

Righteous Ps 231

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 231

Return to reality? Annan was taken aback when the final side mission was issued to him.

What does this refer to?

Is it referring to me in the nightmare... or Evelyn Miller?

“But speaking of this name...”

This wasn't the first time Annan heard the name — Evelyn Miller.

Benjamin used this name in the password he used to determine whether he was in a nightmare, and that name was in the first phrase.

Excluding the possibility of there existing another person with the same name, Benjamin was likely to know Evelyn. He probably even had a good memory of this name when he was younger.

“...I could have been in the past a few decades ago.” Annan was lost in thought.

So, in the original history, what happened to Evelyn Miller?

Annan first reached out to touch his left wrist, then slowly explored around it under the dim light to feel the shape and depth of the wound.

Annan couldn't locate the injury through pain due to the [Reverse Inscription] curse's desensitisation effect. Moreover, the blood trails connecting his left arm to the floor had dried off. He also didn't have the option to locate the injury merely through vision because of the dim lighting. Luckily, he still managed to feel the approximate location through his sense of touch.

Soon, Annan noticed something.

“This wound...” Annan was pleased with his new findings.

Firstly, he managed to determine that this injury was not caused by rubbing the hand on the handcuffs during the attempts to break free.

It became apparent to him that the wound was a cut caused by some kind of sharp tool at the back of the hand.

Judging from the depth of this wound...

Annan reached out and felt the area around the handcuffs.

As expected, there was a thin blade over the side of the handcuff near the wall. It felt like a shaving blade — thin and soft.

Hmph, no wonder.

Annan felt that the size of this pair of handcuffs wasn't quite right from the beginning. It was a tad bit larger, and couldn't possibly cuff Evelyn in this area. With her slender wrist, she should be able to pull her hand out of it after struggling for a bit.

The new discovery explained to Annan why this body was half-kneeling on the ground when he entered the dungeon instance. This was the only way to distance the blade from the skin. If he were to stand up now, the blade would cut his wrist.

Annan felt around some more calmly.

He protected his skin with a layer of his clothes as he pushed the blade. Through his attempt, he found out that the blade would retract when pressure was applied.

With that, Annan immediately realized that this blade should be part of a certain mechanism.

“Where is the other end of it?”

Annan pondered for a moment, holding the left handcuff with his right hand. While keeping the blade away from the back of his left hand, he slowly stood up from the ground.

He felt some numbing sensation on his legs, but he chose to ignore it.

In the end, he followed the chain and fumbled toward the wall.

When he reached a connecting joint of the chain on the wall, he twisted it and found that it could be moved!

Annan's eyes brightened up.

It's here!

He reached out his hand to hold on to that designated joint and rotated it a few times. He immediately noticed that if he rotated the switch counterclockwise, the blade would protrude further and vice versa.

This didn't feel like a device to imprison someone, but instead like some kind of torture device.

Annan kept his left palm facing up, using the gravity to put the blade underneath the back of his hand. Then, he rotated the switch clockwise.

When Annan rotated it to the end, the blade had retracted completely.

Annan didn't hesitate to dislocate his left thumb, and pulled his left hand out of the cuff.

However, he didn't leave this place immediately but rotated the switch in the opposite direction. He realized that the side mission [Keep your body intact.] might be hinting at this.

As expected, after Annan rotated it counterclockwise for a while, the blade protruded out again. After a while, the switch began to become a little unstable. It felt like a loosening screw.

The blade seemed to be attached to a chain. Annan continued to rotate it. When the blade was halfway out, the switch fell off along with the chain attached to it.

The chain connecting the handcuffs to the wall was severed into two.

The handcuffs on the wrist were still tightly shut. It occurred to him that he needed the key to open it, but it didn't matter anymore.

I see. Rotating it clockwise will unscrew the chain and the blade, while rotating it counterclockwise to tighten the blade.

“In other words, if I don't force my hand out, I need to make the switch rotate counterclockwise, allowing the blade to cut into the skin by my wrist nearly one centimeter. Only then can I take the chain off the wall.”

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Annan frowned slightly. This doesn't seem like a simple dungeon cell...

Just in case of future use, Annan took the heavy chain and blade with him.

Annan used Evelyn's intact right hand to hold the original connecting joint, while the other end of the chain was a sharp and slender blade.

It could be used as a weapon...

After all, Annan had checked his body. Evelyn had no silverwares on her. She wasn't a swordsman nor a wizard. Annan had no skills available to be used.

However, if the enemy was just an ordinary person, it would be enough to kill one or two people with this heavy chain.

After receiving the weapon, Annan first reset the dislocated left thumb. The contusion caused by the rough pull rendered him unable to clench his fist temporarily, but that didn't matter much. After all, there was already a cut hindering him to utilize his full force anyway.

“Is Evelyn left-handed?” This thought came to Annan's mind, but he quickly dispelled it.

He dragged the iron chain and wandered around the cell, but he didn't find anything.

So, he could only drag the chain closer to the dungeon cell door.

The dungeon cell door wasn't the typical solid metal door found in the prison, but an ordinary wooden door.

Of course, the door was locked, but it didn't trouble Annan.

He lifted the chain and slammed it heavily on the door lock!

First hit, second hit...

When Annan hit the door lock for the sixth time, he finally smashed it open!

Annan kicked the wooden door unceremoniously and walked out.

What appeared in front of him was a corridor leading to two paths: left and right.

It was still quite dim even after escaping the cell. There was no light in the corridor.

Annan couldn't even find candles, let alone the Green Fire lamps that could be typically found on the streets.

“Eh?” There was an exclamation.

Is it a girl?

Annan immediately turned his head to the direction of the sound, his gaze sharp.

It was not far from his left—a dark area behind the corner.

It could be because the girl heard the sound of the chain dragging on the floor, so she stopped abruptly. She didn't utter a word and fled away from Annan immediately.

Annan squinted his eyes slightly, looking in that direction silently.

If Annan followed and caught up with her immediately at this time, he had the chance to knock the girl unconscious with his chain, and then drag her to a safe place for interrogation.

At this time, Annan suddenly recalled his second side mission [Don't talk to anyone].

Hence, he didn't catch up to the girl and just let the footsteps grow distant from him.

“Hmph, she ran quite fast.” Annan murmured.

Since Annan couldn't talk to anyone, his best bet would be to move in the direction where there were no people.

So, Annan turned to the right without thinking.

He didn't drag the chain on the floor this time, but grabbed the chain from the middle with his left hand that had recovered some strength. He appeared like a cowboy preparing to lasso a horse.

After Annan picked up the chain, he touched the chain and suddenly realized something.

He paused and squatted down.

He examined the ground carefully with his right hand.

There are water stains.

Annan also had water stains behind him. This was because Evelyn's trousers and shoes were wet. But strangely, there wasn't enough water in the dungeon to wet her knees.

Rather, the water came from in front of him.

Annan squinted slightly and looked back.

This should have been left by the person who exclaimed previously.

In other words, she came from the same place as me before?

Also, she should have walked from the right to the left.

I shall follow the direction of the water stains to find the next clue!

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Annan kept a steady pace.

He stayed on alert and looked around as he trod, trying his best to be prepared for whatever monster that might suddenly lunge at him from around the corner.

He didn't forget that the keyword for this dungeon instance was "the dead".

Moreover, the dungeon instance he entered belonged to a necromantic deity.

Despite all that, Annan was still a little grateful—and also a little disappointed. He reached the end, but he didn't see any dead bodies popping out and shouting "surprise", making him look a little timid.

Annan didn't have much care for the matter anyways.

He just walked up the steps located at the end of the path... one step at a time.

After he reached the eighth step, he finally saw a light.

When Annan raised his head, looking at the light-emitting outlet amidst the dark surroundings, something dark crept out and blocked it off!

It was as if someone stood at the door, silently watching Annan, who was moving upwards and towards them!

Finally, it's time for jumpscare, right?

Annan reacted somewhat delayed, raising the chain and looking back.

He was once again surprised when he turned his head back but he didn't see anything in particular.

At this moment, footsteps suddenly came from outside.

Several people were talking and passing by from a short distance away. However, they were not by the door. Even when they were at their closest point, it was more than ten meters away from the door... Maybe there's a corridor right outside.

If Annan had screamed out of fear or tried to negotiate with that person, those people could have heard him.

This thought flashed through Annan's mind.

However, the man still stood at the door. He didn't go down, didn't say anything to him, and didn't even take any particular action.

Is it a dummy?

Annan squinted his eyes and continued to climb up the steps. He deliberately suppressed his footsteps. Fortunately, Evelyn was born as a dancer, and her steps were light enough.

He finally had a better sight with the help of adequate lighting when he got closer.

It really wasn't a living person, but a soldier sculpture,

A marble soldier sculpture that was facing against him had blocked the door!

Above the exit, there was a huge painting. A pulley was fixed on the back of it, which made it appear like a vertical sliding door that could raise about one meter upward. Annan wasn't sure if the culprit didn't put the portrait back out of carelessness or simply needed more lighting when he was here.

So, this is the door to the underground secret room?

Annan attempted to push the marble statue twice, but he realized he couldn't move it without making a sound. Unfortunately, he couldn't squeeze through the door as well.

There should be someone not far away, though.

“...Ha.” Annan smiled slightly. This can't stop me.

He committed to a pose — a somewhat strange posture facing forward sideways.

Immediately after, Evelyn Miller's somewhat weak body instantly changed its appearance.

Annan's body inflated like a balloon. In the blink of an eye, she turned into a kind middle-aged man with black hair, dark eyes, and well-defined features that were shorter than her!

It was “Ghirlandaio·David·Buonaro”!

Just like Annan's other curse, the curse [The Last Work “David”] could also be brought into the nightmare!

If there was anything that demanded physical strength, David was the answer.

The “David,” who was also a marble statue, wasn't in any way unique except for its robust strength.

Annan, who had transformed into David, quickly hugged the soldier statue at the door off the ground and moved it aside.

Annan immediately changed his appearance back and went to pick up the chain.

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This was to avoid [The Last Work “David”] entering a cool-down period and to ensure that it could be used again when the situation calls for it.

Another benefit of shifting back was that Evelyn's footsteps were much lighter than David's. Her footsteps were quiet like a cat and hard to detect when being extra careful.

Annan quietly left the basement door.

But when he looked back, he was slightly taken aback.

He knew this painting.

Indeed, this was the last painting Amos painted in the “Feast of the Hungry” on the Gallery Dungeon's second level!

The painting illustrated a homeless man with messy hair and shabby clothes; he had a thin and shrivelled body. He reached out one hand to support himself on the window and peeked inside, while

the other hand curled slightly under his ribs. His eyebrows gave a hint of confusion and cruelty, and his eyes flashed with dark green eyes that portrayed hunger and greed.

He was standing there crouched, but it gave off the image of a hungry wolf standing up.

The hungry wolf was watching Evelyn.

If anyone who entered this dungeon instance hadn't experienced the "Feast of the Hungry", they might have been shocked here. It was even possible that this scene would increase their erosion rate.

However, it didn't affect Annan at all.

I think I can probably guess the timeline of this dungeon instance.

Annan slowly slid the painting down until it returned to its original position, blocking the light inside. No matter who was below, it could at least trap the culprit and prevent it from coming out easily.

Although it couldn't kill him, the delay was enough.

After Annan finished dealing with the mechanism here, he looked around.

He realized that he seemed to be in a building resembling a church. Many people were chatting in this place.

Which deity's church is this?

Up until now, Annan still didn't know where the water stains came from.

He heard a faint hymn but couldn't tell where it came from.

He thought for a while, threw the chain up, and hung it on the ceiling.

Then, he capitalized on Evelyn's extraordinarily light body to climb up the ceiling through the chains. He moved along the beams, bypassed the door, and entered an empty room.

He searched quickly and found two silver coins.

With silver coins in hand, Annan was more at ease.

He opened the window and took a look. Then, he whizzed out of the window like a thief. At the same time, he did not forget to close the windows as he exited.

What baffled him was that the hymn became louder after he left the church.

Annan followed the direction of the sound and hurriedly left the church.

After walking for three minutes, he gradually stopped.

As Annan approached the source of the hymn, he gradually heard it clearly.

At first, he thought it was another language or simply a dialect.

After hearing the hymn clearly and recalling the conversation he had previously, Annan suddenly recalled the sound he heard on the dungeon level with the symmetrical corridor in the gallery.

The reason the language was baffling was that it was in reverse.

The hymn did not come from the windows of the strange church beside Annan.

It floated out of the lake in front of Annan... the reflection of this white church.

Annan looked down and assessed Evelyn's body.

The face was full of scars and hairless. The right side of the body had burns scars all over the place.

At this moment, Annan noticed that the corners of "Evelyn's" mouth reflected in the lake raised slightly as if smiling with satisfaction.

He was taken aback.

As Annan wanted to raise my hand and touch the corner of his mouth to confirm, he found that the "Evelyn" in the lake did not raise her hand.

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What's happening here?

Annan was shocked.

He immediately stopped what he was doing. He manoeuvred his slender and flexible fingers swiftly like a magician and brought a silver coin in between his fingers from his cuffs.

The "Evelyn" in the lake was unfazed even after seeing Annan trying to attack.

She just chuckled as if listening intently to something else.

It should have been a very gentle smile.

However, when it appeared on her scar-filled face, it looked a little scary.

What is going on?

Just as Annan was becoming more confused, he saw the "Evelyn" in the reflection turning her head slightly, seemingly talking to someone else.

Although Annan couldn't hear what she was talking about, he had an idea after watching this scene.

To test his hypothesis, Annan leaned forward and touched the lake's surface with his intact right hand.

At first glance, the lake was shallow with the depth of half a cubit. However, he still couldn't reach the lake bottom with his hand. Even when he inserted his whole arm, the lake bottom was still very far from reach, seemingly bottomless.

...As expected!

Annan had no reason to hesitate further. After taking a deep breath, he dived into the lake.

The icy lake water was like gushing into Annan's mind, with the hymn becoming louder and louder.

Suddenly, Annan became unconscious.

Soon, he felt someone tapping on his shoulder gently.

“Evelyn? Evelyn?” It was the voice of a panicked youth.

The hymn reverberating in his ears had long gone.

Annan opened his eyes, feeling his mind a little dizzy. He tilted his body, retched a few times toward the lake, and coughed for a long time before slowly getting over the discomfort.

Only then did he realize that he was lying by the lake, drenched.

A panic-stricken youth circled him anxiously, like a puppy whose owner had suddenly passed out.

Only after seeing “Evelyn” wake up was he relieved, “OMG... why did you suddenly fall into the lake? You scared me.”

Annan didn't respond immediately because he was worried that it might constitute a dialogue if he responded.

Annan looked at the youth with light brown hair beside him, having a hunch that he should have seen him from somewhere.

He had pale skin with callouses on his fingers. Judging from that, he shouldn't have come from a noble family; at the very least, he's not the favored child from the first wife. It seemed he was often involved with labor, but his accent seemed standard, unlike the militia of Freezing Water Port influenced by the local dialect. In other words, like Kafni, he spoke with a somewhat standard capital accent.

He looks like Benjamin Foster!

Am I close to the capital?

Annan subconsciously opened the mission panel.

Immediately, his pupils trembled for a moment.

His mission had changed!

[Main mission: Return to the dream.]

Immediately, brand new side missions appeared under this prompt.

[Acquire Benjamin's trust.]

[Complete the sacrificial ritual.]

[Do not go home.]

Annan stood on the spot, dumbfounded. He had never encountered a peculiar main mission that contradicted the side missions.

Was the previous me in another world?

The dream world?

Or, rather, the world in the reflection?

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What's the actual mission here? I don't get it.

Annan hesitated for a while and decided to take a gamble.

While sitting on the ground, Annan imitated a more helpless tone and said hesitantly, "Benjamin..."

"I'm here."

The brown-haired youth, or rather Benjamin Foster, was unsuspecting. He sat next to Evelyn, holding her left hand, and asked, "What's wrong, Evelyn?"

"...Nothing, I'm fine." Annan shook his head.

Hmm, I'm safe and sound. It seems I didn't fail my main mission, and I'm not kicked out of the nightmare.

Moreover, he was keenly aware that his left hand wasn't injured, at least in this world. There was no trace of cuts inflicted by a blade.

Is this the correct reality?

So strange...

The storyline introduction mentioned that I was kidnapped after I woke up...

Annan paused slightly.

He realized the problem.

The nightmare introduction didn't say that the other world was real. It just said, "After waking up, Evelyn realized that she was in the dungeon."

Is there another possibility? After Evelyn saw the "Dancer Dancing Under the Moon", she passed out and entered another world.

Annan thought of this and looked back subconsciously.

He wanted to see if he could follow where he had dived and returned to the church the same way.

At this moment, his pupils shrank slightly.

The church behind her wasn't as brilliant and whole as before, it was without a doubt a tattered ruin!

Not to mention there were no inhabitants, Annan could even clearly see that there were spider webs attached to the edge of the window. There wasn't anyone even cleaning the place.

"What are you looking at, Evelyn?" The Young Benjamin looked at Annan curiously.

Annan withdrew his gaze inconspicuously and appeared in deep thought, "I'm thinking about... It."

—I don't know what It is, but I'm thinking about It anyway.

Do you want to guess what It is?

“Are you still thinking about the Pale Princess?” Benjamin's expression became a bit complicated, “Are you still going to search for Her?”

“How about you?” Annan asked back, “What do you think?”

“I'm willing to accompany you to this place. That's already my answer.” Benjamin said firmly, “There must be clues in the Pale Princess Church, but going in alone is dangerous.

“Look at me! I have a weapon!” Benjamin said as he patted his waist proudly.

Annan noticed with some surprise that there was a gun hanging there.

How should I feel about this?

I'm telling you, Salvatore. This is spicier than magic wand.jpg

Annan realized all of a sudden.

Benjamin was only about thirteen years old at this time. He was still a little innocent, not as sly as a fox like he was in the future. At this time, he probably hadn't embarked on the path of transcendence yet.

But...

Would Benjamin still retain his affections for Evelyn when she has a ruined face?

Annan saw the familiar and unobtrusive youth and affection in the eyes of Young Benjamin.

What a rare sight.

People at this age were often impulsive to judge people by their appearance. It was rare to fall in love with an opposite-gender with a ruined face.

“Let's go. I'll guide you in to take a look.” Obviously, Benjamin himself was a little afraid too.

He paused and repeated firmly, “I will take you in!

“Relax, I have a gun!”

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I'm more worried now because you have a gun.

When you reach the age when you don't need a gun, I will be at ease to have you carry me through the dungeon.

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

Annan stuffed the complaints down his throat and didn't voice it out blatantly.

Instead, he nodded slightly and held Benjamin's sleeves. His reserved and weak act effectively induced Benjamin's youthful desire to protect.

He felt Benjamin's body flinch a little.

Having Evelyn holding his cuff, the youthful Benjamin didn't dare to move at all.

He was likely worried about accidentally throwing away Evelyn's hand that was holding his cuff. Hence, his arm was hanging in the air, motionless.

What a fool. Annan couldn't help but sigh from the bottom of his heart.

This is a great opportunity. When a girl gently holds your cuffs or corners of your clothes and seemingly could let go at any second, it's your opening to hold her hand.

If she can hold onto you tightly, would she still need you to hold her hand?

Benjamin didn't have the guts. Of course, it could also be because he was too innocent and couldn't read the signals.

What an innocent child... Annan sighed again.

However, this also revealed another clue for Annan at the same time.

"Evelyn" should be a person with low self-esteem.

It was understandable given that she was an outstanding teenage dancer, but her face and skin were ruined. Even though her future was gone, she didn't give up on her life. In some sense, that was commendable.

Annan could also feel it when he was controlling her body. Although she had left the stage, she had not neglected her daily practice.

Otherwise, her body wouldn't be so flexible, and her footsteps wouldn't be so light.

In this case, if Benjamin shook Evelyn's hand away by accident, it might be a blow to her self-esteem.

Benjamin's left arm was stiff. He didn't even dare to walk continuously but stopped for every two steps to make sure Annan could keep up.

That's too much trouble. Annan took the initiative and held Benjamin's hand.

Facing Benjamin's surprised gaze, Annan showed a soft and firm expression on his face, "I want to take a look.

"I think She should be here."

"...Alright." Benjamin hesitated as if he couldn't bear "Evelyn's" troubled state.

However, he still took out his gun, held Annan's hand tightly, and marched into the church ruin filled with cobwebs.

Annan keenly captured Benjamin's fleeting emotions.

He quickly realized that Benjamin should have been to this place before.

Annan roughly sorted out the clues of the matter.

—"Evelyn" might have lost her memory for a while.

Judging from Benjamin's reaction, Evelyn should have met the Dancer Under the Moon. She then wanted to find the Pale Princess and discovered the location of the church ruin.

She told Benjamin about the incident, hoping that Benjamin would come with her.

Not surprisingly, Benjamin should have come to explore it by himself before she came—probably with his parents and others. So, he should have known in advance that there should be no danger here, but the person or thing that Evelyn was searching for wasn't here either.

This should explain where Benjamin got the weapon and how his family could be assured to have a young man like him go out with a gun.

It was simply because his family had already accompanied Benjamin here once, knowing that this was only a “ruin”.

However, was there really nothing here?

Not really.

Annan heard the “voice” clearly.

“—Did you go to Her Highness's ball last night?”

“—Yup.”

“—Why not? It's such a grand ball.”

It was as if one man and two women were chatting among themselves while passing by Annan and Benjamin.

Annan looked at Benjamin subconsciously and realized that he was inching forward cautiously with his gun, which the safety pin hadn't yet been unlocked. Strangely enough, he didn't hear the conversation at all.

As he noticed Annan's gaze, he turned his head curiously, “What's wrong?”

“Thank you so much.” Annan naturally wouldn't reply, “nope, nothing.”

If he had done that, those “voices” would notice Annan could see them.

So Annan changed the subject and said casually, “Thank you.”

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“...Ah, ah. It's okay. I just came to accompany you... No, no. I mean, it's not a big deal.” Benjamin coughed a few times and replied incoherently.

He also sneaked a glance at Annan, obviously not knowing whether his answer would satisfy the girl.

Annan ignored him completely.

He just nodded, indicating that he heard it. At the same time, he was still listening intently to the “voices” around him.

“—Huh, isn't that little girl...”

“—Um. I saw her yesterday.”

“—What a pity...”

“—She is a good dancer. Her Highness will be fond of her.”

“—Her Highness cares more about a pure and bright soul.”

“—Let's not forget she also has a pure heart!”

“—So what...”

In front of Annan, this was a half-collapsed ruin.

Some columns lay on the floor. The ground was covered with dust and gravel. All the decorations were taken away, and there was no light.

However, many voices could be heard discussing him—or instead, commenting on “Evelyn”.

Annan didn't see anything.

Benjamin still did not hear these voices.

Are those voices from the Pale Princess's ghosts?

Annan seemed to realize something in his heart.

He had some speculations about the ending of “Evelyn”.

Did she get transformed into a “Half-dead Enchantress” in the end?

When Annan walked near the basement, he subconsciously looked to the left.

The head of the soldier statue had gone missing. The soldier statue was also pushed to the ground, covered with dust.

That painting that blocked the entrance into the secret room wasn't here anymore either.

—The path leading to the secret underground room was also opened up.

“Do you want to explore the basement?” Benjamin spoke in a slightly hoarse voice.

He hesitated for a while, then pulled out a palm-sized metal box from his pocket.

He opened the metal box and took out a hollow silver lantern about two fingers wide. After the lantern was unfolded, it was connected to the metal box with an iron chain, which looked like a pocket watch.

Benjamin vigorously rotated the lantern's head. After turning it for three complete circles, he finally ignited the flame in the lantern.

He carried the hollow lantern like a pocket watch. Although a green flame was burning inside, only bright yellowish brilliance shone from it.

Benjamin bragged, "This is the Green Fire, Evelyn!

"It's not the same as Black Fire... It can be used as a stable light source.

"I heard that Swamp's Black Tower will soon spread the Green Fire Lamp to the public. In that case, we will no longer use candles at night!"

Benjamin's hoarse voice during the teenage period revealed a trace of longing, "I want to go to Black Tower too, Evelyn!

"Did you know that the wizards who made the Green Fire were called alchemists in ancient times? They can even turn stones into gold! The ointment is also their work..."

"I think... I mean, if we can't find any clues here, don't worry too much."

Benjamin, who was walking down the stairs, said seriously, "If I can enter the Black Tower, I will invent an ointment that can treat your injury!"

When he said this, he held Annan's hand tightly again.

Annan looked at Benjamin. His gaze was a little evasive at first, but he quickly became firm and looked back at "Evelyn," who was suddenly silent.

He was a little nervous, waiting for "Evelyn"'s response.

Annan was in a trance, feeling the power of time.

It turns out that Benjamin's motivation to become an Alteration Wizard is right here?

To become a Gold Rank, one must have a strong desire for it. Is this Benjamin's desire?

Benjamin, at today's age, definitely can do so. Not to mention the scars left by the fire, even if the skin is peeled off, he should be able to heal it easily.

But...

Where is Evelyn now?

Annan had a bad hunch because he suddenly remembered the keyword of this dungeon instance was "dead".

—So, who is dead?

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Annan and Benjamin carefully walked down the stairs.

There was dust all over the stairs and cobwebs all over the ceilings.

Fortunately, neither the "Evelyn" played by Annan nor the young Benjamin were tall. Otherwise, they would walk into all the webs, destroying the spiders' homes.

But even so, they dared not to go too fast.

The dust on the ground was so thick that it was even a little slippery.

"It's way too dirty here." Benjamin couldn't help but complain.

"This church..." Annan spoke softly, "Do you know its history, Benjamin? I'm curious."

"Well, I have a rough understanding of it."

Although Benjamin knew that no one was here, he still subconsciously lowered his voice as he spoke, "This church should have been built more than a hundred years ago. I think it should be around 120 years, probably 128 years? Or maybe 118 years..."

"Forget it, that's not important. In short, the Pale Princess established this church personally. She built it in the name of the 'Deity of Song and Dance' on the surface. Her goal is to build a frontline fortress for the Necropolis—do you know what that means?"

Speaking of this, Benjamin's voice instinctively rose a little, "That is to say, guards were patrolling this place in the past! If I'm not mistaken, they should have at least 18 bone ballistas and a scout tower. The scholars roughly estimated this number through the harvesting and investigation results from the Royal Expedition Team. There could be other instruments lost in the passage of time of which we no longer have the opportunity to learn their existence...."

When the young Benjamin said this, his voice became softer.

Benjamin paused slightly, then turned around hesitantly and asked a little timidly, "You don't like to listen to my babbling, right?"

"Nope, I'm still listening..." Annan subconsciously repeated these overused words.

But then, he quickly realized his mistake and corrected it. He said in a kinder manner that was more acceptable to Benjamin, "I'm a little scared, Benjamin."

Since it was an unmanned corridor, Benjamin could still hear it.

Annan continued, "Please keep talking. Don't stop..."

"...Oh, sure." Benjamin was taken aback for a moment. He thought Evelyn must be afraid of the dark.

Hence, he cleared his throat and showed off his knowledge seriously.

"Can you imagine, Evelyn? Those 18 bone ballistas are the size of a queen bed each. They are erected on the walls. Enemies from all directions can't penetrate the fortress! It only takes four or five seconds to load a bone arrow, but they will chase their target like a wild dog! They won't miss! That's so cool! I think it wasn't just the Bone Burying Grandma's believers who came to encircle Necropolis at that time. These ballistas should be prepared for ordinary mortals too..."

"Oh right! There are evil spirits!"

Benjamin talked about it in excitement, and his voice became louder and cheerful, "Evelyn, the Pale Princess's priests can leave their body like an evil spirit!"

"Ordinary people can't see them at all. They can only see the white glow...Yes, my teacher told me that the Pale Tide is made up of evil spirits. Isn't that amazing?"

For some reason, Benjamin's words rang in Annan's ear loudly.

He was even in a trance.

After a sudden dizziness, Benjamin's hand previously in Annan's grasp had disappeared.

He staggered and slid down the steps several times.

Fortunately, he was already very close to the end. Thus, it wasn't a long fall.

"...Um. Benja..." Annan gritted his teeth and slowly stood up from the ground.

He was dumbfounded on the spot.

The light of Green Fire above his head had gone out.

"Benjamin?" Annan called out softly, but there was no reply in the darkness.

He frowned slightly and subconsciously opened up the mission list.

Annan stopped moving immediately.

Mission Details:

[Main mission: Return home.]

[Keep your body intact.]

[Don't talk to anyone.]

[Return to reality.]

"...What's going on?" Annan blurted out, baffled.

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

Am I back to that place again?

These missions are endless!

This loop never stops.

Annan hesitated, whether to go back up or continue exploring below.

He thought about it for a while and decided to continue.

Evelyn had entered the dream world near the water before. Hence, Annan managed to dispel the dream as he approached the pond. However, Annan couldn't guarantee that he could return to reality again the same way.

Without Benjamin's light, it became more strenuous to walk down the steps.

So, Annan leaned against the wall and continued forward.

Annan roughly remembered that there was a straight path leading to his previous cell after entering the basement. After passing by the cell, there was a passage to the right at the end.

I wonder if the guard on the left passage is still there...

Annan was lucky this time.

As he stuck closely to the right wall and approached the corridor end, he didn't hear any footsteps.

He couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief.

Luckily, there isn't a guard.

After all, it was too dark here. Evelyn had no night vision at all. Annan could barely see where the wall was and avoided hitting it under the faint light seeping in from the entrance.

After Annan walked around the long corridor, he finally saw some light.

Is it a candle?

Annan was a little curious but also a little wary.

If there are candles, it means there must be someone there!

When Annan was halfway through the corner in the silent basement, he suddenly heard two loud noises behind him!

“Boom! Boom!”

...What's going on? Annan's pupils shrank slightly.

Annan didn't feel afraid but stopped at the first moment and squatted down to hide his presence.

He was a little regretful. I should have returned to the entrance first and taken the bladed iron chain.

Annan narrowed his eyes slightly and approached quietly.

If someone was going to pass by here, Annan was confident that he could strangle them to death when they passed the corner!

Before Annan tiptoed slowly to the corner, he suddenly froze on the spot.

A series of noises came again.

It struck six times...

After another bang, Annan heard the familiar sounds of the prison door being kicked open.

After that, there was the sound of iron chains dragging on the ground, clattering.

“...Eh?” Annan let out a soft cry.

He was panic-stricken on the spot.

At that moment, Annan seemed to understand something.

The girl's panting around the corner...

The water stains on the ground...

The mission [Don't talk to anyone.]...

What I previously saw when I entered the dungeon instance is my current self!

Annan ran towards the brighter place without any more hesitation.

Under this logic, the person who lit the candle at the end of the corner was probably also “Evelyn”!

—The Evelyn from the future!

The Righteous Player(s) C236– White Guillotine

Chapter 236: White Guillotine

This might have been a nightmare loop that would horrify ordinary mortals.

Instead, it piqued Annan's interest.

Firstly, when he just came out of the dungeon cell, the “eh” he first heard came from the current him.

But, how did this nightmare know that I would arrive here at this timing?

Is this a time loop nightmare?

It makes sense if this nightmare belongs to the Man in the Mirror, but I'm pretty sure this is the Pale Princess's nightmare?

The Pale Princess doesn't seem to have abilities related to time and mirror at all.

Or, is it simply because the nightmare “mutates” toward time and mirror images?

Is it because I have been in touch with the future Benjamin, or is it because I have a mirror given personally by the Man in the Mirror?

Many possibilities appeared in Annan's mind at the same time.

The good news was that those curiosities dispelled his hesitation.

If the future me lit this candle... Annan dashed to the end of the corridor.

Then, he halted his footsteps.

In front of him was still the same long corridor as before. It took more than 10 seconds to sprint to the end.

There was a table with a letter and many white candles of the same thickness and height in the middle of the corridor this time. The only candle that was lit seemed to be lit not long ago. Only a quarter of it had been burned.

Seeing this, Annan was a little disappointed.

In Annan's opinion, if this were indeed a loop, the future self would hold a candle and wait for him to come over. Then, there could be cooperative play later on.

After all, only Annan knew himself the best.

...En? Annan frowned slightly.

No, I'm mistaken.

He had a reason for choosing to run toward here, looking for the "third Evelyn". He was worried that he couldn't convince the "first Evelyn" that "I'm you" properly.

He might have turned into a monster-like Evelyn. The first Evelyn, or rather the first Annan, hadn't seen what Evelyn looked like in the lake — the scars all over her face particularly. If he went over without saying a word, the past self might treat him as a monster and attack.

Annan was confident with his behavior. Therefore, he chose to find the third self.

If the third self existed, he should know that the second self could already believe that "this is a nightmare with a loop in it".

So, the second self was different from the first self; he was trustworthy.

So, why didn't the third self show up here?

Is it because it's unnecessary, or... he can't? Annan frowned, walked over to the table, and opened the envelope sitting there.

There were brief sentences in the letter. Annan was certain that it wasn't any version of him who wrote this fluent cursive writing,

"The pursuit of a tragic love,

"Imprisonment in the shell of a life,

"The wandering dancer who pursues beauty and freedom—

"The Pale already knows your purpose,

"Through this door,

"Dedicate your soul remnant to the Pale."

The words in the envelope ended here.

Does this refer to the mission [Complete the sacrificial ritual.]?

Annan was in deep thought.

There was too much information in this letter.

Wondering dancer, soul remnant...

Could it be that Evelyn was already dead?

So what's the situation with Evelyn in reality?

Annan also suddenly thought of another crucial matter.

Whose nightmare is this?

This dungeon instance is on hard difficulty.

In other words, the nightmare owner should be a Silver Rank Transcended.

Obviously, the nightmare owner wasn't Evelyn.

At least the current Evelyn wasn't... She hadn't even fulfilled the apprenticeship pathway. In the purest sense of attribute points, she wasn't even Level 1.

However, Annan's actions in pausing here and thinking weren't without value.

He saw that the candle had dropped about $\frac{1}{8}$ of its height.

This candle burns too fast; it's unnatural. This was Annan's first thought.

His second thought then followed.

He only paused here for half a minute, and $\frac{1}{8}$ of the candle was consumed.

Then, he quickly understood that it should take 4 minutes for this candle to burn out.

That was to say, another Annan at [Life # ???] had only left this place 90 seconds ago!

...But why is he hiding from me?

Annan took the candle out from the candle holder and fixed it on the table without a second thought.

Holding the sharp candle holder as a weapon, he rushed to the end of the corridor. Then, he quickly opened the door.

At the moment the door was opened, Annan was stunned.

He was within an unnaturally winding room at the end of this long basement.

Approximately 80 white candles with the same height and thickness were placed all around the room. Each candle was burnt to a different height.

Candles surrounded the center of the room; it was as brightly lit as day.

The surprise here was the guillotine.

It was a gorgeous guillotine built on an altar with layers resembling a wedding cake.

It had a pure white wooden exterior, engraved with white runes and inlaid with various gems. A rope supported the diagonal crystal-colored blade at the highest point. There were white veils on both sides of the guillotine, like a wedding dress.

In front of the guillotine, there was a white lace basket with flowers in it, but Annan knew it was used to store heads.

From a distance, the setup gave off a first impression of a giraffe bride in a wedding dress.

Annan searched the room carefully but couldn't find any exits. There was no blood on the guillotine and no heads in the basket.

This is clearly a dead end.

There are also no hints in the room.

Just as Annan was standing in front of the guillotine, pondering whether to cleave off his head.

Suddenly a somewhat new yet familiar low voice behind him rang out, "Annan, don't move and don't look back!"

That was Evelyn's voice! Or rather, his voice!

Annan was sure of it. But, where the fuck did the voice come from?

Since someone had spoken already, Annan could only stand there silently.

What happened?

Could it be that the mission is to have the future self murder the present self?

The other "self" behind him continued to make demands, "Hurry up and lie there... Ah, you don't have to raise your butt. En, I will mention a key phrase to convince you to trust me, players and planning. Alright? Hurry up, stop wasting time..."

Stop wasting time?

Annan pondered, obeying the voice of the person behind him and lying on the guillotine. He stared at the white flower basket in front of him in a trance.

You're not going to ask me to cut the rope myself, are you?

Just then, Annan heard the unmistakable sound of the rope being cut.

Then, there came the sound of the guillotine suddenly falling—

"Ouch..." Annan heard Benjamin's screams of pain.

The next moment, Annan suddenly opened his eyes.

Only then did he notice that he and Benjamin were both collapsed at the bottom of the stairs—the lamp had fallen to the side. His hands and clothes were covered with dust. All the dust had turned into mud, making him feel uncomfortable.

As Annan thought about his situation, he reached out to help Benjamin up.

He subconsciously didn't touch Benjamin with his muddy hands.

However, Benjamin grabbed Evelyn's hand anyways and staggered up from the ground.

"Ouch...this..." He complained about his pain and then gently comforted, "It's fine, nothing is broken..."

Judging from what you said, did I slip and push you down here?

Annan quickly recognized what the young Benjamin meant.

Otherwise, he would have complained about how slippery was this place. But, since he didn't dare to complain at Evelyn, he comforted her as soon as possible; probably she was the one causing all these to happen.

Did I lose control of my body when my consciousness blurred?

Annan subconsciously opened the mission panel.

Sure enough, the mission changed back again.

[Main mission: Return to the dream.]

[Acquire Benjamin's trust.]

[Complete the sacrificial ritual.]

[Do not go home.]

Annan grimaced subconsciously, not because of the pain in his body but because of exasperation.

What a loop!

How do I end this nightmare?

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 237

After Annan helped Benjamin up, he keenly noticed that Benjamin was a lot quieter.

Or probably he had become calmer?

After picking up the lamp, Benjamin held Annan's hand and moved forward. He didn't move on to another topic and just concentrated on finding a way.

Did Benjamin realize something?

In the beginning, he never stopped talking to Evelyn.

In Annan's view, Benjamin was awkward in picking up a topic to chat. He was too excited to talk about the Necropolis fortress with Evelyn. It felt like he was talking about new military equipment for an afternoon with his girlfriend, who was an artist.

I wonder how the real Evelyn will respond to him.

Would she just keep smiling and listen quietly?

"...Eh?" Benjamin said, puzzled, "Why is this door open?"

The last time he came here it should have been closed...

"What's wrong?" Annan's heart tightened slightly and asked softly, "Where is this place?"

He had noticed that his original "spawn point" was in front of them, which was the "cell".

"I remember this... My teacher has mentioned it."

Benjamin frowned slightly, trying to recall, "This seems to be the place where the corpses are stored."

"...Corpses?" Annan was startled.

Isn't this the dungeon cells?

Benjamin asked worriedly, "Are you afraid? We don't have to look at this if you're scared."

"Will there still be bodies in there?" Annan replied.

"Definitely not." Benjamin replied, "The Silver Sire Church had come to clean this place already."

"Then... I want to take a look," said Annan softly.

Benjamin was silent for a while, then held Annan's hand a little tighter, "Alright."

He took Annan to the "dungeon cells" and raised the Green Fire Lamp in his hand.

Only then did Annan finally clearly see the internal environment of the "cells."

This place seemed like a public bathhouse. It was much larger than Annan initially imagined.

Inside the "回-shaped" room, a low, square wall that was filled with Inscriptions stood right in the middle. Apparently, the Inscriptions on it were violently crossed out with sword slashes. The low wall was just over a meter high, reaching exactly half the room's height.

There were handcuffs installed along the low wall as well; all of them were attached with chains with two meters distance between each other. There were about twenty such "chains and handcuffs" devices.

In the beginning, Annan was at the "position" closest to the door.

"What's this?" Annan asked subconsciously.

Benjamin somehow knew what it was, "Do you know about the Half-dead Enchantresses?"

Benjamin replied in a low volume, "The Pale Princess's priestesses aren't living humans. Therefore, although they are priestesses, they have no place in the Pale Tide.

"They are both living and dead; neither living nor dead – the Pale Tide only allows the dead to join. So, if they want to participate in the Pale Tide, they have to fix their bodies here first."

As Benjamin explained, he subconsciously walked to the shackle closest to the door, which was the shackle that bound Evelyn's wrist in the dream world.

While pointing at the shackles, Benjamin explained to Annan — or "Evelynn" carefully but absentmindedly, "They'll put their necks or wrists in here and then release their souls. My teacher had once said that the Half-dead Enchantresses could detach their souls out from their bodies. But, if they leave their bodies for too long, they can never return. They will no longer be Half-dead Enchantress but stray ghosts.

"As you see... There's a tiny blade here. If the cuff is under heavy pressure, the blade will come out gradually and make them feel more and more pain over time.

“As the Half-dead Enchantresses feel the pain from their body getting stronger, they will stop lingering in the Pale Tide and immediately return to their body, their souls' homes.”

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“Is it like a clock?” Annan asked.

He knew that there were already clocks that could work as timers in this era.

Benjamin nodded, “Yes. In fact, it's like a stopwatch... The one I showed to you previously! It won't run like an ordinary pocket watch, but it can be accurately timed. After activating it, the time displayed will flow in reverse and make a ding sound at 0:00. It is said that the Alteration Wizards have this thing for experiments... Um, sorry.”

Realizing that he was going off-topic again, Benjamin stopped abruptly.

But Annan had already obtained the crucial information he needed.

For Half-dead Enchantresses, the body is the home of the soul.

He immediately remembered his main mission in the dream world.

Go home...

At that moment, Annan's pupils shrank slightly.

—In the dream world, Annan would hear the reversed singing from the reflection in the lake.

—After each death, he would return to reality from the dream.

—The mission required “Evelyn” to keep her limbs intact in the dream.

—The sacrificial ritual must be completed in reality.

Also, the Pale Princess was known as the Bondless Princess. Her priestesses couldn't fall in love with anyone, including themselves.

...Of course, Benjamin was no exception.

Annan glanced at Benjamin subconsciously.

He probably understood the situation.

“Evelyn” might have already been dead for a while, and that so-called dream... should be at the church that her soul saw after leaving her body.

Ordinary people would get seriously ill simply from a glimpse at the Pale Tide, even if they immediately ran back and hid in the house. Let's not forget that Evelyn was obsessed with watching the Pale Princess's entire dance up close.

She was probably dead by then.

But obviously, the Pale Princess was interested in her pure soul.

Just as the Venerated Skeleton kept the dead “Elle” alive for a while... “Evelyn” could be the Pale Princess's “Elle”. Currently, Evelyn was already a Half-dead Enchantress. That was why she could hear the ghost's voice faintly from time to time and enter the dream world.

For Evelyn, this was a “prophesying dream”.

Instead of seeing the future, she entered the “real Pale Church” in a soul state!

Therefore, when she smashed open the “cell door” in the soul world, the door in reality was also opened.

The fallen soldier statue at the door might also be because the “David” in the dream violently moved it away.

Evelyn suddenly asked Benjamin to accompany her to the Pale Church, probably because the ritual of transforming her into a Half-dead Enchantress required Benjamin to complete the final step.

“Evelyn” fell into the water and fell down the stairs again, perhaps because she instinctively refused this matter – she hoped that Benjamin could get out of here.

However, if Benjamin left this place, she couldn't be reborn as Half-dead Enchantress – as the “Dancer under the Moon” would abandon her. Instead, she would die completely when she returned home.

That was why the mission Annan received in reality was “Don't go home”!

If she gave up the sacrificial ritual, she would lose the Pale Princess's favor and turn into a corpse.

This might have been Evelyn's original ending.

If she loved Benjamin, she wouldn't be willing to let Benjamin cut off her head, given that she had such a pure heart that even the Pale Princess was impressed.

Therefore, the main mission that Annan actually got would guide him to the “next main mission”.

He would have to go through the “dream world” a few more times before he could acquire the “real” main mission that finally made him leave the nightmare!

That being the case, there was only one question left — Whose nightmare was this?

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 238

Annan was feeling quite complicated.

It didn't matter whether Evelyn gave up the ritual or completed it.

The only difference was whether her physical body left Benjamin or her heart.

In actual history, Benjamin would enter the Swamp's Black Tower, become an Alteration Wizard, recruit many apprentices, and sell Alteration products. Was it all because he had attributed Evelyn's death that year as his fault because he didn't get an ointment for her?

Everything seems to be connected.

According to Salvatore, many Alteration products for civilian usage had only begun to appear in the Noah Kingdom in the last dozen years.

The “Flesh Thread” that could sew together wounds, the “Sorceress Ointment” that could heal burns, and the “Elixir” that relieved any injuries. These ointments had become so much cheaper due to the improvement in the product manufacturing process. There were also spectacles, artificial gemstones, high-quality gauze, and sails made with Alteration arts.

The most famous and iconic product was the “Green Fire” that had now reached thousands of households in the Noah Kingdom, almost replacing the use of candles.

On the other hand, Benjamin's contribution to improving the synthesization process of the Elixir, the Sorceress Ointment, and the Green Fire granted him the honorary title “Master Benjamin”.

The improvement ideas of these Alteration products were similar.

Rather than amplifying their effects on Transcended, he chose a synthesis method that abstained from using the expensive materials, significantly reducing the price of production. In the end, he improved the Alteration arts catered for civilians that were simple and low cost.

Evelyn is likely Benjamin's obsession that will always haunt his mind.

The main reason for Evelyn's death was that she watched the Pale Princess's dance during the Pale Tide.

As for the reason she was fascinated by the Pale Princess's dance was because she was obsessed with dancing.

This obsession came from her disfigured face by a fire.

She had a disfigured face because she couldn't afford the “Sorceress Ointment” to heal her burns.

Evelyn wasn't born poor.

She wasn't forced into any labor or farm work. Apparently, she had no calluses on her hands, and she knew Benjamin. So it wasn't poverty that stopped her from being treated.

It was because of the arrogance of the wizards.

Salvatore told Annan that the wizards monopolized the technology in that era.

Not to mention ordinary people, even other types of Transcended could hardly buy any wizard's inventions. Money didn't help in this situation because wizards strictly forbid the sale of Alteration products to anyone outside of the Swamp's Black Tower.

You could apply the product for them, but you couldn't sell those products.

Their goal was to prevent the Alteration Wizards of other towers from cracking their Alteration ideas and imitating their arts into crafting better Alteration products.

The situation had changed twenty years later, probably due to Benjamin's efforts.

He improved many civilian versions of “Alteration products”, used them to dominate the low-end market, and helped Swamp's Black Tower earn a huge sum of money. At the same time, it also incurred

competition from wizards in other countries, forcing them to put down their ego and research “Alteration products for ordinary people”.

It had indirectly pressured wizards worldwide to share their technology with ordinary people.

This was an era that alchemists could never imagine before the wizard's Unification War.

Benjamin was an Alteration Wizard who wanted to use Alteration products that only Alteration Wizard could make to benefit and help the public.

But who would have known that the change of an era was because of a dancer disfigured by fire?

Annan thought about it silently.

He was a little worried that Benjamin would be reluctant to host the ritual for her.

When Annan and Benjamin came out of the “回-shaped room”, Annan faintly heard something.

The sound was faint and distant...

It seemed like... an ethereal singing voice.

“Did you hear anything?” Annan suddenly had a thought in his heart and asked Benjamin in a low volume.

Benjamin was stunned for a moment. He frowned and listened for quite a while, then slowly shook his head, “No, not at all. Let me listen more carefully—”

“It's fine... Maybe I misheard it.” Annan comforted tenderly.

But the singing in his ear became clearer and clearer, “Life is bright and beautiful, but it is a prison;

“Love is fiery and brilliant, but it is the fire that confuses the eye;

“The wandering dancer who pursues beauty and freedom—

“The Pale already knows your purpose,

“Dedicate your soul remnant and love to the Pale;

“Dedicate your head and blood to the Pale...”

It was a similar poem Annan had read in the letter he found in the dream world.

That voice is coming from right above me.

The ghosts are in the lobby!

Annan immediately realized that this was the reversed hymn he heard in the “Reflection of the Church in the Lake”!

The moment he heard the hymn, Annan lost consciousness again.

He awoke back at the dungeon cell's entrance again. The same spot where he traversed between reality and the dream world previously.

“...Eh?” Annan was startled.

Behind him, the cell door was wide open, but no one was inside.

The chain that he had removed was still intact.

He twisted the lock and found out that it was still intact.

Was I spawned at an earlier timeline? Annan walked forward while being occupied with his thoughts.

But this time, Annan didn't see the candlelight.

He walked to the middle of the corridor, only to see that the table blocked the path leading to the “guillotine room”.

Annan struck the match and lit the candle, but the candlelight was too dim.

The light was not enough to illuminate the entire corridor. The faint light hardly reached the middle of the passage.

I need to move this table out of the way.

“Hmm, I should slow down a little bit.” Annan muttered, “Let's see if the letter is different this time...”

After speaking his mind out loud, Annan skillfully opened the letter.

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Then, he was stupefied on the spot.

The paper strip was much longer than what he first saw!

“To the person who are loved by the Pale:

“The pursuit of a tragic love,

“Imprisonment in the shell of life,

“The wandering dancer who pursues beauty and freedom—

“The Pale already knows your purpose,

“Through this door,

“Dedicate your soul remnant to the Pale,

“Send your lover to freedom,

“Offer your head to the earth,

“You shall receive a condensed soul, a pure spirit;

“Or to leave here,

“Follow the mortal rules and send the soul remnant back to the earth—

“You will be remembered dearly.

“The choice is yours,

“—but I already know your answer.”

It was a narrow strip of paper, about four fingers wide.

After reading the note, Annan understood something.

He had made some incorrect assumptions.

When “Citalopram” created a character, she was only at Level 5... So Annan thought that the profession of Half-dead Enchantress should start at Level 5.

But it could be because the profession offered to the player was a more simplified version – or Evelyn really had an extremely pure heart.

If she was willing to become a Half-dead Enchantress, she could even start at the Silver Rank directly!

The upper limit of the priesthood was at Silver Rank!

With that said, Evelyn even had the talent to become a pope.

In this case, it was beyond doubt that Evelyn, the future Half-dead Enchantress was the owner of the nightmare!

Since Evelyn had completed the ritual and became a half-human and half-undead... why did she die?

If she really died, shouldn't she become a wandering spirit following the Pale Princess?

Could it be that turning into a wandering spirit can also cause nightmares?

Or...

Another doubt floated in Annan's mind.

Benjamin had a desire to advance into Gold Rank.

He had been stagnant in Silver Rank for more than 20 years. Was it really because he couldn't find a way to advance into Gold Rank?

Or was it that his original goal was to become the pope for “the Man in the Mirror”?

Annan suddenly remembered something.

In the “White Tower”, he told Benjamin that he and Salvatore joined forces to kill Gerald.

At that time, Benjamin probably didn't know that Gerald would survive in the end and compete with him for Michelangelo's resurrection.

But then Benjamin muttered, “Just as I expected.”

This showed that Benjamin knew from the very beginning that his future self would have murderous intentions towards Gerald sooner or later.

If that is the case, the answer was clear.

Benjamin and Michelangelo had known each other for a long time.

For the “matching” during that event, Benjamin didn't partner up with Gerald and Michelangelo didn't team up with Melvin. Michelangelo had misled Annan!

Michelangelo's duo wasn't Benjamin but Melvin!

The Melvin he killed was Gerald's partner!

Benjamin, who had witnessed everything from the beginning, was too lazy to care. Benjamin didn't interfere with Michelangelo's ritual because he had to preside over Michelangelo's resurrection ritual in the future and help Michelangelo achieve divinity!

As for his reasons...

“...Oh, yes.” Annan muttered.

He folded the upper and lower ends of the note in his hand and then slowly tore it open. That was to prevent misleading the past self... and thus achieve the perfect loop.

Benjamin likely entered this nightmare at some point and learned of Evelyn's actual whereabouts.

Evelyn hadn't become a Half-dead Enchantress, so she hadn't forgotten about Benjamin.

However, she didn't die because the one who killed her was her future self!

The real Half-dead Enchantress was forever trapped in the cracks of time, where no one could love her.

She gained the Half-dead Enchantress's Transcended power but managed to escape the fate of forgetting the one she loved, at the cost of being caught in a loop of “the past”.

From then, Benjamin's goal had never changed.

He wanted to become the Man in the Mirror's pope and acquire the elements of mirror and time.

That way, he could plunge his consciousness into this infinite loop and rescue Evelyn from the fate of dedicating her soul to the Pale Princess!

In front of Annan, the actual main mission slowly emerged.

[Main mission: Create a loop.]

Below this main mission, three side missions slowly appeared.

[Witness the completion of the sacrificial ritual.]

[Light the candles as a Half-dead Enchantress.]

[Return to the beginning.]

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 239

After acquiring the nightmare's true main mission, Annan knew what he needed to do.

He first dragged the table to the middle of the corridor, then put the paper strip back into the letter. Next, he entered the “guillotine room” with a lit candle and lit all the candles inside.

Then, Annan directly lit the candle on the table outside.

He had originally thought of entering the guillotine room again, chopping off his own head, and returning to reality.

However, that was no longer necessary..

After Annan lit the candle on the table, he felt a trance and returned to reality again.

At this point, the young Benjamin seemed to have realized what was going on.

He just sat beside the unconscious Evelyn, lowered his head, and drifted off in his thoughts. Annan didn't know what he was thinking, but he wasn't in a good mood.

Wow, you lived up to the honorary title “Master Benjamin” in the future!

That's quick thinking...

Seeing that Benjamin didn't want to move forward, Annan spoke softly, “Let's continue.”

He took the initiative to reach out and grab Benjamin's hand.

It appeared as if Benjamin didn't want to break free from Evelyn's hand...

He froze for a moment but stood up with Annan's guidance.

“Evelyn...”

After walking along with Annan silently for a while, Benjamin spoke hesitantly and asked in a dejected voice, “Do you...

“...want to leave me?”

When Annan heard this question, his footsteps stopped slightly.

Since this was Evelyn's nightmare in the future, it meant that Benjamin agreed to help her hold the ritual in the end.

Then, Annan shouldn't have revealed too much...

With the attitude of spilling out too much information might stir up troubles, Annan sighed and whispered, “If I leave this place with you now, I will leave you forever.”

Undeniably, that was the truth.

As soon as Annan said these words, he couldn't help but be surprised by himself. Finally, I speak in honesty inside a nightmare. What a rare experience!

I'm too kind.

I will do my best in my act here so that you both will have a happy ending in the future.

I'm a kind single person.

Annan couldn't help but sigh in his heart.

Benjamin, you silly boy. You're forcing someone who loves you to put up an act.

"Is that so...?" After staring at Annan for a while, Benjamin could only mutter under the persuasion of Evelyn's sincere eyes.

After that, he remained silent, watching Annan walk to the final room and open the door.

Seeing the decayed and bladeless guillotine, he looked as though he had lost his soul.

Annan couldn't bear to see Benjamin in this state.

He added in a low volume, "It's fine, Benjamin.

"The future you... will find me."

"Really?" Benjamin's pupils lit up slightly.

Annan nodded solemnly.

Indeed, he came from the future.

Benjamin became a pope, and his primary goal was to travel back in time and cut off Evelyn's loop.

The time when he learned about this should have been not long before he went to the White Tower.

Benjamin should have obtained the key to the nightmare and learned the truth at that time.

Annan hesitated for a moment but replied in a low volume, "Yes, because... I came back from the future.

"This place is a nightmare."

Immediately, Annan briefly explained the mechanism of this nightmare and what Benjamin would do in the future.

Since it was just a nightmare anyway, so it didn't hurt to tell him.

Looking at the child's despairing expression, Annan couldn't bear it. He didn't even know how Evelyn could bear it that time and asked Benjamin to complete this ritual.

"I would like to believe you." After Benjamin listened to Annan's narration, he pondered for a long time before slowly nodding. Finally, he said solemnly, "But it's not because you told me this...

"It's because you're Evelyn."

But I have told you that I'm not the real Evelyn—

Annan was about to refute with this reason, but he suddenly understood what he meant.

At this time, Benjamin hadn't yet entered the circles of Transcended. Nightmares, loops, the future... these elements were too distant for him.

From his point of view, Evelyn might have made it up to deceive him.

What Benjamin meant was — Even if it was Evelyn who made these all up to deceive him, he was willing to believe in such a bizarre thing.

Annan was silent for a while, and the corners of his mouth raised.

He handed the rope to the young Benjamin with a sincere smile, and he lay down in front of the rotten guillotine.

The next moment, Annan fell into a trance and entered the dream world again.

At this time, he saw another “Evelyn” standing uneasily in front of him, appearing as if she would turn around at any second.

So, Annan stopped her immediately, “Annan, don't move and don't look back!”

Hearing Annan's words, “Evelyn” stopped immediately and stood silently in place.

Annan paused, occupied in thoughts.

So, I have returned to that time...

He quickly calmed down and continued, “Hurry up and lie there... Ah, you don't have to raise your butt. En, I will mention a key phrase to convince you to trust me, players and planning. Alright? Hurry up, stop wasting time...”

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Annan didn't even have to search for it from his memory because he could easily say something like that.

Seeing the “Evelyn on Life x 2” lying obediently in front of the guillotine, Annan looked at the rope connected to the guillotine beside the guillotine with some hesitation.

Do you want me to cut it off?

The idea promptly rose in his mind, but he didn't even have the time to follow suit when the rope suddenly started burning by itself..

It's Benjamin in reality!

The guillotine fell, cutting off Evelyn's head. The head simply fell off and landed in the white flower basket.

Strangely, Evelyn didn't bleed much after her decapitation.

In other words, her blood had coagulated for a long time.

Seeing her hairless, scar-filled head fall into the flower basket, Annan was frozen in place for a while.

...Evelyn, she has been dead for a long time.

Annan thought. He observed the corpse on the guillotine and the skin in the dream world, which gradually became transparent.

The corpse also began to shine, gradually turning into particles of light and disappearing.

His body absorbed those light particles.

His soul seemed to grow more robust, and the transparent feeling dissipated.

Countless Transcended knowledge emerged in Annan's mind. It was the gift of the Pale Princess.

Annan already had knowledge of most of this information... but for Evelyn, this was an introduction to a whole new world.

At that moment, Annan seemed to realize something.

When Evelyn was at Life x 1, did she come up with this solution to enter the crack between life and death?

She figured out that she could store her soul in a nightmare...

While Annan was in his thoughts, the power of unfamiliar elements flowed in Evelyn's body. It gave off a similar feeling when he activated the [Frost Sword].

Is this the power that belongs to a Silver Rank?

What element is this?

Annan's mind raced. His hand gently brushed the rope, and it repaired itself quickly. He caressed the flower basket, and the pure white flower basket became brand new. Annan pulled the guillotine to the highest point again and tied it back in place.

Annan then went back to the ground and picked up the chain at the door.

He finally saw it...

Countless transparent men, women, and children all smiled and applauded him as if he had just given a perfect speech.

Annan looked down at his body that seemed real and finally bowed to them politely.

Then, those people dispersed again and returned to their previous positions.

Annan moved the statue back to its original position, holding the chain back to the "prison" in the basement.

He reached out and touched the door lock, which returned to its initial state.

He closed the door and fastened the chain. He put his hand into the handcuffs and then carefully tightened it. In the process, Annan inevitably scraped his left wrist... It was as if he had struggled hard, leaving some bruises.

Fresh blood rather than dried blood was pouring out of Evelyn's wrist.

[Health: 80%]

Annan stared at the fresh blood slowly oozing out from his wrist.

To convert dried blood back into fresh blood... Is this also the power of this element?

Reversing the broken, giving new life to the old...

Evelyn's power isn't about time and mirror images, but some ability related to new life.

...I see. Annan understood.

Evelyn didn't travel through time at all.

The real Evelyn had already become a Half-dead Enchantress.

However, as she was about to die, she forced herself to believe that this was reality.

That was why Annan woke up here in the first place.

Evelyn was just a Silver Rank Transcended.

Her power was far from being able to reverse the boundary between reality and the dream world.

But if all this was her dream, then it all made sense.

She constructed such a nightmare to contain her soul. She didn't die nor did she dedicate her soul to the Pale Princess; the price was that she would keep repeating this never-ending cycle of nightmares.

The only way out was to wait for the future Benjamin to decipher the nightmare messages, cut off the curse, and forcibly intercept her soul.

What an impressive task.

What an incredible level of trust.

[Health: 30%]

Annan suddenly felt a wave of sudden drowsiness, and he subconsciously opened his mission panel.

[Main mission: Create a loop. (Completed)]

[Witness the completion of the sacrificial ritual. (Completed)]

[Light the candles as a Half-dead Enchantress. (Completed)]

[Return to the beginning. (Completed)]

[Health: 5%]

...I did everything I could.

When Evelyn woke up again, she would forget all of this.

It was just a forgotten dream for "Evelyn by the Lake". "Benjamin" in the nightmare would also be reset.

When she came to the lake, she would still see Evelyn smiling and chatting... until she plunged into the lake, returned to another world, and activated a new loop.

As for how to save your childhood sweetheart, it would be up to you, Pope Benjamin.

Thinking of this, Annan drifted off to sleep.

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[The nightmare has been purified.]

[Purified the nightmare with a designated identity. Evaluation ratings increased.]

[Constructed a perfect loop. Evaluation ratings increased significantly.]

[Received approval from the Pale Princess. Evaluation ratings increased significantly.]

[Comprehensive Evaluation — A]

[Obtained 150 points of Shared Experience. Perception+1.]

[Obtained dungeon instance clearance reward: Profession (Wizard) increases by 3 levels.]

[Hidden plotline has been decrypted: 75%]

[You may receive the second stage reward (obtained when completion reaches 66%).]

“...Receive.” Annan took a deep breath and adjusted his body on the bed so that he could lie comfortably on the pillow.

I just happened to reveal ¼ of the plot...

It didn't go beyond Annan's expectations.

After all, Annan only figured out the mechanism behind this dungeon instance, but he couldn't break off the loop. It was something Benjamin had to do by himself. Moreover, he would have to prepare the items or learn abilities to intercept and store the soul in advance so that when Evelyn's soul escaped the infinite loop, he could capture it as soon as possible.

Judging from the fact that Annan was able to get the second stage dungeon instance reward, Benjamin's progress in decrypting this nightmare shouldn't be as far as Annan imagined.

What Benjamin faced was his “old self” in his nightmare.

It seemed like Benjamin didn't even fully understand the situation at the time, but he had already made up his mind to save Evelyn.

“What a romantic Benjamin is...” Annan muttered.

[Acquired dungeon instance decryption reward: Curse Vessel — “White Guillotine”]

[White Guillotine]

[Type: Weapon/Tool/Miscellaneous (Dark Purple)]

[Description: A guillotine that has severed countless heads remains as white as jade. Users approved by the Pale Princess can hold it without a hilt.]

[Effect: The owner will suffer the curse “God-sent Beheader” and “Divine Cut”]

[God-sent Beheader: You must behead at least one other person within 24 hours after this weapon sees blood, else your own head will be decapitated. Once you have inflicted a “decapitation” injury, the beheaded's soul will be sent to the Pale Princess, which will cause the decapitated to die instantly.]

[Divine Cut: When the weapon inflicts “cut” damage to a living enemy, the damage done can ignore the enemy's armor and inflict complete damage. When it inflicts “cut” damage to ghosts and spirit-type enemies, the damage is considered divine art damage.]

“...What a strange weapon.” Watching the guillotine gradually took shape from the void and lay peacefully on his quilt, Annan turned silent.

For ordinary human enemies, beheading already meant “immediate death”. The instant death effect wasn't quite helpful. Necks unprotected by armor were so vulnerable that Annan could sever them with his existing kitchen knife. Hence, the armor-piercing property wasn't that useful either.

The good news was that it was a dark purple weapon.

After ignoring the conditions to activate its effects, it was still quite a powerful weapon in terms of stats alone.

A weapon that ignored natural armor types such as scales, muscles, and bones. Moreover, it gave Annan the option to attack spirits without activating the [Silver Hand]. Also, he could defeat the enemy that could regenerate infinitely in one hit.

This was undoubtedly a weapon that specialized in “fighting undead monsters”, as long as they had a neck.

It's actually the Mortal Blade.

[TN: A Sekiro Die Twice weapon.]

Annan was speechless.

From another point of view, the conditions of the weapon were too harsh, and the cost of using it wasn't too serious.

Once it was unsheathed (Figuratively speaking, there was no sheath.), the user was required to decapitate someone within twenty-four hours. That was to say, if Annan intended to use this weapon, it meant he had to kill at least one person.

Let's archive this weapon for the time being.

I should unseal this when I encounter a formidable opponent...

Annan imagined himself holding a bloody kitchen knife in one hand, a guillotine blade like another giant kitchen knife in the other hand; or a sledgehammer in one hand and a giant sword in the other...

He shuddered a little.

This style doesn't feel quite right.

It doesn't feel like the image of a magician!

I think I would look much cooler holding a kitchen knife in one hand and a hammer in the other.

Annan tried to wield the [White Guillotine]. He smiled with satisfaction once he confirmed that [Parallel Comprehension] ability was triggered normally.

I should keep it.

Annan thought for a moment, got out of the quilt, and put on a coat casually.

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Then, he went to find a roll of bandages and wrapped the [White Guillotine].

Its blade wasn't too sharp; it probably could be considered blunt.

However, its curse was enough to sever anyone's head easily.

Annan was suddenly curious. If I wrap it with a bandage, will the curse itself still work?

If that works, should I put it in a scabbard? Would the weapon still function normally?

Beheading an enemy directly with the scabbard...

"If that can work too, it would be interesting." Annan sighed.

It's a pity that my character design seems to be getting weirder.

However, now that I have personally experienced the information of the Half-dead Enchantress...

Annan pondered a little and tweaked Citalopram's spawn location.

Then, he began to write a customized starting plotline for her.

Since she was a Half-dead Enchantress, she had to play this role well.

Just looking at the item "recognized by the Pale Princess" in the mission score, Annan was startled.

Annan knew that this dungeon instance belonged to the Pale Princess.

Benjamin put the [Chaos Spell: Denial of Life] as the core reward of the nightmare, which meant that he must have reached some kind of agreement with the Pale Princess.

The side effect of this spell was to fall into this nightmare that was under the Pale Church's control.

This chaos spell wasn't the divine art used by the priest but a spell that borrowed the deity's power as a "non-believer".

The price they paid was to be engraved with the traces of the divine power — "influence".

Their souls were teleported across regions and entered a nightmare even without a key when the chaos spell's effect wore off.

Sure enough, someone must have realized that nightmares could be entered this way, but they might not necessarily have cleared the nightmare. It was likely that the deity's believers discovered it.

Not all deities had as many priests as an upright deity. Moreover, the priests didn't have to do anything. As long as they cleansed the nightmares, they wouldn't starve to death.

For false deities, their believers were only required to “discover” the nightmare.

So, this group of people was also known as “traveling priests”.

They looked as though they were preaching their faith, but they were actually searching for nightmares. As long as they find a nightmare similar or consistent with their deity's domain, they could borrow the Divine Art's power to anchor it.

—In other words, when they encountered dungeons they couldn't defeat or didn't have the spare time to challenge, they would share those dungeons with other Transcended. In return, the Transcended would have to work and pay off their debts.

When an anchored dungeon instance was purified, it would produce a holy light engraving belonging to the corresponding false deity. Usually, these Transcended would utilize these engravings to purify their erosion rate or purchase new chaos spells.

This was how those Transcended who walked the path of chaos would improve themselves.

They were the PvE players who wouldn't participate in the main storyline when they farm the dungeons.

[TN: PvE stands for players vs. environment.]

The speed at which they improved their strength was much faster than the Transcended at the same level.

After all, even if ordinary Transcended found a nightmare, it took a long time to explore it. The advantage was that the Transcended in his category could dig deeper into the secrets of these nightmares.

On the other hand, Transcended who have borrowed a false deity's power had the opportunity to improve their might via this one-time nightmare quickly. The good news was that they would know what was the nightmare's central theme before going in.

Although the night could only be entered once, the probability of one passing would be higher. The price was that once you failed, your erosion rate would skyrocket.

Evelyn's nightmare was clearly in the hands of the Pale Princess. Otherwise, it wouldn't be assigned to Annan.

The traveling priests didn't find this nightmare and “share” it out.

From the very beginning, the Pale Princess kept this nightmare.

It appeared that the Pale Princess granted Annan entry into this dungeon instance because he knew Benjamin.

It was only the first try on the nightmare, and yet Annan attracted the Pale Princess's attention.

If Annan acquired the influence of the "Death Howl" a few more times, enter a different dungeon instance belonging to the Pale Princess or even completely purify a dungeon instance and obtain the Pale Princess's holy light engravings...

He instinctively felt that the Pale Princess would come over with her iconic scissors and take his head off one day.

It was like the naughty kids stealing the fruits from the fruit trees by the streets.

Since Annan couldn't become a Half-dead Enchantress, then he could only run away with his head in his arms.

"Hey, has Yiyi also brought in a newcomer?" Annan suddenly sensed that a new player had entered the world.

He opened his eyes curiously and opened the backend interface.

Forget it. I'm not sleeping tonight!