

Righteous Ps 191

## **The Righteous Player(s) C191– His Royal Highness Albert**

Chapter 191: His Royal Highness Albert

In the evening, the falling snow started to pile up.

Perhaps because of the dim daylight, the Roseburg streets became empty.

Annan's carriage wasn't spacious. Lin Yiyi and Jiu Er sat on his left and right because the three of them weren't big in size. Opposite the trio were Salvatore and Wandering Child.

As for Delicious Wind Goose, he was the carriage's coach.

Indeed, Annan just learned that this man could drive a carriage.

In the beginning, Annan was still wondering whether or not to split into two carriages—borrowing one carriage from Roseburg in advance.

But in that case, Annan was worried that he might put the coach of the next carriage in danger when the catastrophe broke out.

Fortunately, Delicious Wind Goose proposed that he might be able to drive a carriage privately with Annan.

The two of them secretly tried it once and found that it worked.

This could not be better.

Annan immediately revised the previous plan.

After all, letting ordinary people participate in such a dangerous plan undoubtedly put their lives in jeopardy.

If the coach was in danger, Annan had to save him too. If everyone were in trouble together, it would be a distraction that would jeopardize Annan. The coach would get in the way, no matter what.

For the players, Annan could just let them be.

If you die, so be it. I can resurrect you later.

According to Annan's speculation, this might be the skill that Delicious Wind Goose had trained diligently in his reality during this period.

Delicious Wind Goose seems to be a fairly well-known streamer, at least to the extent of being a celebrity. Therefore, he should have friends in the circle of coach riding. Hence, he might have gotten the chance to train on coach riding in a quick course and then utilize the powerful Transcended physique to produce good results.

“I haven't seen you for a few days, and you have already embarked on the path of transcendence.”

Looking at the few, Salvatore put on a complex expression, seemingly thinking of something, “Do you have any plans for your future?”

"We will continue to serve the feudal lord." The person who answered politely was Lin Yiyi, who was sitting on Annan's left.

She quickly replied, "It was the feudal lord who led us on the path of transcendence, and we would want to honor this kindness. If one day we have to leave the city where the feudal lord is located, then it must be the lord's order."

Lin Yiyi's implication was to remind Annan, "remember to bring us along if you want to leave."

Lest they had to venture a long way to find their husbando...no wait, it was their protagonist.

Jiu Er on the side nodded with a smile and said, "Yup."

Wandering Child couldn't sit still after sitting in the carriage for a long time and couldn't talk. He couldn't help but lift the curtains and peer out. With that, the snow came in the carriage along with the cold wind.

Salvatore reached out curiously to catch the snowflake.

He was a little excited about this snow.

Swamp's Black Tower must be quite far away from the North Sea Territory.

"The street feels so quiet today." Wandering Child put the heavy curtain back and sighed.

Lin Yiyi's face changed suddenly, and she stepped on his foot, "Stop your babbling! Don't give us bad luck!"

"Speak carefully, Child God," Delicious Wind Goose couldn't help but laugh as he listened to the movement behind him, "If there is another black premium car...Fuck?! [1]"

Before Delicious Wind Goose finished his words, he suddenly exclaimed, "There's really that?"

"What's wrong?" Annan couldn't help but ask.

"Nothing, feudal lord."

Delicious Wind Goose calmed down, "I saw a row of black carriages parked in front of the church."

"Black?" Hearing this, Salvatore was startled.

He asked, "Can you see the embossing?"

"Yes, very clear." Delicious Wind Goose quickly replied, "It's a golden lion head."

"It's the royal's carriage," Salvatore replied immediately.

Annan noticed that several people in the carriage were panicking for a moment.

But it wasn't the panic to see the prince, but the panic of "Wait, is this monster coming out, already?"

In short, Delicious Wind Goose quickly stopped the carriage.

He turned around and asked softly, "What shall we do, feudal lord?"

“Let's get off here.” Annan quickly ordered, “It's only a few steps away from the church. Anyway, there is no snow accumulating here.

“In addition, Old Goose, remember to park the carriage on the roadside. Then, lead the horse in through the side door. Remember to tell them it is Don Juan Geraint's horse.”

Since it was Delicious Wind Goose's first time as a coach driver, Annan could not help but give his reminder.

Fortunately, Delicious Wind Goose was quick-witted and trustworthy. If Jiu Er were the coach, Annan wouldn't be so at ease.

Several people got off the carriage with Annan.

Annan saw the chubby bishop greet a pair of father and daughter at the door as he approached the church.

The middle-aged man was tall, more than 185 centimeters, with broad shoulders. However, his figure seemed to be thin. He wore a pair of thin-rimmed glasses, exuding a literary vibe and a sense of calmness of the boss.

But the most noticeable feature was his always frowning brow and dark red pupils.

As if there was always something that could make him vigilant and worried.

Which prince is this?

Annan still remembered that King Henry VIII of Noah Kingdom had only three heirs left.

Princess Royal, the Third Prince, and the Fourth Prince.

Considering that the Third Prince was related to Klaus, is this the Fourth Prince?

Noting that Annan came in with a group of people, the two quickly stopped talking and looked at Annan as a form of courtesy.

At the moment when the middle-aged man saw Annan's face, he was taken aback for a moment, and then he was shocked, “You are—”

His first reaction was to look back at Bishop Daryl.

Bishop nodded silently to the middle-aged man. He immediately looked at Annan, bowed slightly, pointed his hand at the middle-aged man, and introduced, “It's His Royal Highness Albert – the Fourth Prince.

“About your situation, I haven't told His Royal Highness yet.”

What he meant was to let Annan make up the excuse for himself. He would follow Annan's statement and support Annan's words.

Lest, his statement was different from Annan's, creating a conflict.

“Your Royal Highness.” Annan greeted the middle-aged man.

The man also hurriedly responded to the salutation. He walked forward and asked in a low voice, "You are, Your Royal Highness Annan?"

"Why are you here?"

Lin Yiyi, closest to Annan, was stunned when she heard this somewhat strange but familiar name.

She wondered if she had misheard it.

Isn't their feudal lord called "Don Juan Geraint"?

If this man is the fourth prince, why does he treat the feudal lord so respectfully and address him... Your Royal Highness?

But if I didn't mishear it.

Lin Yiyi finally knew why the super administrator of the players' forum named himself "Annan."

The protagonist of this "game" wasn't Don Juan Geraint at all, but His Royal Highness Annan!

But which side is "Your Royal Highness" from?

Why does he want to hide his name?

Undoubtedly, the answer to the first question would leave Lin Yiyi with more questions.

Annan turned around and motioned for the players to leave temporarily.

The players also nodded and exited the room obediently. They stood along with the guards wearing heavy silver and black armor.

Then, Lin Yiyi quickly posted on the forum:

"Shocking News! The true identity of the feudal lord turns out to be!"

She wanted to share her findings quickly!

Back in the church...

The little girl following Prince Albert stepped forward before Annan explained his excuses prepared beforehand to the fourth prince. Without warning, she grabbed Annan's sleeve and looked at Annan with wide eyes.

Her eyes were full of reverence.

[1] It's an internet Chinese meme. There's an unfortunate accident that happens after a series of conversations. The players are speaking those lines.

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Who are you?

Why do you hold my sleeve?

Annan frowned slightly and shifted his gaze over.

She appeared to be 15 years old. Perhaps it was because the girl's puberty period was relatively early, she was a little bit taller than Annan.

Annan looked at this girl, who was almost the same height.

The first thing that caught his eye was the beret strapped diagonally on her head. Then, there was the black gothic dress.

But when he noticed the girl's pupils, Annan was startled for a moment.

She had translucent eyes, coupled with the fair skin that had seemingly not seen the sun all year round.

Why does she feel so similar to me?

“Can you please let go?” said Annan politely.

Hearing what he said, Kafni loosened his sleeves obediently.

But she didn't back off or get angry. Instead, she just continued to stare at Annan intently. The bright red crystal-like pupils made Annan feel a little uncomfortable.

This was unlike the amazement when one saw attractive opposite sex, nor was it the girl's admiration at the idol, nor even the worship when the priest looked at the divine statue.

It was closer to the look in the eyes of a painter when she admired a famous painting.

But, Annan didn't have the slightest fear in his heart.

He looked at this girl who gave him a sense of danger with interest and asked softly, “Who are you?”

“Kafni. Kafni Noah.” It was not Kafni who replied but her father, Albert.

Salvatore was a little confused on the side.

Your Highness?

Why?

“Wait.” Salvatore asked Annan in a low volume, “I don't quite understand.”

He didn't call the name “Don Juan” directly.

Because he was worried that if Annan wasn't Don Juan Geraint, then speaking that name here might make Prince Albert suspect that Annan was a spy infiltrating the kingdom.

After looking at Annan and seeing Annan nodding lightly, the fat and bald man with brilliant golden teeth spoke for Annan.

He respectfully introduced to the other three people present, “This is the youngest son of Austere Winter's Grand Duke—Annan Austere-Winter.”

“Are you a Grand Duke's son?”

After a short silence, Salvatore asked suspiciously, "Then why did you visit the Freezing Water Port?"

I also want to know about this. Annan muttered in his heart.

Annan was also surprised by Salvatore's calmness, "Senior, why do you seem not surprised?"

Won't he be angry that I deceived him?

Salvatore only glanced at Annan bafflingly, "The person I'm getting to know is you, not Don Juan Geraint.

"Furthermore, Don Juan's reputation is terrible. I have already heard from the teacher that Don Juan, the youngest son of Count Crow, is a cowardly person, unlike the Old Crow's decisive character.

"He isn't like a nobleman or even a scholar... but like a child. His only strengths are obedient, well-behaved, and knowledgeable. But apart from that, he is a coward. As long as there is a little probability of failure, he dares not act alone. He doesn't even dare to quarrel with others and question the decisions of others."

Having said this, Salvatore glanced at Annan with a complicated complexion, "This matter is universally known in the kingdom's aristocratic circle. So when you first came to the Freezing Water Port, I put up an ugly face."

For a nobleman, "obedience" wasn't a strength.

On the contrary, "lack of temper" could even be called a shortcoming. Coupled with the epic prefix of "not independently-minded," unless Benjamin can prepare him a "Chu Shi Biao [1]." Otherwise, he will only cause more trouble if he comes to the Freezing Water Port.

"So, did you know from the beginning that I'm not Don Juan Geraint?" Annan was a little surprised. He didn't even notice that Salvatore had doubts about his declared identity.

Salvatore just shook his head, "Who you are does not make much difference to me?"

He repeated it, "The person I get to know is you, but not Don Juan Geraint. You have protected the people of Freezing Water Port and the reputation of the Geraint family. You also helped me defeat my old enemy and helped me finish my mission. Even if there is the real Don Juan, he can't do more than you.

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"Of course, I'm still a little displeased with the fact that you lied to me. But considering that you aren't a villain, and you don't want to use my trust to obtain something, then there must be a valid reason behind it."

Salvatore had a calm tone.

There was no anger, no surprises. It was a casual talk as if explaining the facts.

Salvatore even looked a little happy, as if he was relieved.

"It's better to have you not from the crow family."

Salvatore said emotionally, "I was still hesitating to use the power of Swamp's Black Tower to help the crow family. If I help you, I will feel guilty for the teachers I dragged down into the mess. But, if I see you in trouble and I don't help you, I feel uneasy.

"Since you belong to the White Wolf family, then this is the best situation."

The Austere-Winter's Grand Duke wouldn't need the Swamp's Black Tower aid.

No matter what happened, the Black Tower couldn't send aid either. Having many Transcended entering the Austere-Winter Dukedom through the underground tunnel would be regarded as the declaration of war.

If Annan borrowed the power of other countries, even if it were only used to suppress the rebellion, it would only usher in a tremendous wave of public displeasure and mockery.

Moreover...

Salvatore looked at Annan weirdly.

He initially regarded Annan as a protagonist-type friend who "brings trouble at all times."

But he didn't expect Annan to be a big shot.

The youngest son of Austere-Winter's Grand Duke. Doesn't that mean that he is most likely the future Austere-Winter's Grand Duke?

The Grand Duke position was much nobler than the black tower master.

Annan was also a little confused.

This Salvatore...

Isn't he a bit too kind?

Even if it was Annan himself, and if a good friend deceived him, he would complain for a few days, guilt-trip the friend to treat him for a few meals, and get some unique gifts.

He never expected this matter to be over so easily.

Annan's original plan was to use the "royal heir excuse" to tell Salvatore his true identity and eliminate this time bomb. Then, he would utilize the common enemy "the Rotten Man Church" to tie Salvatore and him together on the ship, lest Salvatore would leave directly. Finally, he would defeat the enemy with Salvatore and use the identity of "Annan Austere-Winter" to establish a new friendship with him.

After all, Annan hadn't brought harm to him and even helped him defeat Gerald and acquire the hammer.

But a lie was still a lie in the end.

Annan knew in his heart that lying was wrong. That was why he tried to make up for the relationship between the two because Annan realized that Salvatore's character was great.

He planned it all well.

But he just didn't expect Salvatore to play his cards differently.

“Are all the wizards so open-minded?” Albert on the side roughly sorted out the information in Salvatore's words, looking at the young wizard with messy hair a little weird.

Salvatore's words did sound reasonable.

Still, it was unusual to have someone be so rationally “reasonable” on matters that were so personal.

Albert paused before asking Annan again, “But, Your Royal Highness, why are you here? If I get news of your entry, my father should send my eldest sister or me to welcome you.”

Albert's words were polite.

But Annan sensed a touch of vigilance and probing between the lines.

Annan was not surprised but rejoiced. I'm more adapted to this pattern and manner!

“I brought my guards across the Black Sea to your country because I have a mission,” said Annan in a deep voice.

Facing Albert's suspicion, he began to make up a story without psychological pressure.

Annan frowned slightly, showing signs of seriousness.

He asked softly, “Your Royal Highness Albert...

“Have you heard of the name Rotten Man?”

[1] In summary, it's a guidebook to a useless heir of a kingdom. The expression is to depict as a quick-fix to those incapable heirs.

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When Annan heard from Bread Daryl that the man who came to Roseburg this time was the Fourth Prince, he was already relieved in his heart.

That was no doubt the best situation.

Annan was now facing two of the most pressing problems, excluding the Venerated Skeleton that was temporarily friendly.

One of them was Rotten Man Church.

Both Don Juan and Annan had a beef with the Rotten Man Church already. For retaliation, Annan would ruin their plan no matter what they wanted to do.

Not to mention, Annan had to find a way to help Master Michelangelo out in response to Salvatore's kindness.

Next, another problem that Annan faced was “Don Juan Geraint.”

He borrowed Don Juan's identity, and it didn't come without a price.



Not only Don Juan's enemies would come looking for him, but those who were close to Don Juan Geraint might also doubt whether Annan was the culprit.

Unfortunately, only Benjamin and Count Crow knew of Don Juan's feigned death.

Annan couldn't reveal the secret plan to the royal family.

That would undoubtedly be a backstab to the Geraint family.

Annan wasn't an ungrateful person.

He had borrowed Don Juan Geraint's identity to settle down, get access to the world's secrets, and even become a Transcended. Even though acquiring these benefits didn't come with a cost to the Geraint family, Annan wouldn't forget the favor.

He would find a way to repay this kindness; even the Geraint family didn't think it was their contribution.

As for the three remaining heirs of the royal family...

The Third Prince, who had the closest relationship with the Rotten Man Church, was Annan's nemesis. He wouldn't come to Roseburg at this time.

As for Princess Royal—

The Geraint family's political power was in Princess Royal's grasp.

On the surface, the king was the most optimistic of the Princess Royal. But judging from the fact that the king hadn't made up his mind to expel the Rotten Man Church, his relationship with Princess Royal wasn't necessarily close.

He was just hesitating whether to betray his eldest daughter.

In other words, the price of betrayal wasn't worth it for the king yet.

Although she was addressed as the "Princess Royal," she was already over 50 years old this year.

Also, she hadn't yet been married.

Surprisingly, she had a military background too.

Such a terrifying old woman with a body of steel, it was unlikely that she would be willing to reason with Annan.

Even considering that Annan's identity was as noble as hers, she would only be more suspicious of Annan's purpose of appearing here.

After learning that Annan borrowed the identity of Don Juan Geraint to take up the position of North Sea Territory's feudal lord, Annan would be vacated from the position by someone else sent by Princess Royal by the very least. It was impossible for her to let the neighboring country—or worse still, the future heir of the enemy country to seize power on the land of her own country and allow him to earn the people's hearts.

—Especially this critical land was close to the Austere-Winter Dukedom border.

But the Fourth Prince was different.

He wasn't just a mortal enemy with the Rotten Man Church but also had a bad relationship with the king. He was also competing with the Third Prince and Princess Royal.

Unlike the Third Prince, who was utterly unfavored and acted freely, his current position was the most embarrassing.

The Fourth Prince had no military support, and he wasn't the king's favorite either.

Because of the conspiracy relating to the Rotten Man Church, his relationship with his brothers and sisters was terrible.

Worse still, he was the abandoned son of Rotten Man Church.

The most terrible thing was that his relationship with Silver Sire Church was great, judging from the situation when he came to Old Bread Daryl first after entering the city.

For the Noah Kingdom, this wasn't a plus point but a severe shortcoming.

In other countries, Silver Sire Church only existed as a “bank” and a “currency distributing institution.”

Only in the Noah Kingdom did the Silver Church almost take control of the kingdom's finances, education, and culture.

Except that the church had no army at all and had no say on the law and constitutions. However, there might be ambiguities regarding who the civilians thought the country was governed by.

Due to this circumstance, King Noah suppressed the church to rob away the church's opportunity to grow further.

Therefore, it was impossible for the Fourth Prince to inherit the throne.

Annan was different.

He was most likely the next generation of Austere-Winter's Grand Duke.

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That was why the Fourth Prince would refer to Annan in honorifics.

Indeed, both the Fourth Prince and Annan were the direct heirs of the ruler, with the Fourth Prince as the kingdom's heir and Annan as the duchy's heir. In addition, the Fourth Prince was much older than Annan. But, the situation with their succession made Annan's status much superior.

“Yes, I have heard of it.” Hearing Annan's question, the Fourth Prince quickly understood something.

He adjusted his glasses and replied in a deep voice, “Your Royal Highness, as you came over, is it because...”

“In fact,” Annan said seriously as he put his hand on his chest, “I received the mission granted by Old Grandmother herself.”

Hearing this, Prince Albert's pupils shrank.

In this world where deities walk on the earth, no one dared to offend an upright deity, and no one dared to lie in the name of a deity. It was because they could really hear it.

The deity's punishment could come knocking on the door.

“My eldest brother lost his fertility forever six years ago.” Annan said softly, “That’s because of the Rotten Man's conspiracy.

“I was an ordinary person at least half a year ago. I didn't embark on the path of transcendence back then.”

He said to Albert seriously, “That's why I can travel through the mist on the Black Sea and come here.”

Every sentence Annan said was the truth.

But once they were connected, it could infer another meaning.

Salvatore repeatedly nodded as if he understood something.

“I probably understand it now.” Albert's brows frowned deeply.

In his deep eye sockets, there was an inexorable dejection.

Although the Fourth Prince was the king's son, he was treated like an animal, like those slaves who tend to complain, “What? I have to work overtime to change according to my client's needs.”

“I also doubted whether the Rotten Man Church has reached their hand into Noah.”

The man said depressedly, “This is because a certain advisor I once trusted became a little weird some time ago.

“He knew that I could not succeed to the throne, but he was provoking my relationship with Elizabeth and Philip. Since then, I have been suspicious of him. My father knew that the internal fighting between us became more and more fierce, but he didn't stop it from the beginning. So, I'm convinced of it already.

“The Rotten Man's power has already infiltrated Noah's territory,” sighed Albert dejectedly.

He lowered his head and pushed his glasses before continuing, “I even think that Elizabeth and Philip probably had already known the Rotten Man Church's men are around them. They are not stupid people. En, it's hard to say for Philip, but my sister must have realized it.

“But, they just followed along with the scheme. I don't know what Philip is thinking. Does gold rain from the sky? Can he take those benefits unreservedly?”

The man frowned and said in dissatisfaction, “Don't they already know what happens in the end for those who pursue immortality?”

Compared to Princess Royal Elizabeth, he was even more dissatisfied and distrustful of the talentless Philip who lured the Rotten Man believers to help him seize the throne—the Third Prince.

Albert obviously resonated with Annan's situation, "I was upset, so I agreed to Kafni's request to travel here to the Freezing Water Port."

The man breathed out slowly and explained faintly, "Your Royal Highness Annan, I will treat everything that happens here as if I haven't heard or seen it. If you want to come to the Royal City as a guest, I welcome you. But, please be sure to notify me in advance. I will be responsible for your highness's stay.

"But other than that, if you have any needs, I can't do anything. If you have any intentions for cooperation, you can go to Princess Royal to discuss it in detail. Her words carry more weight over here."

Annan nodded.

In short, you're not cooperating nor a hindrance to me.

Um...

That's fine too.

I don't need your help. I just don't want any trouble.

So Annan replied quickly while asking again. "Then, Your Royal Highness, is there anything you want from this visit?"

"Kafni likes painting a lot. In the past, Freezing Water Port had a crazy painter who believed in an evil deity named Morrison. After Painter Morrison's death, his paintings became much more valuable and rare. Kafni also liked his paintings, but now it's hard to find the original. We want to try our luck."

Albert quickly added, "I wonder if the Freezing Water Port still had the collection of paintings in Morrison's gallery. If not, where can I find them?"

Of course, you can find them from Nightmare: Gallery. Annan thought to himself.

But he also understood that such an answer would be too ridiculous.

Kafni, who stared at Annan intently before, suddenly turned her head and whispered before Annan could reply, "No need, Dad."

Kafni's voice was youthful but hoarse, with mystical prosody.

Annan immediately realized that when Albert's gaze met Kafni, he turned his gaze away.

It's as if he is afraid of his daughter. What is going on?

Kafni stared at Albert and murmured, "It's not that I want to come here. Grandpa Danton has modified your memory; he is a Rotten Man's believer.

"...And so does mom."

Hearing this, all of those on the spot were stunned.

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“—Wait, 'His Royal Highness?’”

“—Did you mishear it?”

Seeing the shocking headline on Lin Yiyi's post, the players clicked in one after another, yelling with excitement.

Although they were deeply suspicious of the post with an eye-catching “headline,” their curiosity in this matter still lured them in.

Faced with the doubts of the other players, Lin Yiyi didn't hesitate to upload a short video.

The video was only about 10 seconds long. However, this video she recorded contained the most critical piece of information.

“About your situation, I haven't told His Royal Highness yet.” Bread Daryl said to Annan with a serious face.

Probably it was because of Bread Daryl being too fat, or because of the bald head, or because he wasn't good-looking, the players attributed Bread Daryl as a sinister character.

So Annan greeted Prince Albert, “Your Royal Highness.”

His voice was neither overbearing nor humble. His thin and tall upper body made him look quite headstrong.

Immediately afterward, the players saw clearly that Albert was stunned for a moment. Then, there was a trace of surprise flashed in his eyes. Finally, he came up and asked in a low voice, “You are, Your Royal Highness Annan? Why are you here?”

The short video ended here.

“Annan?” After watching the video, Delicious Wind Goose murmured thoughtfully, “I remember the super administrator of our forum is called Annan.”

“That's what I have been trying to say!”

Lin Yiyi slapped a thigh and let out a crisp “pa.”

Next to her, Jiu Er was holding her thigh painfully.

Wandering Child came into deep thought, “That's right. The game can't give the super administrator a name unrelated to it.”

“In fact, I thought 'Annan' was the name of a great deity at first.” Delicious Wind Goose whispered, “Then I thought, maybe there will be a few more administrators in the future. They will all use the names of other deities. After all, I didn't think about the possibility of 'Don Juan is a fake name' at first.”

“What you said seems to have some truth in it.” Wandering Child couldn't help but nod.

“Speaking of that, Uncle Goose, which side do you think Don Juan...oh wait, “His Royal Highness Annan” belongs to?” Jiu Er asked curiously.

“There's no way to guess that out,” Delicious Wind Goose said straightforwardly, “We don't know much about this world. But first of all, we can confirm that his origin won't be the Noah Kingdom. Otherwise, they wouldn't be strangers to each other.

“But, Albert must have seen Annan not long ago. After all, His Royal Highness Annan is too young. If Albert met him ten years ago, he would be five years old. Albert wouldn't be able to recognize him now.”

“So I guess Annan should be from the neighboring country or state. Considering that he is now in the Freezing Water Port, I guess blindly for now that he may be the son of Austere-Winter's Grand Duke.”

Delicious Wind Goose replied slowly, “There's a good possibility of that. I'm just not clear what Annan's motive is and where did the original Don Juan go.”

The next moment, a glimmering panel flashed before the eyes of the four of them.

[Half a month after passing through the sea of gray mists, you gradually recovered some of your lost memories and finally realized the contradictions in your identity.]

[You have recalled your mission and the true identity of “Don Juan Geraint” whom you swore allegiance to—]

[—Annan·Austere-Winter. Youngest son of Austere-Winter's Grand Duke, first heir to Austere-Winter Dukedom.]

[But, you have a lot of doubts in your heart.]

[Why are you here? Why are you in the Noah Kingdom? Why are you staying in this remote Freezing Water Port?]

[Where is the real Don Juan Geraint?]

[During the time you lost your memory, what happened?]

[The lord you serve, why did he protect you in silence? And... Do you weak mortal guards have the ability to protect a son of a Grand Duke?]

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[Acquired the main mission: Embarking on the path of transcendence.]

[Mission requirement: Obtain the Bronze Rank Soul, and advance into a transcended (1/1).]

After the four of them realized the contradiction with Annan's identity, a large amount of data flow suddenly flashed in front of them. Then, they acquired a new main mission.

Then, without waiting for them to think further, the stream of texts continued to flow downward after a short pause.

[You have completed the main mission: Embarking on the path of transcendence.]

[Obtained Don Juan Geraint's affection rating 1000.]

[Till now, you finally got the belated transcended power.]

[No matter what burden Annan is carrying or what enemy Annan is fighting against, you are already determined to help him.]

[You will serve him, protect him, and be loyal to him with an immortal body.]

[Even in the face of the deities, still unwavering.]

[Obtained a limited-time main mission: Guardian (Remaining access time 7:22:03).]

[Mission requirement: In the coming disaster, protect the people you want to protect, and make sure that Annan survives.]

The four of them were taken aback and looked at each other.

After that, Lin Yiyi quickly visited the forum.

Other players who saw Lin Yiyi's post also got the main quest line of "embarking on the road to transcendence." One by one, the players looked dumbfounded. Then, they went to inform those players who didn't read the forum to quickly "head to the forum and accept the mission."

But they didn't get the limited-time main quest line because of their insufficient level.

"So close!" Lin Yiyi exclaimed, "If we didn't realize this, would we miss this limited-time main mission?"

"But, the rest of the players are aware of this and have already missed this main mission." Delicious Wind Goose said slowly, "That's because their levels aren't enough.

"If you want to receive this main mission, you must get excellent evaluation ratings or above in 'the Tribulation of Black Fire' and 'the Disaster of Roseburg.' Also, you have to clear the first few levels in the nightmares.

"In other words, those main missions play a screening role from the start. We have fallen prey to the calculation of the system from the very beginning."

Delicious Wind Goose carefully analyzed and said, "The system screens out players who have excellent abilities in both 'reality' and 'nightmare' while eliminating those who are weaker.

"I speculate that we may form a party to challenge the world's boss monster soon. This may be the starting mission of a large dungeon instance."

"Just like opening the Gates of Ahn'Qiraj [1]?" Lin Yiyi couldn't help but ask.

She didn't expect that she would be able to participate in this kind of large-scale world mission that progressed the main storyline of the world one day.

Delicious Wind Goose nodded, "Look. We happen to be four people. So it will be a five-person team after counting Annan. In the previous dungeon instance, we have teamed up once, and we have a rough idea of each other's behavior.

"From the description of the main mission, I think this may be a protection mission. It is the type of mission that we buy time while Annan plays the main role of the critical moment."

Delicious Wind Goose analyzed it with reason and evidence.

The other three nodded.

However, in actual fact, Annan crafted these two main missions early in advance.

The players did find out a little late.

Annan planned from the beginning that when the player began to doubt his identity, he would throw the first mission out. In this way, players would only suddenly realize that this was part of the “game mechanics” and “game content.”

But Annan didn't know whether his acting skill was superb or whether the players' brains were too tunneled. Why did none of them put forward this idea previously?

Fortunately, the Fourth Prince was candid enough to reveal the matter.

Otherwise, Annan would seriously have to think of ways to forcibly drop his intelligence to reveal a flaw and feed this information to the players.

### **The Righteous Player(s) C195– Kafni's Advanced Profession**

Chapter 195: Kafni's Advanced Profession

Annan hurriedly sent the limited-time main mission to the four players outside and finally heaved a sigh of relief.

So, this is roughly resolved.

With this, I sort of resolved the identity issue with “Don Juan.”

Knowing that Benjamin wasn't dead, and even Don Juan wasn't dead, Annan had a couple of preparations to take off this disguise.

It was better for him to take the mask off himself than to be taken off by others.

In addition, Annan was still distracted listening to Kafni telling Albert's sad story.

“From the very beginning, my mother is a Rotten Man's believer.”

Kafni said softly, “Dad, are you not surprised why I suddenly became Transcended? It's because my mother put the medium leading to a particular nightmare on me. It's a chaos-level nightmare.

“But I have let her down, and I'm not dead.” Hearing what his daughter said, Albert's complexion became ugly.

He couldn't help but ask, “Why didn't you say it earlier?”

“Because Grandpa Danton isn't a Silver Rank “Great Wizard.” but a Gold Rank “Dream Stealer.” He can easily rewrite other people's memories, and my mother is his apprentice. Did you remember that Grandpa Danton introduced my mother? He is my mother's elder.”



Kafni's voice faintly sounded, "Grandpa Danton used an illusion to affect your vision. It makes you all think that his curse vessel is silver. If we are still in the capital, he will hear whatever I say. No matter what I tell you, it is meaningless.

"I have been waiting for the opportunity to leave the royal capital and Grandpa Danton far away for a long time." Albert's lips moved slightly.

He looked at Kafni in disbelief. He finally said after a long pause, "That's why you have been so taciturn? Oh, My Silver Sire, I thought you're afflicted with disease!"

But soon, Albert realized something again.

He quickly asked, "What about you, Kafni? Didn't he modify your memory or control your consciousness?"

"He did try, and he thought he succeeded." Kafni's pupils were still out of focus, looking forward.

She whispered, "But he didn't because..."

Kafni said and gently reached her left hand forward.

Her posture was as if inviting a partner to dance.

Annan quickly noticed the Bronze Bracelet on Kafni's wrist.

Immediately afterward, Kafni took off the bracelet.

The next moment, her skirt fluttered.

Countless shadows formed like real tentacles, protruding from under the skirt anxiously. The tentacles slapped on the ground, then gradually calmed down and fell to the ground tightly.

The shadows flowed down like a river, stretching longer and longer behind her.

It was like a long black dress dragging on the ground.

"Eh?" Bishop Daryl glanced at her suspiciously, "Are you disregarding your life?"

"What's wrong?" Albert asked quickly.

"Your Highness Kafni is more than just a Bronze Rank."

Bishop Daryl replied affirmatively, "But her vessel is only Bronze Rank. So she didn't constrain the curse to the new vessel.

"This means that the curse has highly eroded her. For the curse in this density, Memory Rewriting, Mind Manipulation, Touch of Fear, Slothful Eye couldn't affect her.

"If she is an ordinary person, she would have already become a monster. But instead, she can retain reasoning, which shows that she has extraordinary willpower."

Or rather, her curse had many secret keepers.

Daryl didn't point out anything about the latter reason.

But all the people present understood it.

“But...” Albert looked at Kafni blankly.

He realized for the first time that he didn't seem to understand his daughter at all.

Kafni replied calmly, “Actually, you know my curse, papa.”

“What?” Albert blinked and asked with a dry throat.

Seeing his stupefied look, Kafni just glanced at him calmly, “That's what I often say—

“I will be the queen of this country.”

“Is this your curse condition?”

Albert felt that his IQ wasn't as good as his daughter's, “I thought...”

“You think I'm joking, Dad. Or some kind of “children's words.””

In Kafni's clear to almost transparent eyes, there was a crimson red hue that was as plain as a deity, “Of course they think so too.

“I'm not the king's daughter, but your daughter. I can't be a queen. At least for a short time, no one will take it seriously.” But since they heard it, they unwittingly became Kafni's secret keeper.

Annan had soon reacted in time.

Kafni's curse was probably something like “becoming a queen in X years.”

She used a childlike tone to make others think that she was joking or simply expressing her ideals.

As the king's granddaughter, the possibility of contacting high-level Transcended was high. Those adults who heard Kafni's “childish words” unwittingly become her secret keeper.

Kafni's current erosion rate was sky-high. But she relied on these secret keepers to survive in a condition without upgrading the curse vessel.

Although she could maintain her sanity, she was probably similar to the demon Klaus, and the others had transformed into.

The shadow cast under her skirt could manifest in reality.

Danton, the “Dream Stealer,” couldn't control Kafni, who was already a monster in nature.

“My profession is also specialized in resisting mind control.” Kafni let out a soft voice, “From the beginning of my path of transcendence, I'm working hard to break free.”

Her pupils were like a holy grail full of blood and like crystals on fire.

She lifted the skirt slightly and curtsied elegantly to Annan.

Those shadows like living creatures turned into tentacles and retracted under Kafni's skirt.

Annan looked at her weirdly.

...This little girl.

I wonder where her perseverance and wisdom come from.

“Is your profession the lurker?” Albert couldn't help but ask.

The middle-aged literary and artistic prince couldn't help but begin to doubt his IQ and observation ability. Am I a fool?

Daryl shook his head.

He said thoughtfully, “No, if I guessed correctly...”

Before he finished speaking, there was a knock on the door.

The conversation between the four people in the house temporarily stopped and looked towards the door.

Kafni took the opportunity to look at Annan again secretly.

Feeling her focused, scorching, and whole-hearted gaze staring at him, Annan felt a chill crept upon him.

“Your Royal Highness, someone is seeking an audience with you.”

“Who is it?”

Albert had a rare opportunity to say in a majestic voice, “Why are they looking for me here? I'm chatting with... His Royal Highness Feudal Lord Geraint.”

He hesitated and didn't reveal Annan's true identity.

The guard quickly replied, “It's the clerk here! He said he has something to report to Your Royal Highness and the Feudal Lord!”

“It's someone under the viscount.” Bishop Daryl reminded quietly behind Albert and Annan.

Albert pondered for a while but still said, “Let him in.”

“Yes!”

After a careful body search, the clerk was let in.

He respectfully bowed to the four of them.

Counting Kafni, the people here had a higher status than him.

But Annan noticed that there seemed to be something wrong with the visiting clerk's expression.

He wasn't nervous or furtive.

On the contrary, he was too calm.

Meet a count's son, a prince, a bishop, and a member of the royal family, why is he not nervous?

Annan was secretly wary.

“Your Royal Highness, there is something important to report on.” The clerk said respectfully and piously to Albert.

His voice was a little sharp, a little trembling, and a little fanatical, “Rotten Man sends his greeting to you!”

As he said, he untied his belt.

Just when Annan was surprised by Rotten Man believer's indecent assassination method and even hesitated in his heart whether it was an assassination or a mockery, he only heard a sneer.

The shadow under Kafni's skirt was released at some point.

Like a snake, it ejected quickly along the ground, and the sharp thorns completely penetrated several weak points of the clerk's body in the blink of an eye!

Then, the shadow tightened immediately, locked his joints, and lifted this person high.

Then, he was beaten to the ground by Kafni's tentacles with a damaging impact!

He lost consciousness in an instant but still retained a little vigor. The enemy passed out into a coma on the verge of death.

At this time, Kafni's voice sounded faintly behind Annan, “My advanced profession is the Dragon Monk.”

She retracted her tentacles and curtsied gracefully to the three of them.

### **The Righteous Player(s) C196– Foundational Power**

Chapter 196: Foundational Power

“...Dragon Monk?” Annan found this profession incompatible with her image, so he couldn't help but repeat the profession's name.

Wait a minute; there are a lot of inconsistencies. I don't know where to start dissing it.

Annan asked Kafni tentatively, “This sounds like the advanced profession of a monk.”

“Indeed.” The person who responded to Annan was Bishop Daryl.

Although Bishop Daryl was surprised for a moment, he was the first to react to the situation.

Facing Kafni's astonishing words, the old bishop appeared to attain a new realization.

“Dragon Monk is an ancient profession.” Bishop Daryl explained to Annan, “All 'monks' are ancient professions, at least from the previous era.

“Monk is a popular term among the people. Its full name is called 'Yaselan Ascetic.' They built monasteries throughout the empire and welcomed people of any faith to join as an 'ascetic.'

“They aren't the personal armament of some upright deities. But the monks still have their beliefs, which is often referred to as the 'foundation oath.' The foundation can be chosen from anything, such as the doctrine of upright deities or false deities. Other examples would choose the belief based on a

particular philosophy and even concepts like loyalty, filial piety, love, hate. The only requirement is that the foundation must be firm and unshakable in the future.

“Once the foundation of an ascetic is shaken, the Transcended abilities brought by their monk profession will be lost immediately. A ritual baptism must be carried out to rebuild their foundation.”

“So, does that mean the monk has an additional 'high-level curse?’” Annan asked.

Kafni replied softly, “Yes.

“My foundation is the obsession with obtaining and protecting the kingdom.” She calmly told her foundation oath to the rest of the people on the spot.

Annan was stunned.

Why can Kafni speak out her secrets frankly?

Why did Kafni choose the kingdom as the foundation?

Does this mean she has no room to retreat?

Kafni's curse could be to succeed to the throne.

The curse might not be a one-off thing, which meant that she might be required to continue her ruling on the kingdom.

Then, this foundation is sort of her initial “responsibility” already. No matter what, she still has to maintain her curse. This foundation seems more incidental in nature.

However, the foundation is different from the curse. It's free to choose. But, it's more effective to determine a more stable and easy to fulfill foundation.

Annan couldn't help but glance at Kafni.

Kafni's unyielding spirit drew his interest in this child further.

“If you aren't dedicated, you wouldn't be able to advance to Dragon Monk.” Bishop Daryl exclaimed, “This profession is quite complicated.

“The name 'Dragon Monk' is translated from another language.

“I can't pronounce its true name here. However, in the dragon language, it's often interpreted as the “wrestling human with the dragon.”

“Monks are similar to priests. They have extra bonuses at the Perception attribute. Also, they often have a robust Strength attribute. But this boost in Strength attribute doesn't come from intensive physical training like a swordsman. Instead, it is the projection of spiritual power in the material world.

“Depending on the monk's foundation, the blessing power they receive will have a subtle difference. Only the monk whose foundation is 'real, stable, and materialistic' in nature will pour all their spirit on strength to acquire a robust strength capable of even bringing self-harm. Only monks with strength as robust as monsters can advance to Dragon Monk.”

“En.” Annan listened to Bishop Daryl blabbering for a long time and nodded thoughtfully.

In other words, the feature of a monk is that any addition to [Perception] will proportionally increase [Strength], [Agility], [Constitution]... and even [Will]?

According to the oath, the proportion of attributes assigned would be different. Only with an oath like Kafni could the Perception attribute be added as bonuses to the Strength attribute.

This was a real plus point.

In the typical growth of the melee profession, when their level increases, every few levels would also increase their Agility and other attributes besides the primary attribute. That was to maintain a balanced growth.

But Kafni was different.

Before she advanced, she could probably hurt herself.

After all, the growth of Perception attributes was much easier than Strength.

“Once she advances to Dragon Monk, she will acquire the trait [Golden Blood], which will completely solidify the body. Her bones and muscles will become flexible and tenacious. From then on, no matter what training regime she does, her figure will not change.

“Since this profession abandons the traditional fighting skills of monks, they can only avoid getting hurt by their immense strength in tripping and grappling the enemy. The price is that they can't wear any armor and can't utilize most weapons since then.”

Having said that, the complexion of the old bishop became a bit complex.

He looked at Kafni and paused before continuing, “Even to ensure the transmission of Strength, it is necessary to maintain close contact with the target. The few Dragon Monks I have seen are all topless and strong men. It's also the first time I have seen a type of Dragon Monk like Her Highness Kafni.”

“I don't wear any armor. This kind of cloth also doesn't affect me exerting my strength.” Kafni stretched out her arms in display.

Under the translucent silk sleeves as thin as the veil, there were slender fair arms that weren't covered by any clothing.

Under her heavy long skirt, her legs were also wrapped in black silk clothing.

She just stood in place, but she brought about a firm and balanced outlook. Annan did not doubt that he couldn't push Kafni to the floor even with all his strength. But, if Kafni wanted to, she could instantly lift him and throw him to the ground. It was even possible for Kafni to grapple and subdue him on the ground.

“Moreover, I use my shadow more often.” Kafni stared at Annan closely and said softly, “I can temporarily give Strength to them and let them grapple with multiple enemies on my behalf...or protect the others.”

As she said, her right hand gently grasped Annan's sleeve again.

With just that, Annan had a feeling that she might throw him out at any time.

Why do you stare at me?

Annan felt strongly that Kafni would look at him after saying a couple of words. Her eyes fixed on him like a nail.

If it were ordinary people, they would have fled timidly under that majestic gaze full of spiritual power.

Fortunately, the power of Reverse Inscription was immense.

Only then could Annan stare back, "So...?"

"So I will protect you," said Kafni softly.

She put her left hand on her chest, staring at Annan intently while trying to speak in a masculine manner, "I'm strong. I can protect you."

Seeing Kafni's behavior, Albert's eyes gradually changed.

He looked at Annan, then at Kafni.

His expression turned a bit complicated.

### **The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 197**

After noticing Albert's expression wasn't quite right, Annan quickly found an excuse, grabbed Salvatore, and hurriedly left. He handed the interrogation on Rotten Man's assassin to Albert.

After all, the information coming from the assassin wouldn't include "Annan Austere-Winter." Also, Albert had now become a solid ally, which he would tell Annan if there was information of significance.

After Annan left the church with Salvatore, he immediately assigned new missions to the players.

Then, he commenced his next plan without hesitation.

Though, it felt like fleeing to escape from his crime.

Annan had the players go to No. 12, Rusty Water Street in the east area.

It was located next to the Gerald Dental Clinic—Nottdamm's "current" residence, where Nottdamm lived with his new wife.

In actual fact, his "designated" wife had not officially married him, let alone getting pregnant.

At No, 44, Clear Water Street, where the actual Maemis Nottdamm was pregnant, Annan and Salvatore went to check the situation in person.

Annan had notified the players not to startle the target but just observe if there were any abnormalities.

Currently, Annan wanted to experiment with Salvatore.

He wanted to try if the door at No. 44, Clear Water Street, in the west area, was closed.

Will the door at No. 12 Rusty Water Street open then?

In other words, are the two rituals interlocked?

Annan remembered the first time they went to No, 44 Clear Water Street, the door was open, and there was no one inside. It was after all the doors were closed that the “past,” which was four years ago, flipped over from the “mirror” into reality.

If the two sides were interlocked, then Annan wanted to test it out. If the “past” consisted of childbirth was inverted, had the “non-existing” ritual failed or was it a success for the ritual to hide?

If it were the former situation, then Annan would have to set up defenses for both sides simultaneously. However, for the latter case, he only had to place his defenses on Rusty Water Street.

But if the rituals on the two sides weren't interlocked, that would be fun.

Annan just wanted to know one thing—

“What will happen if two 'Nottdamm' meet?” Annan analyzed with a serious face, “Aren't you curious, senior?”

Even though his identity was exposed, he still habitually called out Senior Salvatore.

Salvatore was still used to calling him, Don Juan.

But now, Salvatore looked at Annan with a complex expression.

“Honestly, Don Juan, do you know His Highness Kafni?”

Salvatore looked curious and lowered his voice to ask, “Just tell me. I promise not to let anyone else know.”

Annan looked helpless, “I really don't know her.”

“For real?” Salvatore doubted.

Seeing the senior's persistent questioning, Annan couldn't help but sigh, “Yes...”

Regardless of whether the past Annan knew her before, the current Annan didn't know her anyway.

Annan didn't dare to accept this kind of unfounded kindness.

Annan didn't mind deceiving others, nor did he have an obsessive-compulsive disorder issue when his teammates were hurt. Annan would even let the weaker teammates block the bullet as long as his goal could be achieved.

The purpose was to allow more important teammates to survive first.

All efforts were for efficiency.

Just like Salvatore was easy to be fooled, so Annan didn't want to fool him.

Kafni claimed to protect him, and it was for free. So, Annan didn't want her to tank any potential damage and lose her health points.



Also, Annan didn't need protection. I have tools (players) that can be resurrected at any time to tank the health damage.

If there were enemies, Annan's resurrection authority could be fully utilized. With 4 Bronze players keeping giving their lives indefinitely, Annan could stop the enemy no matter what. If the four of them couldn't stop the enemy, adding a Kafni into the equation probably wouldn't change anything.

Worse still, she would take away the experience points.

“But with His Royal Highness Kafni, I don't think we will need to utilize our prior preparations.”

Salvatore exclaimed, “I don't know if it's a pity or a blessing, but we won't be using Sage's Stone anymore.”

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“It's better not to use it.” Annan said without hesitation, “Believe it or not, after we take this item out, we will be troubled indefinitely?”

“Of course, I believe that's true.” Salvatore shrugged, “Sage's Stone is something that all Alteration Wizards are pursuing. Other than them, it garners huge demand for all the big shots.”

“Speaking of which, senior.”

Annan feels that the timing was appropriate for him to ask this question so that he wouldn't appear to have an ulterior motive, “Even if you suddenly dreamed about the refining method of Sage's Stone, where did the inspiration come from?”

“I do not know either.” Salvatore choked at the question and replied vaguely with a wry smile, “Dream... It's just a dream.”

“—Idiot. I don't know how to use Prophet spells, so I don't know prophecy.” At this moment, the shadow made a low and hoarse voice, “It's Teacher Benjamin's notes you saw before you left Black Tower. Your memory is getting worse, Salvatore.”

Well, isn't it because you disturb my sleep? Salvatore almost scolded out.

But he still endured it.

“—Oh yes, it's Teacher Benjamin's notes!” Salvatore pretended to remember all of a sudden, with a look of realization on his face, “I saw it before I left Black Tower!”

Annan's footsteps stopped suddenly, “Benjamin again?”

He turned around and asked with a bit of surprise.

Watching Annan's reaction, Salvatore blinked his eyes, “What's wrong?”

“I forgot to tell you some information before, senior.” Annan said quietly and quickly, “Your Excellency Benjamin is indeed not dead. He even came to Freezing Water Port 10 days ago;

“I saw from the nightmare that Gerald manifested. The person who was under your pursuit. He had a great relationship with Benjamin a few years ago, at least when their relationship had trust;

“Gerald and Benjamin are both witnesses of Master Michelangelo's ritual, and they are all together now. So I was thinking...”

“You want to say that the matter with me crafting the Sage's Stone is also part of Benjamin's teacher's plan?” Salvatore quickly understood what Annan meant.

Salvatore was in a daze and almost thought this was the truth. This was because he knew Benjamin's behavior. Benjamin also knew he had a shadow. Most likely that the Sage's Stone was one of Benjamin's arrangements at this time.

“Teacher Benjamin is indeed the kind of person who calculates ahead.” But Salvatore quickly denied, “But this is impossible. Teacher Benjamin isn't proficient in Prophet spells.”

“But Master Michelangelo did,” replied Annan.

From the moment Annan heard the name Benjamin, he suddenly realized one thing.

A ritual always needs an executor, right?

Annan initially thought that the “past Michelangelo personally arranged this ritual.” But if everything was within Michelangelo's plan, while Benjamin and Gerald were both pawns of his chessboard...

Why did Benjamin not feel the slightest anger being exploited when he heard that Michelangelo was about to resurrect in the nightmare?

But, if they are ritual executors, then...

“If Gerald hadn't died, what would happen?” Annan murmured, “He was able to control the situation immediately when he met with the viscount. A Bronze Rank hunter couldn't resist Gerald's mind control, especially from the viscount and Rotten Man believers.

“As the ritual controller, he is undoubtedly the most stable choice. After Gerald's death, Benjamin is the ritual executor.”

Salvatore asked, “What are you trying to say, Don Juan?”

There was a vague idea in his mind that wasn't well-formed, but he couldn't organize it well.

“—Fool.” The shadow cursed in a low voice.

Annan replied, “It's straightforward.”

At the next moment, Annan and the shadow almost overlapped in voices,

“—Suppose the contradiction (hatred) between Benjamin (teacher) and Gerald was caused by this matter now?”

That matter referred to the resurrection of Michelangelo!

Because Annan clearly remembered that Gerald killed all Benjamin's students a few years ago, but their relationship was pretty good at that time.

But after that, as a new student of Benjamin, Salvatore didn't seem to know the relationship between them. He thought that Gerald and Benjamin were old enemies for many years. Black Tower also issued a wanted order to Gerald, "To get the hammer back."

But what use was that hammer for Swamp's Black Tower?

And Gerald was also trying to use Salvatore to advance into Gold Rank.

Salvatore was Black Tower's Son. If Gerald killed him, Gerald wouldn't end up well.

But why was he in such a hurry?

Probably because Benjamin was fighting with Gerald for the right to execute this resurrection ritual!

### **The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 198**

For Annan's group, it was great news that Benjamin was involved in the resurrection of Master Michelangelo.

Benjamin wouldn't come forward directly to maintain the facade that he was dead, but he was undoubtedly a reliable ally helping in the dark.

A valuable friendly unit, indeed.

In terms of the preparation for the battle tomorrow, Annan had arranged the players to go to bed early. With that, they would come back online after breakfast tomorrow.

At present, the players only knew that the ritual day was right on December 14, 1503. However, the players didn't know the exact timing. If the main event occurred during the wee hours, they were just unlucky to miss it.

But as long as it wasn't too early in the morning, players should get a night of good sleep so that they could log in as early as possible tomorrow.

After persuading the players to go offline, Annan also went to bed early.

For security measures, Salvatore stayed in Annan's bedroom and read till 3 a.m. The reading was to help him doze off in sleep so that he could fall asleep immediately by 3 a.m.

"Final check."

Annan closed his eyes and said softly, "Tomorrow, Master Bishop and I will try our best to wake up before the sun rises. We will be responsible for the defense preparation work at 44 Clear Water Street and 12 Rusty Water Street, respectively."

"After You, Yiyi, and Old Goose woke up, immediately head to my place to assist in the defense. Her Highness Kafni and the other two shall head to Rusty Water Street to reinforce the defense there."

According to previous experiments, Annan confirmed that the ritual involving two symmetric opposite mirrors was indeed interlocked. Once all the doors of one house were opened, all the doors of the other house would be closed immediately.

Though, there was a unique condition.

No matter if all the house doors at Clear Water Street were closed or opened, nothing would happen on the current Notteddam.

But only when the “present” Notteddam stayed at home could the door of the “past” Notteddam be closed. With that, two of the “past” Notteddam could appear in this world temporarily.

Otherwise, when the last door at the Notteddam house on Rusty Water Street was closed, several doors on Clear Water Street would open up at the same time. Two of the “past” Notteddam would immediately disappear.

It was as if the network cable was unplugged, and the two of them were disconnected altogether.

This should be a security measure to prevent two Notteddam from accidentally meeting each other.

But this also caused Annan's group to scatter their defenses on two sides.

Not only they had to protect the “past” Notteddam and his wife Maemis Notteddam, who was about to give birth and died a few years ago.

At the same time, the current Notteddam must be prevented from leaving his house.

Otherwise, once the current Notteddam went out, the two “past” Notteddam would suddenly disappear.

Hence, Annan's arrangement went as follows.

He and Salvatore had Sage's Stone in their hands. They had the most potent immediate explosive power. They would be assisted by Yiyi, who had the strongest protection capability and the well-rounded Old Goose. The four of them would be in charge of protecting the pregnant woman.

On the other hand, Kafni had the most robust non-lethal control ability. The Child could control and alter the terrain. Jiu Er would launch suicide attacks indefinitely with the help of infinite respawn. This composition offered strong viability to offense.

At the same time, Bishop Daryl and Kafni had a higher status, while Jiu Er and Child God were confident in chatting. That would allow the group to persuade the current Notteddam to stay inside the house, keeping him from leaving the house for that day. Of course, their main task was still to keep the intruders out.

Both Annan and Bishop Daryl could attack the spirits, which helped safeguard against the Rotten Man Church's spirits summoning techniques. In addition, there were players on both sides, allowing smooth communication across distances on the forum.

This arrangement was the best lineup Annan could think of.

No matter which side had encountered a monster at the peak Silver Rank level, they could still retaliate.

The Transcended players had infinite respawns. They had enough combat strength to fight against the basic enemy units.

As long as the players managed to buy time, the other side could send support over in time.

No matter how I look at it, everything is in place.

“But what have I missed...” Annan frowned slightly.

The feeling that he had missed something still lingered.

“If you can't think of anything, forget it. We shall respond according to the situation. We have the Sage's Stone. Like you said, Teacher Benjamin may help us at any time. He wouldn't want to see the ritual fail.”

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Salvatore turned another page in the dim light, glanced at Annan with a frown, and said disapprovingly, “You have to go to bed because you have to get up early tomorrow.”

“Alright, good night.” Annan agreed and retreated inside the quilt.

With Annan's strong self-discipline, he emptied his mind and fell asleep in a very short time.

When Annan woke up in a daze, he glanced out the window.

He soon realized something was wrong.

With his precise biological clock, he could roughly guess that it should have been 5 a.m. even without looking at the watch.

But, what is the “that” outside the window?

A crimson red sun hung in the sky.

It wasn't the golden sun entwined with the triple hollow as it should have been. Annan already knew that the golden sun was Mr. Ray's symbol.

But the “sun” outside the window now was like the sunset on Earth.

Not only was there no rune and no hollows around it, but a thin layer of golden light was shrouded in it.

The golden light was being shrouded, and beyond it was a circle of thick black.

Further out, it was overwhelming and rich blood.

Not only the sky but the entire street was also shrouded in an abnormal blood hue.

The next moment, Annan heard a low and looming drum beat.

The drum beats rumbled like thunder, echoing in all directions.

After another nine seconds, the strange low humming sounded again.

Annan focused his mind on locating the source.

He was a little surprised to find out that the sound came from the heart.

Or rather.

These thunderous drum beats seemed to be coming from the people's chests of the whole city...or at least the entire street!

“What is this?”

Is this the Rotten Man Church's ritual?

Or Michelangelo's ritual?

Annan's face was solemn.

He disregarded the cold air outside the quilt, immediately jumped up from the bed, and got dressed swiftly.

When he rushed to Salvatore's room, Annan hesitated for a moment and stopped.

Should it wake Salvatore up?

If the ritual has started—no matter where it started, it may be too late to wake Salvatore up.

But what if this is just a prelude?

As Annan was thinking, Salvatore opened the door with a tired expression. He hurriedly put on his coat while yawning.

He saw Annan standing at the door, frowning slightly, “Why don't you call me?”

“...Ugh.” Annan cast aside all the random thoughts and nodded to Salvatore, “It's fine since you wake up already.

“What ritual is this?”

“Let's talk as we move.” Salvatore took out the suitcase and replied briefly, “Bring all your things!

“Let's go to Clear Water Street first!”

### **The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 199**

“I know this ritual!” Salvatore rushed down the street, shouting, “This is 'Ritual: Heart That Roars If Untouched!'

“The ritual involves the field of blood. It's under deity of blood and desire, Cup-holding Lady.”

Cup-holding Lady—

Annan rarely heard this name in the Noah Kingdom.

Although the Cup-holding Lady was also one of the twelve upright deities, she was generally called “the desire.” Philosophers believed that those who went crazy for no reason or those who were overwhelmed by the desire to do some stupid things had heard the Cup-holding Lady's whispers.

Those who were more educated and had committed the sin out of impulsiveness would comment, “I have heard the Cup-holding Lady's whispers,” to justify the sins they had committed euphemistically.

In the Noah Kingdom, almost only those immoral entertainment business operators believed in cup-holders. So it was hard to imagine that she could be an upright deity.

After running to the vicinity of 44 Clear Water Street, Salvatore stopped, panting for breath, and continued, "This is a high-level ritual... Now this ritual isn't completed yet!"

"Summarize its content." Annan followed behind Salvatore quickly and asked immediately.

His current outfit might look a little weird.

Annan wore white and slender elven leather gloves on both hands. He had a wooden bucket for the gloves, a waist bag for his kitchen knives that was dripping blood, and a brass flask.

The flask contained the Sage's Stone in the liquid state.

Aside from brass material, Sage's Stone could only be stable in white crystal and pure gold containers.

Otherwise, the Sage Stone would be consumed on its own, purifying the precious stone into white crystal, or making other metals besides copper into pure gold. The brass container under the sun exposure could significantly suppress this process and extend its lifespan as much as possible.

Even as the Alteration Wizard, Salvatore couldn't afford to get three golden kettles out that easily.

Besides that, Annan's right hand held "Barrier Destroyer's Right Arm" (not including the hammer), and the left hand was armed with a kitchen knife that was dripping blood.

To put it simply, Annan looked like a maniac.

Annan also transferred his curse vessel, a bronze bracelet inlaid with sapphires, to his left wrist in the hope of speeding up the curse being conducted to his kitchen knife.

If Annan were to put on a mask, he was like the monster from horror movies, albeit his short height and figure.

On the other hand, Salvatore's outfit seemed much more normal.

He wore a thick white robe that looked like a researcher or a doctor. In addition, he had an internal armor reinforced with thickened cloth. The primary reason was to resist the cold. Visually speaking, that armor made the thin Salvatore look generous and tall.

Of course, Salvatore also carried the brass bottle behind him and exposed it to the light.

In addition, he put the bullet-loaded "the Venerated Skeleton's Bone and Blood Trigger" in the waist bag.

There was a beefy suitcase in his left hand. This suitcase had an opening for a hand to reach inside. There were different reagents tied to the side. They were all marked with metal pieces of different textures to ensure that Salvatore could get what he wanted even without visual cues.

Salvatore's left arm was also tied to a black arm guard like the one used for blood pressure measurement, and a bottle of pre-conversion agent appeared like a perfume sample on the outer side. His right hand was bare, not equipped with anything. The purpose was to allow swift usage on the pre-conversion agent or other reagents from the left at any time.

Salvatore moved quickly to take out a bottle of blue reagent from the suitcase, skillfully took out the cork with his thumb with his right hand, raised it, and drank it.

His mental state improved a lot afterward.

Then, he took out two sticky, brown-black collapsible tubes and handed one of them to Annan.

“Take some of this first. It's an 'emergency nutritional supplement.' These are typically used to rescue those strayed in the wild. It will forcibly stop hunger while supplementing the necessary nutrients. However, long-term use will bring harmful effects to digestion, but it's well-fitted for emergencies. Be careful. The smell may be a bit strange.”

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Salvatore said, raising his head and squeezing the viscous supplement directly into his throat. A bitter and somewhat distorted expression was revealed on his face.

Annan followed suit, pushing the reagent out and taking a bite.

Then, he grew a little disappointed.

It didn't taste so terrible.

Its taste was probably similar to the ginseng jujube drink [1] but with a strong flavor. Or probably sour lemon juice mixed with thick black sesame soup [2].

(TN: For those interested in what those beverages are, I put my findings into the [hyperlink](#).)

It's strange...

But the effect is excellent.

After Annan ate it for a while, he felt rejuvenated despite just waking up without eating anything.

Then, Salvatore took out a bottle of red reagent, a bottle of purple reagent, a bottle of strange smoke and handed them to Annan, “Blood Impulse Decoction, Perception Mixture, Frigid Cold Air. Take them right before the battle. Also, be conservative in using the Frigid Cold Air. I only have one bottle.”

After speaking, Salvatore took out a long silver-gray dropper with a plug from the suitcase.

He handed the dropper to Annan and said, “It's inconvenient for me to do it because of the suitcase. Draw a line as you encircle the house. Be mindful not to break the line. If a spirit tries to enter, it will light up as a warning.”

“Got it.” Annan looked at Salvatore in surprise.

His previous experience against Gerald made him habitually use Salvatore as a heavy cannon.

Now Annan suddenly realized that Salvatore was a potion fighter.

When Annan dealt with the warning line, Salvatore explained, “[Ritual: Heart That Roars If Untouched] doesn't bring any effect, nor will it summon anything. It is usually used when the user has to forcibly carry out a ritual while the ritual conditions aren't met. Also, this ritual can be used to empty the venue.



“The ritual will collect the 'heartbeats' in the ritual area. Every nine seconds, the hearts of all people in the ritual area will hum. At the same time, the awakened people become more powerful, and those who haven't awakened are stuck in their slumber.

“Ordinary people who have fallen asleep in this ritual will never wake up before the end of the ritual. Even if they're punctured or stabbed with a knife, they won't wake up. But those who become awake will never fall asleep. Thus, they are prevented from falling into a nightmare.”

Salvatore whispered, “Many powerful curse vessel materials are high-level nightmares' 'keys.' Any physical contact with them may bring the victim into nightmares. If you want to use the keys' power, you can either purify the nightmare once or use it for the ritual when it enters the “three days ban period for nightmares.” Otherwise, you have to use another ritual to seal the keys' power or bless the ritual executor with a certain kind of power that stops the person from falling into the nightmare. What happened now is an example of that.

“Since we can break free from this ritual, it means that the ritual performer of this 'Ritual: Heart That Roars If Untouched' has a lower soul rank than ours. The good news is that we're all the lowest-level Transcended, so...”

“So, this ritual was held by an ordinary person?” Annan asked incredulously.

What a commotion...

People in the whole city are in a deep sleep, and the sun is replaced.

Is this really something ordinary people can do?

“A ritual is like that.” Salvatore didn't have any exaggerated reaction, “Knowledge is power. This ritual is tough to be held; at least you can't just guess your way through.

“It takes nine people and nine hours to complete. Each person has to sacrifice one thing in the list: a mutilated eye, a mutilated ear, half a tongue, a piece of skin, half a cup of blood, half a bone, half a foot, half a hand, and half a heart. With these conditions met, it will refract the light that summons the Cup-holding Lady's “mouth of the cup.”

“Since this is an illegal summoning, they must bypass the Cup-holding Lady. So the sacrifice used must all be fragmented, mutilated, or incomplete. That will summon an incomplete power of the 'blood cup.' But the Cup-holding Lady is an upright deity. Even if it's summoning part of her power, that is enough to bring out a strange phenomenon.”

With that said, Salvatore pointed to the “dark red sun” in the sky.

“That isn't the sun. That is the shadow of the 'mouth of the cup.’”

### **The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 200**

Annan went into deep thought.

I see.

Just as the symbol of Silver Sire is a silver coin, and the symbol of Mr. Ray is the sun.

The symbol of the Cup-holding Lady is the blood cup... a cup full of blood.

A cup symbol the represents the endless greed and thirst—

When the sun in the sky was altered into “Mouth of the Blood Cup,” the person's blood was under its control. Sniffing any of it would render a person unconscious. What overflowed was excitement.

Is it a ritual that controls the vitality of a wide range of mortals?

But this could be considered a benefit to Annan's plan.

He still had “fragments of the Wheel of Divine Transporter” left on him. He wasn't sure when he would suddenly fall into a nightmare this week. If he were to pass out during a fight, that wouldn't end up well.

But in the ritual area, Annan couldn't fall into a nightmare.

“Since he has used this ritual, does it mean that his real ritual has just begun?”

Annan asked in a low voice, “Probably how long will they take?”

It is too early now.

If there is no [Mouth of the Blood Cup] in the sky, the sun shouldn't rise at this time.

The players were offline at 10 p.m. last night.

Although their bodies wouldn't get sleepy, it would take them eight hours to be online again.

In other words, even if the players got online punctually, Annan would have to be on his own for another half an hour.

“Are you worried that they haven't woken up yet?” Salvatore hesitated slightly when he heard Annan's words.

But he quickly shook his head, “At least Master Bishop should be awake.

“Look at Louis. The senior priests are all well-trained. They will try to get up before the sun rises every day. Even if they don't sleep for a day or two, it won't affect their state.”

That training should be dedicated to avoiding those regional nightmares. Annan nodded.

It was similar to the rules of the Freezing Water Port. There were nightmares in some places, and the key was the “location itself.” If you fall asleep at night, you will fall directly into a nightmare.

“I'm actually a little worried about you.” Annan asked in a low volume, “You only slept for two hours? Are you okay?”

“I have taken the Perception Mixture, a brain enhancement medicine. It will last until the night after another supplement in eight hours.”

Salvatore shook his head and said confidently, “Since I have such a curse, I must have been prepared.”

“Heh... You got quite the acting. Are you trying to save your reputation? Or to reassure your friends?”

At somewhere Annan couldn't hear, the shadow let out a low and hoarse chuckle, "This Perception Mixture can't last for so long, Salvatore. You are deceiving him.

"If you can't hold it, or... if you feel that you are too weak and incompetent, you can close your eyes and faint at any time. I have been full of energy and have been preparing for this a long time."

Salvatore ignored the shadow's voice totally.

While the shadow was speaking, he also whispered to Annan, whereby his voice completely covered the shadow's voice, "Be careful, since they want to use this ritual, it means that they have a powerful curse vessel in their hands.

"Then what they want to summon is probably not the Soul Eater. At least not just the Soul Eater..." A crippling chill crept upon Salvatore's back before he could end his sentence.

At the next moment, the line that Annan had drawn on the ground with the silver-gray potion suddenly lighted up without warning!

They erupted into a scorching wall of fire, reaching a height of about 1 meter. The air above had become distorted.

At a distance of about 10 meters away, an illusory translucent spiritual body gradually emerged.

It was dressed in a long robe, was about 2.5 meters high. It had beautiful dark brown curly hair, and its face was densely packed with more than 20 pairs of eyes. A white halo shone atop her body. The body part below her collarbone melted under the swaying hollow robe.

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"It's the [Leer]!"

Salvatore issued a warning at the first moment, "Don't look at her eyes. Close your eyes immediately!"

As Salvatore warned, he took out a bottle of white reagent from his arms.

After a mysterious chanting for a short while, Salvatore threw the reagent bottle high.

The next moment, an intense brilliance burst out of the reagent bottle.

The spirit body uttered a sharp scream.

It wasn't scared... but irritated.

It seemed to be resisting something.

Annan had already closed his eyes when he was alerted. At the same time, he took out a few bottles of reagent Salvatore gave earlier.

[Blood Impulse Decoction]

[Type: Consumable (Blue)]

[Description: A decoction made of blood thorns mixed with the berserker's blood and mad bull's blood. The decoction is effective for mammals.]

[Effect: Strength+4, Agility+2 for 30 seconds. This effect decays to Strength+2, Agility+1 after another 30 seconds, and lasts for three minutes (The bonus attribute gained from reagent can't be stacked. The highest bonus effect will be applied.)]

[Price: A "mild" bloodthirsty desire will be manifested within 30 secs.]

[Perception Mixture]

[Type: Consumable (Blue)]

[Description: Perception Mixture refined with cat's tears and fledgling's feather as primary materials, only applicable for Transcended.]

[Effect: Agility+2, Perception+2 within ten minutes. This effect decays to Agility+2 after another ten minutes, and lasts for ten minutes.]

[Frigid Cold Air]

[Type: Consumables/material (Purple)]

[Description: The frigid cold air contains the curse of the dead. Just breathing it is enough to induce frostbite at the trachea of ordinary people. Use it with caution. Class III dangerous good.]

[Effect: After inhalation, the temporary element "northern wind" is obtained within one hour. All the abilities with the description of "cold" and "airflow" will get +1 additional point during elemental skill check.]

[Effect: Used in ritual, it can temporarily replace the corresponding curse vessel up to the "Silver" Rank.]

Annan hesitated for a moment and didn't take the [Frigid Cold Air].

Instead, he drank the other two bottles of medicine in one go.

The scorching "Blood Impulse Decoction" and the sour and cold "Keen Perception Mixture" flowed into the throat one after another.

Annan felt his heart pumping violently.

A clear sense of new power pulsated within his body.

He felt that his skin became a lot more sensitive, and he could sense the direction of the air around him. Furthermore, his limbs had also become flexible, as if his bones had become rubber.

But what was more remarkable was his suddenly hot skin, the muscles that tightened without warning, and the blue blood vessels that burst and throbbed all over the body.

Annan found it strange that he didn't feel the "bloodthirsty" state in the description.

There was a burst of intense, irresistible excitement in his heart.

To put into explanation, it was the eagerness when the class learned that the winter vacation was approaching.

When the light faded, Annan opened his eyes.

Holding the kitchen knife in one hand and the hammer in the other, he rushed towards the tall spirit body!