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Citalopram was deeply fascinated by the ghost girl's pure and light figure.

Her usually indifferent and calm face was dyed with a red hue due to her strong wish to conquer her. She even felt her breathing a little faster, and her eyes grew sharp.

It was like seeing a cat that she liked very much in a cat cafe. Her mind was in the mood of "I want to pet the cat and bring it back home".

Seemingly aware of Citalopram's gaze, the ghost girl who was silently walking down the street threw her gaze over curiously.

The ghost seemed to have noticed her.

After the ghost took a step toward Citalopram, she floated over quickly. She circled Citalopram curiously, sniffing the air.

Like a balloon, she moved agilely and floated like a swimming fish. But it didn't give off a clumsy vibe — She swung her skirt and swam in circles to assess Citalopram.

After circling Citalopram for a couple of laps, she landed lightly on the ground.

It occurred that she was shorter than Citalopram by about 20 centimeters. At this moment, she held her skirt, raised her head, and showed a carefree smile to Citalopram as she curtsied, "Hello, the Pale Princess's follower!

"The name is Boffis! My full name is Boffis Cecilia, and I don't have an honorary title yet. I'm a Wind Dancer!"

Miss Boffis was happy and elated to meet Citalopram, "I haven't met someone who can see me for a long time!"

"My name is Citalopram." Citalopram responded politely, "However, don't wizards come here often?"

"I'm not an ordinary spirit, so they can't see me..." Boffis pursed her lips with her energy being low-spirited, "Only the Pale Princess's believers can see me..."

Her emotional fluctuations seemed ridiculous.

In the blink of an eye, she became excited again, reached out to Citalopram, and said expectantly, "Can you touch me? Do you feel it?"

"What do you want here? Just talk to me, and I can help you find it!" Boffis was like a puppy that sees its owner coming home, jumping around in excitement.

On the other hand, Citalopram was like the smiling parents.

She narrowed her eyes slightly and murmured subconsciously, "...I really feel like taking her away with me."

From the live stream window, her words were crystal clear. The spectators became wild in the bullet texts:

“—Fuck, someone here is abducting an innocent ghost girl!”

“—Stop, she isn't a “girl” anymore, considering the typical age of the elves and the duration of the ghost's existence...”

“—Stop the nonsense. She is a girl as long as she is pretty.”

“—I thought you were the most normal among the female players in our group, but I didn't expect...”

“—Sister Wen, be normal...”

[TN: Her real name is Wen Xue.]

“—I seem to have heard the hungry drooling voice just now. Is it a hallucination?”

Citalopram completely ignores these impolite bullet texts.

She just gave a gentle smile and reached out to Boffis' hand.

At the next moment, she felt her soul tremble.

As if she had used the [Pale Body] ability, Boffis had dragged her soul out from her body.

Citalopram looked back and found her body falling forward, kneeling on the ground with the head lowered and then slowly falling to the side.

In those half-open eyes, there was no spirit in it. After blinking weakly, her body had its eyes shut. If it weren't for the faint fluctuations on her chest, she would even think she had already died.

Should I safe keep my unused body somewhere? This thought popped into Citalopram's mind for a moment, but she vetoed it quickly.

Compared with her body, it felt more important for her to accompany cute girls.

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After all, no strangers should come to this place.

Hello, the Child and Dove? Are you watching the stream?

“—Can you hear me? I'll leave my body to you...” Citalopram lowered her voice and said softly.

Boffis asked curiously, “What did you say?”

“I'm just talking to myself. Don't worry about it.”

With a gentle attitude that Jiu Er had never seen before, Citalopram reached out and hugged Boffis directly. She said with a smile, “I'm really happy to meet such a lovely ghost like you.”

“...Me too.” Boffis blushed and whispered.

She was immediately started after having a stranger hugging her from behind.

But this faint discomfort and tension was nothing compared to finally seeing a “companion” who could respond to her words and touch her.

The feeling of being hugged again even made her tear up.

Although the embrace was equally cold, those words were enough to warm her heart.

“Are you going anywhere? Are you looking for something? Or some “Influence” to collect? I can take you there!” Boffis looked with those pitiful cat eyes.

She was much more proficient in moving her ethereal body than Citalopram — even without wings, she could fly as she pleases. On the other hand, Citalopram couldn't do that yet.

But once she just dragged Citalopram along with her, she could fly along with her newly acquainted stranger.

The scene was like the golden retriever biting the leash, pulling his master, and trying to walk to the door.

“I'm here to collect some [Influences].” Citalopram said warmly, “Speaking of which... Boffis, what is this place? I want to understand this place from the beginning.”

“If you are asking about the original name of this land, then it is called the Nuosheng River Valley, at least that was its name in the Third Age.

“And if you want to ask, what do we call this area... You may call it the 'specimen storage', the 'nightmare foundation', or the 'sealed record tape'. I don't know whatever it is called now...”

“...specimen storage?” Citalopram had a wild idea in her heart and asked curiously, “What does it do specifically?”

“...It does what it says literally.”

Hearing Citalopram's words, Boffis gestured somewhat confused and clumsily, “It's... the foundation of nightmares.”

Then, Citalopram came to a realization, “You mean... there is a nightmare here?”

“It's a public nightmare, not just a nightmare.” Boffis corrected, “The specimen storage is a technology we used back then... Since it uses curse energy technology, your people may have abandoned it.

“...Well, do you know the nature of nightmares?”

Hearing this, Citalopram shook her head decisively.

“What about the curse energy?”

Citalopram shook her head again

“Then, do you know about the dream world?”

Citalopram shook her head again.

“—What a clueless streamer. I'm going to follow your stream.”

“—Did you just reply I don't know to all her questions...?”

“—You don't know because you know. That's so philosophical.”

...Assholes, you're talking like you know the answer. Citalopram couldn't help but mutter in her heart.

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Realizing that Citalopram didn't seem to know anything, Boffis frowned in distress and tapped her head, “This is troublesome to explain from the beginning... I can't seem to remember these things well...”

“Well, the world's history will be stored in the 'dream world'. The dream world is a fragment of the world where only information exists and is closely connected to our world. The so-called 'nightmare' is a small piece of history in the dream world. It's projected with the human soul as the cornerstone with the curse acting as the paint... or rather the filling.

“Curse energy isn't a good energy source. It uses curse as a medium to extract and save power coming from the depths of the leylines as energy.”

“...In that case, won't Bone Burying Grandma trouble you?” Citalopram couldn't help but ask.

Why does this sound vaguely like a mako [1]...?

Do you want to use the planet as a spaceship?

Boffis shook her head, “What we extract is not the earth's energy, but the “world's edge” further deep. We first collect the accursed dust through the accursed energy windmill. After special treatment, we pumped the collected accursed dust into the depths of the earth...”

As Boffis explained, she suddenly stopped talking as if she had realized something.

Citalopram had a rough idea of what she meant.

In short, it is an unstable and polluted energy source, right?

“What about specimen storage?” Citalopram spoke gently, changing the topic.

Sure enough, Boffis had replied slowly and earnestly, “The specimen storage is the artificial projection of a historical record... A nightmare that can be preserved for a long time.

“We Osserians used to utilize those energies in bulk. Like you said, Bone Burying Grandma, Silent Lady, and Mr. Ray came to stop us. But when we finally realized the problem, we had absorbed too many curses. Our civilization can no longer survive.

“But we plan to leave something behind. The books can't last long enough, and the stone tablet and crystal will deteriorate. In the end, we chose this method instead of literature records to preserve our history in batches.

“To create a nightmare that can exist forever, we need a lot of [Silver Soul] as a support...”

Boffis opened her hands slightly.

There was sadness in her eyes.

“...I was supposed to be one of the supports.”

She said softly and quietly, “If it all goes well, I won't be here alone for more than a thousand years. I should have been sacrificed into the seedbed of nightmares and the cornerstone of history...”

“But now I'm the only one left...” Boffis squatted down slowly, hugged her knees, lowered her head, and whispered, “I'm the only one left... being left behind by everyone. I'm lucky and unfortunate.”

“—I'm the only one left alive.” Boffis' voice was soft.

The situation was like everyone had committed suicide, but she was the only one surviving in the end.

As she whispered, Citalopram saw some eerie and indescribable spirit bodies rising from the surrounding ruined azure blue rocks.

Unlike her and Boffis, those spirits had a good-looking soul that closely matched her physical appearance.

Some were like chunks of blueberry-flavored candy or stretched rice cakes.

The blue spirits were slender and long. It had no hands nor feet, but there were many heads and a very long “neck”.

Some had two heads, some had three heads, some had five heads, some had seven heads, and another with eleven heads. Their heights also varied from three to four meters to more than 20 meters high.

Those heads and bodies were connected with translucent blue tentacles.

The taller the “seagrass”, the greater the number of heads.

But the number of heads seemed to be a prime number.

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They were like vertically inverted giraffes with many weird legs standing on their heads.

An excellent metaphor popped into Citalopram's mind.

The heads in each group of “giraffes” whispered to the other heads in the same group, speaking a language that Citalopram didn't understand.

At this moment, Citalopram suddenly realized a Basic Influence called [Whispers of Grace] imposed on her inexplicably.

Although the wizards can't see it, are these unique spirit monsters everywhere in this ruin?

These spirits seemed to have floated out from the ground only because of Boffis' emotions. If she didn't have the [Pale Body] ability, she could only see blue glimmers on the ground.

Looking at these strange spirit bodies, Citalopram bit her right thumb nervously.

...This is bad.

She didn't feel any fear from these swaying entities with human heads and seaweed-like spirit bodies. Instead, she found them to be inexplicably cute.

Maybe it's the issue of filters and color scheme.

If it weren't for this beautiful, fairyland-like blue-green color scheme and a hazy shimmer, even Citalopram would feel a little scared if the surrounding environment and these "human head seaweeds" were replaced with a black-and-red color scheme.

At this moment, she really wanted to touch it to see if the texture of these "human head seaweed" was bouncy or soft.

If she suddenly went over and touched them, the players would label her as mentally ill.

I want to take these home too. What should I do?

But before that...

"Can you leave with me, Boffis?" Citalopram coughed lightly, squatted down, and whispered to Boffis, who had become depressed.

She had forgotten everything about missions, influences, teammates, etc... As long as she could earn rapps from Boffis and even pack Boffis away, she had possibly achieved all of those.

This is the checkmate move!

Hearing this, Boffis raised her head.

She had a smile on her face, putting away the crying expression, "Of course! After all, you are the Pale Princess's believer!

"When you get the divine art of [Backup Dancer], you must come back to me! I'm super strong!"

...Will you still cry?

Oops, why does it feel much cuter...?

"...I will definitely be back!" Citalopram followed her desires and answered with great determination.

It turns out that the Pale Princess's priest could rear ghost-type pets.

Sure enough, I didn't choose the wrong faith!

This person called the Pale Princess is a woman of culture!

Citalopram had never met the Pale Princess, had never heard the deity's voice she believed in, and even didn't know what the Pale Princess looked like. However, she inexplicably found the deity assigned to her at random to be amiable.

It was like the agreeableness when she discussed her R18+ fetish with her netizens.

I always feel that the Pale Princess is an ally!

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The more the Child chatted with Miss Boffis, the more embarrassed he felt.

He had always been the type who wasn't good at interacting with the girls. The cuter she was, the weaker he became.

But, he could interact with ladies like Sister Hyphen, treating her like a brother.

When he saw Jiu Er for the first time, he was nervous. But after seeing Jiu Er's terrifying behavior of smashing the enemy into pieces, his nervousness about facing the opposite sex disappeared immediately.

The shyness was replaced by a strong sense of fear.

He had a hunch that if he accidentally triggered this monstrous girl, she would come at him ferociously with a battleaxe.

As for Citalopram and Dove... When the Child met them for the first time, he was pretty nervous. However, since Annan appointed him as a captain, he wanted to make himself reliable.

Fortunately, although Citalopram was young, she was mature and tacit in dealing with people. She was keenly aware of the Child's nervousness and kept her distance from him.

Apart from discussing serious matters, the two hardly ever chatted at all. This made the Child breathe a sigh of relief.

As for Dove...

When the Child realized Dove's age range, he suddenly became less nervous.

In the end, the tension came from caring about the other party's evaluation.

This tension immediately became more apparent when he was alone with Miss Boffis.

"Julian, Julian!" Boffis said coquettishly to the silver-haired male elf whom the Child acted, "Stop daydreaming. Talk to me!"

The Child stood in front of the massive tree with a glaive.

Boffis put her hands behind her back and circled him and the tree, "How is your [Vine Strike] practice?"

"Show me, Julian!"

She seemed to have inexhaustible energy, her footsteps didn't stop at all, and her voice didn't become low-spirited because the Child ignored her. Instead, she kept looking for topics, "Julian, did you fail to learn it? I'm quite strong, ya. Would you like me to guide you?"

"Hiss..." The Child gasped for breath.

How should I put this?

I think I'm enchanted.

...I'm actually interested to learn about flying.

But if I fail to learn it, will I be exposed?

This worry deterred the Child from saying anything too informative before learning more about the situation.

The only good thing was that this “Julian” he enacted seemed to be a taciturn character.

Therefore, the Child hadn't revealed any flaws yet.

The Child was silent for a while, then murmured in a low and solemn voice, “Weather...”

“Weather?”

“The weather is really nice today...”

“What the hell is that!???” The Child's words amused Boffis. She laughed non-stop and rocked back and forth.

Her amused reaction even made the Child wonder if everyday daily greetings were a dad joke in the context of elves.

...Is it that funny?

However, seeing that the current atmosphere seems to have improved somewhat, the Child coughed lightly and asked cautiously, “Boffis... What did you eat this morning?”

“Yeah? Why do you ask that all of a sudden?” Boffis was also a little stunned by the Child's question.

She was stunned for a while and then replied probingly, “I had grilled fish, fried bread, and milk.”

“Ah, a hearty breakfast.”

“Eh? Ah, do you think I eat too much?”

“No, no, no, I'm just saying... Ah, could it be a little unhealthy? Because it contains too much fat...” The Child stammered a little when he spoke.

The conversation was too confusing and awkward. Even the cheerful Boffis, who was happily circling the Child, had stopped. She looked at the Child with a puzzled expression.

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Realizing that the conversation was awkward, the Child was silent for a while, then suddenly changed another topic, “Boffis, what do you like?”

“...Huh, eh?” Boffis felt even more confused.

After thinking for a long time, she asked cautiously, “What do I like...? Are you going to give me a present, Julian?”

“In that case... just ordinary accessories. Sparkling ones, and not too expensive.”

Julian's way of asking questions that were too confusing made her ponder, “what exactly is Julian talking about?” Her hands behind her back unconsciously clasped together.

“Ah, okay...” The Child was even more nervous at Boffis' response.

He was hoping that Boffis would answer something like “I like that giant machine” or “I like the deer in the street,” and then he could follow along with something like “What is that, tell me more?”

In the end, Boffis said politely to him, “I like it as long as Julian gives it to me.”

...So what should we do?

How should I continue the conversation?

It's hard to talk with people...

Please, someone in the stream? Someone help me out...

Wait, I better don't.

It would be better not to activate the live stream function.

Otherwise, they would probably laugh at me as a virgin who has never been in a relationship...

The Child hadn't even confessed to girls since school days. If there were no confession, there would be no lovelorn.

“Then, Boffis...” The Child was silent, then suddenly cut to the subject, “Have you heard of Frostwhisperian?”

“...Uh? Eh? Wait, I did hear about them... Are you interested in Frostwhisperian?” She was a little confused by the topic bumping around.

Boffis' face was gradually tainted with fear as she took a step back subconsciously.

Julian doesn't like to talk. Is it because he becomes so strange when he talks?

The two looked at each other, silent for a while.

“Hiss...” As if infected by the Child, Boffis couldn't help but gasp for a breath.

She took some time to manage her emotions and chose to talk about this topic for the time being.

She didn't know what other strange topics the Child would bring up.

“Frostwhisperian... Speaking of which, my mother has a nice collection of paintings.” Boffis recalled and said carefully, “The Elegant Elder drew the painting... The painting depicts the Old Grandmother.

“That painting is amazing! The Old Grandmother can even fly in the painting and make a terrifying roar. Her roar is capable of penetrating out from the limits of the painting and affecting our world. She had even left frost traces on the rock floor on the street.

“If you look directly at that painting, you can acquire Advanced Influence like 'the Remains of the Frost Deity'. That painting is in my house, but I can't show you. After all, Julian's body is still too weak. If your physique is not firm enough, the Old Grandmother in the painting may freeze you to death.”

Boffis no longer suffered any sanity drop from weird topics when the Child listened to her quietly.

She could not help but be secretly relieved and quickly found the next topic, "Speaking of which, did your mother teach you how to improve your physical fitness? I'm proficient in it too."

Great, the atmosphere is gradually getting better.

It seems that I have finally become familiar with her and got some strange information.

The Child was delighted.

He was about to ask, "How do you view your mother?" and wanted to ask for more information.

But, he found it too embarrassing to talk about topics suitable after becoming friends, and he didn't know how to become friends with girls.

This is so difficult.

The Child couldn't help but sigh.

"...Ah, yes, by the way, Julian! Are you interested in [Wind Dancer]? Let me tell you, my profession..."

This is too hard...

Boffis was frightened by the Child's awkward chatter that she dared not stop. She could only try to find new topics while crying silently in her heart.

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After discussing the topic of Wind Dancer, the conversation gradually returned to normal.

Or... at least on the surface, it didn't continue to get weird.

Suddenly, the Child blurted out, "Speaking of which, I envy those who can fly."

Boffis' cheeks blushed.

"I'm fine with that..." she whispered.

As if feeling a little cold, she hugged her slender left arm tightly with her right hand scratching her left shoulder nervously, feeling the coolness of her fingertips.

Her response was like the city's architectural layout, filled with asymmetry. To put it into perspective, the city seemed to be designed in a manner to identify each other's location.

Boffis had a strong sense of asymmetry too.

She did not put on accessories at all. He could vaguely see the left shoulder and left arm of the armpit from the side and the right arm that was tightly wrapped, even covering half of the palm. Her skirt was short, which emphasized her figure. Her white dress and heavy metal boots reaching to the knees showed an immense sense of asymmetry.

The Child had a harsh comment on her, but he too was similar.

Only at this time did the Child look at himself.

The most conspicuous thing was the strange boots that were short on the left and long on the right.

His trousers and tunic with two color tones appeared as if being cut right in the middle. It was purple on the left and dark blue on the right. The purple side looked like formal attire with some gold floral decorations and sharp-looking shoulder pads. On the dark blue side, it looked like everyday clothes, supple and lacking in decoration... and black squares.

It gave off a vibe of being “fashionable”.

The hidden meaning would be you don't usually wear that on outings.

“...Wait, what did you say?” The Child raised his head and looked at Boffis in confusion.

He was thinking about the aesthetic style of elves in this era, and he ignored what Boffis said. In other words, it was because Boffis kept talking that the Child reacted when she was suddenly silent.

But seeing the Child's reaction, Boffis just stomped her feet a little embarrassedly and raised her voice a little, “No way, no way!

“I won't fly with you again!”

“Wait...” The Child was a little flustered but then immediately stopped.

Seeing his reaction, Boffis looked even more annoyed.

He wasn't stupid.

When he blurted out, he realized what Boffis had just said.

Maybe it was something about her planning to fly with me.

It's my fault for saying something so untimely just now. I guess what I said hinted to her like saying, “I want to watch a movie” or something.

The Child could tell that Boffis liked Julian.

This should be a great chance to get close to her.

After all, if she were to fly with him, she wouldn't be holding his neck up or installing a Take-copter [1] on him. Instead, she would hold him in her arms and fly together.

But that can't work... It's not me that Boffis likes. Instead, it's the elf youth named “Julian” who looks like a 14- or 15-year-old human.

Although no one (players) will see it, I shouldn't take advantage of her.

This is wrong because I'm just a child.

At this time, the Child was stubborn and innocent.

Luckily, the awkward pause didn't last for long. An alluring but somewhat majestic female voice sounded afar, “Julian! Boffis—”

The Child looked up.

His pupils contracted slightly for a moment.

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What a stunning beauty.

The figure in the sky had a plump but solid figure. Her waist wasn't slender, but her chest muscles and thighs were thicc. Under the sunlight, her exposed neck was fair. She had long silky silver hair tied into a ponytail that she draped on her left chest.

She wore something resembling a trench coat with a stand-up collar, and her pants looked like modern slacks.

There were asymmetrical holes presented in different weird geometries on the white trench coat, and her black sweater was exposed under those holes.

For some reason, the Child felt dizzy just staring at the geometric patterns. Like drinking too much alcohol, the world in front of him was fuzzy.

The only similarity the woman in front of him shared with Boffis was the heavy metal boots.

The lady was like a crane with an elegant coat that appeared like wings as she descended on the ground. Her boots were heavy, but that didn't bother her, and they didn't even make any noise as she landed.

"Mom!" Boffis exclaimed happily, opening her arms.

But the woman just glared at Boffis. She glanced at the two of them and then asked indifferently, "Did you quarrel?"

"No..." Boffis grumbled disapprovingly.

The woman frowned slightly, "That's a yes to me.

"—Did you bully Julian again?"

"I just said no..." Under the lady's stare, Boffis' voice grew softer and faded away.

This is not good.

She has the air of a female president of the office. Why does she look like this nightmare's boss monster?

The Child gritted his teeth and politely greeted her, "Teacher."

This was the information he just got from Boffis. His teacher was Boffis' mother.

Although the Child didn't know her name, he was aware that she should be at least in the Gold Rank.

The woman turned her gaze to the Child.

Only then did the child finally see her pupils clearly.

...That's definitely not a human pupil.

Bright golden pupils were shining brilliantly. But, in those pupils, a faint blue pattern was spinning rapidly.

Her skin exuded faint blue particles. These particles become more visible and even easier to detect with the naked eye at her eyes and fingertips.

Are you a Gundam?

A question arose in the Child's mind quickly.

Shit, I almost blurted it out.

If it weren't for the sudden tension when the Child saw her eyes.

He had never experienced this feeling before. The fear and the oppressive feeling made his heart thump violently.

To put it into words, it was like a pet dog encountering a wild wolf. He felt that he had almost screamed out loud.

...Or rather, it was like Pichu [2] meeting Raichu [3]?

But what surprised the Child was that the woman just nodded to the child with satisfaction, "You dare to look into my eyes... Great, it seems you have become braver.

"How's [Vine Strike] practice going? Show me."

Yes... The Child replied quietly in his heart without speaking out.

He raised the glaive, threw it out like a boomerang, and held it firmly when it returned. It was like pen spinning [4] during the school days.

Then, he pointed it to the big tree not far away.

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Even though it was the Child's first time using such a peculiar weapon, he did not find it unfamiliar.

After all, the [Elven Swordsmanship] encompassed this weapon.

This glaive, in Boffis words, seemed to be called a 'ring blade'.

It had the appearance of a bladed hula hoop, a grip on the back, and an opening on the front. Since it was circular, it could easily block and parry enemy attacks. Those highly skilled could even utilize it to hook the enemy's weapon and then disarm them.

The blades on the sides were firm for blocking, while the blades on the inside were sharper and thinner. While approaching the enemy from behind, there was the option to hook the enemy's neck in and then exert pressure on the right hand to decapitate the enemy through the sharp blade at the front part of the inner ring.

There was no doubt that this weapon required great mastery and a balanced attribute distribution.

It was a prerequisite to have enough strength in utilizing its capability to block, disarm and dismember the enemy. Moreover, agility played a role for the user to maneuver this weapon flexibly and grab the

handle while it was spinning. Of course, its unique shape drained stamina quicker than wielding the typical sword.

The glaive was clearly a weapon only suitable for the Transcended with a balance attribute distribution.

However, since there was a higher requirement on attributes, it was much stronger than a standard sword, given the comparison was under the same amount of strength.

After all, the weapon had made use of the three primary attributes.

Also, the weapon was much handier than a rapier.

The Child had the confidence for melee combat with this weapon.

After exiting the nightmare, I should ask Annan for help to get a weapon like this. This thought surfaced in the Child's mind.

While many thoughts crossed his mind, he didn't stop what he was doing with his hands.

He raised the glaive and waved it around.

The glaive in his hand spun rapidly in the air.

The tree in front of him, with a diameter of nearly two meters, was covered with dark green vines in the blink of an eye. In less than two seconds, these vines entangled the tree layer by layer, and even the branches were bound inward by it, making a crunching wooden sound.

At the same time, the Child felt the mysterious power in his body was draining rapidly. The overall cost efficiency was like he was activating three [Vine Strikes] at the same time.

How is it so costly?

Even the Child was startled.

Soon, he quickly realized the situation. If the glaive was Forest Walker's designated weapon, he should be able to complete the vertical or horizontal "swing" required by the skill [Vine Strike] with the glaive.

For each rotation, its cost was similar to swinging the sword two or three times.

A thought suddenly popped into the Child's mind.

If I had a glaive in my hand instead of a rapier against Jude, I would be able to hold on for a longer time.

Of course, my stamina will be exhausted at a faster rate.

"It's fine now, Julian." The woman nodded with satisfaction, "It seems like you're working hard."

After she finished speaking, she glared at Boffis again, "It's just you being lazy every day!"

"I didn't..." Boffis retorted in a low volume.

The Child was quite familiar with this scene.

...Oh my God.

One day, I want to be someone's child too...

The woman reprimanded Boffis for a few words and then said to the Child, "Julian, you have mastered [Geo Strike], [Hydro Strike], and [Vine Strike], right?"

"Then, it's time to teach you the next stage of swordsmanship. After all, you still have to promote your profession into [Wind Dancer] after attaining soul condensation. Let's try to communicate with the power of the atmosphere first.

"Here's the swordsmanship I invented, [Aero Strike]."

"—Damn, this Child..."

Annan, who was on his journey, was affected by the Child's awkward chatter. He couldn't help but feel nervous while watching the stream.

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This fellow is really talented.

Although the stream posted on the forum was interrupted after the Child entered the nightmare, Annan could still spectate the situation with the system's backend interface.

Then, Annan was shocked.

He was stunned by how the Child chatted with Boffis.

After dealing with the "how's the weather" deck, the Child asked "Do you have a favorite weather?", then there came the questions "What did you eat this morning", "What's your favorite thing to do", and suddenly pushed the topic to "Have you heard of Frostwhisperian?"

Annan thought the Child was interrogating her.

The Child seemed to be using an interrogation technique by asking many questions to distract the target before surprising the target with a critical question.

"He isn't just a normal virgin. Does he suffer from social anxiety or phobia of women?"

But why don't you get nervous when talking to Boffis' mother?

So, you're lusting for Boffis, aren't you?

Or do you think her mother is not good-looking?

Compared to the Child, Miss Boffis was as gentle as an angel.

Faced with such a strange topic that was provocative, she wasn't angry but was trying to find a topic so that the Child would not appear too embarrassed.

This kindness was not for the Child but the "Julian" whom the Child enacted. However, she still appeared to be a kind soul.

"In this case, it is indeed possible to guide Citalopram to learn the divine art of the [Backup Dancer of Death Howl]." Annan thought for a moment and nodded.

Boffis should be able to bring information on ways to acquire the Silver Rank profession [Wind Dancer], which would allow the user to step on thin air and fly freely.

With this information, the rest of the players had more options for advancement.

Is this profession an ancient version of “Windrunner”?

Or is it still the same profession, but the name is different because of different times?

On the other side, Dove and Suuankou finally entered the fogged door.

The two of them, like Citalopram, did not enter the nightmare but successfully reached the ruins.

But at this time, something strange happened on Dove's side.

“...Meow?” Dove raised her claws and scratched blankly at the empty air.

She could see a young girl sitting beside her, who came over to smell her and licked her forehead.

Suuankou, on the side, looked over in confusion, “Dove, what are you doing?”

Before finishing his words, “Dove” suddenly stood up from the ground, leaned against his chest, and sniffed.

The overly intimate action made Suuankou silent for a moment.

He wanted to push “Dove” away gently but was bitten by “Dove”.

Suuankou was speechless.

“Meow—“

Dove meowed again, jumped over, and grabbed Suuankou. Then, Suuankou was bombarded with notifications in the forum.

After a while, Suuankou finally realized that someone had tagged him.

“—Help, I have switched body with the cat!”

Dove complained loudly, “Is this a Bug? This is a Bug, right!? How do I change back!?”

After passing through this fogged door, Dove wondered if some abnormal condition had been triggered.

After a strong sense of dizziness, she swapped bodies with her animal companion, the serval she named “Chocolate” without warning.

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“—Fuck, she has changed!”

“—Come on, it's Chocolate who has changed!”

“—Fuck off. It's Chocolate is using my body!”

Dove screamed in exasperation and fought with the players watching the mess on the forum.

She was infuriated because she usually wouldn't suffer a bitter end like this at all.

She couldn't believe it. How is this happening?

“Sister Dove?” Suuankou squatted down cautiously and looked at the panicking serval, “Think of the good news, at least you won't be too tired... Should I carry you away in my arms? Or you can have Chocolate (the pet possessing Dove's body) to carry you...”

Then, the wild cat immediately went for Suuankou's face with sharp claws.

“Meow—” Dove looked up and growled sharply.

On the forum, the “meows” were translated at the same time, “Don't touch me! Don't touch Chocolate either!”

Suuankou felt wronged.

Before that, he had no problem with physical contact with Dove and Chocolate. Dove was like an elder sister, and her attitude was gentle to him; Chocolate had always been close to him. That was why it leaned over to sniff him.

How come no physical touch is allowed after the person and the cat swapped bodies?

After watching this scene unfold, the forum went crazy.

No matter whether they were busy or not... except for the Child who was temporarily disconnected from the system, their friends had summoned them online to watch Dove changing into a cat.

This had further embarrassed Dove, especially when her student — Delicious Wind Goose, couldn't help but say, “To be honest... I think you're cuter as a cat.”

“—What the hell!” Citalopram, “Don't you think Chocolate is cuter now, Dove?”

“—You wait for me!”

“—Can you take care of my body?”

“—Hehehehe, I will take care of it...”

“Alright, alright.....”

Suuankou quickly stopped the crowd, “Let's not get engrossed with the forum. We should hurry. Citalopram is still lying on the street.

“I won't touch you for now. Why don't you let the Chocolate take you? Since you just swapped bodies, maybe you're not quite used to it? How about you get into the backpack? That way, we can go faster.”

Suuankou said so, but the corner of his mouth raised slightly.

I can't help it. It's a little funny to see Dove in this state.

But I can't laugh, or else the cat will scratch me.

Dove was silent for a while and found that she couldn't communicate without the forum. So she had to use the translation, "No, I'll use this body. Chocolate sprints quite fast.

"I can also direct Chocolate to move forward. Don't bother!" She couldn't help but meow.

Chocolate imitated Dove's usual movements, squatted down, and touched Dove.

Dove raised her head in astonishment and looked at Chocolate.

This scene almost made Suuankou laugh out loud.

Suuankou coughed lightly, tried his best to suppress the almost uncontrollable laughter, and said with a serious face, "Maybe this will be resolved once we get out of here. Dove, look at the bright side. Maybe it's your chance to transfer to a rare profession?"

"... A Meow Druid? Or the Serval [1]?"

[TN: Kemono Friends reference.]

Dove lowered her head pessimistically and sighed, "I'm obviously a beast hunter..."

Of course, it wasn't that much different now.

Dove added all the experience gained from killing Jude to the [Hunter] profession and put all the skill points she obtained onto the [Shared Perception] skill, successfully raising it to Level 7.

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[Shared Perception LV 7: You can communicate seamlessly with your animal companion within 350 meters and exchange visual inputs after a short delay.]

[Effect after acquiring LV4: There is no longer a delay in switching visual input, and the function is further complemented with the sense of smell and hearing.]

[Effect after acquiring LV7: You can exchange your sense of touch at the same time when you switch visual perspective with your animal companion. No stamina is consumed when you activate this skill.]

After raising the skill to Level 7, Dove could switch between her senses with Chocolate at any time.

Although the skill could be activated without consumption, maintaining the effect would still consume her energy.

However, if the perspective switching was frequent enough, she had barely switched back to her real body in a sense.

Simply put, it was multitasking.

However, the exchange of consciousness required a certain level of authority.

So, it wasn't entirely accurate to say it was an exchange of consciousness but its projection.

Chocolate couldn't control her body at will, and it could only complete the previous action. On the other hand, Dove could control Chocolate's body and plan 1 action before swapping out her consciousness.

For example, Dove could maintain a specific movement before switching her consciousness back. After she deactivated the skill, Chocolate would continue the action with her intelligence and instinct until the purpose of the action was completed or Dove issued a new command again.

If there were no other commands after that, Chocolate would move freely.

Dove initially used this skill to control the Chocolate's cat body, locate the enemy, distract the enemy's attention, or simply launch a sneak attack independently.

She also frequently practiced "controlling" Chocolate's body movements in previous training.

At that time, Dove still found the experience quite new. Therefore, she also dedicated her practice to enhancing the utilization of the serval's body for sneaking and launching attacks.

Given Dove's intelligence and judgment, the attacks she issued while controlling Chocolate were far more cunning and unpredictable than the attacks Chocolate launched.

She muttered at that time if only she could become a cat.

But, she didn't expect her words were the flag that made this event happen.

Her training on using the cat's body was committed out of sheer fun. However, it was put into good use for her at this stage.

"Dove" was still a beast hunter.

The only difference was that she changed from a range shooter to a melee hunter.

Before the two-person and the one cat set off, Dove put a nearby tree as a target and did an experiment.

What surprised her was that her cooperation and Chocolate improved her combat power a little.

Her shooting skills were instinctive.

Her senses on the bow and arrow seemed to have been inherited from her previous world.

Even if Dove didn't project her consciousness, Chocolate could use her body to shoot like a regular archer without aiming.

It was like Dove's level when she shot only with her senses and when she didn't aim.

Simply put, Chocolate just didn't aim.

Compared with Chocolate, Dove used the serval's body much more efficiently.

As an animal companion, the attributes of Chocolate also increased alongside Dove's level. It was just that it wouldn't acquire a new skill without special training and ritual.

—But the stupid Chocolate didn't make use of its three abilities, [Nightvision], [Silent Steps], and [Stealth Proficiency].

After Dove utilized the cat's body, it was almost equivalent to an additional rogue character added to the team.

The price was only that the original Dove had changed from a longbow sniper and an excellent short-range archer to a pure and excellent short-range archer.

All she lost was the ability to shoot at a distance of 100 meters, but the serval's control did seem better than the typical "AI".

What's going on? Why do I suddenly feel like everything is so great? A strange thought popped up in Dove's mind.

Speaking of it...

Under the current circumstances, was the trigger Chocolate or Dove for the curse that she newly obtained?

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Dove quickly calmed down after surrendering to the feeling of embarrassment initially.

Sure enough, part of the reason she calmed down was that she realized that she didn't lose anything.

Instead, she had gained some benefits.

So on their way to find Citalopram's body, Dove concentrated on the hands-on teaching for Chocolate through the exchange of consciousness.

Well, it was really hands-on training. She personally controlled her own body remotely to teach Chocolate.

She had a pessimistic view of it. If she couldn't swap back to her main body in the future, she would at least have Chocolate take good care of her reputation.

It was still a trivial matter for Chocolate to nibble on someone every now and then with the human body. Anyway, the human teeth were flat. It wouldn't inflict an injury on someone so easily, plus having a pretty girl do it was excusable. Instead, the act of nibbling seemed flirty.

What Dove focused on was to stop Chocolate from making a mess on the floor, urinating randomly, and licking acquaintances.

Even though Chocolate was a female cat, she was pretty clever.

With this hands-on teaching, Chocolate quickly corrected some of the habits she used to have as a cat.

For example, the first habit that Chocolate corrected was squatting on the ground. Human bones were not suited for them to maintain such a pose.

The serval had a habit of sneaking and stalking prey with its head held high in the grass.

After having her pet possess her body, she corrected its habit and changed it to standing upright and looking into the distance with her feet on tiptoe.

It still looked weird, but it was better than squatting on the ground or someone else's shoe.

After that, Dove quickly corrected the habit of licking her hands and cleaning her face with saliva.

On the other hand, Dove started to have a vague desire to lick her paws.

“—Suuankou, I saw it!” Dove let out a meow. After attracting Suuankou's attention, she wrote on the forum, “I see Citalopram's body. It's right ahead.”

“Oh, then let's hurry up...” Suuankou nodded, his footsteps hurried.

Without Dove distracted from controlling it, Chocolat followed Suuankou's pace obediently.

Although unwilling, Dove had to admit that Chocolate's body was handy.

The night vision ability alone made her a little jealous.

Although [Animal Companion] was structured based on animals, they were not completely wild animals. Instead, they were “living vessels” that gradually integrated their life with the hunter.

Not only would the living vessels have their lifespan adjusted with the human, but their shortcomings that were inferior to human attributes would gradually be overcome along with the attribute points increment brought by their human.

But even so, the average [Hunter] would not nurture their profession in the direction of becoming a [Beast Hunter].

The reason was simple. The animal companion that was easier to move about would be weaker than humans. Those stronger animals would be bigger in size, like brown bears or big cats, which were inconvenient to bring around. Worse still, they could be poisoned easily because of their lack of intelligence.

The more practical problem was that the average hunter simply couldn't communicate with powerful animals.

Strong hunters didn't need animal companions. All they did was hunt and get more curses; for weaker hunters, they couldn't even fulfill the ritual for an animal companion.

Taming a wild animal required one's own effort and power, especially when they were unlike pets. In the effort of taming an animal companion, he couldn't allow the target to be exposed to another human. On this basis, he had to feed his blood to his animal continuously every day until the blood volume fed was equal to his total blood volume.

At that time, the soul of this wild animal would be bound by the Oath Power, and the souls of the two would be intertwined with each other.

Like the curse, the oath was also a part of the power of this world.

As the animal gradually became stronger, the compatibility between humans and animals would rise progressively.

But there was a problem.

Compared with ordinary hunters, the hunters who focused on nurturing their animal companion could hardly improve themselves. Once their animal companion was killed, their strength would immediately plummet.

But these two problems did not apply to Dove.

In Salvatore's evaluation, her archery skill was regarded as the top in the world.

Moreover, Chocolate enjoyed the privilege of respawning.

When Chocolate died, there would be no dead body left behind.

It would turn to black ashes like the player and then immediately rematerialize not far away.

The death of Chocolate would also cause Dove to lose experience. But probably it was because the cost of rematerializing Chocolate's body was relatively cheap or because of its small size... Every time Chocolate died, it would only cause Dove to drop about 1/10 of her experience points.

Dove couldn't help but feel a little happy about it.

If the animal companion she chose at the beginning was a brown bear, she lost more than 1 level after it died once.

No matter from the perspective of combat power, size, or weight, the experience consumed by a brown bear in one death should be more than her.

With the improvement of Dove's level, many problems coming from Chocolate's physique would be alleviated.

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For example, the increment of strength, the relief of short-sightedness, and so on.

The serval was outstanding in its dynamic vision, and its vision could reach relatively far in the cat family. However, this vision range was still considered close compared to humans, not to mention Dove's visionary function at the elite level among humans.

The good news was that the serval still retained a remarkable dynamic vision.

Coupled with the "Transcended" ability that Dove chose initially, she unexpectedly discovered that she could see everything clearly within a radius of about 60 meters.

Everything was clear, just like during the day.

As a matter of fact, this place was dark.

"Chocolate is a stupid cat." Dove complained in the forum, "Isn't this body much better than mine?"

"I haven't seen Chocolate utilize [Sneak] before. Look here, Brother Koutsu—" After losing the ability to speak in human language, Dove became a little talkative.

After Suuankou looked over, he saw that Dove's cat body was slightly lowered. Under some light distortion, it gradually lost its color and became transparent.

Even though there were still traces when it moved, it was only visible under Suuankou's [Eagle Eye] property under his skill called [Skillful Hands].

It seemed Dove's [Sneak] would be unchallenged against ordinary Transcended.

“Chocolate seems quite strong.” Suuankou praised, “I hardly notice it.”

“—Isn't that so? It has such a great skill, but this stupid cat didn't use it.”

Dove complained, “It also didn't leverage on [Silent Steps]. It's annoying. I should have picked a passive skill that increases movement speed.”

She suddenly didn't want to change back to herself.

“It's normal. Like when I play games, I rarely use shortcut keys and items in the inventory...” Suuankou defended the cat.

Soon, they walked up to Citalopram's body.

Looking at Citalopram, who was curled up on the ground as if she had lost her soul, Dove couldn't help but let out a meow (laughter).

She looks so funny, helpless like a doll... She can't wake up and has no consciousness. No matter how we play with her, she won't wake up.

She walked gracefully to Citalopram, opening her mouth as if to bite her throat.

Then, she changed consciousness back to her human body and took a screenshot.

She walked up to Citalopram again and licked her lips with the cat's body.

Then, she took another screenshot under the human vision again.

Just when Dove was elated with her pose, Citalopram sent a reply on the forum: “—Do you think it's quite erotic? I think so too.”

Dove: “What?”

Citalopram: “I'm talking about myself. Look at my body lying on the ground like this without any consciousness...”

Dove: “Huh?”

Dove was a little dumbfounded.

Is this something that can be posted on the forum?

I have a shameful photo of you being kissed by a cat. Aren't you going to be embarrassed?

Dove tried her best to contain her shame and raised her tail subconsciously.

Then, she looked back at Suuankou.

But Suuankou also looked down at her blankly, “What are you doing?”

Dove was speechless.

What's going on with these young people?

Am I out of date?

Or... am I being too conservative...?

Dove, a seventeen-year-old and two-month-old girl, finally realized that she didn't seem to be young and wild anymore.

At this moment, the time in the zone with the fogged gate reached 9 p.m.

The players had spent one hour within the Fogged Gate.

A mystical but somewhat pleasant hymn came to Dove, Citalopram, and Suuankou's ears simultaneously without warning.

In this ruin, the rubble scattered everywhere and constantly emitting the azure blue light had started to change.

The brilliance on the stone fluctuated as if it was breathing along with the hymn.

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"It's breathing like an LED breathing light..." Looking at the flickering brilliance on the street, Suuankou couldn't help but mutter.

The city had long been in ruins. There were no signs of its buildings.

All he could see were rubble strewn across the street. Even the street itself barely had a distinguishable outline.

Suuankou narrowed his eyes slightly.

Thinking of this, he suddenly realized a problem.

The buildings here seemed to be destroyed too neatly.

The streets and gravel were scattered on the ground, giving off a hint that this place was once a city.

However, all the buildings were no exception, where they were destroyed neatly to the extent that it was impossible to distinguish the building type.

Although he didn't know why the city had become what it was now, it was too unnatural.

If it was a meteorite rain, there should be houses surviving with higher structural integrity; if it was a massive earthquake, there should be relatively strong houses that survived through it. If it were fire, tsunami, or other natural disasters... and even if the sky fell to the Earth, there should be some small houses that were less damaged.

But here, all buildings were brought to ruins to the same degree.

The destruction was just enough to destroy all traces of life in each house, but the visitors were still able to realize there were buildings in this place.

Seeing that Suuankou's expression became serious, Dove also walked to Suuankou's feet and let out a meow. She posted on the forum, "It feels like it was man-made... right?"

“Yes.” Suuankou nodded, “I watched your recordings and live streams for the past few days and supplemented myself with the knowledge of this world. I thought such an apparent artificial trace seems to be hinting that it isn't as simple as removing all traces of life.”

“Combining the information obtained by Citalopram, I guess this may be a kind of ritual.”

“Ritual?” Dove asked suspiciously.

Suuankou nodded, “Brother Child should have entered into a nightmare.”

“What I'm thinking is that if the elves make such a ritual area just to preserve the legacy and knowledge of the past, then there must be more than one 'nightmare hard disk'.

“Strange enough, the Black Tower doesn't seem to know about this. Judging from the information shared by Longjing Tea and Salvatore, Black Tower is only utilizing this place as an Influence Pool for extracting influence. It means that Black Tower doesn't know the elves have nightmares that store the knowledge from the past.”

“...I agree. That's a valid deduction.” Dove nodded.

Other players who were lured into the stream by Dove's prank also discussed about the matter in bullet texts:

“—I think there's probably something sealed in this place?”

“—Is it possible that Boffis is a boss monster?”

“—I don't think so. Instead, I think Boffis might be a key.”

“—It's also possible that Boffis has been hiding from the Black Tower's wizards, so the wizards don't know about her existence.”

“—No, no, it's also possible that Boffis is special. Only the Pale Princess's priestesses can see her...”

Seeing the discussion moved to this stage, Annan couldn't help but post:

“—It has nothing to do with Boffis. It's expected that Black Tower can't see her because the elves have Silver Rank's soul. Ordinary wizards can't detect them at all.”

This was indeed the truth.

It was like Bronze Rank's Transcended could see Citalopram, but ordinary people couldn't.

Annan thought at first that Transcended should be able to see spirits.

However, Old Vasily quickly debunked his thoughts.

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Before getting the Book of Truth, he could only see other souls when his soul rank was one rank higher than the target. This had nothing to do with the Perception attribute but the soul rank alone.

Black Tower might not be completely unaware of it.

Because what Salvatore said to Annan at the beginning was that he could acquire “Basic Influence: Remains of the Soul of Silver” here.

The influence of the “Remains of Soul” series meant that this wizard had come into contact with the soul of Silver Rank and had been entangled or even possessed by it.

In other words, Black Tower should have long known that there were many elves here, all existing in the soul state.

Judging from the security level of this ruin and the fact that Salvatore could directly tell Annan about this relic, it was most likely because the Black Tower's wizards were convinced that they could not enter this public nightmare.

In this case, the Child could enter the nightmare probably because of his profession as [Forest Walker], something the elves had left behind.

The wizard tower itself was a cloud library. Therefore, the knowledge that had existed since the third era must be preserved.

In this case, those sent to collect influences here were most likely on errands.

The Black Tower tutors would only come in person to collect the influence if it was a requirement for them to use their body as the vessel of the influence.

For example, the Pale Princess was the Deity of Ghosts and Spirits... And only Citalopram could have the privilege of perceiving Boffis.

Suankou saw Annan's bullet text and immediately shouted, “Hey, wait, everyone, stop for a while. There's a wise man in the bullet text.

“Ya, this guy. He said that the elves have Silver Rank souls, but the Silver Rank Wizards can't identify them. I think what you said makes sense. The others, please be quiet first. Can you tell us more?”

What the fuck!?

What kind of eyes are these? How do you identify me directly from the bombardment of the bullet text?

Annan was bewildered.

But he thought about it for a moment and realized it was fine to share more.

It just so happened to be a good chance for him to influence the players' actions.

“—Think about it. The truth is simple.”

“—Since Black Tower does not send a professional team to conduct testing in this place, it can only be because no wandering spirits survived in the normal model of 'specimen storage'.”

“—Only when the Black Tower has never sent someone here to analyze will Boffis remain undetected. Even if it is true that only the Pale Princess's priestess can see the spiritual body, the Black Tower won't struggle to hire a Half-dead Enchantress at all. Also, Citalopram hasn't yet acquired a new divine art. Thus, the other priestess can definitely see Boffis when she already can.

“—Since Boffis is in such a rare situation, there must be something causing it to happen...

“—so I speculate that there should be something sealed here, or at least something that would cause Boffis to be in trouble.”

Annan finished a long paragraph of bullet texts in one go.

He then sent a side mission directly to Suuankou, Citalopram, and Dove.

[You're granted a side mission: Search for specimen storage III-251-11]

[Mission requirement: Collect Frostwhisperian's frozen blood (0/1), investigate what has happened here (0/1)]

[Hint: One player in the team is in an abnormal timeline.]

Suuankou's eyes widened in disbelief, “Fuck, he is our wise man!”

Annan issued this mission to validate the speculation he had just made, thus revealing some unconventional information to the players. For example, Wandering Child had entered the dungeon instance, but the players didn't know it.

The other reason was that Annan wanted to hold the players' group back because he would be there soon.

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“...the special items or events that my clan didn't notice, which might have caused me to be left behind and not involved in the ritual?”

Reluctantly, Boffis repeated Citalopram's words.

This complicated long sentence was too complex for a ghost who was only over a thousand years old.

After all, Citalopram didn't speak Elvish.

The two of them managed to interact because Citalopram, as a Half-dead Enchantress, could communicate with all ghosts. However, this conversation happened with a language barrier.

Citalopram could understand Boffis' words easily. However, in Boffis' perspective, what Citalopram said was incoherent, seemingly translated by artificial intelligence.

Hence, she had repeated it twice before Boffis finally understood what she meant.

Boffis tilted her head and came into deep thoughts, “If I were to pick out something within the criteria...”

“Oh, have you thought of something related?” Seeing Boffis in deep thought, Citalopram asked in a pleasant surprise.

She asked probingly under Suuankou's guidance.

The outcome seemed to be giving her some hints.

"Maybe..." Boffis bit her thumb and thought frowningly, "I don't remember it clearly... Come with me."

"Alright, Boffis." Citalopram decided to follow up with the opportunity, "I'm here to collect a cursed material called [Frostwhisperian's Frozen Blood]. Do you know where it is?"

"Do you have friends who want to advance into [Frostwhisperian]?"

Boffis was a little surprised, "That person must have the element affinity to the Lord of Frost?"

"Yup, he should be." Citalopram replied in uncertainty, "He is the heir to the Austere-Winter Dukedom..."

"Stop, stop! Not to mention Austere-Winter Dukedom, I don't even know what the Austere-Winter Kingdom is..."

Boffis said helplessly, "My knowledge of the outside world now comes from the small talk of the wizards who came here..."

"Then do you know [Old Grandmother]?"

Boffis replied with some nostalgia, "Certainly, my mother even collected a portrait of the Old Grandmother before. I saw that painting when I was a child. The Old Grandmother in the painting can move, talk and growl. Only the Elegant Elder could draw this kind of moving painting in our day. Can the people in this era do that easily now?"

"...No, at least I haven't seen something like that." Citalopram was silent for a while before replying "no" against her will.

She almost blurted out, "Yes, I see it every day, but we usually call this kind of animate painting a silly meme.gif".

"Ok..." Boffis looked at Citalopram suspiciously. She obviously noticed Citalopram's wavering and hesitation. Still, she wisely brushed it off and continued, "Later, my mother sold the painting to a dragon to store the sacred bone in exchange for 40 pax of dragon blood."

"What is a sacred bone?" Citalopram suddenly heard an unprecedented term that was never seen on the forum.

With Dove and Suuankou's prompting, the number of players watching her live broadcast increased sharply.

Annan was like the security guard in the CCTV room. He had several windows lined up before him, and he diverted his attention over here.

He had never heard of this term either.

This sounds a bit like a holy relic or something.

"It's normal that you haven't heard of it, and I've only heard it once or twice," Boffis answered without hesitation.

She glanced at Citalopram, thought for a while, and asked, “Have you heard of the saints in your timeline?”

“No, I have never heard of them at all.” Citalopram shook her head.

Boffis said with a bitter face, “Do I have to start from the beginning? You should know about the principle of curse, right?”

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Should I say I know or I don't know?

“...Ah, I know it roughly.” Citalopram paused and replied in a low volume.

Boffis breathed a sigh of relief and then explained, “Generally speaking, the saints refer to those great sages who have disclosed their curses to everyone. Since they have many secret keepers, their souls will hardly be eroded.

“But not everyone who exposes their curses to the public can become a saint because many people don't disclose their curses because they have outstanding willpower and excellent character. They did it more so because they were insignificant, and their curses were hard to exploit.

“To become a saint, the host must first reach the 'Dyed' rank and complete the 'Dyeing' of the soul. After that, the host will execute the saint's covenant and integrate the sacred bone into his body.

“For every tenfold increment in the number of secret keepers, the increase of erosion rate in nightmares or when using forbidden power will be reduced by half. Also, they are protected by the oath power, thus reducing the curse that came from the ritual by half. Moreover, the Transcended born from curses can hardly harm the saint.

“Under this magic, the sacred bone will provide great power to the saints since it contains the accumulated power from the previous saint.”

“That sounds pretty strong.” Citalopram was a little tempted.

That's kind of like a magic engraving?

Boffis shook her head, “It's really strong, but the sacred bones are rare. There were only six sacred bones in our time, and these bones don't acknowledge just anyone randomly.

“If a saint deviates from the Covenant of Saint, the power obtained from the sacred bone will be lost. If the saint always follows the covenant, they will gradually become feared by people.”

“...Why?” Citalopram found it a little odd.

If the saints were the strongest Transcended who made their weaknesses public and walked the ground to purify nightmares, people should love them more than fear them.

Boffis sighed and explained, “The virtue of a sacred bone will remain no matter what. In order to acquire the recognition of a sacred bone, it is necessary to establish a covenant that can persuade the sacred bone. You can see the sacred bone as an 'inheritable' deity slot.

“At the start, the sacred bone is what was left after the death of a saint who voluntarily gave up on an ascendancy ritual and disclosed the curse after his truth was perfected. The sacred bone is then labeled as the crystallization of one's soul and the Book of Truth. The bone is nothing more than helping out the saints of future generations.

“For this reason, the concept held by the sacred bone itself cannot be entirely positive. The covenant was created to restrain this highest level curse... the ultimate form of the oath power.

“The deities will also commit a covenant at the end of the ascendancy ritual. But He usually only tells His covenant to His pope, and it is passed down from generation to generation of the pope. The saint will make their covenant public. But no matter how beloved the saint is, there will always be opposers.

“For example, there is a saint in our time whose theme was 'Benevolence'. And he was a really good guy, overly benevolent... Even for his enemy, he would forgive and try to save those who want to harm him. He would rather suffer alone and save others from hell. He crossed a desert to the empire to help more people.”

“Sounds like a nice guy,” commented Citalopram.

She added in her heart, “I think he has three disciples too.”

[TN: Easter egg to Journey to the West.]

“But the covenant he swore was to never kill anyone. And he was eventually angered by a wicked villain. The moment he killed someone, the sacred bone abandoned him.”

It sounds like the sacred bone has silly judgment.

Or is it to blame the benevolent saint for being too strict with the covenant?

Citalopram frowned slightly, not knowing what to say.

She was silent for a while and then asked, “So, the sacred bone here...”

“Do you remember what I just said about the source of the first sacred bone?” Miss Boffis asked rhetorically.

Citalopram was taken aback, “No way...”

Boffis nodded and admitted it.

“What my mother got back then was the first sacred bone in history.

“—Its attribute is, [Justice].”

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“The very first sacred bone...” Citalopram muttered.

Although she had no idea about the power of the sacred bone, it didn't affect her understanding of what this concept was.

She knew that the “Dyeing” mentioned in the Third Age was the Gold Rank in their original timeline.

In a sense, the Gold Rank was a requirement to be eligible for “sacred bone”, which was equivalent to the rank signifying the highest level of Transcended power — divinity. Also, the sacred bone was sacred, impossible to mass-produce, and non-renewable.

Despite all that, Boffis' mother had the capability to possess a sacred bone.

Most importantly, the sacred bone was the oldest and theoretically the most potent “Justice” bone!

Even if it couldn't be awakened, it had a tremendous value as a collection. This was probably one of the most valuable treasures in this world.

“Is your mother a big shot?” Citalopram asked cautiously.

Could it be that Boffis was the eldest daughter of an affluent elf family?

Seeing Citalopram appearing nervous, Boffis couldn't help but burst into laughter.

When she smiled, she politely covered her mouth with the sleeve of her right arm, showing a vaguely noble temperament.

“It depends on what you think~” The corners of Boffis' mouth twitched.

She floated around Citalopram for a lap. Her white gauze skirt swayed in the air like a fishtail and lightly patted Citalopram's face.

If Boffis is still alive, I must be able to smell her scent...

But because both of them were in a soul state now, Citalopram could only vaguely feel a slight sense of contact. It felt like the hot smoke from a scented candle pressing on the face.

Citalopram reached out without hesitation, grabbed Boffis' skirt, and wanted to pull it to her side.

“Ugh—” Boffis let out a cute scream and quickly reached out to hold down her skirt, begging for mercy, “Stop, Miss Citalopram!”

“There's nobody else here...”

“But the players are watching too!”

Boffis groaned continuously.

At this time, Citalopram realized that those players were looking.

She couldn't help but click her tongue and gently let Boffis go.

Your dress is so lewd. Why are you shy?

So she licked her lips again.

Intimidated by the Citalopram's predatory gaze, Boffis shuddered in the air and retreated two steps back. It wasn't until she was three people away from Citalopram that she finally blushed and sorted out her clothes because of her attempts in struggling to break free.

“Mom... Ugh, my mother,” Boffis whispered, “She's the captain of the Storm Legion.”

“Storm Legion?” Citalopram asked curiously.

Boffis explained softly, “It was an air force composed entirely of Wind Dancer and griffin. Griffin may have gone extinct... They have a great affinity with the wind, with their sharp claws easily tearing through the air and wings hurling gusts. Even when flying above clouds, they can target through the thunder cloud and hurricanes to lock on enemies on the ground.

“Wind Dancer is a profession that can walk, run, and jump on thin air. Also, they can swim dexterously in the air like a fish... And, I'm a Wind Dancer.

“Of course... The Wind Dancer definitely can't fly as high as the griffin. But they could fly a few dozen meters off the ground easily.”

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Boffis' tone was filled with pride, “If only I were alive, I could let you hug me.”

“...En?”

“No, no!” Boffis quickly realized what was wrong with her words and immediately blushed, “I mean, you can give me a hug and feel how light my body is!”

“How light?” Citalopram asked relentlessly.

“The stronger the Wind Dancer, the lighter the weight will be. I weighed less than 20 pounds!”

“...Hey, that's really light!” Citalopram was really surprised and even a little envious, “Then, will you get fat from eating and become... a fluffy ball?”

Her first reaction was actually... If your body was so light, did it mean that it won't sag?

But considering that there were still male players watching the stream, Citalopram did not ask this question directly.

To be honest, I'm a little envious...

“No way!” Boffis responded firmly, “I take good care of my body.”

“Does that mean you will still get fat?”

“...Yes.” Boffis tilted her head slightly and muttered in a low voice, “For male Wind Dancers, they will deliberately gain weight. That's because even if the weapon is reduced in weight, it will still have some weight.

“To balance up with the weapon's weight, it is necessary to increase their muscle mass. Similarly, they have to wear metal boots.”

“It's not easy...” Citalopram exclaimed, “Is your mother Gold Rank? Ah, no... I mean, Dyed rank?”

“I can understand what Gold Rank is...” Boffis nodded and said helplessly, “We also used curse vessels. But at our time, we classify them in better detail for the rankings above Transcended.

“The path of ascendancy is like the alchemy process... Corruption, calcination, condensation, purification, dissolution, dyeing, and ascendancy. Are they too hard to comprehend? This is actually a metaphor for the process of upgrading from bronze into gold. In the first two levels, bronze is used as the vessel. Then, for the next two levels, it's about dissolution and dyeing, representing the Silver Rank. Finally, the Gold Rank is the ascendancy part, the state after getting the Book of Truth.

“My mother is not a Dyed rank. Strictly speaking, it can't really be regarded as a Gold Rank because she has obtained her own Book of Truth.”

“...What?” Hearing this, Citalopram was startled.

She had gotten the Book of Truth in the Third Age... Could it be that Boffis' mother has become a deity?

“...May I ask, which book is it?”

“It's okay to tell you.” Boffis sighed and said with a bit of melancholy, “Mom didn't activate the ritual back then because she's not here but in the capital. If mom didn't die, she should have become a deity...”

“But if she really became a deity but never came to me once... I would rather...” When she said this, her expression became a little gloomy.

“Hey, since we're talking about this,” Citalopram remembered the situation on the Delicious Wind Goose side, so she interrupted the previous topic, “Do you know the Fallen path?”

“...Of course.” Boffis nodded slightly and became serious, “But you better not touch it.

“Demons... We have spent tremendous efforts to exterminate them.”

“Your clan'? Or 'We'?”

“It's us'.” Boffis was surprised, “Isn't it taught in your history books?”

“We Osserians... During the Second Age, it was because the land we lived in was occupied by demons that we fled into the desert.

“—'Osser' means 'escape and refugee'.”