

Sixth 291

Chapter 291: Shadowing

The beggar, with a big belly, ran swiftly. The waiter, holding a chair, chased him to the door, cursing as he watched the beggar run off into the distance.

After a while, the waiter put down the chair and, full of apologies, walked over and bowed in apology, "I'm really sorry, sir. I wasn't paying attention and let these lowly people slip in. I hope it didn't disturb your enjoyment."

"It's fine. I just finished my drink." Herag put down his glass and got up to leave.

The wooden sculpture that the beggar had left on the table was already gone. Herag had put it away earlier.

Herag sensed a trace of the Abyss Plane's aura from the wooden sculpture. Although it wasn't very strong, the presence of the Abyss Plane's aura could be distinctly felt.

The sculpture seemed to possess an allure of some sort, making people unable to resist looking at it.

But to Herag, it was completely useless and could be directly ignored.

This wooden sculpture was most likely a tactic used by the Abyssal Cultists.

Herag surmised that the sculpture was likely a tool for communicating with an Evil God of the Abyss Plane.

If ordinary people came into contact with this sculpture, they would likely be beguiled by it and become recruited as Abyssal Cultists.

Herag didn't apprehend the beggar immediately.

Because that beggar was just an ordinary person, capturing him wouldn't hold much significance, nor much Contribution Points.

Herag planned to follow the clues and see who was behind this beggar.

If he could catch a big fish, it would be a major profit.

Herag didn't detect any Abyssal Aura on the beggar, so it's highly likely that this beggar was just a tool, and the real big fish was still behind him.

Herag casually strolled out of the tavern. Shenlan's environmental detection range was over a thousand meters, and he had already locked onto the fleeing beggar.

Judging from the beggar's complexion and movements, he seemed untroubled by hunger. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to run so fast and have so much Spirit.

Most beggars had pale faces, moved slowly, and had little strength.

Unlike this beggar, who ran swiftly with a rosy complexion.

It's just that his belly was a bit large, showing obvious signs of illness, but he was definitely well-fed recently.

A beggar who was always well-fed must have a stable source of food behind him.

Herag strolled down the street at a leisurely pace, seeming like he was just taking a walk, but he was actually keeping an eye on the beggar two streets away.

From such a distance, no one could possibly believe that Herag was tracking this beggar.

Once outside, the beggar looked back to see no one chasing him and slowed down, panting.

He had five more wooden sculptures in his pocket, all of which needed distribution within the next few days.

This was his task; he would only get food if he finished it.

The beggar had no idea what the wooden sculpture was or what it was for, but he knew it wasn't anything good; otherwise, that person wouldn't have advised him to be cautious.

The sculpture wasn't distributed at random; it had to be given to those who seemed to be in a bad situation, seeking something.

When the beggar saw Herag in the tavern, he noticed the man drinking alone early in the morning and reckoned he must have recently encountered some troubles, so he handed a sculpture to him.

After leaving Parasol Street, the beggar continued to wander, scouring for targets that fit the criteria, slipping them a sculpture when he found one.

On a park bench on the street, a middle-aged man dressed formally sat with a troubled expression, sighing constantly.

The beggar observed him for a moment, then approached and slipped him a sculpture before turning away.

The middle-aged man stared in confusion at the sculpture in his hand, bewildered by the beggar's intentions.

After slipping him the sculpture, the beggar quickened his pace, leaving the area to the adjoining district.

The middle-aged man, looking down at the sculpture, initially intended to throw it away but found it oddly intriguing in a way he couldn't articulate.

That hesitation stopped him from discarding the sculpture.

After the beggar had moved away, Herag silently passed by the middle-aged man.

A gust of wind blew by, causing the middle-aged man to squint his eyes.

Upon reopening them, the sculpture in his hand had vanished.

He looked around, bewildered, but saw no one around.

Yet the sculpture had disappeared in such a peculiar manner.

The middle-aged man pondered but couldn't figure it out, so he let it go.

Not far away, Herag glanced at the sculpture in his hand and tucked it into his Space Ring.

This sculpture definitely needed to be retrieved; otherwise, the middle-aged man could likely become an Abyssal Cultist later on.

Though it was possible to deliberately "cultivate" Abyssal Cultists this way and then "harvest" them when the time was right.

But Herag had no desire to earn Contribution Points in such a manner.

After retrieving the sculpture, Herag continued following the beggar from afar.

Just as before, each time the beggar gave away a sculpture and left, Herag would silently take it away.

These people were all ordinary, completely unaware of Herag's methods; they would only notice that the sculpture inexplicably vanished, disappearing from their sight.

By late afternoon, as the sun set, the beggar had distributed all five sculptures, and each eventually fell into Herag's hands.

It's doubtful the beggar ever imagined he was being watched by a Wizard.

Herag looked at the six sculptures in his Space Ring and felt that this was just a small portion. Many more had surely been distributed and ended up in various people's hands.

Those people were all potential Abyssal Cultists, making investigations exceedingly troublesome.

The beggar ran all over, highly mobile, with the people holding the sculptures scattered everywhere, making them hard to track.

Herag kept following the beggar, intending to see who had given him the sculpture.

This behavior of distributing sculptures everywhere was surely not a first-time occurrence; the beggar was very adept at it, clearly a seasoned hand.

Seeing the beggar had stopped distributing sculptures, Herag knew he probably no longer had any on him.

In that case, he would likely need to fetch more sculptures to continue his mission.

So long as Herag kept following, he could find out where the beggar sourced his sculptures.

At sunset, the beggar arrived at a residential District and checked behind him to see if anyone was tracking him.

Herag sat on a bench two streets away, holding a handful of beans, feeding a few pigeons in front of him.

From this vantage point, no one would know that he was actually watching the residential District two streets away.

After confirming no one was tailing him, the beggar approached a small bungalow and knocked on the door.

The door first opened to a small crack, revealing the side profile of a young man inside, looking about seventeen or eighteen.

"Have all the sculptures been distributed?" the young man asked.

The beggar replied with a flattering smile, "Just like before, all have been distributed."

"Didn't attract any attention, did you?" the young man continued to ask.

Chapter 292: Food

The beggar quickly shook his head: "No, no, I'm just a stinking beggar, who would pay attention to me. Just like before, I choose the right people, then I directly pass the woodcarvings to them and leave."

The young man opened the door a bit, poked his head out, quickly scanned the surroundings, and said after confirming nothing was amiss, "Come in."

"Eh, okay." The beggar nodded humbly as he entered, and the door was promptly closed.

The room was a mess, with all sorts of things piled haphazardly.

But there was one particularly tidy spot, standing out in stark contrast to the rest.

A small table held a pile of woodcarvings, identical to those the beggar had distributed.

"It seems the beggar got the woodcarvings from here." Herag mused, while feeding the pigeons.

The young man pointed at the woodcarvings on the table: "Take these with you, and tomorrow start distributing them in the south of the city. Finish handing these out. Remember, be careful and choose the right people before passing them on."

"Understood, sir. Don't worry, I've been doing this for a long time and am quite familiar with it." The beggar nodded humbly.

He took out a cloth bag from his bosom and placed the woodcarvings into it, one by one, totaling ten pieces.

The young man grabbed a loaf of white bread and a small piece of cured meat from a nearby cabinet: "Take these, work well for me, and you won't be mistreated."

The beggar's eyes lit up upon seeing the white bread and cured meat, saying happily: "Thank you for the reward, sir! I will certainly work well for you!"

He took the food from the young man's hand and immediately took a bite, swallowing large mouthfuls.

These days being able to eat until full every day was solely due to working for this young man.

Not only was there white bread, but also cured meat, with the task being as simple as distributing woodcarvings.

The beggar was not foolish; he knew there was definitely more to it, that the woodcarvings likely had significant issues.

But he couldn't concern himself with such things; he was starving, so why worry?

Even if he was to die tomorrow, eating his fill with meat today was still satisfying.

The beggar originally thought that after completing the task of distributing the woodcarvings, he would be silenced. He was taking a risk by doing this work.

But in fact, that was not the case. The young man was quite pleased with him and always provided food as promised.

After taking a big bite of bread, the beggar stowed the remaining bread and food into the cloth bag.

Only those who have starved know the importance of food.

Currently not too hungry, he eats a little, saving the rest for later when he gets hungry again.

"Alright, you can go now. Remember to head south tomorrow, no more to the east." The young man waved his hand impatiently after handing over the food, urging him away.

The beggar quickly nodded, swallowing the bread in his mouth, and replied: "Yes, sir."

"By the way."

Just as the beggar was about to leave, he was called back. The young man said, "Remember, if someone catches you, what should you do?"

"Don't worry, sir, I will never disclose any information about you." The beggar nodded.

In fact, the beggar didn't even know who this young man was.

He didn't know his name, where he lived, or what this young man did.

The beggar only met a man on the street one day when he was so hungry he felt faint, who told him he could fill his belly if he worked for him.

So he didn't care about anything else; at that moment, all he could think about was food, nothing else mattered, nor did he care.

This flat wasn't even the young man's residence; he only came here each evening.

If the beggar was captured, virtually no clues could be drawn from his mouth.

The young man was very cautious; once the beggar was caught, by the time anyone traced back to him, he'd already be gone.

Leaving only a cluttered flat behind, with nothing much of value as clues inside.

After leaving the flat, the beggar prepared to spend the night at his usual spot.

It was a low-lying area, relatively warmer than others, ensuring he wouldn't freeze to death overnight.

After tidying up, the young man locked up and also left the flat.

When he came out, he passed by Herag, who was feeding pigeons, without sparing him a glance, treating him as just another passerby.

"There's definitely an Abyss Plane aura on him, looks like he's an Abyssal Cultist. But I still feel there should be someone behind him."

After confirming the young man was an Abyssal Cultist, Herag still didn't make a move.

Because the source of the woodcarvings had yet to be found, and this young man might not be the one making them.

If he took action to capture this young man now, and he wasn't the woodcarving's creator, it would alert the real creator behind the scenes.

Herag decided to continue baiting, seeing if there was anyone behind this young man.

When the young man had just walked past, Herag probed a bit; the man was only at the Second-Class Wizard Apprentice Level in strength.

If the young man wasn't hiding any special means, Herag could certainly handle him with ease.

However, knowing that even a lion uses full strength against a rabbit, Herag would never underestimate this young man.

Once he takes action, he will go all-out, to avoid being caught off guard.

After feeding the pigeons, Herag leaned back on a bench, watching the setting sun on the horizon.

He was waiting, waiting for the young man to get further away before trailing him.

Herag saw the young man cross the nearby main street and enter a commercial district, then stood up, dusted himself off, and turned in that direction.

The young man's alertness was quite high, always subtly keeping an eye on his surroundings.

He quickly merged into the crowd after entering the commercial district, making it very difficult for an average person to continue trailing him.

The commercial district had too many people; once he got into the crowd, he vanished from sight.

In this era, everyone's clothes were of similar styles, making it hard to distinguish them.

But Herag was different; with Shenlan's assistance, he was able to keep track of the young man's figure throughout.

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Luqi walked down the street, looking at the bustling crowd around him with a hint of disdain in his eyes.

He was fed up with this world; completely disillusioned with humanity, believing everyone to be hideously corrupt.

He only wished for the great Gods to arrive soon, to cleanse this vile world.

For this goal, Luqi would give anything.

Luqi was born into an ordinary civilian family, not wealthy; the family income barely maintained a basic living standard.

Though Land of Dawn appeared friendly to civilians, ensuring everyone could eat to their fill,

the class oppression made it suffocating for Luqi, who had once tried hard, but reality woke him to truth.

In Land of Dawn, for commoners to rise, becoming a Wizard was the only path.

He had some Wizard aptitude, but only a little, not much.

Chapter 293: Max

Luqi spent a lot of effort but still couldn't advance to a Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, his aptitude severely limited him.

His family didn't have the means to exchange resources to improve his aptitude.

After witnessing the harshness of reality, Luqi could only resign himself to his fate.

It wasn't until he met Mr. Max that Luqi's life changed.

Mr. Max introduced him to the great Gods of the Abyss Plane.

After coming into contact with those great Gods, Luqi's heart was rekindled with fighting spirit.

He had a new life goal, which was to do everything possible to help the Gods descend and change this decaying world.

Mr. Max is a Level 1 Wizard, and the owner of a wooden sculpture craft store.

His woodcarving skills are exquisite, and many of his carved wooden pieces sell for high prices.

Because his wooden sculptures are often enchanted with many spells, many of which he has created himself.

For example, the sleep-aid series of woodcarvings, just buy one and place it in the bedroom, and you'll never suffer from insomnia.

There are many more types of small items with special functions, and Max's woodcarvings have always been popular.

Due to limited production, orders are often required in advance.

Luqi twisted and turned in the commercial district, entered numerous shops, and exited through back doors, front doors, and other places.

It appeared like a usual shopping spree, but it was actually to shake off potential stalkers.

Luqi knew that the wizards of the Land of Dawn feared the arrival of the Gods.

If the Gods came, they would cause the wizards here to fall from their pedestals and lose control over this place, so they were very afraid.

Once discovered by the wizards here that he's a follower of the Gods, he would be undoubtedly doomed.

Not just him, but he would also implicate Mr. Max behind him.

Moreover, and more importantly, if the two of them were caught and killed by the wizards, the great task of the Gods' descent would be hindered.

During this period, although many woodcarvings have been released and some followers developed, there are very few truly useful ones.

So Luqi has always been very cautious in this regard, minimizing the chances of exposing himself.

After wandering around the commercial district for a while, he arrived at a secluded small courtyard.

Many people would probably find it hard to imagine that such a quiet place exists in the bustling commercial district.

Luqi knocked on the back door of the courtyard, and soon there came a calm sound of footsteps.

Shortly afterward, the door was opened, and a middle-aged man with a thick beard appeared in sight.

This seemingly kind and amiable uncle was none other than Mr. Max.

"You've arrived," Max said casually and then walked ahead.

Luqi closed the door and followed behind, accompanying Max into the house.

Max's residence was a three-story small building with a rather unique style, its structure and construction were different from ordinary houses, clearly specially designed with an artistic style.

The small building was filled with various wooden craft pieces everywhere, along with some round wood pieces half-carved or with corners cut.

These things were casually placed on the ground, suggesting that Max conducted carving work in various places.

Luqi followed Max upstairs, arriving at the small attic on the third floor.

The door outside the small attic was locked with a magic lock, such a magic lock could only be opened with the owner's magic power.

If outsiders attempted to force their way in, Max would only need a single thought to trigger the house's protective measures.

The protections inside the house were connected to a witch array linked to the magic lock; once triggered, the entire three-story building would be engulfed in flames, turning into ashes.

Max placed his hand on the magic lock, infused it with a strand of magic power, and the magic lock immediately opened, followed by the door.

Luqi followed Max into the room, which looked like a woodcarving work area.

Some carving tools were placed on the ground and the shelves next to it, along with some unused timber on the floor.

But what was different was that this room seemed to carve only one type of wooden sculpture.

On a table was an array of completed wooden sculptures, all uniformly carved in the shape of a snake-head, human-bodied figure.

This image wasn't uncommon in the Land of Dawn either; there were many myths and legends about monsters, often including monster carvings like these.

But Luqi and Max bowed their heads in respect at this moment.

They knew that this wooden sculpture was the form of the great Gods.

Of course, it was just a vague image.

The true Gods were not to be gazed upon directly, nor could they be truly carved.

Max had only glimpsed the approximate form of the Gods thanks to his extreme devotion.

Since then, Max had sought the Gods' permission, agreeing to carve the image of the Gods and spread their will to more people through the woodcarvings.

"Have you used up all that I gave you last time?" Max asked.

He and Luqi didn't meet every day; only when Luqi ran out of woodcarvings would he come to find him.

Luqi responded, "Yes, Mr. Max, recently we've gained some more people, but no one truly useful yet."

Max slowly said, "It's alright, no need to rush. Spreading the Gods' will is a long-term thing, don't rush it, take your time. All these woodcarvings on the table were recently carved by me, each blessed by the Gods, you take them."

Luqi respectfully watched those woodcarvings and packed them all into his Space Ring.

"Mr. Max, apart from this work, is there anything else arranged?" Luqi asked, eager to do more for the Gods.

Max said gravely, "Recently, don't make too many moves, I got news that not long ago, Pries arrested an Abyssal Cultist who worshipped other Gods. They might be stricter at this time, so let's play it safe, you need to be more cautious in doing things."

"Understood." Luqi nodded.

After a while, Luqi left Mr. Max's residence from the back courtyard.

Max locked the door of the small attic without expression, then turned around and went downstairs to continue carving those unfinished woodcarvings.

Herag sat in a tavern in the commercial district, silently drinking in the corner.

At this time, the tavern was already very lively, the various noises and chatter now seemed fitting for the place, able to provide lonely people with some liveliness.

Herag watched Luqi leave from the back courtyard of that three-story building and also saw Max alone continuing to carve on the second floor.

He started thinking about what to do next.

This matter must not be handled rashly, Herag had already noticed the witch array and magic lock in that attic place.

If acted upon carelessly, all evidence and valuable intelligence might be lost due to such strict precautions.

Luqi did not seem to be an important role at the moment, dealing with him alone was easy.

But the issue was ensuring that after capturing Luqi, Max must also be captured.

Chapter 294: The Net

Max is a Level 1 Liquidation Wizard, and Herag finds it relatively easy to kill him.

However, controlling him is not as easy, especially while ensuring the contents of the three-story building remain intact.

This task is difficult to execute; a single mistake could result in the loss of evidence.

Herag has never observed the small attic closely, but judging from Max's strict precautions, there must be a contingency plan, and he shouldn't act rashly.

Considering everything, Herag realized that with his current abilities and methods, he is unable to completely control the situation.

It is time to report the information to Pries.

Handing over the collected intelligence to Pries at this time ensures that no matter how the subsequent handling of Max and Luqi proceeds, he will earn significant merit.

But if he acts against Max and Luqi, and any unforeseen circumstances arise, or if he overlooks anything, it could turn a good deed into a bad one.

At that point, instead of getting a reward, he might even face punishment, making things counterproductive.

Herag took out the Talisman Stone and informed Pries of the situation he had gathered.

"You're at the Kawat Commercial District now?" Pries asked after reviewing the information.

"That's right, I'm in a tavern now, not getting close to them anymore," Herag replied.

Herag only reported the situation he discovered about Luqi, without elaborating on Max's situation.

According to normal reconnaissance methods, he couldn't have entered the three-story building without being detected.

Therefore, Herag didn't say much about the situation inside the three-story building, only mentioning that Luqi went inside for a while and then came out.

In his statement, Herag made modifications to every part to better align with the typical reconnaissance methods of a Level 1 Liquidation Wizard.

Many of the information he conveyed was quite rough; it's impossible for a normal person to understand things as thoroughly as if they were under surveillance.

From Herag's description, it appeared he discovered Luqi because a beggar gave him a wood carving, leading him to figure things out, up to Luqi entering the small building.

He didn't elaborate on his reconnaissance methods, only stating his findings.

Pries typically wouldn't ask, as every wizard always has some small tricks, which is normal.

Pries replied, "Good, do not alert them for now. After we have planned everything, we'll take action and aim to capture them with the least cost possible. During this time, continue to monitor the movements within the building and inform me immediately if anyone leaves."

"Understood," Herag replied.

It seems like he won't be able to go back for a while, needing to monitor Max's actions here.

Herag held the Talisman Stone and sent Reese a message: "I'll be on a mission outside for the next few days and won't be back, take care of yourself at home."

"Do you need my help?" Reese asked.

Monitoring Max only required Herag to activate Shenlan's environmental detection, Reese's presence would only make an additional target more noticeable.

He replied, "No, it's easier for me to hide alone."

"Got it, then stay safe," Reese understood Herag's implication and instructed accordingly.

After putting down the Talisman Stone, Herag planned to stay around the area for the next few days.

After all, Kawat Commercial District is bustling with people, so he wouldn't appear out of place and wouldn't attract attention, nor would he draw the notice of Max and Luqi.

To this day, neither of them has faced Herag directly; they're completely unaware that they've exposed themselves to Serlandir.

After receiving Herag's message, Pries immediately halted his work and summoned several organization members, beginning to discuss the specifics.

"Minister Pries, is the information reliable?" asked a member named Shaq.

Pries nodded, "The information comes from our own people, so there shouldn't be any issues. But we also need to send people to verify the specifics to facilitate subsequent arrangements. Herag is watching over there, and there's nothing unusual for now."

"I'll go then; reconnaissance is my specialty," Shaq volunteered.

He's a Level 1 Crystalization Wizard specializing in Shadow Element, frequently engaged in intelligence reconnaissance work.

Pries nodded, "Yes, Shaq, you're a suitable choice. First, go investigate the residence there. I found out the owner is named Max, a renowned Wood Carver. I suspect he's hiding many abilities and methods. Be careful during reconnaissance, absolutely avoid exposure and detection."

"We're in the dark, he's in the light; this is our advantage, and we absolutely cannot let them become aware before taking action."

"Understood, Minister," Shaq nodded, always careful and cautious in his work.

Pries trusts him comparatively, without excessive worry.

"Additionally, we need to assign someone to keep an eye on Luqi. He's just a Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, so we don't need to handle him urgently, just keep an eye on him. Naya, you go," Pries continued to arrange.

Naya, a quiet girl wearing glasses with the power of a Level 1 Liquidation Wizard, nodded, "Yes, Minister."

"Next, let's discuss the specific combat plan," Pries continued, "Max's residence is located in the central area of Kawat Commercial District, surrounded by heavy traffic. When we initiate action, we must strive to catch him off guard to capture him instantly, giving him no time to react and no opportunity to resist. Otherwise, it may cause harm to the surrounding residents."

On the table before Pries was a map, marked with the location of Max's residence and some surrounding terrains.

"Evacuate in advance?" someone suggested.

Pries shook his head, "Impossible. What's the excuse for evacuation? Max will inevitably detect something under such circumstances; it's not entirely possible to conceal it from him."

"From this perspective, if the action is not swift enough, we might inadvertently impact the surrounding people," Naya frowned.

Pries nodded, "Correct, this is the most important issue. I will personally intervene at that time..."

After discussing and consulting with the crowd about the specific details of the plan, Pries sent people off to complete their tasks.

An invisible net began to spread, arranged around Max, although he hadn't detected any of this transpiring.

After drinking at the tavern until midnight, Herag went to a nearby inn to get a room.

This inn is actually right across from Max's residence, only separated by a commercial street.

Chapter 295: Chains

In the dead of night, Luqi returned to his doorstep, took out his key, and began to unlock the door.

He did not notice that under the eaves above him, a mosquito was quietly perched there.

And a pair of eyes, through this mosquito, were silently observing Luqi's every move.

Luqi lived in a residential area for commoners, and in another corner of this area, Naya was sitting in a room quietly watching Luqi's actions.

This house belonged to Pries personally, and it was just right for this task.

Although Luqi lived in the commoner district, the furniture and decorations in his home were extraordinarily luxurious.

Even a random chair from his home would sell for hundreds of Gold Coins on the market, something ordinary people cannot afford.

If Luqi did not want to draw too much attention, he would have moved to the wealthy district long ago.

But that would be too conspicuous; he needed to keep a low profile, so he had to rely on the luxurious interior decor to satisfy himself.

Luqi took out the wooden carvings from the Space Ring one by one and placed them on the table.

He took out a pristine towel and meticulously wiped these wood carvings, ensuring every speck of dust was cleaned away.

Under the roof, Naya watched these wood carvings through the mosquito, recorded all this information, and sent it to Pries.

On Pries' side, he was constantly reviewing the feedback reports from various subordinates, assessing the action plans.

Herag stayed at the inn; he had already seen two or three people lurking stealthily around, their target seeming to be Max.

Another person transformed into a shadow, blending completely into the night, swiftly entering the residence where Max was.

Herag kept a close eye on Max, noticing that he was solely focused on carving with a carving knife, completely unaware of the intruder's entry.

That person concealed their presence perfectly; if not for Herag's environment detection through Shenlan, it would have been difficult to notice.

Shaq, upon entering the house, did not get too close to Max but instead quickly examined the situation inside the house.

He scanned the first and second floors before discovering a small attic on the third floor and noticed the Magic Lock on the door and the unknown Witch Array behind it.

Shaq was unsure of the Witch Array's specific effects, so he dared not approach it for investigation, simply noting the situation down.

He glanced at Max, who was deeply focused on carving, and didn't linger long, choosing to leave immediately.

Shaq's purpose on this trip was to investigate, and any unnecessary actions were to be avoided to not complicate matters.

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The City Hall, inside Serlandir's building.

Pries looked at the parchment in his hand, which was filled with reports from various subordinates.

He reviewed these reports; there were no major issues, and preparations were almost complete.

Pries glanced at the busy people in the room and waved his hand: "Commence the operation."

A group of people instantly vanished from the room, and the previously noisy office turned silent in an instant.

Kawat Commercial District.

Max sat on the ground, dedicatedly carving a sunflower.

The hand holding the carving knife was very steady; each cut was extremely precise and just right.

The once plain piece of log was slowly taking the shape of a sunflower.

After carving out the general form, the next task was to engrave the details.

This was a task that required much patience, but Max was always very patient.

He took the carving knife and began to slowly outline the petals of the sunflower.

Everything was progressing smoothly until suddenly, a deviation occurred in his carving, causing one cut to go astray.

This deviation essentially nullified all the previous work.

This is the tricky part of carving; the further along you go, the more cautious you need to be, as even a slight deviation can result in wasted effort.

Although it could be repaired and corrected, Max always pursued perfection.

Especially with his carving works.

In the past, Max would have simply wrapped up, found another suitable piece of wood, and started anew.

But this time, there was a hint of confusion in his eyes.

"I was clearly very focused on this cut, so mistakes shouldn't have occurred. Why... could it be that the Gods are trying to convey some message?"

The intuition of a Wizard tends to be very sharp, and Max, as a Level 1 Liquidation Wizard, naturally possessed sharp intuition.

He had an ominous feeling lurking in his heart, but upon reviewing recent events, he found nothing unusual.

Max believed that his slip was likely a warning from the Gods.

He always trusted the Gods, and since they offered a hint, he felt he had to take some action.

Max, although uncertain about the source of his unease, knew he couldn't just sit and wait.

Staying here would probably lead to trouble; his immediate priority was to leave quickly.

Max set down the carving knife, standing up, ready to leave immediately, not bothering to pack anything.

He was a man of action, doing what he wanted without hesitation.

However, just as he prepared to open the door and leave, a strong surge of Magic Power rippled around him.

Max's heart instantly raced, and he immediately realized something was amiss. Instinctively, he glanced toward the direction of the small attic.

He was about to use his will to activate the Witch Array in the attic, intending to reduce the entire three-story building to ashes.

Just then, darkness enveloped his vision, and he fell into unconsciousness.

Pries appeared behind Max, holding a gray-white translucent chain, which was inserted into Max's body from the back of his neck.

Pries gave the chain a slight pull, and a gray-white Spirit Body was extracted from Max's body.

"Lucky I was decisive enough, or you might have succeeded."

The chain in Pries's hand was binding Max's soul, which was now in a slumbering state.

Until Pries decided to awaken him, Max would remain asleep in darkness.

Meanwhile, outside the small building, a huge golden pillar of light enveloped the entire three-story residence.

The earlier Magic Power surge originated from this Witch Array, effectively preventing any combat fluctuations from affecting the surrounding buildings and residents.

Pries appeared behind Max almost simultaneously with the activation of the Witch Array.

The chain in his hand was a piece of Necromancy Witchcraft Artifacts, directly binding Max's soul.

Once the soul was extracted, it wasn't easy to return it, and Pries didn't plan on letting Max's soul return to his body.

According to the information Naya obtained, the wooden carvings in Luqi's possession were all objects that could seduce and manipulate minds, tools used by Abyssal Cultists to recruit members.

Luqi had already been captured by this time, and under the Wizard's techniques, he'd confessed everything.

Those snake-headed wooden carvings were also cut open, and indeed a kind of red worm was found inside.

With this, the crimes of Max and Luqi were thoroughly confirmed.

Chapter 296: Breaking the Seal

Pries made his move without hesitation, directly capturing Max's soul.

He skipped the interrogation phase, choosing instead to directly interrogate the soul through various means, which was the most straightforward and effective method, ensuring more authentic information.

The Land of Dawn has strict restrictions on necromancy; ordinary people cannot simply use necromancy on others, or face severe punishment.

However, Pries is one of the rare "certified" necromancers who can legally perform certain necromancy spells according to regulations.

After Max was captured, the protective golden witch array remained activated.

"Minister, the magic lock and the witch array inside the attic seem to be connected, so I haven't taken any rash actions," Shaq reported.

Pries considered this; witch arrays shouldn't be tampered with carelessly, as triggering one accidentally would be troublesome.

"I'll call Herag," Pries thought, remembering that Herag was a witch array master. Here was one readily available, so he could have him check it out.

Herag was observing the activity from the inn across the street and had detected the presence of Pries and his team, watching the entire operation unfold.

"Herag, there is a witch array here that needs you to come and check if it can be cracked," Pries messaged Herag.

Herag replied, "I'll be right over."

When he arrived at the attic, Pries, Shaq, and several others were at the door, studying the magic lock.

Usually, when they encountered such witch array issues, they would call people from the Witch Array Master Association to resolve them.

At present, Herag was from the Witch Array Master Association, so they let him try.

If Herag couldn't solve it either, they would call someone from the Witch Array Master Association.

"Herag, you've arrived. Can you look at this magic lock and see if the witch array behind it can be cracked?" Pries asked.

Herag nodded, "I'll give it a try."

He couldn't guarantee success, only saying he'd see if it could be done.

No matter how powerful a witch array is, its essence is constructed from combinations of various runes.

Cracking witch arrays generally involves two methods: one is seizing control of the array, similar to the attack incident that once occurred in Black Rock Valley, where the opponent tried to take control of the array there.

The other method is rendering the array ineffective, depriving it of its original function.

Cracking a witch array demands a high level of skill from a witch array master, because each witch array is typically very mature and structurally stable.

To crack the array, you must be very familiar with the rune structure and then make some adjustments to change the original structure, thereby rendering it ineffective.

However, this alteration isn't accomplished by randomly changing a single rune.

Many witch arrays have defense mechanisms, like the array in the attic before them.

Once it detects external intrusion or cracking attempts, it automatically triggers its defense mechanism, turning the entire three-story dwelling into ashes.

If Herag wants to crack this witch array, he must bypass the defense mechanism without detection and render the array's function ineffective.

Because the core of the array is inside, the rune structure can't be directly seen.

The normal cracking process is finding a suitable rune structure position externally and exploring step by step, observing the structure of the runes, and then inferring the complete structure based on the observed runes.

The more complete the rune structure obtained through this process, the higher the probability of analyzing vulnerabilities, naturally increasing confidence in cracking the array.

Herag doesn't need such methods.

"Shenlan, scan and analyze the rune structure of this array."

"Task archived, scanning and analyzing in progress..."

Shenlan has environmental detection capabilities, unaffected by the magic power obstruction of the array.

Shenlan can directly scan and observe the core of the array internally, obtaining the complete rune structure of the array.

Before long, a rune structure diagram of the witch array appeared before Herag's eyes.

After observing the structure diagram for a while, he found indeed a rune structure with defense functions.

There was also a small block of runes linked to the magic lock, responsive to each other.

If any external force forcibly disrupts the magic lock, it triggers two arrays.

One array seems to notify Max, informing him of abnormalities here.

Max could directly activate the protective system of the array, initiating the entire array.

Additionally, if the message to Max doesn't receive a response within a minute, the array automatically triggers.

If Herag wants to crack this array, he first needs to resolve the defense structure and the structure that triggers the arrays.

"Shenlan, detect the most suitable entry point and crack the array," Herag commanded.

This was the best time for Shenlan to shine.

The human brain might make errors, and calculations might deviate.

But not Shenlan, which provides accurate results through meticulous computation of these fixed information structures.

After several seconds.

"Cracking completed, entry points shown in diagram."

Before Herag, Shenlan marked several entry points on the array structure diagram and suggested applicable runes.

"Minister Pries, I'm ready," Herag spoke.

Pries noticed the confidence in Herag's eyes.

So he didn't doubt further, trusting Herag's judgment.

"You all leave here first, pay attention to safety," Pries ordered the team behind him.

Shaq and the others left immediately.

Although Pries believed in Herag, he still wanted others to leave first as a precaution.

Of course, Pries wouldn't leave. Staying here was partly due to confidence and partly to protect Herag.

If something unexpected happened, he could immediately ensure Herag wouldn't encounter danger.

Besides, Herag was considered his junior, and there was no reason for him, the Minister of City Defense Safety, to leave while his junior was risking danger here.

He had to stay; it was a matter of principle.

Herag felt more assured seeing Pries by his side.

Pries was clearly backing him up, even if he failed to crack the array, it wouldn't matter.

A Level 2 Wizard was fully capable of ensuring his safety.

With these thoughts, Herag dove into the task.

He checked Shenlan's entry points, analyzed the logic, and found no issues.

Thus, he began the attempt, his hand gathering magic power, forming a rune, and channeling it into the magic lock.

Using the entry point of the covered rune structure on the magic lock, he initiated the process of cracking the entire array.

The first step went smoothly, the array remained stable with no abnormalities, nor did it trigger the defense mechanism of the array.

Herag proceeded unhurriedly, cracking the array, not rushing, but methodically injecting runes into the array one by one, gradually altering the structure.

Chapter 297: Investigation

Herag first resolved the defense structure of the Witch Array, severing its connection with other parts to prevent accidental triggers of the defensive function.

Afterward, the connection between the Magic Lock and the Witch Array was also cut, so even smashing the Magic Lock wouldn't activate the Witch Array.

However, Herag didn't rush to open the Magic Lock. To be cautious, he continued to decipher the Witch Array.

Finally, there was the core of the Witch Array, mainly comprising defense, monitoring, detection, and self-destruction functions.

Handling it was the most troublesome. Herag patiently deciphered structure by structure, disabling every sub-function of the Witch Array until they became ineffective.

In Herag's perception, the entire process seemed somewhat long.

He spent about half an hour to fully decipher the Witch Array.

With a click, the Magic Lock automatically opened.

Herag gently pushed the door, and it opened without any anomalies.

The process of deciphering the Witch Array required extreme patience and precision; there could be no mistakes at all.

Herag had a wealth of experience in Magic Potion Refining, having been thoroughly trained, and his mindset was very stable.

"Well done!" Pries patted Herag's shoulder, expressing his appreciation.

Pries went into the house first, followed closely by Herag.

The interior of the house was simple and unadorned, without much clutter.

A table and a wooden sculpture — that was all.

On the table was only a relatively large wooden sculpture; the small carved wooden sculptures had been given to Luqi.

This remaining one was used by Max for worshipping Gods, and judging by the carving marks, it was not recent — it had been some time.

Pries picked up the large wooden sculpture from the table, flipped it over to inspect it, then put it away, planning to study it slowly.

The two searched and checked the house several times carefully but found nothing else of value.

Herag even used Shenlan's environmental detection to check again but found no clues.

It seemed Max was very cautious, placing nothing here besides this large wooden sculpture.

More detailed information would only be known after interrogating Max's soul.

After confirming there were no issues with the attic, Pries instructed his subordinates outside to conduct a thorough search of the entire three-story building.

Every place here, every item would be controlled and examined with various methods.

The Wizard Organization of the Land of Dawn was extremely cautious when dealing with Abyssal Cultists, leaving nothing to chance.

After instructing a few matters here, Pries hurried back to City Hall to prepare to interrogate Max.

Herag continued to stay at Max's residence, assisting in the search and inventory of all items in the house.

...

Three days later.

In his office at City Hall, Pries spoke to Herag while holding a document: "Herag, you've made quite an achievement this time. Based on the final evaluation, you can earn two hundred sixty Contribution Points."

"That much? Looks like I've struck it lucky, going out for a drink on the street and encountering such good fortune," Herag said with a smile.

Over these three days, Pries and his team conducted rigorous interrogations of Max's soul and Luqi, uncovering a lot of information.

It's surprising what they found after digging.

Besides the wooden sculptures scattered by Luqi through beggars, many of the wooden sculptures sold in Max's sculpture shop contained hidden small demons from the Abyss Plane.

Like insects and beetles.

Though these small demons from the Abyss Plane couldn't directly turn ordinary people into Abyssal Cultists, they subtly magnified people's inner desires.

Desires such as greed, lust, or a craving for power — most people have various kinds of desires.

Max's wooden sculptures amplified these inner desires.

Once someone's inner desire reached a certain level, the Evil God from the Abyss Plane would attempt to contact them, beginning to tempt and allure.

Under normal circumstances, ordinary people couldn't resist such allure, thus becoming Abyssal Cultists.

They would start serving the Evil God from the Abyss Plane, just like Luqi, sinking deeper and deeper.

The process of capturing Max and Luqi went smoothly, with Pries and his team apprehending them with little effort.

Those things were simple because both Max and Luqi were relatively weak.

The troublesome part was the subsequent handling.

According to the intelligence gathered through interrogation, Max started making wooden sculptures containing Abyssal Demons about two years ago.

It's unknown how many pieces were sold over these two years; many have even spread beyond Serlandir to various places in the Land of Dawn.

Pries discovered during the interrogation that Max himself was quite complex.

He seemed to have anticipated being captured one day, so he had already cut out many crucial memories long ago.

Max's memory consisted mainly of routine daily life.

Once it involved crucial information, it was blank, completely untraceable.

Pries sensed that something was off — Max was very likely just a small figure.

Behind him, there must be bigger fish hidden.

Otherwise, Max wouldn't use such means to erase his own memories.

Being able to go to such lengths only indicated that the person behind Max was very unusual.

Pries felt a headache coming on just thinking about recovering those wooden sculptures — it was a troublesome task.

No shipping records were found in Max's shop; he never recorded such information.

Now, they can only issue an announcement, telling everyone that Max's wooden sculptures have issues, and asking them to immediately hand over any in their possession to the City Halls in various cities of Serlandir.

The announcement's effectiveness wasn't very good; only a few people submitted their wooden sculptures.

Those submitted were mostly recently acquired through various means, not yet heavily influenced, and hadn't turned into Abyssal Cultists.

However, compared to the number of wooden sculptures Max sold over two years, the submitted quantity was pitifully small.

In the seemingly calm city, it's unknown how many people have been influenced by the wooden sculptures sold by Max, hence becoming members of the Abyssal Cultists.

Pries has been extremely busy lately, instructing subordinates to use various means to determine who had bought Max's wooden sculptures.

If anyone was found to have bought them without submitting, they would be thoroughly investigated.

It's an extraordinarily large workload; even Wizards are finding their energy somewhat lacking.

Due to the large number of individuals involved, and because many buyers used the sculptures as gifts or for trades, tracing them is very troublesome, consuming a huge amount of manpower, resources, and time.

Chapter 298: The Situation

Despite that, the investigation must go on; we can't relax or overlook any detail.

Everyone involved will be thoroughly questioned and even searched.

With the official manpower of Serlandir, it's certainly not enough for this workload, so many related tasks were quickly issued.

Soon after the tasks were released, many people were recruited to help complete these investigation tasks.

Herag also participated in these follow-up investigation tasks, and with his methods, he could naturally find some information relatively easily.

The investigation is tedious and troublesome. Often, you can't find an Abyssal Cultist even after spending much time.

The other party might have just bought the wooden sculpture and left it on the attic to collect dust, completely forgetting about it and not being influenced at all.

Yet, you still need to spend time and effort to check the purchase time, place, and through whose hands it passed, and so on, all clearly.

You can't act rashly because you don't know if the other party is an Abyssal Cultist.

Only when you have enough evidence can you use special means to interrogate; otherwise, you're infringing on the rights of Silver Moon City's lawful residents.

Herag, unlike others, can clearly perceive the Abyssal Aura on an Abyssal Cultist if he's within a certain distance.

If it's already determined that the other party is an Abyssal Cultist, the investigation becomes much easier; you just need to find the evidence.

Actually, Herag didn't have high hopes for the subsequent investigation; he had already gained many Contribution Points from this operation.

Two hundred sixty points of Contribution Points; this figure is enough to make many members of Serlandir drool.

This time Herag followed the clue and uncovered so much; indeed, he made a great contribution.

In the eyes of others, it was just luck; a beggar happened to come to his door and gave him a wooden sculpture.

Other members of Serlandir dream of encountering such things, believing that anyone who did would be able to find out subsequent matters—it just depends on luck.

Pries reclined in his chair, took a sip of hot coffee, and sighed.

He also felt a bit tired, having not slept for three days and nights.

Although he could still endure it and his Spirit was still full, he felt mentally exhausted.

Too many things to worry about, and it was foreseeable that it would be hard to live peacefully in the foreseeable future.

Pries said to Herag, "This time you were quite lucky, and you handled it beautifully, giving us the chance to find out so much. I can't even imagine what the consequences would be if it took a few more years to discover this Max."

"As a member of Serlandir, it's natural to share the burdens of the organization," Herag said with a smile.

Pries waved his hand and said, "No need for such courtesy in front of me. Here are some materials on Max and Luqi; take a look. We should be able to find out more things later; make sure to seize the opportunity to earn more Contribution Points."

Herag smiled, took the materials, and began to review them.

The documents detailed all the information currently found about Max and Luqi.

There's nothing special about Luqi, born in an ordinary family, without any Wizard talent, seeming like a very ordinary person.

Max is somewhat special; he is from the Mozambique Slums.

Max seemed to have Wizard talent from a young age. He self-taught magic in the Mozambique Slums and quickly entered a small Wizard Academy nearby.

This type of Wizard Academy was established by Serlandir to teach kids with Wizard talent who lacked background, free of charge.

Most in these were not very talented, and after graduation, unable to enter Serlandir, they would be recruited and cultivated by various other forces.

Like Max, he initially joined a merchant guild, serving as an escort Wizard of a caravan in the guild.

Max worked in there for thirty-odd years before he left the guild and used the money saved over the years to settle down in Silver Moon City.

Five years ago, Max opened a wooden sculpture shop in the Kawat Commercial District.

Business was initially slow, but gradually improved due to his exquisite craftsmanship.

The presence of Abyssal Demons in the wooden sculptures started two years ago.

Two years ago, no one knew what had happened to Max, nor why he would become an Abyssal Cultist.

For related memories have already been cut off; no one knew.

Herag naturally also saw that there was a hidden secret behind this Max, but there was no way to investigate it at the moment.

Growing up in the Mozambique Slums, then entering a Wizard Academy to study, and after graduating, working in the merchant guild for over thirty years.

The entire growth process seems simple, but it's actually very complicated to investigate.

Because the guild work period for Max was so long, he likely encountered the Evil God of the Abyss Plane during this period, thus becoming an Abyssal Cultist.

The merchant guild's footprints were all over the Land of Dawn, which was very difficult to trace clearly. It was impossible to know when Max became an Abyssal Cultist, making finding out the secret behind him even more challenging.

Herag silently noted down all the information about Max and Luqi, then began to pick up the thick pile of documents next to him, preparing to start the investigation tasks.

This stack of documents contained collected information about individuals who had ever bought wooden sculptures from Max, though much of it was hearsay and needed Herag to verify.

The stack in Herag's hand was the tasks distributed to him; everyone had such a thick stack.

As to how many Abyssal Cultists could be identified from it, it depended on each person's luck and skill.

Even with Shenlan in hand, Herag could not determine whether the person on the text was an Abyssal Cultist, only to check one by one.

The only advantage was that his inspection time for each person would be short, as he just needed to take a close look.

Herag sighed, glanced at the personnel information on the first piece of document, and went out.

...

Mozambique Slums.

Franz lay on the bench in the courtyard as usual, with his eyes closed, basking in the sun.

Covered by a blanket, the whole person bathed in the soft sunlight, sleeping quietly, breathing steadily and powerfully.

Flowers, grass, and trees were planted in the courtyard, looking serene and beautiful under the sun.

However, this tranquility didn't last long. A series of hurried footsteps came from outside the courtyard.

Franz heard the noise and slowly opened his eyes, looking at the young man at the gate, and asked in a deep voice, "What is it?"

Brown quickly came to Franz's side and whispered, "Max has been captured by the people from Serlandir."

His face was somewhat anxious. If Max's arrest led the investigation here, it would be troublesome.

Chapter 299: Investigation

Franz showed no expression, simply continued with his eyes closed, "Got it."

Brown couldn't understand why Franz showed no expression, yet he still spoke with some concern, "Max is from our Mozambique Slums..."

"So what?" Franz opened his eyes and looked at Brown, "Max knows what he should do, he's a good kid."

Seeing Franz so calm, Brown basically understood in his heart that Max's matter probably wouldn't implicate them.

He thought for a moment and asked, "If the people from Celestial investigate us later, we..."

"Just answer truthfully, there's nothing there anyway, why are you so tense?" Franz said in a deep voice.

Brown nodded silently, understanding what he needed to do.

If the people from Celestial really investigate and ask for some information, they just need to answer truthfully.

Being deliberately evasive might instead arouse Celestial's suspicion.

The fact that Max is from the Mozambique Slums is easy to find out, and there was no deliberate concealment.

From Max's records, he didn't stay long in the Mozambique Slums either.

Even if it's about investigating Abyssal Cultists, no one would suspect he became an Abyssal Cultist in that place.

Because Max was only a few years old at the time, anyone would suspect he became an Abyssal Cultist later when he grew up.

No one would know that Max actually became an Abyssal Cultist when he was just a few years old.

Max was raised solely by Franz, who was quite satisfied with this child.

Since Max joined the business association, he appeared to have no ties to the slums, but he secretly continued to receive various instructions from Franz, completing tasks assigned by him.

But everything was done quite covertly, until Herag met that beggar, Max's secret was exposed to Celestial.

Max had always been cautious in his actions, knowing he would eventually fall into Celestial's hands, so he routinely erased some of his memories.

The reason was to ensure that if something happened to him, Franz would not be implicated.

"Tell them to keep quiet for a while," Franz said.

Brown nodded, "Understood."

...

Herag stood on Lilac Street, hesitating as he looked at the palace complex across the street.

In the span of one morning, he had visited two people; at first glance, he knew neither was an Abyssal Cultist.

As for their wood carving purchases, Herag confirmed that the actual situation was different from the records.

The first was a man named Yarn, who did have one of Max's wood carvings, but it was a fingertip-sized trinket purchased five years ago.

Herag observed that it contained no traces of the Abyss Plane, nor was Yarn an Abyssal Cultist.

Nevertheless, Herag still gathered the wood carving and documented some details about Yarn.

Yarn was also not allowed to leave Silver Moon City during this time until Celestial confirmed there were no issues with him.

Herag knew Yarn wasn't an Abyssal Cultist, but his judgment didn't count; it was up to Celestial to verify.

The second person was an elderly lady named Lilu. According to the records, she supposedly bought a floral basket wood carving from Max's shop.

After Herag visited the old lady's home and inquired, he found she indeed purchased the basket.

But the problem was, this basket wood carving had broken last year and was discarded.

Now it was impossible to retrieve it, as it had long been lost track of.

Herag truthfully documented these circumstances and also checked every corner of the house, confirming no one there was an Abyssal Cultist.

These matters certainly wouldn't just end here; further investigation would undoubtedly follow.

Herag didn't have to worry about further actions; his responsibility was simply to record and report the current findings.

These two cases weren't difficult; Herag's investigation proceeded smoothly.

But when Herag turned to the third file, he found himself in a dilemma.

This was because the person listed in the records was Amisha Mori.

The records stated someone had given Amisha a wood carving piece by Max, which might now be in the Morri Family mansion.

Herag had arrived across the street from the Morri Family residence, right on Lilac Street.

Though referred to as a mansion, the Morri Family's home was actually a palace complex, visible from afar, showcasing the power of its owners.

Having such a vast complex here indicated more than just financial capability; the underlying strength was far more formidable.

Herag was well aware that the Morri Family was a major stakeholder in the Celestial Bank, with formidable influence.

The difficulty was that he needed to investigate inside the Morri Family now.

But the last time, the Patriarch Shatar of the Morri Family didn't have a good attitude towards him, seemingly fearing any entanglement with his daughter.

In this context, pursuing an inquiry with Amisha came off as having ulterior motives.

Although Herag knew he had none, others might not see it that way.

As a formal member of Celestial, investigating is perfectly normal.

But with so many people, why is it specifically you coming over, especially to investigate Amisha?

It's as if anyone looking at this would see Herag as having ulterior motives.

But there was no way around it for Herag; these tasks were assigned randomly, and it was just bad luck that Amisha's file was in the bunch he picked.

Herag thought it over and decided to complete the task as soon as possible.

Hopefully, Old Shatar wasn't home, so he could finish the inquiry and leave quickly.

He arrived at the main gate of the Morri residence, knocked, and soon a strong young man approached, saying, "This is the Morri family residence, strangers please leave promptly."

The young man's tone was cold and uncompromising, highlighting the arrogance of a powerful family.

And rightly so, the Morri family had few who truly instilled fear in Silver Moon City.

"I am Herag from Celestial, I'm here about matters involving Abyssal Cultists and need to inquire with Miss Amisha. Your cooperation would be appreciated," Herag explained amicably.

His goal was to finish the task quickly, not minding the young man's attitude.

"Abyssal Cultists?" The young man behind the gate seemed a bit surprised.

Involving Abyssal Cultists, he dared not put on airs any longer and said, "Wait a moment, I'll notify the butler."

Chapter 300: The Gift

Herag was not in a hurry and waited patiently at the door for the young man to go inside and announce his presence.

After a short while, a middle-aged man with graying hair briskly walked out—it was Blanc, the butler of the Morri Family.

Seeing Herag, Blanc smiled and said, "Mr. Herag, we meet again."

"Hello, Mr. Blanc, you look quite spirited," Herag responded.

Herag and Blanc had known each other from before, and there had been no conflicts between them.

"Well enough. It's said that Mr. Herag is here to investigate matters related to the Abyssal Cultist. Could you tell me more about it?" Blanc inquired.

Herag explained, "Recently, there was an incident involving an Abyssal Cultist. The mastermind of the event was a woodcarver named Max, whom you may have heard of. We've received information that Miss Amisha had once received a woodcarving gift, and this carving was made by Max himself."

"We need to retrieve all woodcarvings made by Max, so we're here to conduct an inquiry."

Blanc pondered for a moment, then nodded, saying, "I see. Please follow me, Mr. Herag, the young lady is at home."

Herag followed behind Blanc, entering the expansive estate of the Morri Family.

There were many people inside the Morri Family estate, but a mere glance could reveal everyone's hierarchical status.

As the butler, Blanc commanded respect, and other servants would bow to him, clearly indicating his position.

Herag followed Blanc for about ten minutes before stopping outside a courtyard.

Walking through the estate, Herag felt that one unfamiliar with the grounds could indeed get lost in the Morri Family home.

"Please wait here, Mr. Herag, I'll inform the young lady," Blanc said softly.

"Very well, Mr. Blanc, please excuse the trouble," Herag replied.

Blanc nodded and proceeded into the courtyard behind him.

This courtyard differed from others in style; it began with a garden leading to a three-story villa inside.

Shortly after Blanc went inside, Herag heard a series of light, quick footsteps from within.

Herag looked up to see Amisha in a golden gown jogging out. Upon seeing Herag, she tidied her hair by her ear and slowed her pace.

"Herag, you've come to see me?" Amisha hadn't heard what Blanc said earlier but dashed out upon hearing Herag had arrived.

Since Herag stopped responding to her messages, Amisha felt quite disheartened, but refrained from actively seeking him out to avoid being bothersome.

Now suddenly learning that Herag had come to see her, Amisha felt pleasantly surprised.

"Miss Amisha, have you ever received a woodcarving made by Max?" Herag asked directly.

Amisha was puzzled by the question, "A woodcarving?"

She was a bit slow to process, sensing a discrepancy between what she expected and what Herag was discussing.

Herag nodded, "That's right. According to records, you once received a birthday gift that was a woodcarving. This woodcarving was crafted by Max, the Abyssal Cultist. Miss Amisha, do you know where it is now?"

Amisha took a moment to digest this information, then realized Herag was handling official business, not visiting her specifically, leading to another dip in her spirits.

Seeing Herag's serious expression and knowing it involved the Abyssal Cultist, she understood the urgency.

Right now, the most important thing was to cooperate with Herag to resolve this matter; everything else could wait.

Amisha thought carefully, "A woodcarving... let me think..."

Every year, she received numerous birthday gifts from various people across society.

Among them were suitors, elders, friends, and business partners of the family.

With so many people giving gifts, how could Amisha possibly remember who gave what?

Many gifts remained unopened, and she wasn't even aware of their contents.

"Which year is this birthday gift from?" Amisha thought for a long time but couldn't recall anything related to a woodcarving, so she asked for the year instead.

Herag glanced at the parchment in his hand and confirmed, "It was the birthday gift you received last year, Miss Amisha."

Amisha pondered for a while and then called, "Blanc, where did you put last year's birthday gifts?"

"They should be in the warehouse to the west, Miss," Blanc replied with a bow.

The group soon arrived outside a large house, clearly used for storage.

Blanc fetched the keys and opened the warehouse doors.

Under normal circumstances, outsiders would not be allowed in.

But now, as Herag was handling official Serlandir business, even the Morri Family had to cooperate.

Once Blanc opened the door, Herag stepped inside the warehouse and saw it was filled with items.

There was a bit of everything, and some items seemed like goods for trade.

Herag scanned the room and discovered some precious herbs stored inside.

These items would be treasures outside, yet here they were stored like ordinary goods. It showed just how wealthy and indulgent the Morri Family was.

"In which area are Miss Amisha's birthday gifts stored?" Herag asked, turning back.

In such a large warehouse, searching individually would be too time-consuming.

Blanc thought for a while and said, "I'll ask the servant in charge of the warehouse for the specific location. I'm not sure myself."

As a busy butler, Blanc had no idea where Amisha's birthday gifts were stored.

After a while, a servant responsible for warehouse management came in, "Butler, Miss."

Blanc looked at the servant and asked, "Muse, where are the gifts from Miss Amisha's last birthday stored?"

A flicker of something strange flashed in Muse's eyes, noticed by no one except Herag.

"They should be over there," Muse recalled after a moment and pointed northeast.

"Lead us there," Blanc instructed.

"Alright," Muse nodded and led the way ahead.

The group followed, while Herag's expression turned somewhat curious.

He glanced at Muse, seemingly deep in thought.

"Are these the birthday gifts from Miss Amisha's last year?" Herag asked, looking at the mountain of gifts before him.

"Yes, sir," Muse replied. Although unaware of who Herag was, Muse knew his status must be unusual, or Blanc and Miss Amisha wouldn't have accompanied him here.

Before Herag was a pile of gift boxes of various sizes, each uniquely wrapped, forming a small mountain on the floor.