

SORCERER'S HANDBOOK

Chapter 701: No Rescue

“Over here.”

Following the guidance of the Starlight Spirit, Gwen reached out and cleared away the dirt on the ground. It didn't take much effort before a narrow tunnel appeared before them. This tunnel was located on one side of the slope, and just a few meters further lay the Vine Giant City of the Four Pillars Cult.

If not for Igor's application of a group Miracle to reduce their presence, the Four Pillars Cult's long-range Miracles would have likely targeted them by now. Even with the Miracle's help, they still had to wear wasteland camouflage to avoid drawing attention.

It's quite amusing, really. Back during the Blood Moon, when Ashe and the others were weak, they could only focus on enhancing their combat abilities, neglecting other aspects. During the Gospel period, despite the strong need for reconnaissance, the Gospel Book's mechanism overshadowed all Reconnaissance Miracles, so they didn't bother to catch up. And now, in the Senlo wasteland, even though they were hunting down the Silver Lantern, aside from the Mercury Trojan Horse's prophecy Miracle, they had no other means to locate her, leaving this gap unfilled.

In terms of attack, defense, healing, mobility, reconnaissance, and support, these sanctuary sorcerers generally only developed the first four. They couldn't even manage simple and common needs like tracking.

Fortunately, Gwen had the Starlight Spirit and the Star Trace Spirit. The former could track the traces of starlight, while the latter could mark any target with starlight. With some preparation, they could track almost any target.

“Mr. Tamashi likely used this tunnel to sneak into the city,” Gwen suggested. “Should we go in?”

Ashe glanced at the silent Vine Giant City and shook his head. “He slipped in under the cover of night, so he might not have been noticed. But with so many of us, it’s a different story. Let’s retreat to a safe spot, have some breakfast, and then discuss our next move.”

No one disagreed. They retreated to the shadows of a nearby rocky outcrop, about a hundred meters away. Chikara skillfully set up a flat pan and a stove, heating the pan with oil before adding the marinated beef-breakfast was beef pasta. He immediately voiced his opinion, “Mr. Tamashi must be attempting to assassinate the Mercury Trojan Horse. He’s in danger, and we should go support him!”

Igor raised an eyebrow. “If you were in the Blood Moon Kingdom, even if you couldn’t become the mayor, you’d definitely make it as a Council Member. Your knack for adapting to circumstances is wasted here in Senlo.”

“Ah, I often lament why I wasn’t born a Blood Moon person,” Chikara sighed. “Then I could have met Mr. Bukin, Mr. Harvey, and Mr. Ashe earlier... I wish I were born under the Blood Moon!”

“We met in the Death Row prison,” Harvey remarked while clipping nails.

Though, he wasn’t clipping his own nails.

He had brought out a coffin to sunbathe, sitting on its lid. Inside, Alice extended her hand out of the coffin for Harvey to trim and maintain. It's remarkable how powerful habits can be. Now, Chikara and Gwen could remain unfazed by the pungent mix of preservatives and the stench of decay. As for Ashe and Igor, their olfactory nerves had long since been desensitized.

"Mr. Harvey, with all due respect," the orc chuckled, "do I not look like a Death Row Inmate? But when you think about it, aside from Tamashi, it seems like the rest of us could be considered as such..."

"Tamashi is one too," Ashe stated calmly. "He's long been prepared to face his fate in hell."

As the beef sizzled in the hot oil, Chikara quickly tossed in the scallions to stir-fry. Amidst the rising steam and smoke, Ashe glanced at Gwen, then at Igor.

"You all have clothing marked with the starlight imprint," Igor explained proactively. "It's not specifically aimed at Raven; it's a precaution for everyone. Of course, if Gwen were to betray us, we could use the marked clothing to set a trap."

"But you know Mercury Trojan Horse is down there, don't you?" Ashe's tone carried a hint of reproach. "Even Tamashi figured it out."

“I can only say I’m not certain,” Igor admitted. “Mercury Trojan Horse is cautious, cowardly, indulgent, ruthless, and yet she can descend into the disciple’s vessel to command the cult. It’s no surprise she could be hiding anywhere.”

“But analyzing her personality traits, Mercury Trojan Horse prioritizes her own safety above all else, so she would definitely keep her strongest asset close-namely, the legendary sorcerer she can control, Pope of Annihilation, Oreyva.”

“From my investigation, even when Oreyva goes out to fight, he quickly returns to the Four Pillars Cult’s base. Mercury Trojan Horse wouldn’t live near Oreyva, but she wouldn’t be far from him either, so he could quickly assist her in case of any emergency.”

“Now that Oreyva has entered the Silent Spiral and will likely stay for over half a month, it’s highly probable that Mercury Trojan Horse is also in the Silent Spiral. That’s evidence one.”

“Raven mentioned that aside from him, everyone in the Raven Annihilation Cult is addicted to Crow’s Blood Wine, which likely contains addictive ingredients. Clearly, Mercury Trojan Horse is also a Crow’s Blood Wine addict... The Four Pillars Cult moved a large quantity of Crow’s Blood Wine into the Silent Spiral, suggesting it’s to supply Mercury Trojan Horse. That’s evidence two.”

“The Four Pillars Cult has withdrawn all forces, abandoning strategic points and allowing the Qinyi Alliance to penetrate deep into their territory, all to defend the Silent Spiral. This indicates Mercury Trojan Horse is making a desperate gamble, unconcerned about the consequences. It’s hard to imagine her hiding elsewhere waiting for news in such a high-stakes gamble. That’s evidence three.”

“But even so, I can’t draw a conclusion,” Igor paused. “Only Raven, who has been with Mercury Trojan Horse for over twenty years, can be sure his old friend is down there.”

Ashe’s lips moved, but he ultimately said nothing.

Chikara distributed breakfast, giving everyone a portion, even preparing one for Alice, while he ate directly from the flat pan.

Sensing the subtle atmosphere, the orc initiated a topic, “If we want to sneak in, it’s best to do it under the cover of night. We could even destroy the Four Pillars Cult’s statues to reduce their illuminated areas and create chaos. By the way, I know the Dark Gold Bishop guarding the west wall; he’s a coward who would prioritize his own safety in case of an emergency...”

“But there’s still 9 hours until nightfall,” Gwen pointed out. “Wouldn’t it be... too late?”

“Right,” the orc rubbed his bald head, “Thanks for reminding me, Miss Gwen. So-“

“Shut up and eat your breakfast,” Igor said coldly. “If your mouth is just for talking, I can help you shove the flat pan into the other one.”

The orc’s sphincter tightened.

“Why take it out on Chikara?” Ashe shrugged. “He’s just saying things I want to hear. Thank you, Chikara, but I wouldn’t dare speak well of you in front of Igor. You’re better off flattering Igor than me.”

The orc sorcerer chuckled awkwardly.

“Or perhaps you’re speaking in reverse, trying to persuade me to save Tamashi so I would abandon the idea.”

“No, I, Chikara, never lie-“

“If that’s the case, you’re overthinking it.”

Ashe said, “I never intended for everyone to go rescue Tamashi.”

Everyone was taken aback.

Chapter 702: The Loop of Beginning and End

Chapter 702: The Loop of Beginning and End

Ashe seemed oblivious to the surprise on everyone's faces as he calmly spoke, "Tamashi's intentions are clear. He didn't tell us, choosing to leave secretly on his own because he didn't want to drag us into this."

"The Mercury Trojan Horse is down there; it's the end of his revenge. He's willing to sacrifice everything for it, even if it means dying inside. If he succeeds, he's content to breathe his last; if he fails, he's resigned to being lost without a trace."

"But we're different. We have a grudge against the Mercury Trojan Horse, but not to the extent of sacrificing our lives for mutual destruction. More importantly, we have a way out, a future we can grasp."

Ashe stated calmly, "We're just one step away from happiness."

"To pull us, travelers who are already on our way out, into risking our lives for his revenge? Just the thought of it seems too selfish, especially for a disciple of Raven Annihilation, whose actions are always just."

"If we really go to save him, not only would we risk our lives, but we'd also betray his good intentions," Ashe continued. "We're no longer children acting on whims, with favorite colors."

"We can't be emotional; we can't look back. Everyone has their own path to walk. If the paths are different, then we won't meet."

Aside from the orc's slurping of pasta, Ashe's words echoed in the shadow of the desert. Harvey glanced at him thoughtfully, shook his head, and tightened his grip on Alice's hand.

"...Do you really think that?" the Con Artist asked. "Won't you regret it?"

"What else?" Ashe retorted. "To save someone we've known for three months, should we charge into the Four Pillars Cult's army of tens of thousands of sorcerers? For the private vendetta of someone whose face we don't even know, should we face the threat of a legendary sorcerer?"

"In just a month, we could safely leave this wasteland of religious fanatics, monsters, and war, and return to the safety of the Gospel to enjoy wealth and comfort-at least without the fear of being hunted down. But instead, we can't wait that little time and insist on risking our lives in the near-death Silent Spiral?"

"More importantly, is Tamashi of Raven Annihilation worth such a sacrifice? Though he's incredibly strong, he's ultimately just an ordinary person; he's illiterate, with no life skills other than a rumored talent for cooking..."

"His faith in Raven Annihilation is too cold and rigid, likely causing trouble for us in the Kingdom of Gospel. Although he hasn't caused any major conflicts with us these months, minor disputes have been constant. Can we truly accept a companion whose beliefs are so different from ours?"

"Come to think of it, we should be grateful the Mercury Trojan Horse is here," Ashe said coldly. "Tamashi leaving for revenge might actually be a good thing."

Clang!

The Con Artist slammed the stainless steel plate onto the ground, standing up to glare at the Cult Leader with wide, furious eyes, biting his lower lip. Everyone else was stunned—they could hardly believe Igor would show such an emotional expression.

“Ah, what a surprise! I never knew you were a mental sorcerer, Ashe,” he mocked. “Mind reading? Mimicry? You’re spot on; it sounds just like something I’d say, like a voiceover in my head. Go on, I have thirteen more reasons not to save Raven. I’m curious to see how many you can guess!”

“Chikara, watch and learn! This is sarcasm at its finest. Your little tricks are nothing compared to this!”

The orc meekly replied, “I really am sincere...”

Ashe shook his head. “I wasn’t being sarcastic.”

“Then who are you trying to convince with these grandiose reasons for not saving Raven? Are you trying to persuade Raven’s closest brother, Harvey, or his non-human friend, Chikara, or perhaps me, who knows him inside out?” Igor kicked the plate aside, gritting his teeth. “Who here doesn’t know you’re closest to Raven? Who are you trying to disgust with these words?”

“I’m not.”

“Fine,” Igor said, stepping outside and spreading his arms. “Since you say you’re not, let’s leave. We’ll head to the nearest village and wait for a couple of weeks, then come back to the Silent Spiral to see if we can find that raven’s corpse in the Green Beast’s stomach-“

“I just thought you wouldn’t want to say it,” Ashe replied. “So I said it for you.”

The Con Artist stood with his back to them, facing the desolate land outside. The wind, carrying sand, lifted his long, untrimmed golden hair.

After a long pause, he asked, “What do you mean?”

“Even Chikara knows I want to save Raven. How could you all not know?” Ashe said. “But I’ve waited so long, and none of you have voiced any objections.”

“It’s different from Blood Moon, where we were forced by circumstances to take risks for mutual benefit; different from Gospel, where Annan enslaved us, leaving us no choice. This time, we’re free.”

“You don’t have to like Tamashi, you don’t have to save him, you can wait a month and escape Senlo. You can do whatever you want; nothing is holding you back.”

“What I fear most is you risking your lives for my sake.”

Ashe continued, “Yes, I do want to save Tamashi, but if it means sacrificing your lives, that would be too selfish, even more selfish than him wanting us to help him with his revenge.”

“I might as well deceive myself, wait until my spellcasting is perfected, and then return to Senlo to avenge him.”

Igor’s voice carried a hint of mockery. “You can deceive yourself?”

“Don’t worry, I won’t promise you here and then run off alone to save Tamashi-that would be a foolish suicide mission. I understand that I can’t save Tamashi by myself, and even if we all went, the chances would be slim. If you ended up risking your lives for me, the Mercury Trojan Horse would probably laugh herself awake from a dream.”

“I’m not a god, nor a savior. There are times when I’m powerless, obstacles I can’t overcome,” Ashe said. “I’d rather regret standing by in the future than become your burden.”

“Tamashi Raven Annihilation is indeed a friend I’ve shared life and death with,” Ashe said earnestly. “But Igor, Harvey, do you think your place in my heart is any less than Tamashi’s?”

Harvey suddenly felt a bit uncomfortable, wishing he could crawl into a coffin and lie beside Alice. 'Is this something a Blood Moon person would say?' he thought, though he found himself sitting up straighter, as if Alice sensed his thoughts and squeezed his hand tighter.

Igor covered his face with his hand to mask his expression and asked, "So, you're giving up on Raven for us?"

Ashe shook his head. "Not for you, that would make it sound like I'm making a huge sacrifice for you... Maybe I just don't want to go and am using you as an excuse."

"Though it's not really my place to speak," Chikara suddenly interjected, "but Mr. Ashe, that must be a lie."

"It's almost 10 o'clock," Gwen suddenly reminded them.

Igor sighed deeply. "Alright, you win, we--"

"That's not going to work," Ashe interrupted. "Now it's your turn to convince me. I need a word, a sincere word, especially from you, Igor. If I don't feel it's genuine, I won't let you go save Tamashi."

"How am I supposed to know what you want to hear?"

“You definitely know, because you’re the Con Artist Igor. Besides God, only a con artist like you would dare claim to fulfill anyone’s wishes,” Ashe said. “But this time, I want to hear your true feelings, not a lie to fulfill my wishes.”

Igor stared at Ashe, his eyes showing annoyance. Yet Ashe held his gaze, firm in his stance.

After a moment, Igor reluctantly squeezed out a few words from the corner of his mouth, “Unlike you, Raven holds a very low place in my heart. But you all aren’t much higher, merely tools I think I can use long-term-what people call ‘friends.’”

“However, there aren’t many ‘friends’ I acknowledge,” the Con Artist said. “So, Raven can’t die.”

“To die in a foreign land at the hands of a legendary sorcerer is quite a prestigious way to go,” Harvey mused. “If my death can help Raven shatter Mercury Trojan Horse’s happy life, making this bloody revenge even more intense, then all the better.”

This was what Ashe wanted to hear.

They could go save Raven, but not because “Ashe wants to save him.” If that were the case, Ashe would rather abandon this obsession; he didn’t want to be the catalyst for their downfall.

Igor and Harvey had to want to save Raven out of their own volition. Only then would Ashe approve of the mission.

Though it might seem the same, to Ashe, the meaning was entirely different-the former would be Ashe dragging them into the arena with chains, while the latter would be them walking in with heads held high.

It's the difference between shame and honor, between disgrace and pride.

"I will follow Mr. Igor," Gwen said softly.

Chikara looked around, swallowing nervously, "Maybe we should think this through carefully?"

"You were just all fired up about saving Raven, weren't you? We know your stance very well," Igor said, patting the orc's shoulder and leaning in with a cold voice, "Or are you thinking of backing out now?"

Chikara looked at Ashe with pleading eyes, but Ashe shrugged-indicating he wouldn't speak on Chikara's behalf to Igor.

“Don’t worry,” Harvey said calmly, “Your master is Alice. Just keep her and the coffin safe; no one’s sending you to your death.”

Igor snorted, seemingly displeased, but he accepted Harvey’s arrangement, and Chikara felt a wave of gratitude. Ashe watched this unfold, thinking how well Igor and Harvey played the good cop, bad cop routine.

The group emerged from the desert and gazed at the distant Vine Giant City.

Ashe suddenly chuckled, “Speaking of which, when we first arrived in Senlo, we were thrown into a cell, and it was Tamashi who broke the wall to save us.”

“That was three months ago,” Igor remarked, “Back then, you were so confident in your Divine Hosting, only to be instantly defeated by Silver Lantern.”

Igor realized his mistake as soon as he spoke. Ashe paused, his expression slightly dazed, “Silver Lantern... It’s been a while since we’ve heard anything about her.”

He quickly returned to the topic, “When we first came to Senlo, Tamashi saved us, and now, before we leave, we need to save Tamashi. It forms a perfect loop.”

“But when we see him, I’m giving him a punch.”

Ashe threw a straight punch into the air, grumbling, “Even though he had no choice, my anger is beyond my control. He said he was under my command... Hmph!”

“Let’s go, before heading to hell, let’s follow Raven into the Silent Spiral.”

In the shadow cast by the barrel, Raven was fully engaged in the technique he learned in Blind Town, trying to erase his presence as much as possible. Although this technique could achieve the effect of stealth, it demanded a high level of emotional control; any intense emotional fluctuation could reveal his aura.

But for a judgment warrior who had seen countless battles, there was little in this world that could shake his composure. Yet, during the past half-hour of listening, Raven found himself repeatedly unable to suppress his inner shock, nearly causing the technique to fail.

“...Lord Vichy, Silver Lantern has reached the lower level.”

“Although it should take some time, I’ll go down and keep watch... By the way, without my orders, do not approach the bottom three levels, lest you alert Silver Lantern.”

“Understood.”

“You could have left earlier; didn’t you already open a normal Void Gate?”

“On the other side is a deserted island surrounded by ocean, far from human society, not even knowing if there’s civilization... Anyway, there’s still plenty of time, no need to rush the decision.”

“In my era, there was a saying: ‘After much picking, you end up with a broken lamp.’”

“Remember Lord Vichy’s teachings.”

“No need to remember. You might open a brilliant Void Gate, or you might pick for a long time and end up worse off. All the world’s wisdom is the experience of those who have successfully navigated fate, but success has never been about experience, it’s about luck.”

Raven heard Vichy’s footsteps growing closer, his voice becoming clearer, “As long as you win in the end, you’re right; otherwise, no matter how right your reasoning is, it’s wrong.”

“So...”

The next moment, Vichy’s enigmatic voice pierced through Raven’s ears, reaching his brain, “Your luck is good; she’s of no use to me anymore.”

“Farewell, Lord Vichy,” the others said politely, as if they hadn’t heard the remark.

Raven dared not move, unsure how long he waited, until people began to move the barrels. A drop of Crow’s Blood Wine dripped from the barrel, landing on Raven’s Mask, tracing a bloodstain.

Then it gently fell.

Onto his grey fox blade.

Chapter 703: The New World of the Silent Spiral

Boom!

“Help, help...”

“Intruders...”

The sorcerers, engulfed in black flames, writhed in agony on the ground, but the sand and dirt they touched only fueled the fire.

Ashe walked through the thick smoke, hands tucked in the pockets of his dark red trench coat, stepping over the charred remains.

Igor took out a perfume bottle from his skirt suit, spraying it on his waist and the back of his neck to dispel the strong smell of tar. Gwen followed behind him, offering eye drops and a warm towel. Igor had just unleashed a large-scale mental assault, which not only drained his spellforce but also put immense pressure on his optic nerves, necessitating immediate eye care if possible.

Harvey and Alice emerged from the black smoke arm in arm, as if attending a gala. However, Alice was no longer in her normal form; her body was a decaying corpse, with countless flies and maggots forming her new skin, exuding a dark green putrid aura. This was the necromancer's new Miracle, "Death's Breath." Without needing close contact, merely gazing upon Alice's deathly visage could drive onlookers into madness, fear, and paralysis, inducing various Negative Status effects. They would even forget to breathe, and without switching to manual breathing, they might suffocate to death.

Chikara, bringing up the rear, extinguished his flames. Apart from his pants, the orc's clothing was almost entirely burned away. While there might be debate over individual combat prowess, few would contest Chikara's dominance in group attacks; his destructive black flames had obliterated all obstacles in their path.

"No traps, surprisingly."

Ashe stepped into the ancient stone tunnel, his Heart Sword spirit sweeping through the fifty-meter area ahead, radiating an intensely bright and penetrating warm white light. This move was low in damage but highly disruptive, capable of triggering most Miracle Traps.

It wasn't a Miracle per se, just a special application of the Heart Sword spirit. Ashe had been wielding the Heart Sword spirit for so long that he'd naturally unlocked some new tricks.

"Who else but a sanctuary sorcerer could make it through here?" Igor remarked. "And if they are a sanctuary sorcerer, what use are traps?"

Behind them lay the hexagonal fortress the Four Pillars Cult had built at the entrance to the Silent Spiral. Although Ashe and his group had considered a stealth approach, their six-person team was too conspicuous. The Four Pillars Cult had reconnaissance Miracles specifically targeting sanctuary sorcerers, and they were detected shortly after entering Vine Giant City.

However, luck was finally on their side this time. Just as Ashe resolved to storm Vine Giant City, the Qinyi Alliance's forces arrived at the Silent Spiral and launched a probing attack.

Seizing the opportunity while the Four Pillars Cult's attention was diverted by the Qinyi Alliance, with most of their forces gathered on the city walls, Ashe and his team cut through the chaos. With their lineup of four sanctuary sorcerers, they tore through half the camp-against four sorcerers who ignored all damage, the Four Pillars Cult members were like butter meeting a hot knife, melting away in an instant.

Before the Four Pillars' Bishop could arrive, they had already stormed the hexagonal fortress guarding the Silent Spiral. This was a race against time, a daring intrusion into

the heart of the Four Pillars Cult, where no one dared to hold back. They paved their way with spectacular displays of death, blasting open doors with brutal Miracles.

Ashe pointed behind him, his Heart Sword slicing through the air at the tunnel entrance, leaving hundreds of sharp ink marks in space, capable of cutting even through the black smoke. “Even a sanctuary sorcerer would need considerable time to disarm this trap,” he said. “For now, we needn’t worry about pursuit from behind.”

Utilizing the secret toxin of faded dreams, Ashe transformed it into Shadowblade Spellforce. With his Four-winged Heart Sword and Four-winged Sword Mark, combined with the Four-winged spellforce and spirit, he could elevate this Heart Pen Miracle to a legendary level!

Shouts and curses echoed from behind, yet none dared to cross those ink marks.

As Ashe and his companions turned along the spiral passage, the noise from above faded into a distant delusion.

True to its name, the Silent Spiral was a peculiar passage spiraling downward, constructed of square stone bricks. Fluorescent mushrooms and green grass sprouted from the edges of the bricks, ensuring visibility was not compromised.

The crisp sound of boots on stone echoed through the passage, accompanied by dim lighting, creating a dreamlike haze.

Yet, no one relaxed their vigilance. They all knew that what lay ahead was the real challenge from the Four Pillars Cult. Having fought their way in, they no longer expected to ambush the Mercury Trojan Horse; avoiding an ambush themselves would be fortunate.

“We’re still in the ‘foyer’ of the Silent Spiral,” Chikara reminded them. “The foyer consists of about eighteen spiral layers, accessible to anyone without restriction. But to step out of the foyer and enter the first layer of the Silent Spiral, one must use a Demi-God to unlock the ‘New World’-also known as the ‘Trial.’”

“Each Trial layer requires a Demi-God. At its peak, the Tribulation Fire Temple had five Demi-Gods, enabling access to the fifth layer of the Silent Spiral. Of course, the Temple wouldn’t deploy all its Demi-Gods for the Tribulation Trial-it’s unnecessary, as the Trials on the first and fifth layers are identical.”

“If the Four Pillars Cult has already established multiple Trial layers here...” Chikara’s expression turned peculiar. “I suspect we might be halted by the Trials before even encountering the Mercury Trojan Horse.”

“What exactly are the Trials of the Silent Spiral?” Igor inquired.

“Each Trial initiated by a Demi-God is unique. I only know of the Tribulation Trial, and my experience might not serve as a reference; it could even skew your judgment,” Chikara admitted helplessly.

Gwen, another informed party, nodded in agreement, affirming Chikara’s words.

The orc feigned ease, saying, “But there’s a silver lining; perhaps Mr. Tamashi has already been halted by the Trials, and we’ll find him without breaking a sweat...”

“We’ve arrived.”

A massive Fog Gate loomed at the end of the spiral passage, with a faintly visible blood-red flame pattern within. Clearly, they had reached the end of the foyer.

Upon seeing this, Chikara’s composure shattered, “How is this possible...”

The group stared in surprise at the orc, who took a deep breath and slowly said, “This is the mark of the Tribulation Fire Chapel. The blood-red flame signifies a Trial initiated by the Killing Tribulation Fire Demi-God.”

Igor suddenly asked, “What’s your full name?”

“Chikara Tribulation Fire,” Chikara replied expressionlessly.

At this moment, Ashe suddenly walked towards the wall. The others looked over and noticed a ‘→’ mark on the stone slab. However, it wasn’t pointing towards the Fog Gate ahead, but rather back the way they had come.

Ashe extended his finger, placing it into the groove of the mark, finding it a perfect fit. As he moved his fingertip, he scraped away some of the debris within the groove.

“You can write on the stone slab with just a finger, and it was done recently...” Ashe confirmed, “This was left by Tamashi.”

“At least he has some brains and conscience,” Igor glanced at the mark pointing backward, “He even guessed you would come to save him and left a warning.”

“He guessed we would come to save him,” Ashe pointed to the faint scratches on the slab, “There are five more warnings that you can only see up close-looks like he included Alice in his calculations.”

“Ah-ha,” Harvey remarked, “Another reason to rescue him.”

“Indeed,” Igor sneered, “Since he guessed you would come, he naturally assumed we wouldn’t be absent.”

“Couldn’t it be that he genuinely believes his confidant, the psychologist Igor, would come to save him?” Ashe chuckled, “Alright-it’s your turn now, Chikara.”

Chikara was silent for a moment before seriously saying, “I vaguely remember the procedure. Follow me closely, do exactly what I do, and don’t act rashly.”

After a slight adjustment to their formation, Chikara led the way through the back door, with everyone else following closely.

The next second, gentle sunlight squeezed into their eyes.

Warm sunlight streamed through the blue sky and white clouds, passing through a massive glass dome, and softly bathed everyone.

They walked along a bustling avenue, flanked by clusters of flowers, with towering buildings in the distance. Children played on the distant lawns, couples chatted on benches, and a mother pushing a stroller passed by them.

Ashe almost thought he had time-traveled back to the Kingdom of Gospel.

But upon closer inspection, he noticed significant differences: above the flower beds, numerous bee-like spirits tended to the blossoms; children played with spirits, even reading picture books with them; while couples whispered sweet nothings, two spirits behind them seemed poised for a fight; the stroller wasn't pushed by a mother, but by a spirit, and inside, the baby slept alongside a small spirit.

Almost everyone had a spirit companion, whether humanoid, beast-like, insect-like, One-Winged, two-wings, or even three wings. Some people even had multiple spirits.

They interacted with the spirits naturally, chatting with them. When they were happy, the spirits were happy; when they were downcast, the spirits mirrored their mood.

On this road, Ashe and the other sorcerers seemed like country folk without spirits.

“Welcome to the Tribulation Fire Trial,” Chikara’s voice carried a hint of nostalgia, “It’s a fascinating place, isn’t it?”

“The so-called Trial is actually an Illusion constructed by the Demi-God?” Igor suddenly realized.

“This isn’t an Illusion,” Chikara shook his head. “This is the world we envision after achieving our ideal, a future depicted by the Demi-God’s boundless imagination.”

Gradually, everyone began to understand the situation: no wonder each layer of the Silent Spiral must be constructed by the Demi-God, no wonder each layer is called a new world!

Because each new world is a future imagined by the Demi-God!

It’s the ideal nation they wish to establish!

It’s their hope and longing for the Senlo wasteland!

“Our Tribulation Fire Chapel yearns for the glory of the Fire Cat Divine Era, and the key concept of the Fire Cat Divine Era is the ideal of the Fire Cat Demi-God: Allow ordinary people to wield spirits. We don’t know the true situation of the Fire Cat Divine Era, so we can only imagine our desired past-or future-from the fragments left in the ruins.”

As Chikara walked, he continued, “Therefore, the Tribulation Fire Chapel believes that everyone should have a Familiar Spirit, inseparable until death.”

At that moment, a spirit suddenly appeared beside Ashe and the others. This spirit resembled them closely, almost like another version of themselves.

“The Familiar Spirit will accompany us as we grow.”

After walking a while, the scene suddenly changed, and they found themselves atop a slide. The orc naturally slid down, and the others followed suit.

“Accompany us in learning.”

They suddenly appeared in a classroom, with five desks beside them, each with a test paper on it. The orc sat down first to answer the questions. Ashe and the others couldn’t quite see what was written on the test paper, but the Familiar Spirit guided them in answering.

“Accompany us in making friends, traveling, participating in activities, facing emotional issues, entering higher education...”

With the constant change of scenes and Chikara’s guidance, Ashe and the others seemed to experience the growth process of a ‘Tribulation Fire person.’ ‘Tribulation Fire people’ grew up with spirits, occasionally having spats with them, but mostly weathering life’s storms together, never alone, always optimistic and hopeful for the future.

The Familiar Spirit is their friend in life, helper in learning, and weapon in battle.

“When we grow up, the Familiar Spirit will continue to accompany us-” Chikara said, “in pursuit of the ultimate Truth.”

Suddenly, the scene transformed into a dark underground Institute.

A Scholar in a lab coat addressed them, “The research on ‘stealing spellforce from the Virtual Realm’ has hit a bottleneck. Should we continue experimenting with the Blade Fish Dragon or use humans?”

Meanwhile, several large cultivation tanks appeared on both sides of the Institute, with Blade Fish Dragons on the left and humans on the right. Chikara, without hesitation, directed the Familiar Spirit to choose the human tank, causing the people inside to suffer agonizing pain until they died!

“Quick, follow suit!” Igor urged. “It’s all an illusion!”

However, this was just the beginning. The subsequent experiments gradually exceeded the limits of Ashe and the others' imagination: preventing death while making someone watch their body decay, to see if they could summon a new spirit; transferring a person's consciousness into food at the moment of eating, then back after consuming it, to see if they could activate the Gluttony Sect; using humans...

Every experiment offered a choice, yet before each one, they were informed that animal testing had reached its limits. Without exception, Chikara opted for human trials.

Finally, it seemed they arrived at the last experiment. The lab-coated figure stated, "The research on 'self-sacrifice breaking the spellcasting limits' has hit a bottleneck. Should we proceed with Blade Fish Dragon or human trials?"

Despite the question, there were no other living subjects available. When Chikara directed his Familiar Spirit towards his own throat, everyone realized the test subject was himself.

Slash!

The Familiar Spirit wailed as it cut Chikara's throat, and the orc slowly collapsed to the ground. Igor watched coldly, without hesitation, instructing his Familiar Spirit to slice his throat as well!

"Do it," Igor said, clutching his throat as he looked at them. "You must use the Familiar Spirit..." With that, he too fell.

Ashe, Harvey, and Gwen hesitated little, each cutting their own throat, consciousness plunging into darkness.

When they awoke, they found themselves once again before the Fog Gate. Inside the gate, faint flame patterns flickered.

“Are we back at the start?” Ashe asked, surprised as he got up.

“No, we’ve passed the first layer of the Silent Spiral,” Igor replied. “This is the Fog Gate of the second layer. Look closely.”

Ashe examined it carefully, noticing the flame pattern was blue, not blood red. Turning around, he saw the passage behind them was also filled with mist, as if they were wedged between layers of fog.

“Typically, the Tribulation Fire Trial requires ten completions to be deemed successful, and with each repetition, the difficulty increases sharply,” Chikara explained. “But the more times you pass the Tribulation Fire Trial, the higher your resonance with the Tribulation Fire Demi-God. If you wish to become a divine host, multiple trials are necessary.”

“Why does the trial involve so many inhumane experiments?” Ashe asked, puzzled. “Is this really the future the Tribulation Fire Demi-God envisions?”

“To be precise, this is the future envisioned by the Killing Tribulation Fire Demi-God.”

Chikara clarified, “And you seem to have misunderstood; the Tribulation Fire Chapel doesn’t aspire to the prosperity of the Fire Cat Divine Era, but rather its ‘atmosphere.’”

“Atmosphere?”

“Yes, the atmosphere of daring to challenge all impossibilities.”

Chikara continued, “Forever young, forever passionate, always chasing impossible dreams, seeking the greatest Truth. The Tribulation Fire Chapel wants to return to such an era-though it’s likely a romanticized past.”

“But the five Demi-Gods of Tribulation Fire differ slightly on ‘how to pursue.’ The Killing Tribulation Fire Demi-God’s pursuit is ‘by any means necessary.’ If human trials are the most cost-effective choice, then human trials it is.”

“In fact, the Killing Tribulation Fire district conducts the most human experiments,” the orc shrugged. “But human trials are merely a facade; in any trial constructed by Tribulation Fire, adhering to one principle ensures safety.”

Ashe asked, “What principle?”

“Truth is Supreme,” Chikara replied. “No matter how it tests you, as long as you choose the path closest to Truth, it will be correct.”

Harvey suddenly asked, “What happens if we make the wrong choice?”

“In other new worlds, I’m not sure, but in the Trial of Tribulation Fire, a wrong choice leads to the curse of Tribulation Fire, burning until death.”

Harvey asked, “Can Tribulation Fire burn through the Sanctuary?”

Everyone was momentarily stunned.

Chikara blinked and hesitated before saying, “Generally, only two-wings sorcerers participate in the Trial of Tribulation Fire...”

Harvey turned and walked back into the mist, but he soon returned, his clothes slightly scorched. “Tribulation Fire is a bit of a hassle, but the Sanctuary can withstand it.”

Chikara almost choked on his own words.

He had intended to use the Trial of Tribulation Fire to scare them off, as it was only easy with him leading. The subsequent trials wouldn't be so accommodating. Yet, he had forgotten that among the five living people here, four were Sanctuary sorcerers, akin to tactical weapons!

Forget the trials, just bulling through with the Sanctuary would do!

Despite his frustration, Chikara still reminded them, "Each trial has a main theme, like the 'Truth is Supreme' in the Trial of Tribulation Fire. As long as you follow the main theme, you can avoid the curse. To conserve spellforce, if we can follow the main theme, we should."

Everyone nodded, but Ashe seemed puzzled. "How did Tamashi get past the Trial of Tribulation Fire..."

Truth be told, the Trial of Tribulation Fire wasn't much of a threat to them, being morally flexible death row inmates. If necessary, they could just act through it, or overturn the table if acting failed. But for someone as rigid in his values as Raven, without the protection of the Sanctuary, how did he manage to pass?

"You forgot he's a Virtual Realm despiser, right? It's hard to say whether these trials even affect him," Igor said. "So, next..."

"Blue flames, it's a trial constructed by the Dust Tribulation Fire Demi-God," Chikara said, somewhat puzzled. "Wait, the Killing Tribulation Fire Demi-God, the Dust Tribulation Fire Demi-God, I recall these Demi-Gods were in..."

Even though the orc immediately shut up, those who needed to understand had already understood.

“Let’s go,” Ashe said calmly. “We’re here to save Tamashi.”

Chapter 704: The Legendary Sorcerer Oreyva

“Ah, ah-finally out!”

Ashe collapsed to the ground the moment he emerged from the mist, and since they were all holding hands, everyone else ended up kneeling as well. They breathed heavily, as if they had just returned to the land of the living, so moved they almost wanted to cry.

They weren’t exaggerating; they had just endured one of the most nauseating Trials-the Blind Sight Trial, constructed by the Demi-God of Blind Sight.

Even now, they had no idea what the main theme of the Blind Sight Trial was, but they had experienced the curse firsthand: sensory deprivation!

Some might wonder, didn’t they have their Sanctuaries? Couldn’t they resist it?

Turns out, they couldn't!

The Sanctuary's protection, no matter how comprehensive, still needed to allow light and air to pass through; otherwise, the sorcerer would be as good as blind and deaf. The terror of the Blind Sight curse lay in its reliance on these two mediums. Even with a Sanctuary, you would still fall victim to it.

After being blinded and deafened, they had to hold hands and move forward together, lest they lose a few companions along the way. The ground was littered with obstacles and traps, and they stumbled through with the Sanctuary's protection. They even considered flying, but the obstacles in the air were even more numerous...

Eventually, they lost all sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, unable to even control their bodies, their consciousness seemingly trapped in a dark coffin. But this time, Alice was the hero-she wasn't affected, and Harvey had her drag them out.

"No wonder the Mercury Trojan Horse didn't leave any traps," Igor exhaled a breath of relief. "These Trials alone are enough to stop an army-no matter if the Qinyi Alliance conquered the Vine Giant City, they couldn't penetrate the Silent Spiral."

"Speaking of which," Ashe recalled, "we've already delved into the ninth layer, so why haven't we encountered a single disciple of the Four Pillars?"

The first five layers of the Silent Spiral were relatively easy to navigate, as they were Trials constructed by the Demi-Gods of Tribulation Fire. By adhering to the main theme 'Truth is Supreme,' they managed to pass through with only minor burns from the Tribulation Fire. But once they reached the unfamiliar sixth layer, their progress slowed significantly.

The 'Light Spiral Trial' of the sixth layer and the 'Natural Trial' of the eighth layer were challenging, but they managed to push through with their Sanctuaries.

However, the 'Bronze Law Trial' of the seventh layer delayed them considerably.

The curse of the Bronze Law Trial was peculiar; it didn't harm the Trial Takers and even offered them unlimited chances: it simply transported them back to the trial's starting point!

Ashe and the others were utterly frustrated, akin to playing a difficult video game where a single mistake meant starting over. It took them a while to figure out the main theme of the Bronze Law Trial, thinking it was the most annoying challenge, but the 'Blind Sight Trial' of the ninth layer quickly proved them wrong.

Throughout their journey, they witnessed the 'new worlds' constructed by nine Demi-Gods: though the five Demi-Gods of Tribulation Fire shared the same ideals, their details varied-Dust Tribulation Fire was gentle, Fire of Slaughter was aggressive, Inferno of Tribulations was lofty, and so on.

The Natural Demi-God crafted a lush world where wind, rain, thunder, mountains, seas, forests, the sun, and the moon were all transformed from humans. Humans were no longer mere mortals but eternal beings, living in harmony with nature and the cosmos.

The Bronze Law Demi-God, on the other hand, created a society bound by strict rules, where no one could physically break the laws, eradicating 'evil' altogether. This reminded Ashe of the familiar Shattered Lake Prison.

The Blind Sight Demi-God constructed a new world where people lost all their senses, merging directly into the void of existence.

Yet, after enduring nine trials, they still hadn't encountered any disciples of the Four Pillars.

"If it were you, would you stay in those trials?" Igor retorted.

Ashe shook his head vigorously.

"Even if the Four Pillars Cult left people to guard midway, they would choose trials where the main theme is easy to adapt to and without scene changes," Igor analyzed. "Like the Natural Trial and the Light Spiral."

Not all trials had the complex scene changes of the Tribulation Fire Trials. Trials like the Light Spiral and the Natural Trial consisted of a single area, with no scene changes throughout. If they weren't in a hurry, resting and experiencing the new world would be a pleasant travel option.

"More than finding disciples of the Four Pillars, I want to find Mr. Tamashi," Chikara howled sincerely. "Mr. Tamashi, where are you-come out already!"

“Stop yelling,” Igor said, stepping into the next Fog Gate. “Let’s keep going.”

They passed through the Fog Gate of the tenth layer and arrived at a serene grassland. Lush green grass, blue skies, and white clouds met at the horizon, reminding Ashe of a classic computer wallpaper.

“A trial related to nature?” Igor speculated. But as they took a few steps, their expressions changed dramatically, and they quickly raised their Sanctuaries!

“What’s happening?” Ashe looked at his foot. “It feels like something bit my toe!”

“Same here!” The orc lifted his foot, now barefoot, showing his bleeding toe. He grimaced with a wry smile. “This curse... has quite the taste!”

“Same for me,” Harvey said, crouching to remove Alice’s boot. “But Alice is unaffected.”

Igor and Gwen nodded slightly, indicating they too had been bitten on the toes. Worse still, the Sanctuary couldn’t block the attack, only slightly mitigate it, and the assault on their toes continued!

What kind of curse targets toes? Sandworms?

“Let’s hurry through this layer and keep quiet,” Igor instructed, casting a Mental Miracle to lower their presence. They stealthily crossed the grassland. Though their toes were injured, it didn’t significantly hinder their movement.

Until they saw someone sitting in the distance on the grassland.

A person gnawing on their foot as if it were a chicken claw, bloodied and exposing bone.

A person whose hands were chewed down to skeletal remains.

A person they had heard of but never met!

“Am I seeing things!?” Chikara whispered, almost roaring. “Oreyva the Frenzy Battle has such a peculiar hobby!?”

Indeed, the person on the grassland engaging in self-mutilation and cannibalism is none other than Oreyva, one of the three legendary sorcerers of the Senlo wasteland, the former head of the War Temple, and now the top combat force of the Four Pillars Cult-the Pope of Annihilation!

Yet, at this moment, where is the dignity and aura befitting a legendary sorcerer? His hair is disheveled, his body covered in blood and grime, drool dripping as he frantically gnaws at his own foot, looking worse than a beggar!

But Igor felt a chill rise within him, “Let’s bypass him and move through this layer without attracting his attention!”

Everyone nodded in agreement, but just as they were about to take a detour, Igor stepped on the grass, producing a crisp ‘snap’ sound.

They looked down and discovered numerous transparent ice crystals hidden among the green grass. At the same time, the sunny tenth layer suddenly erupted into a blizzard.

Miracle: Sword Body Barrier!

Ashe instantly constructed a massive defensive barrier, capable of resisting any Sanctuary Miracle, but in the next second, it was shattered by an ice spear! Even more terrifying, despite their Sanctuaries being raised, the vicious ice crystals still pierced their bodies, causing blood to burst forth!

“The water vapor within the Sanctuary!” Igor shouted as he retreated, “He’s directly condensing the water vapor within the Sanctuary to attack... Try to shrink the Sanctuary to fit tightly against the skin!”

When fully focused, shrinking the Sanctuary into combat attire is feasible, but achieving this in battle requires years of Sanctuary experience-yet time is precisely their biggest shortcoming!

“It’s useless!” Chikara shouted, clutching his bleeding chest, “I just covered my skin with the Sanctuary, but I was still attacked!”

At this moment, they finally saw the legendary sorcerer renowned in the wasteland-Oreyva, facing the sky, back to the ground, crawling towards them like a bizarre spider. His murky eyes swept over them, revealing an eerie blood-red glow.

The blizzard intensified, nearly freezing their Sanctuaries and further hindering their mobility!

“Wait!” Chikara’s eyes lit up, “This is his Frost Sanctuary-his Sanctuary completely covers us!”

When a sorcerer has immersed in their Sanctuary for long enough, they can integrate their spellcasting into the Sanctuary. For instance, Chikara can manifest a Flame Sanctuary, where anyone entering his Sanctuary will spontaneously combust.

This technique seems powerful but is actually quite impractical: if you cover the enemy with your Sanctuary, you won’t have your own Sanctuary covering you!

Thus, it's only somewhat useful when overwhelming two-wings sorcerers; in Sanctuary or even legendary-level battles, sorcerers will still honestly keep their Sanctuaries on themselves.

Which means-

Miracle: Rage Sword!

Miracle: Visualization Overlap!

Miracle: Black Flame Instant Annihilation Arrow!

Miracle: Alice's Ten-Finger Strike!

Miracle: Starlight Fall!

Simultaneously, all sorcerers launched remote attacks on Oreyva! Even though Oreyva managed to dodge in time, many attacks still landed on him-

"Ugh!"

Ashe's body trembled, feeling his insides churn into a mess, unable to stop the blood from trickling from his mouth as he clutched it.

He glanced around and saw that everyone else was similarly wounded, teetering on the brink, and immediately understood. He quickly unleashed several Joy Swords to heal everyone, shouting, "Damage Chain-we're all in a Damage Chain!"

No wonder their toes kept hurting.

No wonder Chikara covered his skin with the Sanctuary but was still pierced in the chest by ice crystals.

The curse of the tenth layer of the Silent Spiral is indeed a Damage Chain-if one person is injured, everyone else suffers the same injury!

"Here," Gwen gasped, "might be a new world constructed by the War Demi-God."

"The War Demi-God seeks peace, and the way to achieve it is by destroying all wars."

Igor suddenly realized, "If everyone is in a Damage Chain, then indeed, no one would start a war, since harming others equals harming oneself."

“But this conclusion assumes...” the Con Artist chuckled bitterly, “no one is insane.”

Crack!

Oreyva’s head twisted at a grotesque angle, emitting an almost inhuman roar, sweeping towards them with endless frost!

Chapter 705: A Blade of Revenge

“Found it!”

“Oh?”

“Reporting to Your Excellency, we’ve discovered a stable alternate world! It’s 15 meters below ground, primarily a coniferous forest, undeveloped, with no signs of civilization or dangerous creatures. There’s water and wildlife present!”

“Abandon it.”

On the fifteenth layer of the Silent Spiral, Mercury Trojan Horse lounged lazily on a cool-toned plush carpet, nestled against a 200-kilogram gray wolf. Dressed in a simple robe, she seemed more like she was on vacation. A girl in a cat-eared pajama set curled up in her arms, eyes closed, enjoying a sweet slumber. Mercury Trojan Horse gently caressed the girl's delicate face with the back of her fingers, as if handling a piece of art.

Around her, sorcerers clad in Black Feather robes were busy at work. Most were engaged in creating Void Gates and scouting what lay beyond them-these gates could lead to unimaginable places: lava fields, underground caverns, high altitudes, deep seas, or even virtual realm turbulence. Without a robust defense mechanism, opening a Void Gate was akin to greeting death.

"Remember two conditions: you must observe a civilized society, and it must be in a lawless area where civilization's control is weak. The best places are underground facilities like sewers, followed by slums, and lastly, suburban forests and beaches," Mercury Trojan Horse instructed. "If these two conditions aren't met, there's no need to report to me."

She raised two fingers, picked up a glass, and gently swirled it before downing the chilled lemon Crow's Blood Wine in one go, letting out a soft burp.

"Your Excellency, the probability is just too low," remarked a cold-faced Black Feather youth. "Although we have the Miracle 'Sustain,' which allows us to continuously increase the usage of Void Gate Spirits, each sustain consumes a significant amount of spellforce. This Miracle is sanctuary level, and only four of us can use it... Out of hundreds of experimental records, only twice have we found a safe Void Gate. If we insist on meeting both conditions, it might take thousands of tests."

"We have time," Mercury Trojan Horse replied calmly. "Remember, this isn't an escape; it's a strategic relocation. The Four Pillars Cult's mission will follow us to a new Kingdom. If we end up in a barren world, even the Four Pillars would abandon us. Only by dragging civilization into the Abyss can we please the supreme Four Pillars."

“Praise the Four Pillars that uphold the world, granting us happiness and peace,” the group chanted in unison.

“Your Excellency,” a cute boy in a black feather robe asked, “since we’re going to a new world, why not bring Oreyva along? He was already a legendary sorcerer a decade ago, and no one would dispute him being the first in Senlo!”

“I would love for Oreyva to continue with us,” Mercury Trojan Horse said, setting down her glass as the cold-faced Black Feather youth promptly refilled it. “But he’s... no longer useful.”

“In his pursuit of the Wishflux Inheritance, his soul was repeatedly damaged at Ruby Mountain. I’ve exhausted countless resources just to keep him alive, but his consciousness is completely shattered, no different from being dead. There’s nothing more I can do.”

“Your Excellency’s compassion for subordinates is truly benevolent and kind,” the group praised in unison.

“Outside, without my distraction to sustain him, he wouldn’t even have the ability to move,” said the Mercury Trojan Horse. “I brought him down not to guard the Silent Spiral, but to keep others from knowing that Oreyva is a flickering flame in the wind.”

“I just didn’t expect that Silver Lantern would initiate a Trial using the War Demi-God; nor did I foresee that Oreyva, within the War Trial, would actually develop a new consciousness.”

Another sunlit boy clad in Black Feather curiously asked, “Since Mr. Oreyva has a new consciousness, why not bring him down?”

“Because he is no longer human,” the Mercury Trojan Horse explained. “The Four Pillars Cult does not need non-human disciples, and...”

She looked around, snapped her fingers to signal everyone to raise their glasses, “True, Oreyva is the foremost sorcerer of Senlo, the strongest legend of the wasteland, but you are the Black Feather Guard I formed with my own hands. I hold you in much higher regard than Oreyva. As long as I have you with me to challenge new worlds, what have I to worry about without Oreyva?”

“Together,” she raised her glass.

“Together!” inspired by her words, the Black Feather Guard drank Crow’s Blood Wine fervently, wishing they could offer their very blood to expand the territories under Mercury Trojan Horse!

“However, it’s truly a pity to lose Mr. Oreyva,” a bespectacled young man in Black Feather lamented. “Water spells are not known for their lethality, yet Mr. Oreyva managed to earn the title of Pope of Annihilation. Even the sanctuary sorcerers of the Qinyi Alliance retreat immediately upon encountering Mr. Oreyva. Apart from legendary peers, even sanctuary sorcerers struggle to survive against him, such is the reputation of Frost Extinction.”

The crowd nodded in agreement, and the Mercury Trojan Horse smiled, “Now he remains on the tenth floor, aligning with the mechanism of the War Trial. No one can pass his winter, which is making the best use of him, dedicating himself completely.”

“With him standing guard, we need not worry about the Qinyi Alliance... or any other messy pursuers. We can safely find the Void Gate leading to the new world.”

“Found it!”

Suddenly, a Black Feather sorcerer exclaimed excitedly, “The Void Gate leads to a suburban forest, but there are traces of a highway in the distance!”

Mercury Trojan Horse’s pupils dilated, but she remained calm, “Keep the Void Gate open, send someone to investigate further. Charlyn, well done.”

The Black Feather sorcerers’ spirits soared, and Charlyn, a humble One-Winged Sorcerer, couldn’t believe that Mercury Trojan Horse remembered him, “I am willing to die for your honor!”

“But I don’t have anything to reward you with right now, hmm...” she glanced sideways, noticed the wine was gone, and a stern-faced young man immediately tried to fetch more, but Mercury Trojan Horse gestured with her eyes for him to stop. She picked up two wine glasses and personally went to the barrel to pour the wine, “I hope you won’t mind that Crow’s Blood Wine isn’t refined enough.”

“Your Honor.” Charlyn hurried over, not daring to interrupt as he choked up and took the wine glass.

“Together.” Mercury Trojan Horse gently clinked his glass, and the other Black Feather sorcerers watched with envious eyes. Charlyn’s face flushed with supreme honor, “Together!”

Mercury Trojan Horse smiled faintly, lifted her head, ready to down the Crow’s Blood Wine-

Crash!

The barrel suddenly burst open, a spectacular blood rain commenced! Amidst the sweet drips of blood wine, a dull blade sliced through the air, its sound lagging behind it, the air compressed into a shockwave before it!

Since the day the Raven Annihilation Cult turned to ruins, since the night he was forced to kill his comrades, Raven had been waiting for this blade.

He closed his eyes and dreamed of this blade,

Opened his eyes and thought of this blade,

Gripped the blade in training,

Released the blade in contemplation.

Every bite of bread he ate was to have the strength to wield this blade,

Every drop of water he drank was to keep his mind sharp for this precise strike.

He was not a sorcerer, illiterate, unversed in spellcasting, he had nothing but this blade.

So, with this blade.

Let it end everything.

Mercury Trojan Horse still held her drink, her pupils shifting as she sensed the danger. A sanctuary sorcerer only needed a thought to-

Crash!

As the sonic boom ripple tore through the blood rain, marking a trail of revenge, Mercury Trojan Horse's head soared into the air!

Raven stepped forward, shattering the wooden remains of the barrel, his blade lightly vibrating, slicing the remaining headless corpse into dozens of pieces in an instant!

The other sorcerers barely had time to react, stunned by the sight of Raven amidst the mingling rain of blood and wine. Wearing a ferocious raven mask and draped in a Black Feather cloak, he appeared as a ghastly specter risen from hell to claim lives.

Chapter 706: Harvey and Chikara

“Found it!”

On the tenth level of the Silent Spiral, sorcerers were engaged in aerial combat amidst a raging blizzard. They maneuvered their golden and silver Twin Wings through a barrage of hail and Frost, evading the icy Miracles conjured by Oreyva.

Oreyva hadn't unfurled his virtual wings, yet the Frost would crystallize into icy platforms, allowing him to leap through the air like a jumping spider, relentlessly pursuing Ashe and the others like a swarm of buzzing flies!

Gwen clung to Igor within his Sanctuary, her eyes shimmering with starlight as she hung onto the Con Artist.

Though the Silent Spiral could spawn infinite spaces, it ultimately existed within a single layer of the Silent Spiral, meaning this vast prairie must have an entrance and an exit!

However, the prairie was so expansive, and Oreyva's Frost Sanctuary had whipped up a blizzard that blanketed the entire area, drastically reducing visibility. Coupled with Oreyva's rabid pursuit, searching for the Fog Gate had become exceedingly difficult.

The starlit spirit could significantly extend the range of vision, but each flicker severely impacted the retina, with five flashes being the limit. Each additional flicker would further impair vision. On the ninth flicker, Gwen finally spotted the Fog Gate leading to the next level, far in the distance.

Yet at that moment, a hysterical roar echoed through the blizzard, as if someone had ground their teeth to dust.

This was no metaphor; everyone felt a sharp pain in their molars, as if their dental nerves were being struck by a chisel!

Then, in mere moments, Frost enveloped their bodies, rendering the Sanctuary utterly meaningless. As the Frost spread, their thoughts slowed to a crawl-this was a Frost Miracle capable of affecting the mind!

Zing!

Suddenly, a blazing light pierced through the Sanctuary, melting the Frost on their bodies!

A three-wing spirit stood on Chikara's shoulder, radiating a dazzling, warm light that melted the white Frost clinging to them.

Firelight Spirit!

Chikara's ace in the hole!

Most of his fire spell Miracles required the Firelight Spirit to extend attack range and expand the area of effect, but simply deploying the Firelight Spirit could neutralize most water spell Miracles!

Though they narrowly escaped disaster, Oreyva's second wave of attacks was already upon them! The moisture within their Sanctuary rapidly condensed, about to crystallize and explode, tearing into their flesh!

They had witnessed this attack many times before, and under immense survival pressure, everyone had quickly gained experience in 'shrinking the Sanctuary,' as a smaller Sanctuary meant fewer ice crystals. Keeping it close to the skin could even resist this assault. However, Igor needed to protect Gwen, so his Sanctuary had to cover them both. He could only hold Gwen tightly to barely shrink the Sanctuary to its smallest size!

After a round of ice crystal explosions, everyone suffered only minor injuries, but due to the Damage Chain, others' injuries accumulated on themselves, leaving everyone bloodied and battered!

Such is the terror of the Damage Chain.

If the Damage Chain could be reduced to only 60% effectiveness by the Sanctuary, then if each of the five received 10 points of damage, they would also suffer an additional $6 \times 4 = 24$ points of damage from the Damage

If they focus their attacks on Oreyva, they would collectively inflict 10 points of damage on him, but each of them would also suffer 6 points of damage individually, totaling 30 points for the five of them!

In normal battles, having more people usually gives an advantage over fewer opponents, but in the War Trial, it's quite the opposite. If a fight breaks out in the War Trial, the side with more people will definitely suffer the greatest losses!

Of course, Oreyva's attacks on them aren't without cost. As Ashe and the others get injured, he too is heavily impacted by the Damage Chain, but his wounds quickly freeze over with Frost, seemingly unaffected.

Water spells are inherently the best at healing, and although Oreyva primarily focuses on the secondary water spell Frost, as a legendary sorcerer, how could he not have healing methods?

Once they pinpointed their destination, the group dispersed in the air, preventing Oreyva from launching a mass attack, and took the long route to fly towards the Fog Gate leading to the next layer. For some reason, Harvey flew a bit slower, becoming Oreyva's target of pursuit.

Soon, the Fog Gate appeared on the horizon, and Chikara breathed a sigh of relief. The pressure from the 'Pope of Annihilation' Oreyva was immense for the orc-he had grown up listening to Oreyva's legendary tales!

To be precise, the Tribulation Fire Chapel and the War Temple were opposing forces, and he had grown up hearing about Oreyva's exploits in slaughtering Fire sorcerers. It could even be said that Oreyva rose step by step by trampling over the Tribulation Fire Chapel. There were even rumors that Oreyva specialized in water spells just to extinguish the Tribulation Fire!

Even if Oreyva now has mental issues, he's still a legendary figure with a mental illness! It sounds like his danger level hasn't decreased but increased! The orc felt every cell in his body roaring, urging him to flee!

However, at this moment, Chikara saw Ashe and Igor stopping at the Fog Gate. He almost went mad, urging, "Run!"

"Harvey!" Ashe shouted, "Why aren't you running?"

Chikara turned his head and saw the necromancer not only failing to approach the Fog Gate but also luring Oreyva to another area. Harvey didn't respond to Ashe's voice, but Oreyva's head turned 180° to look at them.

At that moment, a ghostly claw slashed across Oreyva's neck, and corrosive marks appeared on Ashe and the others' necks as well!

Harvey didn't answer; that was the best answer.

"Oreyva will chase us to the next layer."

Igor's expression was calm, but his eyes were fixed on the figure in the blizzard: "We can't let him follow us; someone has to stay behind to deal with him."

"Can't we lure him to the next layer and ambush him?" Ashe asked fiercely.

"The curse of the War Trial binds us while also limiting Oreyva's abilities," Gwen explained. "Oreyva might be insane, but he's not stupid; his combat instincts haven't deteriorated. He realizes the existence of the Damage Chain, so he hasn't tried to kill us—he's had many chances."

"If he's either inflicting frequent minor injuries on us or trying to bind us, that's why we've managed to hold out until now. If we reach another Trial without the suppression of the Damage Chain, he might unleash the true power of a legendary sorcerer. At that point, we wouldn't stand a chance against the madness of Senlo's foremost legend."

"But in the War Trial, we can't gang up on him, or we'll be the first to fall. The best option is to leave someone behind to hold him off."

“Besides,” Igor added, “we’re here to rescue someone, not waste time.”

Ashe didn’t hesitate upon hearing this. He flew back and launched his Heart Sword, trying to draw Oreyva’s attention to himself. “Harvey, you go down with them to find Tamashi. I’ll keep this lunatic busy!”

“Don’t be foolish.”

Harvey attacked Oreyva again with his ghostly claws. Although he missed, it at least drew Oreyva’s ire back. “Look at Alice,” the necromancer said.

Ashe focused and quickly noticed, “Alice isn’t hurt?”

“The Damage Chain doesn’t affect Alice. Once I merge with her, it won’t affect me either.” Harvey, carrying Alice, darted through the air, dodging Oreyva’s barrage of ice spears. “I’m the best choice to stay and deal with him. You’re just trying to stall him, but I intend to kill him.”

“Go on, don’t stop me from dealing with a legend’s remains. Your lingering here only makes me hesitant to embrace Alice, fearing you’ll be tainted by death.”

Ashe stared at the distant necromancer. He knew now wasn’t the time to hesitate, but-

“Only you can stay?” Igor and Gwen had flown over at some point, asking from afar.

“One of us three must stay,” Harvey replied.

Ashe immediately realized-Chikara and Gwen!

Gwen was one thing, but Chikara was a fire spell Sanctuary, and they had enslaved him! Although it sounded harsh, if anyone had to take the risk of facing Oreyva, the orc Sanctuary was the best choice!

But would Chikara really be willing to stay?

The most crucial clause in the slave Pact was that he couldn’t be deliberately sent to his death!

If he believed it was a certain death situation, he could defy orders. Even if they left the orc behind on purpose, he could lead Oreyva to them instead of willingly leading Oreyva away to die-in the face of death, anything Chikara did wouldn’t be too much.

So, the person to intercept Oreyva had to be chosen from among the three of them.

According to Harvey, he was indeed the best candidate, but if he alone faced Senlo's top sorcerer...

"I'll stay with Mr. Harvey."

At that moment, Chikara suddenly flew over to them and volunteered, "I'm a fire spell Sanctuary, perfectly suited to counter Oreyva's Frost spellcasting. As for the Damage Chain, I have ways to resist it. Even if I can't help much, I won't be a burden to Mr. Harvey."

Ashe and Igor looked at Chikara in surprise. The Con Artist squinted slightly but decisively said, "Alright!"

After speaking, Igor and Gwen didn't linger; they flew straight towards the Fog Gate. Ashe took a deep breath, glancing at Harvey amidst the blizzard, his black skin appearing even darker against the white snow. The Cult Leader shouted, "Either I or my corpse will be waiting for you below. Catch up quickly."

"I shall look forward to it with great anticipation," the necromancer said with a slight smile.

After Ashe and his companions passed through the Fog Gate, Harvey also met up with Chikara in the storm. Noticing some had escaped, Oreyva seemed a bit annoyed and roared. The area around Harvey and Chikara began to ice over, nearly freezing them directly into ice balls!

However, Chikara waved his hand and released a cloud of black smoke, which instantly set the ice on fire upon contact. The smoke produced from the melting ice helped to intensify the concentration of the black smoke, quickly consuming the ice ball in flames.

Miracle-Fireworks.

Harvey looked at Chikara somewhat surprised, and the orc laughed, “For a long time, Lord Oreyva has been the hypothetical foe of the Tribulation Fire Chapel.”

“You didn’t have to stay,” said Harvey. “Although Igor will hold a grudge against you, he won’t sell you out as long as you’re not in mortal danger.”

Chikara smiled sheepishly, “Not at all, Lady Alice is my master, Mr. Harvey is Alice’s master, and I genuinely want to help you...”

“Suit yourself,” Harvey turned to the distant figure of Oreyva. “You said you had a miracle that could resist the Damage Chain? You can cast it now. Because...”

Harvey pulled the decaying Alice into his arms. “I am about to cross through the veil of death.”

“His body, though cold and fiery, still yearned for the moment of burning out.”

The noisy ghost fires merged the two into one, and the wild blizzard couldn't block this bizarre and eerie necromantic life. The dark blue ghost fire cast a dim glow on the blizzard, and the snow on the ground began to 'wither.' They didn't melt but seeped into the ground and died.

Miracle-Frostfire!

Meanwhile, Chikara suddenly stood upright, arms raised, then flames in the shape of a cross burst from his back, binding him like the cross he was tied to, and then flames burst forth from within him, completely turning him into a man on fire being executed!

His flesh was quickly consumed by the flames, leaving only blackened bones in the fierce flames, instantly vaporizing the surrounding snow into mist!

Miracle-Purgatorial Punishment!

Oreyva seemed to realize something, his voice tinged with excitement. He swept up the icy frost, forming a tornado around him, hurling countless icicles and ice shards towards them!

Harvey's right hand transformed into a massive dragon skull, deep blue flames brewing within; the flames on Chikara grew more intense, turning his arms into roaring torches!

Ghost King Shackles-Dragon Lich Bone Fire!

Miracle-Purgatorial Roar!

Deep blue flames of death, dark red purgatorial flames, and the freezing storm of Frost all struck together in a tumultuous clash!

Chapter 707: Dragon Lich

Ashe faced the Trial he dreaded most-a labyrinth.

The twelfth layer of the Silent Spiral was a colossal maze. The walls stretched from earth to sky, leaving no gaps to leap through, and they were seamlessly fused with the ground and ceiling. Any attack on a single point of the wall would have its damage distributed across the entire spiral layer.

Unfortunately, Chikara, the most adept at destruction, was left on the tenth layer. Ashe specialized in slicing, Igor's imagined adversaries were intelligent creatures rather than walls, and Gwen, despite being a two-wings sorcerer, had lost many spirits due to the recent collapse of the 'Stars concept,' rendering her combat strength nearly negligible.

If they truly wanted to brute-force their way through the twelfth layer's labyrinth, it would require over an hour of intense output. By then, their spellforce would be nearly depleted. Encountering the Mercury Trojan Horse on the next layer would be akin to serving themselves on a platter, practically inviting the Mercury Trojan Horse to tear them apart.

Thus, they had no choice but to navigate the maze honestly. However, the labyrinth wasn't entirely devoid of clues. At each fork, a question would appear, such as "What is the most beautiful music in life?" followed by three diverging paths, each emitting different sounds: the white noise of rain through the forest, the pure melody of flowing instruments, and a silent passage with no sound at all. Choosing the wrong path would lead them back to the same fork.

Clearly, the Trial's main theme was to grasp life's truths and choose the right path in life.

Ashe was evidently not skilled at answering such questions. When faced with "What is the most beautiful music in life?" he would recall phrases like 'Don't listen to the sound of rain hitting the leaves' or 'The sudden burst of water from a broken silver bottle.' It wasn't that he didn't understand life's truths; on the contrary, he knew too many of them but simply couldn't live life well.

In contrast, Igor quickly deciphered the expected answers to these questions. Although they didn't know which Demi-God had crafted this layer of the Trial, as long as they grasped the questioner's intent, solving the reading comprehension became traceable.

Ashe wanted to join the brainstorming but found that his answers never matched Igor's after several attempts. He quietly waited for the Con Artist to provide the answer, then dashed to the end of the passage like a dog, loudly relaying the next question to Igor.

When Ashe made his sixteenth heroic charge down the passage, Igor hooked his finger around the back of Ashe's collar: "Rushing won't help."

"Ashe, sir," Gwen said, pulling out a notebook, "While you can clearly repeat the question, the passage's conditions are the crucial answer choices, and your descriptions of the options are slightly distorted. Your advance scouting only optimizes one to three seconds."

“I waste more than three seconds trying to understand your recounting,” the Con Artist said coldly. “I’ll honestly report your performance to Harvey. I’m sure he’ll be moved to tears by your theatrics.”

Igor expected Ashe to retort, but Ashe merely walked forward silently, without a word. The Con Artist’s expression became somewhat awkward, and Gwen added, “Ashe, sir, we all know you’re just worried...”

“Igor’s right, I am putting on a show,” Ashe sighed. “Thinking about Harvey and Chikara fighting tooth and nail, I feel I can’t just stroll leisurely. I have to act like I’m in a rush, even if it’s pointless... I’m just trying to move myself.”

“Regretting it?” Igor mocked. “You didn’t think this would be a fun little trip, did you?”

“I’m waiting,” Ashe said, his mood sinking. “Like a ball hitting the net and bouncing back, I don’t know where it’ll land... I can only wait for it to come down.”

“I haven’t found Tamashi, nor can I help Harvey and Chikara. Even though I’m no longer the person I was at Shattered Lake, even though I’ve grown stronger... in the end, I’m no different from a Death Row Inmate, powerless against the whims of fate.”

“Powerless rage,” Igor remarked. “It’s one of the top three psychological ailments under the Blood Moon.”

“Got any medicine for that?” Ashe chuckled bitterly.

“Not every illness can be cured; some are curses you can’t escape,” the Con Artist said. “If you were a bit more selfish, many problems would solve themselves. The more you care, the more powerless moments you’ll face.”

Ashe couldn’t help but laugh. “Honestly, I already think I’m selfish enough. If it’s not mine, I couldn’t care less.”

“That just means you’ve defined too many things as ‘yours,’ you fool.”

Igor stopped and looked up at the question on the fork in the road:

“What is the most unrealistic fantasy in life?”

Three paths lay ahead. The first was filled with laughter, birdsong, and the sound of children playing-‘innocence.’

The second path was radiant, with steps leading upward, and the sound of cheers like waves crashing, as if welcoming a king’s coronation or a general’s triumphant return-‘success.’

He glanced at the third path and walked straight into it, saying, “But in your case, the remedy is simple. Just sharpen your observation a bit, don’t treat your eyes as decoration, don’t use your brain as a fishbowl. Look around, think more.”

“Huh?”

“We haven’t found Raven yet, which is actually good news. It means he’s likely infiltrated—you’re aware of Raven’s stealth skills. He wants to kill the Mercury Trojan Horse more than anyone, so he won’t throw his life away easily. He’ll wait for a foolproof opportunity to strike. But before that, we might already find him.”

“Similarly, when have you seen Harvey volunteer for anything?” Igor continued. “To him, whether he dies, I die, or you die, it’s all the same. He might even prefer we die first, so he can collect the corpses.”

“You’re too tense, which is why you haven’t noticed—the necromancer is actually excited,” the Con Artist said calmly. “He’s never hidden his feelings or lied. If he says he’s going to bury a legend, it means he believes he can do it.”

“Just like you believe in how twisted he is,” Igor’s voice was serious, without a hint of humor. “You must also believe in his abilities.”

Ashe paused slightly, suddenly hearing singing in his ears. Along the walls on either side of the road, there were travelers singing joyfully in chorus, comrades fighting back-to-

back against countless enemies, adventurers discovering treasures and embracing in celebration...

The third path was 'Trust.'

"But," Ashe murmured, "that's Senlo's first legend..."

"Ashe, you may no longer be the Cult Leader from Shattered Lake," Igor said, "but Harvey isn't the necromancer from Shattered Lake anymore either."

"Indeed, you're no longer among the living."

In the midst of the swirling snowstorm, Harvey, transformed into the Nether Knight Ghost King, pinned Oreyva to the ground. Two ghostly hands emerged from his sides, firmly gripping Oreyva's arms, while his own hands raised the Scythe of Despair high, aiming at Oreyva's head, and swung down heavily!

Faced with a lethal strike, Oreyva, his hair disheveled and looking deranged, had a glint of bloodthirsty desire in his eyes. His mouth opened wide, revealing menacing gums, letting out a mournful yet hysterical roar. Yet, his limbs continued to struggle, as if infinite agony was erupting within him!

Clang!

With a resounding explosion, the Scythe of Despair struck Oreyva's face, the blade nearly grazing his forehead!

Sanctuary!

At the final moment before death descended, this legendary figure finally enveloped himself in Sanctuary, blocking Harvey's deadly blow!

The Frost Star Ring exploded with a thunderous roar, pushing Harvey back several meters even though he was shielded by Sanctuary. But he swiftly unfurled his Twin Wings and flew away. His maneuver proved wise-the Frost Star Ring, having exploded, began to coalesce again, threatening further damage if he didn't escape in time!

Meanwhile, Chikara opened his mouth and roared furiously, unleashing a fiery projectile towards Oreyva! The projectile's speed and intensity were influenced by his voice-the louder the sound, the faster and fiercer the flame!

Miracle: Fiery Explosive Roar!

However, the returning Frost Star Ring immediately formed a Frost Shield Array in front of Oreyva, perfectly deflecting Chikara's fiery projectile, not even a spark reaching Oreyva!

“This is ridiculous!” Chikara exclaimed, his eyes wide with disbelief, quickly dodging Oreyva’s counterattack and retreating near Harvey. “He’s clearly lost his mind, relying solely on instinct for spellcasting... yet our situation keeps worsening!”

From the start until now, Harvey and Chikara had mostly held the upper hand in the battle-though Oreyva was a legendary sorcerer, his current actions were incredibly predictable. After several rounds, they could anticipate his moves just by watching his posture.

This was the main reason Chikara chose to stay: as long as they could find a way to neutralize the Damage Chain, Oreyva’s threat wasn’t as significant.

When the orc saw Harvey walking Oreyva like a dog, he realized this-if Oreyva had his sanity, even if he was on the brink of death, Chikara would flee as far as possible; but the current Oreyva was no longer a legendary sorcerer, just a madman with power.

Yet soon, the orc’s newly ignited ‘ambition to surpass’ was cooled by the wind and snow.

Despite appearances suggesting they were beating Oreyva down, in reality, they hadn’t inflicted any effective damage. Meanwhile, every spell Oreyva cast further deteriorated their condition!

The true intricacy lies in the environment!

This blizzard sweeping across the plains, freezing everything in its path, is the real deadly threat!

Every Miracle and spirit Oreyva conjures adds to the blizzard's fury, and in turn, the blizzard amplifies his Miracles, making them increasingly powerful. Meanwhile, Harvey and Chikara struggle to even move in the storm!

Although Chikara's spellcasting counters Oreyva to some extent, overall, Chikara is on the defensive, and his attacks are barely effective. Oreyva can easily manipulate the storm to block Chikara's fiery Miracles, and each of Chikara's Miracles loses over 30% of its power due to the environment!

This showcases just how terrifying Oreyva was in his prime: he could transform the battlefield into an environment perfectly suited for Frost spellcasting, weakening his enemies and strengthening himself! If his foes tried to flee, the Frost spells, designed to slow and hinder, would make them like lost travelers caught in a blizzard, their body heat and strength steadily draining until they collapsed in the deep snow.

If Oreyva had his wits about him, none of them would escape!

"Mr. Harvey, perhaps we should retreat to the previous level?" the orc tentatively suggested. "He might not follow us..."

"You can reveal your trump card now and leave immediately," Harvey's voice came from beneath the Nether Knight's helmet, cold and inhuman. "I won't stop you."

Chikara's expression remained unchanged as he quickly shouted, "I never intended to abandon Mr. Harvey-"

"Let me guess, it's a Movement Miracle centered around the Firelight Spirit, isn't it?"

Chikara froze, the usually jovial and cunning orc losing his composure for the first time, his eyes betraying shock, caution, and a hint of killing intent.

"It's actually quite obvious. You chose to stay, so you must have a Miracle for self-preservation. The only Miracle that could ensure survival before a legendary sorcerer is a Movement Miracle."

"We're familiar with your spirit system, and the most likely candidate for a Movement Miracle is the Firelight Spirit, probably allowing you to escape like a flash of light."

Harvey spoke calmly, "Once you reach the previous level, you'd likely activate the Movement Miracle to slip out of my sight. By then, even if I wanted to use a slave Pact to stop you, you wouldn't hear it. Without the constraint of the Damage Chain, Oreyva could unleash his true legendary power, and I'd probably be crushed by him if left behind."

"Mr. Harvey," the orc lowered his gaze, "you've misunderstood. I genuinely want to leave Senlo with you."

“No sorcerer would willingly be a slave, especially not a sanctuary sorcerer.” Harvey dodged a distant ice spear storm from Oreyva. “You sincerely want to leave, but you also sincerely want to break free from the Pact.”

“As long as I’m dead and Alice is gone, your Pact will naturally dissolve... In such a short time, you’ve figured all this out and are ready to act on it.” The necromancer remarked, “Your cunning is no less than that of a Con Artist, though he is overtly sharp, while you hide your brilliance behind a facade of foolishness-he was right, staying in the wasteland indeed buries your talents.”

“Mr. Harvey, you deserve that praise more than anyone. Mr. Bukin’s presence has overshadowed your brilliance,” Chikara said, his face now devoid of any smile. “But if you don’t wish to leave, Mr. Harvey, I’ll stay with you to the end.”

“No, you should go,” Harvey replied softly. “Once we rescue Raven, we’ll likely leave immediately. The world is vast, and as long as you don’t encounter us, your Pact is as good as a scrap of paper.”

“Why?” the orc asked, puzzled. He couldn’t believe Harvey would let a Sanctuary slave go.

“Because I don’t care about you. Your corpse is more valuable to me than you are,” the necromancer said. “More importantly, my next attack might not spare you from being reduced to dust along with Oreyva.”

Chikara hesitated, flapping his Twin Wings to dodge Oreyva’s assault, but soon returned to the ground-the wind and snow in the air were too fierce, threatening to blow him off balance.

“Do you have a way to deal with this madman?”

“If it were a living legend, I’d have no solution,” Harvey replied. “But he’s no longer alive.”

“Indeed, he’s a madman.”

“No, what I mean is-he’s an undead.”

Chikara looked at Oreyva, his face full of confusion. He couldn’t fathom how this lively, spell-casting lunatic could be equated with undead like Alice...

“His body hasn’t died, but his soul is completely shattered, and his consciousness died long ago,” Harvey said softly. “What dominates him now is a new soul, a new consciousness.”

“This is the most primitive method of undead creation-a living dead. A creature that should have passed through the veil of death is forcibly kept in the world by a sorcerer’s Miracle, and within that decaying crippled body, a tragic creation caught between life and death is born.”

“He’s mad because his new soul craves rest, but the old personality embedded in the corpse’s neurons possesses a powerful survival instinct. He’s tormented by the desire for death and the will to live, which is the root of all primitive undead’s suffering.”

“That’s why he constantly harms himself, yet protects himself when facing death.”

“Living beings seek life and shun death, undead seek death and shun life.”

“Such a primitive undead will hate all living beings and eagerly drag them into the restful deadlands, which is why he attacks us. The earliest necromancers existed to resolve the disaster of primitive undead, and later began to harness the power of Necromancy.”

“So rest assured, I’m not bluffing,” Harvey said. “I will definitely deal with Oreyva.”

Chikara stared blankly at Harvey, whose black mist churned, with only a pair of green eyes fixed on the raging Oreyva.

“Primitive undead are the most pitiful monsters in the world. Playing a requiem for them, allowing them to return to eternal rest, is the necromancer’s professional duty,” the necromancer said calmly. “Necromancy is a mad power that must be under the sorcerer’s control.”

Though it sounded quite far-fetched, the orc could tell Harvey was serious!

Helping Ashe and the others fend off Oreyva was certainly the main reason, but even without this matter, Harvey would still lay Oreyva to rest!

The necromancer's voice was calm, yet the unwavering determination within it was so intense that it almost made Chikara feel allergic, reminding the orc of the unshakeable faith he had seen in living Saints.

Even in Chikara's past view, Saints were incomprehensible madmen. They clung to principles that seemed laughable and engaged in actions devoid of meaning.

So...

"Mr. Harvey, I truly have no intention of fleeing," Chikara said cautiously. "You don't need to worry about me; I'll stay out of the way."

With Harvey's words, Chikara was even more reluctant to run. If Harvey won, the slave Pact would still be in effect, and who knows if Igor would find a way to capture him again.

"Is that so?" Harvey suddenly soared into the air. "Then I won't hold back."

Chikara watched as Harvey, shrouded in black mist, flew towards Oreyva. Oreyva unleashed a storm of ice crystals, like a spiraling drill aimed at the necromancer.

“Two madmen indeed...” the orc muttered, preparing to avoid the Miracle.

Suddenly, the black mist rose and spread, quickly transforming into a gray miasma that could rival the blizzard! A massive corpse dragon, reduced to pitch-black bones, let out a silent scream, wielding the destructive Corpse Decay Miasma, pressing down fiercely on Oreyva!

Ghost King Shackles: Dragon Lich!

Yet, faced with the Corpse Decay Miasma, Oreyva’s frenzied expression gradually softened, and even his attack slowed, showing a sense of comfort akin to returning to a mother’s embrace.

This was Harvey’s trump card-the Dragon Lich’s Corpse Decay Miasma was poison to the living but nectar to the dead! When necromancy encounters Corpse Decay Miasma, it’s like a Silly woman meeting Igor, falling into a state of enchantment, ready for the Dragon Lich’s mercy!

“Rest in peace,” the Dragon Lich’s green fire eyes fixed on the smiling Oreyva, as its colossal claw descended with a thunderous crash!

Chapter 708: Still, a Bit Reluctant to Die

Chapter 708: Still, a Bit Reluctant to Die

“Mr. Harvey! Lady Alice!”

As the snow melted into water, Chikara finally found the pair buried beneath the heavy snowfall. The orc hurriedly dug them out, using flames to melt the ice and snow clinging to them. Harvey slowly opened his eyes, gazing at Chikara, and remarked, “You really managed to stay out of harm’s way...”

Harvey, transforming into a Dragon Lich for the first time and facing the legendary necromancer Oreyva, dared not hold back. He unleashed all the Corpse Decay Miasma he could muster, turning the surrounding hundred meters into a death zone. The miasma mixed with the air, creating a barrier even a regular Sanctuary couldn’t withstand, which is why he had urged Chikara to leave.

“Hehe.” The orc summoned warm flames, grinning as he helped them thaw. “Mr. Harvey, you did it!”

“But I’m badly injured,” Harvey admitted. “I’m surprised you didn’t just leave.”

The Dragon Lich is a necromantic troop type only unlocked by legendary sorcerers. Harvey had previously only dared to partially transform, but this time he went all out, naturally putting immense strain on his body. If you were to lift his shirt, you’d see his skin starting to rot in several places, with a few fingers wrinkled like those of a centenarian.

His dark complexion somewhat masked the decay on his face.

He couldn't even maintain his Frostfire state, separating from Alice after the attack and falling into a stupor, buried by the blizzard.

"Why would I run when you've won?" Chikara's words were both sincere and insincere. "Although this snowstorm poses no lethal threat to Mr. Harvey, my staying behind just happens to help with the aftermath."

Is it because he knew the storm wouldn't kill me that he dug me out? Harvey was almost amused by the orc.

With Harvey regaining consciousness, Alice naturally resumed her ability to move (without Harvey's permission, the undead cannot act independently). Alice stood up, raised her hand to catch the swirling snowflakes, but was inadvertently struck by hail, causing black corpse fluid to seep from her forehead.

Chikara didn't notice this, but Harvey's expression changed dramatically. He struggled to his feet, grabbing the orc's arm, and shouted, "Run!"

"The storm hasn't stopped; he hasn't found peace!"

As if responding to Harvey's voice, a figure emerged from several meters of snow, rising into the air. He had only half a head left, with the rest of his body composed of ice crystals. Four virtual wings unfurled behind him: silver, gold, rainbow, and frost!

Harvey gasped in shock. “He’s mostly dead, yet life instinct has kept him here...”

“His only thought is to drag everything into death.”

Clang!

Suddenly, ice began to form around Oreyva, rapidly spreading and invading the space where Harvey and Chikara stood! Chikara quickly dragged the pair into flight, but before Harvey’s feet could leave the snow, the frost caught up with them!

In an instant, the entire tenth layer of the Silent Spiral transformed into a frozen world of frost!

Chikara and Harvey instinctively expanded their Sanctuaries to resist the ice, but the air and light seemed to serve as conduits for the frost, continuously invading their defenses. The frost was on the verge of reaching their limbs!

Miracle: Flame Barrier!

A blazing barrier of fire appeared at the edge of the Sanctuary, its terrifying heat scorching the skin of both Harvey and Chikara!

High-temperature flames are the nemesis of all Frost spells; ice cannot withstand the searing heat of 5000 degrees. However...

Crack!

Harvey and Chikara watched in disbelief as the Frost spread to the fire barrier, freezing the leaping flames within the ice, like a bizarre painting.

Even the flames were frozen!

“Ground-level divine intervention, Frost Extinction...” Chikara murmured, his voice filled with fear. “This is Oreyva’s most powerful Miracle, almost reaching the realm of divine intervention. Freezing is no longer a change in temperature but a freezing of all concepts: fire, air, time, everything can be frozen! But this range is too vast...”

“He’s desperate to drain his spellforce and die sooner,” Harvey closed his eyes and sighed softly. “It seems this is where our journey ends...”

“No!”

Suddenly, Harvey noticed his right hand was on fire.

He looked at Chikara beside him and saw the orc's right hand was also burning.

Their arms were engulfed in blood-red flames, yet the burning areas felt no heat; only flesh and bone were continuously consumed. Faced with this heatless blood fire, the ice began to melt, unable to approach them further.

"The Fire of Slaughter district and the War Temple are the closest," Chikara's forehead was drenched in cold sweat. "We've studied for so long on how to counter Frost Extinction... never thought we'd actually use it one day."

"Miracle of Blood and Flesh Flame, a bizarre Miracle created by another Tribulation Fire Sanctuary after receiving the Inheritance of a Blood Saint sorcerer in the Virtual Realm. Its effect is to burn true fire with the 'fire concept' through flesh and blood. This move is low in cost-effectiveness and has a small damage range, but it can effectively resist Frost Extinction."

"The original plan was, if Oreyva launched Frost Extinction on our district, we'd burn a line of fire using hundreds of prisoners... it wasn't meant to burn ourselves."

Due to the Damage Chain, Chikara burning himself naturally caused Harvey to burn as well, but at this point, it didn't matter. They were both going to burn the blood flame to resist the ice layer.

In the completely frozen tenth layer, a flickering blood fire glimmered within the ice.

An orc and a necromancer, continuously burning themselves for warmth.

Soon, their left forearms were gone, then their arms, the next choice was the right calf, then the right thigh.

They felt no pain, but just watching their limbs, flesh and bone, burn away was enough to put immense pressure on their nerves.

But they weren't without hope. As long as Oreyva's spellforce ran out, these ice layers, without Miracle support, were just ordinary ice blocks. Chikara could melt them with a single fire Miracle.

Yet, even after they burned away their left thighs, leaving only a single right hand, it still wasn't over. Oreyva's spellforce seemed endless, the ice layers continued to maliciously test the blood flame, trying to freeze them.

All they had left to burn was their right hand. But if they lost even that, casting spells would become nearly impossible...

"Miracle of Blood and Flesh Flame," Harvey suddenly asked, "So it just needs to be flesh and blood, right?"

"Yes."

“Can Alice burn too?”

Chikara seemed somewhat relieved and nodded vigorously, “Yes!”

Alice calmly squatted beside them, her blood flame slightly different, emitting a faint dark green hue, but still capable of resisting the ice layer.

First the limbs, then the lower body, and then the upper body. The blood flame spread continuously across Alice’s body. Although the flame seemed eerie and malevolent, it was nevertheless a source of life for two living beings.

Soon, the blood flame had reached her neck, but there was still no sign of the ice thawing.

Chikara looked at Harvey, the necromancer reaching out with his remaining right hand to close Alice’s eyes.

“Burn,” he said.

“Really?” Chikara asked tentatively, “If we burn her...”

“Alice will be gone, and your pact will be annulled, I know.”

Harvey said, “But the dead are meant to serve the living, not the other way around.”

Chikara fell silent for a moment, waiting until the blood flame in his throat was about to extinguish before he fiercely intensified the flames, burning Alice’s head to ashes.

Perhaps fate finally began to favor them. Just as Chikara prepared to burn his own right hand, the ice layer suddenly stopped spreading. The orc immediately unleashed a wide-ranging fire miracle, rapidly melting the surrounding ice layer, releasing a massive amount of white mist!

Chikara kept firing fireballs almost in a frenzy, melting the surrounding area into water, until he, with his remaining hand, dragged the necromancer and exclaimed excitedly, “Mr. Harvey, we’ve made it through! We’ve survived the Frost Extinction! Oreyva is dead!”

Harvey looked up and said, “Why... hasn’t the snowstorm stopped?”

The orc’s pupils dilated, realizing that the snowflakes were still dancing in the sky-the sanctuary of Oreyva’s Frost was still active!

Chikara immediately sprouted three virtual wings on his back, pulling Harvey, almost roaring, “We need to fly out quickly-“

It was too late.

The Frost spread again, the previous pause seemingly just an intermission, as Oreyva once again unleashed Frost Extinction. The area just melted by Chikara’s flames froze over again.

But this time, they had lost one hand and two legs, and Alice was completely consumed by the flames. Next, they could only burn their internal organs, but that wouldn’t last long.

It was certain death.

“Do you regret it?”

“I regret it,” the orc said solemnly, “I should have just left.”

“This is the allure of death. In the face of death, everyone must drop their masks and reveal their true selves,” Harvey mused, “Death is the greatest equalizer.”

“So, live well. I’ll be waiting for you in hell.”

The orc paused, and while the Frost continued to invade the sanctuary, he asked, “What do you mean?”

“Oh, that’s something Ashe often says, I’m just borrowing-“

“You have a way?”

“Yes, I do,” Harvey said languidly, “I have a form of Necromancy stronger than a Dragon Lich, which should change the situation.”

“Why didn’t you use it earlier!” Chikara was both angry and amused, nearly going insane: “Just when we lost a hand, two legs-and Alice-Right, without Alice, how could you transform into a necromantic form?”

Harvey lifted his remaining right hand, his lips twitching. He violently gouged out his blood-streaked right eye and tossed it aside, then stuffed another eyeball in its place, his voice trembling: “Alice is with me.”

Chikara looked closely and realized it was Alice’s cloudy, grape-like eyes, likely plucked out by Harvey when he had closed her eyes earlier.

“But that’s just an eye!”

“Just an eye is enough,” the necromancer said. “It’s enough to activate the Frostfire.”

“But, but,” the articulate orc stammered, “but don’t you need to merge with Alice to resist the negative energy of transforming into undead creatures? Like my inferno form, each time it burns away much of my muscle-“

Wait a minute.

Chikara suddenly realized something: If it was stronger than the Dragon Lich form, why not use it directly? And Harvey had transformed into a Dragon Lich for less than a minute before his body began to decay...

“I no longer need to resist the negative energy.” Harvey lifted his right hand, shaking the Ghost King Shackles on it: “Once I use it, I will inevitably become an undead creature, with or without Alice.”

“But don’t worry, I am a professional necromancer, even if I transform into an undead creature, I will self-destruct within a day, unless another necromancer comes along to pick me up-unfortunately, you all don’t practice the Necromancy Sect.”

Harvey spoke regretfully: "It's truly a waste."

"Why?" Chikara felt almost driven mad by him, his voice trembling: "Why would you sacrifice yourself to save me!?"

"It's not about saving you, but since we're all going to die, I might as well sacrifice myself to give Oreyva a funeral, and incidentally let you survive." The necromancer countered: "When only one needs to die, why should two die? I have no feud with you."

Chikara asked incoherently: "Is there anything you need me to do? Help Mr. Ashe and the others? Or go to your hometown to complete your unfinished wishes?"

"Dead people shouldn't interfere with the living," Harvey said. "I'm not like Igor, I never use words to bind others' actions, after all, I can't control you."

"If I must say something, then it's just live well." The necromancer stated: "Not just waiting to die, but to run with all your might, to survive as long as possible, to run to far-off places to see the greater world, until you're utterly exhausted."

"I actually admire how you groveled to survive in the Dead City, and just now, how you voluntarily burned your own flesh to resist Frost." Harvey showed a faint smile: "When it's time to die, die earnestly, but when you can live, do whatever it takes to survive."

“I’m like that myself, I’ve long wanted to embrace death, but I’m still alive, so I must live seriously until the inevitable death comes.”

“That way, my corpse will surely be very beautiful.”

Harvey sighed: “Unfortunately, Senlo has no necromancers...”

He raised his remaining right hand, covering his eye. The Frost had already spread over him, and the necromancer reminded, “Chikara, I’m about to pass through the veil of death.”

Flames ignited on Chikara’s body, transforming him into a fiery skeleton.

“His body, though cold and fiery, still yearned for the moment of burning out.”

In an instant, the pristine ice was stained with a blood-red hue. The ice cracked inch by inch, and the all-freezing Frost receded, bowing to the blood light that commanded everything in its path.

A Blood Moon rose with a rumble amidst the snowstorm.

Beneath the Blood Moon stood a pale-skinned man with black hair, wearing black pants. A wolf's tail extended from his spine, his eyes gleamed like red rubies, and his long fingernails emitted a continuous blood-red glow, converging into the Blood Moon above his head.

Ghost King Shackles: Blood Corpse King.

“What a formidable power...” Harvey thought.

Unlike before, when Harvey and Alice merged, it was Alice who truly became the undead troop type, with Harvey merely controlling it through her, never fully unleashing its potential.

But now, only his right eye belonged to Alice, while the rest of his body had entirely transformed into the Blood Corpse King.

Thus, he perfectly wielded the Blood Corpse King's power, but his body could never revert, and soon his soul would be consumed by negative energy, turning him into a wild undead.

His Frostfire Miracle wasn't entirely original; there was an ancient version in the Blood Moon Kingdom. Many necromancers who learned the original version succumbed to the allure of the power Necromancy offered, unable to resist the negative energy's erosion, eventually becoming undead.

Harvey's mentor met such a fate, later becoming one of the undead creatures in Harvey's collection. However, with Harvey's imprisonment, those treasures were naturally confiscated by the Blood Hunters.

Having witnessed the painful lessons of predecessors, Harvey had always been cautious in exploring the Ghost King Shackles, yet even so, he had nearly crossed the boundary between life and death several times.

But now, Harvey's reason remained unclouded by the Blood Corpse King's power. He gazed at the distant Four Wings Oreyva, then looked beyond the thick ice layer towards the Fog Gate leading to the next level.

"Still," he pointed his left hand downward, raised his right index finger towards the Blood Moon, and a serene smile appeared on his lips:

"I don't really want to die."

In the next moment, the Blood Moon's brilliance overwhelmed the Frost.

Chapter 709: A Worthwhile Death

Harvey's childhood was spent in an orphanage, alongside ogres, orcs, and goblins. From the makeup of the residents, it was clear that his orphanage in Kaimon City was of a lower tier-merely using the guise of "diversity" to scam subsidies.

Evidently, his childhood was quite enjoyable, with entertainment freely available (no supervision), bonding with other kids (physically), engaging in social practices daily (snatching food), and receiving the best education (online resources). Unlike Fenanshe, who emerged untainted from the muck and eventually became mayor, Harvey didn't escape this mire, nor did he turn bad. After leaving the orphanage at fifteen, he went to work at a construction site.

Yes, the feared top assassin known as the "Controller" in Blood Moon Kaimon City, the future "Ghost King" who would transform the Gospel Kingdom into a necromancy realm, the "Ghost knight" renowned across the Senlo wasteland, started as a construction worker, laboring for three years. The once slightly sickly yet aesthetically pleasing youth was tanned to a dark hue.

Unlike his coworkers, who spent money on candy for thrills, donated to casinos, or indulged in Tea House pleasures, Harvey diligently saved his money for a down payment, planning to buy a house in the suburbs. Looking back now, Harvey finds his past self peculiar-why purchase property? Most Blood Moon residents rent due to high property costs and their solitary lifestyle, with little need for a "stable abode."

Wherever you sleep tonight, that's home.

Perhaps it was the cozy mansions seen in TV dramas, or maybe the houses he built while mixing cement planted a strange obsession in his mind: he wanted a house of his own.

Harvey would pass time flipping through renovation magazines and architectural books, planning how to decorate his house, what materials to use, which style to choose, how to wire it, how to... He even occasionally worked part-time as a renovation worker to gain experience for his future home.

While other workers flirted with charming female homeowners, he was busy assessing whether the ceiling was too extravagant.

His coworkers called him odd, as everyone else focused on tonight's plans while he pondered ten or twenty years ahead-whether he'd even be alive was uncertain, yet Blood Moon folks remained optimistic.

Barring unforeseen circumstances, if Harvey avoided all spending traps, he had a chance to achieve this small goal.

But life is unpredictable. One night, the security guard took leave, and Harvey volunteered for the night shift to earn extra money. As he sat in the guard room reading magazines, strange noises emanated from the construction site. He went out to investigate and found, under the Blood Moon's glow, a girl in black methodically hacking at a corpse until it ceased moving.

Harvey stood by, quietly observing. The girl suddenly turned to him, her high ponytail swinging back. She approached, pushed Harvey to the ground, leaned over him, and held a curved blade to his neck, commanding with authority, "Help me dispose of the corpse!"

Harvey didn't know her name was Nalber, nor did he know whom she was killing or what organization she belonged to. However, something stirred within him, and he replied, "Then I suppose I'm your accomplice now."

It was Harvey's first time dealing with a corpse, and it was the crudest job he had ever done. Perhaps it was fate that after this incident, he joined Nalber's organization and became a Scavenger, specializing in cleaning up corpses.

At that time, he hadn't shown any talent for the Necromancy Sect, but he took his work very seriously. He devised over thirty different formulas for dealing with bloodstains, feces, and flesh remnants in various environments. Every scene he handled was so clean that not even the Blood Hunters could find a trace.

It was during one alleyway cleanup that a wild necromancer, impressed by Harvey's meticulous approach to corpses, took him as an apprentice. This marked Harvey's entry into the world of sorcerers.

He gradually transformed from a Scavenger to a Controller cum Scavenger-killing people and then disposing of their bodies, a seamless service from death to the sea.

Harvey and Nalber often carried out missions together, but they rarely talked. Nalber tried to initiate conversations, but Harvey was usually silent and unopinionated—he really wasn't much for culture or humor.

The only two topics that interested Harvey were livor mortis and his new home. But then it was Nalber's turn to be silent, though she would listen to him talk about how he would decorate his new house and what patterns of livor mortis looked best on a corpse...

The peaceful days continued until Harvey's face was seen during an operation, and his information fell into the hands of the Blood Hunters. To avoid further endangering his organization, Harvey erased his own memories as a Controller and was captured by the Blood Hunters, ending up in Shattered Lake Prison.

“A person's life marches towards death, and the value of a person is determined by the value of their death.”

This was a saying among necromancers. Necromancers were a rather morose bunch, perhaps because they spent all day observing death, which in turn quietly observed them back, occasionally patting their heads. Yet, necromancers were also very proactive, opposing suicide and premature death, proclaiming, “Only those corpses that strive to live to the end hold greater value.”

Harvey knew his entry into Shattered Lake was a one-way road to death, but he didn't care. He had never cared much about anything in his life. Since he had once been moved by a young girl who called him to collect a body, dying to protect her seemed like a death of value.

It was only two years later that Harvey realized he hadn't protected anything. So he planned a Prison Break with Ashe and others. He couldn't stay in Shattered Lake; he couldn't die a worthless death.

Dying with value was now the only thing he cared about.

Harvey had imagined his own death countless times-dying in a prison break, dying for revenge, dying on the run, dying for the Gospel, dying to avenge Annan, dying from storming Yisuo's Royal Palace, dying in combat against the Silver Lantern...

In the end, he died on the very last step towards home-a fitting end for a necromancer...

...Home?

Ha, it's all Ashe's fault for mentioning 'home' so many times that I almost thought...

I had a home too.

Harvey felt like he was continuously sinking deeper into the ocean. He turned his head and saw a dark Corpse Dragon, as if draped in a misty veil of fog. Its veil shimmered, looking like the night sky wrapped around its body. Its massive, majestic form seemed almost entirely composed of chains.

The Mist Veil Corpse Dragon.

While studying Necromancy, this dragon often appeared to assist Harvey, even possessing Alice at times, making it possible for Harvey to develop the Ghost King Shackles into the Blood Corpse King in just a few months.

He never knew why the Mist Veil Corpse Dragon wanted to help him, but he didn't care. Now seeing it, Harvey had a faint realization: "My soul won't go to hell; it belongs to you?"

"Although I'd like to wait in hell for those two, they won't be coming down so soon."

"Then it belongs to you," Harvey whispered softly. "This time, I must have..."

“Died with value.”

The Mist Veil Corpse Dragon spread its Death Twin Wings, gently enveloping Harvey within.

Chapter 710: Lucky You Came

“Cough, cough, cough! “

Harvey coughed up a glob of black phlegm, unable to sit up-after all, someone whose body hadn’t fully formed past the upper torso, spine included, lacked the essential parts needed to sit.

A sliver of warm light squeezed through his barely open eyes. Harvey slowly opened them and saw Chikara, the orc, healing him. The orc’s remaining right hand was ablaze with orange flames, and as the fire continued to burn, Harvey’s internal organs slowly regenerated within the flames.

“Has the snow, ” the necromancer’s voice was hoarse, “melted? “

“It’s melted, ” said the orc. “Spring has returned. “

Harvey turned his head, viewing the endless blue sky and white clouds above, the snow pressing down on the vibrant green grass. A gentle breeze blew, causing waves of grass to ripple across the plains.

“I should have become a complete undead, my blood turned to corpse blood,” Harvey curiously asked. “How did you bring me back?”

“The way you became undead, that’s how I turned you back to living, ” Chikara stated.

Harvey blinked in astonishment, then realization dawned on him: “My eyes? “

To become undead, Harvey had gouged out his own eyeballs and replaced them with Alice’s, thus the only part of his body not tainted by necrotic energy was the eyeball he had removed.

Blinking again, Harvey realized his left eye had not yet regenerated, but his right eye saw clearly.

Yet, with just an eyeball, Chikara had miraculously restored him to life, almost akin to a blood rebirth. Such healing power...

But the necromancer didn’t pursue this point and instead asked a more crucial question: “Why save me? “

Given that Chikara could regenerate Harvey from just an eyeball, the orc surely could have healed his own limbs. Previously, he had used the Miracle of Blood and Flesh Flame to burn off one of his hands and both legs, which would logically be his priority. However, he remained disabled, using all his spellforce to heal Harvey.

More importantly, Chikara had no reason to save him. They were not comrades; Chikara had joined them only because he had surrendered as a slave in the Dead City, defecting from the Four Pillars Cult to survive as their Sanctuary slave.

Now that Alice had burnt out completely, the slave pact was nullified, and Chikara was free again. It would have been natural for him to kick Harvey while he was down or simply walk away silently. Saving Harvey painstakingly offered no benefit to the orc.

“Because it’s the ethical duty of a Healing Sorcerer,” Chikara said in a deep voice. “To try and save any life possible.”

Harvey couldn’t help but laugh: “You’re a Healing Sorcerer?”

“The Tribulation Fire Chapel’s water spell Inheritance is rare, but healing is a universal need. Thus, we developed a set of healing fire spells,” Chikara explained. “Hydrotherapy has its spirit, and so does fire cupping. Fire cupping spirits may not be as convenient as hydrotherapy spirits, but they can significantly accelerate the body’s natural healing processes. The regenerated body is stronger and, in the long run, even better than what hydrotherapy spirits can achieve.”

“I thought fire cupping spirits involved locking someone in a jar and roasting them alive as a form of torture,” Harvey said earnestly.

“I have always been a Healing Sorcerer, all the way to the Sanctuary,” Chikara said. “It is precisely because I am a Healing Sorcerer and have seen too many casualties that I cherish life so deeply. Those who ascend to the Sanctuary by fighting either die battling the Mercury Trojan Horse or are killed by it.”

“Why didn’t you tell us you were a Healing Sorcerer?” Harvey asked curiously. “Igor would definitely have treated you better-we’ve always had Ashe fill in as a healer.”

However, Chikara changed the subject: “This healing fire spell miracle called ‘Life Fire’ is the strongest masterpiece of the Tribulation Fire Chapel’s healing fire spells. As long as there is a single brain cell left, it can bring someone back from the brink.”

“But the Life Fire requires not just spellforce, but life itself to ignite.”

Harvey opened his remaining right eye, only then noticing the orc’s face had grown significantly more wrinkled. Orcs were naturally hard to read due to their rugged features.

No wonder this healing miracle was so potent; it required the sorcerer’s own life span.

No wonder Chikara dared not reveal this to Igor. If it were known, Igor wouldn’t stop until he had drained the orc’s life span, unless a Con Artist’s conscience happened to kick in.

It was also fortunate that Chikara's spirit had a deceptive nature, appearing more like an offensive spirit, so everyone assumed he was a battle sorcerer. Who could have guessed he could use offensive spirits to form a healing miracle?

"I'll help you keep it from Igor, but if he asks seriously, I probably won't be able to hide it," Harvey chuckled.

"I never thought I could escape Mr. Bukin's discerning eye," Chikara said with a bitter smile. "I can only hope nothing dangerous happens in your homeland."

"Do you still want to leave with us?"

"I have nowhere else to go," the orc said. "Since I'm leaving the wasteland, why not go somewhere with people I know? And... Mr. Harvey, have you forgotten something you lost?"

Something lost?

Harvey paused, then suddenly remembered: "Where's my corpse?"

He was regenerating starting from his eyeballs, which meant his original body, transformed into the Blood Corpse King, still existed!

“That’s no longer your body,” Chikara laughed. “Look beneath you.”

Harvey turned his head and saw he wasn’t lying on the grass, but in a corpse’s embrace... in Alice’s corpse’s embrace.

Although it was said to be Alice, her features were unrecognizable, only the right eyeball remaining intact while the rest of the body had turned into a desiccated corpse, full of cracks. Her arms were crossed over her chest, like a pair of wings, meant to protect the necromancer cradled within.

“I did my best, never really thinking I could actually bring you back,” Chikara said. “I placed your eyeballs on her body, then ignited the Life Fire, hoping to wrest your soul and life from her shell.”

“It seemed eager to push you out, and I didn’t have to do much before transferring you to the eyeball for regeneration. And your old shell has now become the new vessel for Lady Alice.”

“Is that so?” Harvey murmured. “You think I’m not yet ready to quietly enter the grave?”

“Ah?” Chikara was momentarily taken aback, then quickly realized the necromancer was speaking to Alice. However, the orc had witnessed such scenes many times before and didn’t find it strange at all.

“In that case, your Pact with Alice remains valid, and you’re still a slave. But you saved me, and I saved you before, so I consider us even,” Harvey said. “If you want to travel with us, I can assure you that the slave Pact won’t bind you.”

The orc nodded. He hadn’t expected Alice to still exist, but that didn’t affect his decision. “I have one more request for Mr. Harvey.”

“What is it?”

“I want to learn from the Necromancy Sect.”

Harvey was slightly taken aback, his right eye staring intently at the orc.

It wasn’t until the latter began to feel uneasy that Harvey broke into a genuine smile, his lips curling as he said, “Alright. If Igor bullies you in the future, you can come to me.”

As Ashe, Igor, and Gwen passed through the Fog Gate on the silent fifteenth floor, they immediately tensed up, ready for battle.

The fifteenth floor was a vast room with various images playing on the walls. But no one cared about the main theme of the fifteenth floor because all eyes were fixed on the confrontation inside!

On one side was a group of sorcerers in Black Feather uniforms, guarding a Void Gate passage. They looked tense, and despite having a numerical advantage, they didn't dare to act rashly.

On the other side was Tamashi, holding a Black Feather sorcerer hostage. His gray fox blade was already at the hostage's throat, a slight move away from decapitation! The hostage's face was full of resentment, eyes fearless, yet they dared not resist.

After all the effort and danger, they had finally found the main culprit!

Ashe was both excited and furious, barely able to contain his anger. "Tamashi Raven Annihilation!"

"Ashe!"

But Raven was more excited than Ashe. He turned to stare at Ashe, his distorted voice unable to hide his delight. "You came, just as I expected."

He then let out a long sigh of relief. "Thank goodness you're here."

Ashe and Igor both frowned, puzzled by the uncharacteristically meek words from Raven...

“Don’t mind me, don’t stop, don’t engage them, just go through this floor!” Raven shouted.
“Hurry to the lowest level and stop Silver Lantern!”

“She’s already constructing the World Destruction Procedure, preparing to annihilate Senlo! You’re the only ones left who can stop her!”