

Righteous Ps 161

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 161

When Annan woke up, his portrait was already painted.

“Thank you very much for your cooperation.”

Amos's voice sounded behind Annan, “Really? Are you sure you don't want dinner?”

“...Wait, let's get dinner.” There was some hesitation in Annan's tone.

Amos chuckled lightly, “That's right. I'm very hospitable...”

These words did sound very polite.

But his tone was filled with impatience, and he had no intention of covering it up. He didn't invite Annan to see the painting but put it away. Not only did he speak fast when he invited Annan, but he also didn't even look at Annan directly.

Annan keenly sensed Amos adopting a sense of superiority.

Amos had a great attitude towards Jiu Er. It should be because Jiu Er still showed “curiosity” and “praise” for Amos's paintings when she played as a homeless man. This fully satisfied Amos's pride.

It seemed perfectly reasonable.

Amos initially held a Venerated Skeleton's ritual because he reached the bottleneck of art and didn't have the patience to attain a breakthrough slowly. After all, the Elegant Elder was also an option for him to improve his art level.

Unlike the Venerated Skeleton, the Elegant Elder was more inclined to propose an effective “training method” or point out the mistakes and improvements in the artistic style. Then, he would have his followers train on it.

Yes, for his followers, the Elegant Elder was a critic who had sharp eyes and spoke blatantly with none dared to offend him at all.

This was undoubtedly a troublemaker for artists, but it was also a good teacher and helpful friend.

Amos did not choose the Elegant Elder but the Venerated Skeleton.

At that time, he had already exposed his inner thoughts.

He didn't want to work hard for it anymore.

Amos only wanted to draw a better painting and become famous immediately. But even he had overlooked the laziness and restlessness in his heart.

In Elle's memory, Amos lamented, “I just want to pursue a higher artistic realm,” but everything was lies he painted to himself.

His level of portrait painting had significantly improved because he got the “Elle special paint.” Also, his art level had nothing to do with the customers he chose.

If he wanted to paint better, why would he choose to paint portraits for big shots?

The answer was straightforward.

Amos's initial sense of morality and respect for the law restrained him. But, he had committed the sins a long time ago. Once his doings were discovered, he would use the “soul fragments” sealed in the painting of these big shots to threaten and curse them.

Compared to when Elle was pregnant a few months ago, Amos's speech and behavior seemed to be just a stereotyped imitation. However, the vile temperament in him had become more and more prominent.

Not many things could change Amos significantly over a few months.

The only exception would be killing people with his own hands.

After he deceived and killed a large number of homeless men, he lost patience with mortals.

It felt to him just like becoming an actual Transcended.

As a matter of fact, the homeless man played by Annan didn't do anything out of the ordinary, from beginning to end. He was like a “real” homeless man.

How could a homeless man with an empty stomach be interested in the artist's paintings?

He was hired. Why would he assess the gallery curiously?

Could he understand it?

—Of course not.

The real homeless man wouldn't care about these “big shot's art” at all. They just wanted money and food. Besides, they wouldn't trust anyone since society alienated them.

The homeless man played by Annan could not be considered “evil.” On the contrary, it was fair to say Annan acted like a homeless man with a good temperament.

But even he didn't get on Amos's good side.

In other words, Amos had no good attitude towards these homeless men.

The reason why Amos was confident of keeping the homeless man here was simple.

Because after the portrait was completed, Annan felt a strong sense of hunger in his body.

It was just like in games where you hurt the other players but sell them potions later on.

If Annan were a homeless man, then he would naturally not feel ashamed at this time. Although he said he would not stay for dinner, he was famished, and Amos invited him again. At this time, he would naturally choose to stay to save money.

For the homeless men, there was no freedom of choice from the beginning.

After Amos set his sights on them, they had only one dead end.

Just looking at this unceremonious mannerism and Amos's familiarity with what he was doing, Annan knew many homeless men were killed in this way.

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The portrait hung on this wall wasn't just a portrait.

It was the “magic painting” that imprisoned the soul of the dead!

Annan had a sense of it.

—What the senior said is right.

Transcended must go through rigorous screening and education.

Amos wasn't even Transcended!

He couldn't even fend off bullets!

If Amos didn't have that curse vessel pistol, he would probably not even be able to beat an ordinary swordsman or wizard apprentice.

But it was such a mortal who committed so many murders out of greed and stirred up chaos right after he obtained a meager Transcended power.

The magical paintings he painted for the big shots would even have a greater impact.

If the magic painting was burned or physical destruction was carried out, the owner's soul would be weakened, and life span would be significantly reduced. If the magic painting were stolen, the consequences would be even more severe. This was equivalent to having their soul fragment fall into the hands of those with malicious intent. The soul fragment could be used as part of the ritual, and it was entirely possible to cause a greater conspiracy.

Worse still, these big shots were hardly Transcended.

Therefore, the possibility of being made into a magic painting for self-defense—for example, a “feast for the hungry” was small.

The greater possibility was that they were all stolen or robbed.

Annan was agitated.

Amos is a pest.

He didn't know how much trouble he would cause.

For example, forty-five years ago, Viscount Barber's wife might have died because of this. Worse still, Viscount Barber might have believed in Rotten Man because of his wife's sudden death under the intervention of the deities' power.

That was when Viscount Barber passed the position of city lord to the eldest son forty-five years ago — the year Amos died.

From this point of view, Amos's quality as a problem stirrer was intimidating.

Annan watched Amos squat on the ground, carefully mounting the new painting with rapt attention. He sighed slightly.

He took out the deposit that Amos had given him—the three silver coins silently. Two in the left hand and one in the right.

Afterward, Annan gently tossed the silver coin in his right hand, giving out a 'cling' sound.

Then, he spread out his right hand and aimed his palm at Amos.

Annan's eyes gradually flickered with a silver shimmer.

“...En?” Amos vaguely heard a strange noise and looked back defenselessly.

At the moment when the silver coin was about to fall into Annan's palm, it suddenly accelerated. A stream of light manifested and quickly struck Amos with the trembling and loud buzzing sound!

Amos's emerald green eyeball wriggled.

His body avoided the attack on its own in a weird posture, but it only safeguarded the vitals.

The bullet that the silver coin morphed into had rubbed against Amos's right shoulder—the wound was deep.

The projectile was launched across the shoulder and hit the wall. A large amount of dust exploded in an instant. The room was filled with sharp and piercing high-frequency noise.

“Puff!”

Although it was only a scratch, Amos's body trembled violently. A mouthful of blood spewed from his mouth, and his pupils dilated.

Amos leaned forward feebly.

But his emerald green eyeball moved strangely again. His falling body suddenly stopped in the air. Like a marionette, he was touching the ground with toes, trying to stand up again with jerky movements.

But Amos had lost his chances already.

After Annan used the divine art “Clanging Object,” he didn't plan to stay idle by the side.

He immediately tossed a silver coin from his left palm to his right palm.

As Annan flicked his hands, two slender silver rapiers manifested.

The rapier in Annan's left hand pierced Amos's heart, while the other slit Amos' throat.

Then, Annan moved Amos' head back with his free left hand skillfully.

Amos's azure blue eyeball had lost its vitality.

But the emerald green pupil belonging to Elle was still trembling.

Annan didn't hesitate at all and didn't show any mercy.

With great precision, he flung his other rapier in the air elegantly and pierced the emerald green eyeball from top to bottom!

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Chapter 162: Swordsman Advancement: Silver Knight

The process went the same as the last time Annan cleared a dungeon.

A large amount of green pigments flowed out of Amos's eyeball that initially belonged to Elle.

When the eyeball was cut open, it splashed liquid like a burst water balloon. In the end, Amos's entire head was stained.

Those liquids seemed to be endless, with more and more of them gushing out.

In the end, it was like a collapsed dam, roaring out of Amos's eyes and submerging the entire room in the blink of an eye.

This world was like being repainted by a lot of paint. The three homeless men stupefied at their spot. The moment they met the river of green paint, they immediately melted and disappeared. The same happened to the furniture, ceiling, and floor in the room.

In an instant, Annan fell into the emerald green sea.

He felt intense suffocation assaulted him.

But Annan looked at all this indifferently. Instead, he looked up calmly at the top of the emerald green sea, breathed in the emerald green liquid calmly, and slowly closed his eyes.

After all, Annan had already experienced this once.

The last time he cleared “Gallery: Elle Morrison,” he was also submerged in the sea of paint. The difference was that it was red last time, but it went green this time.

When Annan woke up again, he could breathe normally in the green sea.

Loads of system prompts swept across Annan's eyes.

[Nightmare has been purified.]

[Purify the nightmare with a designated identity. Evaluation rating increased.]

[Complete the portrait. Evaluation rating increased.]

[All four homeless men survived to the end. Evaluation rating increased significantly.]

[Kill Amos. Evaluation rating increased.]

[Injured Amos's left eye as a homeless man. Evaluation rating increased.]

[Comprehensive Evaluation—A]

[Received Shared Experience 211 points. Perception+1.]

[The current purification progress is 74/350. Therefore, you may enter the dungeon instance again after 71 hours: 59 minutes.]

[Obtain dungeon instance clearance reward: Profession of your choice increases by 1 level.]

Annan realized that he didn't get dungeon instance decryption rewards this time.

Is it because my way of clearing the dungeon is wrong?

Or is it that dungeon instance decryption reward will only be issued once for each level?

However, Annan was startled after noticing the purification progress.

He realized that it seemed impossible for him to build an army of proficient swordsmen at Freezing Water Port.

When he cleared the dungeon instance last time, the purification progress was only 39.

But under the players' efforts, the cooldown had escalated to 70 hours.

This was the situation when the player hadn't completely cleared the dungeon.

Even if Annan didn't recruit new players, it would take these 40 players seven cooldown cycles to consume all of the 350 tries for dungeon instance, which would take more than half a month.

Oh my God!

Annan realized the problem.

This Freezing Water Port gallery dungeon instance would exist for another month at most.

After a month, Annan would have to give freedom to the players, at least providing a way to grow themselves steadily.

Annan wasn't sure if the player could gain experience through training. But it seemed that besides the level promotion gained from clearing the nightmare and the mission experience that Annan rewarded them, the players had to turn into killing machines to attain growth.

But, how to find so many people from this world for the players to kill and farm experience?

—It is necessary to find a place where the nightmare is stably generated.

Annan felt a sense of urgency.

He only had 40 players for now.

In less than a month, a terrifying nightmare that had existed for 45 years and even involved the deity power would be thoroughly consumed.

If Annan obtained the complete Book of Divine Transporter and recruited 600 players...

“Isn't it more fitting to be the Book of Disasters?”

Annan sighed.jpg

“Eh?”

But when Annan was about to promote his wizard profession level, he noticed something different.

The initially Swordsman LV10 labeled with (Max) on his attribute panel had a flashing plus sign appearing.

Oh, does this mean I have the option to promote this profession?

But, the swordsman profession isn't a Transcended profession at all.

Annan had tried multiple times in the past. There was no way to promote the swordsman profession level.

Have I advanced? Annan directed his focus on the plus sign.

But, it seemed the advancement didn't take place yet.

Instead, a line of words appeared in front of Annan:

[Please choose your advancement direction—]

[Swordsman LV10 (Available to be advanced): Silver Knight (Main Attribute: Perception)]

[Keywords: Resilient, endurance]

[Proficient: Environment (nightmare), fighting alone, siege]

[Advancement requirements: Perception > 12; Will > 8; Constitution > 8. When clearing a nightmare, you have performed a divine art with its activation successful without errors (Silver Sire)]

Then, another set of panels appeared in front of Annan again:

[Swordsman LV10 (Available to be advanced): Dual Wielded Swordsman (Main attribute: Agility and Strength)]

[Keywords: Balance, interference, double attack]

[Proficient: Tussle and fighting alone]

[Advanced requirements: Agility > 7; Strength > 7. Having the ability “Dual Wielding Proficiency,” “Dexterous Hands,” or “Parallel Comprehension.” When clearing a nightmare, dual wielding the same weapon type for battle. Moreover, the weapon isn't disarmed from your hands, and you didn't injure yourself in the battle.]

“I see!”

Looking at the two advancement directions that were in contrast, Annan realized.

—It turns out that the Transcended of this world changes profession like this!

One could advance when his level reached the threshold, passing the nightmare while meeting the needs of the profession in the next stage, and his attributes met the requirement!

This was why the advancement into Bronze Rank was relatively simple, while the Silver Rank Transcended was rare.

Because their attributes were not enough for advancement!

With the typical attributes and abilities of an average “strong swordsman,” they couldn't advance into a Dual Wielded Swordsman or a Silver Knight.

For example, the players—

Even if they were at Level 10, they wouldn't necessarily acquire the ability “Parallel Comprehension.” They had to develop the ability on their own.

To become a Dual Wielded Swordsman, the attributes might be up to the standard. However, the advancement into a Silver Knight was impossible!

The demand for Perception wasn't difficult to meet.

Because Annan knew how to upgrade the Perception attribute—one would get to improve the Perception attribute by clearing a nightmare.

But as for how to improve the Will attribute, he had no idea.

Annan didn't know why his initial Will attribute was so high.

But sadly, his Constitution wasn't up to par even at the wizard's standard.

For the Silver Knight pathway, if Annan were a commoner, he would need to sharpen his expertise toward the Constitution attribute, clearing nightmares at least seven times and acquiring a tenacious Will. Last but not least, he had to learn divine art.

Although Annan's current attributes ultimately overflowed this demand, it was because his initial attributes were high. Moreover, he hadn't really advanced to Bronze but promoted his second profession to Bronze. Hence, the difficulty was much simpler than the first profession.

Annan suspected that it might be necessary to have some alternate professions in the later stage.

Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to fulfill the advancement's attributes requirements.

Although Annan had learned this information, he still planned to ask Bread Daryl.

But before that, Annan had to prepare for advancement.

He couldn't stall the attribute point upgrades after completing the nightmare.

Combined with the situation of Guard Captain Klaus, there should be no strict “advancement tree” for professions in this world. As long as the requirements of attributes and abilities were met, one could jump to other professions and even advance across professions.

For example, “Windrunner.”

Annan recalled Salvatore mentioning that “Windrunner” was a Silver Rank profession for hunters or lurkers. At that time, Annan was still a little confused, wondering what kind of professional Klaus was.

It now appeared that most professions did not have a fixed leading profession.

Being able to step on the wind and walk silently was of little use to a fighter, but it was of great significance to a sniper or an assassin.

But even so, Klaus could still forcefully advance into a Windrunner and attain Silver Rank.

80% of the advancement conditions of the Falteration Wizard were to master something like “Chilling Touch.” It was just that Annan didn't meet the promotion conditions for two professions at the same time. Hence, the system didn't give him the opportunity to choose an advancement direction.

All in all, there was no need to worry that the wrong job selection would ruin your life, albeit there was no 'reset' button.'

Should I advance into a Silver Knight?

Or should I add 1 level onto the wizard profession first, then I will wait for the cooldown while considering whether to advance into a Silver Knight?

“To me... it doesn't matter.” Annan didn't hesitate.

He was more inclined to follow the wizard pathway. The main attribute of the wizard profession was Perception, and the highest attribute of his status panel was also Perception.

The main attribute for the Silver Knight was also Perception!

This is perfect!

In addition to making him more resistant to damages, the swordsman profession was only for activating the Frost Sword. Hence, choosing what fitted him seemed more important than anything else.

Not to mention, the Silver Knight profession was far rarer than Dual Wielding Swordsman, judging by attribute requirements.

Rare things can't be a wrong choice!

“Then, there is only one answer—”

Annan tapped the plus sign without hesitation.

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After Annan confirmed the advancement, his Profession Overview became like this:

Silver Knight LV11: [Austere-Winter Swordsmanship LV5], [Frost Sword LV7], [Parallel Comprehension LV1], [Silver Hand LV1]

Wizard (Energy Falteration School) LV13: [Instant Spells LV3 (Chilling Touch, Slothful Eye, not yet)], [Guided Spells LV2 (Impeding Wall, Frost Nova, Notion Rain)], [Chant Spell LV1 (Frost Wheel)]

Priest (Silver Sire, engraving 0): Clanging Object, Sharp Object, Eternal Youth.

Annan couldn't see anything special with Silver Knight for now.

After all, it did not have the suffix "swordsmanship," so it was fair not to acquire new swordsmanship. Probably its unique characteristics would only be revealed when it was upgraded with more levels.

The only difference at present was that Annan's last unused Silver Sire holy light engraving had combined with his "Disarm LV1" and turned into a new ability [Silver Hand].

Annan copied how he felt when he added ability points just now and focused his attention on his abilities. A general introduction to the various abilities of the "Silver Knight" profession slowly emerged before his eyes:

[Austere-Winter Swordsmanship LV5: Austere-Winter Dukedom style swordsmanship. Your attack is less likely to be blocked or parried when fighting enemies that are slower than you.]

[Effect after LV 4: When the opponent's speed is significantly lower than you, the probability of attack being blocked or parried is slightly reduced.]

[Frost Sword LV7: This high-ranking swordsmanship is imbued with frost elements, which Frostborns can only utilize. You will extract the frost element from the bloodline and bless yourself with a "Frost Blood" state, which can cause a lot of frost elemental damage when attacking in a short time (Rank: Enemies below the truth cannot resist the elemental damage). Slashing out sword energy after activating it again will immediately end this state.]

[Effect after LV4: Every time the "Frost Blood" state is ended, all frost damage is temporarily increased by 7% (based on the current Frost Sword level), and your frost damage resistance is reduced by 7%. All up to 12 stacks.]

[Effect after LV7: "Will" attribute can further increase the Frost Sword's damage.]

[Warning: This swordsmanship requires at least "Rank: Gold" before it can be used. Otherwise, it will consume a certain percentage of the maximum life each time upon usage. It will bring immense negative emotions before the "frost blood" state ends.]

[Parallel Comprehension LV1: You are proficient in weapons other than swords. You can use them to cast a sword ability. The weapons under this effect are light one-handed hammers, light clubs, and long daggers.]

[Silver Hand LV1: Silver Knight's unique Transcended ability. Sacrifice a certain amount of silver coins to strengthen your weapons or shields temporarily. The more silver coins consumed, the stronger the enhancement.]

Annan was rendered speechless, almost cursing out loud.

This "Silver Knight" is simply a spendthrift profession!

Annan had a bad feeling about it.

Is it possible that the Silver Knight's abilities after levels promotion are all about premium purchases with silver coins?

Oh ya, Silver Sire seems to be the Trade Deity.

The advancement of this “Silver Knight” requires at least Divine Art Level 1 in the Silver Sire Church. In other words, this profession is fair to be said as Silver Sire's Templar or something similar.

The Templars of Trade Deity's Church are all premium users.

It sounds reasonable.

—Fuck!

“No, I have to ask Bread Daryl quickly about that.” Annan was annoyed.

Annan vaguely realized this just now, but he still lacked verification in this idea.

An all-around profession that could tank, fight, and heal—this meant that its growth would be balanced.

Balanced growth meant that it would take several times the funds and effort to catch up with the attribute gaps with other professions specializing in one proficiency.

As for the premium knight's upper limit, Annan wasn't worried.

After confirming that this might be a costly profession, Annan assessed his profession again. After seeing the keywords “Resilient and Endurance,” it became clear that he would never be weak.

The most crucial point about a costly profession was its sturdiness. It would be meaningless if the user couldn't sustain critical hit damages.

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Secondly, there should be no apparent shortcomings. After all, the distribution of the attributes was balanced. As long as it was built upon this foundation, there would be no more shortcomings compared to professions specializing in one field.

“Forget it. I'm more or less a faction leader.”

After changing his mind like this, Annan vaguely felt that this profession was not bad.

If survival was the priority, Silver Knight was indeed a great profession.

After all, Annan wasn't short of money.

He could be a dealer if he didn't mind. For example, he could utilize Don Juan's identity or Annan's identity to buy some high-end items that weren't available to the players. Then, he could sell them to the players, which would undoubtedly achieve a win-win situation.

When the players had all advanced into Transcendence, Annan intended to scatter them in the world.

After all, the Freezing Water Port couldn't afford to raise so many Transcended. Having the players stuck here was too wasteful.

With the players' abilities, coupled with the players' integrity, they could easily make a lot of money. If Annan sold the affection rating for money, he would get many silver coins that could be used for emergencies in a short period.

But that still feels weird...

It feels as if I'm asking for sugar mummies and daddies.

What is this?

Am I a publicly available lover?

“Haiz, forget it. I often portray myself in the wizard profession anyway.”

Annan hesitated for a moment but chose the astounding profession.

Annan could have challenged two more nightmares until the day the baby was born.

They were Justin's nightmare and the gallery's nightmare three days later.

If Annan could load the save file and challenge “Nightmare: Betrayer,” Annan would raise three levels in total. Otherwise, he was guaranteed to upgrade by two levels.

I should invest the earned levels in Silver Knight.

Falteration Wizard has entered a stage of slow development.

Salvatore didn't know any Bronze Rank's Falteration spell. Annan didn't have time to read the Edict School textbook Joseph sent over. He had to read the Rotten Man book first.

If Annan couldn't learn new spells, his wizard level couldn't be immediately transferred into combat power.

After all, the level upgrade was to acquire attribute points, and the wizard upgrade was only to receive spell slots.

Anyway, they would eventually be upgraded to Silver Rank.

It didn't matter which order first.

Since Annan had dealt with advancement concerns, it was now the players' turn.

Fortunately, Annan's speed of clearing this nightmare was swift. It only took him twenty minutes to speed run through the gallery's second level.

He carried the book “Rotten Man” and went to the carriage. When he arrived in Roseburg, Bishop Daryl had just finished lunch shortly.

Obviously, Bishop Daryl was surprised to learn that “Don Juan Geraint” was paying a visit to him. After all, Annan said that he wouldn't be back in five days.

Bishop Daryl was taken aback at his first glimpse at Annan,

“How did you change your profession to Silver Knight?”

Annan was familiar with this reaction.

When he watched the seniors playing games, he would often be surprised: “How are you Level 15!?”

It felt like looking up to a premium player.

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“Oh, you can see it directly?” Annan was a little baffled.

Annan verified his status panel repeatedly that he didn't see any markers on him after becoming a Silver Knight.

“Or, are our churches all Silver Knights?” Annan asked.

If Annan learned that the Silver Sire priests would choose this advancement, he would have been much calmer previously.

But, Bishop Daryl shook his head with a baffled gaze, “No, most people in the church are not even Transcended, such as me.

“Although Transcending can quickly turn ordinary people into big shots, actual big shots don't always choose the path of transcendence.”

“...En, that's understandable.” Annan nodded.

After all, the Transcended in this world wouldn't have a “clean death.”

Not only would the others turn the victim into ashes after death, but also a nightmare would form. All the secrets in the victim's life would be revealed. Moreover, after someone of mortal nature acquired a certain level of status, he could be more influential than Transcended.

In every big family, at least one mortal wouldn't choose the path of transcendence. That was to preserve political sparks.

In other words, it was to offer the option to flee.

Once the big shots decide to go to neighboring countries for various reasons, they could smuggle by boat at will. Unless the king wanted their lives, the Transcended assassins would not be able to pass the border. At most, assassins of mortal nature would be dispatched. But, the assassins of mortal nature wouldn't be able to fight the Transcended of neighboring countries.

Even Annan sometimes suspected that “Annan·Austere-Winter” might be the ordinary person selected to “prepare for emergencies.”

“What about the Transcendeds in the church?” Annan asked expectantly.

Bishop Daryl said relentlessly, “No, and they won't. Our Transcendeds in Silver Sire Church generally prefer to upgrade their profession to the 'Silver Robe Wizard' or other wizard-type professions. That's because the church's main job is to purify nightmares. Purifying nightmares can effectively make us more sensitive to sensing curses. This is the proficiency on high demands for the wizards. Wizards having poor perception tend to face more difficulty to advance.

“Those who can become Silver Knights are those who are extremely pious, extremely fanatical, and extremely rich.”

Speaking of this, Daryl looked at Annan in bafflement and even hesitated, “But now it seems that there should be exceptions...”

Don't look at me like that!?

What else can I do?

I'm put into a desperate spot.

Annan coughed as usual, “My main profession is actually a wizard.”

“But seriously, Silver Knight is a compelling profession.”

Daryl said thoughtfully, “Although it's costly for the fights, you can utilize it as a profession to protect yourself in critical moments.

“Better still, if you cannot advance into the Silver Rank, you can utilize Silver Knight as the main lead to advance into silver. The upper limit of this profession isn't bronze but silver. If it isn't for its demanding advancement requirements, many Transcended will choose it.”

In other words, its upper limit isn't Level 20 but Level 30...

Annan said in deep thoughts, “Does this mean I'm guaranteed to attain Silver Rank?”

“Yup. It's like the wizard apprentice profession that assists in attaining Bronze Rank.”

When Daryl heard this, his expression was a little weird, “But only a pious priest can be transferred to this profession. Your Excellency Annan, if our Silver Sire priest wants to be promoted in the holy order, he has to become a bishop. After being a cardinal bishop, you can no longer possess personal property.”

Now, I probably know why only a pious priest can advance to this profession.

Annan was silent, thinking to himself.

It should be because its attribute requirements were rather strange.

Perception at 12; Will at 8; Constitution at 8.

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Typically speaking, it wasn't hard for the swordsman profession to reach 8 in Constitution at Level 10. But according to this demand, they needed to invest 3 additional attribute points in Will. That made it difficult.

Those qualified had a significant talent gap as compared to the average healthy adult.

Moreover, the average population's Perception attribute was 5, which meant those who weren't trained as wizard apprentices had to clear the nightmare seven times additionally.

But those having the wizard apprentice profession would have progressed deeper into the wizard pathway instead. After all, they were more secure in attaining the Bronze Rank profession that way.

Where would they find the time to slowly temper their bodies and temper their will?

"I know a senior Silver Knight. Many Gold Rank assassins have failed their attempts in his hands."

Daryl sat on a chair and reminisced, "He isn't a bishop, but he is indeed a believer in Silver Sire. He once killed a 'Shadow Hunter' with his own hands, a Gold Rank curse hunter. He can use divine art that is inclined towards offense compared to the other priests. After all, his curse reactivity is at the Transcended level, unlike our ordinary priests who don't store curses with us.

"For example, he can use molten silver coins to form a giant hand to grasp the enemy. This will almost guarantee the opponent's death by turning them into a terrible silver sculpture in the process. He can also shine out dazzling silver light and bring persistent healing effects and buffs to his comrades. The buff effects are beneficial. It can enable the priests whose Strength is at the commoner's level to repel the Bronze Rank Swordsman face-to-face.

"If you have a chance to go to the capital, I can write you an introduction letter."

"I just want to ask."

Annan hesitated for a while, "For that veteran Silver Knight, his roots are...?"

"He is the Noah Kingdom's former Chancellor of the Exchequer."

Speaking of this, Daryl looked at Annan with a vague pity, "He is now the chairman of Noah First Bank and the board member of Noah Second Bank and Iris Bank. But you can rest assured... After all, your fortune will definitely be more than his when you become an adult!"

"..." Annan choked on his saliva for a moment.

Adulthood...? Inheriting Austere-Winter Dukedom?

Annan looked at the golden-toothed fat man with his mouth slightly raised and decided to change the subject decisively, "I'm here cause I want to ask if my guards want to embark on the Transcended road, what do you recommend?"

"Have they decided? Is it their own decision?" Daryl's look was a little serious.

Annan nodded and said with certainty, "Yup. They are all under the swordsman profession. They are in good health and have a solid foundation. But they have no specialties. So I hope to get them advancements with slightly a lower entry standard and a better future. "

"In that case..." Daryl thought for a long time.

He said slowly, "Then, I recommend these three professions 'Guardian,' 'Berserker,' and 'Swordmaster.'

"A guardian is a profession who is proficient in defensive warfare, one-to-many and many-to-one combat. Its promotion requirements are to successfully block more than 10 attacks in a nightmare and have a relatively balanced physical fitness.

"The Berserker lives up to its name. It is powerful in terms of frontal assault. You accumulate more bravery as the battle continues. As your injury worsens, your Strength will continue to increase. To advance into the Berserker profession, you need to have enough Strength and a sturdy Constitution.

Berserker's advanced requirement is to kill the enemy in a badly wounded state in the nightmare and die alongside the enemy.

“Once the Berserker's advanced requirements are met, at least one self-harm type of curse will inevitably appear. If you select that self-harm type of curse, you can smoothly advance into a Berserker.”

As Daryl recalled, he said, “For swordmaster, it is an advancement that specializes in one-on-one combat. It may be the hardest attainment for a swordsman of their age. They first need to hone the Basic Swordsmanship to a certain level. Then, they need to be agile.

“They need to use their learned swordsmanship to kill all enemies without taking any damage. This is almost the only way for all aged swordsmen to change their profession. Moreover, they tend to get a lighter and swifter body than themselves in their nightmares, so this is not hard for them.”

“I see.” Annan nodded.

It seems the swordmaster advancement isn't a viable option.

This was mainly because Annan didn't dare to reveal “Nightmare: Betrayer” to the players for the time being. In “gallery,” Amos didn't have the swordsman profession and no sword in his hand.

However, there seemed to be possibilities for the first two options.

I shall talk to the players when the time arrives and let them choose.

But, this information is quite valuable.

Hahaha, y'all have to pay! (Cracked Voice)

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 165

The players were having dinner together at Delicious Wind Goose's house.

It wasn't only because Old Goose's house was the most spacious. Another reason was that the other players had the habit of visiting to discuss their thoughts or private matters.

Over time, everyone treated it as a norm.

The Old Goose's home had become a landmark building like a temporary headquarters.

Just this morning, all the players had cleared “Nightmare: Gallery” using the strategy summarized by Jiu Er and Delicious Wind Goose.

This was undoubtedly a day worth celebrating!

Because this meant that players could finally gain a foothold in this world even though it was just an entry-level novice dungeon instance!

“The dungeon instance of this game is too difficult!” The players complained at first.

But when they thought deeper about it, the dungeon didn't seem to be overly difficult.

Typically speaking, adventuring unexplored parts of the game as front liners usually took more than two days, unlike their accommodating circumstances now.

With that in mind, they felt embarrassed to complain that this dungeon instance was too difficult.

After all, they overcame the dungeon within two days. If they were to acknowledge it to be difficult, they were in a way mocking themselves being inferior already.

“But don't be too excited. We are just able to clear it, but we haven't unveiled the real ending.

“After the cooldown is over, everyone has to try new routes. After you die twice, you can go through the correct route and get a reward. The purpose is to train ourselves.”

Delicious Wind Goose summed it up like this, “I think that we failed miserably on the first day because we were not mentally prepared and couldn't adapt to the dungeon instance of this world.

“It now appears that the nightmare dungeon instances in this world are a test of resilience rather than skills and IQ.”

“Don't forget acting.” Child God, who played Miss Elle, added, “Acting skills are also fundamental.”

Lin Yiyi whispered, “Actually, I think it feels like Running Man [1].”

(TN: The players were physically running in the dungeon instance too)

She had a wealth of experience in board games, so she is familiar with this situation.

“Yeah, sanity check too.” Jiu Er nodded with lingering fear, “When I saw those paintings, my erosion rate increased a lot. I don't think I will challenge the nightmare with my life. I will focus on clearing it on the first run because of my situation.

“So, the increase in erosion rate is equivalent to losing sanity?”

“But the question is, if the erosion rate goes up, how can they go down?”

Anderson asked worriedly, “Would it be once it's maxed out, we will die on the spot and can't be resurrected?”

Hearing his terrifying assumption, the players went a little quiet for a while.

Indeed, the erosion rate seemed to be increasing slowly.

But just because it increases gradually, the players were a little panicked.

The slower the increase, the more confident the players felt that erosion was a form of injury that wasn't easily afflicted but hard to be cured at the same time.

After each respawn, the erosion was still retained, unlike their health bar that refreshed into the blank slate.

What happens if the erosion rate is full?

DongDong—

At this moment, the players heard someone knocking on the door.

The players shivered inexplicably as if they were caught in an illegal party. But soon, they reacted. It appeared like they just got together to eat a meal with nothing shameful about it.

Garlic Chives, who was closest to the door, reacted and ran over to open the door. Then, the players realized that it was their feudal lord, Don Juan Geraint, who was knocking on the door.

“Why are you all here?” Annan was also a little surprised.

Is this a dinner party?

Does anyone have a birthday?

In this small room, 40 players had crowded together.

There were eight people on the bed, and a group gathered around the table. A few were sitting on the ground. A silly player had a branch in his mouth, acting cool while leaning against the wall.

Annan couldn't help but glance at the eccentric player and remembered his name.

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—Purple Hydrangea.

Hmph, I will send you directly next time there is any dangerous job.

“Delicious Wind Goose, I need something from you. Come out.” Annan called out names one-by-one, “Yiyi, Jiu Er, Wandering Child. You all come out too.”

The four players, who had their names called out, panicked.

It was like going back to the school when the headteacher suddenly came in and called your name.

That tends not to end well.

The higher possibility was to be utilized as temporary labor.

But, when the four players thought of the potential task, they were delighted.

Is my boss giving out affection ratings?!

“Feudal lord, please just call me Old Goose.”

The four players followed Annan out, and Delicious Wind Goose whispered, “That's what my friends call me.”

He had been called “Old Goose,” “Uncle Goose,” and “Baldy!” for a long time.

Having people call him by the full name felt uncomfortable.

It felt like calling someone via the online nickname across the street when meeting a netizen.

Wandering Child hurriedly said along the side, “Don't forget about me! Just call me Child...”

The added suffix sounded a bit shameful.

“Alright,” replied Annan understandingly.

The main reason was that he felt tired of acting.

Jiu Er's and Yiyi's names were still fine.

Except for Hyphen being comical, Annan quite liked the name.

The players followed Annan to the city lord's residence, and Annan offered them to sit.

“I summoned you out today because you have made rapid progress recently.”

Annan said solemnly, “Five days later, Senior Salvatore and I will have a secret plan. We need some helpers, but this plan is important. I need someone more capable.”

When the four players heard this, they were suddenly startled.

Isn't this the legendary hidden mission?

Without giving a chance for the players to think about it, Annan said quickly, “Three days later, you shall clear the nightmare as quickly as possible. Then, follow me to Roseburg. I have made an appointment with Bishop Daryl in Roseburg. He is offering help to reveal an easy nightmare—an easy nightmare dedicated to advancement.

“According to my guess, when you clean up the 'Nightmare: Gallery' again, your strength should peak at ordinary people's level. Then, you're open to using that nightmare to advance. If you can advance smoothly, I will issue an important mission at that time,” said Annan solemnly.

The players were surprised deep down in their hearts.

That's right! The four of them were the only players who had reached Level 9.

Three days later, they would indeed be promoted to Level 10 — the peak level of commoners. The next step was advancement.

—As expected of Lord Don Juan, he has keen eyesight!

But soon, Lin Yiyi realized a problem.

“Is it a we?” She asked cautiously.

Annan nodded seriously.

The beautiful ice-blue pupils shone like the fine gems or a baby Ragdoll's eyes [2].

Annan replied solemnly, “Yes, I asked Bishop Daryl about the nightmare. This nightmare is simple. It allows up to five people to enter at the same time and work together. To be precise, in this nightmare, we need to play the role of the famous wizard and the four guards.”

After Annan heard the specific content of the dungeon instance from Bread Daryl, he had to make some minor adjustments to his previous plan.

So, he had the four players clear Nightmare: Gallery again. Then, take them to Roseburg.

That nightmare was really suitable for advancement!

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 166

Justin's death left a high-quality nightmare for Annan.

According to Bread Daryl's information, the name of this dungeon instance was "Nightmare: Witch Hunt," which was a relatively rare co-op type nightmare.

Dungeon's entry requirements: Bronze Rank wizard of any school and four mortal swordsmen. Satisfying any of the conditions would grant entry by replacing one member of the lineup.

For example, Bread Daryl took the swordsman role. Unfortunately, his experience and insight in clearing the dungeon in a mortal swordsman's shoes were meaningless to Annan. After all, he was a notable priest beyond commoners.

But he could provide Annan information about the dungeon instance's sequence.

—These five people would fight against Justin, who was in his heyday.

Justin held a Mysterious Ritual, which was called a "hunt notice."

If Justin were to send an official hunting statement letter to the opponent three days in advance, and his opponent opened and read the hunting letter, then he could lock on the opponent's trace and soul within these three days.

After three days, if his opponent had not fled the city, the opponent would be labeled as the hunter's target until the sun sets on the seventh day.

Before the hunter(Justin) launched an attack on the hunting target, he would appear invisible (psychologically) to the locked on hunting target.

In a sense, the target would be completely unaware of the hunter. No matter the scouting and detection mean the target could muster, he would ignore the hunter's existence. Only the people around the target could see the hunter normally.

At the same time, the specific location of the target would manifest in the hunter's mind. Even if the target turns invisible or hides, the hunter would know the location.

At this time, Justin had successfully hunted down the two Transcended, having his combat sequence just established.

With that, Justin's ego inflated.

After studying a young Destruction Wizard, he issued a "hunting notice" to the wizard. He had the goal to snatch the wizard's curse.

If the wizard left, then Justin would let him go. But if he didn't take Justin to heart, Justin would attempt to hunt him down.

The Destruction Wizard was the same as his classmates—having an ego and a bad temper.

Although the wizard was only Bronze Rank, he did not choose to escape.

After the wizard received the hunting letter from Justin, he immediately hired four elite swordsmen. When the three-day time limit was approaching, the wizard found a relatively open area (because he was a Destruction Wizard), prepared emergency medicine, food, water, and traps. Then, he got his team into a formation, acting as his eyes. It was a firm declaration that he would fight Justin to death.

The wizard portrayed his big-headed characteristic.

In the end, Justin didn't stand up to this wizard because there was no share of this wizard in his curse vessel collections.

Justin might even be punished violently and escape in a sorry state.

It might be because of this happening that Justin branded the event clearly in his heart.

“Justin” himself was strengthened in this nightmare.

Not only had Justin's body become sturdier with his Strength attribute enhanced, but his resistance to burning and explosion was raised. Since Justin had the unique trait [Curse Sensitive Skin], a tingling sensation would arise if a Transcended power targeted him. In that way, Justin was considered immune to sneak attacks.

At the same time, Justin bore the curse before his death in this nightmare: [Overload Hunger], [Pain Loss], [Break Free], and [Death Is A Dream].

This dungeon instance required only five people to work together. The wizard was responsible for outputting damage and protecting the mortals. On the other hand, the mortals took charge as his points. With that, the wizard had a chance to kill Justin.

Hearing Annan's explanation to “Nightmare: Witch Hunt,” the four players became excited.

This dungeon instance seems fun!

Yiyi and Jiu Er were the most excited among the four.

These two female players happened to be the types whose brains couldn't keep up with the reaction. In the previous nightmare dungeon instance, they were either stuck or suffered a sanity drop (rise in erosion rate).

It was a rare opportunity for them to encounter a dungeon instance which they could charge head-on. Of course, they immediately became excited.

Immediately, Annan first sent a batch of affection ratings to the players according to their dungeon progress. After having the four players' consent, Annan withdrew a large amount of affection ratings from them in the cost of delivering them info on the three prerequisites for “profession transfer.”

After listening to these three requirements, the four players reached enlightenment.

“So that's how it goes.”

“Indeed, the gallery dungeon instance is inconvenient to complete the advancement.”

“I think it's mainly because you can't find a weapon.”

“Nope, it's mainly because no enemy can be found.”

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After a quiet discussion, the four suddenly realized something.

Delicious Wind Goose asked Annan, “How many times has “Nightmare: Witch Hunt” been purified?”

“There are about eight times left for purification. That's enough for us to clear the nightmare for one round only.”

Annan knew very well what the players were thinking. He appreciated that the four players thought of sharing this opportunity with the rest.

Annan happily assigned them some affection rating, which almost recovered their affection ratings to how it previously was before the charges.

“In these three days, the four of you can first discuss what professions you plan to advance to. My personal opinion is to try to have all three professions distributed among your group.”

Annan continued, “In the morning three days later, you should clear Nightmare: Gallery as quickly as possible. Then we will get in the carriage and head to Roseburg.

“I will personally host the advancement ritual for you.”

Annan's inner thoughts: I will carry you in this process. [1] You can even just be away from the keyboard and wait for me to do the job.

Annan was confident.

However, the four players didn't trust Annan's combat effectiveness a lot.

“—Why does it feel like Dead by Daylight?”

“—Obviously not. Dead by Daylight is having one person hunting for four people. This is the case where four of us are looking for the killer.”

“—Worse still, we have to protect Young Master Don Juan.”

“—Yes, at least two people must stay with Young Master Don Juan. Otherwise, the opponent may set up an ambush on our losing condition.”

“—Nor should we be too scattered. With the game mechanic typically goes, we will definitely not be able to beat that killer.”

“—But even if you can't beat the enemy, you have to grind our parry count on enemy attacks.”

“—But, we will fail in achieving not getting hit while protecting Don Juan, right?”

“—Don Juan will be slow us down. It is unrealistic to sustain no injuries in this dungeon. We have to be extra prepared. On the one hand, we should still make preparations to overcome the challenge to sustain no injuries. At the same time, we must also use the dungeon to grind our parry count.”

The four players published an encrypted post, discussing silently and intensely among themselves.

They didn't trust Annan's combat experience.

After all, Annan looked too young. He wasn't so much the captain but like Athena.

Indeed, it was the Athena who needed protection in typical game storylines.

But the four of them obviously didn't know.

Their Lord “Athena” was now peeking at their post.

Annan was like a class teacher who hid near the back window and peered silently into the classroom like a phantom.

...Fuck. Since you think I'm Athena, if the boss is too simple, then I will give you trouble myself.

Annan squinted his eyes, thinking silently in his heart.

No, no, this wasn't vindictive.

This was selfless love.

In fact, the players' performance in this dungeon instance would dictate their curse.

So Annan had to give chances for the players to perform~

In this way, the players would get a more rare and powerful curse!

There would be no way to find a teammate like Annan who had excellent acting skills, could carry the game and wasn't afraid of being beaten up.

Soon, the three-day-long waiting time was over.

After the four of them went online, it took an hour and a half to clear “Nightmare: Gallery” and hurried to the carriage.

Annan was looking at the four players with a smile, “Well, your efficiency is pretty high. It's pretty early now. After we get to Roseburg, we can go to Bishop Daryl for lunch. If your progress goes well...

“How about we have a special barbecue in Roseburg tonight?”

[1] “Carrying” is a term used in team games where one person wins the match for everyone else.

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 167

[Falling in a nightmare. The dungeon instance is being generated.]

[Dungeon instance difficulty is easy. You can enter up to eight times.]

[The current purification progress is 2/10]

[The total erosion rate of the team is 36%. Dungeon instance difficulty increased by 36%. Nightmare mutation probability increased by 36%.]

[This dungeon instance has no checkpoint. The erosion rate is increased by 1% for each death. You will be forced out of the dungeon instance upon death.]

[This dungeon instance provides a plot introduction and no decryption rewards.]

[Dungeon instance clearance reward: Profession (wizard) increased by 1 level]

[Loading completed.]

Annan's consciousness gradually came back with his strength quickly recovered.

Just as he was about to open his eyes, Annan heard Justin's whisper, "Enough. I don't want to remember it anymore... My failure..."

Then, Annan suddenly woke up.

It was like waking up in a shallow dream.

Annan noticed that he was in the carriage at the moment, leaning against the carriage's side door, and fell asleep.

He yanked "his" hair hard and pulled a handful of it.

"Blond hair..." Annan murmured and began to check the items with him.

Soon, the curse items' details invaded his vision:

[The Mouth of Deflagration]

[Type: Weapon/orb (Dark blue)]

[Description: Contains a magic orb imbued with explosive power. After activation, it can seek out the enemy and attack by itself. The attack mode can be switched.]

[Effect: Once a day, place it at a spot to become a magic eye (ward). The maximum charge of the ward is 60. The ward recovers 1 charge every second. You may consume 6 charges to activate "Scorching Sight," consume 18 charges to activate "Fire Orb," and consume 60 charges to activate "Deflagration Light."]

[Cost: When the ward is recovered, the user's erosion rate will increase by 3%.]

[Fervor]

[Description: The armband contains searing power. You will get burned if you hold it.]

[Type: Accessory/armband (Purple)]

[Effect: Permanently increase the damage of all searing elements and flame elements you cause by 30%. For its active use, you may trigger an explosion by expending this item.]

[Cost: All spells related to the searing and flame elements consume an additional 50% mana value.]

[Venom – Pain Amplification] * 3

[Type: Weapon/throwable object/dagger (Light blue)]

[Description: The aquamarine thin-bladed dagger is exceptionally fragile.]

[Effect: The dagger breaks immediately after attacking. The "Pain Amplification" effect will be applied to the target every three seconds. The effect is equivalent to the Destruction spell of the same name.]

[Cost: Using the dagger to parry, deflect, and block attacks will fail for sure.]

"This wizard is kind of rich." Annan checked on the three curse vessels above blue rarity and sighed in surprise.

In addition, his robe, gloves, boots, and vest were all curse vessels with minor effects and costs. But these curse vessels were standard equipment. The effect had consistently "provided additional mana value," so there was no point in diving into the details for the time being.

Even his curse vessel, a bronze ring inlaid with ruby, had additional attributes!

The gems inlaid on it seem to be some kind of high-grade curse vessel. Every day when the sun sets, the accessory would apply "heal minor wounds" on the wizard once. The effect was equivalent to the Idol spell of the same name.

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Besides that, Annan also found three reagents in his inner pocket. One of them looked like a frozen Black Fire, and the remaining two were utterly unknown to Annan.

For items that did not contain curses, Annan had no attribute hints provided.

So even Annan himself didn't know what the other two reagents in the wizard's possessions were used for.

Moreover, in addition to these curse vessels and potions...

Annan also found a money bag on him.

There was a wad of paper money in it. Annan realized the value was more than 40 pounds with a slight fumble. In the other pocket hanging in the carriage, there were 13 silver coins "loose change."

What the hell? Is this fellow a noble's son?

"Why did you provoke him?" Annan had mixed feelings for Justin.

Probably what Justin hunted down before were stray Transcended or poor Transcended.

But this wizard is obviously not an average Joe.

Did you see his equipment and that armband with a terrifying effect?

Annan couldn't help being thankful, but fortunately, Justin's hunt was unsuccessful.

But speaking of it, why would Annan play the role of the nightmare owner's enemy this time?

Annan came into deep thoughts.

As he opened the carriage, he saw four big macho men lying on the ground outside the carriage.

Up to now, two of the four players had woken up.

—It was Delicious Wind Goose and Yiyi.

They struggled to stand up. Annan got off the carriage and helped them off the ground one by one.

After the four players gradually came to their senses, the plot introduction of this dungeon instance slowly appeared in front of them:

[Arthur Searing-Fang is Carney Casting's recent prey.]

[No wizard irritates more quickly than the Destruction Wizard. The never-ending fierce curse flows through them, and they can't calm down, nor can they see through the conspiracies of others. Therefore, the Destruction Wizard is the easiest to be hunted among all the wizards.]

[Carney originally wanted to use the “hunt notice ritual” to force the young wizard alone out of the city and then intercept the wizard from outside the city. But his plan was self-defeating: Arthur chose to stay, and he hired four guards. This blatant move incited fear in Carney. Carney realized that Arthur wanted to hunt him down in return.]

[In the end, Carney failed the hunt because of timidity and hesitation at the critical moment.]

[It was precisely because of this failed hunt that interrupted the last part of Carney's “Slayer” advancement ritual: successfully killed a wizard, a swordsman, a priest, a hunter, a lurker, a male elderly over eighty years old, and a girl under eight years old within a month.]

[But Carney had no chance to try again—he had been wanted by Swamp's Black Tower and Silver Sire Church.]

[This failed hunt completely changed the trajectory of Kani's destiny.]

[If he had successfully advanced to silver, someone should be willing to recruit him.]

[But he finally gave up his plan to advance into Silver Rank. Instead, he chose to stay incognito.]

[The soon-to-be-advanced “Slayer” Carney Casting was dead. But the curse hunter Justin, who Carney killed, “came to live” again—]

[“The only failed hunt in my life. But even if I do it again, do I have a chance?”]

After these explanations faded away, new lines of text appeared before Annan again:

[Main mission: End this hunt.]

Immediately, two mission requirements emerged below it:

[End this hunt as soon as possible.]

[Arthur Searing-Fang must survive.]

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 168

Eh?

Is Justin's real name called Carney Casting?

Annan was a little surprised.

That said, Justin's acting skill was pretty good.

Although Annan knew Justin wasn't a good person, he didn't expect this fellow to be a retired murderer.

Annan hadn't noticed that Justin had a murdering intention on him at all.

Or to say, this is not acting.

Is he beaten up into fear?

Annan remembered that nightmare was born based on harbored regrets even until death.

For Carney Casting's regret, is he seeking a quick death?

That way, he could have ended his life of harming others and himself long ago.

But if Carney kills "me" successfully, we can't fulfill the mission. Also, Arthur and his four guards have to survive.

We can't clear the dungeon by intentionally feeding the enemy.

Wait, I shouldn't think so much about it.

This is just an easy dungeon instance. It doesn't provide any decryption reward, so it's useless to overthink it.

Also, the dungeon instance that does not provide decryption rewards may have different rules than other dungeon instances.

The scar-faced brawny man with the name [Jiu Er] floating on his head carefully glanced at Annan, who was in deep thoughts at the spot, "Feudal lord?"

"Ya, it's me." Annan recovered his senses quickly.

Annan asked Jiu Er, "What kind of person do I look like now? Describe my appearance and main characteristics."

If Arthur Searing-Fang survived, he would become a big shot. Apart from anything else, his personal belongings alone revealed that he was a rich person.

Annan and other players would probably meet him in the future.

Annan was in the live broadcast room. When he asked this question, the players vaguely realized that they needed to pay attention to Arthur's intelligence. Thus, when they encounter Arthur in the future, they will notice it as soon as possible.

"You now look like... a handsome young man but appear fanatical. You're thin, not tall, and with scary eyes." Jiu Er described it vaguely.

Annan listened to her description, feeling that he needed some wild inspiration to understand it.

Delicious Wind Goose on the side couldn't stand the description either.

“Let me do it,” Old Goose commented before explaining to Annan. “This is Jiu Er. She isn't familiar with this kind of stuff...”

“You now look like a noble young man with golden curly hair, wearing a red and white standing collar cloak. You appear conspicuous, about 1.7 meters tall with a long face, fair skin, and special pupils like flowing lava. When you breathe, you will breathe out a faint white mist. It smells of sulfur.”

“En, I see.” Annan nodded approvingly.

He glanced at the name on Delicious Wind Goose's head and asked, “Are you Old Goose?”

“Yes.” Delicious Wind Goose nodded repeatedly, then introduced Annan, “This is Yiyi, and this is Child.”

Ha, you all are too inexperienced.

If I'm an NPC, now I should be wary of why you can see others' real names.

Annan shook his head silently.

Annan reminded the players, “I know you all are familiar with each other and can easily recognize each other. But if you aren't with me, it is best not to do this in front of strangers. Everyone should introduce themselves.

“Otherwise, they may suspect that you have a curse vessel capable of finding out real names. Consequently, you may be targeted or killed.”

Hearing this, Delicious Wind Goose's heart shuddered.

Only then did he realize these settings that players were used to were so unnatural in the eyes of the NPC.

If this wasn't Don Juan Geraint, the person would have become hostile and conspired against the player group, turning the players into cannon fodder.

After all, it was fine to have the guard dead but not the wizard in this dungeon instance.

So Delicious Wind Goose nodded seriously.

“I will notify the rest when I go back.”

—Actually, you don't need to do that.

Players are now watching their live broadcast.

They learned this information at the first moment.

Annan knew about this.

It was because Annan lurked in the live broadcast room, ready to peek at the screen at any time.

“We shall spread out first.”

Annan commanded, "Get down the carriage. I'm standing on the side far from the road and close to the woods. At this distance, crossbow's arrows shot from the woods can't reach here. Yiyi, your figure is relatively tall. You shall stand on my left. Focus on dealing with ambushing arrows, then stay on high alert in the direction of the woods with me.

"Jiu Er and Old Goose should hide somewhere. The requirement is that the two of you shall hide farther apart, but take note to have vision of each other and also the rest.

"Child, you are the shortest and thinnest. You try to see if you can go up the tree. You will be in charge of the carriage's back. Gain a height advantage and cover my blindspot. Child and Yiyi, you two shall watch out for each other.

"Listen well, team. Don't move away from your position at your own accord, lest one of your partners can't find you or get assassinated.

"I think you are all equipped with a light crossbow and dye balls. If there is no friendly unit in your shooting direction, shoot with your light crossbow. If there is any friendly unit in your path, shoot with the dye ball and call out your party member's name. Those who hear their name called immediately dodge away from the spot before reassessing your surroundings.

"Remember. It's fine for Child and Yiyi to give warnings. However, Old Goose and Jiu Er try to keep silent unless you are certain that the enemy is by your side."

Annan went utterly beyond the players' initial expectations.

Annan commanded in an orderly manner, showing the professional qualities of an excellent commander.

Annan appeared like a twenty-five years old blond youth filled with surging self-confidence and unquestionable leadership aura.

It wasn't too surprising if Annan was indeed a twenty-five years old wizard.

But the problem was that Annan was only twelve years old in the eyes of the players.

—He was indeed an elementary school student.

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Are all elementary school students in other worlds monsters these days?

"We have a clear goal. The opponent is capable of instantly killing any of you. He must have long-range attacks such as crossbows or bows. To me, he is completely invisible.

"So if we take any one point as the center and look around, we will only be killed by him one by one. So we have to reverse our lineup. We shall look inside from all sides, observe each other's position, and utilize Child and Yiyi as baits.

"As long as I can determine the general direction, I will directly launch an area attack. You are responsible for alerting me whether the enemy survived and correcting the attacking trajectory for me.

"The goal this time is to defeat the enemy with one casualty or less. Do you understand?"

Annan's eyes were sharp. He spoke swiftly but loud and clear, "Why are you dumbfounded on the spot? Get in position quickly!"

"Yes!" The four guards responded quickly and then dispersed.

The players who watched the live broadcast were a little bit stunned.

"—Why is Don Juan so professional?"

"—I don't know. He shouldn't have learned this kind of survival skill at his age."

"—This isn't a survival skill. It's already proficiency in managing home base and setting up guard posts!"

"—I think the Gerant family may be a military force."

"—That's probable."

Annan looked at the comments and kept silent.

This was a strategy he had already thought of before the nightmare.

Although this dungeon instance was here to upgrade the players quickly, it was also part of the process to showcase his strength and identity.

Annan had to take off "the Don Juan Geraint's mask" eventually.

Moreover, "David's identity" was at a rare spot of not intersecting with Annan Austere-Winter's identity.

Annan had started his arrangements.

He had to gradually show the abnormality, revealing his true identity to the players bit by bit.

He would have the players gradually start to doubt his true identity but make them nervous, excited and avoid having them felt deceived.

It appeared complex, but it could be done easily as long as it was apparent to the players that their benefits were far more remarkable if Annan changed back to his true identity.

Also, Annan had to let the players know that he didn't deliberately deceive them, that their relationship had been like this from the beginning. Then, everything would work.

Simple and straightforward.

The players were now in a situation similar to "amnesia," just like Annan.

They had no idea what their true identity was.

When others said they were "Don Juan Geraint" private soldiers, Annan didn't deny it but didn't admit it either.

Annan just said, "These people are my guards."

—But why couldn't they be Annan Austere-Winter's guards?

After all, the real Don Juan escort either escaped or died.

There were cleaned death, easily traceable.

At that time, the players would suddenly realize: Ah, it turns out that I'm Austerian.

Do you think what you think is true?

I will give you the information that makes you grow suspicious of me!

When did you have the illusion that I didn't use misdirection?

Sure enough, even Annan didn't utilize the bullet text to incite momentum. Players had already begun to discuss the status of "Don Juan Geraint" in the family and the situation that the Gerant family might face now.

After all, the players would tend to use some minute details to speculate about the plot that was beyond reach.

"—Feudal lord!"

But at this moment, Annan suddenly heard Yiyi's nervous voice.

"...That person...isn't he?"

Did you see it?

That's fast?

Annan was a little surprised.

Then he lowered his head without a trace and glanced at the direction Yiyi was pointing with her chin.

He assessed twice repeatedly, but there was no one there.

So, Annan immediately shouted, "Attack!"

He opened his clenched right hand.

A dark gold gemstone burning with flames rose rapidly like the sun. The brilliance was getting brighter and brighter. When it rose to the highest point, it turned into a huge, somewhat illusory eyeball (ward).

The pupil of the eyeball was like the pupil of a snake!

At this moment, Jiu Er, Yiyi, and Child all immediately attacked in that direction.

But, Annan still didn't see where the enemy was.

It felt like he was a Starcraft player who was oblivious to the obvious.

But Annan quickly realized that the three of them were shooting dye balls!

This meant that Delicious Wind Goose and Carney Casting were close to each other!

The distance was so close that friendly fire was plausible!

"Don't move. I'll go over and take a look."

Annan replied decisively in a low volume.

Yiyi was frightened by this command as if her soul escaped her body.

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Yup, it was indeed an easy dungeon.

But Delicious Wind Goose felt a heavier pressure when facing Carney Casting in comparison to Nightmare: Gallery!

Old Goose thought at first that this “hunter” should be the kind of tall and thin man with scars on his face.

But after encountering “Carney” face-to-face, he realized that he might have underestimated this opponent.

“Carney” was a giant shrouded in burning flame with a height of about two meters. His face was full of burn marks. His almost broken neck had evident traces of being cut by a blade. In addition, there were some fresh scars on his body, as if they were injuries he suffered not long ago.

But this was impossible.

One-third of these injuries were enough to kill him.

Is this all the injuries he suffered during his lifetime?

Such a thought flashed through Delicious Wind Goose's mind.

Carney looked like it had been enlarged 1.5 times. Even the buttons on his coat and the rope on his boots had been enlarged in proportion.

That also signified that the searing long sword behind Carney was bigger and heavier!

Carney's body slumped slightly. His left hand gently pressed on the ground, and the muscles on his arm were bulging.

Immediately, he pounced agilely. After spinning for a circle in the air, he slammed a heavy sword at Delicious Wind Goose!

Delicious Wind Goose felt a great sense of danger.

His instinct told him that he had no way to block this slash.

Without hesitation, he jumped out to the side, rolled on the ground after landing. Then, he immediately stood up.

The next moment, the sky behind him suddenly lit up. Three dye balls scattered around Carney, bursting out three shining clouds of green, red, and pink smoke.

But Carney reacted before being bombarded by the smoke.

He altered his slashing motion into thrusting at the ground.

Immediately after, an azure blue halo extended from the sword tip, preventing the sword tip from being directly inserted into the ground and causing damage to the blade. With that, the sword supported Carney's entire weight steadily.

With that, Carney elevated from the ground, avoiding these dye balls.

With the sword tip propping him up, Carney launched himself to the air like a pole vault.

That gave him the opening to kick at the laid-down Delicious Wind while in mid-air!

Are you from a gymnastics team?!

How is this hunter proficient in close combat?!

Delicious Wind Goose almost screamed out loud.

Old Goose could only kneel on the ground, holding the sword with his left hand to block Carney's kick.

With this strength assaulting him, Old Goose staggered back. He could barely stand on his ground.

But as Carney's legs landed firmly, he slashed his long sword horizontally.

A scorching wave of fire flashed in the air along with the sound of a whirring wind.

Delicious Wind Goose lay down straight back in a sorry state. That put him into a momentary trance as he barely dodged the attack.

At this moment, Carney retracted the sword.

He stepped forward, with the sword in his hand directed at Delicious Wind Goose's neck. Consequently, Delicious Wind Goose was forced to roll backward.

Carney used the same trick again.

Then, he pounced again, turned over in the air, and delivered a heavy slash!

This time, he utilized a complete set of martial arts.

The scorching sword wind whizzed past!

Delicious Wind Goose released his weapon, knelt on the ground, and exerted force on his knees to lower his upper body backward. The sword wind swept over his head. He even heard the crackling sound of his hair and the creak of his back caused by the violent movement.

Old Goose performed the series of block and dodge barely. All in all, no attacks landed on him yet.

After watching Carney perform the same skill, he breathed deeply in place. Delicious Wind Goose hurriedly climbed to his feet and didn't forget to pick up the sword again.

“Help!!!” Delicious Wind Goose burst into anger, shouting.

Come and read on our website [wuxia worldsite](#). Thanks

Immediately he heard Yiyi's very panicked shout, “Draw the monster's aggro [1]! Hold the boss monster at the spot!

“Don Juan is coming over!”

Motherfucker—

Don't you see! This fellow could have killed me in one slash...

Delicious Wind Goose looked at Hunter Carney, who seemingly had his cooldown refreshed. He stared back at Delicious Wind Goose with those bloodshot eyes, making Old Goose's heart trembled.

Why is this aggro locked on me for no reason?

I didn't even hit you once with my sword!

Suddenly, Delicious Wind Goose had an idea.

“Let him come! You all come too!”

He shouted, “This boss won't run at all. Come over and grind your block count on attacks!”

“I'm coming!”

“You hold on!”

Enthusiastic voices came from the other players immediately.

Damn it. You don't come when I ask for your help. But, when there's something to grind, you immediately come over.

Are you all barbaric monkeys? You're no different to them!

Delicious Wind Goose had the urge to curse out loud.

But the next moment, he suddenly heard Yiyi's voice, “Lower your head, Old Goose!”

Old Goose lowered his head subconsciously. An arrow with strong wind shot out from his back, firmly nailed at Carney's right shoulder, holding the sword!

The distance between Carney and Yiyi was about forty meters.

The crossbow's might at this distance was trustworthy.

It would be great if it translated to a headshot kill. Delicious Wind Goose secretly called it a pity.

With his shoulder hit, Carney's towering body was shaken back by the impact.

But the damage seemed to be insufficient to make him drop his weapon.

The next moment, Carney's bloodshot eyes moved away from Delicious Wind Goose and turned to stare at Yiyi.

His left hand slowly reached his waist.

Delicious Wind Goose saw it. There was a tiny(compared to Carney's size) but very delicate silver hand crossbow.

Old Goose's pupils shrank.

He immediately activated [Charge] to interrupt Carney to switch weapons.

“Which area is he in?”

But at this moment, an urgent but somewhat arrogant tone came from behind him. “Say the color!”

Delicious Wind Goose froze for a moment and then realized that this was the wizard Don Juan Geraint played!

“The intersection of red and green!”

It was Wandering Child who reported.

When Child heard Annan's voice, he immediately added, “Seven steps in front of Old Goose!”

At the moment, the notification sounded on the battlefield, a scorching ray shot above Delicious Wind Goose's head in the air!

It was as precise as to how surgeons operated with their scalpel.

When Annan couldn't see the enemy, he seemed to have activated wallhacks and hit Hunter Carney!

The ray slashed horizontally, and the affected trees were light on fire in an instant.

Delicious Wind Goose felt very clearly that a burst of hot air hit his face. His facial skin quickly became dry.

Even as Carney tried to dodge backward, it only caused the scorch mark to move down from the neck to the chest and abdomen.

A dark scorch mark appeared between his chest and abdomen, along with the crackling sound and burning smell!

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Chapter 170: Just Die, Thank You!

After the ray attack, Hunter Carney's upper body was directly burned out.

The scorching ray cut through his arms, chest, and abdomen.

But something unexpected had happened.

The seemingly fatal damage only cut Carney's arm to that point of having bones exposed.

Even if the flesh turned black, Carney did not faint, and he didn't die because of it. On the contrary, it was like he couldn't feel the pain at all.

Moreover, Carney's injuries were recovering in haste.

The incredible recovery speed could be seen with the naked eye!

Under Delicious Wind Goose's horrified gaze, he could see the burnt black scars on Carney's body had pinkish muscles squirming out like worms. The bizarre flesh waved fanatically in the air. Once the two bundles of flesh could touch each other, they would fuse and intertwine with each other.

After being hit by Annan's ray cannon, Carney's attention shifted to Annan completely.

Moreover, for the first time, there was an expression on his face.

It was an expression of immense resentment.

The next moment, Delicious Wind Goose suddenly felt that his body was no longer under his control.

He immediately realized that he seemed to have entered a computer graphic (CG) scene.

Delicious Wind Goose looked back.

He saw Arthur's handsome and unrestrained face with disdainful pity.

Obviously, he could see Carney.

When Carney was almost cut in half by a ray, the crossbow around his waist, the reagent in the vest, and the hidden weapon were burned entirely.

After being hit by "Scorching Sight," Carney's invisibility was broken.

Carney seemed to realize it himself.

After being hurt by it, Carney seemed to give up his intention to remain stealthy.

At the next moment, Carney spoke.

From his leaky throat, there was an intermittent voice, like a voice coming from the abyss, "Kill me."

"No, I won't kill you. Friend."

As Arthur said, he flicked his armband lightly and said in a relaxed tone, "I stay not because I'm planning to hunt you, nor am I angry. I have lived to this day, and I have long been accustomed to being pursued by assassins. So I will just stay because I don't like being threatened."

To Wandering Child, it felt familiar.

It was like some of his wealthy friends pretending to show off a new watch inadvertently.

Look, look at me, look at this thing. It's so valuable~

It was about such a silent cry.

Arthur opened his arms and said with a smile, "Because our identities, our lives, and the levels we pursue are different. The peak of your life is the Silver Rank. But I'm different. I want to advance into Gold Rank.

"You dare to murder because you have nothing. But I'm different. I have to care about my reputation.

"Just say it, my friend. I didn't want to hurt you because of how you have nothing to do with me. If you leave today, you will never see me for the second time in your life. I didn't kill you because I was

cowardly stupid. It's because of the curse you carry; I'm not interested in your curse at all. I have a strict plan. Otherwise, how can I advance to gold?

“But if I leave you alone and don't absorb your curse, it will become a nightmare and pollute the environment. This is a serious sin.

“So, if I kill you, you will become a stain on me. Your body will also be dug, made into specimens, and used as evidence. I don't think you can find big shots and have your dark histories erased by those advanced into Silver Rank. Friend... No secret in this world can be hidden from those 'Prophet.' It's just that they think there is no need to tell certain matters to others.”

Arthur smiled, with the brilliance of lava flowing in his eyes, and smiled slyly, “In other words, you are not worth the price—but I am.

“I don't want to chop up your corpse to feed the animals. I don't have time to cleanse your nightmare. Whether it's burying you or throwing you into the sea, they will be able to find your corpse again. For God's sake, don't die. If you want to die, go to a quiet place and commit suicide. Don't cause trouble for me.”

Arthur sighed and shook his head slowly.

“I'm telling the truth. Since I have opened up so blatantly, can you go now?”

Arthur smiled graciously, “If you are angry because your equipment is damaged, I can compensate you 50 pounds. Please take it as your medical expenses for me to increase my combat experience.

“If you don't leave, I will dismember your limbs and send you back to the police station in the city,” said Arthur softly.

There was no hatred in Arthur's eyes.

Even the anger coming from the attack had dissipated. For a Destruction Wizard, controlling his rage was undoubtedly hard.

Unless he wasn't angry in the first place.

Indeed, Arthur had not been provoked from the very beginning.

He didn't even ask Carney's name.

On Carney's side, his face became more and more distorted.

Anger, greed, jealousy, and hatred were mixed. The red flame burning on his body gradually turned black.

“Kill me, Arthur! Do you think I will be grateful for your forgiveness?”

“I don't want to live in humiliation and an ordinary life!”

“Either you kill me or let me kill you!”

It was a resentful and fanatical roar.

Carney's body began to swell. All the wounds in his body began to bleed at the same time.

The smile on Arthur's face gradually faded.

Because at this time, Annan gained back control over the wizard's body.

Annan soon came to an understanding after listening to the CG scene.

Why was this nightmare not "Carney hunting Wizard Arthur" but "Wizard Arthur against Carney?"

Because Carney's resentment wasn't that he had failed to hunt Arthur.

But something more pathetic.

—He couldn't even die.

He was not beaten to death by Arthur and then escaped in a sorry state.

Instead, Arthur repeatedly burned Carney and exhausted his regenerative power from the curse "ultrahigh-speed regeneration." In the end, Arthur spared him.

It could be even worse. His limbs were dismembered, and he was thrown back into the city.

After Carney died, he subconsciously didn't dare to challenge Arthur again.

As long as Arthur could kill him, it could be regarded as an end to his resentment.

He said that he "definitely doesn't want to live in humiliation and an ordinary life!"

Because he had lived like this once.

Arthur had beaten him to the point that he had utterly lost his courage.

He even began to fear failure. Even in the nightmare after death, he no longer dared to challenge Arthur.

He also stopped hunting afterward. This should be the reason.

"—But Arthur and I have different opinions." Annan said nonchalantly, "I don't need to evade responsibility to kill trash like you. So what if I kill you?"

"You don't know what price I paid! You don't know what I sacrificed." Carney growled, his voice becoming more and more inhuman.

His spine grew slowly, and bat-like wings slowly grew behind him. His figure continued to enlarge.

Is this a demon? Yiyi was in panic and wanted to raise her crossbow to shoot.

But Annan stopped her.

"Don't move. Wait until he finishes transforming."

Annan said calmly, "After defeating him like this, the curse you can choose will be stronger."

Boss, what we worry about is that we can't beat it! The four players cried out from the bottom of their hearts.

But Annan didn't panic.

He took out a few silver coins from his arms, played with them in the palm of his hand, quietly watching the Carney transformation.

Don't you know that transformation is a death flag?

Bread Daryl once told me divine art has bonus damage to "demon" enemies.

Moreover, although Arthur was a Destruction Wizard, he did not advance to silver, so he didn't oppose a specific school of spells.

Annan's breathing became slower. The ice-white mist slowly exuded out from his mouth and nose with his breathing. The faint blue brilliance also rose at the bottom of his eyes.

"Almost done." Annan looked at the four agitated players and said suddenly, "Stay away and retreat behind the carriage.

"Since I can see him, you all aren't needed. You can come back after I mutilate him."

Don't get in the way.

Just die, thank you.

The players clearly understood Annan's intentions.

They looked at the muscular demon, who was nearly three meters high and burned with black flames. Then, they looked at Annan, who didn't even have a piece of leather armor.

It wasn't that Annan didn't have enough damage. After all, Annan killed Gerald in front of them.

But this distance is too close, right?

For a wizard, being within thirty meters of an enemy of this size doesn't seem okay.

If Annan still had the energy to read the bullet texts, he would complain.

—What do you know? Dumbo.

I have to get closer so that my magic can hit.

And do you think I'm here to deal with his nonsense?

I'm charging my magic eye (ward)...