

Marvel Manifestor

Chapter 201 - 201 – The Knights Templar Coin

Lucas sat down opposite the Archbishop, showing none of the reverence Skye had earlier. His expression remained calm and indifferent.

"So," Lucas said, looking at him, "what kind of matter requires a Purple Cardinal to come in person?"

The Archbishop studied Lucas for a long moment. He showed no surprise at Lucas's sudden appearance. Given his position, he had seen more than enough supernatural phenomena—and they had done their homework on Lucas beforehand, fully aware that he possessed extraordinary abilities.

"Young man," the Archbishop said slowly, "this matter can only be explained after you come with me to meet someone."

He did not beat around the bush and stated his purpose directly.

"I need to know the details of the commission first," Lucas replied flatly.

He had no intention of indulging the Archbishop. Just because someone asked did not mean he would comply. Customers might be gods—but this man was merely a servant of one.

"Very well."

The Archbishop paused briefly, then continued.

"Half a month ago, during the Battle of New York, we received an exorcism request. In a small town near Pennsylvania, a young girl was suspected of being possessed by a demon. We dispatched three priests to perform the exorcism. None of them returned alive."

He took out several photographs. They showed the three priests and the possessed girl.

Lucas picked them up and examined them. The girl's skin had already begun to ulcerate; even without any knowledge of exorcism, it was clear she had been tormented by the demon for quite some time.

He then looked at the photos of the priests' corpses. Their eyes were completely charred, as if burned by flames. Strange runes had been carved into their faces, their limbs twisted at unnatural angles, mouths agape in expressions of extreme terror.

"I don't understand," Lucas said, tossing the photos aside and looking at the Archbishop.

"Exorcism has always been the Church's responsibility. Why come to me? And for the record, I don't perform exorcisms."

Vatican City was hardly lacking in capable individuals. There was no reason they should need him.

"You're right," the Archbishop replied calmly. "Exorcism is indeed our duty. But this time, the demon is exceptionally powerful. We sent three separate teams, and none survived. Their deaths were identical—ritualistic. This was no ordinary possession."

He put the photos away and met Lucas's gaze.

"So what? Are you saying there are demons even the Vatican can't handle?" Lucas asked.

He didn't truly know the Vatican's real strength, but as God's earthly representatives, he had assumed their capabilities were formidable.

The Archbishop shook his head.

"It's not that we cannot deal with it—it's that the cost would be too high. The possessed girl has now been transferred to a convent, but the demon remains rampant. We've decided to cooperate with independent exorcists outside the Church to deal with it together."

Lucas frowned. The Vatican cooperating with civilian exorcists? In their eyes, those people were usually frauds or heretics unworthy of acknowledgment. This was highly unusual.

Seeing his confusion, the Archbishop explained,

"Our manpower is insufficient. For reasons unknown, since the Battle of New York, demonic possession cases have been erupting worldwide. Our forces are stretched thin, and the new generation of exorcists has yet to fully mature. We have no choice but to seek outside assistance."

"I'm not an exorcist," Lucas said decisively. "You've got the wrong person. I don't perform exorcisms."

He was a demon hunter—fundamentally different from an exorcist. He did not "save" victims.

Lucas had always followed one rule: kill, not redeem. If he intervened, the possessed girl might not survive either.

"You previously forced Blackheart back into Hell," the Archbishop said. "This time, you only need to seal the demon back into Hell as well."

Clearly, the Church knew about Lucas killing Blackheart.

"So you did investigate me," Lucas said coolly.

"I'll take the commission—but let's be clear. I only handle the killing. Everything else is none of my concern. Don't come looking for me afterward."

His meaning was unmistakable.

The Archbishop nodded.

"Agreed. You will only deal with the demon."

"Good. Then let's talk about payment," Lucas continued.

"What are you offering?"

The Archbishop showed no displeasure at Lucas's bluntness, nor did he attempt to sway him with faith or divine rhetoric. He could tell Lucas was not a believer—perhaps he didn't believe in God at all.

The Archbishop took out his phone and handed it to Lucas.

On the screen was an image of a gold coin. On one side was an armored knight holding a sword; on the other was a cross-like symbol, narrow at the center and broad at the ends.

"Skye, look this up," Lucas said, passing the phone to her.

Skye scanned the image into her computer and began searching immediately.

Less than a minute later, she had an answer.

"A Knights Templar coin?"

Lucas looked at the screen, which detailed the coin's origin, value, and symbolic significance.

"Correct," the Archbishop said.

"A Knights Templar coin. This one is newly minted, not an original from the twelfth century—but its authority and meaning are identical. It is fully recognized by the Church."

The Knights Templar coin originated when the order was first established in the early twelfth century. There was a fixed number—nine coins per generation—symbolizing the nine founding knights. They were not currency, but honors, akin to medals of merit.

Yet the coin carried immense power.

Beyond being a symbol, it granted its bearer unconditional access to support from any church worldwide—food, lodging, resources, transportation—everything. Present the coin, and the Church would open every door.

Moreover, the coin itself was a consecrated artifact used in exorcism. Every tool involved in its forging had been blessed by the Vatican, and the coin was cooled in holy water personally consecrated by the Pope.

Each generation followed the same process. When a bearer died, the coin was buried with them and never reclaimed. Only after all coin holders of a generation passed away would the Vatican mint a new set.

Every Knights Templar coin was unique—and coveted by the world's elite.

"The Vatican is being generous," Lucas said, visibly surprised.

"You're actually offering a Knights Templar coin? What kind of demon did you provoke—don't tell me Mephisto himself has shown up?"

The more he understood the coin's value, the clearer it became: if the Vatican was willing to part with this, the situation was far from simple. Chances were, many lives had already been lost—and many more were at stake.

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The Archbishop did not try to hide anything and spoke plainly.

"If it weren't a serious matter, the Vatican would not take out five coins at once."

"Five?" Lucas raised an eyebrow. "So besides me, there are four others?"

Lucas didn't really care how many people were involved. As long as Mephisto himself wasn't descending in person, nothing about this posed a real threat to him.

"That's correct. In addition to you, there are four others. Their files are all kept at the branch. That's why you'll need to come with me—details of the incident are stored there."

The Archbishop took another sip of tea. It had been over an hour since Skye poured it, yet it was still warm, as if it had just been brewed.

The Archbishop found nothing strange about this. In the face of the supernatural, the impossible was often perfectly normal.

"Alright," Lucas said casually. "I'll take the commission. I'll make some preparations and come find you tomorrow."

He had Skye print out the contract and handed it to the Archbishop.

The Archbishop signed without hesitation. Two copies were made, but he did not take his own.

"I'll be waiting for you at St. Patrick's Cathedral," he said. "You know the address—it's not far from here."

With that, he nodded politely to Skye and left the office, taking the black-suited bodyguards with him.

"Lucas, are you really taking this job?" Skye asked worriedly.

"I just looked it up—those coins are incredibly rare. Each generation only has nine. If they're willing to offer one as payment, this situation must be enormous."

She was genuinely concerned. Lucas was powerful, and he could even transform into his so-called summoned beasts—but demons were different. They were profoundly evil and dangerous.

Modern attitudes were strange that way. Many people weren't afraid of aliens at all—some even advocated actively seeking them out, welcoming them with open arms, human traitors included.

But mention demons or monsters—mysterious supernatural entities—and the reaction flipped completely. Fear and rejection were the norm. Only a handful of fanatics and cultists would ever welcome such things.

"It's fine," Lucas replied indifferently. "It's just a demon. It's not like I haven't killed one before."

He really didn't mind. He'd been idle for far too long, and finally having something to do would at least let him stretch his limbs.

People were like that—when busy, they longed for leisure; when idle for too long, they craved action. Lucas had never understood why the wealthy constantly sought excitement, even resorting to crime for thrills. Now, he was beginning to get it.

They lacked nothing—money was endless, everything within reach. There was no joy in hard-won rewards, no material pursuit left. Spiritual desires swelled unchecked, but even those could be easily satisfied. So they chased new stimuli, hunting for that original rush of "gain."

And thus, they became warped—more and more extreme by the day.

Human nature was like that: greedy to obtain everything, yet once it was obtained, it became dull, discarded in favor of something new. Over and over again. One conclusion was clear—people could not remain idle for too long. They had to do something. Even counting ants under a tree every day was better than doing nothing at all.

After instructing Skye to mind the office, Lucas headed to Fifth Avenue in Manhattan—where St. Patrick's Cathedral stood.

St. Patrick's Cathedral was the most renowned church in New York, one of the oldest, and also the largest. It was where the Vatican's Cardinals had first come to America to spread the faith.

The cathedral was built in a classic Gothic style, an architectural movement that emerged in the Middle Ages. Sharp angles, soaring spires, and vast stained-glass windows defined its structure.

Gothic architecture profoundly influenced later Western designs. It represented mystery, solemnity, and sublimity—an emotionally powerful style that held an irreplaceable place in architectural history.

Because of its distinctive form, St. Patrick's Cathedral stood out dramatically among the surrounding modern skyscrapers.

The entire structure was gray-white, sharply contoured, with twin spires piercing the sky. Its exterior was adorned with intricate hollow carvings—luxurious yet enigmatic.

The cathedral was also a frequent backdrop in films and television. In Lucas's previous life, it had appeared in movies like *Daredevil*, *Spawn*, and *Spider-Man*, as well as countless TV series and games. In Marvel's *Spider-Man*, it was even the place where Miles Morales reminisced about his girlfriend.

Naturally, it was also one of New York's most famous tourist landmarks.

Ignoring the crowds outside snapping photos with phones and cameras, Lucas pushed open the cathedral doors under countless astonished gazes.

Because the Purple Cardinal was present, the cathedral had been closed to visitors. Everyone had been stopped at the entrance—yet Lucas walked straight in. Not a single priest or nun tried to stop him.

How could the onlookers not be shocked? They were all tourists—so why could he enter?

Out of reverence for their faith, no one caused a scene. Instead, they politely asked a cleaning priest why Lucas was allowed inside.

The answer stunned them even more.

"He is a guest invited by the Purple Cardinal."

That single sentence sent waves of speculation rippling through the crowd as people began guessing Lucas's identity.

Lucas, however, knew nothing of this.

At that moment, he was seated on a front-row pew in the prayer hall, gazing up at the towering cross behind the pulpit.

Beneath the cross, an elderly man in purple robes was lighting candles one by one, his movements gentle and practiced.

Lucas did not interrupt him. He waited quietly, observing the cathedral's interior.

He had to admit—while Western architecture lacked the sheer grandeur of Eastern structures, it surpassed them in sheer opulence.

Geography played a role. Eastern architecture emphasized harmony—round heaven, square earth. Aside from ceremonial structures for worshipping the heavens, most buildings favored simple, square forms, restrained elegance, and understated dignity.

Western architecture, influenced by Roman design, favored curves and arches, creating a very different aesthetic. Combined with lavish ornamentation, the contrast between East and West was stark.

Lucas gave the surroundings a casual glance.

Every pillar bore a unique carved pattern. Hollow engravings were everywhere. Massive stained-glass windows, predominantly blue, dazzled the eyes. Even the chandeliers were made of natural crystal.

Luxury, taken to the extreme.

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This also reflected, from another angle, just how wealthy the Catholic Church had been at the time. During the Middle Ages, much of Western Europe's wealth was firmly held in the hands of the Church. This was precisely the result of excessive religious authority—royal power diminished, no one truly spoke for the common people, and the masses were thoroughly indoctrinated, endlessly supporting a group of so-called servants of God.

Of course, whether everyone within the Church truly deserved that label was another matter entirely. Any religion had its own mysteries and unique truths, and many things lay far beyond what ordinary people could ever know. What could be stated with certainty, however, was that the Church of that era wielded overwhelming power and enjoyed immeasurable wealth and privilege.

After lighting all the candles, the Archbishop finally came over and sat beside Lucas.

"I have served God my entire life," the Archbishop said softly.

"From a simple cleric, I rose step by step to where I am now. I've witnessed too much, and I've exorcised demons from countless people. The more I learned of these matters, the firmer my faith in God became."

He paused briefly.

"I am old now. I can no longer shoulder the responsibility of exorcism. Before long, I too will follow God's path. Yet there is still so much darkness in this world—darkness that even God cannot completely erase."

As he spoke, the Archbishop summoned a cleric, who handed Lucas a document.

Lucas opened it. It was a briefing on the mission.

In a house on the outskirts of New York, a family of three had recently moved in. The house appeared newly renovated; the white paint hadn't yet been weathered by time.

Their once-happy life was shattered by an accident—just like in any horror film.

The young daughter discovered an altar in the basement. Strange symbols were drawn across the walls and floor. On the altar lay a black leather-bound book, along with scattered bones and grotesque jars containing organs.

The file included several photographs of the possessed girl, as well as a recording device.

Lucas activated the recorder. A series of harsh, unintelligible words spilled out—clearly not the voice of a child—interwoven with the sound of exorcists reciting scripture.

"Archbishop, I don't understand any of this," Lucas said calmly.

"I don't perform exorcisms. All I do is kill."

He made to return the file. Exorcism wasn't his responsibility—demon hunting was. He had no interest in ritual purification.

"These are the other three exorcists," the Archbishop said, producing a tablet. "Take a look first."

Lucas accepted it and began flipping through the profiles.

The first was someone he knew well—Elsa Bloodstone, the so-called monster hunter. Since parting ways at the Bloodstone estate, Lucas hadn't seen her again. He hadn't expected her to be involved this time.

"You brought her in?" Lucas asked, glancing up.

"It seems you know her," the Archbishop replied. "She is the heir of the Bloodstone family."

Lucas nodded. "We worked together before. She's very strong."

He flipped to the second profile. This person was unfamiliar—plainly dressed, appearing to be in his early twenties.

Lucas paused when he saw the name.

Daimon Hellstorm.

"Hm?"

The name felt strangely familiar. Lucas was certain he had heard it somewhere before—perhaps from a television series in his previous life—but he couldn't quite recall.

Then he turned to the final profile.

The moment he saw it, Lucas froze.

The image showed a stocky man with short hair, dressed in traditional robes—it was Wong, a sorcerer of Kamar-Taj.

"This... what is this supposed to mean?" Lucas asked in disbelief.

"The Vatican managed to contact Kamar-Taj?"

"Yes," the Archbishop replied.

"He is a sorcerer from Kamar-Taj. This incident is far too serious, so the Sorcerer Supreme also dispatched someone."

The Archbishop glanced at Wong's photo. He clearly hadn't expected Lucas to know about Kamar-Taj.

"Archbishop," Lucas said seriously,

"tell me the truth—what exactly does this involve? Even Kamar-Taj has been drawn in. This isn't an ordinary demon, is it?"

The Archbishop nodded slowly.

"Correct. This matter is extremely grave. The girl inadvertently released one of King Solomon's seventy-two demons—Amon."

"What?!"

Lucas nearly dropped the tablet.

This was no ordinary exorcism—it was a full-scale war.

Amon was one of the commanders of Hell's legions. Wherever he appeared, countless demons followed. If he fully descended, the result would be utter devastation.

"That is correct," the Archbishop said gravely.

"This has been personally confirmed by the Vatican. The book the girl opened was the Blood Book."

He retrieved a photograph of the leather-bound tome. Even in the image, the material looked strange—its color unlike ordinary leather.

"The Blood Book," the Archbishop continued,

"was written by ancient Jews to worship Amon. The entire book is made from human skin. Every symbol within was written in the blood of maidens. According to records, when the book was completed, an entire city was sacrificed—its souls absorbed into the book. It is a dark scripture acknowledged by Amon himself. Anyone who opens it is deemed his follower and becomes a vessel prepared for his descent."

"Where is the Blood Book now?" Lucas asked, studying the photo closely.

The cover was not pure black, but the dark, eerie hue of dried blood.

"In the Vatican. We fly at noon."

"And the possessed girl?" Lucas asked. "What's her condition?"

"For now, she is stable. We transferred her to a secluded convent, protected by holy relics capable of repelling demons."

Lucas nodded slowly, still staring at the photograph in his hand.

Ten hours later, night had fully fallen.

Lucas and the Archbishop arrived at the Vatican in an official vehicle. The city-state was brightly lit, and after a short drive, the car stopped before a cathedral.

"We're here," the Archbishop said.

"The other three exorcists are already waiting inside."

He stepped out first, with Lucas following close behind.

They proceeded to the second floor of the cathedral. The Archbishop pushed open the doors to a large conference room, where nearly ten people were already gathered.

"Lucas! I can't believe it's really you—we meet again!"

Elsa stood up immediately and gave Lucas a light hug. As former comrades, she had complete confidence in his strength. With him involved, her confidence in their chances rose noticeably.

Wong also stood and embraced Lucas. They had become friends during Lucas's brief time at Kamar-Taj, and even one visit had been enough to form that bond.

"I never thought the Ancient One would send you," Lucas said with a sigh.

"Looks like this situation is far worse than I imagined."

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Chapter 204 - 204 – Amon's Possession

Wong and Kaecilius were among the strongest combatants in Kamar-Taj. Even Mordo was no match for either of them—Wong through relentless study and practice, and Kaecilius purely through extraordinary talent.

"I didn't expect this either," Wong said with a laugh, slapping Lucas on the shoulder.

"Kaecilius was supposed to come, but that guy disappeared somewhere, so I was sent instead. Good thing I came—otherwise I wouldn't have run into you, kid. Haha!"

"Let me introduce you," Wong continued.

"This is Daimon Hellstorm. He's also a very formidable exorcist."

Wong introduced the final exorcist, the only unfamiliar face among the three.

Daimon looked slightly reserved. He stood up and shook Lucas's hand.

After everyone had gotten acquainted, they returned to the rooms prepared for them by the Church.

The night passed without incident.

The following morning, everyone gathered once again in the conference room. After they were seated, a cardinal dressed in red robes stepped forward.

"Gentlemen, I am the person in charge of this operation. My name is Claude. I assume the archbishops have already briefed you on the mission, so I won't repeat it. First, please watch this recording."

With that, a man dressed as a cleric began playing a video.

The footage showed a room. In the center, on a bed, lay a filthy, disheveled young girl whose body showed signs of decay. She appeared to be in her early teens, lying still as if asleep.

As the camera moved closer, the girl suddenly let out a feral scream. Her eyes turned completely black, and her teeth transformed into sharp, canine-like fangs.

Three priests stepped forward and stood around the bed in a triangular formation, chanting scripture aloud. A cleric acting as an assistant took out pen and paper and began recording observations.

Under the priests' exorcism, the girl did not improve. Instead, her condition worsened. Her body slowly levitated into the air, her mouth murmuring strange, incomprehensible sounds in an unknown language.

Suddenly, the Bibles in the priests' hands burst into flames. The crosses they wore turned pitch black, and the holy water began to boil violently.

Even without their Bibles, the priests continued reciting the exorcism prayers from memory.

Then, without warning, the girl turned her head and stared at one of the priests. He immediately spat out blood, unable to utter another word. Large patches of decay spread across his body, and the cross on his chest melted away like ice.

The same fate befell the other two priests. They too vomited blood, their flesh rotting away, until they finally collapsed into pools of blood, leaving nothing behind but their clothes.

"Ha... hahaha... HAHAHAHA!"

The girl laughed wildly, her voice resembling a beast's roar. The fate of the person holding the camera was unknown, as the footage abruptly ended—but it was easy to imagine the outcome.

"This recording was taken during an exorcism at St. George's Convent," Cardinal Claude said solemnly.

"At the time, three priests attempted to exorcise the girl, but as you can see, it was completely ineffective. If not for the relic containing the Blood of God suppressing the demon, the entire convent would have been slaughtered."

As he spoke, the cardinal carefully placed a book on the table—it was the so-called Blood Book.

"Gentlemen, this is the Blood Book. It records everything about Amon, including the ritual required to allow his descent. The Blood Book is the only means of contacting Amon. That is why, when we discovered the girl and the book, we immediately separated them to prevent the book from being opened."

Everyone looked closely. The cover and pages of the Blood Book appeared fused into a single piece. It was impossible to open, no matter how hard one tried.

"The Blood Book can only be opened by the first person who came into contact with it," the cardinal continued.

"Unfortunately, that person was the girl in the video. Amon's will has already eroded her soul. After repeated confirmation, we have determined that her soul has been completely devoured. She is now entirely under Amon's control."

The image changed again, revealing a monstrous being with the body of a wolf, the tail of a serpent, and the head of a raven.

"This is Amon—his original form. He can assume the appearance of any person, exploit humanity's weaknesses, incite wars, and bring his legions into the world."

"The objective of this mission," the cardinal concluded,

"is to banish or kill Amon and force him back into Hell."

"May we examine the Blood Book?" Wong asked. As Kamar-Taj's former librarian, he possessed extensive knowledge of ancient texts.

The cardinal nodded and slid the Blood Book toward Wong. In its current state, only the cover could be seen; the contents were completely inaccessible.

Wong studied the book for a long time. It had fused into a single solid mass, with no seams or openings—meaning no one could open it except the girl who first touched it.

"We need to bring the Blood Book to the girl," Daimon suddenly said.

The cardinal shook his head.

"No. If the girl comes into contact with the Blood Book again, Amon will descend fully, and the entire world will be destroyed."

"No," Daimon said firmly.

"We must bring the Blood Book to her. Only then can Amon be forced to manifest."

The cardinal fell silent.

Daimon was right. To truly resolve the threat, Amon had to be made to appear—whether in his true form or as a projection. Only then could he be dealt with completely. Otherwise, they would merely destroy his current vessel, allowing him to seek out another host. Finding him again would be far more difficult.

The cardinal surveyed the four of them.

According to Vatican intelligence, one was a sorcerer from Kamar-Taj—this was beyond doubt, as Kamar-Taj had been formally contacted.

Another was the heir of the Bloodstone family, whose reputation was well known. Bloodstones were explicitly recorded in Vatican archives as being highly effective against all dark creatures, and the Vatican had even cooperated with Bloodstone family members during the Middle Ages.

The third was the son of Satan—something the Vatican never could have imagined. When they first learned that Satan had a child in the human world, the Vatican had even dispatched the Knights Templar to capture him—Daimon Hellstorm.

However, after long-term observation, the Vatican abandoned that plan. Daimon had never shown any demonic tendencies. He grew up like an ordinary human, aside from the inverted pentagram scar on his chest.

The Vatican was no longer the feudal, authoritarian Church it once was. It had learned to judge actions rather than origins. No matter who Daimon's father was, his deeds were righteous and stood in direct opposition to demons. Moreover, Daimon had accepted the Vatican's restrictions—the bracelet on his wrist was clear proof of that.

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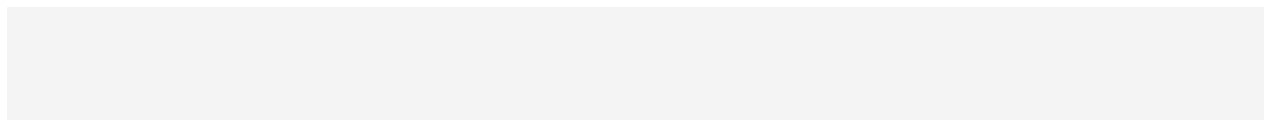
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Chapter 205 - 205 – Arrival at the Convent



Yes—after determining that Daimon posed no immediate danger, the Church still felt uneasy about simply leaving him unchecked. As a compromise, they forged a bracelet from mithril. This bracelet could suppress most of Daimon's demonic power and served as an extremely strong restraint, intended to keep him under control.

Daimon did not resist this measure. Upon learning of it, he accepted the bracelet outright, giving the Church a measure of reassurance.

This was also why the Church had chosen to summon Daimon for this mission. His power originated from Hell and shared the same source as demons themselves—making him, paradoxically, a highly effective weapon against them.

The final member of the team, of course, was Lucas.

Not long ago, the Battle of New York had been witnessed by the entire world. Lucas's transformation into a hundred-meter-tall giant had shaken humanity to its core. After investigating his abilities, the Church decided to include him among the four without hesitation—for one simple reason: Lucas was powerful.

Moreover, Lucas had previously succeeded in killing Blackheart. The Church knew full well that he possessed the ability to deal with demons directly.

After a moment of contemplation, the cardinal finally nodded and agreed to Daimon's proposal.

"I have only one requirement," he said solemnly.

"Amon must be destroyed. He cannot be allowed to escape. Otherwise, the human world will descend into Hell."

Daimon nodded in agreement and handed the Blood Book to Wong for safekeeping.

Daimon was no fool. After learning the identities of the other three, he had conducted his own research. Wong, as a sorcerer of Kamar-Taj, was more than capable of protecting the Blood Book. The magic of Kamar-Taj was profoundly mysterious, possessing countless methods and safeguards. Entrusting the book to Wong was the safest choice.

"During this operation," the cardinal continued,

"all Church personnel will be at your disposal. Everyone at St. George's Convent will cooperate fully. In addition, the Knights Templar will accompany you."

The Knights Templar were the Church's military force. Since the Middle Ages, they had served as one of the primary armed orders of the Crusades.

The Crusades had once been the Church's war machine, composed mainly of three major knightly orders and their subordinate forces. The Knights Templar were one of those three, made up entirely of elite warriors. Even their name reflected their status—the Templar Knights were the very core of the Church's martial power.

In the modern era, the Crusades no longer existed, but the three great knightly orders had been preserved. The Knights Templar continued to pass down their legacy, with veterans training new recruits. Their numbers remained fixed—any losses were quickly replenished.

After finalizing their plans, the group boarded a Church aircraft and traveled nonstop to a convent located on a remote island.

Because the convent stood on an isolated island, it could only be reached by boat. It was precisely this unique geography that had led the Church to send the possessed girl there.

On the boat, both Daimon and Elsa frowned as they stared at the distant, solitary island. The gray outer walls of the convent seemed especially gloomy.

"Do you see something?" Lucas asked curiously.

The two of them looked almost identical, their brows knitted tightly together.

"This place doesn't feel right," Daimon said quietly.

"We'd better be careful."

He glanced back at the large group behind them, his expression growing even darker.

"What exactly do you see?" Lucas pressed.

Daimon took a deep breath and habitually touched the bracelet on his wrist.

"The demonic presence here is extremely strong. Normally, a single demon wouldn't affect such a wide area—especially not a place protected by a holy relic like the Rod of God. This shouldn't be happening."

As the son of a demon, Daimon was intimately familiar with demonic auras. It was an innate ability—he could distinguish them instinctively.

Elsa nodded in agreement.

"He's right. A demon's influence usually has limits. That's why possessions tend to happen in remote areas. But the demonic presence here is far too dense."

Lucas stared at the convent but sensed nothing unusual. To him, convents simply looked gloomy by nature.

"System," Lucas muttered internally, "aren't you supposed to be the strongest demon hunter system? Why can't I see any demonic aura at all? What kind of demon hunter is this supposed to be?"

He was getting irritated. He had already asked Wong—although Wong couldn't see demonic energy either, he could at least sense it through other means. Lucas, on the other hand, could neither see nor feel anything. At this rate, he felt like nothing more than a regular guy.

[Ding~ The host's character template does not possess an occult-oriented physique.]

"Damn it! Then why the hell are you called a demon hunter system?!"

Lucas nearly exploded. Calling this the "strongest demon hunter system" was a joke—it was pure fraud.

[Ding~ Host, please remain calm. Although the character template lacks an occult physique, summoned beasts possess such abilities. The host can use a summoned beast's powers to perceive demonic energy.]

There was hope.

Lucas immediately asked how to do it.

[Ding~ Please explore on your own.]

"What use are you?! You fail me at critical moments and threaten me when nothing's wrong. If you were standing in front of me, I'd beat you within an inch of your life!"

Lucas was furious. This system was outrageously incompetent. It fell silent after dropping that line, clearly uninterested in further conversation. Sometimes Lucas even wondered whether the system had simply died.

With no other choice, Lucas experimented on his own. If seeing demonic energy required vision, then it must be something like opening a third eye.

He channeled the demonic power within his body and concentrated it into his eyes. A faint green glow flashed—and when he looked toward the convent again, everything changed.

The sky above the convent was filled with thick black miasma.

Lucas had always imagined demonic energy as fog or clouds, but seeing it firsthand proved him wrong. It was more like smog—countless tiny particles drifting chaotically around the convent. From a distance, it resembled a swarm of minuscule insects.

He also noticed that his vision had sharpened dramatically. Like an eagle's eyes, his pupils could adjust, allowing him to zoom in and out at will.

The boat finally docked. Several women dressed as nuns were already waiting at the pier to receive them.

Along with the Knights Templar, the group was accompanied by the purple-robed archbishop from New York. He was responsible for coordinating with the convent, as it was populated entirely by women. Since nuns were bound by vows of chastity, the arrival of so many men required a designated intermediary.

The Knights Templar were given a simple mission: secure every exit of the convent. As an island, there were very few points of entry or escape.

The archbishop ordered that no one be allowed in or out—not even the members of their own group—until the matter was resolved.

After that, the five of them followed Sister Agatha, the convent's administrator, along a rugged mountain path toward the convent itself.

The convent covered a vast area, with a complex internal layout. Without a guide, it would be easy to get lost. Sister Agatha emphasized that anyone wishing to move about must inform the nuns so that someone could guide them properly.

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Upon arriving at the convent's main hall, over a hundred nuns were seated together in prayer—this was a ritual they performed every single day.

The purple-robed archbishop joined them in prayer as well, while the remaining four stayed seated in the hall.

Lucas had no religious beliefs whatsoever. After observing for a while, he stood up and walked outside.

The demonic miasma was still thick—so dense that even the prayer hall had not been spared. The entire convent felt increasingly oppressive and sinister.

Suddenly, out of the corner of Lucas's eye, he caught a glimpse of a shadow flashing past.

At this hour, every nun should have been praying in the hall.

So who was that?

Driven by curiosity, Lucas immediately headed toward where the figure had vanished.

To his surprise, he discovered a staircase leading underground. He carefully descended the steps and soon arrived at a vast subterranean chamber.

At the very center of the chamber stood a stone chair, and surrounding it were rows of stone coffins.

At a glance, the coffins were unmistakably Western in style—the kind from the Middle Ages, with human figures carved into the lids.

The stone chair itself was empty. Lucas only glanced at it briefly before shifting his attention elsewhere.

But when he looked back again—

There was suddenly someone seated on the stone chair.

The figure sat upright, entirely shrouded in black gauze, their appearance completely obscured.

Lucas was absolutely certain that the chair had been empty just moments ago. Now, a figure had appeared out of nowhere.

He stepped closer to examine it. Judging by the outline, it was likely a woman. She wore a white wedding dress, though it was tattered and decayed. Her entire body was wrapped in black gauze from head to toe, leaving nothing visible.

Lucas was not particularly surprised. In modern times, wedding dresses symbolized beauty and nobility, worn only at weddings.

But in medieval Europe, wedding dresses were often used as burial garments—a custom that still existed in some regions even today.

The woman before him clearly belonged to that tradition. The wedding dress, combined with the black veil and indistinct features, made her presence deeply unsettling.

Lucas raised his hand—

Suddenly, something moved beneath the black gauze.

He leaned in closer, intending to get a clearer look.

The next instant, the gauze lifted without any wind, shooting straight toward him while emitting a shrill, piercing screech.

At that moment, green claws flashed into existence. Just before the gauze could envelop Lucas, it was torn to shreds.

Now, he could finally see the woman's face.

She was undeniably dead—and had been for a very long time. Her body had dried out almost completely, reduced to skin and bone. Yet her eyes were still there, clouded and staring straight at Lucas, as if she might come back to life at any moment.

A normal mummy would never still have eyeballs.

That fact alone made this corpse highly abnormal.

Lucas leaned in curiously, wanting to inspect her further. This place had been a convent for centuries—those buried here should have been nuns, monks, or perhaps soldiers. A woman buried in a wedding dress did not fit any of those categories.

Just then, the corpse moved.

Her withered, rigid hand shot out and grabbed Lucas. She opened her mouth, filled with writhing maggots, and lunged to bite him.

Bang!

A gun was suddenly shoved straight into her mouth.

With a deafening gunshot, her entire head exploded. Her body collapsed instantly, scattering apart like loose bones, leaving behind nothing but the tattered wedding dress.

Crack... crack... crack...

A series of faint, unsettling sounds echoed around Lucas, like whispered murmurs. At the same time, the stone coffins began to tremble.

The gunshot echoed all the way up to the main hall.

Wong reacted first. Lucas was missing—something had clearly gone wrong. Without hesitation, he opened a portal.

The three of them stepped through and arrived in the underground crypt.

Every coffin was shaking violently now, as if the corpses inside were about to burst out at any moment.

Daimon's gaze immediately locked onto the wedding dress scattered across the stone chair. He stepped forward, picked it up, and even leaned in to smell it.

"This is Amon's warning," Daimon said, looking at the others.

Boom!

All the coffins burst open at once. Dozens of corpses sat upright inside them—some wearing medieval armor, others still draped in tattered priestly robes.

Dozens of reanimated corpses filled the crypt with feral roars as they closed in on the four of them.

"This is not a place you should have come to,"

one corpse rasped, its voice like rusted metal scraping together.

"Do not interfere..."

"Who says we're interfering?" Lucas replied casually.

"We were paid for this. Ever heard the saying 'take the money and eliminate the disaster'?"

He paused, then slapped his forehead.

"Oh right—you're dead. Guess you haven't heard it. No matter. It won't stop me from scattering your ashes."

He raised his gun and fired.

A blue bullet streaked through the air. The speaking corpse's head exploded instantly, just like the woman in the wedding dress.

Roar!!

The remaining corpses charged, swinging their weapons at the group.

Boom!

Orange-red flames erupted, instantly engulfing the entire crypt. Countless wailing souls screamed in agony, turning the chamber into something straight out of Hell.

Daimon's eyes burned with fire as hellfire wrapped around his body.

"Hellfire!"

Lucas smelled a strong stench of sulfur. For some reason, hellfire always seemed to carry that odor.

Daimon pointed forward. Fire serpents surged out, wrapping around every corpse.

"Aaaargh!!"

"You... you're his son! You're the son of Satan!!"

Amid the screams, the corpses were reduced to ash.

When the hellfire faded, Daimon staggered, looking extremely weak. He instinctively rubbed the bracelet on his wrist. A black scorch mark had appeared, as if his skin had been burned.

Moments later, the mark faded, and his wrist returned to normal.

"That's the bracelet's side effect," Daimon said, drenched in sweat.

"My power is heavily suppressed, and every time I use it, the bracelet burns me."

After explaining, he collapsed onto the ground, breathing heavily.

As the son of a demon, his power came directly from Hell—no different from a demon's. The bracelet, forged by the Church and imbued with divine power, naturally suppressed that energy.

"Are you okay?" Elsa asked, stepping forward. She didn't want to lose a combatant at such a critical moment.

Daimon shook his head. "I'm fine. Just the bracelet. I'll recover soon."

Wong then opened a Mirror Dimension.

"This place isn't that simple," he said grimly. "We just arrived, and Amon already made his move."

"The archbishop said there was a divine relic here—the Rod of God," Wong continued, frowning.

"So how is Amon still able to control these corpses?"

According to the Church, the Rod of God was a sacred artifact with immense suppressive power over demons. Amon should have been severely weakened here.

Yet clearly—

Something was very wrong.

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Chapter 207 - 207 – Meeting Jenny

"I'm not sure," Lucas said. "I followed a shadow to that place earlier. I don't know whether it was a person or a ghost."

He continued, clearly unsettled. Although he had only caught a brief glimpse of the figure, with his eyesight he was certain it had been real—not some illusion caused by light or reflection. Yet from the moment he entered the crypt until now, the figure had never appeared again, which only deepened his suspicion.

"This place really is strange in every possible way," Wong said as he scanned their surroundings.

The group then left the underground crypt together. Coincidentally, the prayers in the main hall had just ended. Under Sister Agatha's instructions, someone was sent to guide them to the room where the possessed girl was being held.

They walked down a long corridor. On both sides were cell-like rooms, resembling prison cells. Crosses hung along the walls—almost every doorway had a cross mounted beside it. All of them were pitch-black, clearly ancient.

As Daimon passed those crosses, he glanced at them repeatedly, subconsciously touching the bracelet on his wrist.

Led by the novice nun and the archbishop, they arrived at a door at the end of the corridor. The door was clearly very old—rotting wooden planks reinforced with a heavily rusted iron frame. The cross hanging on it was just as black as the others.

"Jenny is inside," the novice nun said softly. "Because she can bewitch people with her words, several nuns have already been influenced by her. That's why I take care of her personally every time."

She didn't seem affected by Jenny's words herself.

However, Lucas and the others could clearly see traces of demonic corruption on her—fortunately, it was shallow, only on the surface, not deep enough to affect her mind.

"Open the door," the archbishop ordered.

The nun took out a key and slowly unlocked the door.

Creeeak—

As the door opened, a dense wave of demonic energy rushed out. Daimon reacted instantly, thrusting both palms forward as hellfire burst forth, scorching the incoming miasma.

If demonic energy entered the body, the result could range from severe illness to death.

Under the burning hellfire, the demonic energy was quickly eradicated, and the room's interior became visible.

Just as described, the room was little different from a prison cell. Stone walls surrounded it, and dim sunlight filtered through an iron-barred window on one side. The light fell directly onto a rusted iron bed, where a filthy little girl lay restrained with iron chains around her wrists and ankles.

Sensing the presence of others, Jenny opened her eyes and looked at them through her tangled hair.

"Jenny, are you feeling better?" the novice nun asked gently as she stepped forward.

For some reason, she showed no fear toward the possessed girl—only concern.

Jenny said nothing, staring intently at Lucas and the others who had entered behind the nun.

"Her condition fluctuates," the nun explained. "When she's doing better, she can communicate just like a normal child."

She affectionately stroked Jenny's hair.

"Don't be afraid, Jenny. These people are here to help you. They're going to ask you some questions. Answer them honestly, okay?"

Jenny nodded dully, her gaze never leaving the group.

The archbishop stepped forward and gently held Jenny's thin, fragile hand.

"Hello, Jenny. I'm a priest from the Vatican. You're safe now—you don't need to be afraid. We're all here to help and treat you."

His voice was gentle, like a grandfather speaking to his granddaughter.

"Can you tell me about the one inside your body?"

He asked directly. From Jenny's calm demeanor, he could tell she wasn't currently possessed, so he judged that she was conscious.

Jenny nodded, still staring in Lucas's direction.

The archbishop followed her gaze and asked curiously,

"Are you looking at him?"

He pointed at Lucas.

Jenny shook her head slightly, but her eyes remained fixed on the group.

The archbishop pointed at them one by one. When he pointed to Daimon, Jenny finally nodded.

"He says that person is Satan's son," she said hoarsely, her voice like someone who hadn't had water in days. "He's not a good person."

"He?" the archbishop asked. "Can you tell me who 'he' is?"

Jenny shook her head. "I don't know. When he wants to come out, he just comes out."

"Do you know what he looks like? Is he a man or a woman?"

Again, Jenny shook her head.

"Neither. He has the head of a crow. He helped me chase away the bad people who wanted to hurt me."

Everyone immediately understood what she meant—everyone except Lucas, who looked utterly confused. He hadn't studied the relevant lore and hadn't had time to cram.

"Who's the bird-head?" Lucas asked, his clear eyes radiating pure ignorance.

"If Jenny's description is accurate," Elsa explained, "then that crow-headed figure is Amon. He sometimes manifests as a human-shaped creature with a raven's head to manipulate people."

The Bloodstone family archives contained vast records of dark creatures, meticulously collected by her late father, Ulysses Bloodstone. Even the Seventy-Two Demons of Solomon were documented in great detail.

"Ohhh," Lucas replied.

He didn't really care whether Amon had a bird's head or not. His job was simple—kill Amon the moment he was expelled from Jenny's body.

As always, exorcism wasn't his specialty. Killing demons was.

That was his profession.

After all, he was a demon hunter—not a demon... hunter.

Besides, Daimon and Elsa were the ones responsible for the exorcism. Wong was likely the contingency plan—the failsafe.

"Jenny," Daimon suddenly asked, "has that person come to see you in the past few days?"

Jenny didn't answer. Instead, she looked at Daimon with deep wariness, as if he were extremely dangerous.

Immediately, everyone turned their eyes toward Daimon—including the novice nun. Jenny's earlier words, "son of Satan," had clearly frightened her.

After all, Jenny was merely possessed by a demon. Daimon, on the other hand, was the son of the King of Demons himself. In terms of danger, he was far more threatening.

The novice nun looked at the archbishop in confusion.

Shouldn't you explain this?

Has the Church really fallen so far that it's now cooperating with Satan's son? Have they no shame at all?

Sensing Jenny's tension, the archbishop smiled gently and patted her head.

"Don't be afraid, Jenny. He's not a bad person. He's here to help cure you."

His words worked wonders. Jenny visibly relaxed and turned her attention to the archbishop.

"He came yesterday," she said. "He told me some people would come here to hurt me and that I shouldn't cooperate with them. He meant you, didn't he?"

The group was stunned.

Had their mission been leaked?

But after a moment's thought, they realized—

That didn't seem possible.

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Chapter 208 - 208 – Exorcism

They had departed directly from the Vatican, traveling the entire way by private aircraft. Everyone involved was from the Church. Could it be that someone within the Vatican had leaked their itinerary?!

The group exchanged glances, an unspoken shock settling in their hearts. If even the Vatican had been infiltrated, then this situation was far beyond what the four of them could handle alone.

"Jenny," the archbishop said calmly, choosing not to dwell on her previous words, "when did he first start appearing?"

"It was after Mom and Dad took me to move into a new house," Jenny replied. "I found a book in the basement. After I opened it, he came to me."

That confirmed it.

Jenny had opened the Blood Book and become the first person to make contact—the key individual required to help Amon descend.

Amon needed Jenny to find the most suitable vessel so he could successfully possess it and descend upon Earth.

"Did he ever tell you to do anything for him?" Elsa asked.

"Yes," Jenny answered obediently. "He asked me to help him retrieve his body."

If an adult heard those words, they would find them chilling. What kind of being would ask someone to help recover their body?

But coming from a child, it sounded different. Children didn't overthink such things. To them, everything was new and strange. Ignorance bred fearlessness—their minds were still unformed, and a single sentence wouldn't terrify them.

"Did he say where his body is?" Elsa pressed on.

This was critical. If Jenny knew and told them, the rest would be far simpler—they could locate the chosen host and lie in wait.

"He said that person is—"

Jenny froze mid-sentence.

She suddenly sat bolt upright as the iron chains binding her limbs rattled violently. Her pupils rapidly turned pitch black.

The archbishop immediately sensed danger and yanked the novice nun backward, his movements swift and sharp—nothing like those of an elderly man.

Jenny's lips curled into a cold smile as her body slowly levitated. The chains kept her tethered to the bed, limiting how far she could rise.

"Church dogs... Did the useless fools from the Vatican send you here to die again?"

Her voice dropped into a deep, hoarse growl—utterly inhuman, more like a rasping man than a young girl.

"You dare show yourself in broad daylight?" the archbishop barked, pulling out a small silver vial and uncorking it.

"Ha! Your so-called holy water is useless to me. You should be worrying about your own life!"

The moment she finished speaking, the vial in the archbishop's hand exploded. Holy water splashed across the floor—but instead of purifying it, the liquid hissed and corroded the ground like sulfuric acid.

"Wong!" Lucas shouted.

Wong reacted instantly. With a swift motion of his hands, the Mirror Dimension unfolded, pulling Lucas, Wong, Elsa, Daimon, and Jenny inside—leaving the archbishop and the novice nun outside, safely excluded.

Jenny glanced around and immediately recognized where she was.

"The Mirror Dimension... You're a sorcerer from Kamar-Taj."

She showed little surprise, clearly familiar with Kamar-Taj's existence.

"Move!" Elsa ordered.

Elsa and Daimon stepped forward at once. Elsa seized Jenny, activating the Bloodstone to suppress Amon's will.

The gem on Elsa's chest blazed crimson, streams of red energy flowing down her arms and into Jenny's body.

"The Bloodstone?!" Jenny shrieked in shock. "You possess the Bloodstone?! What is Ulysses, that bastard, to you?!"

For the first time, genuine fear appeared on her face. The Bloodstone clearly restrained her—otherwise, she would never have reacted like this.

"That's none of your business," Elsa snapped. "Now crawl back to hell!"

She intensified the Bloodstone's power. Jenny's levitating body was forced inch by inch back onto the bed, her struggles completely suppressed.

At the same time, Daimon placed one hand on Jenny's forehead.

Hellfire erupted in his eyes. An inverted pentagram appeared on his chest as a terrifying demonic aura surged outward.

"Leave this girl's body."

When Daimon spoke, his voice carried overwhelming authority—an invisible pressure that crushed down upon Jenny.

This was one of Daimon's inherited abilities. As the son of Satan, he possessed the hellish dominion of the Lord of Hell himself, granting him limited command over demons. The duration depended on the demon's strength.

But even one second was enough.

As long as Amon was forced out of Jenny's body, Lucas would send him straight back to hell with a single bullet.

After all, this was only Amon's will manifesting. The Punisher's power was more than sufficient to deal with it—at worst, it would take a few shots.

At Daimon's command, Jenny stiffened. Dense black veins spread from her forehead, branching like twisted blood vessels. Her eyes gradually returned from pure black to normal.

"AAAH—!!"

Jenny suddenly screamed, her mouth flying open as thick black smoke poured out, swirling in the air and repeatedly trying to surge back into her body.

"Lucas!!" Elsa shouted.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Six gunshots rang out in rapid succession.

Six blue bullets, trailing glowing tails, slammed into the black smoke. They formed a perfect hexagram midair.

The instant the pattern completed, the smoke let out a deafening shriek. A violent psychic shockwave rippled outward, stabbing at their eardrums.

As the final wisp of smoke dissipated, Jenny collapsed unconscious. The black vein-like marks faded completely from her body.

Wong waved his hand, dispelling the Mirror Dimension.

Jenny was safe now—her unconsciousness was simply the result of extreme exhaustion after prolonged possession. With proper care, she would awaken in a few days.

But the moment the Mirror Dimension vanished, the four of them were confronted with a horrifying sight.

The archbishop and the novice nun lay on the ground.

The novice nun's white habit was completely soaked in blood, blooming like a crimson rose—forever frozen in that moment.

The archbishop lay in a pool of blood as well, but the faint rise and fall of his chest showed that he was still alive, barely clinging to life.

Elsa stayed by Jenny's side, while the other three rushed over.

"He's still breathing!" someone shouted. "Get help—now!"

None of them had any real medical training—not even Elsa. As for Lucas, he couldn't even apply a proper bandage. His rapid healing only worked on himself.

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Wong immediately opened a portal. On the other side was the chapel where prayers had been held earlier. Several nuns were inside, carrying out routine cleaning, and they nearly jumped out of their skins when the portal appeared.

Wong stepped through first, leaving the portal open behind him.

"Get help immediately! Someone's been badly injured!"

Hearing his shout, the nuns realized the gravity of the situation and rushed off to summon the monastery's physician.

Working together in a flurry of motion, they carried the still-breathing archbishop back to his room. The physician was also a nun. With the monastery's limited medical supplies, all she could do was perform emergency bandaging.

The novice nun, however, was already confirmed dead.

The nuns carried her body to the prayer hall, intending to hold funeral rites so her soul could enter Heaven and continue serving God.

According to custom, a novice nun's body should be washed clean and wrapped in a burial shroud—but Elsa stopped them. She needed to examine the body.

Despite the nuns' vehement objections, they were overruled. The novice nun was not wrapped in a shroud as intended.

"You are desecrating the soul of a pure servant of God!" Sister Agatha cried, standing in front of the body. "God will never permit this!"

"Your God doesn't get a say with me," Lucas replied coldly. "If He disagrees, He can come argue with me Himself."

Lucas showed no mercy. He had no issue with faith—but using faith as an excuse for everything was infuriating. They were here to investigate and exorcise demons, not to listen to sermons from a group of foreign nuns.

Sister Agatha tried to step forward again, but a blade of compressed wind instantly stopped inches from her face. The sharp pressure made her breathing hitch.

"One more step," Lucas said flatly, "and I'll send you straight to meet your God."

With that, he ignored the shocked nuns in the prayer hall. Faith was one thing; blind indoctrination was another.

With the crowd subdued, Elsa began the autopsy. Among the four of them, only she knew how—Lucas, Wong, and Daimon were only good at fighting and killing.

The novice nun's body showed no obvious external wounds, but all of her internal organs had been completely crushed and mashed together. The chest and abdominal cavity were a chaotic mess, impossible to distinguish individual organs.

Elsa skillfully sutured the incision afterward, her movements as precise and practiced as a veteran tailor's—so smooth it was unsettling. She clearly had far more experience than anyone would like to think about.

Lucas and the other two watched with thinly veiled horror. With suturing skills like that, calling Elsa a serial killer wouldn't have sounded far-fetched.

Elsa rolled her eyes at their expressions. She was used to it. Ever since childhood, Ulysses had forced her to learn all kinds of things. Autopsies and stitching bodies back together were child's play—she could practically disassemble a person and put them back together intact.

"It looks like she was killed by a demon," Elsa concluded.

No external injuries, completely destroyed internal organs, and within a monastery—only a demon could have done this so silently.

"A demon?" Lucas frowned. "You're saying there are demons here besides Amon? This is a monastery. How can demons just come and go like this?"

He was genuinely shocked. A monastery was sacred ground—demons shouldn't even be able to enter. Only a being powerful enough to rival God could ignore such holy protection. Even Amon himself had been confined to Jenny's body and couldn't leave that room.

"Where is the Staff of God?" Daimon suddenly asked, turning to Sister Agatha. "Take us to it."

This was no ordinary monastery. It housed a holy relic. With such an artifact suppressing evil, ordinary demons shouldn't have been able to enter at all. Yet during their exorcism, another demon had attacked the archbishop and the nun.

That meant the monastery was no longer truly sacred.

And it likely meant something had gone wrong with the so-called Staff of God.

Sister Agatha led the way, with the four following behind. The other nuns began preparing for the funeral.

Just as Lucas was about to step outside, he suddenly halted, a strange sensation tugging at his instincts.

He turned back.

All the nuns were kneeling on the floor, quietly reciting scripture.

It should have been an ordinary sight—but Lucas felt a thick, unsettling sense of wrongness hanging in the air. He couldn't pinpoint the problem, only that something was deeply off.

Suppressing his unease, Lucas turned and left. The nuns never looked up, continuing their low prayers as that eerie atmosphere lingered behind them.

"The Staff of God has always been sealed inside the monastery's tower," Sister Agatha explained as they walked. "It is the oldest and most sacred place here. No one is allowed to enter except during the monthly cleaning."

They soon arrived at the base of the tower.

It stood at the very center of the monastery, with all other buildings constructed around it.

Everyone looked up simultaneously.

The tower stood silently before them, but it gave off an intense sense of dissonance—as if it didn't belong there at all.

Daimon stared at it with a deep frown.

He had felt this sensation before, once at an ancient ruin where Satan-worshipping cultists had conducted rituals. The same wrong, discordant feeling—just like now.

But this was supposed to be sacred ground, housing the Staff of God. This feeling should not exist here.

Unless something was very wrong.

"Open the door. We're going up," Daimon said grimly.

Sister Agatha hesitated, gripping the key tightly in her palm, unwilling to step forward.

"Any concerns?" Lucas asked, noticing her nervousness.

"No... none," she said hesitantly. "It's just that no one is allowed to enter except on cleaning days, and today isn't—"

"Extraordinary circumstances," Lucas interrupted with a smile. "God won't hold it against you."

He took the key from her hand and unlocked the door himself.

The four entered one after another, with Sister Agatha bringing up the rear.

"According to Church doctrine, I cannot enter the tower outside of cleaning days," she said, grasping the door handles. "You'll have to go on alone. The relic is at the top."

Before they could respond, the door slowly closed behind them.

The four exchanged looks.

"There's definitely something wrong here," Daimon said quietly. "From the moment we arrived, this monastery has felt off. Stay alert."

They began surveying their surroundings.

The first floor of the tower was a large room filled with stacks of books and parchment scrolls, some covered in thick spiderwebs. Many looked ancient.

Lucas casually picked up a roll of parchment. It was sealed with red wax bearing the imprint of a cross—clearly very old.

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"Didn't they say this place is cleaned every month? Then why is there so much dust?"

Elsa ran her finger across a bookshelf. A thick layer of dust coated the surface—it didn't look like it had been cleaned monthly at all.

"Unless..."

Elsa and Daimon arrived at the same possibility at the same time.

At that moment, Karl opened the wax-sealed parchment. The text was written in archaic English—or at least something close to it—and he couldn't understand a word.

"Elsa, see what it says," Karl said, handing the parchment to her.

Among the four of them, only Elsa could read texts like this. Once again, thanks to Ulysses Bloodstone.

Elsa scanned the parchment carefully.

"It's Latin. It records historical events related to the monastery. Nothing special."

She set the parchment aside.

Karl nodded.

The group continued upward toward the top of the tower. The structure was clearly ancient, resembling the pointed towers of medieval castles.

A spiral staircase led all the way up, with a mid-level landing where the four of them now stood.

Karl looked out through a window. Outside, demonic energy still churned, and the monastery lay silent—deathly silent, like a ghost town.

"Something's not right," Karl muttered.

The more he observed, the more unsettling the monastery felt.

He had never visited other monasteries, but this one was far too quiet. Quiet to the point that it felt abandoned, as if no one had ever lived here.

From this vantage point, overlooking the entire complex in broad daylight, Karl realized there wasn't a single person outside. No movement at all. Not even the sound of birds or insects.

That was deeply abnormal.

Even in the most desolate places, animals existed. But not here.

At last, Karl understood the source of the unease that had been gnawing at him—it was the absence of animals.

There were no birds or beasts around the monastery. Not even a rat. Inside the monastery, there were no mosquitoes, no insects of any kind. Given the season, that was impossible. Even a city like New York was crawling with bugs.

The same applied to the tower. The books and documents on the first floor were covered in dust and cobwebs, yet there wasn't a single spider in sight. Spiders didn't flee just because humans arrived—they stayed motionless on their webs.

Likewise, a tower this old should have been teeming with insects. For all animals to collectively avoid a place meant only one thing: this location was extremely dangerous.

Animals didn't choose environments based on preference like humans did. Their decisions were driven entirely by instinct and magnetic fields—the smaller the creature, the stronger this tendency.

Insects were the prime example. They adapted to environments rather than rejecting them, and they were among the most sensitive creatures to Earth's magnetic field.

And yet, there was no trace of life here.

This monastery had a serious problem—a very serious one.

"We've been here for quite a while now," Karl said without turning around, still staring down at the monastery below. "Have any of you seen even a single insect?"

The others froze, then immediately grasped the implication.

"Then it's confirmed," Daimon said grimly. "Something is wrong here. The Staff of God must already be compromised."

He lifted his gaze toward the spiraling staircase and the small chamber at the top.

The four of them quickly made their way to the summit. A single door stood there, leading to the room where the Staff of God was supposedly stored.

They pushed the door open.

A stench of decay rushed out to greet them.

That alone was a bad sign. Any place housing a sacred relic should remain stable and uncorrupted due to its presence. Rot and decay should not exist here.

At the center of the room stood an ornate pedestal, atop which rested a lavishly decorated box.

Daimon glanced at the other three, signaling them to open it. As the son of Satan, merely being near the Staff of God wouldn't kill him—but it certainly wouldn't be pleasant.

Elsa and Wong both turned to Karl, their meaning painfully obvious.

"Damn it..."

Karl felt numb.

What a great team—sacrifice your teammate at the critical moment, right?

Rolling his eyes, Karl stepped forward and approached the box.

The container was made entirely of gold, yet blackened spots marred its surface, like corrosion. That alone further confirmed that something was very wrong with the relic inside.

Without hesitation, Karl opened the box.

It was empty.

The cushioned interior still bore the clear imprint of a staff-shaped object—but the so-called Staff of God was nowhere to be found.

"It's empty," Karl said flatly. "There's nothing inside."

The other three immediately gathered around. Indeed, the box contained nothing at all.

"Wasn't there supposed to be a sacred relic here?"

The four of them felt their hearts sink.

The loss of a sacred artifact was no small matter. It meant the monastery was truly in grave danger.

"Now it all makes sense," Daimon said slowly. "Why demonic energy is everywhere. Why the archbishop and that novice nun were attacked. But there's still one thing I can't understand."

He frowned.

"Why did Amon remain obediently inside Jenny the whole time? If the monastery had already lost the relic's protection, Amon should have acted without restraint. Why was he so easily destroyed by us?"

No one could answer that question.

For now, Jenny had been successfully exorcised. Aside from extreme weakness, she was no longer in danger.

But a much bigger problem had surfaced.

This entire monastery—inside and out—was steeped in something deeply wrong.

"We need to contact the Templar Knights stationed outside," Elsa said suddenly. "I have a very bad feeling about this."

She felt as though they had been dragged into a massive vortex, one whose shape they still couldn't see.

"I think," Elsa continued, "that from the moment we accepted this mission, someone's been leading us by the nose. We've been used."

Her words echoed exactly what the others were thinking.

At last, they understood why they had felt so uneasy ever since setting foot on this island.

The four hurried back down from the tower, intending to find Sister Agatha and demand answers about the missing relic.

But when they reached the exit—

The door was locked.

Their hearts dropped instantly.

The worst-case scenario had come true.

"Contact the Templar Knights. Now," Karl said sharply.

Elsa pulled out the communicator and attempted to contact the knights outside. Only static answered her call.

No response at all.

Daimon leaned close to the door and sniffed lightly. A faint, elusive scent entered his nostrils.

"There's a barrier on the door," he said. "Getting out won't be easy."

He placed his hand against the door and fully released his demonic power.

Complex symbols and sigils immediately surfaced wherever his power touched, completely covering the door—and even spreading across the surrounding walls.

"They really did set us up," someone muttered.

At this point, if they still couldn't see that this was a trap, then all their years of experience would have been for nothing.

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