing was not a momentary victory, but a lifelong torment. Let alone whether they could escape, even if they did, what awaited them was an even more cruel challenge - like street rats, living incognito in the sewers, breathing the freedom-scented murky air.

Yet a life of ignoble survival was happiness that they could easily obtain.

A death row inmate who survived the Blood Moon Tribunal knew how to choose.

"You make a lot of sense."

Ashe sat up and nodded at Igor's expectant gaze, "Indeed, escape is a dangerous and unknown thorny path, while life here, although not without risks, is much more comfortable overall. If I stay here for a long time, I guess I'll become like you, knowing how to enjoy prison life, right."

Igor was overjoyed, "Yes, yes, it's good that you understand, so—"

"That's why I must escape, and quickly, the sooner the better!"

Ashe looked at Igor and shook his head gently, "I don't want to become like you, edges smoothed, courage extinguished, spine broken."

"I don't want to live like a...dog!"

Igor's expression froze instantly.

After a moment of silence, Igor slowly stood up.

Slap!

He kicked the chair over and turned to punch the wall, but just before impact, his body suddenly stiffened, energy output prohibited by the chip.

"Interesting, so calling myself a dog isn't considered profanity? This should be a loophole in the chip, hahaha..."

"Fine! Escape, escape is good!"

Igor swung his hand in disgust, "But the premise of escape is that we first have to figure out how to kill...have the neck chip removed! As long as the neck chip is still there, not to mention escaping, even where you want to take a shit depends on the prison's mood! Haha, I can't do anything about this, do you have a way, my dear cult leader, Ashe Heath?"

"I have a way to deal with the chip."

"I knew you didn't have...what? What did you say?"

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

Chapter 69

"Cut my miracle, cut my miracle..."

Igor paced back and forth in the room, unconsciously biting his nails, and couldn't help asking: "Are you sure you can use the Miracle Slash without arcane energy output?"

"I'm not sure," Ashe said calmly. "And I definitely can't do it now. I'm still missing a key spirit to form the Miracle Slash."

"Then how did you—"

"I told you, I have secret ways of obtaining spirits. I don't know when I'll find that key spirit, but it's just a matter of time."

Igor opened his mouth but then closed it again.

Since Ashe didn't elaborate, Igor naturally couldn't guess what that so-called "secret channel" was. But he didn't doubt the authenticity of this matter much.

Because of the Balance spirit.

If Ashe had the Balance spirit a few days ago, he wouldn't have been unilaterally bound by Igor's contract spirit back then.

Although it was also possible that Ashe was just pretending to be weak to catch Igor off guard, Igor was the one who provoked him first that time. How could Ashe have set a trap targeting Igor specifically?

Compared to believing in this conspiracy theory that only existed in probability, Igor was more willing to believe in Ashe's potential.

It wasn't because Igor was naive, optimistic and cute, but because Ashe had already demonstrated miracle after miracle with his own hands.

In the fight with Igor, he went from a complete martial arts novice to a skilled fighter in just minutes;

In the deathmatch with Valcas, he went from not even being able to hold a sword properly to a master swordsman in minutes;

During the Blood Moon Tribunal, he was somehow immune to the searing pain of the Purgatorial Flame, even though he was the death row inmate with the deepest sins.

Plus the sudden appearance of the Balance spirit, Igor felt he had no reason to doubt Ashe, even if the "secret channel" Ashe mentioned sounded preposterous under the prison's surveillance. In this world of mages, miracles were the most common inevitability.

Moreover, Ashe Heath was the leader of the Four Pillars heretical cult...

Igor's expression was constantly changing. He gritted his teeth and stamped his feet, "Screw it!"

"But we can't escape with just the two of us. I have to recruit a few more people."

"Of course," Ashe smiled. "The reason I came to you first was because you must know the profiles of other death row inmates. After all, I'm not familiar with this place and need a cunning 'local' to help assemble the team."

"Thank you for the compliment. As a con artist, information is my weapon." Igor bowed elegantly.

"So who should we look for?"

"I already have a preliminary plan. Assuming you can remove the chip limit with the Miracle Slash, we need three types of people: a vanguard focused on assault, a destroyer focused on sustained damage, and a support focused on mobility and healing."

"That sounds like you need professionals with very specific skills. Can we find people like that?"

"Are you kidding me?" Igor laughed.

"Villains, murderers, black market smugglers, aren't these three types of people everywhere in Shattered Lake Prison?"

Cailleach, Saint Empire.

Ingritt curiously observed the view of the villa district outside the car window, Adele excitedly touched the decorative leather inside the car, and Iris hurriedly pressed Adele's hand down in embarrassment, making small talk: "Thanks for inviting us to the tea party, Felix."

"Don't thank me," Felix frowned as he drove. "It was Sonya who strongly requested to bring along her roommates, so I had to invite you..."

His words were impolite, showing that Felix was in a very bad mood now, unable to even maintain basic noble etiquette. Adele didn't even dare touch things randomly anymore.

Iris had no interest in continuing to rub salt in the wound. She secretly observed Sonya in the passenger seat, wondering what their relationship was.

At noon today, Sonya suddenly came to them saying that Felix was inviting them to a tea party at his villa.

Tea parties were very common student activities. The usual form was a few students eating snacks and drinking black tea at a scenic spot, while gossiping and spreading rumors. Many campus rumors originated from tea parties.

Iris had participated in quite a few tea parties herself, and had even specifically held them to badmouth Sonya — a tea party would be worthless without slander.

So she found it very strange that Sonya wanted to have a tea party with her. From the nature of tea parties, she knew they were intimate circles for gossiping and rumor-mongering. Iris didn't think her relationship with Sonya had reached the intimate level where they could badmouth people behind their backs together.

Even if Sonya wanted to bring friends to a tea party, she and Ingritt had been so close these days that inviting just her would be enough. Why drag Iris and Adele along?

Plus, this was Felix's tea party. Recalling the despicable rumors about this playboy, Iris subconsciously thought badly of Sonya — keywords like 'noble son', 'basement', 'imprisoning girls', 'abuse', 'sex slaves' flooded her mind.

However, before Iris could refuse, Sonya suggested they let their parents know they were attending Felix's tea party. If anything unexpected happened, it must be the misdeeds of the second son of Duke Vlozrada...

Such thoughtful concern made Iris somewhat confused. On the other hand, Ingritt saw some clues and asked Sonya if she needed them as witnesses. Sonya didn't say it outright, but promised there would definitely be benefits if they came to the tea party.

Benefits related to mages.

But if Felix had ulterior motives, it would spell trouble for them. That was why Sonya told them to inform their parents of their whereabouts.

The more Iris listened, the more it sounded like bait used to lure ignorant young girls. If it were anyone else, Iris would have refused for sure. But since it was Felix and Sonya, and they had reminded them to notify their parents, plus Iris still hoped to buy the Virtual World Telescope spirit from Sonya, she couldn't afford to offend Sonya too much.

Most importantly, Ingritt had agreed.

In her words: "In the world of mages, adventure means progress, caution means retreat. If I don't even dare take this little risk, I might as well go home and get married."

Perhaps it was a young girl's longing for adventure, or perhaps the hints of arranged marriage from her parents' recent visit home, or simply not wanting to chicken out in front of the person she hated most. In the end, Iris agreed to the tea party invitation.

As Iris's follower, Adele didn't think much before agreeing to come along too.

However, after getting in the car, Iris's raised guard gradually lowered. Not only because many students saw them get into Felix's silver car, but also because the car was

heading towards Cailleach's villa district. There were surveillance Eyes all along the way, and it was impossible for anyone to commit crimes in the core area of Cailleach.

The silver car drove into a luxurious villa. Adele looked around and asked, "Where are the servants?"

"There are no servants," Felix said lightly. "Only when I'm away will housekeeping staff be hired to maintain the villa. Otherwise, no one else is here."

Adele foolishly asked again: "No servants? Then how do we have the tea party? Are we going to brew tea and make snacks ourselves?"

Iris showed an awkward expression and pulled her little follower aside to explain.

Felix walked ahead, leading them into the villa's great hall, then under everyone's contemptuous gaze, summoned a scantily clad single-winged beauty spirit.

As if triggering some mechanism, the fireplace suddenly opened, revealing a spiraling underground passage leading down.

Sonya complained: "Do you have to make it so creepy and scary? Do you usually have other hobbies too, like kidnapping girls, murdering them, dissecting corpses, skinning them?"

"Secrets are always associated with fear, darkness, and murder — not because secrets are inherently so, but because secrets are too weak and need to posture threateningly to protect themselves," Felix said impatiently. "Or do you want me to change the location to the school cafeteria at midnight?"

Sonya muttered something, then followed Felix into the spiral passage, with Ingritt close behind, wooden sword taken out of her sword bag. Iris and Adele looked at each other, hugged each other tightly, and nervously followed at the end.

Iris was starting to regret this a little.

Not that she was afraid of being harmed, she even believed she would benefit. But every gift came with a price — in exchange, she sensed that she would be tied to Sonya and Felix, becoming a community of shared interests and stakes.

She suddenly recalled what her merchant father once told her:

"Interests are the most stable relationships, secrets are the strongest constraints, accomplices are the most genuine friends."

After walking for about thirty seconds, they arrived at an underground training room.

Shockingly, instead of civilian gas lamps, the lighting system here was the artifact 'Daystar', illuminating the vast underground hall as bright as daylight. To think that even the training halls at Swordflower College only used one 'Daystar' for night lighting — the extravagance was evident from such details.

Upon arrival, Felix seemed to have shed burdens and masks. He uncorked a bottle of wine from the corner fridge and blew into it directly, his unhappy face saying: "I've fulfilled my promise and satisfied your request. Handle the rest yourself."

Ingritt stood at the stair entrance, holding back the two behind her, and asked: "Sonya, you can explain now, right?"

"No problem," Sonya smiled. "To put it simply —"

"Felix has a treasure and wants to split it fifty-fifty with me. But encountering something so good, how could I forget my dear roommates? So I brought you here to share this treasure!"

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

Chapter 70

Felix's treasure?

Meeting good fortune yet remembering to inform roommates?

My god, we have a saint in our dorm!

Ingritt laughed and said: "Are you afraid Felix has ulterior motives for you, so you decided to share the risk with us, even reminding us to report whereabouts to parents, just to deter Felix through implicating us?"

Sonya shrugged without denying: "There's also a bit of consideration along that line of thought. But the treasure is real..."

Looking at the chattering Sonya, Felix secretly sighed, suddenly doubting whether his decision this time was too much.

When leaving the meditation building in the morning, Felix called out to Sonya, saying he had a huge good news to share with her.

But what kind of person is Sonya? She is a shrewd girl who made her own living in the extravagant city of Cailleach alone. Having seen all kinds of sinister humanity, how could she believe this empty promise?

Swindlers all know to send small gifts first before scamming people. You should at least send me some expensive gifts first to lower my alertness!

Sugar-coated cannonballs, sugar-coated cannonballs. Your cannonballs don't even have sugar-coating, looking down on who!

Felix tried hard to persuade Sonya, but under Sonya's constant threat of "forget it, I won't participate", he could only reveal his bottom line and gave up control.

The so-called treasure is actually the legacy left by Felix's mother. But this legacy was divided by his mother into several parts, each with its own requirements. If the requirements are not met, the legacy can never be obtained.

One part of the legacy requires the person to possess the spirit sword "Murderous Intention" as well as having more than half a wing of arcane energy.

Although Felix has half-wing arcane energy, he lost the "Murderous Intention", which makes the treasure that should have been easily obtained suddenly become as difficult as ascending to heaven.

At this time, Sonya's "Murderous Intention" came into his sight.

But Felix also knew Sonya would not give up the precious "Secret Sword Twenty-One", so he proposed to cooperate with Sonya.

At first he proposed a price that he thought was very reasonable: a fake marriage. Not that he wanted to take advantage of Sonya, but because after investigating Sonya's history, he believed this was the opportunity Sonya wanted.

According to the Noble Crest Act, any relationship recognized by the Noble Council is legally equivalent to marriage. Felix knew that what Sonya wanted most was the noble status that would allow her to live respectably in Cailleach, but the path to ennoblement was rocky and difficult. In contrast, marrying a noble was a shortcut.

As long as she marries Felix, Sonya will directly get the Vlozrada family crest, not only getting monthly allowance from the family fund, but also enjoying the family's sorcerer training system. Miracles like 'Dragon Belly Scales' and 'Dragon Dinner Party' will also open up to her.

Most importantly, she can directly use the Vlozrada family crest to bypass Cailleach's residency restrictions and enjoy noble privileges without restriction on purchasing property and choosing occupations.

She could even change her mother's residency registration from agricultural town resident to Cailleach resident.

Felix judged others by himself. He knew Sonya must cherish her mother very much, who was widowed early and raised Sonya alone. If possible, Sonya would definitely want her mother to enjoy blessings early.

However, even with Sonya's outstanding talents, it would take at least a year and a half for her to unfold the Silver Wings, at least four years to unfold the Golden Wings. If she wants to enter the Three Wings Sanctum in ten years, she would absolutely need great fortune and opportunities.

But more likely, she won't be able to enter the Three Wings Sanctum in twenty years.

In recent years, the number of nobilitations has become less and less. It's almost impossible to be nobilitated now without reaching Sanctum. Without the noble crest, no matter how outstanding Sonya is, she can only enjoy this success alone in Cailleach, without the qualifications to relocate her mother's residency. Her mother will still be restricted to staying in Cailleach for only thirty days a year.

Commoners must abide by the commoners' code, only nobles have the qualifications to soar.

Felix thought Sonya would readily accept, because accepting is equal to sparing twenty years of struggle.

After all, marriage can be divorced. Although she would lose the Vlozrada crest then, by that time Sonya must have already made a fortune. She would have also relocated her mother's residency to Cailleach, so divorce wouldn't affect any of her interests or even reputation - noble divorces and extramarital affairs are common occurrences that everyone is used to and won't care about.

But even after Felix explained the pros and cons, Sonya still rejected the proposal.

He couldn't understand why the smart and vulgar Sonya would reject such a mutually beneficial proposal.

Interests, status, fame, weren't these what she wanted?

Why did she reject?

Could she really be so confident that she can obtain everything by her own ability in just a few years?

Or did she look down on me, Felix, and wasn't interested in taking so-called shortcuts?

But since Plan A failed, Felix could only propose Plan B: split the treasure evenly.

Although the treasure was left to him by his mother, in principle it shouldn't be shared with anyone. It was also not entirely impossible for him to regain the "Murderous Sword" in the future. Felix could have kept the treasure for the future.

But Felix also knew everything in the world has an expiration date.

Power also expires.

The reason his mother left the legacy with restrictions was precisely to provide targeted help to Felix.

Any treasure that Felix could just open now would provide huge help to his current self. It wouldn't give Felix power beyond his control.

For example, Felix at one wing couldn't obtain a two-wing spirit from the legacy. Because for him, it would only be a pure burden and drag.

And this treasure that requires him to have half-wing arcane energy to open must be very suitable for his current situation.

If Felix advanced to Golden Two Wings and opened this treasure then, he wouldn't need this bit of help by that time. It wouldn't even count as icing on the cake. But now, even if he could only get half, it would still be a godsend.

Years of assassination attempts have made Felix realistic and rational.

He wasn't a squirrel who hides away all his food. With his constant sense of crisis, he believed in utilitarianism - maximizing benefits was the only principle he followed, even if it meant sharing his mother's legacy.

Sonya agreed, but didn't completely agree.

She proposed a condition that Felix felt was incomprehensible: she wanted to bring friends to participate in this operation, and she would reward her friends from the treasures she obtained.

At first Felix also thought he had met a principled saint who wouldn't give in to power and wealth. But on second thought he understood Sonya's concern - she was afraid he would kill her for the treasure!

If not for Professor Trotzam's support, Sonya was basically a foreign college student without any background. Even with Trotzam as her backing, cooperating with local nobles like Felix was no different from dealing with tigers for their skins. She could only spread the risk by bringing her roommates, with Ingritt being children of minor noble

families from out of town, Iris being daughter of local businessmen, and Adel's father a government official of Cailleach... The key was Iris and Adel. The two of them must have alarm devices that could send location signals to the Security Bureau when encountering danger!

Plus they all reported whereabouts to their families. Felix had to be careful to escort these young ladies back to school, otherwise the Noble Council would come after him first if anything happened.

Felix greatly admired Sonya's prudence, but of course he didn't want more people to know his secrets. He tried to persuade her with benefits, even willing to change the profit split from fifty-fifty to forty-six. He could be considered quite humble.

But Sonya insisted, "If you don't agree, I don't want the treasure." She firmly grasped Felix's bottom line.

The winner of a negotiation is always the one who cares the least.

Felix knew how much the treasure could improve him. In the end, he still conceded.

After Sonya explained the situation, her roommates all looked at Felix warily, huddling behind Sonya like chicks, making Felix want to laugh: "If you're still worried you can leave now. Just don't talk about this outside."

"No, I want to stay and protect Sonya!" Iris righteously stated, though her eyes showed eagerness. Adel also looked like she was here just to watch the spectacle without fear of trouble.

Ingritt was even more direct: "I'm just very curious what kind of treasure needs spirits to open."

Treasure that even the Vlozrada second young master coveted, how could these apprentice mages not be curious? In the end, they were teenagers. How could they not yearn for this treasure straight out of a novel?

Felix sighed and took out five blank membrane contracts, "Then let's sign the contracts first."

Sonya and the others secretly exclaimed at the luxury - membrane contracts were common spirit tool devices. The principle was to temporarily store the miracle 'Oath of the Virtual World' onto paper. Signers of the contract would be restricted by the virtual world, sleeping endlessly for light violations, and souls vanishing for heavy violations.

Membrane contracts weren't cheap, market price equaling a one-wing spirit. Not used for unimportant deals. That Felix could take out five at once not only showed his wealth,

but also indicated the treasure's extraordinary value. Otherwise he wouldn't have invested so much.

Using membrane contracts was simple. Users peel off the membrane then directly copy the template. Messy handwriting or corrections didn't matter. As long as the five signed copies of the contract could be stacked together, meaning the contents were the same, the oath takes effect.

The pre-attached membrane, separate copying, and overlap detection were all designed to reduce the chances of mages tampering with the contract. In fact, membrane contracts have proven to be trustworthy. Like how Sonya's academic loan was a membrane contract.

The template was simple: not leaking anything that happens in this basement, not keeping any records in any form, not exposing anything about the treasure, concealing the source of anything obtained, and not implicating Felix himself.

At the same time, Felix and Sonya will split the harvest from the basement evenly, then Sonya will further distribute the treasure with Ingritt, Iris, and Adel.

Essentially a non-disclosure and profit-sharing contract.

While copying, Adel quietly asked: "Sonya, why did you reject the fake marriage proposal? If it were me, I would definitely choose the fake marriage rather than the treasure... That's the Vlozrada crest..."

Iris also looked at Sonya curiously.

Sonya's expression was a bit awkward. She hesitated for a long time before squeezing out: "Humiliating!"

What's humiliating?

Marrying Felix for pretend humiliating?

Or taking this shortcut into the noble class humiliating?

If it were Ingritt saying this it would make sense, but you're Sonya Therave!

Iris and Adel both couldn't understand. After all, Sonya didn't seem like someone who values face to them. More importantly, they didn't feel like Sonya cared about dignity! Losing money hurts more than losing face!

They couldn't understand, Felix couldn't understand, only Ingritt vaguely guessed something.

Not because she was particularly close with Sonya, but simply because they both came from small towns.

Unlike the open-minded metropolis of Cailleach, small towns have very conservative views. Although to urbanites they only seem backwards and uncultured, to rural folk some things simply cannot be treated lightly.

For example, marriage.

Perhaps because Sonya integrated into the city so quickly, others felt she was a very modern and trendy college student. But Ingritt knew Sonya still harbored the unique innocence and fantasies of rural folk at heart - believing effort will lead to success, believing suffering will bring progress, believing... marriage is sacred, love is pure, and cannot be tainted one bit.

She may see marriage as a pathway for advancement, but she hasn't discarded her own integrity for it. Otherwise there are plenty of very rich and oily noble heirs around. She just wants to find the most suitable marriage partner within acceptable boundaries, then steadfastly tend the marriage.

Not everything can be used for transaction. People in the city just don't understand such things.

Of course, in addition to this, Ingritt felt Sonya was also being prideful - taking shortcuts may be easy, but if you can succeed by your own effort, why let your honor be smeared?

Sonya felt uneasy being seen through by Ingritt. "What are you staring at me for, do I have words on my face?"

"Hehe, you're shy aren't you?"

"You're sick."

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

Chapter 71

Cailleach City, in the basement of a luxurious villa.

As the five overlapping contracts dissipated into thin air, the five people faintly felt their souls grow a little heavier.

"The contract is signed, so where's the treasure?" Adele looked around curiously: "I get it, it must be hidden in these tables and chairs. We have to peel off the outer wood to get to it, right?"

It was understandable why Adele would think this way. The basement was filled with nothing but tables and chairs, with no obvious place to hide anything.

"The treasure isn't here." Felix said.

"Not here? Then why did we come?"

Adele was utterly confused, but the others seemed to have expected this. Iris pinched Adele's cheeks in exasperation: "Pay more attention in class! We're mages, not ordinary people. If we want to hide something, how could we do it like normal people and leave it in the real world?"

"If not in the real world, then where... oh, the virtual world!" Adele had a sudden realization, "No wonder we need spirits to open the treasure!"

Compared to the unpredictable real world filled with upheavals and disasters, the virtual world was the ideal storage facility - eternal, free of disasters, and uninhabited.

The virtual world had always been more than just a training ground for mages. It was the cornerstone of the mage system. To this day, no one dared claim they fully understood the virtual world. Almost every year, mages invented new technologies utilizing it.

Mages were like children picking up seashells on the beach, with the vast unknown ocean still before them.

Storing things in the virtual world was nothing new, but had yet to be commercialized even now, remaining an exclusive miracle of high-level mages.

The principle was simple - find a way to fix the virtual world coordinates of the Gate of Truth inside a spirit, ensuring access to the same coordinates every time. That spot would become the mage's personal storage.

Easier said than done, since the Gate appeared randomly inside spirits. How could its coordinates be fixed?

This involved another rarely known field: Spirit Relationships.

Spirits had intellect and thus emotions, but mages couldn't perceive them, at least not below the Saint rank.

But when multiple spirits gathered, their moods would inevitably change. By observing the patterns of change, and fixing one spirit's mood at a certain state, its Gate of Truth would also stay still, becoming an eternal virtual coordinate!

Felix summoned his Vibration Sword spirit. "When it shows a change in expression, have your Murderous Sword approach it immediately. Ready?"

Sonya nodded and summoned her 'Murderous Sword' spirit.

Felix took a deep breath and summoned his 'Love's Call' spirit, a pure and cute single-winged angel girl.

The Vibration Sword spirit had a cold and aloof swordsman appearance. As Love's Call fluttered around it, its expression was unchanged. Even when Love's Call grabbed its hand and shook it, it remained impassive. Suddenly, Love's Call leaned in and pecked the Vibration Sword spirit on the cheek, finally melting its icy visage to reveal a faint blush.

Now!

Sonya promptly had her Murderous Sword approach. With its dual-sword wielding crimson-clad maiden looks, the Murderous Sword exuded a red aura. As it neared, Love's Call hid behind Vibration Sword, which met the Murderous Sword fearlessly, radiating black vibrations!

Spirit Relationships - Battle of Pure Love, success!

Felix's eyes flashed as his consciousness delved into Vibration Sword, grasping the Gate of Truth!

Expand!

A gray dot emerged from the spirit's body and swiftly expanded, soon becoming a hazy, transparent bubble.

The gray bubble grew larger in the air, with illusions of thunder and lightning within. Everyone stayed far back, not daring to go near.

The Gate of Truth could be expanded, but it was pointless for physical mages - only the soul could enter the virtual world.

No matter how huge the Gate grew, it couldn't allow the mage to bring anything inside.

Matter simply couldn't enter the virtual world.

But the reverse was different.

Things from the virtual world could come out through the Gate into reality. Some knowledge beings would even seize the chance to manifest a real body and wreak havoc.

This was also how spirits were born - mages used knowledge to resonate with the virtual world, allowing its truths to flow into the mage's knowledge. When knowledge and truth combined, spirits were born.

That was why Sonya and the others retreated to the stairwell, ready to flee if anything seemed off.

The virtual coordinates used by mages for storage were mostly ominous places. Storing things on a peaceful little island might lead to discovery by other mages. More crucially, knowledge beings needed sustenance too!

By expanding the Gate instead of entering, Felix indicated he knew the coordinates led to extreme danger. There was a popular joke in school - a mage instantly blacked out upon opening his Gate, likely because he had connected to a battle.

Getting countered by one's own Gate of Truth was considered one of the stupidest ways for a mage to die.

The gray bubble kept expanding as the thunder inside intensified. Everyone grew anxious to flee the basement. Felix's face paled from the massive arcane expenditure, grunting as unfledged Silver Wings sprouted from his back!

Sonya gazed at the half-formed Silver Wings with narrowed eyes.

The gray bubble continued swelling when suddenly lightning struck a nearby chair, instantly turning it into charcoal!

"Ah!"

"What do we do now?"

"Maybe we should come back another day when the weather is nicer?"

Everyone looked askance at Adele - the virtual world had no such thing as weather...

Just as Felix was about to give out, a box dropped out of the bubble. He immediately cut off his power, the gray bubble disappearing with a pop, its scattered energy creating a light breeze.

"Is this the treasure?"

Adele dashed to the box, peering curiously at the virtual world object. "It looks... huh, it disappeared... huh, it reappeared? Am I seeing things?"

The box seemed to be made of obsidian, nothing extraordinary, but it vanished when Adele blinked, then reappeared when she focused on it.

"Unforgettable Wood." Iris' voice was soft, as if afraid to startle the box. "When you look away even slightly, you won't see it anymore, even forgetting its existence... This rare material can only be found in the virtual world."

"Its most important use is that it can be hidden in the soul, allowing mages to carry it out of the virtual world, and also bring it inside." Search* The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Sealing unforgettable wood into a container blocks all energy leakage. It can even hold real objects and bring them into the virtual world..."

Everyone nodded and marveled at the miraculous properties, without thinking deeper.

Only Iris secretly glanced at Felix, filled with doubt and suspicion.

Due to family circumstances, she knew such absurdly rare and expensive items.

She clearly remembered unforgettable wood originated from the 'Far Expanse' in the third layer of the virtual world. It was completely inaccessible below the Saint rank with three wings.

Frankly, the box itself was likely far more valuable than its contents - objects that could traverse reality and virtuality were so absurdly rare they inevitably triggered lethal mage conflicts!

She didn't have high expectations for Felix's 'mother's legacy', assuming it was just some tools to aid a Silver-level mage.

But the unforgettable wood box's appearance made Iris reconsider - why would his mother use a Saint-grade box for Silver-grade items?

Either the box meant little to her compared to Silver-rank treasures, or...

Just as Iris would not buy cheap clothes regardless of price because it wasn't about extravagance, but because the small price difference was almost negligible to her, why suffer?

Felix's mother must have had other ways to preserve items, yet she deliberately chose to use the unforgettable wood box. This shows that a mere unforgettable wood box was simply not worth making ripples in her heart.

So what level of sorcerer was Felix's mother really?

A three-winged Saint? A four-winged Legend? Or could she be...?

Iris swallowed nervously, feeling like Sonya had lured her into a pit - this was the internal strife of the Vlozrada family! As a merchant's daughter, this was way over her head!

But it was too late for regrets. She had signed the secrecy contract!

"It's open."

Felix opened the unforgettable wood box and golden radiance gushed out.

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

Chapter 72

When all the treasures from the chest were laid out on the table, everyone couldn't take their eyes off them, even Felix. Every time his mother's inheritance appeared, it made him deeply feel her abundant love.

"According to the rules, I get to choose first," said Felix.

"Go ahead," replied Sonya.

The contract had stipulated the distribution method long ago. If there was only one set of treasures, Felix would have to compensate Sonya a large amount of money. If there were two sets, they would split it evenly. If there were multiple sets, Felix would choose the first, Sonya the second and third, Felix the fourth and fifth, and so on.

However, the treasures Felix obtained had to be greater than or equal to Sonya's, and the wooden chest had to go to Felix.

To be honest, Sonya really wanted to compete with Felix for ownership of the wooden chest. With this chest that could transport items between reality and the virtual world, she could exchange resources with the Watcher. It would provide an almost transformational help to both her and the Watcher.

But the contract had clearly stated that "the loading container belongs to Felix." And Felix had firmly refused to budge when Sonya had brought it up earlier. Sonya couldn't do anything about it - who could have guessed that the box containing the treasures would be more valuable than the treasures themselves!

Sonya could only temporarily let it go. After all, this windfall of treasures had literally blown in with the wind. It was reasonable for Felix to get a bigger portion.

If it wasn't for Sonya accidentally obtaining the Murderous Sword, Felix wouldn't have partnered up with her in the first place.

Moreover, Sonya had an inkling -

Her Murderous Sword was probably the one Felix had lost.

Although Felix hadn't said anything, the fact that he could detect Sonya's ownership of the Murderous Sword through the flow of killing intent meant that he must have previously owned a killing intent-type spirit himself, most likely the Murderous Sword.

Otherwise, it would be like having a cup and wine but no bottle opener. As long as no one brought a bottle opener, he wouldn't be able to open the wine... Even if Felix was really that foolish, his mother who could set up the inheritance in the virtual world wouldn't be so stupid.

More importantly, the heavily wounded lacerating fish dragon she and the Watcher had defeated yesterday had wounds that looked to be caused by the Vibration Sword. She hadn't thought much of it at the time, since the wounds didn't prove anything.

But with all the evidence laid out before her, even if Sonya didn't believe in such a coincidence, she had to believe in the truth deduced by her own logic:

Felix's half-condensed Silver Wings;

The virtual world treasure that required the Murderous Sword to open;

And the lacerating fish dragon severely injured by the Vibration Sword.

It was obvious that Felix must have also encountered the vortex last night. After passing through, he was attacked by the lacerating fish dragon. Although he had desperately inflicted heavy damage on it, he had still died in the end and lost the Murderous Sword.

What happened next was Sonya and the Watcher's delightful segment of profiting from the situation by passing through the vortex.

As a result, not only had Sonya picked up someone else's Murderous Sword, she had also used it to split someone else's treasures.

When she thought about this, Sonya couldn't help but blush and lower her head, too nervous to meet anyone's eyes.

Otherwise, they would have discovered she couldn't hold back her smile.

It felt so good!

Was this what a win-win was like!

She had won once by picking up the Murderous Sword, then won again by using it to split Felix's treasures!

Ah, praise the Watcher!

Hope the little trumpet's body stays healthy!

"Sonya, it's your turn," said Iris.

Sonya took a deep breath to suppress her smile as she looked at the treasures in the wooden chest.

Sure enough, Felix had chosen the only real-world item: the pendant box.

Although she couldn't make out anything strange about it, this was probably an important memento left to him by his mother, perhaps related to the next inheritance. Naturally, Sonya had no intention of competing for something that didn't belong to her. She glanced at the treasures left in the chest and decisively took the Splitting Sword spirit and the Sword Artifact Orb!

The Splitting Sword wasn't the best, but it was the most suitable for Sonya, because it could combine with the Vibration Sword to form the high-powered miracle "Rupture Slash"!

If she had to rely on her own cultivation to summon it, Sonya estimated it would take her half a year before she had a chance of summoning the Splitting Sword. Obtaining it early not only meant saving time, but also represented Sonya could accelerate her virtual world exploration progress!

In last night's battle, Sonya had discovered her own shortcomings. Although the Moon Reflection miracle was indeed powerful, it also had disadvantages like being a passive counter, short attack range, and excessive arcane energy consumption. She urgently needed an active attack miracle that could cooperate with the Watcher, and the "Miracle · Rupture Slash" had the best cost-performance.

Felix also had the Vibration Sword. Sonya was worried he would snatch the Splitting Sword, so she naturally had to grab it first. As for the Sword Artifact Orb, there was nothing much to say. Any sane swordsman wouldn't miss such a treasure.

But Felix's choice exceeded everyone's expectations - he took the Poison Artifact Orb and the Wind Artifact Orb.

Wind magic was one thing, at least it was still an orthodox school of magic, but poison magic was an extremely unpopular branch. Not only did no college offer related courses, there weren't even any learning books available on the market. The only ones estimated to have relevant materials were certain special departments.

Moreover, Felix was the second son of the Vlozrada family. His identity didn't allow him to use poison either. The Noble Council wouldn't permit anyone to commit acts that damaged the reputation of the nobility!

It was Sonya's turn to choose treasures again. Under the enthusiastic gaze of her roommates, Sonya thought for a moment then took the highest value Galloping Spirit and Healing Waters Spirit.

Felix chose the Vile Poison Spirit and Foul Wind Spirit.

Only two spirits were left. According to the distribution rules, Felix had to take more than Sonya, so Sonya could only take one. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Which one do you want?" Sonya asked.

"Either is fine, you choose," Felix replied.

"Then I won't stand on ceremony," said Sonya.

She took the Underdog Spirit, a spirit with very low utility but high value. It could only be activated when the sorcerer was weaker than the enemy. Its effect was to provide the sorcerer at a disadvantage with all-around enhancements, including but not limited to strength, agility, arcane power, and thinking speed. The greater the disparity between the sorcerer and enemy, the greater the enhancements it bestowed.

It sounded decent enough, but the problem was that the enhancements provided by the Underdog couldn't make up for the gap in strength. When the two sides were evenly matched, it was completely useless. And when there was a huge disparity in strength, it also couldn't help the sorcerer pull off a miraculous reversal.

On the contrary, it gave the sorcerer a psychological suggestion: Even the Underdog Spirit thinks you're the underdog.

In fact, many battles between sorcerers were determined by who made fewer mistakes and who persisted until the end. This kind of "you're the underdog" psychological suggestion would make the sorcerer's defeat even more swift and thorough. It could even be said to be a curse - the underdog thinks you're going to lose this time, so you're definitely going to lose.

But the Underdog Spirit was highly valued because it was one of the few spirits that couldn't be obtained through cultivation and training. It only had one acquisition method - when an underdog miraculously defeated a stronger opponent, it had a certain probability of being born in the underdog's heart.

It was also the most mysterious of the Fate school spirits, possessing extremely high research value. Therefore, it was in short supply on the market, and there were far too many sorcerers who wanted to delve into the Fate school through the Underdog Spirit.

Naturally, Felix took the last spirit, Gloomy Gales.

With the distribution of the Experience Orbs and spirits finished, next was the shareable knowledge - the miracle formulas! The contract stipulated that the miracle formulas could not be transcribed or leaked externally. The original records would be kept by Felix, but everyone could view them.

There were a full ten miracle formulas in the chest, but only one was a sword formula - the combination miracle of the Murderous Sword and Vibration Sword, Evil Light Slash. It was a vibration miracle that could inflict dizzying damage on the enemy. Sonya quickly committed this formula to memory.

With that, the treasures in the chest were completely divided up, but Adele picked up the chest and squinted at it. Iris asked curiously, "What are you doing?"

Adele seriously said, "I'm checking to see if there's a hidden compartment. Maybe there are still treasures inside that Felix will take out and keep for himself after we leave."

"The contract states that no matter what Felix discovers, he has to notify us for distribution," said Ingrid with a laugh.

"Good, the contract is really thoughtful!"

"Likewise, if we discover any secrets about these spirits, we have to share them with Felix too," said Iris.

"Ah? Why's that? The spirits are ours once they're in our hands!" exclaimed Adele.

Iris looked steadily at Sonya. Sonya thought for a moment. "I took the Sword Artifact Orb and Splitting Sword myself, so I'll give the Galloping, Healing Waters, and Underdog spirits to you three. How about that?"

Of course they had no objections. Sonya had brought resources to the group after all. The three of them were purely freeloading off Sonya's windfall. If Sonya had been bolder and not brought them along, she could have even split 64-36 with Felix. But for safety's sake, Sonya was willing to give up some of her own interests to bring along these three living amulets.

"But you're not sorcerers yet, so I'll hold on to your spirits for now and return them when you grow up," said Sonya.

Adele faltered. "Why does this sound kind of familiar..."

"However, there's another distribution method - sell your spirits and split the money evenly among you three. What do you think?" suggested Sonya.

Iris shook her head first. "I want the Galloping Spirit. It's the most valuable. I can chip in some money to compensate them."

Like Galloping, Healing Waters also belonged to the excellent water-type spirits, and it additionally had the effect of swift movement. Naturally Iris didn't want to miss out on it.

Adele looked at Ingrid. "I want the Healing Waters Spirit. My mother said medical mages are in high demand..."

Ingrid didn't seem to mind either. "Then I'll take the Underdog Spirit."

With the distribution of benefits concluded, Felix was about to send them back when Adele suddenly asked, "Are there snacks here? Is there black tea?"

Felix faltered. "There are some in the kitchen..."

"Then isn't it teatime now?" said Adele excitedly. "I've never had a tea party in such a luxurious villa before! I have to take lots of pictures later!"

"Taking pictures?" Felix's voice went up a note.

Adele said matter-of-factly, "Of course I have to take pictures, otherwise isn't coming here pointless?"

This time, Iris stood on Adele's side. "Everyone saw us leave in your car. Taking some tea party pictures can help explain where we were this afternoon."

"Yes, yes, that's what I meant!" Adele nodded vigorously and hurried off into the stairs. "I'm going to see what snacks are in the kitchen!"

Iris and Ingrid exchanged a look before following after with a sigh. Shared secrets were indeed the best lubricant. After experiencing the treasure incident together, Ingrid, Iris and the others' relationship had unconsciously grown much closer.

Sonya walked to the stairs and turned back to look at Felix, who was still sitting there. "Aren't you coming?"

"I'm not interested. You guys have fun," said Felix, holding the pendant box he had just obtained. "Also, I still have things to do."

Sonya nodded. "You're not planning to continue learning swordsmanship?"

Half of the spirits and orbs from the treasure chest had nothing to do with swordsmanship. Among the miracle formulas, there was only one sword formula, while the rest were composite formulas for wind, water, and poison magic. Yet this was the treasure his mother had left for him. Clearly, the path his mother had arranged for him was not one of swordsmanship.

"Professor Trotzam is a good teacher. I still need his protection for now," Felix said with a smile. "I'll keep learning swordsmanship, just not as intensely as you."

"The second son of the Vlozrada family also needs protection?"

"Let alone a mere second son, even if I were the Duke of Vlozrada, I'd still have to watch out for vengeful retaliation from the shadows." Felix's voice was cold.

Sonya raised her eyebrows. "You nobles really are chaotic."

"Yet you still want to become one of them, no?" Felix shook his head. "Sometimes, I'm actually quite envious of you, Sonya Therave..."

"Alright, enough nonsense from a pampered noble brat. It's nauseating." Sonya waved her hand. "But since I'm your senior sister and have also benefited from this treasure trove, in both personal ties and justice, there's something I should tell you in advance."

Felix frowned. When it came to Sonya calling herself his senior sister, he was quite helpless too. After all, Professor Trotzam had accepted Sonya as a disciple first before taking him in. In order of sequence, Sonya was indeed a bit more senior.

"If you have to flee in the future because of noble infighting and urgently need help, have nowhere to take refuge..."

Felix was a bit surprised. He had brought up the Duke of Vlozrada, yet Sonya still dared to meddle in his affairs? This forced him to revise his understanding of Sonya's character -

"Then remember to never come looking for me. To wash away suspicion and protect my future prospects, I'll definitely placate you first to stay put, then bring people to arrest you and exchange you for a title reward. Listen, I'm telling you this beforehand. If you suddenly get a lapse of judgement later and stubbornly place your hopes on me, don't blame your harsh and ruthless senior sister for going back on her word."

Although completely different from his imagination, Felix still refreshed his understanding of Sonya's character.

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

Chapter 73

The Sea of Knowledge, the virtual world.

"You couldn't find anyone willing to escape with you after a whole day?"

Sonya slashed forcefully, splitting her sword energy into several spinning ripple rings that gnawed at the earth barrier like electric saws. It was the new miracle she had just learned, 'Ripple Slash'.

"Yeah."

Ashe sighed. He pointed his imaginary sword and guided his sword heart to pierce through the barrier. But as soon as his sword pierced one layer, the barrier grew another. It seemed endless.

"Not a single one?"

"Well, not no one. Other than Igor whom I have a contract with, no one else was willing...or rather, they don't believe it's possible."

"If Shattered Lake Prison has never had a successful prison break before, they do have reason not to believe you."

"It's not just that," Ashe sighed again. "More than saying they don't believe me for objective reasons, it's more accurate to say they subjectively refuse to believe."

Ashe had spent the entire day today following Igor to persuade other powerful inmates, like 'Diamond' Taig, 'Black Beast' Took, and 'Hundred Spirit Bird' Joell. Each of them

were vicious and wicked sorcerers before being imprisoned. Their criminal records could each be made into a thrilling novel.

But they all refused to participate in the prison break.

To be honest, Ashe wasn't surprised by this. Given Shattered Lake Prison's high-pressure rule and its near absolute isolation on an island, it would be abnormal if the death row inmates immediately believed they could escape. Skepticism was reasonable.

But the problem was, the inmates didn't show skepticism, but refusal.

They refused to escape.

And the one negotiating wasn't even Ashe, but Igor the 'Beautiful Beast', who was quite famous in prison. Although Igor was a conman, he had a good reputation and rarely lied. He was even one of the rare intelligence dealers in prison, so he was quite popular.

In his own words, 'Lying is a taboo for conmen. Reputation is a conman's face. Honesty is the most important quality for a conman. The biggest failure for a conman is when others are unwilling to interact with him.'

Therefore, Igor's words carried considerable weight. Even if the inmates didn't believe him, they should have at least asked Igor for more details to make a better judgement.

But they didn't.

Even when Igor said he 'might have a way to remove the restrictions of the control chip', no one asked further questions like 'how?' or 'really?'. They simply showed expressions like 'that's enough' and switched topics or walked away.

In this entire huge prison, they couldn't even find a single ally who wanted to escape. Ashe felt like this was the worst batch of criminals he had ever seen.

But Igor had already expected this reaction.

During dinner, he resolved Ashe's confusion with one sentence:

"They aren't who they used to be anymore. Even shit will become fertilizer if you let it sit long enough."

If time was the best poison, then Shattered Lake Prison was undoubtedly the best compost heap. Whether you were harmful or poisonous, once you enter, you'll become nutrients for me.

Even ordinary people could change a lot after a few years. After being imprisoned for so long, how could these death row inmates possibly still be their former vicious and wicked selves?

In fact, many of the death row inmates would sincerely regret their past crimes when looking back, feeling that their past selves were so immature and impulsive. Even if they didn't regret it, they would gradually lose hope for the outside world over time, finding their place of belonging in Shattered Lake Prison.

Igor said something very true - Shattered Lake Prison was a utopia. Crime was forbidden here. There was no racial discrimination, cursing, fights, or even cutting in line or public urination/defecation.

As long as you followed the rules, everyone could live very freely. You didn't need to watch other's faces, because no one could harm or affect your interests. It was true equality.

The death row inmates committed heinous crimes out of greed, depravity, impulse and other reasons ultimately because they were accustomed to a criminal lifestyle - only that way of life made them feel secure.

The Shattered Lake Prison forcibly changed their lifestyle, yet was still able to make them feel secure.

Feeling secure can be addictive. When someone is in this environment long-term, free of complex social relationships and the competitive external world, even if the inmates outwardly scorn the prison's restrictions, being released into society would actually leave them feeling lost, especially if they were able to live a tranquil life in prison.

Many death row inmates can't even get up early, let alone voluntarily leave their comfort zone. Looking at it this way, the Shattered Lake Prison was quite successful in reforming the death row inmates.

Without any hard labor or punishment, just with various restrictions, KPI assessments and elimination of the lowest performers, the inmates were transformed into compliant workers who voluntarily work overtime, obediently contributing their residual value in prison.

If they had no residual value, they could earn money by participating in trial livestreams - there was always suitable work for the death row inmates.

What Ashe and Igor were inviting them to do was like asking them to start their own business with unknown prospects, insufficient funds, and the need for them to pay out of their own pockets.

Most importantly, even if the business failed, what if it succeeded? Wouldn't they have to return to that society where they'd have to struggle and rely on themselves? Just thinking about it was terrifying. It'd be better to just buy a toy gun, rob a bank, and wait for the Heresy Court to bring them home.

Even Igor probably wouldn't be willing to participate in the escape if not for Ashe binding him with the rebound contract. Admittedly, he could live better outside, but he would also live in constant fear and paranoia of the Heresy Court.

Here, even commoners could feel at ease.

If not for Professor Bessel and the Blood Moon Tribunal, Ashe felt Shattered Lake Prison could be a nice vacation spot. Not only could you enjoy the scenery here, you'd also be forced to cleanse your soul. Once you leave, you'd never be able to fart freely in bed again and would have to run to the bathroom.

As such, Ashe felt like he was an evil villain forcing chaste reformed criminals back into a life of sin. Igor was like an innocent maiden whom he had blackmailed, who was just trying to live a peaceful life, but now had to become the head courtesan in Ashe's employ...

Slam!

With a muffled bang, the earth barrier that Ashe and Sonya had been attacking for over 10 minutes finally exploded, revealing the elderly sorcerer hiding within. Before he could speak, Sonya's 'Wicked Light Slash' and Ashe's 'Sword Heart' directly tore him apart, bursting into three spirit familiars and a .

This was the best sorcerer inheritance Ashe had encountered since entering the virtual world.

Because this sorcerer did not use combat abilities.

He couldn't fight at all. All he did was continuously create earth barriers for defense. At first, Ashe was a little worried the ground might suddenly sprout spikes to give him an acupuncture massage. But nothing happened. The projection just cowered behind the earth barriers, as if this inheritance was to test their damage output efficiency.

"Sorcerers like him are actually the mainstream," Sonya said. "Or rather, dedicated combat sorcerers are the minority. Most learn production skills that can find them good jobs, and just pick up a little combat on the side. Many sorcerers go through life without ever having a combat spirit familiar, and rarely have opportunities to fight others. Like medical mages, meteorologists, architects, agriculturalists..."

She grumbled, "If not for you insisting, I learn swordsmanship, I could have been a non-combat water mage medic now."

Ashe was puzzled. "But they can't be completely non-combat, right? Even if they don't need to fight in reality, the knowledge creatures in the virtual world aren't going to check their ID and let them go right?"

"There are more ways to deal with knowledge creatures than just fighting. Sorcerers have many methods, like running, defending, etc."

"But without ever fighting, how do they obtain new spirit familiars?"

Sonya laughed. She picked up the slumbering spirit on the ground and casually said, "Study! Cultivate! Research!"

"People like us who can gain something in the virtual world every day are truly rare. For most sorcerers, the main way to obtain spirit familiars is to trigger resonance in the virtual world by improving their mastery of their school of magic, thus giving birth to new spirit familiars."

"A sorcerer's foundation is their knowledge. Diligent study is the proper path for a sorcerer. What we're doing now, fighting and adventuring, is actually the crooked path. Academy-trained sorcerers who grow step-by-step have complete spirit familiar systems. Us adventurer sorcerers have messy, unclear systems, far inferior compared to academy sorcerers."

"And we can't skip lessons either. Once our Silver Wings fully condense, we'll have to double back to take classes, raise our mastery of our schools of magic. Without golden-grade mastery, we won't be able to summon dual-winged spirit familiars. We'd be stuck swimming in place in the Sea of Knowledge forever, never reaching the Timelands!"

Production is the orthodox path; combat is the heterodox path?

Ashe secretly sighed. Comprehensive superhuman systems that required moral, intellectual, physical, and artistic development were what he feared most. He knew himself well - he was just an ordinary person, with neither sports talent nor academic ability. Other than paid toilet breaks, he had no special skills. If not for clutching the sorcerer handbook Aurora's Guide for Sorcerers, he wouldn't have had the chance to become a sorcerer at all.

Why weren't there any superhuman systems where you just drank a magic potion, digested it, and leveled up?

"Speaking of which, didn't you mention before there's a golden fish in the virtual world? Reaching it would let us get to the Timelands?"

"Just a rumor. And even the Observer doesn't know where the golden fish is, how could I possibly know?" Sonya quickly skimmed through the , joking, "Don't tell me you're

pinning your hopes on the golden fish? You might as well hope the prison suddenly riots tomorrow and you can escape in the chaos..."

Seeing Sonya make a strange noise, Ashe asked, "What's up? Another handbook that clashes with your values?"

"How to put it...I feel you should prepare yourself a bit before leaving the virtual world."

"What do you mean?"

"Because the prison might really riot!"

Sonya squeezed next to Ashe excitedly and flipped the handbook open to a page in the middle, showing it to him.

Written on it were the words:

"I've found the golden fish."

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

Chapter 74

Ashe and Sonya sat in a small boat, intently reading the leather-bound .

Like the previous handbooks, this one did not contain any personal information about its owner, who could only be referred to as "The Explorer". Why was he called that? Because his greatest passion was exploring various natural landscapes, and the contents of this handbook were about the various sites he had visited in the past.

"Lava Cave"

"After working at the construction site for over a year across three phases, the project finally ended. I should be able to visit the lava cave before my foreman takes on another job."

"I went to the village closest to the lava cave, but my foreman said he had another big project coming up. Oh well."

"A few months later, I made time to explore the lava cave again. I got lucky this time - I paid a local a good amount of money to guide me inside."

"It was amazing - lava flowing across the ground, explosive pollen from the blooming flowers, yet inside the lava cave it was a cool and refreshing underground river... An incredible spectacle!"

"I'm so happy, so thrilled! I encountered a female green fire dragon that must have escaped from the Virtual World long ago and made a nest in the lava cave! Haha, I took photos - the submission fee I earned from that alone would be enough for me to come here again!"

This was generally the format - the Explorer would often go through twists and turns before starting his journeys, sometimes having to interrupt due to work. He lamented the present circumstances but did not forget about poetry and distant places.

"He was probably a civil engineer," Sonya remarked, and Ashe nodded in agreement.

Living on construction sites long-term, working nonstop when there was a project and having no income when there wasn't, and travelling solo... The Explorer would probably remain single well into old age. Civil engineers really were the same no matter which world you were in.

The first half of the handbook contained sites the Explorer had visited in the real world, while the second half contained sites in the Sea of Knowledge - to the Explorer, the Virtual World was also a scenic destination.

If they came across a Sorcerer who enjoyed fishing, Ashe had no doubt they would go fishing in the Sea of Knowledge. But fishing there was extremely risky and unrewarding - either the fish would fly away or the knowledge creature would have no fish.

There were many sights to see in the Sea of Knowledge, including the "Maelstrom", "Sea Waterfall", "Great Road", "Sky Bubbles" and other permanent fixtures even Sonya had not heard of before - Swordflower College naturally would not teach them since they offered no benefits or help to Sorcerers unlike the Maelstrom.

The "Sea Waterfall" was just as its name suggested, a waterfall dropping down from the sea surface. The "Great Road" was a land path that spanned the entire Sea of Knowledge. The "Sky Bubbles" were gigantic bubbles floating in the sky, making the surrounding fog lighter when they appeared.

The Explorer had witnessed these three sites personally. He had jumped into the sea waterfall to see what was below, only to die instantly in the Virtual World. He had run very far down the Great Road until he collapsed from exhaustion. He watched the sky bubbles drift by, moving too fast for him to catch up.

The words in the exuded the Explorer's joy and excitement upon witnessing these natural wonders. Even Ashe and Sonya could not help but smile.

Finally, they reached the chapter about the Golden Fish.

"Golden Fish"

"I researched extensively, consulted many scholars, trying to find clues about the Golden Fish's location. But it is the greatest secret in the Sea of Knowledge, with pathetically little information available. So I turned to novels about the Golden Fish - perhaps someone who found it could not resist bragging and secretly hid the truth in fiction? I think it's very possible."

"Most Sorcerers and scholars believe the Golden Fish should be in the most dangerous core region. But I have a different view: the Golden Fish carries the entire continent on its back - how could such a massive fish fit in the core area?"

"But no Sorcerer has fully explored the core region, so the Sea of Knowledge may be much vaster than we imagine."

"Only Sorcerers who have fully spread their Silver Wings can find the Golden Fish? Very likely. I should hurry and complete my ten thousand mile journey."

"I have spread my Silver Wings and been to the core region, yet there is no trace of the Golden Fish. Does it stay underwater most of the time, only surfacing occasionally?"

"Quite possible. I've decided to dive underwater. I died."

"Died."

"Died."

"I should retire... My friends all advise me not to go to the Virtual World - dying there at my age would severely shorten my lifespan. The last time I died there, I nearly went brain dead."

"But I feel I really saw the Golden Fish... Even if I die right after catching a glimpse, it would be worth it..."

"Golden Fish, where are you..."

"I think I found the Golden Fish."

Damn! Ashe and Sonya nearly wanted to drag out the elderly Sorcerer and beat him up again - how could you leave out the most crucial information? We want to know how you found the Golden Fish!

We'll give you two coins, now finish the story!

"If it's true, then the Golden Fish is too massive for a normal person to climb onto. Fortunately, I'm an earth mage - I can continuously pile up mounds of earth to gain height. This elevation is nothing to me - it seems I may get to witness the Golden Fish's true form in this lifetime."

"Ten layers... fifty layers... one hundred layers... no, the foundation needs reworking. The Golden Fish is just too high up."

"Two hundred layers... three hundred layers... five hundred layers..."

"If only I could fly."

"When I reached over eight hundred layers, the mound under my feet collapsed. Falling from this height, my entire soul would likely shatter... At least the tombstone I prepared for myself will finally be put to use."

"Though I have some regrets, at least I found the Golden Fish before death - now I can die content... Wait, I haven't cleaned up my collection at home yet!"

The ended there - the Golden Fish was the last sight the Explorer pursued in his lifetime.

"So how did he find the Golden Fish in the end?" Sonya asked, puzzled. "He couldn't find it for the longest time, then suddenly encountered it?"

"Maybe because he was too old?" Ashe guessed. "Could the Golden Fish only appear before Sorcerers nearing death?"

After some discussion, they could not figure it out. Since their Silver Wings were not fully formed yet, Ashe and Sonya decided not to worry about finding the Golden Fish for now.

The three magic spirits the Explorer had dropped were all earth spirits that could form a miracle, but Ashe and Sonya had no interest in earth magic. After discussing, Ashe kept them - earth magic corresponded to lower paying production jobs, so earth spirits had low value. Sonya selling them wouldn't earn much money either.

As for the , Ashe felt a civil engineer's skills would not help him much, so he gave it to the Swordswoman.

After all, he had consumed three handbooks already while this was the Swordswoman's first time getting one she could absorb. It was only right for her to have a turn.

In truth, the skills from Sorcerer Handbooks were rarely useful - things like 'Counter-reconnaissance', 'Secrets of Bliss (only effective on females over 2m tall)', 'Skinning Mastery' - useless little tricks that did not improve quality of life much or look good on a resume, unless the interviewer happened to be a tall female orc.

This was Sonya's first time absorbing a . She looked rather nervous. "Speaking of which, what did he mean by 'I haven't cleaned up my collection at home' before he died? Why did he care about his collection?"

"Well, the Explorer was an elderly bachelor after all, so he definitely had some unspeakable things in his collection," Ashe shrugged. "As the saying goes, better leave a clean name behind in this world."

As he spoke, Sonya finished absorbing the handbook and looked at Ashe with an odd expression.

"What skill did you get? Fire drilling or wilderness survival? Or maybe bachelor cooking?"

"No, it's a very useful skill," she replied solemnly. "Eye Insight - it allows me to better understand someone's thoughts by looking into their eyes. It seems to be because the Explorer met many different people while travelling, and having lived a long life full of stories, he naturally gained the ability to see through human nature."

Ashe nearly fell into the water in anger.

That was exactly the skill he needed for his prison break!

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

Chapter 75

Shattered Lake Prison.

"If hurt enough, slash open with a pair of hands, curse yesterday..."

Ashe looked at the recharge page on the light screen, lost in thought.

Yesterday's virtual world exploration didn't yield much. Ashe barely found an "worth a visit" area, but discovered there was a Slicing Fish Dragon inside.

He and the Swordswoman fought hard against it, but still couldn't kill the Slicing Fish Dragon in the end. That Slicing Fish Dragon cunningly pretended it would die with them, then dove into the water and escaped after farting out two spells - spells in the bubbly diarrhea.

So Ashe and the Swordswoman could only very humiliatingly catch the Slicing Fish Dragon's farts, watching it disappear into the white fog.

The damage was low, but the insult was extremely strong.

Ashe was taught another good lesson by the virtual world - the survival environment of sorcerers was so harsh, no wonder the death row inmates didn't feel anything about not being able to enter or leave the virtual world - the virtual world was a place where you might not succeed even if you tried hard, but would definitely feel very relaxed if you gave up.

The difference between reality and the virtual world was that reality was a garbage game dominated by pay-to-win players, while the virtual world was a garbage game dominated by lucky players. The average sorcerer's gaming experience was to first get beaten up badly in reality, then get ravaged in the virtual world, fully experiencing the disparity of the world.

The two spells farted out by the Slicing Fish Dragon were not great either, so they were naturally taken by Ashe to recharge, as a tortured player like him who started out in hell difficulty in reality could only change his fate by recharging.

The problem came when Ashe was recharging the - he suddenly realized the price of a single-wing spell was only 8 points!

It was clearly still worth 10 points a few days ago!

What was going on, game system, did you fix the Apple payment channel and are now charging me Apple tax?

The five spells only recharged 40 points, a full 20% less!

However, Ashe had no way to complain or inquire, not because the game system hadn't fixed the complaint module, but because their company's game simply didn't have a complaint module...

But Ashe also had some vague guesses - it was probably related to his own strength.

After crossing the vortex, his Silver Wings were also more than halfway condensed. As his arcane energy grew, the power of his spells naturally also increased. For him and the Swordswoman, the difficulty of exploring the virtual world decreased linearly - the most obvious manifestation was that the number of "worth a visit" and "a bit

troublesome" areas increased a lot on the virtual world map, and "suicide zones" only occasionally appeared once.

When the Silver Wings spread open, Ashe was afraid he could achieve spell freedom, harvesting seven or eight spells every night, bursting the game system, and the first thing he did every morning was a ten pull to test his luck.

But this was obviously impossible.

Even if Ashe's brain lost imagination after working as a corporate slave for a few years, with his daily computing power only used on lunch choices, he also knew the game system must have problems and would not leave such an obvious loophole for himself.

Clearly, in order to prevent value collapse, the game system's method was: reduce returns.

Or rather, taxation mechanisms.

Ashe guessed that after advancing to two wings, the price of single-wing spells would drop to 5 points or even lower. When he spread three wings open, the price of single-wing spells would even drop so low that he would be too lazy to pick them up off the ground.

Ashe strongly suspected that the selling point of this game might be "free spells for all", with all harvested spells directly recharged as money, giving players a feeling that "this game is so generous".

But as the player's strength increased, the price of the low-level spells they defeated would decrease. To improve their gold efficiency, they would have to obtain higher-level spells... In the end, all players' daily income would be about the same. As everyone knows, giving everyone money is equal to giving no one money, so this taxation mechanism was an additional supplement to the check-in system that could effectively increase players' online time.

"So the greater the ability, the more tax you pay..." Ashe sighed and went out for breakfast.

As for the newly obtained 40 points, he would naturally let them be for now. He had already bought the Source Crystal Pack worth 30 points, and without the first recharge double reward, Ashe's next small goal was the 'Pile of Source Crystal Packs' worth 98 points.

Arriving at the central hall, Ashe was surprised to find many people gathered here, with people even arguing with the prison guards in front - Ashe was overjoyed to see this - could a prison riot really happen?

He squeezed to the front and saw that the light screen in the hall was broadcasting news:

"A warm celebration of Caimon City being rated as the region with the best public security nationwide. Mayor Fernand Snow attended a press conference, where he thanked everyone for their indelible contributions..."

Damn, this news was so mocking! Which death row inmate would watch this kind of news!

Ashe looked closely and saw a notice posted next to the light screen:

"Special Task Volunteer Recruitment"

"Requirements: Two-wing combat sorcerer or above"

"Reward: After completing the special task, the inmate's sentence will be commuted from 'Salvation' to 'Probation for 5 Years', and will be awarded a government job, a house in Caimon City, and a one-time subsidy of eight hundred gold coins."

"Number of Personnel: No Limit"

"I, I'm a two-wing hybrid sorcerer, golden wings fully spread, fire element and wind element fully mastered, I even know the miracle spell 'Dragon Poetry Vanquisher'! Why don't you choose me?"

"And I, I'm a two-wing gunmage, former Blood Mad Hunter member, outstanding battle record and good family background, just accidentally crossed the line and ended up in Shattered Lake, I'm clearly the kind of former Hunter sorcerer who should be chosen!"

"You have to at least give a reason for rejection, there's no limit on the number of people, why not allow me to be a volunteer?"

"I actually don't care about getting out of prison, I just want to do something to contribute to society, so why stop me from serving the country?"

The prison guard sitting at the front registration desk looked aloof, completely ignoring the cries of these job seekers, and coldly said, "Next."

Ashe also wanted to sign up, but unfortunately he wasn't even a two-wing sorcerer, so he didn't have the qualifications to submit his resume. But he was also unwilling to leave, so he could only stand aside and watch eagerly, not knowing what he was waiting for.

"What a great opportunity, unfortunately you can't grasp it. You look like a vulgar man who knows he has no right to make advances, but still hopes a beautiful lady will suddenly go blind and be willing to spend a wonderful night with you."

Ashe glanced at Igor and asked, "Aren't you going to sign up?"

"I signed up, but unfortunately wasn't chosen." Igor looked at the surging registration point and shook his head, "Fortunately I wasn't chosen, I'm not confident I could survive in this kind of special task."

"Do you know what the special task is?"

"I don't, but can guess. I observed that the selected death row inmates basically all specialized in water, earth, wind and light elements."

"What's special about these spell elements?"

"Let me put it clearer - the selected death row inmates basically all had these charges in their crimes: multiple resist arrests, long-term escapee, rich criminal experience, committed crimes across multiple cities."

Multiple resist arrests, long-term escapee? Recalling the formidable Blood Mad Hunters in the Heresy Court, Ashe immediately realized: "They are very good at escaping?"

"That's right." Igor nodded, "This special task probably doesn't require combat or social skills, but needs volunteers to have sufficient escape experience and survival skills. No matter how you think about it, it must be an extremely dangerous reconnaissance mission. I have to say, in Caimon City, the people who meet these two requirements are indeed all in Shattered Lake Prison."

"I didn't know these kinds of tasks that pardon death row inmates would appear." Ashe said, "Do these tasks happen often? Have death row inmates openly left through these tasks before?"

"Of course not. I've been here for over a year and this is the first time I've seen it. I asked some other old inmates earlier and they also saw this kind of task that could pardon death row inmates for the first time. At most, previous special tasks just rewarded some contribution points to death row inmates."

Igor narrowed his eyes slightly: "Speaking of which, for a proposal like pardoning death row inmates, the Order Faction would definitely not approve it, and the parliament would also quarrel over it for a long time... Exactly what kind of huge benefits could make even the Order Faction agree to such a dangerous proposal?"

"Order Faction?" Ashe heard a new term.

"You don't know? It's one of the factions in parliament, opposed to the Human Rights Association. The Human Rights Association advocates people-oriented goals, that all laws should aim to protect people, and people cannot be treated as consumables; while the Order Faction advocates pursuing absolute order, laws must be strictly enforced, and people's appeals and emotions need not be considered."

"Most bills need to reach a balance point between the two factions to pass. Things like the Blood Moon Tribunal are the result of the Order Faction and Human Rights Association debating for many years. The Order Faction hopes death row inmates die as quickly as possible, while the Human Rights Association believes death row inmates still have the chance to repent and reform themselves, and the Blood Moon Tribunal allows some death row inmates to contribute value to society while giving the people the power to judge, thus obtaining unanimous approval from parliament members."

Igor looked at Ashe, "Things like your 'extra dosage' Blood Moon Tribunal the day before yesterday, the Order Faction must have exerted quite some effort... Forgot to mention, Professor Sylin, the city councilor, is a member of the Order Faction."

Hearing this news, Ashe's desire to escape prison grew even more intense - having such a political villain like him inciting outside, the law could no longer be Ashe's shield.

"So what exactly is the special task?"

"Benefits substantial enough to silence the Order Faction, recruiting volunteers skilled in escape and survival, plus the approaching spring-summer transition... Thinking it through, there's likely only one possibility."

Igor said, "Caimon City has appeared stable virtual world rifts, and there may be a virtual world passage inside leading to other nations."

"If a stable virtual world passage can be found, that would be a feat to please the Blood Moon."

Cailleach, Swordflower College.

Other than Ingritt who went running in the morning, the other three were still in the dorm.

Seeing Adele hugging her doll asleep, Iris got out of bed, grabbed the ice spring water spray and angrily sprayed a face full, instantly becoming fully awake - truly cruel morning skincare torture.

At this time, Sonya was already showering in the bathroom, so Iris could only wash her face first then apply a thick layer of jelly mask, squeezing time to read a book - she couldn't use sheet masks or the essence would drip down to her chin.

To quickly become a watermage and get the Flow spell back from Sonya, Iris could only compress her own skincare and makeup time to squeeze out time to learn and cultivate.

At times like this, Iris was always both resentful and admiring of Sonya - how could this world have such a girl who still had time to dress up and learn quickly?

Suddenly, the Miracle Bracelet vibrated slightly, and Iris tapped it to check the message, which was from the Meteorological Institute.

"Meteorological sorcerers announce this week is Virtual Rift Week, with increased probability of virtual passages appearing around Cailleach."

"Please report immediately to the Police Department if you discover virtual passages or suspicious persons."

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

Chapter 76

"Virtual world turbulence? Virtual world passages?"

Since this was obscure knowledge, Ashe didn't feel surprised that Igora was aware of it: "These are rare magical disasters that occur when sorcerers establish a connection to the virtual world through the Gate of Truth. Some areas of the virtual world are unstable, and can spill knowledge back through the Gate of Truth, causing spaces in reality to become distorted by virtual world knowledge."

Igora gestured as he explained: "You can imagine the virtual world as a big jelly. Sorcerers enter the jelly through a straw, and everything is fine. But part of the jelly has rotted and dissolved away, and the liquid from there flows back up the straw into reality, corroding a hole through it... This is virtual world turbulence."

"As for virtual world passages, they form because the knowledge that spills into reality wants to return to the virtual world. Most turbulence quickly dissipates, but some denser flows of chaotic knowledge solidify into passages, trying to get back to the virtual world."

"But knowledge without an owner can't open the Gate of Truth, so these partial passages end up hovering outside the virtual world, forming half-passages to and from it."

"Half-passages?" Ashe was puzzled. "So how do they become complete virtual world passages?"

"Remember when I said part of the jelly had rotted?" Igora said. "So these magical disasters caused by turbulence don't just happen once or twice, but in batches all over the world. Any sorcerer who has visited the rotted area could trigger turbulence and form different half-passages locally."

"The closer the coordinates these half-passages point to in the virtual world are, the more likely they are to combine and form a complete passage that connects two real world locations."

Ashe grasped the idea using his meager mathematical knowledge: Half-passage A wants to return to point C in the virtual world, forming passage AC. Meanwhile, half-passage B also wants to return to point C, forming passage BC.

But since the Gate of Truth is closed, even if A and B make it to the gate and desperately claw at it, C won't come out. At this point, A and B, who are both down on their luck, meet outside the gate. They give up on C and connect to form the complete AB passage, living happily ever after together.

"So the closer the Gates different sorcerers open are to each other, the more easily a virtual world passage forms between them?"

Igora nodded. "That's how it works in theory, but it's virtually impossible to manufacture a passage this way."

Ashe's expression became grave. "Isn't that really dangerous for sorcerers then? Once they open a Gate in a rotten area, won't their bodies be sucked into the virtual world turbulence?"

"No, virtual world knowledge would never harm a sorcerer," Igora replied.

"Why not?"

"They're afraid of us." Igora shrugged. "Even spirits flee when they see us. Why would you think the knowledge that makes up spirits would dare harm sorcerers?"

"There's an amusing theory that for the virtual world, we sorcerers are like predators. Any knowledge that accidentally spills into reality is like refugees who have stumbled into enemy territory. They can barely flee fast enough, let alone dare to challenge the vicious predators we are."

"Virtual knowledge often escapes to areas with few sorcerers, like underground or the skies. Then it settles and distorts the space, trying to return to the virtual world, forming turbulence or passages."

Igora described the disaster as helpless and endearing... Ashe glanced at the bustling registration point. "So exploring virtual world passages is pretty dangerous?"

"I don't know!" Igora admitted candidly. "But not all passages are complete ones. What do you think happens to the pioneers who venture into half-passages?"

"Still, if they find a passage to another realm and make it back successfully, that accomplishment would surely offset their death sentence."

Ashe raised his eyebrows. "That doesn't sound too hard. Just take a look, flee back if you survive, purely luck-based. Why do you need survival and escape capabilities?"

Igora shook his head. "If the other side leads to an uninhabited area, you could return immediately. But if it's another realm with people, volunteers definitely wouldn't be able to come back right away."

"Why not? Do they need to go through customs when crossing over or something?"

"Think about it from another angle. If strangers from an unknown realm found a passage to the Blood Moon Kingdom, wouldn't you take precautions in advance?"

Ashe was about to ask how to safeguard against unknown enemies, but he stopped short - this was a world full of miracles where sorcerers dwelled, and the one absolute truth was that nothing was absolute.

Things that seemed near impossible to Ashe could be child's play for high-tier sorcerers.

The knowledge gap between sorcerers created insurmountable divides. Ashe still didn't understand how the chip in his neck prevented him from farting outside of restrooms.

"The Blood Moon Kingdom has kingdom-wide surveillance miracles. The Church is notified immediately of any outsiders. At the same time, the Blood Moon casts down curses restricting outsiders from teleporting or communicating for 48 hours," Igora explained, hugging himself. "When I was 7, an outsider appeared in Feimeng City, seemingly fleeing to somewhere near my orphanage. The Blood Mad Hunters turned the place upside down searching for them..."

"You're not from Caimon City?"

Igora shrugged. "When you've fooled most people in Feimeng City, it's time to tap new markets."

The virtual world passages were undoubtedly major events that could shift power balances, but meant nothing to their prison break squad. If anything, it made recruitment more difficult.

Maybe more volunteers would come tomorrow?

Maybe he had a chance to return to society fair and square?

This sudden amnesty greatly dampened the morale of these staunch escapees. How could they continue their ideological work now?

Just as Ashe was at a loss and about to go eat some Lala Fat to find inspiration, a commotion broke out at the registration point.

"Pick me, please pick me! I'm the 'Golden Beak' of the Woodpeckers, I'm well-versed in all kinds of murder methods. I really want to be a volunteer, please pick me, wuuu—"

"Water magic, gunpowder magic, light magic, earth magic, explosives... your spellcasting aptitudes meet the requirements, but you only have single-wing arcane power, below the minimum threshold. I'm afraid not."

Hearing this, everyone looked at the tall kneeling man in astonishment.

Igora provided an introduction: "Golden Beak is the Woodpecker Gang's best hitman. His assassination targets have included many famous figures, politicians, businessmen... With his missions being no less difficult than killing a two-wing sorcerer, the fact that he became the Golden Beak as a one-wing sorcerer means he has exceptional professional capabilities."

Ashe recognized the man. "Isn't he Langna's 'friend' Ronat Wade?"

"That's right, and he's also a new arrival this month." Igora had a subtle smile. "No wonder he got close to Langna... Looks like he's realized something and is desperately trying to save himself."

"Save himself? Is he in danger?"

"Do you know Langna's nickname?"

"I do. 'Gourmet' Langna - it's because of his peculiar tastes, right?"

Although Langna's preferences were rather bizarre, this prison was the ultimate cesspool gathering degenerates. Right now, Ashe was chatting with a cannibal nonchalantly. He could discuss Langna's minor perversions without any emotional response.

"Most people only see the surface, but the reality goes much deeper." Igora wagged his finger. "Langna doesn't even spare the insides."

"What's so different about that?"

"Extremely different. Don't be fooled by Ronat's lack of external injuries. His insides have already been eaten away by Langna."

"...Is this some vulgar joke?"

"Ashe, your words and actions make me feel like the Four Pillars Church is a sleazy old men's club for relaxing after work. Keeping you alive only makes food more expensive." Igora responded lightly, revealing Langna's horrifying and bizarre secret.

But Ashe's eyes only grew brighter as he listened.

Looking at Ronat still clinging stubbornly over there, he said, "Perhaps we've found a teammate."

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

Chapter 77

"Bring six bottles of Vodka here, it's on me!"

"Get me a huge platter of lobster ravioli, I'll pay with contribution points!"

"A round of ale for everyone, this one's on me 'Black Beast' Tuck!"

It was noontime, the registration point had been cleared away and volunteer recruitment was over.

The cafeteria was lively, the condemned prisoners who had been selected hurried to spend their contribution points on feasting and drinking. These villains who had committed all kinds of misdeeds were even voluntarily buying drinks and sharing joy. After all, as volunteers they would either get out of prison alive or disappear without a trace, so their contribution points were useless anyway - of course they had to spend it all quickly.

The most tragic thing in life is when someone dies with money still left unspent.

And even more tragic is having money left unspent, but desperately wanting to die.

Ronald Wade was the latter.

He looked at the sumptuous food in front of him. His stomach was hungry but he had no appetite at all.

The cafeteria server brought over the chilled ale that 'Black Beast' Tuck had bought for everyone. Ronald had not touched any alcohol for many days, though he used to drink

like water every day before being jailed. Having taken a sip of the ale, what should have been a refreshing drink to his parched throat tasted like water with a hint of bitterness.

Boring.

Everything was boring.

Being jailed was boring, living was boring, even masturbation was boring. The only thing now that could make Ronald's pituitary gland send strong signals, the only thing that could make him feel alive, was -

"Woo woo!"

Ronald suddenly plunged his face into the food, frantically shoving it into his mouth with his hands. He chewed vigorously, his teeth gnashing back and forth to tear apart the tendons in the meat slices, as if only this could make him temporarily forget that kind of nauseating yet irresistible primal craving!

"Quite an appetite you've got there. Though you look pretty thin, do you normally work out?"

Ronald looked up to see two infamous personalities of the prison - no need to introduce Igor of course, skilled at financially devastating new inmates through contracted spirits, while also being an information broker in the prison.

Langna had told him on the very first day to be extremely wary of anything Igor said, that he'd never know when he might unknowingly enter into an unfair contract with Igor.

Having been jailed only a short while, Ronald had yet to witness Igor's vicious side, and thus did not have much guard up against him. The other infamous figure, 'Warlock' Ashe, left an even deeper impression - defeating Igor first, then overcoming Valcas, surviving the Blood Moon Tribunal from a nearly doomed predicament.

To Ronald, Ashe seemed fated for defeat every time, yet somehow he kept winning.

From not being able to fight at all to knocking Igor out with one punch, from not knowing how to use a sword to stabbing through Valcas' throat, in the Blood Moon Tribunal Valcas clearly wanted to bring him along to meet the Blood Moon Sovereign, yet somehow his head remained intact...

If this had happened outside, Ronald would surely feel like he was witnessing the birth of a new legend.

What a pity this was Shattered Lake Prison.

No matter the miracles, here they were just bubbles surfacing in the lake, popping when they reached the water's surface, never able to exist under the sun.

"No I don't."

"Then how come you're so skinny?" Ashe took a big bite out of a sandwich, "Did your body fat run away by itself?"

Ronald raised his eyebrows slightly, his face expressionless. "Let's be real here, if you wanna cause trouble for Langna just go look for him directly. I'm not interested in getting involved in your grudges."

"No no, we came to find you." Ashe said. "Still feeling down that you didn't get chosen as a volunteer? Don't worry, besides becoming a volunteer, there are other ways to leave prison."

Ronald's spirit shook. "What ways!"

"Escape!" Ashe said mysteriously. "We have a big plan now, the chance of success for the prison break is very high, just lacking some manpower. Are you interested?"

Ronald was stunned for a moment, then sighed. "Let's be real, don't try to mess with me okay? I'm begging you, can't we just let it be? How about this, I'll buy you guys dinner, one contribution point each, and you let me off easy alright?"

Ashe and Igor exchanged helpless glances. Igor sighed, "If all cult leaders outside were as silver-tongued as you, no wonder the Four Pillars have gone into hiding for so long."

Igor looked to Ronald, "You know you can't keep staying here right? You have to get out of Shattered Lake, you need to escape from Langna, even if it means becoming a volunteer with nine chances dead for every one alive. Because if you keep staying by Langna's side, the outcome will be worse than death, more excruciating than death."

Ronald's eyes flickered. "I don't know what you're talking about. All I know is without Langna, I'd be a regular attraction at the Blood Moon Tribunal, getting hammered into meat paste by the executioner."

"Certainly tempting." Igor laughed. "As long as you agree to be intimate with him, he'd be willing to lose to you deliberately in deathmatches, letting you obtain lots of contribution points and temporarily escape the Tribunal. Especially after you lost five deathmatches in a row, Langna became your only lifeline."

Like most condemned prisoners, Ronald's means of earning contribution points were mostly illegal outside, leaving him almost no way to contribute value in prison. Naturally his sights turned to the Deathmatch Society - obtaining resources by plundering others, this had always been Ronald's way of survival for over twenty years anyway.

Unfortunately, there were too many plunderers and too few producers in prison.

When Ronald joined the Deathmatch Society, he chose what looked like a weak old man to fight, but got beaten till every bone in his body cracked - 'Diamond' Taig had succeeded in snatching another 1 contribution point from a newbie.

The results of the next 4 deathmatches were about the same. Ronald had gathered intel and pulled out all the stops, but those willing to fight him could practically crush him with one finger.

After losing 15 contribution points, Ronald became the bottom feeder of the prison's food chain. He no longer dared to accept deathmatch invites - his confidence had been shattered by the first five losses, he felt everyone here was stronger than him.

If he could not find a way to earn contribution points, he would appear at every subsequent Blood Moon Tribunal until the day the citizens graciously allowed the Blood Moon Sovereign to take away this murderous Woodpecker desperate for redemption.

That was when Langna appeared.

He was willing to deliberately lose to Ronald in deathmatches, allowing Ronald to gain contribution points. What's more, it was an ongoing agreement - Langna had ways to earn contribution points, as long as he was willing, both of them could maintain high contribution and live comfortably in prison for years.

He only had two requests. First, that Ronald be intimate with him. Although reluctant, Ronald did not oppose much either, having experienced plenty outside already. For the sake of survival, sacrificing his chastity a bit was acceptable.

As for his second request...

"Langna needed you as 'raw material' right?" Igor said. "He requested deathmatches with you, and naturally you had to accept in order to earn contribution points. Restrictions are removed in deathmatches, so he could do as he pleased with you...right before you were about to die, Langna would off himself to let you win..."

"This was probably your deal flow right?"

Ronald was silent for a moment, then nodded slightly. "As long as I don't die, my body can recover. Although it shortens my lifespan in the long run, without contribution points I might not even make it past the next Tribunal."

Igor laughed. "Yes, if the 'deal terms' were only this, then it would be quite a bargain. Even I would be tempted."

"What do you mean?"

"Surely you understand better than me right? After all I just pieced together Langna's true motives from collecting intel on his previous 'friends'. But you were the sacrificial offering experiencing the ritual itself. You must have felt the real nature behind this deal already no? Otherwise you wouldn't be so eager to become a volunteer and escape from Langna."

Ronald's pupils dilated. "Ritual? What ritual?"

The corners of Igor's mouth curved up slightly - revealing the truth to victims like this was one of his favorite criminal activities. If possible, he'd love telling every fool he had scammed about his deceptive schemes.

"Do you honestly think Langna made such demands out of mere whimsy? And you must feel it—Langna doesn't treat you as an object, tool, or stranger. He truly loves you... with all his heart, without any reservation."

Ronat's face paled further, his hand trembling slightly as it clutched a steak.

It might sound ludicrous. Langna had taken advantage of situations to threaten Ronat and force him to comply. Each time they fought, Langna treated him like a piece of rib to be savored. From any angle, it looked like Langna simply regarded him as a slave, at his beck and call.

If it were really that way, Ronat would feel somewhat relieved because that's a dynamic he could understand.

Yet, he felt that Langna's feelings were genuine!

Ronat wasn't some lone assassin; he'd been in love before and knew what love felt like.

That's why he was so terrified—every look, every move from Langna, all revealed pure sincerity. Even when Langna ate, there was no hint of malice in his eyes! A profound love combined with feasting; Langna seemed to achieve a perfect harmony between the two, as if they coexisted effortlessly.

Ronat had always been afraid to think deeply about it, but now that Igor brought it to light, he was forced to confront this harrowing truth! He swallowed hard and asked hesitantly, "What... what kind of ceremony is this?"

"To be honest, I don't know. I only know the fate of the sacrificial offerings in the ceremony," Igor replied. "All of Langna's previous 'close friends' died in their own bedrooms, without exception."

Ronald's face turned pale, "How is that possible!? How could they have died in their dorm rooms?"

Ashe also realized - unless in the deathmatch arena zones, chips prohibited condemned prisoners from self-harm and suicide! If a prisoner starved himself, the prison would notify the guards to force feed when his body reached a critical point! Therefore it was impossible for a condemned to die in his dorm room, unless from old age!

But Langna was obviously not a twilight romance enthusiast.

"It's said there were no anomalies in their bodies, everything seemed normal, but all organs and tissues had ceased functioning." Igor speared a strawberry on the cake with his fork, "As if...their souls had suddenly vanished, so their bodies shut down immediately after."

Ronald's face turned as white as paper, his lips quivering uncontrollably.

Igor stabbed in the final blow.

"Now you must be disinterested in everything, except looking forward to Langna's ritual right? Even if you have enough contribution points already, you'd still accept his deathmatch invites... Do you know why?"

"Why?"

"Because only in the ritual can your soul obtain a moment of wholeness - your incomplete soul is already impatient to escape your body."

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

Chapter 78

In the design room, a bald muscular man was cutting fabrics, modifying patterns, making sample clothes. The whole room was filled with all kinds of fabrics, portraits, and clothing accessories, but it was neat and tidy, with everything in its proper place, giving off an aesthetically pleasing feel.

"It's approved! It's approved!"

A young female prisoner excitedly pushed open the door to the design room and said, "Master Langna, our submitted design has been approved. The featured collection for Kaishi this summer is the 'Fantasy Bubble' series you designed! Congratulations!"

"This is an honor for all of us," Langna smiled lightly. "Annette, with this successful experience, you are now a qualified fashion designer."

"It's all thanks to Master Langna's guidance," Annette bowed deeply. "If not for Master Langna teaching me wholeheartedly, how could I have progressed so quickly? This is your honor, Master. My contribution is negligible. I'm deeply grateful."

"Alright, enough with the modesty. If you don't mind, have dinner with us tonight," Langna's mouth curved up as his eyes brimmed with joy. "Such good news, I ought to share it properly with Roni as well."

"Can I order takeout?" Annette joked.

"You can, but the total has to be within five contribution points," Langna winked. "Okay, back to work. Don't get complacent just because we got contribution points from Kaishi. You can never have enough contribution points. And you should try designing independently too. Maybe the next collection will be up to you to take charge..."

"Alright, alright, I know, Master Langna you're great at everything except being long-winded."

Langna helplessly sighed and lowered his head to continue working.

Looking at the piles of fabrics in front of her, Annette had no mind to work. Her attention soon drifted to Langna. The more she looked, the more attractive she found this focused, working man. The more she looked, the harder it was to hide her silly grin.

Too bad he doesn't like women.

Annette sighed. The world is so cruel. When you finally find someone you like, not only do you compete with other women, but also with men?

She had been in Shattered Lake Prison for over a year. Like most death row inmates, she had no livelihood skills beyond simple manual labor, and she didn't have the fighting prowess on the deathmatch stage either - perhaps that was a good thing, at least she wouldn't get beaten to the point of questioning life by those ferocious beasts pretending to be pigs for food.

Annette naturally didn't dare gamble on the citizens letting her live in the Blood Moon Tribunal because of her pretty looks - on the contrary, destroying beauty is often a hidden desire in people's hearts.

The perverts in this country aren't limited to just the death row inmates locked up in prison.

But trying to learn a contribution point-earning skill in prison was almost as difficult as encountering a whirlpool in the Sea of Knowledge.

Repeating simple manual labor had no value. It had to be either an unique craft like the Beastmen's maze toys, the Goblin's bone carvings, or the Cannibal's oil paintings - Annette only found out after coming to prison that the Cannibal's paintings could sell for so much.

Other than that, it had to be complex work requiring mental effort, such as writing, musical composition, tax preparation - with the "harmlessness" of death row inmates, tax accountants from Shattered Lake Prison were especially welcomed by the rich. As long as they could survive the first Blood Moon Tribunal, most accountants, tax experts, and calculators among the death row inmates could live decently in prison.

Of course Annette didn't have the time to learn a skill, nor the brainpower for complex work. Just as she was about to give up and wait for death, wandering aimlessly around the prison, she accidentally walked into Langna's design room.

Fabrics were everywhere inside, and Annette could barely take her eyes off the sample clothes worn by the mannequins - the prison only provided plain white uniforms, she hadn't worn nice clothes for a long time.

She stood in the design room for a long time until a low male voice suddenly sounded from behind her.

"Do you like this outfit? Would you like to try it on?"

Somehow she ended up becoming Langna's designer assistant and apprentice.

Anyone who knew Langna would have a hard time associating his appearance with the profession of "fashion designer", but Langna was a highly valued exclusive designer for Kaishi, the blood moon fashion brand. Almost every design he made became Kaishi's featured collection that season.

The girls and women wearing stylish clothes would not know that the clothes they wore were designed by a bald death row inmate.

Although the brand did push things along, the fact that Langna could lead fashion trends every season was proof enough of his exceptional talent. Even Annette, who had never been involved in fashion design before, grew step by step under Langna's lead. Now, the joint design she did with Langna was even recognized by Kaishi!

Annette was even starting to feel grateful for her imprisonment - if the first twenty years of her life were dim and chaotic, then Langna was the most brilliant rainbow she had encountered.

Everything about Langna attracted her, his personality, talent, speech, everything.

Even his bald head emanated the unique unfettered radiance of an artist.

If she could spend her whole life with Langna, then it wouldn't matter even if she stayed in prison. In fact, compared to the murky society outside, the small prison could better accommodate a quiet design studio.

Too bad he wasn't interested, or rather, he didn't have much interest in women.

Whenever she thought about this, Annette felt sad and hopeless. She had even considered going to the medical center to get the doctors to give her a complete gender reassignment surgery. After all, in the Blood Moon Nation, gender was never an insurmountable obstacle.

But it was really difficult to make this decision, plus Annette didn't know if Langna would mind an unoriginal copy. Back then Langna was still single, so Annette wanted to straighten him out through prolonged company. There's a saying, 'even the bendiest man gets straight when erected', Annette was quite confident in her looks and flirting skills.

If not for the chip's restriction on any violent acts, Annette might have screwed first and dealt with consequences later.

Yet after a year, Langna's partners had changed while Annette hadn't even touched his bald head. She even had to eat dinner with the two of them, swallowing the stinky sourness of their romance.

Thinking about this, Annette felt like the fabrics in front of her were that foul man Ronald, and she cut him to shreds fiercely with the scissors.

Knock knock.

The design room door was pushed open. Langna looked up, his eyes instantly curved into crescents as he revealed a faint smile. "Roni, how do you have time to come over here? What's wrong, are you not feeling well? Want me to go with you to the medical center?"

Pale-faced Ronald shook his head. "I'm fine, Langna. I came to find you today for something."

"To be precise," a handsome man walked into the design room, "we came to discuss cooperation with you."

Langna's expression cooled slightly. "The 'Beauty Beast' Igora... Roni, he's dangerous, come over here by me. Igora, don't think the prison can protect you. If you dare harm Roni, I have plenty of ways to make you wish you were dead."

Another person walked into the design room, standing between Igora and Langna. "Don't worry, Langna. No one will be harmed here."

Langna was no longer smiling at all: "'Troublesome' Ashe, I thought that even if we were not friends, we were definitely not enemies."

Ashe smiled and said: "We are friends, in the past, now, and in the future as well."

"Langna, we came here to discuss cooperation with you."

Suddenly, Langna raised his hand: "Annette, please leave first."

"Master—"

"Leave!"

Annette glared fiercely at Ashe and the others, biting her lip angrily as she left the room.

Ashe glanced at the closed door and said: "You can probably guess why we are here. This is not some vulgar male conversation, so we do not mind an extra accomplice."

Although Igora didn't announce his prison break plans with a loudspeaker, he had visited several prominent inmates in prison, so the news had already spread. With the connections of 'Gourmand' Langna, he certainly knew Igora's intentions, which was why he deliberately dismissed Annette.

Langna completely ignored Ash and stared quietly at Ronald. "Roni, is this your idea?"

Ronald, who had been a bit timid, met those deep blue pupils and gritted his teeth with determination. "Langna, I want to join Igora's team and escape from prison with them!"

"Roni, we can live very well in prison. My contribution points are enough to ensure we'll never be selected for the Blood Moon Tribunal - "

"But I want to leave!" Ronald said loudly. "Langna, are you coming with me, or staying here!?"

Langna was silent for a long time, glancing at Ash and Igora.

When Langna's gaze swept over him, Ash broke out in goosebumps all over, filled with an instinctive fear as if facing a mortal enemy, even having the urge to flee!

It was like...facing an executioner!

"Roni, you know I can't refuse a request from my beloved," Langna breathed out slowly and said calmly, "Beauty Beast, Evil One, as you wish, I, Langna Chiose, am willing to obey your commands. But remember, if anything happens to Roni during this, you will have to keep him company in the afterlife."

"Tell me your plan."

"Since we haven't gathered everyone yet, I can't reveal too much for now," Igora said. "All I can tell you is that Ash has a way to remove the restrictions of the chip."

Langna looked at Ash in surprise but didn't say much. "Who else do you need to find? I can help."

Igora shook his head. "No need. But first you have to tell us, what abilities will you have after the chip restrictions are removed? It might just happen to fill a gap in the team, then we won't need to find new members."

Langna was silent for a while, seemingly considering whether to reveal his background. Everyone waited patiently for his decision.

Finally, he sighed. "Turn off all the lights except one."

When only one lamp remained lit in the corner of the design room, Langna walked into the shadows where the light could not reach, blending completely into the darkness.

"I am a Moonshadow."

Igora's body jerked. "Impossible. Moonshadows and the Sacred Bloodline would never be allowed into the Blood Moon Tribunal. The research institute and church would not permit such disgrace to the two tribes' honor - "

"But I'm an exception. Unlike my brethren who need the moonlight's illumination to transform into Moonshadows, I have to hide in the shadows to transform. Under the moonlight I actually cannot transform. The church has no need to worry I would do anything to disgrace the tribes."

"Besides, unlike my brethren who resonate with the blood moon and descend into madness, I have never heard the blood moon's call. After transforming into a Moonshadow, I only become more cruel, more rebellious, and more... ruthless."

With the lithe and agile steps of a predator, a wolfman nearly two meters tall and covered in grey fur walked into the light.

Its deep blue pupils made all three people feel as if they had fallen into an ice cave.

"I am a traitor to the church, a disgrace to the Moonshadows, a beast even the blood moon spits on. I am neither a pure Moonshadow nor a devout human. Every strand of fur is filled with disloyalty to the blood moon."

"They call me... a werewolf."

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

Chapter 79: A Wild Sorcerer Appears

In the virtual world, the sea of knowledge.

"Werewolves who can't transform when exposed to moonlight... your prison really has a diverse population, no wonder it's a multi-racial nation."

Sonya lay at the bow of the small boat, gazing up at the hazy sky. "But what exactly was the gourmand's ritual? I've never heard of such a brutal and bizarre ceremony. Could he have been trying to summon a gluttony-aligned arcane spirit?"

In theory, the easiest arcane traditions for a sorcerer to master aren't the external ones like fire, earth, and sword magics that are readily accessible. After all, external traditions still require deliberate training from the sorcerer to gain experience.

Internal traditions, on the other hand, can level up even without the sorcerer intentionally training them.

What are internal traditions? They're the physiological activities that every sorcerer has to do every day.

Eating, sleeping, listening, watching, excreting... These unavoidable physiological activities since childhood could be converted into arcane tradition experience. If so, nearly every sorcerer would have seven or eight mastered arcane traditions.

Unfortunately, that's only theoretical.

The seemingly simplest and most effortless internal traditions actually have much higher barriers to entry than external ones. However difficult external traditions may be, there's always a possibility of getting started as long as one puts in the effort. But with internal traditions, racial talents are nearly always required. If you aren't randomly born with an

internal talent, you'll likely never independently master an internal tradition in your lifetime.

What Sonya referred to as the "gluttony tradition" was one such internal tradition, usually only found among cannibalistic races. And not all cannibals can learn it either, only a small portion of cannibal sorcerers suddenly gain insight into the gluttony tradition.

Internal traditions can't be taught. What is there to teach about eating, defecating, and sleeping?

Moreover, internal traditions have deep connections to inner desires, emotional changes, and personality quirks. This knowledge can't be imparted through words alone. It's something that can only be comprehended, not explained.

Sonya's guess wasn't unreasonable. After all, eating and the gluttony tradition are nearly one and the same. Many believe that cannibals possess the gluttony talent precisely because they eat human flesh.

"Igor has a different take," said Ashe, biting his fingernails. "He thinks that in this ritual, eating is just the tiniest part. The true core steps aren't about eating, but about love."

"Love?"

"Have you ever farmed before?"

If it were anyone else, Sonya would definitely feel doubly insulted.

Firstly, suspecting that a young and pretty girl sorcerer like her had farmed before was insulting.

Secondly, doubting that a country bumpkin from an agricultural town had never farmed was even more insulting!

"...Go on, I understand what you mean."

"Igor thinks Langna was farming," Ashe said, lying at the stern. "He planted seeds of love in the targets' hearts. Through the bloodiest intimacy — eating them — he quickly nurtured those seeds to take root and grow, equivalent to fertilizing and cultivating them."

"Though Renard refuses to admit it, he has gradually lost interest in everything else. The only thing that still ignites his desires is participating in Langna's rituals. Even if Langna suddenly changed his recipes, Renard would likely voluntarily add his own name."

Just listening to this made Sonya feel muddled. “So after the seeds of love have sprouted and matured, what will Langna harvest? Their souls?”

“Igor couldn’t guess either. It’s probably related to the soul, but not just the soul.” Ashe said, “But that’s their business — we just need to be sure of one thing: Langna and Renard have an inseparable bond, and that’s what we can utilize.”

“So as long as you’ve persuaded Renard, it’s akin to gaining Langna as an ally.” Sonya reminded, “But aren’t they both vicious death row convicts? Is this really okay?”

Unlike Igor the fraudster with hardly any combat ability, Renard was the Woodpecker Gang’s golden mouth, skilled in traps, firearms, concealed weapons and more murderous techniques. Langna was even more terrifying as a Moonshadow werewolf, considered a high-tier threat even among two-wing sorcerers.

Compared to them, Ashe and Igor were like two little lambs that only knew how to bleat.

Once they lost the prison’s protection, it was hard to imagine a good outcome for Ashe and Igor when facing these two utterly wicked death row inmates.

“The prison isn’t a talent market. I don’t have many choices,” Ashe said helplessly. “Just finding two capable and willing escapees is lucky enough. Can’t be picky about their characters either, just have to hope Shattered Lake Prison’s rehabilitation of convicts is very successful.”

Ironically, Ashe hoped the rehabilitation wasn’t too successful, so he could find prison mates daring enough to escape with him. Yet he also hoped the rehabilitation was extremely successful, molding those daredevil escapees into model citizens who’d only escape to contribute to society.

“But I don’t really need to worry. When it comes to safety, Igor is far more concerned than me. He’s already planted suggestions in Renard, intensifying his sense of danger...” Ashe said, “Not exactly deceit, just making Renard clearly realize — as long as he doesn’t kill Langna, his craving to be devoured by Langna will never disappear.”

Sonya kicked Ashe’s legs back down. “Then wouldn’t they just kill each other after breaking out?”

“Kill each other? I bet not just that. If possible, Igor would definitely have them attract and occupy the Heresy Court’s attention before slipping away himself.” Ashe smiled wryly. “And he’s still holding one of my promises. I haven’t even decided how to handle that yet.”

The promise couldn’t be too outrageous. It had to be something the other party could accomplish without triggering innate resistance, like commanding them to “commit suicide”. That kind of request went against innate drives and was unreasonable.

Therefore, Ashe could only have Igor “help” him escape, not “make” him escape. The latter strict command would be invalid.

But even so, Igor could still make things difficult for Ashe. For instance, during their escape, if Igor ordered Ashe to “cover our rear”, Ashe would be unable to refuse this reasonable demand.

Even if hundreds of Blood Mad Hunters charged at them, Ashe would still have to pause to surround them, demonstrating the action of “covering the rear” before continuing to flee.

“What do you plan to do? Did you make any plans for after the escape?”

“I roughly have some. First find this body’s nemesis, an elf professor named Sylin. See if I can get revenge. If not, at least steal some of his money, then find a way to survive.”

“Isn’t that just playing it by ear? Aren’t you afraid the outside is even more dangerous than prison, where at least you’re safe daily?”

“It’s adopting a progressive approach in the adventure domain to achieve lasting gains, using abstraction, transmission and attribution analysis as handles to empower life, improving the logical considerations for escape...”

“Say something a child can understand.”

“I chose this path, so even if it gets hard I’ll willingly walk it. Regret is for my future self to worry about. My present self just needs to consider how to avoid future regret.” Ashe leisurely said, “You don’t want to see me crying my eyes out everyday in prison, right?”

“Show me. I love watching others bawl until snot drips from their faces.”

“And there’s still you.” Ashe sat up.

“How can I help you?” Sonya rolled her eyes.

Ashe said, “Through our bond, the stronger you are, the stronger I become. So if you don’t want to explore the virtual world alone in the future, be more proactive in training. Don’t always leave on time. Don’t lead such a comfortable life at your age. Have the courage to step out of your comfort zone!”

“When you put it that way, I suddenly feel very tempted to slack off. Yes, no training, just playing around.” Sonya muttered lazily and stretched. “Did you recover your arcane energy?”

“Mostly recovered.”

Earlier, they had encountered an adolescent froth dragon and nearly exhausted their arcane power before barely driving it away. So they had to rest in the boat. Times like these were often when they shared about their daily lives.

To be honest, these rest times were quite frequent. Ever since condensing over half the Silver Wings, the difficulty of both Legacy Isle and knowledge creatures had risen sharply. The most common situation was knowledge creatures depleting their arcane power before fleeing.

Ashe suspected the knowledge creatures were intentionally draining them.

But the Swordswoman said this was normal. They couldn't instantly obliterate knowledge creatures, lacked control abilities like stuns, and didn't have a speed advantage either. So it was hard to pin down knowledge creatures.

This was also the plight most silver-level sorcerers faced — they often only excelled in one area. In the real world, they could still cooperate in teams, but in the virtual world, having a major shortcoming in one aspect led to severe tactical flaws.

This situation often didn't improve until sorcerers reached the two-wing gold or even three-wing Saint domain, when they could finally polish their arcane systems. But by then, they would face new challenges in the virtual world.

Ashe opened the virtual world map, though there wasn't much to see. The 24 surrounding grid areas were all "Don't Waste Your Effort" no-reward zones. In these cases, they could only randomly pick a direction to try their luck—

"Ah!?"

Sonya was puzzled. "What's wro—"

Ashe instantly covered Sonya's mouth with his hand, holding one finger to his lips.

Sonya blinked blankly before quickly realizing. She lowered her voice and asked, "There's a sorcerer nearby?"

Ashe nodded, turning to look at the mist-shrouded sea.

On the virtual world map, another yellow marker identical to Ashe and Sonya's had suddenly popped up in the neighboring area!

In the mist 10 meters from their boat, space opened up a tiny Gate of Truth. A figure fell out from inside.

Right before hitting the water, she burst out in smoke, transforming into a tiny bat frantically flapping its wings forward.

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

Chapter 80: Sylphine

A small bat was leisurely flying above the sea shrouded in white mist.

There were two drops of congealed, colorless liquid on the bat's back, continuously absorbing knowledge and converting it into arcane energy from the white mist.

'The absorption rate is still too slow...' Sylphine sighed to herself, still very dissatisfied with the speed of her arcane energy growth.

2 drops of colorless Source Blood = 6 drops of rainbow Source Blood = 18 drops of golden Source Blood = 54 drops of silver Source Blood in synthesis. In the Sea of Knowledge, it had an arcane energy absorption rate 560% of an ordinary sorcerer.

It seemed quite impressive, a full 5.5 times the arcane energy growth rate of an ordinary sorcerer, thoroughly demonstrating the power of the Sacred Bloodline.

However, the advantage of the Sacred Bloodline was only in the Sea of Knowledge. Upon promotion to Two-Winged Gold, entering the Time Lands, the silver Source Blood would lose its effect and only the golden Source Blood could absorb arcane energy.

With Sylphine's current 2 drops of colorless Source Blood, it could only be divided into 18 drops of golden Source Blood. Her absorption rate would decrease to 200%, merely twice that of an ordinary sorcerer.

If she advanced to Three-Winged Saint, it would change to only the 6 drops of rainbow Source Blood being able to absorb arcane energy. Her absorption rate would further decrease to 80%, already inferior to sorcerers of the same level!

By the time she reached Four-Winged Legend, Sylphine would have to rely solely on 2 drops of colorless Source Blood. Her absorption efficiency would be a pathetic 40%, not even half that of a Four-Winged sorcerer!

Therefore, despite their immortality, the Sacred Bloodline was actually the race most pressed for time. They had to quickly cross the Sea of Knowledge and Time Lands, spreading their gold and silver wings while young, and entering the Three-Winged Saint realm. Only the Sacred Bloodline who stepped into the Three-Winged Saint realm could

obtain the Blood Moon Sovereign's blessings and undergo the Bloodline Purification ritual.

The later the Bloodline Purification ritual was carried out, the less ideal the results, unable to refine higher tier Source Blood and renew their vitality.

In the research institute, Sylphine had seen many aged Sacred Bloodline sorcerers. They often remained in the Three-Winged Saint realm or Two-Winged Gold for a lifetime. Even with their long lifespans, due to their extremely poor arcane energy absorption rates, by the time their souls extinguished, they were still unable to condense complete rainbow wings and golden wings.

Therefore, the disparities within the Sacred Bloodline were extremely severe. Some managed to spread their silver wings in just a few years, yet remained silver-level sorcerers for life. Others took a hundred years just to enter the Three-Winged Saint realm, but were unable to fully spread even their rainbow wings in the next four hundred years.

Although the Sacred Bloodline broke free of time's shackles, they would eventually still meet eternal silence.

"Hmm?"

The little bat hovered in mid-air, emitting inaudible ultrasonic waves to ordinary humans, probing the detailed terrain nearby.

Miracle – Blood Bat Form, it was one of the racial traits of the Sacred Bloodline. Almost every member could easily grasp this miracle to transform into a flying bat in the virtual world. This way, they did not have to swim laboriously in the Sea of Knowledge like other sorcerers. If danger arose, they could also flee swiftly, greatly improving their exploration efficiency and survival rate.

Ultrasonic detection was an advanced miracle in Blood Bat Form with a continuous effect, allowing Sacred Bloodline sorcerers to roughly detect the terrain around them.

Although the detection range was short due to the high interference of the white mist, it was still better than nothing.

Just now, the ultrasonic detection picked up some anomaly on the right that did not seem to simply be the sea's surface, there was an object signal. But when she stopped to probe further, the feedback changed and the object disappeared.

Could it be a knowledge creature?

Sylphine held no fear towards knowledge creatures, on the contrary, she felt excited. She had just learned a new miracle and was looking for a victim to test its might.

However, the location where the object signal originated was just a flat sea surface, with nothing around.

She felt puzzled, but there were far too many mysteries in the virtual world. If she had to get to the bottom of every anomaly, the few hundred years would not be enough for her to research just one Sea of Knowledge.

“Oh well, I was hoping to encounter a knowledge creature, I have some spirit familiars I want to exchange...”

Just as Sylphine was about to leave, she clearly heard a ‘plop’ sound from up ahead on the right.

The little bat froze in mid-air, momentarily stunned.

This was the first time she had heard such a strange sound in the Sea of Knowledge. It sounded just like...someone throwing rocks into the sea?

Could it be another sorcerer?

Sylphine hesitated for a bit, but still flew in the direction of the sound – she was confident in herself, even if she could not beat another sorcerer, she could at least escape.

Moreover, this was the first time she had encountered another sorcerer in the virtual world. Just to satisfy her curiosity, it was worth the risk of death to venture into dangerous territory.

Who was the other person?

One of the Blood Moon Kingdom’s sorcerers?

How old were they, which magic disciplines were they proficient in?

If it was a sorcerer from another kingdom, could we communicate?

With apprehension and anticipation, Sylphine quickly flapped her wings and flew over. The white mist parted to reveal a small island before her –

It was an adolescent Ivory Thunder Dragon. Its entire body was covered in pearlescent skin, eyeless, with a neck and head containing only a single mouth.

Ivory Thunder Dragons often contained many rare lightning-based spirit familiars, making them quite valuable knowledge creatures in the Sea of Knowledge. Even if Sylphine had no use for them, she could trade them to the research institute for a large amount of research points.

In the past, Sylphine would have been happy to encounter such a decent prey. But now, she felt somewhat disappointed – she really wanted to try chatting with someone else in the virtual world! Even just trash talking would be great!

If the other party was a nice sorcerer, they might even temporarily party up and explore the virtual world together!

But her encounter was just an ugly Ivory Thunder Dragon...

Noticing the little bat, the Ivory Thunder Dragon let out a shrill roar. The intense sound waves were enough to temporarily deafen sorcerers.

But Sylphine simply reverted back to her humanoid form during that instant, becoming one with the virtual world for 0.1 seconds during the form transformation. Naturally, she avoided the dragon's roar.

As she transformed, blood mist burst forth violently around the Ivory Thunder Dragon. When Sylphine landed, the dragon's pearlescent skin erupted with wisps of blue electricity as it charged at her with a bellow!

Such reckless brute force attacks were the hardest to deal with. Firstly, the small island limited the sorcerer's evasion space. Secondly, the intense electric current around the dragon's body could heavily injure or even briefly stun the sorcerer if they barely grazed it.

Yet Sylphine did not dodge or evade. Facing the pouncing dragon, she stretched out her palm and softly exclaimed, "Miracle – Blood Brambles!"

The blood mist abruptly condensed into thorny vines that tightly coiled around the Ivory Thunder Dragon's body. As it continued its charge, countless lacerations were ripped into its pearlescent skin by the blood brambles, practically skinning it alive!

Some days ago, Sylphine still found it somewhat difficult to unleash 'Blood Brambles', but after practicing with surgical spells like Eyelid Incision, Orthodontic Molding, and Nasal Sculpting these days, her proficiency with this miracle had increased tremendously, allowing her to use it in combat now!

Suffering such a brutal attack, the Ivory Thunder Dragon's charge naturally came to an abrupt halt. It violently flapped its wings, the flickering electricity tearing apart the blood brambles. It took to the skies to escape the range of the blood mist.

Knowledge creatures' learning capability was no inferior to sorcerers'. The Ivory Thunder Dragon had realized the blood mist was extremely dangerous, so it wanted to swoop down from the sky to strike at this detestable invading sorcerer!

Sylphine remained composed. Tracing intricate gestures with her hands, she muttered, “My first time using this in actual combat, hope nothing goes wrong...”

Sizzle!

The Ivory Thunder Dragon suddenly spiraled down in a fierce dive, completely enveloped in a thick layer of electric plasma, resembling a terrifying electric plasma ball!

Even sorcerers proficient in defensive abilities like the Masochist disciplines would surely have their souls instantly damaged and ejected from the virtual world if struck head-on by that!

Yet Sylphine clapped her hands together, a bizarre radiance flashing in her bloody pupils as she exclaimed, “Miracle – Blood Retrograde!”

Hiss!

Accompanied by a wretched shriek, the Ivory Thunder Dragon's body lost control. Like a severed kite, it was flung away, writhing in agony on the ground. Within its body, blood vessels continuously ruptured as its muscles convulsed. The reversed blood flow even burst through its skin like blooming blood flowers!

When the Ivory Thunder Dragon was pierced by the blood brambles earlier, Sylphine's ‘blood seeds’ had already been planted within it.

With the blood seeds’ assistance in locking onto the target, Sylphine could freely manipulate the blood within the target using her Hemomancy spirit familiars, hastening blood loss and reversing blood flow were common miracles. High-level Hemomancers could even freeze or boil the blood of their targets!

Among the Blood Moon Kingdom's sorcerers circulated this adage – ‘When fighting a Hemomancer, the moment you shed your first drop of blood, you'll know it's time to commit suicide.’

“Waaa!”

The Ivory Thunder Dragon suddenly let out a shriek resembling a human infant's. Violent arcs of electricity erupted from its body once more as it swung its tail and flung 3 spirit familiars in the opposite direction!

When Sylphine went to collect the 3 spirit familiars, the Ivory Thunder Dragon immediately smashed into the white mist, its traces and sounds quickly obscured by the layers of mist as it fled to parts unknown.

Sylphine was not surprised at all by this. Battered as the Ivory Thunder Dragon looked, if it went all out, Sylphine's Hemomancy miracles could not stop it at all.

This was also where the cunning of knowledge creatures lay – even when hunting, they would conserve some strength, misleading enemies into underestimating them. The moment they realized the odds were against them, they would toss out bait and decisively flee, never fighting enemies to the death.

Coupled with the concealment of the white mist, unless they had the time, terrain, or attribute advantage, one-winged sorcerers basically could not slay knowledge creatures alone. After exploring the virtual world for over half a year, Sylphine had not killed a single knowledge creature, a true reflection of most sorcerers' experiences.

As Sylphine kept the 3 spirit familiars, her ears twitched. She seemed to vaguely hear the Ivory Thunder Dragon's agonized cries from afar.

But with the heavy obstruction of the white mist, Sylphine found it hard to confirm her own judgment. Listening carefully again, she seemed to hear nothing.

But as aforementioned, there were far too many bizarre occurrences in the virtual world. She need not waste time pondering over such matters. Time was the most precious resource to the Sacred Bloodline. She had to treasure every second exploring the virtual world.

Sylphine activated her miracle again, transforming back into a bat. Just as she was about to pick a direction to continue forward, she suddenly heard another 'plop' from up ahead on the right.

The little bat hovered in midair, bewildered.

Again?

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