

SORCERER'S HANDBOOK

Chapter 691: Did the Sword Princess Die?

In the Stars Kingdom, within the girls' dormitory of Swordflower College, Adelle lay on her bed, anxiously scrolling through the school forum.

“Details of the Specter Seer’s Resurrection Event”

“Four Sanctuaries Have Fallen”

“Eternal City Entry Forbidden! Suspected New City Lord Elected! Stay Tuned!”

“We Still Don’t Know Who Obtained the Lake Inheritance”

These four pinned and highlighted posts dominated the forum, each one a sensational piece of news over the past two days. Even Adelle, a typical college student who wasn’t a sorcerer, was eagerly following the updates.

The most eye-catching of all was undoubtedly the Specter Seer’s resurrection event.

Although most people had no chance to partake in the Specter's Inheritance, the "Specter Handbook" had become the best-selling book in Galaxia. In the past month's book sales ranking list in Galaxia, the "Specter Handbook," "Time Handbook," and "Lake Handbook" occupied the top three spots. After all, books like these, filled with intrigue yet free from copyright fees, were a publisher's dream.

The sales of the "Specter Handbook" were several times that of the other two combined, and rumors circulated that the Thousand Star Business Association was already planning a TV drama about the Specter Seer. With keywords like 'rebirth,' 'ruthlessness,' 'cunning,' and 'revenge,' the Specter Seer was a magnet for directors and screenwriters.

In such a media environment, the news of the Specter Seer's resurrection was like a spark igniting the sorcerer community in Stars. The Specter Seer was a character full of dramatic tension on the Holographic Screen, but if he were to appear in reality, who could withstand him?

Moreover, the resurrection of the Specter Seer wasn't a distant event; four Sanctuaries in Stars had already perished due to his resurrection, and this number was far from final. Many Sanctuaries preferred solitary research, and assessing their survival status would take time.

The pinned post detailing the resurrection event was essentially the 'official version' circulated by the Sanctuary professors of Truth College. Additionally, other Sanctuaries had released embellished versions, offering various perspectives on the perilous journey through the Dreaming Celestium.

The dissemination of this news was no accident: when the four Inheritances first appeared, the House of Nobles had launched a forum dedicated to Inheritances and established an information scoring system. All valid information regarding Inheritances could be exchanged for nobility points on the forum, accelerating the process of gaining titles or redeeming various rewards, and this information was freely available to any browser.

Due to the inertia of information sharing, when the Sanctuaries returned to reality, they naturally rushed to the forum to discuss the Specter Seer's resurrection event-especially since they had been in the Virtual Realm for nearly a day and night. Sanctuaries were the backbone of society, and their collective disappearance had already attracted widespread attention.

Initially, Adelle had been enjoying following the updates, but now, as she looked at the forum, she was trembling with anger, gritting her teeth, wishing she could drag the posters out through the Holographic Screen and give them a good beating.

"Rhythm Sword Saint, Invisible Sword Saint, and Other Sanctuary Professors Are Safe!"

"Ms. Therave Hasn't Appeared for Over 60 Hours; All Sanctuaries Should Have Returned to Reality 24 Hours Ago"

"Weapon Master Mentioned Seeing the Red-Haired Sword Princess in the Dreaming Celestium"

"When the Tide Recedes, You Discover Who's Swimming Naked"

"Has there been absolutely no news about Therave? After all the effort to bring forth a Swordflower that eclipsed even Truth itself, and she just falls like this?"

"The ones who should return have already returned; those who shouldn't, can't."

Adelle clicked into the forum post to read the responses, and was so infuriated that she rolled on the bed, her legs almost kicking the ceiling. “What are you ranting about now?” Lois asked. “Those people on the forum are all being sarcastic and cursing Sonya!” Adelle said, sounding as though the curses were directed at her.

Of course, that couldn’t actually be the case. Although freedom of speech exists, cursing someone to death clearly violates moral and legal standards-in a world filled with the Miracles of sorcerers, such remarks that could become part of the Ritual Track are especially scrutinized. But the creativity of the masses is boundless, not to mention that the main users of a university forum are the most intellectually developed and also the most idle group of people. While they can’t curse others to death, they can bless them to live.

Adelle opened posts mentioning Sonya, each feigning concern for her situation, with comments like ‘hope she’s alright,’ ‘if it’s true, then I hope it’s false,’ and ‘a meteor fleeting yet brilliant,’ followed by various emoticons. If anyone accused them of being sarcastic, they could even turn it around and report others for cursing the sword Princess... They’ve clearly mastered the mechanics of the forum.

Of course, these people only dared to be sarcastic now. If Sonya were still around, she would have forum admin privileges herself. The Stretching Paw sword saint wouldn’t ban these people, but would directly expose their real identities in the forum-and she had already done this once; every account she named ended up deleting itself.

Now, the problem is, she isn’t here.

Adelle now dares not even open her messaging app, because members of the Stretch Paw Club keep bombarding her with messages, asking if there is any news about the sword Princess.

Previously, Adelle could still muster up some encouragement for them, going to forums to argue with others, but now even she has become listless, only daring to hug her stuffed toy and sulk.

Just 12 hours ago, when Truth College announced the details of the Specter Seer's resurrection, everyone realized something had happened to Sonya. Accompanying the announcement was a list from the House of Nobles of Galaxia's Sanctuary, which could not verify the life or death status of two Sanctuary sorcerers.

Sonya Therave was one of them, and the other was a recluse of the Sanctuary. But six hours ago, the recluse was confirmed to have fallen, becoming one of the four victims of the Specter Seer incident.

Everyone knows, those who should have appeared, should have done so by now. Those who haven't appeared, can only be waited for.

Today everyone has classes, but no one goes; they all wait in the dormitory, not even sure what they're waiting for.

"Just the other day, I heard that a few senior brothers died," Engulite suddenly said. "Their souls perished in the Eternal City, their bodies died in the Meditation Building, and were only discovered after they had decomposed."

“Exploring the Virtual Realm is fraught with dangers, and every year sorcerers perish unexpectedly within it, let alone those who engage in the competition for Inheritance. Even the safest, like the Lake Inheritance, has a risk of death, let alone the Specter’s Inheritance.”

“I know, I know!” Adelle exclaimed, “I’m just really upset about why so many people are hoping for Sonya’s demise!”

“If she really were gone, people would only mourn and remember her. Swordflower College would hold a memorial for her, and her image and statue would remain in the school,” Lois said calmly. “Right now, it’s just some people who can’t wait to mourn, eager to show their presence on the forum.”

“That’s what I don’t understand,” Adelle questioned. “It’s one thing not to like Sonya, but why do so many people hate her? She hasn’t offended them or touched their interests.”

Leaning back against her chair, Lois gazed at the ceiling and said, “If I weren’t so close to her, I might dislike her too.”

“She hasn’t wronged me, nor do we have any conflicting interests, but I constantly hear her name. The school praises her, the forum discusses her, and even when I turn on the Holographic Screen, I might see her endorsements... and she’s my peer.”

“Some people will admire her for her excellence, but others will find her annoying and dislike her,” Lois said indifferently. “She makes me anxious, makes me jealous, and more importantly, she’s not flawless.”

“She’s not like Dimy, who comes from nobility; she’s just a village girl from a small town. She went from becoming a sorcerer to advancing to Sanctuary in just a few months, and the process was shrouded in mystery... Even Dimy is disliked by many Truth students, so how could someone like Sonya possibly be loved by everyone?”

“Do those people on the forum really hate Sonya? How could they? Most of them haven’t even met her; they’re just going with the flow,” Lois looked at Adelle. “If you’re bored, come down and pick a TV drama to watch with me. I could use a break anyway.”

Adelle nodded silently, came down in her pajamas, pulled up a chair next to Lois, and after selecting a TV drama on the Holographic Screen, she suddenly asked, “Do you think she might not come back?”

After a brief silence, Engulite, who was doing inverted sit-ups with her legs hanging off the bed, jumped down. She was steaming with heat, her workout shirt completely soaked. She took a sip of water and said, “Should we go look for her?”

“The school has already checked the Meditation Building; she’s not there,” Lois replied. “Do you know anywhere else she might spend the night?”

“Her boyfriend’s place?”

“Are you answering a riddle with another riddle?” Lois retorted bluntly. “We can’t even be sure her boyfriend actually exists.”

“So we’re just supposed to wait here?” Adelle’s voice was filled with exhaustion. “Isn’t there anything I can do?”

“Study,” Lois suggested. “Studying is never a mistake.”

“At a time like this, how can I focus on studying!”

“Don’t act like you usually manage to study anyway...”

“Is it just my delusion,” Engulite suddenly said, “or are you really not that nervous, Lois?”

“It’s probably because I watched her the longest,” Lois said calmly. “From the first day we shared a dorm, we were at odds, and the more we fought, the prettier and more popular she became. Eventually, she became a sorcerer, defeating those who looked down on her, and swept through the Meteor Trial competition like a dazzling spark of lightning, quickly becoming the brightest star in the night sky...”

“How could I ever believe that such a brilliant, unique person could just fall from grace?”

After a pause, Lois tapped the Holographic Screen to start watching the TV drama, adding with the background music playing, “But maybe, deep down, I was also hoping she would just disappear.”

Engulite went to change her clothes, then moved a chair over to join them in watching the TV drama. Just as the drama was reaching its first climax, the sound of keys turning in the lock was heard.

The three turned to stare blankly at the door, but instead of the Red-Haired Sword Princess, six strangers in black uniforms appeared before them.

It was evident that these six were also surprised by their presence.

The leading male and female exchanged a glance, then flashed their badges and said, “We are from the school administration office, and we are here on a task. Please vacate the dormitory temporarily.”

They glanced over and indeed recognized the two as the male and female deputy directors from the administrative office.

Adelle let out an “Oh,” and stood up to change her clothes, but Engulite and Lois were puzzled.

“What task does the administrative office have that requires sneaking in with a spare key to open a student dormitory?” Lois asked calmly. “It’s class time, theoretically we shouldn’t even be here. Were you planning to steal something while we were out?”

“Students are becoming increasingly disrespectful,” the female deputy retorted sharply. “The student dormitories are school property, and the administrative office has the right to manage them!”

“Then you could have informed us and asked for our cooperation,” Lois argued. “What is it that you can’t let us know about?”

“There are many things students shouldn’t know,” the female deputy said disdainfully. “Who do you think you are? A sanctuary sorcerer?”

“No comment.” Compared to the female deputy, the male deputy was more reserved and beyond reproach. “Students are obliged to cooperate with the school’s operations. Please leave immediately.”

Engulite started, “But how can you prove-“

“Fine.”

Lois cut her off, standing up to prepare to leave, “We’ll change our clothes and then leave-“

“No need for that,” the male deputy blocked the door with his foot. “You just need to go to another dormitory or stay downstairs for a while. You’ll be able to return soon.”

Lois sighed in resignation, “Then we can take a few books downstairs to study, right?”

She turned and gave Adelle and Engulite a meaningful look, “Grab a few books, the most important ones.”

Engulite still looked confused, but Adelle quickly dashed to Sonya’s desk, pulling open a drawer and pretending to search for something, “Just a moment, I’ll find and burn it-“

“What are you doing?!”

As the administrative staff burst through the door in shock and anger, Lois suddenly stepped aside and shot a Riptide at the ground, while at the same time Engulite kicked a chair hard, sending it flying like a cannonball at the intruders!

“I knew it,” Lois sneered. “You came to steal.”

Chapter 692: Why Are You Only Back Now?

The most coveted aspect of Sonya wasn't her beauty, nor her self-created miracles, and not even her own being! It was the secret she harbored-the secret that allowed her to achieve the Sanctuary of Swordsmanship from scratch in less than half a year!

Even the likes of Lake Angel, King of Time, and Specter Seer, these Demigods, need at least two years to ascend from silver sorcerer to sanctuary sorcerer, even when traversing the Path of Origin without deliberately enhancing their Sect Realm.

The absurd speed at which the Red-Haired Sword Princess ascended was beyond even the reach of the reborn Specter Seer!

Even if Sonya faced no bottlenecks and could ascend as soon as her virtual wings were fully formed, her speed in forming those wings was several times, if not dozens of times, faster than that of ordinary sorcerers!

Silver virtual wings might have the excuse of the Whirlpool, but golden virtual wings required a solid journey of thousands of miles, yet she managed to cover in a month or two what others took two years to accomplish!

Such a secret could propel a Family or even an entire Kingdom to new heights. Who wouldn't be tempted? Who wouldn't want it?

The Stars Kingdom refrained from demanding Sonya's secret because all officials, from top to bottom, were bound by the blessing of the Stars, preventing them from making any decisions that would intentionally harm the interests of citizens. Even if they wanted to

use the greater good to threaten a village girl, the constitution reminded them that the greater good included these common folks.

However, the Stars Kingdom wasn't in a hurry. Sonya accepting the blessing of the Stars was only a matter of time, and if there was indeed a secret, it would surely remain within the Stars Kingdom.

But for others, it was a different story. If Sonya's secret was limited, whoever got it first would benefit their Family immensely!

Adelle and Lois, for instance, had previously been pressured by their Families, both openly and covertly, to find ways to steal the secret of the stretching paw sword saint. But as their relationship with Sonya grew closer, and with Lois also becoming a sorcerer, the Family pressure gradually eased-after all, maintaining good relations with a promising sanctuary sorcerer wasn't a bad idea.

Lois had long anticipated that someone would covet Sonya's belongings. But she hadn't expected that even before the death was confirmed, someone would be so eager to raid the place!

Upon reflection, she understood-if the death was confirmed, they wouldn't even have the chance to snatch the belongings.

Smash!

The male deputy charged in with a powerful punch, shattering the chair to pieces! As for the Riptide beneath his feet, it hardly affected him!

Fist-Claw sorcerer!

Lois and Engulite's pupils contracted sharply. In the cramped environment of a dorm room, the advantage of a fist-claw sorcerer was nearly limitless! Engulite's swordsmanship couldn't be fully utilized, Lois's water spell required spellcasting time, while his fist-claw techniques could be freely deployed!

He was well aware of this, stepping steadily into the room, "It's already over--"

The male deputy's voice abruptly choked, for he saw the weakest and most powerless person in the room, Adelle, holding a megaphone-something she had picked up while helping at the Masquerade Ball some days ago.

"Help! There's a thief attacking girls in the dorm!"

Adelle's voice pierced through the entire dorm building: "These thieves pretended to be from the administration, pried open our doors, and when they couldn't steal, they resorted to robbery, striking at the female students! Help, there are thieves, come quickly, there are extra credits for acts of bravery!"

In this situation, the male deputy calmed down. He said to the people behind him, "Hurry up." Then, turning to the female deputy, he added, "You come with me to subdue them."

The female deputy was deeply resentful: “Aren’t you enough by yourself?! What do we do now? Everyone knows! It’s all your fault. If you hadn’t chosen this time to come, none of this would have happened!”

“I can defeat them, but I can’t stop them from damaging property,” said the male deputy. “Stop complaining, since we’ve already messed it up, we at least have to complete the minimum task.”

Lois laughed, “Hard to believe you can still be so amiable. If it were me, I would have slapped this menopausal old lady flying by now.”

The female deputy immediately turned her gaze toward Lois. Indeed, Lois’s words were biased. The female deputy, though no longer delicate, was still considered beautiful. In her youth, she might have competed with Lois for the title of Swordflower, but her resentment made her features profoundly terrifying, each blackhead seeming to exude bitterness.

Whoosh! Suddenly, the female deputy pointed at Adelle’s water cup, and the cup exploded, sending a stream of black water towards Lois-it turned out she was also a water sorcerer!

The black water, likely mixed with a shadow spirit, sped towards Lois’s face at an incredible speed. Even though it wouldn’t be fatal, it would leave a terrifying scar on Lois!

An ordinary silver sorcerer, even if aware, could not dodge this miraculous attack. However, Lois showed no fear! Water marks appeared under her feet, and though she exerted no force, her body slid out with the flow of water, incredibly fast!

Riptide spirit!

This was precisely the reward Lois had received from the Lake Inheritance!

Lois didn't just slide randomly; she slid right up to Sonya's desk and shot a burst of riptide at the four men in black, forcing them to defend. The female deputy wanted to retaliate but had to consider the relics behind Sonya!

At that moment, Engulite had already drawn her Wooden Sword, and her Sword Shadow strike aimed at the female deputy!

Clang!

The male deputy caught Engulite's Wooden Sword with his fist, unknowingly wearing a Chain Glove. Despite being struck, the glove rang out, yet he was unscathed!

Engulite's eyes turned cold, and her Wooden Sword split into numerous afterimages that slashed at the male deputy! The male deputy seemed overwhelmed and could only passively defend, the room filling with the sound of countless crackling thunders!

Seconds later, they both withdrew. The male deputy glanced at his now-ruined glove, his face showing surprise, “To achieve this with just a few basic spirits... truly a generation of talents.”

“You’ve done quite well for a One-Winged Sorcerer.”

“But still.”

Snap.

Engulite, steaming with heat, had just wiped herself dry only to be soaked with sweat again. She let her sword fall to pieces. Looking at her cracked palms, large beads of sweat rolled from her forehead to her eyes, her expression unchanged, only her slightly trembling lips indicating the intense pain she was enduring.

“The game is over,” he said.

The noisy Adelle was grabbed by the female deputy, holding her swollen face, tears brimming in her eyes yet she held them back, and the loudspeaker was also smashed.

Lois still guarded the desk, but seeing more men in black blocking the corridor outside the door, she knew there was no hope left.

“I request to notify Professor Trozan,” she said.

The female deputy immediately responded, touching Adelle’s face, clearly not as a gesture of affection.

“We’re just nobodies,” said the male deputy calmly. “Of course, we fear the invisible sword saint, but our backers do not.”

“Do you fear the Stretching Paw Sword Saint then?”

As soon as the voice rang out, the male deputy instantly threw a miraculous punch, and the female deputy instinctively pulled Adelle in front-

But it was useless!

Their bodies slipped out of their control, their throats tightly gripped by an iron hand, and in an instant, they were pressed to the ground, dragged out like rags and slammed into the balcony!

Boom!

Lois weakly collapsed to the ground, asking breathlessly, “Why did you come back so late?”

“Slept a bit, took a bath, got a haircut, changed clothes.”

Sonya, holding their throats, forcefully smashed their heads into the balcony tiles, then turned around smiling, “How could I come back to the dorm not looking my best?”

Chapter 693: The Frenzied Sword Princess of the Underworld Forces

Impossible!

Zach was filled with disbelief and a sense of betrayal. His position at Swordflower College was not only due to his status as a two-wings fist-claw sorcerer but also thanks to the influence of his Family. His mother was a Griffin Meteorologist in the Griffin Squad, holding the noble title of armor peerage. Their Family was well-regarded even within Galaxia.

However, without the support of a Sanctuary, a Family like his could rise and fall within a generation. Once his mother passed away, they would revert to their original state. Furthermore, while the guard palace nobility wielded power, they struggled to accumulate wealth. As a result, they often had to rely on the prosperous inner court nobility, forming complex interest groups. Zach’s Family was aligned with a Count’s Family that boasted a sanctuary sorcerer.

Even though Zach received orders from the Count to act as a front-runner, he could have refused if he sensed danger. He dared to seize Therave's heritage because the Count assured him that the Red-Haired Sword Princess was dead!

This wasn't merely a logical deduction. After failing to contact the Sword Princess, several nobles commissioned a prophecy from the Sanctuary, confirming that Sonya was no longer in the Distant Sky Domain!

If she wasn't in the Distant Sky Domain and couldn't be reached, what other possibility was there besides death?

The situation was even more advantageous because, despite Sonya's significant secrets, she had no real estate at the time. Her only relative was her mother, a simple village woman far away in the countryside.

Had she owned property, they couldn't have bypassed regulations to search her home. Only the Police Department would have the authority to handle Sonya's belongings. If she had a legally recognized sorcerer partner, even the Police Department couldn't hold onto her belongings; they would have to be handed over to her partner for heritage distribution.

For instance, the heritage of the four fallen sanctuary sorcerers in the Stars Kingdom was no less valuable than Sonya's. Yet, no one coveted their heritage because, firstly, their relatives were sorcerers, and secondly, their heritage was stored in their own property, making it impossible to act without legal repercussions.

However, the college dormitory was a unique area where both the school and students had management rights. The school could inspect dormitory hygiene and handle

prohibited items, creating a significant legal vacuum. Even though Zach and the others had received the Stars' blessing, they could openly take Sonya's belongings without violating any laws!

This was indeed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so they rushed over to seize Sonya's belongings before the confirmed news of her death arrived. Even if the Sword Princess's rural mother came to Galaxia to claim the belongings, they could use the excuse of 'discovering prohibited items' to keep most of the heritage, returning only insignificant items to the uninformed village woman.

The premise was that Sonya Therave was truly dead!

Yes, Sonya had no real estate, no relatives to rely on, and no advanced noble title. Her death would extinguish her influence, and people would only focus on her hidden secrets.

But as long as she wasn't dead, she was a sanctuary sorcerer, a human tactical weapon, a formidable presence that needed no respect from anyone except legends!

"In the face of a home invasion, this should count as self-defense, right?"

Sonya held them by their throats and lifted them up. It seemed that she had put on makeup before she arrived, her radiant smile accompanied by kind words: "Don't worry, I'll be living here for a while, so I won't make it too gruesome. Plus, it looks like it's my turn to clean today... So I'll just break 208 bones, there won't be any blood."

"You, you can't!" the female deputy screamed, her head bleeding from the impact, "I am Trellia Nob, I am-"

“Trellia!”

Zach roared, “What are you trying to say!?”

Trellia paused for a moment, seeing the mocking smile curling at Sonya’s lips, resentment flashing in her eyes. She took a deep breath and said, “I am the deputy director of the administrative department, you cannot attack school faculty!”

“You dare offend those behind you, but dare to offend me?” Sonya still maintained a crisp smile, yet her ruby eyes shadowed slightly with darkness: “Because offending them might affect your future, right? But have you ever considered...”

Her hands suddenly tightened, like a vise clamping down on their throats!

“I could kill you right now,” said the village girl, her gaze fixed intently on them.

A girl not yet twenty, living in the ivory tower of academia, speaking such words-no sane person would take them seriously. Zach and Trellia took this job because they truly believed there would be no repercussions. If it had been Trozan, they would have cowered immediately, but Sonya, a young celebrity who had neither entered society nor ever killed anyone, did not instill much fear in them, even when captured.

Yet at that moment, their hearts felt like they had plunged into icy depths, their minds blank.

The pretty young girl before them seemed pure and kind, made of love and candy, but they felt as if they were being watched by a fierce beast, ready to crush their necks at any moment!

“Sonya!”

It was then that Lois called out, and Sonya slowly relaxed her grip, allowing the two to catch their breath from the lack of oxygen.

“We’re just nobodies!” Zach hurriedly explained: “Even if we stepped forward to testify, it would be useless, there’s no substantial evidence. And indeed, we haven’t broken any laws this time; we just received news from Ms. Therave about your suspected death, so we came early to sort out your belongings-this is a function of the administrative department!”

Trellia was already too scared to speak.

“Will my belongings be returned to my mother?” Sonya asked calmly.

Zach could only reply tactfully, “They will be returned after inspection!”

“And how did the news of my death come about? Who told you I was dead?”

“Anonymous incorrect information, untraceable,” Zach said. “We will conduct a thorough review once we return, scrutinizing our information channels!”

Sonya smiled, “So you haven’t done anything wrong, you just caused a commotion in my dorm because of a misunderstanding?”

“So, haven’t we already apologized?” Trellia seemed to regain her courage from Zach’s words. She clutched Sonya’s arms tightly, her nails almost digging in, as if trying to unleash some Miracle against Sonya, but she couldn’t even breach Sonya’s Sanctuary. “Why don’t you let us go already? We’ve explained everything. If you have any issues, file a complaint! You’re intentionally hurting us now, restricting our freedom! You’re breaking the law, you know that?”

“We are at fault,” Zach admitted, his tone conciliatory yet subtly defiant. “We will make amends for our mistakes. If Ms. Therave is still unsatisfied, she can file a grievance with the school.”

Sonya’s gaze turned icy. She knew they were right; their actions weren’t deserving of death, and they had thoroughly studied the school’s rules and legal regulations. Even in the worst-case scenario, they could hide behind the law.

She was all too familiar with this kind of tactic. In her childhood, she and her mother often encountered these passive-aggressive maneuvers. Those people never did anything

overtly wrong, yet they managed to disgust you. Complaints would enter a lengthy processing period, and ultimately, she had to adhere to her mother's frustrating yet practical approach to life-endure.

Of course, Sonya's status was different now. Swordflower College would undoubtedly provide her with a satisfactory resolution, ensuring she wouldn't have to see these two again at school.

But how was this any different from the past?

I'm so strong now, yet why do they still dare to flaunt their arrogance in front of me? Why do they still dare... to disrespect me!?

"Sonya!"

Adelle whimpered, complaining, "They hit me!"

Sonya turned to look at them, seeing Adelle sitting on the floor, her pajamas dirty, one side of her face swollen from a slap; Engulite was leaning against the wardrobe, sweating profusely, her hands hanging naturally, blood dripping from her palms; only Lois seemed unharmed, but she shook her head slightly at Sonya, her eyes full of concern.

However, witnessing this scene, the stretching paw sword saint made up her mind. She dragged the two out of the room, where several floors were crowded with students who had just returned from class, along with the black-clad followers these two had brought.

She looked at the tense black-clad men and said, “You, jump down.”

The black-clad men were stunned.

“This is the third floor. Jumping down won’t kill you, at most you’ll need a few days of treatment,” Sonya said coldly. “You can run, or you can choose not to jump. I’m giving you ten seconds. Ten, nine, eight, seven...”

For the first few seconds, everyone hesitated, but by the time she counted to five, Sonya expanded her Sanctuary to envelop everyone. By the time she reached three, her spirit began to manifest, and the killing intent spirit brazenly exuded a terrifying aura, the blood-red killing intent almost tangible, pressing down on everyone’s shoulders like a prison...

Finally, someone couldn’t take it anymore and was the first to jump. Then, like dumplings, the others followed suit, one after another, crashing onto the concrete below with loud thuds, almost all of them breaking their legs.

No one in the dormitory dared to speak; everyone watched the scene in silence. When Sonya finished counting down, she looked down at the two in her grasp.

“We’ll jump too!” Zach immediately said.

“You can’t do this!” Trellia exclaimed hysterically, “I am a direct descendant of the Nob family, and the Viscount Nob is my uncle!”

“Nob?” Sonya recalled something, “What are Sylvia and Alto to you?”

“Sylvia is my niece, and Alto is my cousin!” Trellia cried out as if clutching at straws. “Yes, you even starred in Alto’s TV drama. You can’t harm me!”

Sonya nodded silently, unfolded her virtual wings, and carried the two towards the sky.

As they flew higher and higher, almost able to oversee the entire Swordflower College, both Zach and Trellia felt increasingly uneasy, their voices trembling as they asked, “Are you planning to drop us?”

“How could I?” Sonya said, “You are two-wings sorcerers, capable of flying. What use would dropping you have?”

“I’ll go down with you.”

With that, she grabbed the backs of their heads and plummeted towards the ground like a cannonball!

300 meters!

200 meters!

100 meters!

The scenery zoomed in rapidly, and despite spreading their wings, the two couldn't resist the rapid descent! Trellia screamed wildly, scratching around, while Zach tried to resist by turning around. However, Sonya was now performing the three-wings Swordsmanship Miracle 'Vibration Surge,' far beyond what two-wings sorcerers could contend with.

Students from the dormitory buildings who saw them plummeting began to scream until a loud crash echoed as Sonya, carrying them, smashed into the ground, raising a huge cloud of dust!

"Ah!-"

Zach's eyes widened as he saw the gravel on the ground, his head merely five centimeters from hitting the earth, saved only by Sonya halting their kinetic energy at the last moment.

"Uh..."

Trellia broke down crying, with a suspiciously foul liquid seeping through her trousers. Zach was no exception, though his pants absorbed more of it.

But it wasn't over yet, as Sonya lifted them again. Just when they thought they were in for another drop, they found that Sonya had flown to the front gate of the college.

It was the afternoon, and the entrance of Swordflower College was already a bustling commercial area, dense with people. Thus, the nearby citizens and students stared in disbelief at the renowned Red-Haired Sword Princess, who hung the two on a pillar at the entrance.

Not only that, but Sonya also summoned the Heart Sword to draw several sword bonds, securely binding them with Miracles.

Originally, she wasn't much for Control Miracles, but just as the Observer's Heart Sword spirit and Sword Mark spirit stepped back, they filled this gap, unexpectedly coming in handy right now.

Being tied to the college gate, and soon to be the spectacle of thousands of passersby, even as some began filming, Zach's face turned ashen, and Trellia muttered, "You can't do this... I am of the Nob family... don't you know Sylvia and Alto?"

"Yes, I do know them, and I treated them with the respect they deserved when we were in a relationship," Sonya stated calmly. "Now, it's to see if they will respect me."

“I don’t care who is behind you. This Miracle will last about 12 hours. I’ll wait and see if anyone comes to untie you early.”

At that moment, the dean of students arrived with a group from inside the campus. He wiped the cold sweat from his forehead as he looked at the two tied to the pillar and said to Sonya, “Whatever happened, could we take them down first? This is damaging the school’s reputation.”

“Do you know what happened?” Sonya asked calmly.

“I will investigate and understand,” the dean exhaled heavily. “Could you-“

“If you still wish to intervene after your investigation, please prepare the documentation and send a written application to Professor Trozan’s office. I will respond within five business days. If the school wishes to fine or reprimand me, I will accept that,” Sonya stated. “Of course, you can try to undo their Binding Miracle by yourselves, but...”

She stepped closer to the dean, looking straight ahead, “Whoever takes them down is rejecting my friendship.”

“The friendship of a half-year Sanctuary, a future legend, and a village girl young enough to slowly avenge every enemy and their descendants.”

With that, the Red-Haired Sword Princess strode away, as audacious as the Underworld Forces.

The dean and others looked at each other, and finally, the dean could only say, “Notify the principal, let the principal decide.”

Someone asked, “But didn’t the principal say he was injured at Ruby Mountain and needed to recuperate?”

The dean looked at him as if he were a fool, “That’s why we need the principal to decide. Otherwise, would you go and take them down?”

“I can’t undo a Sanctuary Miracle,” the latter shook his head repeatedly.

Chapter 694: Void Abyss

“You have such a strong aura of malevolence.”

In the office, Trozan was arranging flowers, sorting them by height-blooming flowers at the bottom and smaller buds on top, creating a pleasing display.

“Isn’t that how we Swordmasters should be?” Sonya sat across from her. “You’re the one who said it, elder sister-seek revenge from dawn till dusk, never let the stress linger into sleep!”

“It’s different,” Trozan explained. “A Swordmaster should always harbor a bit of malice to hone the sword blade and refine their swordsmanship. But malevolence is different; it accumulates, corrupts the soul, weakens your resolve, lowers your intellect... it can even become a vulnerability that mental sorcerers can exploit.”

“How can you tell the difference between malice and malevolence?”

“It’s simple. When you release your malice, you feel much lighter and recalling past events doesn’t anger you anymore,” Trozan said. “But with malevolence, even after you vent, you’ll find yourself getting angrier the more you think about it.”

Sonya pondered this and nodded in agreement. “Then I truly am full of malevolence.”

After a brief silence, Trozan suddenly asked, “Aren’t you going to ask how to resolve it?”

“I have my own ways.”

Trozan looked at Sonya, surprised, noticing her natural demeanor and the bright sparkle in her eyes, clearly not lying.

“I’ve always been quick to anger and hold grudges. I remember everyone who wronged me when I was young, but previously, I just bore it silently, until now, wielding the power of a sanctuary sorcerer to show it,” Sonya said softly with a chuckle. “I know it’s not a good trait, like a sword flailing wildly...”

Her cheeks tinted a light blush, her voice softening, “But I’ve already found my sheath.”

“Hmph, you’re going against the true path of a Swordmaster.” Trozan said coldly. “A sheath will only slow your draw.”

“But this way, everyone will think you hid all day just to spring a trap, punishing those coveting your secrets with the news of a fake death,” Trozan said calmly. “I’ll tell people you were hidden here with me all along-which is indeed the case.”

Sonya walked over and hugged Trozan, affectionately pressing her face against the professor’s, sweetly expressing her gratitude, “Thank you, Professor Sister!”

Sonya was actually logged into the Virtual Realm in the Meditation Building, but as soon as Trozan returned from the Virtual Realm, she quietly took Sonya away. That’s why the school couldn’t find Sonya-she had been with Trozan, asleep the whole time.

“Any united sorcerer Kingdom is surely tallying the sanctuary conditions now,” Trozan said, fiddling with a vase. “Not just to see who fell in the Specter Seer’s resurrection event, but also to identify the heir to the Wishflux Kingdom. After all, sanctuary sorcerers who have left the Dreaming Celestium would surely rush back to reality to rest, except for the four black-robed sorcerers who might inherit the Wishflux Celestium and could linger in Celestium for a long time.”

“If any sanctuary sorcerer remains asleep too long without quickly returning to reality, especially if they’ve recently advanced to legend, it will certainly raise suspicions.”

Sonya widened her eyes as she looked at Trozan. She naturally understood Trozan's warning and slowly nodded, whispering, "I get it. Only half a year as a Sanctuary, not half a year as a Legend."

Hearing this, Trozan couldn't help but twitch the corner of her mouth. She stood up, offering her seat with a sarcastic tone, "Come, Ms. Therave, you sit. I'll stand. How could I dare call myself a professor in front of you?"

Sonya couldn't help but laugh and pulled Trozan back to sit down, saying, "Professor Sister, you can take me down with one hand now; you're definitely still my professor. Plus, my soul's a bit hurt, so I might not be able to enter the Virtual Realm for a month or two. You might just climb up Ruby Mountain during this time!"

The higher the tier of the sorcerer, the harder it is for their soul to recover from injuries. At the Sanctuary Legend stage, it could easily take half a year or more. For old sorcerers like the Alchemist King, whose battle damage rate reaches 90%, they might not be free from diapers until this time next year.

Sonya dared to say she only needed a month or two because she had the Observer's potion support, which could speed up soul recovery.

"Legend..." Trozan couldn't help but feel a bit wistful, "When you have time, tell me about your friend's experiences on Ruby Mountain."

Sonya chuckled and nodded repeatedly, "Of course. By the way, Professor Sister, how did you recognize me?"

“You shouldn’t use the Evil Light Vibration Sword in front of people anymore,” Trozan said leisurely, “Even if you do, change the appearance effect.”

The village girl was taken aback, then remembered that when she attacked the bubble barrier from within the Golden Hall, she used the Evil Light Vibration Sword! At that time, other sorcerers in the Dreaming Celestium could naturally observe the miracles they performed!

“Just based on that?”

“Of course not,” Trozan said calmly, “That’s why I went to the Meditation Building to find you, just in case.”

Sonya blinked and couldn’t help but ask, “Why are you so good to me, Sister Trozan?”

“Didn’t you listen to the lecture before?” Trozan mocked, “A Swordmaster must always harbor a bit of malice, otherwise there’s no way to Sharpen the Sword; a Swordmaster must always have a passion, otherwise there’s no way to cleanse the sword.”

“Sharpen the blade with malice, cleanse the sword with passion, only then can the sword blade be unstoppable, charging forward!”

Sonya listened, somewhat bewildered, and nodded, “I get it.”

“You get it again?”

“In short, Sister Trozan spoils me!” Sonya hugged Trozan, acting cute, and giggled, “I like the professor the most!”

“Do you really like me the most?” Trozan retorted.

“At least right now, I like you the most!” Sonya said firmly, without a hint of embarrassment.

Just as Trozan looked disdainfully and dodged Sonya’s embrace, their Miracle wristbands suddenly vibrated continuously.

They opened them to find the same message.

“Meteorological Bureau Emergency Notice: Virtual realm passages have appeared in Steel Abyss, Sunken Ship Abyss, and Eyeball Abyss. The likelihood of virtual realm passages appearing around Galaxia has increased. Report any virtual realm passages and unknown individuals to the Police Department immediately.”

“Virtual realm passages appearing in the Abyss?” Sonya was puzzled, “And three Abysses simultaneously having virtual realm passages... Isn’t that too much of a coincidence?”

“All coincidences in the world stem from unavoidable inevitabilities,” Trozan mused. “The four major Inheritances have just concluded, and now there’s a special occurrence in reality. Perhaps...”

“The influence of the four major Inheritances is only beginning to manifest.”

In the Gospel Kingdom, within the Royal Palace of Yisuo.

“How much longer until the Rebellion against authority can control the Gospel Deity?”

The Gospel Book replied, “It will take another 45 days to initially influence the Gospel Deity, and 465 days to fully control it.”

“Awesome!”

The Witch leaped excitedly on the bed, only to be bounced off by its elasticity. Unfazed, she lay on the carpet, dreaming of the future.

Finally, there was a chance to escape the threat of the Gospel Deity!

This time, the greatest beneficiary of the legend advancement was Deya. As sorcerers ascend to higher levels in the Virtual Realm, their souls undergo a transformation, allowing them to accommodate more advanced spirits.

For Deya, bearing the Gospel Deity with a Sanctuary-level soul versus a legend-level soul was a completely different challenge. Originally, it would have taken a year to resist the Gospel Deity's brainwashing, but now, in just 58 days, with the Rebellion against authority procedure spreading nationwide and leveraging the people's power, she could achieve a balance with the Gospel Deity!

By then, even if she confessed to everyone that Lise Deya was the Witch, she wouldn't be reformatted by the Gospel Deity!

Her soul recovery would also take over a month, so she had plenty of time to wait!

Deya had considered 'building a relationship with Ashe from scratch,' but the sword Princess had too strong of a head start. If not for Ashe's own psychological issues, she wouldn't have had any chance at all. Even if Ashe accepted her, their relationship felt too flimsy, like a sandcastle in the wind and waves-dispersed by the slightest breeze or the sword Princess's interference.

Clinging to old thoughts was no longer appropriate. Once the Rebellion against authority Miracle was complete, she would confess directly, using their Shared Life and death experiences to add weight, and find a way to lure Ashe back to the Gospel Kingdom. After that, everything would be easier!

But if he returned, he would definitely want to see Annan... and maybe even Qenna... What should she do...

As the Witch brewed various schemes in her mind, her Gospel Book suddenly popped up, displaying several messages:

“Virtual realm passages have appeared in the lower levels of the Abysses in Vamora, Azura, Hemera, Modora, and Mephila, with more expected in ten days.”

Abysses with virtual realm passages?

Deya was taken aback; this was the first time she had encountered such a change. But she didn't need to ponder it; she could just ask: “Why are virtual realm passages appearing in the Abysses?”

This time, the Gospel Book took nearly ten minutes to compute an answer: “Due to the influence of the Void Abyss.”

“What is the Void Abyss?”

“The Void Abyss is a region of the Abyss or underground that has been polluted by the Virtual Realm. Because it possesses the properties of the Virtual Realm, the spatial barrier of the Void Abyss is very thin, making it easy for virtual realm passages to appear. Simultaneously, new spirits suitable for the Void Abyss will emerge in the Virtual Realm. These Abysses with virtual realm passages are the Void Abyss areas.”

“Summarize the impact of the Void Abyss on sorcerers in one sentence.”

Gospel Book: “Sorcerers can more easily time travel to other regions using the Void Abyss.”

Deya found it odd: “Why haven’t I heard of the Void Abyss before?”

Gospel Book: “Because it’s a new concept that emerged 20 hours ago.”

Chapter 695: Void Gate Spirit

In the Black Robe Town of the Mirage Prism.

The whiteboard used for recording intelligence in the Foxlamp Ice Room hadn’t been taken down. Although the Four Inheritances had concluded nearly a week ago, the exchange of information was a fundamental need for sorcerers. This need had long been suppressed among the Senlo sorcerers, and now that it had erupted, it wasn’t going to be stifled again-much like how once you get used to sleeping naked, underwear becomes a nuisance.

Moreover, let’s not forget that the Senlo wasteland was still embroiled in the war between the Qinyi Alliance and the Four Pillars Cult. Black Robe Town, being a crucial

transportation hub, was constantly flooded with intelligence. At the same time, the new developments in the Virtual Realm made sorcerers eager to explore and exchange ideas.

“Why are there fewer dishes again? And why has everything gotten more expensive?” The pretty red-haired girl complained as soon as she sat down.

“Because the price of steak has gone up,” the peach-like female manager lazily leaned against the counter. Her ample chest was flattened against the table, the buttons on her shirt straining like the teeth of a death warrior, barely holding on and threatening to pop at any moment.

“But I’m having the Lala Fatty combo, not steak!”

“But I eat steak,” the manager shrugged. “If you don’t like it, you can pay in gold coins. It’s even cheaper that way.”

Ashe was momentarily speechless and turned to Igor. “About tonight’s dinner expenses…”

“The budget remains unchanged,” Igor said calmly.

“I’m not saying I need to eat so much, but Harvey and Chikara still need to grow. They won’t get enough to eat like this…”

“Oh, don’t worry about me,” Harvey said. “If I really don’t get enough, I can share Alice’s meals. Chikara too, since he’s Alice’s slave anyway.”

Alice... the meals for that corpse... I seem to remember...

Ashe covered his mouth to stop himself from retching. Chikara clearly had his own opinions but dared not speak, while Gwen nearly spat out her drink. Igor raised an eyebrow. “Who knew necromancers could be useful occasionally-your appetites have decreased, right? Perfect, eat less.”

In recent days, the cost of living in Black Robe Town had skyrocketed as if it had grown wings, increasing exponentially compared to before the war.

The main reason was that gold and silver coins, as general equivalents that could serve as strategic resources, were naturally hoarded and reclaimed during wartime. This caused the value of the coins still in circulation to soar.

In theory, this meant that those with money could do nothing and watch their assets appreciate with the changing circumstances!

-In theory, that is.

However, gold and silver coins were divided into silver coins and gold coins. Gold coins were strategic resources for two-winged and three-winged sorcerers, as both two-winged and three-winged spirits could be nourished by gold coins. Two-winged and three-winged sorcerers were also the core combat strength and middle-level cadres of various cults.

In contrast, silver coins could only sustain a One-Winged Spirit, and One-Winged Sorcerers found it difficult to play a significant role in war, mostly serving as support personnel.

On one hand, you had the resources needed by support personnel, and on the other, the resources required by core combat strength. Naturally, the consumption rate of gold coins far exceeded that of silver coins. As the value of gold coins rose, the value of silver coins plummeted!

In a peaceful kingdom, the exchange rate of silver to gold coins might be 1:100, but in the past, Senlo was 1:150, and now it's nearly 1:1000. In a few days, it could even reach 1:1500!

Instances like the Foxlamp Ice Room, where silver coin prices have risen while gold coin prices have dropped, are not uncommon in Mirage Prism Black Robe Town. Even street vendors selling skewers are advertising 'super low prices' for gold coin payments.

The reason behind this is simple: silver coins are the main assets for ordinary people and One-Winged Sorcerers, and the consumption rate of silver coins is far lower than that of gold coins. During wartime, gold coins are akin to luxury goods, while silver coins are closer to 'general equivalents,' and thus, they are mercilessly harvested.

Initially, the cults tightened their gold coin reserves for strategic purposes, but now they're doing it to speculate. Whoever holds the most gold coin reserves can leverage economic advantages to crush other cults post-war. It's a chance anyone can see!

However, before economic victory arrives, an economic crisis is bound to erupt first. The reduction in dishes at the Foxlamp Ice Room is a sign; in a few months, it might close down with nothing to sell-silver coin depreciation is so severe that producers prefer bartering over accepting silver coins!

In other kingdoms, an economic crisis would be a serious social event. But in Senlo wasteland, where economics have lost their inheritance and there's no currency system, an economic crisis is hardly noteworthy-the cults are closer to a pastoral feudal society, capable of self-sufficiency even without commercial trade. They can endure until the holy war is won, and then all of Senlo will be theirs!

Moreover, with thousands dying daily on the front lines, can an economic crisis kill more efficiently than sorcerers?

It's tough for Ashe and other flexible employment sanctuary sorcerers.

After the high-intensity battle in Dreaming Celestium, Chikara, Igor, and Harvey's Three-Winged Spirits were famished, consuming nearly a month's worth of gold coins to recover, causing a sharp drop in gold coin reserves. Ashe also has the Heart Sword and Sword Mark, two Four-winged Spirits, which he dares not fully feed, maintaining basic combat power with just five gold coins a day, significantly increasing the team's expenses.

Daily living expenses could have been covered by silver coins, but with such severe depreciation, they dare not spend gold coins recklessly, naturally tightening their budget.

Yet, the Foxlamp Ice Room remains bustling, filled with lively chatter and cheerful voices. But the topic of discussion isn't the war; it's the recent changes in the Virtual Realm.

“My friend opened a real Void Gate and hauled back several boxes of gold coins!”

“That’s nothing; my friend pulled a Blade Fish Dragon from the Void Gate!”

“Is it true that the basement has a high probability of yielding treasures?”

“But the chance of monsters appearing is also high. My... my friend’s cult opened a Void Gate, and a horde of monsters suddenly rushed in, taking considerable effort to subdue.”

Ashe and the others perked up their ears, listening to the surrounding discussions, and glanced at the new information on the whiteboard:

“Void Gate Spirit: Likely to yield virtual realm creatures such as Blade Fish Dragon, Foxlamp Dragon, Mud Fish Dragon, White Fast Gragon. Note: The drop rate might only be increased for a limited time.”

“The same location, the same Void Gate Spirit, can lead to different places.”

“On the horizon, the Void Gate Spirit’s spellforce consumption increases significantly, and it often only opens gates leading to virtual realm turbulence (suspected). The lower the distance from the horizon, the higher the stability of the Void Gate Spirit, and the greater the probability of reaching a real location.”

“Using the Void Gate Spirit in places piled with gold coins makes it easier to open gates leading to gold coin vaults (suspected).”

“Using the Void Gate Spirit after midnight reduces the probability of encountering virtual realm turbulence (suspected).”

“First, activate nine Void Gates leading to virtual realm turbulence on the ground; on the tenth time, activate the Void Gate Spirit underground, and there’s a high probability it will lead to a real location (suspected).”

On the whiteboard, aside from the first two pieces of information which can be basically confirmed, the rest are filled with the mystical aura of ‘suspected.’

All this information revolves around a new spirit-the Void Gate Spirit!

This spirit has garnered such attention not only because of its unique use but also because its drop rate is incredibly high, almost instantly flooding the market. Except for Ashe, who couldn’t enter the Virtual Realm due to a soul injury, and the illiterate Raven, everyone else acquired this spirit during recent virtual realm explorations. It’s practically as if nine out of ten spirits encountered are Void Gate Spirits.

Judging by its name, the spirit’s proper use should be to open Void Gates, like creating a door on a wall-it indeed can be used this way. But soon, sorcerers discovered that if used on air, the Void Gate Spirit opens a door to an unknown destination!

Although most of the time it leads to destructive virtual realm turbulence, even if one is lucky enough to reach a real location, the other side could be land, seawater, lava, or thousands of meters in the sky. This discovery alone has expanded the Void Gate Spirit's applications-such as setting traps or using it as a defensive barrier.

But most importantly, the Void Gate Spirit might enable spatial teleportation!

A spirit capable of continuously creating random virtual realm passages!

Everyone can see the immense value of this spirit. In warfare, if it can open doors directionally, it could directly decapitate enemy command posts; in transportation, if it can open doors directionally, it could save countless transport steps, completing material exchanges in one go!

This is similar to the spatial teleportation arrays hosted by sanctuary sorcerers, but the cost is vastly lower! Moreover, spatial teleportation requires a sanctuary sorcerer to initiate, whereas a One-Winged Void Gate Spirit can be activated even by silver sorcerers!

Even though there are countless technical challenges to overcome along the way, the emergence of the Void Gate Spirit is destined to be a catalyst for the explosive growth of spatial sect technology.

Previously, the slow development of spatial sects was mainly because sorcerers had to reach the Distant Sky Domain to start, making it a niche field that relied heavily on the breakthrough of genius sorcerers.

Now, with the low-level Void Gate Spirit, countless silver sorcerers can delve into spatial sects, and some sorcerers might even major in spatial sects at the One-Winged or Two-Winged stages! With the lowering of the learning threshold, the era of spatial spirit explosion is imminent, and the regularization of spatial teleportation will accelerate rapidly!

Yet, compared to the grand narrative of historical progress, the Void Gate Spirit holds a more immediate significance for Ashe and his companions:

Going home!

No longer do they need to search for the gray fox heritage; with the Void Gate Spirit, they might open a Void Gate leading to Gospel, Blood Moon, or even Stars!

However, precisely because of this, the atmosphere within the peculiar team-composed of a Con Artist, a Necrophile, Raven Annihilation, disciples of the Four Pillars, Bishops of the Four Pillars, and former leaders of the Four Pillars-has started to become subtly tense.

Soon, Ashe finished his Lala Fatty meal, still feeling somewhat unsatisfied, and reached out to Igor. Igor handed him a money pouch, and Ashe weighed it, noticing something was off.

His lips curled slightly as he gestured for Raven to follow, then swaggered down the snack street, buying up everything in sight. Raven was initially puzzled by Ashe's sudden wealth, but upon spotting gold coins in the pouch, he understood immediately.

The two arrived at their usual corner, eating back-to-back as they always did. Ashe no longer hid his inner turmoil, his brows furrowing deeply, though it didn't affect his eating efficiency.

Raven, on the other hand, initiated the conversation: "Ashe, how many days have you been in Senlo?"

"Over two months, I think?" Ashe pondered, sighing, "So much has happened, it feels like time is crawling."

"Do you like it here?"

"Are you serious with that question?"

"Of course," Raven replied calmly. "I've never heard of or been to other Kingdoms. I'm not a sorcerer, nor can I enter the Virtual Realm... I've lived on this wasteland since birth. My life is bound to this land."

Ashe felt he was being a bit rude and adjusted his tone, speaking slowly: "Compared to the Kingdoms I've visited before, Senlo is too chaotic and disordered, with constant religious conflicts and no unified government... Every faction is exploiting the gray fox heritage to wage reckless wars against each other. I really don't like it here."

“But,” he continued, “Senlo people are the most vibrant community I’ve ever seen. Despite environmental pressures, religious influences, and lifespan limitations, nearly every Senlo person has pursued those elusive ideals at some point. Even those who have joined the Four Pillars Cult-it’s only after their ideals were shattered that they were tempted by the Four Pillars.”

“Isn’t that quite ordinary?” Raven asked, puzzled.

“If you’ve been to Blood Moon and Gospel, you’d understand how unique you are,” Ashe explained. “Blood Moon, Gospel, Senlo... I find it hard to judge the merits of these three Kingdoms. Blood Moon is entertainment to the point of numbness, with civilians living peacefully, but most face brutal elimination as infants; Gospel is perfect in every way, except people’s futures are predetermined from birth, laid out clearly; Senlo is flawed in every aspect, yet each of you strives to shine brightly. Unless the Demi-God collapses, I rarely see anxiety, hesitation, or confusion among you-all are striving toward their ideals and beliefs. If Blood Moon people become numb in entertainment, and Gospel people can’t escape their comfort zones, then Senlo people shine brightly in adversity.”

“Even if the Demi-God were to fall, some people’s brilliance would not be dimmed by the night,” Ashe paused, “and I’m talking about you, Tamashi.”

Raven responded with a nasal “Hmm.”

“The Transcendent Cult, the Twinborn Cult, the Bronze Law Cult, even the Tribulation Fire Chapel... While I don’t agree with their methods, I respect their ideals. If everyone were just chasing after money, women, and power, this world would be far too dull.”

Ashe looked up at the night sky and softly said, “Even though there are no stars, you all are gazing at distant ideals. By the way, do you know which cult’s ideal I admire the most?”

Raven immediately replied, “Raven Annihilation?”

“It’s the Tribulation Fire Chapel.”

Raven was puzzled, “Huh?”

“Because I really like the ideal of the Fire Cat Demi-God: Allow ordinary people to wield spirits,” Ashe chuckled. “It challenges the very foundation of the sorcerer system, threatens the interests of the sorcerer class. In other Kingdoms, such an ideal would be laughed at. But in Senlo, it has become a goal for sorcerers nationwide. The Tribulation Fire Chapel’s pursuit of the glory of the Fire Cat Divine Era is truly appealing to me.”

“If I hadn’t lost to Silver Lantern, if I could have continued pretending to be the First Gospel leading the Tribulation Fire Chapel, maybe...” Ashe shrugged, “But there’s no ‘if.’”

“So, I don’t like the land of Senlo,” he concluded, “but I do like a certain era, a certain ideal, or perhaps... a certain person.”

“You don’t have to worry about my feelings,” Raven said. “I was just making small talk.”

“Ask Igor when I’ve ever cared about anyone’s feelings?” Ashe scoffed, then curiously asked, “But why are you suddenly interested tonight? You rarely start conversations, and even when you join in, I always feel like you’re eyeing Igor’s neck, looking for the best angle to chop it off...”

Raven replied, “Because you’ve never mentioned when you plan to leave.”

Chapter 696: A Fresh Start

Currently, the Void Gate Spirit has been discovered to have three uses:

For walls with a thickness not exceeding 10 centimeters (One-Winged), 50 centimeters (two-wings), or 3 meters (three wings), it can directly open a temporary passage, which requires a constant consumption of spellforce to maintain.

When used in the real world to create a portal, 99% of the time it opens into the virtual realm turbulence that can shred anything, and it’s extremely unstable, possibly collapsing the next second.

When used in the Virtual Realm, it creates a Void Gate, which is currently meaningless.

The Void Gate Spirit has a limited number of uses. A One-Winged can be used up to three times before self-destructing, and if used twice within 24 hours, it will also collapse from exhaustion. A two-wings can exist permanently but requires a 24-hour interval before the second use, or it will self-destruct. A three wings can be used three times in succession, but any more will lead to self-destruction.

In fact, spirits have always had usage limits, but most sorcerers only use them for commuting between the Virtual Realm and reality, so the market doesn't allow them to overwork the spirits. Therefore, it's rare for anyone to reach this limit. It was only during the Specter Seer's resurrection event that many sorcerers fought continuously for over ten hours, occasionally causing spirits to collapse from exhaustion. The surviving spirits had to consume a lot of gold coins to recover from their weakened state.

Consumable spirits like the Void Gate Spirit have always existed, such as the Reverse Year time spirit. Their common feature is that their effects far exceed their wing level. For example, a One-Winged Reverse Year can reverse a year of time, and a One-Winged Void Gate can open a portal-power far beyond their rank, naturally leading to restrictions.

Thus, even though the drop rate of Void Gate Spirits has increased, research into their use will be a long process. Even major powers may not yet have feasible methods for utilizing them, let alone Ashe and his group, who are essentially a black market operation.

However, when faced with Raven's question, Ashe was surprised, "You noticed?"

"The first day you learned about the Void Gate Spirit, you were happy; the second day, you went out during the day to gather information, full of anticipation; the third day, you rented a basement for research and began to feel anxious; the fourth day, you spent the morning playing cards with Chikara and Harvey and only went to the basement in the afternoon, showing a bit of slack."

"And then yesterday and today, you didn't go to the basement, nor did you play with Chikara," Raven said. "More importantly, you actually asked me for advice on combat skills and even sparred with me. That's when I knew you had found a way to leave."

Ashe was indignant, “Is it so strange for me to seek you out for learning!?”

“It’s not strange; the strange one is me,” Raven replied. “Because I’m just a fierce Death Raven, no one tries to please a raven, no one gets close to a raven. So when someone goes out of their way to get close to me, I know something unpleasant is about to happen.”

Ashe mumbled, “I wasn’t really going out of my way... And who says no one gets close to you? Aren’t we quite familiar?”

“You never invite me to play games.”

“That’s because every time I see you, you’re either sharpening your blade or training. How could I interrupt you doing serious work?” Ashe protested his innocence. “I never disturb Igor when he’s counting money either!”

“And if you want to join us in our activities, you should just say so. How else would I know you want to be part of the Sleepless and Meal-less Club?”

“Sleepless and Meal-less Club?”

“Yes, the Sleepless and Meal-less Club.”

Raven paused for a moment, then shook his head and said, “I tried being proactive before, but it ended up making others uncomfortable.”

“Huh?”

“Once, when I passed through a small town, I played a game of kick-the-bag with some kids. I was happy at the time, but then someone complained to Tanomoo, saying I was intimidating those kids... I mean, who would want to play with someone dressed so strangely and smelling of blood?”

Raven’s tone was flat, his voice gradually lowering. However, Ashe had a different opinion. “Was it the kids who complained, or their parents?”

“It was probably the parents, but it doesn’t matter...”

“It does matter. You’re not blind, just illiterate. When you were playing with the kids, could you really not tell if they were happy or uncomfortable?”

“I felt the same way. Initially, I might have been a bit reluctant to approach you, given that I’ve reached the age where physical activities start to annoy me... But soon enough, I got into it because you were genuinely teaching me, so I had to respond sincerely.”

“Your appearance is indeed intimidating, but goodwill is something felt with the heart, not seen with the eyes. A good person who looks fierce is still a good person, and a bad person who looks beautiful is still a bad person... And not only can I sense it, but even Harvey and Igor, who are notoriously sensitive and aloof, are considerate of your feelings. You’ve already earned their recognition.”

“I don’t need their recognition.”

“But you’ve already acknowledged them, haven’t you?”

Ashe continued, “From now on, there’s no White Crow to accept goodwill for you, so you need to learn to accept it openly and also learn to express kindness proactively. Don’t hide behind Raven’s mask, wallowing in self-pity like an immature teenager... Did I make myself clear?”

“Yes.”

“Sigh, having to worry about a grown man like this,” Ashe sighed, “I’ve given too much to this team.”

After a brief silence, Ashe slowly said, “We plan to leave Black Robe Town tomorrow and start our journey home. It’ll probably take about ten days to reach our destination.”

“It wasn’t supposed to be this soon. Although we have the Void Gate Spirit as a crucial means, creating a space gate to another Kingdom still presents many technical challenges—challenges we can’t overcome.”

He shrugged, “But Gwen’s luck changed everything.”

No one expected that the key intelligence for returning home would come from Gwen, the captive they brought back from Dead City. Gwen, a two-wings sorcerer, had ventured into the Time Continent and accidentally entered the Fate Questioning building.

She successfully answered two fate questions, and as a reward, she was allowed to ask the Virtual Realm a question. Her question was, “What’s the best way I can achieve time travel across Kingdoms?”

The Virtual Realm responded, “Reach the lower level of the Senlo Kingdom and use the Void Gate Spirit there. This will create a stable space gate, greatly reducing the chance of encountering virtual realm turbulence, and may randomly lead to other Kingdoms.”

After Igor verified it, the intelligence turned out to be true. As for why Gwen asked this question, she claimed it was “because everyone has been worried about this issue lately,” but Igor believed she wasn’t being altruistic; it was simply the smartest choice. After all, Senlo was about to become a bloody grindstone, and she had already offended the Four Pillars Cult. Asking how to leave was clearly more practical than any other question.

Regardless, Ashe and the others finally had a clear goal: reach the lower level of Senlo, and keep refreshing the Void Gate until they open a portal to the Gospel Kingdom.

“Congratulations to you all.”

“Thank you.”

Ashe put the trash back into the bag and said, “Chikara was already our shared slave. To survive, he sold himself to us, so we will definitely take him along-at least Igor hasn’t squeezed all the value out of this orc yet. But Chikara is easygoing by nature; he doesn’t resist leaving Senlo.”

“Gwen is the same. Whether for us or for herself, she will definitely follow us out. So, our goals align.”

With that, Ashe took the initiative to walk out of the alley, with Raven following behind. There should have been a question here, but Ashe found it hard to voice, and Raven had no intention of answering.

As they crossed the street, a large crowd suddenly poured out from a nearby building. This building was the only auction house in Black Robe Town. Originally, auctions were held once a week, but recently they’ve been happening almost daily. The continent-wide war shattered the isolationist mindset of all the cults, and nearby cults brought out their prized possessions to Black Robe Town to exchange for resources and enhance their combat power.

Ashe was initially interested in the auction, as it was a classic element of a fantasy adventure. Not triggering competitive bidding, robbery, or finding hidden treasures would make the time travel pointless, wouldn't it?

But after experiencing one auction, Ashe completely gave up on the activity.

Finding hidden treasures was impossible, and competitive bidding and robbery couldn't happen in Black Robe Town. More importantly, the auction items were mostly useless to them-Ashe was from the Swordsmanship Sect, Igor from the Mental Sect, and Harvey from the Necromancy Sect. These three sects were considered the lowest of the low in the Senlo wasteland, with few practitioners and naturally scarce related outputs!

The Senlo wasteland favored Physical, thunder spell, fire spell, Earth spell, and Senlo, which were spellcasting sects capable of withstanding harsh environments. These were versatile spells that could both fight and produce. It's like buying the cheapest entry-level car; customers naturally expect it to handle grocery shopping, cargo transport, and long-distance driving.

Swordsmanship and Mental, being delicate spellcasting sects, were obviously not in demand. The only relevant sect, Necromancy, had no development ground due to the Green Beast-if bodies were buried, the Green Beast would dig them up from the graves to eat, so cremation was popular in the Senlo wasteland.

With no desire for shopping, Ashe naturally skipped the auction.

Curiously glancing at the auction house, he noticed three girls in tight outfits, loaded with many bags, running towards them.

“Run!”

From afar, the girls tossed two treasure bags to Ashe and Raven, then disappeared into an alley like a gust of wind. Ashe instinctively caught them, and immediately saw a group of people bursting out of the auction house, some heading straight for him...

“Damn!”

Cursing, Ashe grabbed Raven and ran. Pedestrians on the road parted ways for them, some even clapping and cheering them on to run faster.

“Why are we running?” Raven, quickly grasping the situation while still able to talk during the run, asked, “Can’t we just return the stuff? We’re not accomplices of those three.”

“But they don’t know that!” Ashe shouted back. “It’s not just that they won’t believe us; we’d get beaten up before we could even explain. More likely, we’d be dead before we could get a word out!”

“That’s impossible.”

“How is it not possible? Right now, I’m in a Mirage Prism state, unable to use spirit spellforce, and I can’t carry you away! Quick, let’s jump onto these crates and run across the rooftops!”

Raven was about to say something but then fell silent, taking the lead and leaping onto the rooftop. Ashe roared and tried to follow, jumping onto a crate but failing to grab the eave—he had misjudged his own height and jumping ability! However, Raven quickly grabbed his hand and pulled him up.

People from the auction house cursed from below. Some tried to follow their method by climbing crates, while others fetched ladders from nearby shops to pursue them. Occasionally, someone would shoot at them with dirt guns—most Gray Fox firearms required spellforce to operate and were useless here.

Ashe and Raven ran and jumped across rooftops, crossing balconies and climbing beams. The street vendors and pedestrians stopped to watch their escape. The torches and shouts from below seemed to compose a flowing melody, accompanying them on their escape.

Tonight, Black Robe Town danced for them.

A sense of absurdity spread within Ashe as he ran. He thought of himself as a legendary sorcerer, now fleeing in panic from a group of ordinary sorcerers with at most two-wings. Although he didn’t know what was in the bags, he was sure they weren’t anything he needed or even cared for.

Reaching the edge of a roof, Ashe jumped forcefully but his jumping power was indeed lacking. It seemed he would crash into the wall like a squashed mosquito, but Raven grabbed his arm and pulled him up.

Ashe looked up, and the ink-black night sky filled his vision.

Strangely, despite the close clamor and bright lights, they felt distant to Ashe; though the night sky was far and deep, it seemed as if he was enveloped within it. A subtle sense of alienation quickly grew within him.

He knew this was a typical melodramatic thought anyone might have upon reaching a rooftop, but he also felt as if the wasteland was acknowledging his intentions, bidding him farewell in its unique way, and reminding him not to forget his baggage.

He exhaled deeply and said, “Tamashi Raven Annihilation.”

Raven turned to look at him.

“Give up your revenge, give up your homeland, and come with us,” Ashe said, gazing at the Death Raven. “Then, start anew.”

Chapter 697: Judge Ashe

After saying those words, Ashe felt a weight lift off his shoulders.

He was well aware of how rude and arrogant his statement was.

Unlike him, a social drifter with no attachments, Raven bore the heavy burden of avenging his cult's massacre, the revival of Raven Annihilation, and his deep attachment to this land.

Especially the revenge against the Mercury Trojan Horse, which was not only the inevitable path to realizing Raven's ideals but also his greatest motivation to live. Before meeting Ashe and the others, Raven was consumed by his hatred for the Mercury Trojan Horse. If he could personally kill it, he would die content the next second.

Abandoning revenge and leaving Senlo would almost negate all the values Raven had lived by.

The last time Ashe asked Raven if he wanted to leave together, Raven said he needed to think about it, but Ashe didn't hold out much hope.

With short lifespans and intense beliefs, every Senlo person had a self-destructive tendency to bloom urgently. Raven would never abandon revenge out of fear of death.

In fact, with over ten days of travel left, Ashe could have slowly discussed it with Raven or teamed up with Igor to subtly imply and soften Raven's resolve, rather than using such direct, almost commanding language to express his deepest request to this friend who had shared life and death with him multiple times.

Raven looked at him quietly, silent for so long that Ashe almost thought he was going to be hit, before Raven softly said, “I-“

Boom!

Suddenly, the rooftop exploded. Someone inside had triggered something, blowing the entire roof apart!

Ashe and Raven were on opposite sides of the eaves, instinctively kicking off to avoid the blast, as if fleeing along two separate routes. By the time Ashe realized what had happened, Raven had disappeared to the other side, and he had nearly fallen to the ground, with shouts of pursuit echoing behind him.

“Stop!”

“Run again and I’ll shoot!”

“Damn thief!”

Ashe quickly darted into an alley, a place easier to escape from, and suddenly remembered something. He tossed the treasure bag behind him: “Take it back!”

Without bothering to see what was inside, he slipped into the alley, rolling up his sleeves, pulling off the black stockings, dismantling the red ponytail, and reversing his jacket. By

the time he emerged from the alley, he had completely changed his appearance, and those chasing him glanced at him before rushing past.

Luckily, he had been transformed into the Sword Princess by the Mirage Prism, and having seen the Sword Princess's magical transformations a few times, he managed to replicate it.

Ashe nonchalantly weaved through the crowd, heading back to the Foxlamp Ice Room, but couldn't help feeling a twinge of regret.

He should have said that if there's a way to leave, there's a way to return, and once his spellcasting skills were honed and he could fight alone, he would come back to help Raven kill the Mercury Trojan Horse; or perhaps he should have simply invited Raven to take a short trip to Gospel.

Escaping is much easier to accept than giving up, even if the chance of returning is slim, at least it's still there.

Now that there's no excuse for self-deception, Raven must choose between revenge and departure. Compared to seeking refuge in an unknown kingdom-a feeling inevitable in foreign lands-pursuing revenge aligns more with Raven's interests and emotional needs.

Perhaps Raven has already left quietly. Since their destinations differ, there's no reason to travel together. He continues his mission to assassinate the Mercury Trojan Horse, while Ashe and the others embark on their journey home.

Ashe sighed, looking up at the endless night sky, his gaze slightly dropping, suddenly spotting a terrifying yet familiar figure at the entrance of the Ice Room. Because they had just fled to the other side, the crowd was drawn away, making the figure appear even more solitary and slim.

As Ashe approached, Raven tossed him a bag-the treasure bag. Opening it, Ashe found it full of gold coins.

“You actually kept it?” Ashe asked, surprised.

“They couldn’t beat me,” Raven said.

Ashe paused, then remembered that in Black Robe Town, where spellcasting was forbidden, Raven, being a mere mortal, was nearly invulnerable. Ashe should never have run; Raven could have handled them all alone.

“So...”

“But this is a crime,” Raven said. “This isn’t the property of the Four Pillars Cult or any villains; it’s legitimate property from an auction house. Although unintended, we indeed plundered someone else’s property.”

“I’ve committed a crime, do you know what that means?”

Ashe blinked, tentatively asking, “Means you’re tainted?”

“In the Raven Annihilation Cult, judgment warriors who commit crimes must undergo seclusion for reflection, temporarily suspending their duties. Crime must be punished, as it reflects both Raven Annihilation’s expectations for all beings and the demands on oneself.”

“During seclusion for reflection, the warrior needs a Judge to monitor their reflective process and mental state. Whenever the Judge deems the reflection complete, the warrior can resume their duties, under the Judge’s control during this period,” Raven explained. “Who do you think would be suitable to be my Judge?”

Ashe immediately answered, “Igor.”

Raven just stared at him quietly. Ashe looked at the money bag in his hands and quietly tucked it away. “Ahem, actually, I think ‘Judge Ashe’ has a nice ring to it.”

Raven nodded, then turned and walked into the Ice Room.

“I will try my best.”

Try what? To reflect? Or to give up?

Ashe's feelings were mixed, touched yet ashamed. He returned to the Ice Room, where Chikara curiously asked, "What happened outside, it seems lively?"

"Oh, someone robbed the auction house."

Saying this, Ashe handed the money bag to Igor. Igor glanced at the bag full of gold coins, looking at Ashe, wanting to speak yet holding back.

"Alright, everyone!" Ashe clapped his hands. "We're leaving Black Robe Town tomorrow, heading home! If there's anything you want to buy or eat, now's your last chance. Tonight's expenses are on Master Bukin!"

"Really? Add this to the order!" Chikara immediately shouted.

Igor glared at the orc, but didn't object.

Harvey glanced at Raven, then suddenly asked, "Tamashi, what pattern do you like on livor mortis?"

"By the way," Ashe turned to Igor and Harvey, "you two shouldn't slack off on your virtual realm exploration. Try to gather the Rainbow Wings soon. I might be able to lend you a hand."

Ashe knew they had probably guessed some of his secrets. Igor might even have figured out that he was one of the four black-robed sorcerers-after all, Ashe had returned from the Virtual Realm a whole day late, which was a glaring oversight.

Yet, Igor hadn't asked anything, and Ashe hadn't offered any explanations. But he remembered that both Igor and Harvey had used external means to ascend to the Distant Sky Domain, which meant they could never independently summon a Four-winged Spirit and thus had no chance of reaching Ruby Mountain.

Now that Ashe had the Dreamwake deity, although he couldn't bring it into reality just yet, he would eventually solve this issue. When the time came, he could use it on Igor and Harvey, allowing them to walk the Path of Origin to reach Ruby Mountain.

"Tonight's the last night, so we don't need to go to the Virtual Realm, right?" Chikara suggested. "Starting tomorrow, we'll be roughing it, and tonight's probably our last night in a hotel. Let's stay up all night playing cards!"

Ashe's eyes lit up, "Sounds good to me."

"I'm in too."

Everyone turned to Raven in surprise, eyes filled with disbelief, as if the words had come from the Mask itself. Chikara paused, then asked, "Do you know how to play?"

“I’ve watched you play. I know the rules.”

“Heh, then get ready to be crushed,” Chikara chuckled. “You’re up against the Card-Busting King Ashe, the Card-Counting King Chikara, and the Shadow King Harvey!”

Ashe protested, “Why is my title so lame?”

“You dare call yourself the Card-Counting King?” Igor sneered. “I’ll join tonight and see what you’re made of.”

“Ah, Mr. Bukin, you’re joining too?” Chikara turned to Gwen. “How about you? We’re just one short for a full-blown battle of the gods.”

Gwen glanced at Igor, “Alright.”

“Wow!” Chikara clenched his fists. “My blood is boiling!”

Why are you so fired up over a card game...

Raven suddenly asked, “By the way, where exactly are we headed?”

Igor replied, “Didn’t Ashe tell you? We’re going to the very bottom of Senlo. That’s the only way to ensure the Void Gate passage is stable enough.”

“The very bottom of Senlo...” Raven recalled something, “The underground of the Twin cult?”

“There’s a level even deeper than that,” Chikara explained. “You probably haven’t been there, Raven, but Gwen and I have. It’s a trial ground shared by all cults, the origin of Senlo, the belly scales of the earth-“

“The Silent Spiral.”

Chapter 698: Silent Spiral

“I see, I completely understand now.”

In Blind Town, within a dimly lit hotel room, two identical girls were engaged in a mental exchange. They were none other than Vesser and the phantom created by the Mirror Dragon from another world line.

With the Willingness spirit, Vesser had crafted a small miracle called “Mutual Consent,” allowing for rapid information exchange between two souls. However, this miracle had a significant side effect: the personalities and memories of the two could easily become confused. For Vesser and the phantom, this side effect was negligible, as the phantom was merely Vesser’s shadow.

After acquiring all the spellcasting knowledge from the other, Vesser felt her Mental Sect was nearly touching the threshold of the Sanctuary realm. She looked at the phantom in the darkness and sincerely said, “Thank you.”

“No trouble at all. I’m the one who benefited the most,” the phantom replied. “If there’s nothing else, I’ll be going.”

“But are you really going to execute that plan?”

Vesser remained silent, and the phantom said no more, gradually dissolving into the air and vanishing without a trace.

“Mirror Dragon...” she murmured softly.

Previously, her spellcasting realm was insufficient, leading her to believe the Mirror Dragon truly summoned a phantom from another world line to converse with her. But now, it seemed this so-called ‘self from another world line’ was merely the Mirror Dragon extracting her memories and blending them with other knowledge from the Virtual Realm to create a haphazard phantom.

In simple terms, the Mirror Dragon was helping her steal knowledge of the virtual. As for the ‘self from another world line,’ it was merely a character setup to facilitate her

absorption of knowledge.

How could there truly be other world lines?

No matter what decision is made, it will only lead to one outcome, with no turning back, no regrets.

Thus, the phantom's final question was actually born from her last shred of hesitation.

But that hesitation vanished completely when Ashe obtained the Heart of Wishes Command, allowing for a retreat to the Wishflux Celestium at any time.

"Just as well, I haven't been able to log into the Virtual Realm lately. The Demi-God has been sufficiently collected, and everything is ready."

Vesser opened the window, gazing upon this city devoid of light, where everything she saw was shrouded in darkness.

"Then, during this interval, let's make a trip to the Silent Spiral and start the countdown for Senlo."

"This Kingdom... is truly fascinating."

In the main hall of the Raven Annihilation Zone, Four Pillars Cult.

At this moment, the main hall had been cleared of all servants, and all confidential documents were laid out, being rapidly read by a handsome cold man.

Opposite him sat the Mercury Trojan Horse. Even though she had descended using a secure container, and even though the container, if damaged, could not harm her originals, she still sat uneasily, avoiding any eye contact with the cold man.

“No wonder He dares to guarantee that this Kingdom will present the opportunity I need...” the cold man mused for a moment, then suddenly asked, “To enter the Silent Spiral, is a Demi-God required?”

“Yes,” Mercury Trojan Horse answered immediately. “A Demi-God is a necessary condition to open the Silent Spiral.”

“But now, there’s someone named Silver Lantern who is frantically seizing Demi-Gods?”

“That’s right,” Mercury Trojan Horse replied. “She’s a deranged woman. Her theory is that ‘reality is just a momentary delusion, and the virtual realm is the eternal future.’ She believes reality is nothing but a false dream, and her goal is to pierce through this dream and destroy Senlo.”

The cold man couldn't help but pace back and forth in the hall, pondering for a long time before suddenly saying, "Necessary expenses are indeed unavoidable..."

Mercury Trojan Horse was startled, watching as the cold man suddenly slumped to the ground, falling asleep just like that. Yet even so, she dared not approach him, remaining seated and waiting quietly.

She didn't have to wait long before the cold man rubbed his eyes and woke up, grumbling, "Indeed, without Dreaming Celestium, the Prophetic Dream can't foresee much of the future, but it's enough..."

He commanded, "Next, you need to go to war with the Qinyi Alliance and keep the battle lines near the Silent Spiral, minimizing obstacles for Silver Lantern's entry into the Silent Spiral."

"Yes," Mercury Trojan Horse replied without any dissent, for the Oracle of the Four Pillars dictated that she must unconditionally follow this man's orders.

However, the cold man's earlier question and final command sparked a curious thought in Mercury Trojan Horse, prompting her to ask, "Could Silver Lantern really pierce the dream and destroy Senlo? But if that's the case, why are we helping her?"

The cold man glanced at her, prompting Mercury Trojan Horse to immediately lower her head. "I apologize for my rudeness."

“It’s alright. It’s better for you to understand the truth and know the details, to prevent you from making unforgivable foolish mistakes,” the cold man said kindly. He sat down and picked up a document, saying, “I think using this matter as a starting point is perfect—do you remember, two months ago, the Tribulation Fire Chapel summoned the First Gospel?”

“I remember,” Mercury Trojan Horse replied. “The First Gospel was named Ashe Heath, but he didn’t possess the abilities of the First Gospel and was defeated by Silver Lantern... Wait, could he actually be the true First Gospel, but has been hiding his talents?”

“Don’t be so hasty,” the cold man said. “What do you think the First Gospel came to Senlo for?”

“To suppress the Four Pillars Cult,” Mercury Trojan Horse answered. “The captives from the Tribulation Fire Chapel said they heard the Chasm Sovereign of Senlo’s decree that the First Gospel would come to save Senlo, so they summoned the First Gospel.”

“You see, the First Gospel is here to save Senlo, not to destroy the Four Pillars Cult,” the cold man explained. “You misunderstood from the very beginning.”

Then, the cold man briefly explained the truth about the Senlo wasteland and the Green Beast, as well as the fate that awaited the Senlo wasteland as it would fall into eternal torment with the death of the Chasm Sovereign of Senlo.

Mercury Trojan Horse listened, drenched in cold sweat, not only because what the cold man said corresponded perfectly with the intelligence, but also because she, despite being a sorcerer of the Prophecy Sect, had no perception of these secrets. This made her

increasingly aware of the power of a Demigod in the Prophecy Sect-despite having the same intelligence sources, this man could uncover the world's truth in such a short time!

“So, the First Gospel isn't here to destroy the Four Pillars Cult; it might even join them,” the cold man concluded. “The Kingdom of Senlo is like a bleeding wound for the Chasm Sovereign of Senlo. The faster we eliminate its people, the more we save them and help the Chasm Sovereign stop the bleeding. The Four Pillars Cult is the perfect tool for the First Gospel.”

Mercury Trojan Horse suddenly realized something. “Then Silver Lantern...”

“If he were the true First Gospel, he would immediately collaborate with Silver Lantern, assisting her in controlling the Four Pillars Cult, then annihilating all beings and destroying the world. The First Gospel's prophecy abilities surpass mine; he undoubtedly knows the right way to save Senlo.”

“Unfortunately, the First Gospel is a fake,” the cold man shrugged. “We'll have to handle it ourselves.”

Mercury Trojan Horse trembled. “But Senlo is doomed to destruction. Aren't we on a path to death?”

“That would be the case, but you're incredibly lucky,” the cold man chuckled. “The Void Gate Spirit gives you a chance to escape Senlo-though it's just a chance.”

“But the Void Gate Spirit is so unstable! It’s a death sentence!”

Mercury Trojan Horse had tried using the Void Gate Spirit, but it only resulted in the loss of hundreds of cultists without any success.

“As long as you reach the lower level of the continent, the success rate of the Void Gate Spirit will increase exponentially,” the cold man explained, fully aware of the Void Gate Spirit’s effects. “As for where the continent’s lower level is, you surely know better than I do.”

Mercury Trojan Horse sat in silence for a while, then asked, “But why are you helping Silver Lantern?”

“That’s something you don’t need to know.”

The cold man spoke leisurely, “Besides, although I’m just a trivial will now, I’m still your master’s trading partner. Is it too much to ask for a little respect?”

“Apologies, Specter Seer.”

“Don’t use that title. If I’m not mistaken, several Divine Sovereigns have cursed that name. The more you use it, the more likely you are to attract their attention.” The cold man placed his feet on the desk, picked up the nearby wine glass, and swirled it gently before pouring it out without drinking.

“Call me by my Elf name, Vichy.”

Chapter 699: Interrogation

Dozens of meters away in the darkness, rustling sounds continuously emerged, occasionally mixed with crisp crunching noises, reminding Dilo Ge of her favorite dish-Rice Roll.

She had grown up in the Dust Tribulation Fire district of the Tribulation Fire Chapel. The Dust Tribulation Fire controlled a vast area of Gray Fox farms, with 50% of Senlo wasteland’s food supply coming from these farms. With such abundant food resources, culinary efforts naturally flourished. Dilo Ge’s top three gourmet recommendations included the deep-fried dough called “fried ghost” and the steamed rice batter known as “rice noodle roll.” Combining a fried ghost inside a rice noodle roll created her beloved Rice Roll.

The rice noodle roll soaked in soy sauce exuded a fresh aroma while the skin remained as smooth as milk. The fried ghost was crisp and sweet. Chewing slowly, the fragrance of the fried dough filled the mouth. Eating the Rice Roll, one would first feel the smooth skin almost kissing the lips, followed by the salty flavor of soy sauce awakening the entire palate, and then the crispy fried ghost bursting between the teeth, its sweet taste seeping into every crevice.

Every morning, Dilo Ge loved to start her day with a serving of Rice Roll. Even after returning from the disorienting Virtual Realm, it felt like this carbohydrate delight was what brought her back to the dusty reality of the wasteland. Even after trying various other expensive and rare delicacies, she still craved a plate of Rice Roll the most.

However, the noises coming from the darkness were not from someone eating Rice Roll.

It was the Green Beast gnawing on bones and sucking marrow.

Tens of thousands of discarded corpses had attracted countless herds of Green Beasts. They dared not approach during the day, only daring to dig up these bodies at night to feed on the flesh, tendons, organs, bones... even the blood-soaked sand, as if their insatiable hunger had dried up all their sanity.

It was only because so many had died this time that they couldn't finish eating in just two days.

Had it been only a few dozen people, the ground would be licked clean by the next day.

Dilo Ge stood guard on the watchtower, tens of meters away from the Choking Green night where even the light of faith could be swallowed. Behind her was a massive fortress erected over the past two days by the Four Pillars Cult.

Constructed by thousands of Earth spell and Senlo sorcerers working together, they forged the colossal Vine Giant City from blood-stained corpses and vines!

Among the builders, not a single necromancer was present; the reason the walls were covered in corpses was purely due to using materials readily available-just three days ago, this area was under the control of the Qinyi Alliance. However, the Four Pillars Cult suddenly launched a full-scale attack, disregarding all other battle lines, concentrating all forces here. Even the legendary sorcerer, the Pope of Annihilation, Oreyva, joined the

fray, slaughtering the thirty thousand-strong sorcerer army of the Qinyi Alliance, turning the area into a river of blood with corpses strewn all around!

Dilo Ge took a deep breath, the pungent stench of decay filling the air, even causing a slight itch in her throat. She gulped, turning to open a glass bottle on the table and drinking deeply from the blood-red wine inside.

Tribulation Fire disciples could hardly enjoy life, with delicacies being the limit, and alcohol strictly forbidden. Dilo Ge had never cared much for alcohol, but after joining the Four Pillars Cult, she found herself unable to put down the bottle.

However, as a physical sorcerer, sobering up was just a thought away for her, so it didn't really matter. She even summoned a 'spirit of indulgence' that made her more attractive the more she drank.

Nevertheless, she refrained from drinking while at work. The Four Pillars Cult had no taboos, but negligence on the job was punishable by death. Everyone knew that the High Seat could possess any disciple at any moment to check if their work was satisfactory. Who would dare slack off under such circumstances?

Yet this bottle of wine was truly exceptional, making Dilo Ge feel her spirit of indulgence scratching at her heart. Moreover, with recent fierce battles, although the Qinyi Alliance suffered heavy casualties, weren't there also countless bodies of Four Pillars Cult members within those blood-stained city walls?

Thinking she might die tomorrow made the prospect of a performance review by the High Seat seem less daunting. Dilo Ge sipped her wine, her gaze unfocused, and pulled a black crystal from her pocket, rubbing its oily surface, lost in thought.

Suddenly, her consciousness blurred.

When she came to, she found herself tightly embraced, unable to move. She tried to scream for help, but only managed a mosquito-like whisper: “An~ attack~”

Spirit of Flashing Fire!

Since she was on guard duty, she naturally had the ability to raise alarms! This spirit could shoot a blinding white flame visible even a hundred meters away, potentially blinding those nearby.

However, the white flame exploded in her face before it could launch! Even as the master of the Flashing Fire spirit, the bright light made her eyes tear up.

Mental control!

Sanctuary!

Dilo Ge, battle-hardened, immediately realized she was trapped in a Sanctuary. A Sanctuary could protect one as well as confine others.

A chill went through her as she realized she was in a dire situation, being just a silver sorcerer, yet targeted by a sanctuary sorcerer!

Seconds later, her vision cleared and she looked up to see three men, one woman, one beast, and a black raven staring at her. She turned her head back and saw a pale and beautiful young girl holding her, not only incredibly strong but also unnaturally cold to the touch, and the strong smell of decay invaded her nostrils.

In a flash, Dilo Ge knew who these people were: “The Undying Gospel, Ashe?”

“Although that’s not really what I wanted to ask,” Ashe crouched down curiously. “But why is my title the Undying Gospel?”

“Because you escaped from the Dead City,” Dilo Ge replied. “The High Seat commanded that if we encounter the undead Ashe, we are to abandon our missions and flee.”

“But I wasn’t the only one who escaped.”

“I’m not sure, but it seems everyone thinks you led the others out of the Dead City, and since we’ve never been able to catch you, and you were previously considered the First Gospel, that’s why they call you the Undying Gospel.”

Igor added, "Alright, let's get to the point-"

"What are their titles?" Ashe inquired.

Dilo Ge thought for a moment: "Ghost knight Harvey, Fire of Wrath Chikara, Rebel Star Gwen, Raven Annihilation, and..." She glanced at Igor.

Ashe chuckled: "What, is his nickname that bad?"

"No, Mr. Bukin's nickname is, Gospel Keeper Igor."

Gwen turned her head away, covering her mouth, and Chikara immediately clamped his hand over his mouth, but his laughter seemed to leak from the corners of his eyes; even Harvey, usually stoic, couldn't help but bite his thumb, showing a hint of a smile; only Igor and the black raven appeared unamused.

Ashe's expression fell.

Damn, he was called the Undying Gospel, and Igor was called the Gospel Keeper, which basically suggested Igor was keeping him like a pet! Although it had been the case recently, this was tantamount to being treated like a pet!

“This is Mercury Trojan Horse trying to sow discord,” Igor’s words seemed rational, but his voice was laced with a playful tone, stretching out the syllables. “You wouldn’t mind, would you?”

“Of course not. Mercury Trojan Horse’s understanding is too shallow. In my heart, we’re already like father and son. I’ve always considered myself your dad,” Ashe said, patting Igor’s shoulder.

Since Blood Moon didn’t have the cultural context for father-son jokes, it took Igor a second to grasp Ashe’s logic. But before Igor could start cursing, Ashe had already stepped back, admonishing, “We’re in the middle of an interrogation, everyone. Let’s be serious and stop with the nonsense. Igor, it’s your turn!”

“You rascal...” Igor gritted his teeth in frustration, choosing not to argue, and crouched down to press Dilo Ge’s head. “I can forcibly search your memories, but the price is that your brain might malfunction afterward, like being unable to relieve yourself properly. But if you answer my questions truthfully, we might consider letting you go. Of course, you can try lying in front of a Mental Sanctuary.”

“We Four Pillars Cult disciples aren’t that steadfast,” Dilo Ge immediately replied. “Ask away.”

“Why is the Four Pillars Cult surrounding the Silent Spiral?” Igor asked. “Is it really because the Silent Spiral can help the Four Pillars Cult summon the Four Pillars?”

“Such strategic decisions are beyond the knowledge of a small fry like me,” Dilo Ge paused. “But I feel it’s not the case.”

“Oh?”

“We’ve been skirmishing with the Qinyi Alliance around the Silent Spiral for half a month, but until a few days ago, the battles weren’t that intense. We were just ensuring the Qinyi Alliance couldn’t seize the Silent Spiral. But three days ago, the Pope spared no effort to annihilate the nearby Qinyi Alliance and immediately established this fortress to fend off their counterattack.”

At that moment, a patrolling disciple of the Four Pillars Cult walked along the city wall. However, Igor glanced at him, and the disciple seemed to see nothing, simply passing by them.

Igor continued, “Did anything happen three days ago?”

Dilo Ge shook her head, “I don’t recall anything special... If I had to say, there was a minor earthquake that night, but there was no battle at that time, which felt odd to me. However, earth sorcerers causing earthquakes is quite common, so it might have been triggered by the Qinyi Alliance.”

“After you surrounded the Silent Spiral, did anything else happen?”

This time, Dilo Ge remained silent for a long while, her face showing fear and hesitation. Eventually, she confessed, “Oreyva brought many people down there.”

“Oreyva?” Raven Annihilation immediately spoke up, “Legendary sorcerer ‘Pope of Annihilation’ Oreyva? As the highest combat power, he’s not stationed above ground?”

Ashe glanced at Raven with surprise, puzzled by his sudden excitement. Igor’s eyes sparkled with intrigue upon hearing the news.

“I saw him go down with my own eyes,” Dilo Ge stated earnestly. “And as he descended, he issued an order from the throne: the fortress must be defended at all costs, preventing the Qinyi Alliance from reclaiming the Silent Spiral. Everyone is to follow the directives of the four Bishops above ground.”

“To boost morale, he opened the reserves for lavish rewards, feasting the entire army. Ordinary sorcerers received at least one spirit, while two-wings sorcerers were awarded two or three spirits. As for silver and gold coins, they were distributed in abundance.”

The group exchanged glances, and Igor asked, “When will Oreyva leave the Silent Spiral?”

“I don’t know,” Dilo Ge replied helplessly, “but it shouldn’t be more than a month.”

“Why?”

“If Oreyva doesn’t appear within a month, the Qinyi Alliance will become suspicious and send divine hosts to attack the fortress. We won’t be able to withstand them,” Dilo Ge pondered further, “it could be as soon as half a month.”

It was a straightforward reasoning, and everyone nodded in silent agreement. However, this news was not favorable for those who had traveled such a long distance.

In the midst of the frustrating silence, Raven suddenly picked up a bottle of wine from the table and asked an odd question, “How did you get this bottle?”

Dilo Ge paused, then said, “It was given out during the feast.”

“Do you usually drink this kind of wine?”

“No, it’s only this time that such fine wine was distributed,” Dilo Ge shook her head, suddenly recalling something, “By the way, among the people Oreyva took down, there was a team of chefs, and they brought quite a lot of wine. I smelled it when I passed by. The wine seemed similar to this bottle.”

“So, they had planned to live down there for a while...” Ashe mused, looking at the bottle in Raven’s hand with some confusion, “Why are you so interested in this bottle of wine?”

Raven didn’t answer Ashe, instead he asked, “Did you see a woman with silver hair, about my height, who likes to wear a mask covering half her face?”

Dilo Ge shook her head, “I’m not sure. There are quite a few silver-haired women, I can’t be certain which one you’re referring to.”

Raven didn’t ask further. Ashe glanced at him thoughtfully but chose to move past the topic, opening his palm to reveal, “What’s this?”

Dilo Ge focused her gaze and saw that Ashe was holding her black crystal card.

She hesitated for a moment, then said, “Can I touch it? It’s hard to explain otherwise.”

Ashe looked at Igor, who stared at Dilo Ge for a while before slowly nodding. When Dilo Ge touched the card, it suddenly emitted a light, but Ashe, protected by his Sanctuary barrier, was naturally unafraid of any threat.

In fact, there was no threat. Ashe lifted the card to see that the text within had flipped to suit his viewing angle-gravity sensing, indeed.

Inside were lines of... the latest news.

“The Floating City Transportation and Security Bureau reminds you that the October holiday is approaching. Drive safely, avoid lane cutting, speeding, and overloading. Do not

drive while fatigued, and always wear your seatbelt. The autopilot system is only for use on highways; unauthorized modifications are illegal.”

“The Floating City Weather Station advises that from the 10th to the 11th, most areas will experience light to moderate rain, with heavy rain or storms in some regions. Roads will be slippery, so drive carefully. All outdoor workers should take leave as per regulations.”

“Exciting news! Floating City is now fully covered by the augmented reality system and has been awarded the title of Model City for Augmented Reality! We invite you to experience premium augmented reality services. For more details, contact us...”

“[Gray Fox Literature] Author Suo Ren’s new book ‘For a Darkened World’ has been available for 77,302 days! Don’t miss out!”

“Floating Traffic Butler: The north-to-south route is currently clear. Safety first, please adhere to traffic laws.”

Ashe and the others looked around, surrounded only by the stench of decay, walls made of bones, and barren land.

Perhaps this was once Floating City, perhaps the ground beneath them was once a highway, but now there was no trace of Gray Fox civilization.

Yet, the information system left by the Gray Fox sorcerers was still operational. Countless invisible signals continued to travel through the air.

“This is the Gray Fox heritage I obtained before,” Dilo Ge said. “Aside from receiving these messages, it’s useless.”

“It’s quite useful,” Ashe replied, handing back the black crystal card. “Take good care of it.”

Dilo Ge looked up at Igor, who expressionlessly pressed a finger to her forehead.

“I’ve placed a fear shackle in your mind. If you actively disclose our information, fear will consume you until your mind collapses,” the Con Artist said calmly. “If you find a way to leak it passively, there’s nothing I can do.”

Before Dilo Ge could respond, Igor covered her eyes.

After a familiar haze, Dilo Ge found herself back in her chair, everything calm and as if nothing had happened.

But the glowing black crystal card and the missing bottle proved she had narrowly escaped from the sanctuary sorcerers.

She sat in a daze for a long time, not in the mood to test if the fear shackle was real. She picked up the black crystal card, watching the stream of information.

Her previous role at the Tribulation Fire Chapel was as a researcher, tasked with excavating Gray Fox ruins. This card was a heritage she had unearthed, deemed useless enough to fall into her hands.

Before this, though she held the faith of Tribulation Fire in her heart, the idea of “reviving civilization” felt more like a slogan, akin to “I want to unite the world” or “I want to kill everyone on the other side for freedom.”

However, after obtaining this card and receiving constantly updated information daily, Dilo Ge realized for the first time that this was the civilization the Tribulation Fire Chapel sought to revive.

This was the ideal she was chasing.

From then on, she threw herself into her work with passion. Though just a silver sorcerer, she became one of the top researchers at the Tribulation Fire Chapel.

Until the Four Pillars Cult overran the Dust Tribulation Fire district.

Then she abandoned relic exploration, became a sentinel, and indulged in hedonism, making up for twenty years of missed pleasures.

But...

Dilo Ge pulled a small bottle from her pocket, took a few swigs, her face flushing as her consciousness grew hazy.

“Ah,” she exhaled, lazily slumping in her chair.

“I still want to drink in the ruins, and then have a plate of Rice Roll.”

Chapter 700: The Disappearance of Raven

[Sorcerer's Handbook](#)

Crunch, crunch.

Several Green Beasts, enjoying the crispy sensation of bones, suddenly looked up and scattered in all directions.

In the distance, a massive Green Beast raised its head, its eyes glowing like green flames, a deadly trap enticing anyone to approach. It was unmistakably a Deep Sea Level Green Beast! Yet, it quickly shut its eyes, fearing attention, and stealthily slipped away.

Before long, a group of sorcerers traversed the battlefield of corpses, arriving at a wind-shielded spot by a mountain wall. They hammered stakes into the ground, erected a large tent, laid down mats and moisture-proof cloth, and crawled inside. After days of camping, they had learned how to make their outdoor stay comfortable.

Chikara took out a portable stove and used a fire spirit to provide the flame, beginning to prepare supper. As a Fire sorcerer and a slave, he naturally took on the role of cook.

Only they dared to cook supper in the night. Green Beasts in the distance smelled the aroma, their eyes turning even greener, but they wouldn't dare approach within a hundred meters of the tent.

"What's for dinner tonight?"

"Spicy Lala Fatty."

"No way, my mouth is watering already. Is there anything to tide me over?"

At that moment, a bottle of liquor was handed to Ashe.

Ashe took a sip and glanced at Raven in surprise. “You actually took someone else’s booze? Tamashi warriors, the Judge might think your reflection isn’t quite up to par...”

“It’s from the Four Pillars cult followers,” Raven replied. “Taking their stuff is executing justice.”

“So, what’s next?” Harvey trimmed his nails, placing them into Alice’s lunchbox. “The Four Pillars Cult surrounding us is one thing, but the Silent Spiral has their main combat forces inside. We can’t possibly get in.”

“It feels like Senlo has turned against us,” Ashe said, frustrated. “When we don’t plan to go to the Silent Spiral, no one pays attention to it. But as soon as we decide to go, the entire continent starts fighting over it!”

It had been a full month since they left Black Robe Town.

Originally, the journey was supposed to take only a dozen days, but the advancing battle lines consistently stayed half a step ahead, forcing them to spend twice the time on the road.

Wherever they went, the battle lines followed, as if they were the ones inciting the war.

The main reason, of course, had nothing to do with them but stemmed from a suddenly erupted rumor: if the Four Pillars Cult occupied the Silent Spiral, they could summon the phantom of the Four Pillars and crush the resistance of the Qinyi Alliance!

The Silent Spiral had always been within the Qinyi Alliance's territory. After the rumor spread, the Four Pillars Cult indeed launched a fierce assault towards the Silent Spiral. Regardless of whether the rumor was true, the Silent Spiral, as the most crucial Trial Sanctuary for all cults, was shared by all, even the Tribulation Fire Chapel had the right to use it. Naturally, the Qinyi Alliance couldn't let the Sanctuary fall into the hands of the Four Pillars Cult.

Both sides engaged in a tug-of-war around the Silent Spiral, turning the surrounding areas into a War Zone.

Ashe and his group, not belonging to any side, naturally faced attacks from both.

The mixed attacks were bad enough, but the War Zone was also littered with traps and mines. Ashe, Igor, Harvey, and Chikara, all sanctuary sorcerers, were thoroughly disgusted, not to mention Raven and Gwen, who lacked instant defensive capabilities.

They had hoped to sneak into the Silent Spiral amidst the chaos, but arrived a step too late; the Four Pillars Cult had already taken control of the Silent Spiral.

Worse still, there was already a legendary sorcerer inside.

A legendary sorcerer who had dominated the wasteland for years!

Of course, even a legendary sorcerer can't easily crush sanctuary sorcerers. If the latter can't win, they can at least escape, right? Sanctuary isn't just for show.

However, Ashe and his companions entering the Silent Spiral isn't a matter of reaching the destination and calling it a day. They need to conduct continuous experiments, which might take several days or even half a month to refresh the Void Gate passage leading to Gospel.

Playing hide-and-seek under the nose of a legendary sorcerer for ten days? Even the most reckless Harvey wouldn't entertain such thoughts.

"Let's wait."

Raven's distorted voice echoed inside the tent. "We'll wait until the Four Pillars Cult withdraws from the Silent Spiral before we go in. There's no need to cross paths with them."

"Exactly," Igor nodded in agreement. "We've already been in Senlo for three months, so staying another month doesn't matter. Since we have a definite way to return home, there's no need to stir up trouble. Most importantly, we can afford to wait."

Ashe nodded silently.

Indeed, his enmity with the Four Pillars Cult runs deep, and he would gladly disrupt their plans. But to jeopardize his chance to return home for that would be foolish.

Moreover, they can't defeat the Four Pillars Cult.

Once their spellcasting skills are perfected, they can return to Senlo and deal with the Four Pillars Cult. But for now, safely returning to Gospel is the priority, and everything else must take a back seat.

If they were to force their way into the Silent Spiral now and get caught in danger, Ashe is sure the sword Princess would have the Witch tie him up, then slap his face while calling him a Little Trumpet.

Everyone understands the logic, but there's a small matter that's quite unsettling.

"Ashe," Igor suddenly spoke up, "Did you just finish that?"

"Huh?" Ashe looked at the empty bottle in his hand. "It tasted pretty good, the more I drank, the better it got. Before I knew it..."

“Do you like it?” Raven said calmly. “That’s a specialty of the Raven Annihilation, Crow’s Blood Wine.”

He paused. “Made from corpses.”

Ashe: “...”

Harvey’s eyes lit up, but he was also a bit disappointed, silently giving Ashe a thumbs up.

“The Raven Annihilation Cult possesses a gray fox heritage, which we call the ‘Blood Fountain.’ The Blood Fountain can’t be replenished by any other means; only by throwing corpses into it will new wine emerge. The cult leader discovered that tossing the corpses of evildoers in yields more blood wine, and of higher quality, providing refreshment, enhancing insight, and speeding up spellforce recovery.”

“Aside from personal use, Crow’s Blood Wine is also sold, serving as the main economic source for the Raven Annihilation Cult.”

“That’s why we call ourselves Ravens,” Raven glanced around. “Ravens are naturally scavengers, and we survive by devouring the corpses of evildoers.”

“In reality, it has nothing to do with being an evildoer,” Igor said, lacking any tact. “Only sorcerers have the ability to commit such acts. If you throw a sorcerer’s corpse in, it’ll produce blood wine.”

Raven remained indifferent and continued, “The Raven Annihilation Cult doesn’t have much in the way of gourmet food; Crow’s Blood Wine is the best party drink we can find. Every gathering consumes dozens of barrels of Crow’s Blood Wine, and sometimes they even toss the corpses of villains directly into the mix to brew fresh blood wine-many find the new brew more exhilarating.”

Though it sounded a bit grotesque, it perfectly matched the style of the Raven Annihilation Cult. Ashe glanced at the empty bottle in his hand and sheepishly said, “Sorry... I drank all your wine.”

“No worries,” Raven replied. “Everyone in the Raven Annihilation Cult is addicted to Crow’s Blood Wine, except me.”

No one noticed the peculiar expression that crossed Igor’s face upon hearing this.

“Midnight snack is ready!” Chikara announced, opening the pressure cooker and distributing plates to everyone, leaving the rest in the pot for the orc.

“So, are we setting up camp nearby?” Ashe asked.

“We could retreat to the town,” Gwen suggested. “Wait until everything is over before heading to the Silent Spiral.”

“No way,” Harvey countered. “If the Qinyi Alliance takes over the Silent Spiral, it’ll be a hassle for us to get in. The chaotic window period after the Four Pillars Cult leaves is our best chance to sneak in.”

“Then we need to find a good spot nearby to camp and observe,” Ashe said, turning to Raven. “Tamashi, during this time...”

“I won’t be hunting the Four Pillars Cult,” Raven stated clearly. “I’ve realized it’s a pointless endeavor. As long as Tanomoo lives, the followers of the Four Pillars will only increase. I might kill one, but she’ll recruit two more. Only by eliminating Tanomoo can we solve the problem.”

“But ever since I nearly assassinated her, Tanomoo has been extremely cautious, always directing the Four Pillars Cult through proxies while her originals indulge in unknown places. Any sign of trouble, and she’ll summon powerful protectors immediately.”

“Unless I know Tanomoo’s exact location, I won’t act rashly.”

Ashe breathed a sigh of relief. “That’s good.”

The next day, Raven was gone.

