

Menu 601

Chapter 601: Jennifer Stands by Her Word (4)

Whether from pride, anger, greed, envy, sloth, lust, or gluttony.

After they transformed, only instincts remained.

And then?

They kill everything that prevents them from unleashing their nature.

The only exception?

It's that magic mirror.

But even the magic mirror doesn't want to hear that name.

After just once, speaking becomes stuttered.

Keep in mind, the magic mirror's speech was not only eloquent but also sweet in the past.

Now, when it speaks, it not only stutters but always sounds bitterly resentful.

Moreover, it remains indifferent to her questioning, threats.

"You're playing this game too?"

"Hmph!"

"Just wait!"

"I will find you all!"

"And then, I'll make you regret this!"

Jennifer scoffed.

On the subsequent journey, Jennifer became quite annoyed.

She didn't proceed by usual means but charged forward like a rhino, reaching the "coordinates" in a "straight" manner.

No ritual was performed.

Filled with anger and impatience, Jennifer grabbed the “coordinates” and vanished from there immediately.

...

In a room enclosed by thick curtains, hundreds of lit candles made it as bright as day.

A massive glass vessel stood there.

More than ten witches knelt around this container.

Their witch robes became even more imposing in the flicker of candlelight.

Moments later, a blue-green liquid began to churn inside.

An inconspicuous piece of flesh, the size of a pinkie finger, appeared amidst the swirling liquid.

Quickly, the flesh began to grow at a rate visible to the naked eye.

In a breath, it became an embryo.

On the second breath, it turned into an infant.

On the third breath, it transformed into a child.

On the fourth breath, it became a young girl.

The surrounding witches quietly stood around the vessel, watching these changes.

This was not their first time.

They had grown accustomed to it.

They were silently waiting for Lady Jennifer to return to her original form.

According to past experiences, it required five breaths.

But this time, as the fourth breath was completed, the girl in the vessel opened her eyes.

She lifted her leg and stepped out.

The glass cover of the vessel was like air to her, walked through by the girl.

Emily immediately stood up to wipe the girl's body, while two other witches, kneeling there, lifted the prepared robes and broom high over their heads, delivering them to the girl's front. *raNObĚs*

The entire process was silent.

Even though they were puzzled why Lady Jennifer had not returned to normal, not one of them dared to ask.

Even Emily, the closest to Jennifer, was no exception.

"There are some things, I'll be back soon."

Facing these loyal subordinates, Jennifer's mood improved slightly, so she chose not to leave without saying goodbye.

Of course, that was all.

Then, under all the witches' watchful eyes, Jennifer picked up the broom and flew out of there.

She was going to ask the magic mirror.

Ask it who the name was that she had just remembered.

This time, she was determined to get to the bottom of it!

Even if it meant shattering the magic mirror, she wouldn't hesitate!

...

The aroma of "food" grew increasingly intense.

Jason started to run with all his might, occasionally incorporating the skill of "Acceleration."

Like an arrow loosed from its bow, he approached his destination: the majestic mountain in view.

According to the direction of the aroma, that's where the "food" was.

At the same time, Jason confirmed once more.

This rich aroma would be an unprecedented "delicacy" he had encountered!

"What will it be?"

"I must savor it carefully!"

"Bite by bite, letting my taste buds experience the flavor inside!"

Jason thought as his speed increased.

Facing 'food,' Jason could give two hundred percent of his burst.

Then...

He met Jennifer.

Just as Emily had said, he really did meet Jennifer in a way he could never have imagined—Jennifer on her broomstick, speeding toward the magic mirror from high above.

The dust kicked up by Jason's running naturally caught Jennifer's attention.

Then she saw Jason.

Almost without any hesitation, Jennifer lowered her altitude.

"Jason!"

Jennifer called out Jason's name.

Then, she quickly approached Jason, keeping pace with him as he ran.

With the sun creating a clever backlight, the girl-like Jennifer turned her head, tucked a strand of hair behind her ear, her eyes clear as water, yet filled with emotion.

She just looked at Jason, and as he began to get goosebumps all over, she spoke with a trembling voice.

"Is this a fateful encounter?"

"After experiencing life and death, we meet again."

"Jason~"

As she spoke, tears streamed down her face.

It was as though she had really been through life and death to meet Jason again.

Although in a sense, there was no mistake, Jason, who was running, had no intention of responding.

Even, Jason didn't so much as glance at Jennifer.

He didn't want to have any entanglement with her.

He hoped that coldness and silence would beat her back.

As for the words Jennifer spoke?

Jason never believed them.

Only a lunatic would believe a 'Witch'?

But Jason forgot that lunatics cannot be treated with common sense.

The 'Witch' who kept pace with him pulled on the broomstick and flew high, then upon reaching a certain height, she accelerated and dove straight down.

Her speed increased.

The ground got closer.

There was no intention of slowing down.

Then—

Bang!

The 'Witch' crashed into the ground about a hundred meters in front of Jason.

She was smashed to pieces.

Even as the echoing sound of impact faded, her last words before death still lingered in the air.

"I haven't forgotten!"

"This is the second time!"

"I still owe you nine more times!"

Jason's eyes twitched.

Jennifer had died again.

She had just been resurrected, returned from the Land of the Dead, only to kill herself in front of him without any discussion?

And clearly, she too must have been headed to the 'food.'

But upon seeing him, she unhesitatingly went to her death.

Since when did 'Witches' keep their promises so devoutly?

Sigh!

Jason took a deep breath, looked at the shattered corpse in the crater, and again spewed out a cone of Flame.

Then, he turned and continued on his way.

He didn't know what Jennifer was trying to do,

But he knew what his goal was.

Jason was getting closer to the mountain.

The hunger in his stomach made it roar.

Hungry!

Atop the mountain, inside the stone house.

The pristine oval mirror, at the sound of Jason's stomach's hungry roar, trembled as if it had been startled from a deep sleep, and a fine mist of droplets formed on the smooth, clear surface.

Then, breaking the rules of the ritual, it began to speak to itself—

"I, I

Chapter 602: Past, Present, and Possible Future

"I, I

"No, not tasty!"

The more anxious the magical mirror became, the more it stuttered.

Phrases that normally required only a pause now not only took twice as long, but also had to be repeated.

For the magical mirror, which always strived for brevity and clarity, this was a serious mistake.

But right now, it had no time to worry about that.

A mistake was still better than becoming 'food'!

It had never imagined that within the 'Witch's' destiny, two terrible, irreversible entities would appear.

It had already tried its best to avoid dealing with the first one.

That's why it chose the right moment to appear.

But it never expected a second one to appear.

Moreover, compared to the obviousness of the first, the second truly was the 'hidden of destiny.'

Even it hadn't noticed the true identity of the other.

Only when it was truly approached did it realize the 'invisibility' involved, and the great terror that came with it.

Leave!

Leave immediately!

Such thoughts sprang to the mind of the magical mirror.

But it hesitated.

Or rather, it was reluctant to do so.

Not only had it invested too much in the 'Witch,' but its initial error had already attracted the attention of that entity, damaging its abilities and causing it to stammer.

More importantly, it was impossible to find a second target now.

In the past four epochs, four of the 'Nine True Seats' had already been filled.

They were so powerful that no other being dared to contradict them.

All eyes were now focused on the fifth seat.

Anyone who could potentially compete for the fifth position was under the scrutiny of those beings, who would not let any entity except themselves get close to their 'competitor.'

If it made an appearance, it would surely be a fight to the death.

What to do?

What to do?

What to do?

The magical mirror thought, as droplets formed on its surface and the frame shook continuously.

Anxiety!

Fear!

They kept surfacing in its soul.

Then, it suddenly recalled a truth from the world it once inhabited—

If you can't beat them, join them!

With a shudder, the magical mirror flicked off the droplets and began to use its inherent ability to peek into the future that waited if it took such action.

The River of Fate.

It had both a main course and branches.

The branches were complex and interwoven.

The main course could even change course.

Therefore, fate was complicated.

It was unpredictable.

And what about it?

It remained unable to predict; it simply saw every possibility and calculated which was most likely, and then intervened at the most appropriate moment.

Of course, it used to be able to influence things slightly.

But now?

Injured as it was, it could no longer do that.

Moreover, it didn't believe it could find anyone more suitable than the 'Witch.'

More powerful?

Of course, there were some.

For instance, the one about to appear.

But did it dare to cooperate with him?

It didn't dare.

It feared being consumed.

Just like how it was now peering into the destiny it shared with him.

In the 3 main branches of the River of Fate: being eaten.

In the 75917 branches of fate... also being eaten!

Upon seeing these outcomes, the magical mirror felt as if it were suffocating.

Because it had just seen 75920 ways it could die.

It was utterly terrifying!

Being eaten alive and chewed was par for the course.

Being dipped in sauce was understandable.

But what about those roastings and stewings?

And that slow savouring, bite after tiny bite!

Just thinking about it frightened the mirror.

And that was 75920 times!

How relentless must you be to consume me?

In so many destinies, is 'eating' all you want to punctuate your life with?

The magical mirror trembled more violently.

Already not adept at dealing with such situations, it finally made a decision.

"Too terrifying!"

"No way!"

"I must leave now!"

"The 'Witch' has the ritual as a link, there's still a chance."

"Although it will give other beings an opportunity to take advantage, if I don't go now, there's no chance left for me!"

With this thought, the mirror's frame began to shake anew.

Unlike the previous fear.

This time, the shaking was done with a certain rhythm.

Mysterious characters formed of Dufol Language appeared across its surface.

Everything, including the entire stone house, began to appear illusionary.

It was taking its 'home' to temporarily vanish.

"I will return!"

The magical mirror thought to itself.

And while most of the stone house had already disappeared, the small part remaining started to become vaporous, and just as everything was about to vanish completely, a tall, muscular figure appeared.

Jason saw the house about to disappear.

Without any hesitation, he activated "Swift" and headed straight for its location.

He could smell the rich aroma disappearing rapidly.

With the stimulation of 'food,' Jason closed the hundred-meter gap in the blink of an eye.

By that time, there were still parts of the stone house, like the columns.

Jason reached to grab them.

But his hand passed right through.

"Huh?"

Jason was startled and then reached out again.

The result was the same as before.

His hand went right through.

The magical mirror could not see any of this, having already completely vanished from this 'world' and was now struggling to take its 'home' with it.

However, although it couldn't see, it could still sense.

That terrifying figure was outside its 'home,' trying to grasp it.

"Don't, don't even talk about using hands, even with a m-mouth

The temporarily safe magical mirror couldn't help but speak up, trying to say 'even with a mouth, it's impossible' completely, but it repeated the word 'mouth' several times, unable to get to 'bite.'

Chapter 603: Past, Present, and Possible Future (2)

Ultimately, the magic mirror chose to give up.

Who could be perfect?

Since it had acquired a flawless frame curve, a crystal clear surface, and a magnetic voice, a stammer wasn't insurmountable.

At worst, it would simply not speak in the future, only 'write.'

The magic mirror swiftly made the biggest decision of its mirror life.

But what it would never know was when Jason faced an unprecedentedly delicious 'food,' the potential he could unleash was immense.

Its body, its soul, had long since left this world.

The voice it muttered to itself naturally did not exist in this world either.

Only its 'home' remained.

And that 'home' was about to vanish from this world too.

Yet it still represented a 'connection.'

A very subtle 'connection.'

To call it a crevice was an exaggeration.

But under this negligible 'connection,' Jason heard a voice repeating incessantly—

'Mouth, mouth, mouth!'

Suddenly, Jason's eyes lit up!

The next moment, Jason opened his mouth wide and bit towards the remaining stone house.

Whoosh!

The instant he opened his mouth, a huge shadowy figure loomed behind him.

Crimson eyes fixated on the soon-to-disappear 'food'; as Jason opened his mouth, the shadow likewise opened its gaping maw.

Crack!

The two overlapped.

The two mouths bit into the 'food' almost simultaneously!

He got it!

Jason instantly felt his teeth touch something solid!

And a slight lick of his tongue released a rich taste of creamy cheese on his tastebuds.

Hard cheese?

Jason's eyes brightened, then he clamped his mouth shut, strained his body, and his feet continuously pushed backwards.

He felt he could 'pull' the food back.

The shadowy figure, following Jason's strenuous pull, did the same, and the unprepared magic mirror staggered, nearly being 'pulled' back.

How could that be possible?!

Its mirror surface expanded, almost popping out of the frame.

Almost instinctively, it used its powers.

Then, it saw Jason biting into the corner of its 'home's' doorpost.

At the same time, it also saw the huge, ethereal shadow.

The moment it saw that immense shadow, the magic mirror almost shattered on the spot.

"He, it, They

"They've appeared again!"

The magic mirror howled in fear.

Then, without a second thought, it immediately cut off the 'home' that hadn't 'passed' through yet.

Crack!

A sound echoed in the void.

The stone doorway's pillar was bitten off.

Jason raised his hand and embraced the pillar.

Within the void, the magic mirror powered up and, with its broken 'home,' fled into the distance.

No looking back.

No lingering.

Run!

Keep running!

It even lost all extraneous thoughts.

Because—

‘The Gluttonous Sovereign’!

It had actually seen the ‘Gluttonous Sovereign,’ who emerged at the end of the fourth era, and was most likely to claim that position!

‘The Gluttonous Sovereign,’ although only appearing for less than a century at the end of the fourth era, devoured more than half of the ‘competitors’ in that short period!

You should know, by that time, the 'competitors' had already grown.

In mortal terms, they were 'deities'!

But...

All were consumed!

Not a single 'competitor' survived an encounter with 'The Gluttonous Sovereign.'

Similarly, including Their 'investors'!

At least a hundred like it were eaten!

More powerful ones?

They devoured at least a thousand!

In fact, in the last era, those guys were the protagonists.

It?

It was just a bystander on the edge.

And because of this, it survived.

It was able to participate in the Fifth Era!

It still remembered that time; it had already concluded that 'Gluttonous Monarch' would certainly become the fourth and thus began to lay out plans for the Fifth Era.

Not just it, but all the beings back then thought the same.

They all believed that 'Gluttonous Monarch' would become the fourth.

However, 'Gluttonous Monarch' suddenly disappeared, just as suddenly as it had appeared.

Then, an entity that was 'somewhat famous,' yet underestimated by everyone, became the fourth.

Even though it chose the 'Witch' and had some connection with the entity, it had to admit that the fellow's luck was incredibly good, to the point where even those who governed 'luck' were envious.

When the entity inherited the position of the fourth, many wondered, where had 'Gluttonous Monarch' gone?

As for death, vanishing?

That was impossible.

If asked who was immortal?

All beings would think of 'Gluttonous Monarch'.

Not only because of its own strength, but also because it had devoured at least 99 deities prefixed with 'Life,' its vitality so abundant it was beyond imagination.

But one thing was certain: something unexpected had happened to 'Gluttonous Monarch.'

An unavoidable accident.

Otherwise, no one would give up the position of the 'fourth.'

However, all beings also believed that such an accident couldn't forever stop 'Gluttonous Monarch.'

'Gluttonous Monarch' was certain to return!

With the same brutality and greed as always!

And...

It's very likely to be our most formidable opponent in the next era.

When the 'fourth' truly came into being, all beings were thinking this way.

Even many beings made their plans based on this assumption.

It was the exception.

Because it knew that no matter how hard it tried to plan, it couldn't possibly go against 'Gluttonous Monarch.'

So, from the very beginning, it had decided that it would give up as soon as it encountered 'Gluttonous Monarch.'

"But now, 'Gluttonous Monarch' is far from reaching its former level, can I perhaps

"No!"

"I shouldn't think like this!"

"If I'm discovered, I'm doomed!"

After thorough consideration, the Magic Mirror finally shook its head.

It didn't dare to attempt to annihilate 'Gluttonous Monarch' prematurely.

Because it knew that even an extremely weakened 'Gluttonous Monarch' was still 'Gluttonous Monarch.'

It also didn't dare to assist 'Gluttonous Monarch.'

Because 'Gluttonous Monarch's' pride would take such help as contempt, as an insult.

It dared not even share the news of 'Gluttonous Monarch's' appearance with other beings.

Because it was absolutely certain that once it spoke out, it would become a pawn for other beings to probe 'Gluttonous Monarch.'

After much thought, Magic Mirror suddenly realized it couldn't actually do anything.

"I, I am useless."

The Magic Mirror, dragging its 'home' and fleeing frantically through the void, couldn't help but burst into loud crying.

Especially when it looked back and saw that even the door of its 'home' was missing a corner, it cried even harder.

The crying echoed far across the void.

Then, the crying abruptly stopped.

The surface of the Magic Mirror flickered, as if dumbfounded, it felt an irresistible force acting upon its body.

Subsequently, everything before its eyes went dark.

When it could see again, it saw a seven- or eight-year-old girl.

Just a glance was enough for it to confirm, this was Jennifer.

Jennifer as a little girl.

But how could she have the ability to pull it back from the void?

She was strong, but should not have such power.

The Magic Mirror subconsciously attempted to peer into Jennifer's fate.

"If you dare to pry into my fate, I will hand you over to Jason."

The crisp voice sounded like a devil's whisper to the Magic Mirror, and it immediately stopped.

By this time, it realized that it had become a hand-mirror, easily grasped in one's hand.

Its handsome appearance had not changed due to its shrinkage; on the contrary, it became even more exquisite.

But...

What happened?

The 'all-knowing' Magic Mirror suddenly found out that it, today, was full of questions.

"I'll ask you a question, give me the answer, and I will restore you to your original form."

"If you dare to keep silent or deceive me, I will coat you with honey and hand you over to Jason."

Jennifer sat in the chair, holding the mirror, and spoke slowly.

Magic Mirror: Please advise (I think writing makes me more charming, don't you?)

...

Staring at the text on the surface of the Magic Mirror, Jennifer, appearing to be seven or eight years old, frowned. Yet at this moment, she didn't pay any attention to that and asked in a deep voice—

"Do you know the 'Giant City'?"

Chapter 604: Jason: As a writer...

"A massive city?"

Upon hearing the unfamiliar term and sensing for a moment to confirm there was no danger, the magical mirror transformed into a handheld makeup mirror. The surface of the mirror began to ripple, with waves cascading like a flowing river and also resembling rising fog.

In response to Jennifer's question, the magic mirror began another peering into 'destiny'.

This wasn't difficult for it.

In fact, it was well-practiced.

Quickly, its gaze penetrated the annoying 'fog' that hovered over the River of Fate, blocking the majority of those who overestimated their ability to spy.

Whoosh, whoosh.

The sound of flowing water emerged.

It saw the ceaseless River of Fate once again.

And then...

Nothing!

It couldn't find the 'massive city' within the River of Fate!

The magic mirror paused, then stubbornly checked again.

Still nothing!

No destiny related to a 'massive city'.

There were plenty of giant cities, though.

But the magic mirror was certain that wasn't what it sought.

Moreover, the mirror knew Jennifer wouldn't aimlessly make conjectures.

So, was it 'hidden'?

With that thought, the magic mirror began to utilize its power again.

Its 'gaze' became tangible.

It peered deeper into the 'River of Fate'.

The ever-rushing River of Fate flowed even more swiftly.

The forceful water tried to erode the mirror's 'gaze', even generating a tremendous suction trying to pull the mirror into the waters.

The magic mirror quickly ceased such spying; it was after all a handsome and dashing mirror meant to reflect the world's beautiful things, not to be submerged in an unknown riverbed, buried by silt and sand.

It definitely wasn't because it lacked the ability.

Mirrors never admit inability.

They only say—

Magic Mirror: "It lies deep within the mist, a place I have yet to reach."

...

Jennifer looked at the text on the mirror's surface, her expression tinged with some disappointment.

This was a new term that had appeared in her mind right after she had fulfilled her promise to Jason and came back to life.

She instinctively felt that this term was of great significance.

Therefore, she had summoned the magic mirror.

Of course, with a lesson learned from before, Jennifer was prepared mentally; after all, 'nouns' that surfaced in her memory seemed to always be hiding some enormous secret.

And the 'massive city' was naturally no exception.

Thus, her preparation spared her from deep disappointment at this moment.

Next, Jennifer recomposed herself and continued to ask.

"You know

The name 'Rachel' silently vanished.

Yet, the magic mirror could 'sense' it.

Because it could sense it, its entire being began to tremble.

Here we go again! This dreadful presence!

The moment it 'sensed' the name, it faintly perceived a terrible gaze penetrating the ceaseless River of Fate, looking straight at it.

The magic mirror shrank back.

Then, the front of the mirror became just like any ordinary mirror.

It was as if the text that had just appeared on its surface was an illusion.

Knowing the mirror all too well, Jennifer flicked the surface with her finger as if popping a brain bubble.

Pop, pop!

Three consecutive times.

By the fourth flick, the magic mirror finally responded.

Magic Mirror: $||\Phi|(T\bar{D}T)|\Phi|$ (This expression is exactly how I look right now, too scary!)

...

"Do you know Him?"

Jennifer looked at the magic mirror surprisingly, her eyes filled with excitement.

Magic Mirror: I don't know, but I can feel that He is a rather ill-tempered being. If possible, I'd really rather not hear this name a second time.

(Here, I pause to signify my solemnity.)

Magic Mirror: If you continue to ask such dangerous questions, Jennifer, I will break the ritual and dissolve the contract between us.

...

Seeing such a response, Jennifer flicked the mirror surface twice more.

As if unsatisfied, she thought for a moment and then flicked it once again.

"Useless, what even is your purpose?" Jennifer said.

Magic Mirror: ...(That's not what you said in the beginning.)

...

"The me from back then was naive and ignorant, that's why I was deceived by you." Jennifer stated, her youthful appearance lending credibility to her words, leaving the magic mirror with no grounds to argue.

Because it could see itself being thrown onto the ground if it dared to argue using Jennifer's 'actual age'.

It wouldn't break, but it would hurt.

No, I need to change my circumstances!

With that thought, the magic mirror slowly wrote on its surface—

I'm sorry, I was wrong!

"To know your mistake is good." Jennifer took a glance and gave a slight snort.

Magic Mirror: To make up for my mistake, I think I should tell you something. It's about Jason...

Clang!

Before the mirror could finish writing, it was flicked again.

The tremendous jolt made its mind buzz.

It looked at Jennifer, puzzled.

"I don't need you to tell me!"

"I want to understand him myself!"

"Though Jason isn't the man I've been waiting for, he is special. He not only can survive there but also is focused, handsome, dashing, full of male vigor, and what's more, he snubs me—you know, I have never met a man who could snub me."

"This feeling is so unfamiliar, yet so exhilarating," Jennifer said, holding the magic mirror in her hands.

The magic mirror remained silent.

It had just wanted to say, Jason is the man you've been waiting for!

You were just too anxious before and misunderstood because you didn't listen to the entire explanation!

Chapter 605: Jason: As a Writer... (2)

However, for the sake of caution, the magic mirror still took a glance at "destiny."

Option 1, frankly inform Jennifer, was thrown on the ground, stepped on, then tossed into a drawer and sealed for 10 years.

Option 2, pretend to be ignorant and confused, and continue being held by Jennifer and talked to.

The magic mirror decisively chose option 2.

Who would want to be thrown on the ground and sealed when they could be held in someone's hands?

It didn't have any special hobbies, anyway.

Moreover, to be held for a longer time, it needed to take action.

Magic Mirror: "Do you need me to tell you some necessary skills? (Although I hate to admit it, I can claim to be a master in certain areas!

...

"I don't need a mirror without even a gender to teach me!"

"I want to approach Jason in my own way!"

"Any advice is an insult to me and to Jason!"

Upon saying this, Jennifer paused for a moment.

Then, she spoke to the magic mirror in a much more formal tone.

"So, I won't allow you to mention his name, nicknames or anything else while giving so-called advice."

"Because

"You're not worthy!"

After that, Jennifer stood up and walked out holding the mirror.

She needed to deal with some unexpected matters quickly, and then go to find Jason.

She had a promise to keep.

She still owed Jason nine times.

And she had to repay him fully.

The magic mirror, held in Jennifer's hand, swung back and forth as she bounced along, and a glistening crystalline liquid overflowed from the surface of the mirror.

Magic Mirror: "I am on your side, I will try my best to help you! (Go for it!)"

...

The text just appeared, then became blurry.

The overflowing clear and sparkling liquid flowed over the newly emerged text.

Making it incomplete, yet still present.

Just like a dog waiting for its owner to return.

...

Crunch, crunch.

Jason was chomping down on the door frame pillar in his hands.

Crunchy.

Juicy.

And it had a special taste.

Cucumber?

Jason wondered as he ate.

[Devouring Destiny Column (part)!]

[Physical Strength, Energy, Excessive Recovery from Injuries!]

[Satiety +100]

[Satiety: 449]

[Excitement of Feast +2]

[Excitement of Feast: 3]

...

“2 points of Excitement of Feast?”

Jason looked at the text prompt in front of him with surprise.

The appearance of Excitement of Feast was enough of a surprise for him, but even more surprising was the 2 points.

Immediately, a tinge of annoyance sprang up in Jason’s heart.

He had only eaten a pillar!

Bear in mind that just before, an entire house was in front of him!

And the contents inside the house!

Thinking of this, Jason couldn’t help but scratch his head.

Then, he subconsciously thought.

"If I had eaten the entire house just now

Slurp!

Saliva dripping instantly, Jason sucked it back up and then he stood there, recalling the scene just a moment ago: the house had already been disappearing before he had truly approached it.

He advanced, the other side disappeared.

Jason never believed in such a coincidence.

"Did it sense me in advance?"

"Or

"Foresight?"

After a bit of contemplation, Jason felt the latter was more likely.

After all, with the [War Pattern. Prus. Griffin. Stealth Body Forging Technique] having been elevated to master level, his skills in stealth and evasion had reached a new level.

He had been running at full speed, but as he approached this mountain, he deliberately concealed his presence.

Although it was daytime, devoid of much darkness and shadows, Jason was still confident that his stealth was above master level.

Of course, more importantly, it was the satiety from the food he had just eaten, the Excitement of Feast.

A hundred points of satiety and two points of Excitement of Feast were not negligible values.

The food containing such amounts of satiety and Excitement of Feast was definitely powerful.

Not to mention, this was only a portion of it.

By glimpsing such a part, Jason could already guess how powerful the “complete food” would be.

Then, as he approached, the other party chose to leave.

This was illogical!

Unless, the other party's strength was not in combat.

"A 'food' that excels in 'premonition'?"

Jason deduced, with the corner of his mouth behind his mask turning up.

"Don't worry, this is just the first encounter."

"We will definitely meet again."

He murmured softly to himself.

At the same time, he thought about how to counter 'premonition' type abilities.

This was not easy.

But compared to the deliciousness of 'food,' what was it?

Then, Jason subconsciously thought of Jennifer.

Besides spirit mediums and diviners, witches were also quite skilled in such abilities.

Those adept at them would naturally have countermeasures.

But the thought of Jennifer's madcap nature made Jason frown.

In the end, he shook his head and cast aside the idea of recruiting her.

He prepared to find another reliable candidate through other people.

With this in mind, Jason did not linger.

He had not forgotten the promise he made to the members of the Golden Wind during the meeting at dawn.

He had agreed to check for any detectors for the members of Golden Wind, and he intended to keep his word.

Moreover, he needed to be formal about it.

At least, he needed to make the members of Golden Wind believe they hadn't been shortchanged.

Otherwise, how would he negotiate the next trade?

Although Jason didn't consider himself a qualified businessman, he understood some principles.

So, when he returned to the side of the refrigerated truck, Jason immediately got to work.

He improvised with what he had on hand, choosing a withered tree.

After chopping it down, he picked out a usable section from the middle: a trunk that allowed Jason to stretch his hands through both ends.

Jason meticulously smoothed the inside and outside, removing any splinters, then added two small handles to both sides of the 'bucket' before he began to inscribe Dufol Language on its surface.

'Expulsion,' 'Sacred,' and other complete symbols from the Dufol Language appeared on the surface of the 'bucket.'

Jason examined his work and promptly added content from a bronze giant book he had seen in the world of Aras; these were ambiguous patterns that appeared somewhat like the Dufol Language, but he strictly avoided the symbols and chose only the patterns.

This task was much harder than writing the correct Dufol Language.

It took Jason about an hour to complete.

When Jason held the 'tree trunk bucket' in his hands again, it had already been thoroughly transformed.

With its completely wooden structure, it had a natural sense of mystery.

The appearance of the Dufol Language perfectly captured people's attention, causing anyone who saw the 'tree trunk bucket' to be involuntarily drawn to it.

Those ambiguous patterns were independently crafted with ingenuity.

Ordinary people wouldn't understand them and would find them mysterious.

Even those from the Mystical Side would find them more mysterious.

Because they couldn't understand them either.

In fact, even now Jason, the creator, didn't know the meaning of those patterns.

"Done!"

"The device of divergence...no, that's not right."

"You are the 'Free Assault'!"

Jason said with conviction.

The afternoon sun shone on the 'Free Assault,' reflecting the unique luster of wood and combined with the Dufol Language and peculiar patterns, made the 'Free Assault' look even more extraordinary.

Jason set the 'Free Assault' aside.

He turned and walked towards the refrigerated truck.

With a leap, he jumped onto the roof of the truck and took out paper and pen from his backpack.

He had never forgotten his identity.

He, Jason, was a writer.

He was ready to begin recording the previous events related to 'Edward' in more detailed, vivid, and interesting prose.

Ten minutes later, Jason put down the manuscript in his hands and looked at the pen seriously. He said in a rational tone, "You are now a mature pen, you must learn to write on your own."

"Yes, you can't depend on me."

"I've taught you everything you need to know."

"Hmm?"

"Do you need me to demonstrate it again?"

"Okay, one more time."

"As a writer, you must always remember that the 'pen' in your hand is your weapon!"

After saying this, Jason gripped his pen and thrust it backwards—

Thud!

Chapter 606: Thought Transfer Writing Method!

The narrow, seemingly smooth tip of the fountain pen became infinitely sharp under the application of strength and speed.

The attacker, who thought he had approached Jason silently from behind, hadn't even had time to react when the pen's tip was already plunged into his eye—

Crimson blossomed.

"Ah!"

The attacker let out a cry of pain, the dagger he was about to stab into Jason's back involuntarily paused.

Jason, still seated, reached back with his right hand and grabbed the wrist of the hand that was stabbing downward with the dagger.

The attacker, on instinct, tried to pull his wrist back.

But Jason's palm was unmoving; his fingers clamped down like a tiger's vise, deeply pinching into the attacker's 'wrist'.

Creak, creak.

The wrist bones groaned.

Pain stimulated the attacker once more; his remaining eye stared furiously at Jason, his foot lashing out towards Jason's back.

When the tip of his foot was less than 10 centimeters from Jason's back.

Ching!

A flash of cold light protruded from the man's shoe tip.

A 3-centimeter-long, razor-thin dagger appeared there, with a faint smell of blood on it.

Poison!

Watching the dagger about to make contact with Jason, a hint of satisfaction surfaced in the attacker's fierce eyes.

He considered this strike to be a complete surprise!

He had practiced countless times, and had killed quite a few opponents.

He believed that it would be the same with Jason!

He seemed to already see Jason writhing on the ground, dying.

That dagger was smeared with green viper venom!

Deadly upon contact!

Just a little is enough to kill three adults!

The distance grew closer, but the ferocity and pleasure in the attacker's eyes froze at that moment.

Jason, who had been sitting, stood up.

Then, with a yank and a fling of the hand holding the other's wrist!

Bang!

Amidst a whirl of Cloud Riding, the man was brutally smashed onto the small desk in front of Jason; with a snap, the desk turned into fragments, followed by a collision with the ceiling.

In the muffled sound, the sturdy ceiling dented, and the man spurted out a mouthful of fresh blood.

But before he could react, he was sent flying once again.

Jason turned and threw the attacker into the air, releasing the wrist he had been holding.

But this didn't mean Jason had let his opponent go.

He merely switched to another grabbing point: the ankle!

As the attacker continued to rise, Jason's large palm accurately grasped the other's ankle; without a moment's hesitation, Jason mustered all his strength and smashed downwards with force.

Bang!

Another sound, no less muted than the one before, was heard as the attacker was driven deep into the mud.

This time, the opponent vomited blood again, his body convulsing.

Certainly not going to live.

Jason, standing on top of the van, was sure of this.

But the situation was far from over!

Soft, dripping sounds emerged from beneath the refrigerated truck, and the next moment—

Boom!

In a massive explosion, the several-ton refrigerated truck, along with Jason, turned into a fireball that shot into the sky.

A figure hidden to the side witnessed it all.

"Brute."

"Combat is about using your brain."

The figure pushed the glasses up on the bridge of his nose, speaking disdainfully.

Then, he turned and prepared to leave.

The mission was complete.

He was going to collect his reward.

But in the moment he turned around, his entire body broke out in a cold sweat.

A tall, robust figure had appeared behind him without notice, and in the mask of a hockey goalie, cold eyes were staring at him.

"Wait a sec

Thud!

Without wasting words with the opponent, Jason raised his hand and struck with his knife.

As the head flew off, hissing erupted within the tree canopy.

Three dark green snakes shot out of the dense leaves, heading straight for Jason.

Jason looked up at the three venomous snakes.

In an instant, the snakes stiffened mid-air.

An oppressive aura from the top of the food chain left them paralyzed, to fall helplessly to the ground.

Not far away, the snake controller watched this scene with a vacant gaze.

Impossible!

That was his first thought.

Flee!

That was his second thought.

He had never seen someone like Jason.

Someone who could disarm his control over the snakes with just a look.

One should know that he had nurtured those snakes with various resources and secret techniques; they were not only immune to general methods against snakes but also disregarded the 'exorcism' type secret techniques of the Mystical Side.

They were his ultimate weapons!

And now they were useless!

With his strongest means ineffective, naturally, he could not stay.

As for the three carefully nurtured snakes?

Though it pained him, what was more important than his own life!

The snake controller turned and ran.

With incredible speed!

But Jason's knife was faster!

Thud!

The wide-blade short handle knife thrown by Jason penetrated the snake controller's chest front and pinned him directly against a thick tree trunk.

Jason walked over and pulled out his knife; his gaze swept around.

After confirming there were no more attackers, he began to use [Protection Against Evil] to inspect everything carefully before returning to his previous location.

The refrigerated truck had long become wreckage.

Along with it, his communicator, spice jars, and the book he had just completed had all vanished in the explosion.

It was a tremendous loss!

Especially the latter, which was the fruit of his labor!

He must have compensation.

Standing there, Jason waited in silence.

He knew that what had happened here couldn't be hidden from those with interest.

Indeed, about three minutes later, he heard the sound of a helicopter's rotors.

Chapter 607: Thought Transfer Writing Method! (2)

Cortana descended from the helicopter and looked at the unscathed Jason standing there, unable to help but let out a sigh of relief.

"Master Chief, it's a relief to see you're all right,"

Cortana said sincerely.

Whether from a personal standpoint or from the perspective of the Ground Reconnaissance Bureau, Cortana didn't want anything to happen to Jason.

For this reason, she had made meticulous preparations.

But the unexpected still occurred.

Jason didn't speak, just pointed at the bodies on the ground and the bodies in the distance, believing Cortana would understand what he meant.

Jason believed that after he had demonstrated sufficient value, the Ground Reconnaissance Bureau would certainly place great emphasis on him.

Naturally, corresponding protection measures would appear.

So the occurrence of attackers who were entirely human was quite thought-provoking.

Cortana didn't say much and immediately began the inspection.

"Twin-Dagger Assassin."

"Bomb Maniac."

"Snake Controller."

Cortana quickly identified the identities of the three men, and the liaison officer's face turned exceptionally grim.

All three of them were assassins!

Assassins motivated by money!

They should not and could not have appeared here!

As Jason had guessed, after demonstrating the ability to identify “infiltrators,” Cortana had requested instructions from Major General Fohl Reyno after yesterday’s departure, and then, on behalf of the Ground Reconnaissance Bureau, she had sent out “official letters” to all forces openly and secretly.

She had particularly taken care of some special organizations.

But now that an accident had happened, what did this indicate?

Someone had disregarded the orders of the Ground Reconnaissance Bureau.

And such people simply could not exist on the ground.

Unless they had defected to the Sabie Aliens!

"Traitors!"

Cortana gritted her teeth and said.

"Master Chief, don't worry."

"I'll find this bastard!"

"And then

"I'll take care of him personally!"

Cortana said with indignation.

For Cortana, as a military person, there were two things she could not tolerate the most.

First, the sacrifice of comrades.

Second, traitors.

Now someone was threatening her comrade, and the threat came from a traitor.

Cortana was prepared to deal with the adversary in the most severe manner.

For example, execution by firing squad!

However, Jason shook his head.

"It's not necessarily a traitor,"

Jason said.

"The warriors returning to 'ground,' are under close surveillance; it's simply impossible for any of them to be behind the bounty on Hua Hong!"

Cortana said truthfully.

"What about earlier?"

Once again, Jason shook his head. He turned his head and looked at the liaison officer in front of him, asking in a calm voice,

"Earlier?!"

Suddenly, Cortana's face changed again.

Moreover, compared to before, her complexion became even more troubled.

The Sabie Aliens' "infiltrators" were not just the warriors who had returned to "ground" before... but others as well!

Or perhaps the Sabie Aliens had dispatched "infiltrators" even earlier!

It's just that they were unaware of it!

And now, because of Jason's importance, it had been exposed.

What did this indicate?

It meant that among those warriors who had returned to ground, there was a considerable number of "infiltrators"!

The ones previously exposed were just the tip of the iceberg!

Otherwise, those Sabie Aliens would not have taken such a desperate risk!

Cortana, coming to this conclusion without any hesitation, immediately opened the mini-computer on her wrist to contact Major General Rael Fono.

Jason remained silent without uttering a word.

He believed in the professionalism of Cortana and that general.

Even without his accurate judgment, they should be able to narrow down the general area.

And after that?

It would naturally be his turn to personally identify them.

He hoped the reward would be enough to exchange for a dose of "Sparta" Potion.

Although he had not yet obtained the last dose of Potion, the faint scent on Cortana had already informed Jason that the taste of "Sparta" Potion must be quite good.

About five minutes later, Cortana ended her conversation with the general.

"Master Chief, the general thanks you for your contribution to the ground,"

"This merit will be doubled in the records,"

Cortana reported accurately.

Double merit made Jason feel a trace of goodwill towards this general he had never met.

At least, this was a person who was clear about rewards and punishments.

The other party knew how to treat someone who had shown value.

That was enough for Jason at this stage.

After a pause, Cortana added one more thing,

"Of course, there's also this compensation."

Cortana said, glancing at the wreckage of the cold storage truck.

This was not any kind of special treatment but rightfully owed compensation.

"The cold storage truck was a gift from Vince; there wasn't anything valuable inside, except for

Jason reached this point and deliberately paused, his eyes revealing helplessness and sadness.

Cortana noticed such a look in his eyes.

"Except for what?"

Cortana pressed.

"Except for the manuscript I just finished writing."

"I had originally promised my editor that the book would be published by the end of the month."

"Looks like I'm going to break my promise again."

Jason said, then shook his head somewhat dejectedly, and additionally, he let out a deep sigh, "After this, I may have to face the successive assassination attempts from the Sabie Aliens, and with such developments, it's simply impossible to continue writing the book."

"But I really want to finish it."

"After all, it represents nearly a decade of my effort."

Hearing Jason's sighs, Cortana couldn't help but empathize.

She could clearly sense the frustration in Jason's heart.

Giving up the writing work he loved most for the sake of the ground... How painful must the Master Chief be feeling now?

Chapter 608: Mind Transfer Writing Technique! (3)

Cortana thought about it and couldn't help breaking the silence.

"Master Chief, you could dictate, and I'll help you organize it."

"Dictate?"

"I can't remember the contents of the manuscript."

Jason said indifferently while picking up the 'Freedom Assault'.

"To make it, I used a certain ritual, and the cost of conducting this ritual was temporarily losing some memories of what I love the most—how long this lasts depends on how it is used."

"Based on the current situation, I estimate I'll completely lose that memory."

Jason then sighed.

"It is?"

Cortana asked.

"It's a special object I created to better identify 'Infiltrators'. Identifying 'Infiltrators' with conventional methods is just too slow, too inefficient," he explained.

"So I made it."

Jason explained.

Cortana, who had already come into contact with the Mystical Side, didn't doubt it in the slightest.

She knew that creating special artifacts inevitably came at a price.

And the creation of something capable of detecting 'Infiltrators' would likely be even more costly.

Loss of memories for things one loved?

Cortana looked at Jason, whose face was hidden by a mask but whose eyes were full of pain, and almost subconsciously said, "Master Chief, let me help you finish this book!"

"Although I have never written a book, I am very sensitive to words."

"If I try hard, I should be able to reach half your level."

Success!

My idea transfer writing technique succeeded!

Jason breathed a sigh of relief internally.

If possible, he certainly wouldn't want to use the 'idea transfer writing technique', a 'forbidden art', given his absolute lack of talent in writing.

Indeed, was my Talent in swordsmanship so overpowering that it affected other areas?

Jing felt a pang of apology towards Xin, maintaining his previous gaze.

"Is that possible?"

"Will it affect your normal life?"

He pretended to hesitate.

"Of course not!"

"I promise to complete the task!"

Cortana spoke solemnly.

She was determined to write the book well.

She couldn't let the Master Chief's efforts be wasted!

"I remember I wrote an outline... it should be on my apartment's desk. Although I can't remember the content, you can expand on it," Jason said.

"All right, I will find it immediately and read it thoroughly."

After saying this, Cortana turned around and headed towards the helicopter.

It wasn't to leave but to take out a metal suitcase, and then she turned again and walked back towards Jason.

"Master Chief, this is 'Sparta' Potion!"

"I suggest you inject it immediately."

"It will have a significant impact on improving your strength."

Cortana opened the case as she spoke.

Inside the case was a syringe as thick as an index finger and just 5 centimeters long.

The pale blue potion inside gave off the 'taste' of food.

Jason reached out to grab this 'food', and Cortana was about to explain the 'Sparta' Potion to Jason, but at that moment, a figure quietly appeared on the distant hillside.

This figure carried a box-shaped object with rounded edges and a black coat of paint on his shoulder. On the front and back, there were four dark holes.

As the setting sun shone on these holes, an inexplicable ferocity spread.

This was especially true when the figure pulled the trigger.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Four rockets, tail flames blazing, were launched sequentially, rushing directly towards Jason.

Chapter 609: Who Am I?

Magic could only counter magic!

This was said by an unnamed old man from the 'Mystical Side'.

Ever since hearing this, Kandater, as an 'outsider', had deeply agreed with the statement.

Therefore, after using his identity to place a bounty on Jason, he immediately dispatched his well-prepared backup plan, a highly unique assassin who mastered the true meaning of 'Mystical Side' strength.

This backup plan was originally intended for that major general.

To directly implement a decapitation strategy against the 'Ground Reconnaissance Bureau', in one fell swoop, to destroy the entire bureau!

Kandater truly hated that major general to the bone.

The man was like a spring that, no matter how much pressure was applied, would bounce back even more ferociously. Every time, when they thought they had driven him into a corner, he would counterattack desperately, and under his command, the ground forces inflicted tremendous losses upon them.

However, Kandater was also secretly relieved inside.

Because he was only facing that major general.

Not the two madmen before him.

Every time he thought of the meteorites summoned by that 'Mystical Side' person named Liu,

And the fact that the soldier named Li directly used a warship to destroy their flagship,

Kandater trembled from the bottom of his heart.

It was too terrifying!

Madmen who didn't care about their own lives!

He could never forget the raining meteorites that accurately struck their warships.

Nor could he forget when they thought victory was assured, the ground flagship named 'Pangu' directly charged at the flagship, turning the sky red with a single collision.

This had become his persistent nightmare lately.

Each time he awoke from the dream, he was drenched in sweat.

"Fortunately, there aren't many such people."

"Otherwise, I would suggest to the elders that we retreat."

Kandater thought to himself.

Then, he began to feel his breathing becoming troubled.

It was a normal reaction to increased stress.

It was as much a habit of this body as it was an influence of the 'Assaulter' Talent.

When he felt something was terrifying, fearful, he would feel the pressure.

Such pressure could have a severe response on his body and abilities.

Sometimes, it might even be lethal.

But he and many other 'Assaulters' had already found a solution: shifting attention.

As long as attention was diverted, there wouldn't be any pressure!

To divert his attention and rid himself of the pressure brought about by those two shadows, Kandater started focusing on a name that had recently caught his eye: Jason. R'ANŎ B ĚŠ

A third-rate writer from the 'Mystical Side', yet a powerful combatant capable of engaging in head-on battles with over 10 'Scouts' and 1 'Assaulter'.

Remembering his photograph and information, Kandater's mouth involuntarily twitched several times.

He had never seen someone tall and more muscular than a wrestler choose to become a writer.

And that hockey mask, machete!

No matter how you looked at it, it seemed more fitting for a serial killer, a psychopath!

But all that was now irrelevant.

What mattered was that the man had the ability to discern 'Assaulters'.

Without this, he wouldn't have caught his attention.

But now that he had, it was impossible for him to survive.

"Sorry."

"It's your bad luck to have run into me."

"For the sake of my comrades-in-arms, you must die!"

Kandater silently reflected.

Then, he started thinking about the next step in his plan.

If Jason were dead, this batch of warriors returning to the ground would surely be under the highest level of surveillance; 'Assaulters' among them couldn't possibly take action, and, with this unexpected assassination attempt, it was very likely that a number of them would be exposed.

Logically, they would have to go into deeper hiding.

That was the safest, most prudent course of action.

But Kandater was different.

He had a more insane, direct plan.

He would have the potentially exposed 'Assaulters' conduct suicidal attacks.

Then, he wanted to see what that old general would look like.

After all, some of them would have been close to him.

"The scene is bound to be spectacular!"

Thinking about this, Kandater couldn't help laughing out loud, casually taking a sip of the tea on his desk.

He was not accustomed to anything on the surface.

Except for the food.

Perhaps when the time came, he could keep a batch of ground people as slaves to cultivate more food, especially this kind of tea.

The flavor was really good.

With such thoughts, Kandater stood up and walked to the window to look down.

In his view, the 'Kylin' warship being built by the ground people was gradually completing. Observing the protruding, horn-like main cannon and the numerous secondary cannons on the ship's massive hull, a mocking light flashed in Kandater's eyes.

This so-called state-of-the-art flagship was also obsolete goods from decades ago to them.

Had it not been for the so-called 'Mystical Side', it wouldn't have stood a chance.

And now?

With their invasion, the veil over those 'Mystical Sides' had been lifted as well.

They would eventually understand the power within.

And then become the rulers of the ground.

Just as they had done before.

"Thinking of stopping us? What a delusional fantasy!" Kandater thought, as his wrist-mounted computer vibrated.

The plan was complete!

His mouth corners instinctively curled up, and then he opened the miniature computer.

On the screen was displayed one of his subordinates.

Not from the ground, but a true kin, a subordinate he could trust.

Chapter 610: Who Am I? (2)

"How is it?"

Kandater asked in a relaxed tone.

With their technology fused with the powers of the “Mystical Side,” he couldn’t believe they would fail.

However, Kandater soon noticed something was not right.

The subordinate in front of him had a vacant look in his eyes, and the angle seemed off; he could only see a head.

Kandater’s brows furrowed as he directly entered command mode.

As a lieutenant colonel, he had the authority to control his subordinate’s micro-computer.

Immediately, the previous scene appeared—

Four rockets, their dazzling tails blazing, shot towards Jason one after the other!

There was no contact, no actual explosion.

The rockets disintegrated mid-air, and from within them, countless tiny arrows burst out en masse.

There were both real arrows and illusory ones.

The latter deceived the target.

The former?

They set up a ritual!

Watching the arrows fall to the ground and bloom with a faint light, Kandater smiled again.

The ritual was a success!

The power of the curse would permeate the entire ritual.

All living beings within the ritual would meet a gruesome death.

It was a success, wasn't it?

As Kandater was thinking and about to look at his subordinate to ask why he wore that expression, his eyes bulged, nearly popping out of their sockets.

What did he see?

He saw the so-called writer pluck out a “Cursed Arrow” and throw it into his mouth.

Six “Cursed Arrows” were chewed up as if they were french fries.

"Damn it!"

Kandater cursed under his breath.

Not only had the plan failed, but he finally understood what was off about his subordinate.

He could only see a head.

Because all that remained of his subordinate was a head held in Jason’s hand.

The head moved slightly.

Blood flowed over the micro-computer's camera, staining the screen Kandater was watching with a crimson hue, as the corner of a hockey mask slowly entered his field of vision.

An inexplicable sense of terror rushed to Kandater's forehead.

Especially after seeing Jason's cold eyes, he turned and prepared to leave without hesitation.

He was exposed!

He couldn't stay here any longer!

He had to escape!

Otherwise, he would be killed!

Kandater believed Jason would certainly kill him!

He had to escape before Jason found him!

But just as he turned, the light bulb above him flickered—

Sizzle!

Amidst the distinct sound of electricity, the light bulb flickered on and off.

Kandater paid no attention to this.

Even if such anomalies should never occur in this base.

Bang!

He pushed open the door and rushed out.

The sheer strength sent the door crashing against the wall beside it, knocking off a piece of the spotty wall plaster.

Kandater stopped in his tracks, stunned by the dim corridor before him.

He was certain that the hallway outside his office was nothing like this.

In the dim light, drops of water fell from the ceiling, hitting the dirty, greasy floor, and at the end of the corridor a red figure was squatting, with a low voice slowly rising.

"What can a boy play with?"

"Frogs, snails, and puppy dog tails."

"What can a girl play with?"

"Sugar, spice, and all things nice."

"And what about me? What can I play with?"

It sounded like a nursery rhyme.

As if it were a children's song.

But Kandater's face turned pale.

Because his Talent as a "Lurker" told him everything he saw was real!

The corridor before him.

The dripping water from the ceiling.

The filthy floor.

And the red figure in the distance.

Not illusions, all were real!

Impossible!

I clearly came out of my office!

Kandater took a step back, intending to return, but immediately his back hit a wall.

Sometime when he was not aware, the direction from which he came had turned into a solid wall.

The touch informed him the wall was extremely solid.

More importantly, as he turned his head to check the wall, the red figure squatting in the corner seemed to have moved a bit closer.

Kandater's breathing grew rapid.

With no avenue for retreat, he broke into a run.

"What about me? What can I play with?"

The incessant voice in his ear made Kandater run even faster.

His Talent confirmed that the shadowy figure was in pursuit; he had to get out of there.

Luckily, there was a staircase leading down at the end of the hallway.

Without a second thought, Kandater ran down the stairs.

More fortunately, directly opposite the staircase was a door.

Bang!

Just like earlier, Kandater pushed open the door.

And then, he awoke.

He lay on an old bed, covered with a rather light blanket, a stove not far away still radiating a bit of warmth, and outside the window, it was starting to get light; carriage sounds and footsteps began to emerge intermittently.

Kandater sat up, confused.

What happened?

He asked himself, but his body involuntarily walked over to the stove, tossing in some wood and coal.

Soon, amid the crackling of the wood, the stove radiated heat again, making Kandater feel a bit better; he turned around, donned his coat, and sat in the only chair in the room.

It was only when he sat down that he was startled.

Why does this feel so familiar?

As he was zoning out, a knock on the door sounded.

Knock, knock knock!

"Good morning, postman."

A clear voice came from outside the door. Kandater watched warily in the direction of the door but did not respond.

"Good morning, postman."