

Righteous Ps 321

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 321

“...The Osser Empire was made up of refugees?” The news caught Annan by surprise.

He had never heard of any information related to this, not even a word.

His knowledge of the history of the Osserians dated back to the Third Era.

At the turning point between the Second Age and the Third Age, the Epoch Disaster occurred. A desert equivalent to three-quarters of the Yaselan Continent came to life. It moved around recklessly, like a child in a restless state.

So the Osser Empire relocated the entire empire. After paying a considerable price, the defeated soldiers finally escaped from the desert and arrived at a prosperous and peaceful oasis.

—“Yaselan” meant “oasis” in this case.

At this time, the technology of the Yaselan had just developed to a stage equivalent to the early Middle Ages. They were simply vulnerable to the Osserians. Without even waging a decent war, they were easily defeated and ruled.

In honor of the Osserians fleeing the desert, they changed the name of their new empire to “Yaselan”, which meant the land of the oasis.

There were roughly two types of people – Osserians and Yaselians on the Yaselan Continent during that time.

The Yaselians included the races of humans, dwarves, and werewolves native to the Yaselan Continent. On the other hand, the Osserians were referred to as elves and centaurs.

At this time, there weren't many Osserians left. Their numbers determined that they could not rule such a vast continent, so they simply conferred the lands to different rulers. As a result, many small kingdoms and dukedoms were born one after another during the Third Age.

At the end of the Third Age, they had nothing to do with the world west of the desert.

They could only confirm that the Third Age was over through Prophet magic.

From the end of the Third Age, the number of elves suddenly began to decrease sharply. After two hundred years of unrecorded history, more information surfaced.

With the increase of the native population and the increase in the number of Transcended, the technology of the Osserians somehow stagnated and even began to regress on a large scale. Then, the races with dwindling populations gradually shrunk their territory. The Yaselians finally restored the political status of the Yaselan Empire and returned to an equal position.

In fact, at the end of the Fourth Age... Before the Yaselan's capital sank, the number of elves had been reduced to only three figures. They had basically lost their power. On the other hand, the centaur was timid despite their inherently robust strength, and their race existed as a sub-race of elves.

But because they were tired of the power struggle in the capital, a considerable number of centaurs left the capital. The elves united in a group attaching a significant priority for political power, and they all stayed in the capital with the most advanced technology.

Until Yaselan's capital was finally gone, the elves were utterly exterminated. Even if there were survivors, the man count was at a single digit.

Then, there came the collapse of the Great Barrier, the disintegration of the Yaselan Empire, and then hundreds of years of chaotic civil wars. In this sanguinary battle to become an upright deity, the number of centaurs was significantly reduced.

In the end, the centaurs, who were not good at competing with others and liked to run away when they encountered hardship, ultimately gave up the power struggle. They returned to the wilderness far away from the Yaselan civilization and rebuilt their living settlements.

At present, the centaurs could only be seen on the islands of the United Kingdom.

Judging from the information on Boffis' side, everything was related to a technology called "curse energy", no matter it was the downfall of the Yaselan Empire in the Fourth Age, the sharp reduction in the number of elves starting in the Third Age, and the advanced technologies that the Osserians acquired without warning.

However, did the "Osserians" take refuge due to demons?

Could this be the Epoch Disaster of the first epoch?

No wonder the Osserians are made up of elves and centaurs...

The characteristic of elves was that they were born with silver souls. Therefore, if they embark on the Ascension Path, they would start with Silver Rank and would not become a Fallen.

The centaur was exceptionally good at running away. Each centaur was the best Prophet, a robust warrior, and a timid coward.

They could predict the future and went through physical training to ensure their survival; they were without any strong desires. Therefore, even if their population were larger than elves, they would become subordinate races of elves.

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The news from Boffis made Annan a little worried.

Demons...

Speaking of that, there were quite some Fallens and demons in the capital.

While Annan was pondering deeper about it, Boffis continued to chat with Citalopram, "Speaking of Mom's Book of Truth, I only know its name is 'the Anthem of the Storm and Heart'. But my mother doesn't tell me which realm it is, so I have no idea.

"But I think that since there is the word 'heart', this should be why mom finds a way to get the 'Heart of Justice'."

“Heart of Justice?”

“Yes...the sacred bone is a part of a saint's body. The sacred bone left by the righteous saint is his heart.”

Boffis replied seriously, “But my mother felt that the 'Heart of Justice' might not acknowledge her for the time being, so she planned to seal it first.

“Since the sacred bone will continuously release curse power... If someone signs a covenant, it will become an infinite source of saint power. But if there is no covenant, it will be like a fountain, spraying out curses continuously.

“It will continue to fluctuate, attracting adaptors. But generally speaking, the sacred bone won't be satisfied with the Gold Rank Transcended, but ordinary people. The Gold Ranks simply can't bear the power from the sacred bone. Once they forcibly use the sacred bone, their soul will collapse. They won't survive more than a month.

“Due to the power coming from the sacred bone, they will turn into a massive nightmare after death. So, in addition to being a scarce item, the sacred bone is also a complex problem to resolve.

“The only way to put the sacred bone to sleep is the Wymrest Reagent.”

“...Wymrest?” Citalopram heard a familiar word.

She vaguely remembered that Old Grandmother seemed to be on Wymrest or something, but she wasn't clear about it.

Boffis explained it to Citalopram subconsciously, “It's exactly what you think... It's the state that Cold-Blooded Lady will enter every once in a while. But the term is more so an adjective...”

“This reagent will put the victim into a decade-long Wymrest that is difficult to wake up, like the Old Grandmother. Not only through touches and consumption, but even the smell alone is enough to put one in a coma.

“It's the most powerful narcotic reagent, even strong enough to put dragons to sleep. So it's also a dragon-hunting reagent, but it isn't easy to craft. The main reason is that one of its necessary curse materials is 'active adult dragon's blood'.

“We call it the 'active blood' because they are the blood that is voluntarily drawn from the body after the blood donor holds a ritual. Therefore, it has a small intensity of spirituality in the blood. Once the active blood is drawn from the body, it is difficult to regenerate them. But in the same way, the active blood will also be like fresh blood, equipped with special effects.

“If you draw blood by killing a dragon or when the dragon is sleeping, or even collecting normal blood, the blood won't bring out the desired effect. Only soaking the sacred bone in Wymrest Reagent can make them sleep.”

“Oh! That's why your mother—”

“Yes, my mother sold the painting of Old Grandmother to a dragon to produce Wymrest Reagent. But the dragon seemed satisfied. It easily agreed to my mother's request and sold 40 portions of active blood. That's about as much as a bathtub...”

Boffis said this with some surprise in her tone, “Even though Mr. Dragon's body size is enormous, it's a huge loss. But, I can understand Mr. Dragon since it's Old Grandmother's painting. Old Grandmother is the idol of the dragon race.

“Speaking of which, did you say your friend is a descendant of Old Grandmother? What's his last name?”

“His last name is 'Austere-Winter'. That seems to be a sign of the Old Grandmother's offspring,” replied Citalopram.

“...What?” Boffis was a little confused.

“As far as I know, don't the descendants of the Old Grandmother have the last name Frostwhisper?”

“...Or rather, is your friend, not a dragon?”

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Chapter 322: Curse Shaft

“...Austere-Winter and Frostwhisper.” Annan froze slightly and muttered in a low voice.

He suddenly recalled that he seemed to have heard the surname “Frostwhisper” somewhere before.

That happened the first time Annan met the Venerated Skeleton when he introduced himself. The Venerated Skeleton once said to Annan, “You will be a 'Frostwhisper' sooner or later”.

Am I going to become a dragon in the future?

Is that why Old Grandmother talks to me in the dragon language?

So after meeting the Old Grandmother's request, the [Winter Heart] will evolve into [Winter's Harvest]. Did I transform myself from Austere-Winter to Frostwhisper?

“I wonder if Boffis can speak the dragon language...” Annan muttered.

On the other hand, Citalopram replied with certainty, “Annan must be human.”

That tone even wavered Boffis a little, “Is it?”

“Yes, without a doubt.” Citalopram nodded and answered affirmatively.

It's because he didn't trigger my monster boy preference radar.

Being concerned about her indifferent and elegant lady image, Citalopram did not say this directly.

She paused for a while and then changed the subject, “Let's forget about this but focus on our main business first...”

“Main business?” Boffis tilted her head, “Do you want to see where the sacred bone is?”

“That's something I'd like to see too, but the more important thing is the 'Frostwhisper's Frozen Blood'.”

Citalopram was aware of her priorities. The group came here to get the material Annan required. Even though the group had triggered the side mission at this place, she would still like to perform her tasks in order.

As for the sacred bone, it was obviously a key item related to the main storyline.

At least until her strength reached a certain level, she would not trigger this mission with all the players unprepared.

Under the circumstance that all her actions might have irreversible effects on everyone, she thought she had to exercise extreme caution now.

"I have to bring back what my friend needs first..." Citalopram threw a bitter smile and explained further, "Annan is not only my friend but also my boss.

"For me to pick you up next time, I must at least complete the mission that the boss entrusted to me."

"Well, no problem," Boffis answered cheerfully.

She paused slightly and then added, "But these two items are actually in the same place."

"...Where is it then?"

"It's right at the Silverstone Curse Shaft." Boffis replied softly, "The only [Curse Shaft] in the city."

"What is the [Curse Shft]?"

"It's the place we dedicated to storing and converting the curse energy to something useful..." She looked at the pit outside the city with a complicated expression and said nothing.

Then, she whispered, "It used to be the largest building here, and now it is the deepest scar in the city."

At this time, the Child in the public nightmare had also just ended his training.

He breathed a sigh of relief and subconsciously looked at the dazzling giant device.

Ah, I'm still a little concerned.

What the hell is that thing?

It was a massive building, at least 30 or 40 stories high. It could be considered towering even by the modern city's standards.

Moreover, it was not a boxy structure like a residential building.

It looked like an enormous snail's shell from the outside with the opening upside down on the ground.

It was getting dark now.

But the city did not become pitch black.

The Child noticed colorful neon lights lit up in sequence in the elvish city from the hillside outskirts.

As the Child squinted his eyes, he could barely see the end of the "street lamps" connected to the ground. They were only as high as the elves' knees and even thinner than their calves.

On every of these "sticks", there was a hollow vessel the size capable of putting one person in. The vessel had a glass-like shell; its inside was filled with a single-colored liquid pouring out from the ground, shining brightly.

These sausages-like “street lamps” exuded shimmers of pink, red, blue, or purple, dyeing the passersby into strange colors.

Although the population in the city was relatively sparse, the elves did not return home because of the night. On the contrary, the Child even saw that the number of passersby increased gradually.

Undoubtedly, there was something amiss with this peculiar cyber scene, probably with the snail device that continuously extracted certain substances from the ground.

What energy is it extracting?

Just one “power station” like this alone has supplied the city's daily needs.

“Julian?” Noticing the Child's gaze, Boffis tilted her head and jumped around in front of the Child, “Do you still want to go to the Curse Shaft to take a look?”

Is that the power plant called the Curse Shaft?

“Ok.” The Child didn't know what the original Julian wanted to do in the Curse Shaft, but he nodded silently.

“We can probably go in now.” Boffis blinked her eyes and said lightly, “The workers in the Curse Shaft should have already left work.

“How about let's go on an adventure? You've learned [Aero Strike] anyway! As long as we get back here before my mom comes back, she won't know we left!”

“But your mother... Teacher, where did she go?” The Child asked Boffis, “What if she didn't go far and came back suddenly?”

“...Probably not.” When Boffis heard what the Child said, her face became sad. She said uncertainly, “Since she left us all here so suddenly... I think... she shouldn't be back soon, right?”

No, you're wrong.

Just because she left the two of us here and left in a hurry, she must not have left far and would be back soon.

You are still too young and inexperienced...

The Child muttered silently in his heart.

But after this period of training, his acting skills had also improved significantly. He wasn't just someone who relied on sheer luck.

So he showed a hesitant expression on his face, “So...?”

“Let's go!” After being silent for a while, the energetic Boffis made up her mind, “If my mother finds out, you can say that I took you there!”

“Alright!” The Child responded perfectly and nodded.

“Let's go! It's time to have fun. Forget about the training!” Boffis took his hand and went ahead cheering.

Such a familiar tone. Her actions stunned the Child a little.

His childhood friend spoke in the same tone during the holidays. When he was about to start his homework, she would take him to her house to play games.

This forced him to stay at home for the last two days of each school holiday to rush his homework.

It took a long time for the Child to realize that every time his childhood friend asked him to play, she had already finished her homework.

For a while, he felt that he was a little indulged in this public nightmare and didn't want to wake up.

Such a wonderful time...

Is this really a nightmare?

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Wandering Child was also somewhat of a Bronze Rank Transcended.

Coupled with the Silver Rank Boffis with flying ability, they entered the curse shaft quickly.

But the inner structure of the curse shaft surprised the Child and made him vigilant at the same time.

As a Forest Walker, he could sense the surrounding earth, plants, and water sources. After all, he would need to perceive them before manipulating and using them.

Moreover, he invested some experience points to learn [Aero Strike] taught by Boffis' mother.

[Aero Strike LV1: Swing the sword into the air to form a wind blade.]

According to Boffis, mastering the air element seemed to be a prerequisite to attaining the [Wind Dancer] profession. As long as he learned [Aero Strike], he would soon be able to advance into a [Wind Dancer].

Here was the problem.

The Child could feel the air and the water.

However, he didn't sense any traces of “rock” or “earth” in this massive building.

The wall didn't feel like metal. Instead, it gave off the tactile of an eggshell.

The water in this building did not flow systematically like the drainage system in a factory. Instead, the pipes were disorderly with different lengths.

It gave off a sense of blood vessels rather than an organized plumbing system.

This place named “Curse Shaft” seems to be alive.

Along with the strange pumping movement, Wandering Child sensed that the liquid in this building was surging rhythmically in the inner layer. The pumping sound in his ear became clearer and clearer. He

could even feel his heart pumping uncontrollably in synchrony with that thing. There were also the strange metallic sounds imbued into the heartbeat.

As the heartbeat grew louder and louder, the humming metal sound that accompanied the heartbeat gradually grew louder. At the same time, Boffis' voice became vague and distant.

However, he still followed Boffis, going deeper into the place slowly.

Suddenly, the heartbeat stopped.

In other words, the voices of the whole world disappeared.

The Child, who was gradually getting used to this strange noise, felt a little uncomfortable when the world returned to silence.

This made the Child subconsciously stop moving.

Realizing that he was no longer going forward, Boffis let go of his hand in confusion and glanced back.

She opened her mouth as if to say something.

But the Child heard nothing.

He tried his best to open his mouth to say something, but he couldn't say anything. This even made him sweat profusely as he went nervous.

The world in front of him suddenly became distorted as if the framerate [1] was too high and the screen was tearing apart.

Every now and then, there would be places that suddenly became pitch black and recovered later. It seemed that the restored timeline wasn't the same as the nightmare timeline he had entered, causing a stark color difference with the surrounding area.

For some reason, the inexplicable sense of fear that arose in the Child's heart was greatly diminished when he saw this familiar scene of a game crash.

A large number of words suddenly appeared in front of his eyes:

[Detected "Apprentice" trying to enter specimen storage III-251-11 "the Silverstone Curse Shaft"]

[You don't have the relevant authority.]

[Detected that the new skill [Aero Strike] has been mastered, and the learning goal has been achieved.]

[The restriction imposed has been withdrawn.]

The Child vaguely heard a strange and faint "click" sound at the next moment. It was like putting a lid on a wooden box.

The world in front of the Child suddenly turned dark after losing the picture and sound.

"Is this the curse shaft?" Citalopram muttered.

Dove, Chocolate, and Suuankou found Citalopram's spiritual body through her stream.

Like what the “wise men” in the comment section had guessed, Dove and Suuankou could not see Citalopram and Boffis because of the inadequate soul rank.

On the other side, Boffis was deeply shocked by this magical technology that allowed the team to communicate even without auditory and visual cues.

How did you do it.jpg

Still, communicating with Boffis by peeking at Citalopram's stream was a bit laborious.

So, the team decided to stuff Citalopram's soul back into her body.

Considering the possibility of someone entering this place after them and being concerned with their safety, Suuankou carried Citalopram's body on his back.

At first, he had intended to let Chocolate carry Citalopram on its back.

[TN: Chocolate is now possessing Dove's body.]

After all, he and Citalopram weren't so close even though they met often.

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Moreover, his sister, who lived with Citalopram, was still watching his stream.

But when Suuankou tried to get Chocolate to carry Citalopram on its back, it became unsettled.

Suuankou didn't expect the cat to have a much more serious temper than Dove. When he tried to put Citalopram on Chocolate, it turned around and plunged directly at him.

Since Chocolate didn't have paws—or rather, her fingers didn't have enough force, she was literally hitting Suuankou's forearm with finger slaps.

Suuankou didn't feel the pain, but Chocolate was quite hurt for hurling its fingers fanatically.

The angry Chocolate immediately bit Suuankou's hand.

Dove, who was beside him, was dumbfounded. She hurriedly took over Chocolate to pull it away.

Then, she punched Suuankou again in embarrassment. It was a real punch that struck Suuankou's back. He could feel the sound of cracking bones.

In the end, Suuankou had no choice. After asking Citalopram for consent, he finally carried the soulless Citalopram's body on his back.

After her body lost its soul, it was as if she had drunk too much alcohol and was abnormally heavy. Suuankou carried it for a while, and then he had to push her body up again on his back.

But this was a bit too stimulating for Suuankou, who had never been in close contact with the opposite gender.

He didn't dare to say a single word when he was nervous. Instead, he walked forward with his head down and stiff. It took a long time to send Citalopram's body over to her soul. He then apologized to Citalopram several times.

On the other hand, Citalopram didn't mind the intimate contact, "Why do you apologize to me for bringing my body here for me?"

Instead, she felt that Suuankou was quite cute for being so nervous.

Too bad that he is not my type.

Citalopram's attention was focused on another thing.

It turns out that after my soul leaves my body, it doesn't activate the passive life steal effect.

Half-dead Enchantress was featured for their ability to suck vigor out of living creatures upon contact. However, it was only now that she realized that this ability was attached to the soul, and it did not activate simultaneously on both the body and the soul.

So, did it mean that she could put on armor and be a human shield at the front ???

Her soul drained life whenever it touched an enemy. When she returned to her body, it would heal her body with this power. Then as long as she sprinted fast enough, she could move back and forth between the enemy and her body, and the shield would continue to recover health.

So, am I a Death Prophet now?

[TN: Reference to Dota's Death Prophet [2] Spirit Siphon ability.]

This sounds a bit weird too.

While Citalopram's thoughts ran wildly, the ghost girl led the way. She held a torch, walked at the front of the player team, and walked towards the bottom of the pit in the curse shaft.

"Brother Koutsu, did you ever get a girlfriend in college?" Then, she asked casually, "Didn't your sister introduce one to you?"

"I don't have that time..." Suuankou complained with a wry smile, "I had to stream, but now I have to play this game, so I don't have time to look for one."

Citalopram clicked, "That's true.

"But when there are more female players in the future, you can try to find one among the players. With that, you will be dating at this place. But in that case, you will have to compete with others."

As an older person, she gave valuable advice on Suuankou's relationship aspect, "If there is a fair competition, you have to consider how handsome you are. You have to find a way to increase your fashion value.

"On an equal level, the more fashionable and handsome one must have a higher attraction from the opposite sex?"

"...Becoming fashionable?" Suuankou murmured and repeated.

The other unmarried male players watching the video also nodded thoughtfully.

What was even scarier was when Jiu Er thoughtfully touched the axe in her hand and nodded slowly.

“Then I have to become more handsome.” Jiu Er muttered to herself.

Next time, I should try the new trick that I have learned in the past few days...

—Jiu Er's Guillotine!

At this moment, Wandering Child slowly opened his eyes.

He found himself still in the same place.

But the bustling city had disappeared, and he was in a ruin with nobody else. The place was deserted with broken walls everywhere.

“...?” Wandering Child was puzzled.

There was a sudden fluctuation around him, and a strange azure blue brilliance lit up.

He nervously tried to feel the glaive behind him — only to find his rapier.

Just then, he saw a familiar figure.

“Your Highness Annan?” Being surprised, the Child almost forgot to address the honorary title.

Annan, who rushed over at the fastest speed he could, just breathed a sigh of relief and said casually, “It's better to call me Don Juan in front of outsiders. Just call me Annan when no one is there. After all, we are [friends].”

He liked his attempt in building a stronger rapport with the Child.

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The traces of the Silverstone Curse Shaft's existence had been completely erased.

No one would be able to notice that there used to be a “power station” that the elves depended on to survive above this massive pit.

For the other buildings, only the part above the ground was demolished. Except for the curse shaft, not even a single piece of gravel was left, with the part below the ground completely gone.

The pit was like a crater, with a diameter of hundreds of meters.

What was strange was how the place was handled. Instead of a vertical pit, they dug a hole from the entrance, which extended diagonally after leveling the building on top.

The deeper it was, the bigger the pit. Finally, it reached its maximum space and depth at more than 20 meters below the ground.

What lay further down was the collapsed floor shining with azure blue brilliance. Then, there were the dry and dusty sewers occupied by rubbles at the bottom of the pit.

“...This place looks like a subway exit.” Dove commented on the forum, “I'm guessing the depth should be at least two floors underground.”

“Maybe more than 2 floors.” Delicious Wind Goose, who watched the live stream, blurted affirmatively, “I think the depth of this pit can fit even up to 4 floors underground. When you first went down, I saw a desolated floor. If the height of each floor is the same, you should be on the 4th floor now.”

“It doesn't matter how many floors are there,” Citalopram looked at the sewer hesitantly. “The question is... are we going down? There doesn't seem to be anything here.”

“No one has used this place for hundreds of years. Are you still afraid of getting dirty?”

“No, I mean the sewers are too wide. It feels like you can even drive a car into it.”

Citalopram complained silently, “Under this familiar setting, I have a hunch that four muscled turtles with murderous weapons will come out from them.”

Dove comforted, “Don't worry. If four green turtles really came out, we will be having turtle soup for supper tonight.”

[TN: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles reference. *link*]

“I really don't want to go in. I feel like there will be mice and cockroaches in there...” Citalopram grumbled.

Despite saying so, she could only helplessly hold the torch to keep up after seeing Boffis floating into the sewer. She couldn't help but complain, “This place has been unvisited for so long. Is the air here okay? There won't be any gas in this sewer that would explode when it meets fire, right?”

“This is not a sealed environment. Also, this place is connected to the ground. That's a wrong guess. Quickly go and apologize to your chemistry teacher.” Suuankou retorted.

Unlike the empty basement, which was completely torn to pieces, the sewers were surprisingly well preserved.

The sewers built by the elves look like massive blood vessels, connecting in all directions in the underground world.

The original waterway in the middle was utterly dried up, leaving only a shallow layer of dry sand. There were raised terrains on both sides of the sewer that served as a path for the group to walk on.

Although the sewers had been dry for a long time, everyone, including the Ghost Boffis, moved along the sides of the waterway subconsciously.

Dove walked at the end of the group because she didn't want anyone to step on her feet by accident. Chocolate's body, which she possessed, had night vision anyway. She could move forward normally without Citalopram's torch.

She sniffed the air with a strange expression, rubbed the sand in the middle with her paws tentatively, and put it in front of her face to smell it.

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Then, her face was filled with doubt.

She reached out her claws and dug into the sand layer in the middle like digging a pit. They are really damp soil.

She took another sample and smelled it. Then, she rubbed her paws on the ground with a thoughtful expression.

Dove squatted on the spot and thought for a while, then suddenly ran to catch up with the crowd. She hopped forward and grabbed Suuankou in front of her.

Then, she scrambled her feet, lying on Suuankou's shoulders like a cat-shaped school bag.

Suuankou was taken aback.

Unfortunately, Chocolate's physique wasn't a small pet cat. The body couldn't fit on Suuankou's back.

Suuankou could only hug the cat awkwardly, burdened by the heavy weight of this spoiled child.

"What's wrong?" He whispered to the serval in his arms, "Are you afraid of getting dirty?"

"—No."

Dove meowed and replied calmly on the forum, "I checked the sand in the waterway. There is no smell of grease, excrement, and rot.

"This is a sewer, but no stains can be seen on the walls and floors. Isn't it strange?"

"Maybe it's because the stain has weathered over time?" Suuankou followed Dove's gaze and looked at the sewer: "After hundreds of years, it is impossible for substances that emit odors to exist."

"That would at least leave some traces." Dove responded, "At the very least, the soil will become fertile. But, I didn't see any traces of the soil becoming fertile. Instead, I detected the traces of the curse.

"For the sand on the surface, the curse has almost dissipated. However, the curse is evident in the deeper layer of moist soil. The concentration is close to the curse level when Annan held a ritual in the warehouse."

"...That's weird." Suuankou thought for a while and nodded in agreement with Dove's reasoning.

Citalopram in front also saw the conversation between the human and the cat. She paused and asked Boffis directly, "Boffis, what is this sewer for?"

"How could I possibly know?" Boffis turned around, stared at Citalopram in a stunned manner, and asked in disbelief, "Do underage girls on your time need to know this kind of knowledge?"

"Cultural differences." Citalopram said confidently, "Isn't it normal to learn more common knowledge? I don't even know what this tunnel is called."

"Even if you say that, I still don't know about this place." Boffis was bothered, "But if you're speaking at the level of common knowledge, of course, I know this place is used to treat the waste."

"What kind of waste? Feces?"

“—Hey! How can you say such dirty words!?” Boffis was surprisingly not very good at dealing with this type of word.

She embarrassedly retorted, “How can the feces be discharged into these pipes? The city will stink a lot!”

“Where does the water here lead to?”

“Of course, it's leading to the ground surface,” Boffis replied confidently.

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Boffis patted her head with some distress, “But even if I tell you the answer, you won't get it because you haven't seen it before.”

She thought hard for a while, then reluctantly reached out her hand and gestured, “Here's how it goes...”

“Generally speaking, there will be many dispersers this high on the ground surface. Water will be pumped from underground rivers, imbued with energy, and then poured into the dispersers. Then when the night comes, the dispersers will be turned on.

“The water infused with curse energy will emit different colors and beautiful lights when activated.” Boffis said with a little nostalgia, “But you won't have the chance to see it.”

“Why do you say that?”

“It's because your blood doesn't have a special reaction to those curse energies.” Boffis glanced at the group behind Citalopram and replied casually, “As the Pale Priestess, you might have felt it, but I don't see the curse sensory running in their blood. I think the era of curse energy technology has already come to an end.”

“...So, what exactly is the curse energy?” Citalopram couldn't help but ask.

“Curse energy...” Boffis muttered.

She couldn't help but express a bitter smile, “It seems that you will still be hung up with that topic if I don't tell you.

“Since I'm going to tell you what it is, I have to make it clear. You must never use the curse energy again.

“Curse energy is the technology we rely on to survive in the desert. You can understand it as the ability to pump out clear springs from the desert, achieving what we want under harsh conditions.

“—That's an 'incomplete power of creation'.

“But your teacher should have also taught you about the laws of this world, right? Everything that isn't meant to exist comes with a price.”

“...Something like that.” Citalopram nodded.

Annan did tell her.

Although Annan didn't lay it out as such, he conveyed a similar meaning.

Boffis took a deep breath and murmured in a low voice, "Curse energy is the blood of the world.

"The contact between this world and the dream world isn't a gentle fusion. At the overlapping point of the two worlds, the world will become extremely fragile, creating a flaw in our current world itself.

"You can see it as the wounds inflicted upon our world, the exposed flesh without the skin's protection."

Boffis sighed, "The curse shaft is a hollow wedge nailed into flesh and blood, pumping out the world's blood. The surrounding of the curse shaft will gradually become desolate, and the people near the curse shaft will occasionally go missing. In that case, they have fallen into the dream world. Once the physical body enters the dream world, it is basically impossible for them to come back.

"In addition to the curse shaft's destruction of the world itself, those who drink the world's blood will be cursed by the world. Or rather, you can say that they're directly drinking the world's curse into their bodies.

"Those who have used the power of curses will live seven times longer, but they will not stay youthful; they are doomed to be entangled by nightmares even after they are dead. Every time they wake up from a nightmare, new curses will be added. It's a tragedy. They will be tortured until death... and even death isn't the end to it.

"As long as we're in contact with the curse energy once, we will never be able to get rid of this craving. But there is no room for hesitation when we are in the desert. The curse energy is the poisonous blood that keeps our civilization going. We consume it knowing that we will die sooner or later because of it. However, if we don't take it, we will die of thirst first.

"After we arrived in Yaselan, which isn't rich in resources, some folks with wisdom began to encourage the crowd to use the curse energy in moderation.

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"But the vast majority of elves are reluctant to give up on the convenient and magical energy because its side effects can be said to be negligible compared to its convenience. Having an entire civilization using the curse energy together will further share its burdens and side effects rather than having one person bearing it alone. As for the possibility of the world becoming riddled with holes for hundreds of years later, that's a future that has nothing to do with us."

"Can the curse energy be so addictive?" Citalopram asked subconsciously.

She vaguely saw the shadows of the Sunwell Plateau [1] and Quel' Thalas [2].

"Not really. The curse energy itself is not addictive, but the convenience itself is a terrible dependence for us. The convenience of the curse energy is enough to make people forget the pain of death. Therefore, the elves born after the third era do not see death as a terrifying thing.

"For them, the curse energy is not for survival, but enjoyment." Boffis' answer was even direr.

"Given the increasing rarity and the magical property of this power, the people of Yaselan are eyeing this power. There are traces of curse energy in some of the legends and stories sung by the bards.

“In your legends, curse energy is granted many aliases like 'the Water of Immortality', 'the 'Fountain of Youth', the 'Holy Grail', the 'Water of the Underworld', and so on.

“In the end, under the persuasion of many prophets, the emperor took control of the situation. In the case of the elders' house opposing it, a compromise was reached. The elves would not completely stop the use of curse energy but centralized the population in the capital and ran curse energy there. In the end, they prohibited the use of spell energy among the Centaurs and Yaselians (People of Yasefan).

“...But then, we launched a rebellion.

“Not an uprising, but a rebellion bringing us to self-destruction. For example, the city I live in is a curse-worshipping city at the extreme level. Before the curse shaft was finally demolished as planned, people destroyed their own houses and destroyed the traces of life. Using the curse shaft's last power, they weaved an eternal public nightmare and stopped the time there.

“—It was an endless month, an incomparably beautiful 'nightmare'. But, it wasn't to record important knowledge and inheritance, but to escape into it and enjoy life no different from before.”

Miss Boffis turned emotional, but soon the surge of emotions subsided.

She was silent for a long time before she lowered her head and said in a low voice, “Sorry, I lied before.”

“This is not your fault.” Citalopram gently and softly comforted.

Boffis took a deep breath and calmed down.

Then she continued, “Mom wanted to take me to the capital. But I ran away halfway because I didn't want to use the curse energy anymore, which was obviously wrong. Mom taught me so since I was a child.

“But she herself wants to move to the capital to live...” When she said this, she choked with emotion.

Citalopram advised again, “It's not your fault.”

“I just want to live a normal life. But no one supports me. The best I can do is go back to my hometown and die with everyone, putting this meaningless 'knowledge' as specimen.

“But, I couldn't do anything. When I came back, I was late and didn't get to participate in the ritual. When I wanted to leave, I couldn't run.”

Boffis smiled wryly, “I'm here alone with no great mission or great things to achieve. So I just lingered in the same place, not knowing where I should go, and I didn't get anything done in the end.

“I lied, Citalopram. I'm not good at all. I don't have any buddies, and I don't have any special abilities. So I can't do anything well.”

She murmured, “I'm just an indecisive dabbler.”

Boffis looked at Citalopram pleadingly, and her voice was soft and ghostly. “Will you come back for me?”

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The sky was pitch dark in the Elven Ruin.

There were no stars in the sky except for the moon, unlike the outside world. Maybe the aqua blue glow scattered everywhere had contributed to this scenery.

The glows were similar to a firefly-like light cluster, suspended in the air and rung elegant whispers into Annan's ear.

Of course, Annan couldn't see those long-necked phantoms that looked like potted plants. However, he already knew these fireflies' disturbing nature when he previously spectated Citalopram's perspective.

This place undoubtedly had a beautiful view for those who didn't know the truth.

The ruin was blessed with faint brilliance; it exuded a profound historical air, and there were light clusters floating in the air like bubbles. Under the clear night sky, the moon gleamed silently. Then, the scenery was further accentuated by the faint night breeze.

However, it was a disturbing image that hurt Annan's sanity because he learned the truth about this place.

Those bubble-like light clusters were actually brains.

Worse still, the back of the heads was attached with a neck as elastic as Luffy's; they floated in the air, weightless with a solemn and serene face.

In a sense, it was better not to know the truth.

A strange low groan sounded faintly in Annan's ear.

Unsurprisingly, Annan quickly completed his first goal of this trip.

[You have acquired the new engraving "Novice Influence: Whispers of Grace".]

[If you don't remove it in time, you will fall into a random nightmare with the keyword "elf" after seven days (Difficulty: Hard).]

Although the seven-day preservation time was short, it was enough for Annan to complete the advancement ritual.

"So, this is 'Whispers of Grace'?" Annan had a complicated feeling about it.

Just as Annan couldn't understand Old Grandmother's words, he couldn't understand what the ghosts uttered.

But he knew what they were related to.

Undoubtedly, they were the murmurs of the elf heads floating in Annan's ears.

The legendary graceful mutters of the dreamers.

Those who were proficient in the Elvish language might be able to discern the general meaning from the vague and intermittent whispers.

But if the other party couldn't see the spirit bodies floating in the air, they might regard it as "a faint prayer left behind by the elves".

Without a discernible eye that see the truth, everything was beautiful.

Should I call it the 'elegant' teeth grinding?

“Speaking of which, how was your nightmare?” Annan put his hands behind his back, looked at the Child in front of him, and walked backward.

He looked at Wandering Child with a sly smile, his eyes innocent but a little playful, “Do you feel like returning to your youth?”

Annan had already found an opportunity to reveal that he could see the exact location of the players. When the Child's stream was cut off, Annan could still see the Child's situation. His intention of inserting an interaction here was to induce the players to further ignore the possibility that “Annan may also watch the stream”.

Sure enough, Annan was well-versed with what kind of persona he had established in the players' perspective.

What he enacted was a precocious, fourteen-year-old young nobleman.

His current rapport status with the Child was considered “Trusted”. Roughly speaking, it was on the level of “a trusted friend for the time being”.

Then, after seeing the innocent behavior of the Child in the nightmare, it was natural for Annan to joke about it at the first moment.

The act that Annan decided to put on was mostly natural!

Annan's goal wasn't to mock the Child!

But, surely, he more or less was keen to pull the Child's leg about it.

“What did you think of it?” Annan made a somewhat exaggerated voice, “Those... kind of topics in your interaction. I felt goosebumps just by knowing it.

“Hey, don't you like her? That's why you used that kind of topic to keep her away from you? Or is it acting?”

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“...A little bit of acting, but not really.” Wandering Child hugged his head and replied helplessly, “I get nervous in front of a beautiful girl I'm unfamiliar with. Ahem, excuse me for being out of place. But I'm at this age, and I still have a problem with that.”

Although the character he created was about 18 years old, he was already in his 30s.

Even his real person had become a little bald.

Every day when he left, he had to comb his hair carefully and let the long hair section cover up the bald part.

“If I really liked her, I wouldn't talk to her like that. But I don't hate her. Who would hate such a cute girl?”

Wandering Child sighed softly, "I'm just alienating her in this way to remind myself it's all fake and don't indulge it. The person I'm possessing is not me, after all.

"But I didn't deliberately show that I hated her. Otherwise, with Boffis' character, I'm afraid she would be pretty sad.

"So I didn't cover it up and showed my most real and stupid side. Of course, I don't usually talk to people like this. Otherwise, I might be beaten up terribly."

The person whom the Child referred to was Boffis' crush in the "fake Nightmare".

Surely, Annan noticed what the Child meant.

What the Child actually meant was that "the feelings in this world are false." The players had understood that this was world transmigration with in-game skin and cosmetics.

From the Child's perspective, it didn't matter even if this time-travel mechanism would always exist, allowing him to spend the rest of his life in Annan's world. All in all, they were still separated into two different worlds.

So he wasn't distancing himself from Boffis intentionally.

But he didn't want to hate that innocent girl deliberately.

He unreservedly showed his clumsy side just to cut off his fantasy.

I seem to have heard this approach before. However, Annan appeared to have another take from it.

Are you a blind date expert?

Although Annan was walking backward, he didn't fall because of it.

He didn't need to see, nor did he use his memory or the sense of touch to identify the direction. Instead, he could "see" the obstacles behind him under a unique perception radar.

He was deliberately training his perception.

Annan was already able to dodge merely with this sixth sense like Jude, given his perception attribute. The range of that unique perception was a bit bigger than Jude too.

Annan also had the secondary profession as a [Silver Knight].

His agility attribute was superior to Jude, signifying that he had a better reaction speed.

At the very least, Annan was confident... If he could temper his perception to the level of Jude's proficiency, he was 90% confident that he could deal with Dove's arrow that had instantly killed Jude.

After all, Dove did not have any transcended abilities related to archery.

The [Impeding Wall] could even intercept bullets, not to mention arrows that were much slower and bulkier than bullets.

The Child had no choice but to open his stream to report safety to his teammates.

"I've come out of a nightmare. It talks about a time when the Elven Civilization was still prosperous... This is a new dungeon instance type without the main mission, called a 'public nightmare'. I think it may be a kind of open-world setting. Hey, Your Highness Annan! This is too tall—"

The Child watched Annan walk backward to the pit, close his eyes, and jump into it.

It surprised the Child with his complexion ashen; he hurried forward to the pit's edge.

The live stream he just activated was immediately filled with surprises in the comments.

"—Damn, he streams Annan jumping off in suicide."

"—Wandering Child, you must not understand what's happening, right?"

"—Wait a minute, what do you think of this, Child?"

"It's not my fault!"

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Wandering Child witnessed Annan falling and disappearing into the curse shaft.

The sudden event put him into a panic. He hurried over, "Hey, watch out! What if you hit the back of your head? Even if you don't hit your head, you may get stuck in a hole instead."

"I appreciate your concern, but something feels off to me." Annan's young and cold voice came from the front.

Since they were in a structure, his voice seemed distant and muffled.

Annan questioned the Child's concern over him blatantly, "Think about it, Boffis is such a cute little girl, and yet you take her to such a dangerous place. It seems like you don't care if she is willing. In contrast, I'm a man about to come of age, right? Also, I'm a Transcended with dual professions. Nothing terrible will happen to me.

"If I were to follow them down, I would have missed this place," said Annan confidently.

Only now did the Child realize that Annan did not jump directly to the bottom of the Silverstone Curse Shaft.

Annan did the opposite instead.

Relying on his young body, he leaped backward like an Olympic diver. Then, he slipped into the gap and entered the next floor smoothly.

Previously, Citalopram noticed this particular floor right after the ground floor; it was filled with rubble and was about five meters in height.

Of course, it was inconvenient for Annan to disclose his findings to the Child.

When he watched Citalopram's stream previously, he vaguely saw something here, but Citalopram didn't notice it. The group surely did not visit this place either. After all, only people with a small figure and a flexible body like Annan could get into it. Even Dove could not achieve this.

“You may catch up to them first, or you can wait for me here!” Annan yelled, “I think I saw something in there. I'll be back very soon!”

“...Then I'll wait for you at the entrance first in case you get stuck when you come back.”

The Child said helplessly, “If there is anything wrong, just shout, Your Highness. I can also help!”

He was now brimming with confidence.

He just learned a fantastic new skill — [Aero Strike], which sent wind blades through his sword. He didn't have a chance to try it out yet, thus the eagerness. Also, his comprehension of [Geo Strike] was further improved.

Most notably, his achievement was witnessed by many other players.

All the Child wanted was to act cool, so much so that he hoped Annan was endangered so that he could rescue the damsel in distress... Rather, saving the noble child in distress smoothly.

Sure enough, Annan would probably let him down in his fantasy.

After Annan got into the crack of the building, he slowly turned around inside the narrow and dark space, crawling forward with his eyes closed, relying on the perception he had been training for half an hour.

Since his destination wasn't too far away, it only took him less than three minutes to crawl over and find the thing he saw on Citalopram's live stream earlier.

It was a head-sized object covered in bandages and gauze.

Hundreds of years have passed. The bandages and gauze had become dry and brittle with a dusty surface.

Then he maintained the lying posture on the ground, raised both of his hands above his head, and carefully removed all the bandages and gauze on it.

He quickly felt around the bottle to identify its material.

It kind of resembles the texture of a gem...

Its shape is a bit like a medicine bottle used for infusion and probably the largest model too.

After Annan removed all the bandages, new information popped up in front of his eyes.

[Sacred Bone's Extract (Justice)]

[Type: Raw Material/Consumable/Ritual item/Mystical item (Gold)]

[Description: After soaking the sacred bone in the Wyrmmrest Reagent, it has absorbed all the available anesthetic effects. There seems to be some new power but may contain unknown venoms if not purified.]

[Description: It cannot be exposed to sunlight and must be sealed completely.]

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[Description: The reagent's original material contains curse energy, and some of that energy is still left in it.]

[Description: You have never heard of its usage as a ritual item (the "Advanced Mysticism" check has failed).]

[Effect: There is a 13% probability of unknown mutation after drinking it. Upon consumption, your erosion rate increases by 57%, and you will be granted [Advanced Influence: Remains of the Heart of Justice]. Moreover, temporary levels will be added, pushing the current level to Level 45. The awakening percentage of the element [Brilliance] shall increase randomly after drinking, with the minimum increment being 3%. You will be afflicted with the "Dragon's Blood Poison" LV43.]

[Effect: There is a 75% probability of immediate death after injection. When your level is boosted above LV43, there is a 3% probability of an unknown mutation relating to an unknown dragon. The injection will inflict [Curse: Creator's Death]. It's guaranteed to acquire "Advanced Influence: Remnants of the Heart of Justice" upon injection.]

"Damn..." Annan was stunned.

It was the first time he had seen such a long description explaining the item's effect.

If Annan learned [Advanced Mysticism], there should be paragraphs describing the item's effect as the "ritual item".

As a raw material, the rarity was actually Gold Rank before being purified.

Is this the wine brew to preserve the sacred bone?

Or rather, is it more accurate to see it as a dragon blood wine?

In general, drinking it would cause great side effects. In addition, the cost of injecting it into the body was completely unacceptable too.

Annan coughed twice, stirring up the dust into the air. Then, he murmured, "Ah, I miss the senior a little."

Wait, Senior Brother Sal (Salvatore himself) may not be very good at this.

But if it's "Senior Sister Vatore" (the Shadow), she might possibly extract the active ingredients from it.

It had a similar effect to Hermetic's Sage's Stone; both were top-tier reagents that granted temporary levels.

It was just that the effective time of the temporary level was not written on it; there was also the erosion inflicted upon the soul.

Annan wanted to extract that influence and element in the wine and leave the rest to senior.

When he took Sage's Stone before, he found that his [Brilliance] element had awakened 63%. At that time, he used the Book of Divine Transporter's Truth, [the Way to Rise and Change], and discovered that his [Brilliance] element's safe extraction limit was capped at 85%.

This meant that if he didn't burn his soul to the limit, the element of [Brilliance] could not achieve 100% perfection after reaching Gold Rank in his current state.

His talent... Or, the talent of "Annan's" soul for the element of [Brilliance] was limited to this extent.

In other Xianxia [1] Isekais, he could probably resolve this issue with some nourishment, improving his spiritual roots. However, it seemed that the awakening progress could only be enhanced through the rewards issued by nightmares.

Annan acquired 10% progress for the awakening in the nightmare regarding Kafni's childhood.

Then, Annan confirmed that the [Brilliance] element could only be perfected till the maximum percentage of 95% through Vasily. But this was clearly not enough.

After seeing the properties of this sacred bone extract, Annan had a bold idea.

It was not entirely about the 5% gap.

Instead, Annan was well aware that aside from his [Frost] element that was innately perfected, and the [Brilliance] element that was as high as 65% in Bronze Rank, he had other four elements he had to awaken: [Wisdom], [Glory], [Beauty], and [Strict].

Although the combined awakening progress of the last two elements was below 5%, Annan seemed to have a certain degree of affinity with these two elements to attain the awakening in his current state.

If Annan could fill up the two elements of [Brilliance] and [Wisdom] in terms of the awakening progress before reaching Gold Rank, he had the option to opt for soul burning to awaken the remaining elements.

The ascension and attainment might be different if he ascended while having six elements perfected.

At present, the nightmares created by Advanced Influence seemed capable of improving the awakening progress of elements.

Annan was thinking seriously about his options.

Should I go to Silver Sire or the Man in the Mirror after advancing into the Silver Rank and ask for the real names of some deities related to his elements?

On the other side, Dove's group had finally reached their destination through the sewer.

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"What's this?" Suuankou was suffocated by the brutal scene before him.

What appeared in front of them was a bizarre and dire strait reminiscent of frozen storage or a snow park.

Nine humanoid ice sculptures gathered at the round table in an airtight basement completely covered in ice.

Some stood up angrily, some calmly stretched their bodies and spread their hands, some whispered with the people around them, some leaned back and seemed to want to stay away from others.

Their frozen state was like a piece of art. The ice sculptures included nine elves, four male and five female. The nine elves with different movements and expressions were so real as if they were alive.

They were significantly different from ordinary sculptures.

The sculptures had exaggerated movement, seemingly to give off an artistic air. If these living statues were put alone, they would be mistaken as those street performers enacting a statute. However, having them gathered added a significant incongruity that could not be found in real people.

In the eyes of photography, it was the difference between a snapshot [1] and a photoshoot [2].

What appeared in front of Suuankou and the group was a spontaneous “snapshot”.

He could vividly see a sculpture with his eye squinted, looking like a fool. Also, this particular sculpture had a twisted expression out of anger.

It was as if time suddenly stood still.

“What's happening here?” He murmured.

“They're all Frostwhisper.” Citalopram, as the only translator — or rather psychic, translated Miss Boffis' words to the rest of the players, “Stay calm. They maintain such actions not because they triggered any trap. On the contrary, they had all come to the underground secret room and sacrificed their life voluntarily.

“To be more precise, they originally planned to hide in a public nightmare. They were making the last use of their bodies before they escaped.”

“So, is this a ritual?” Suuankou responded quickly.

Citalopram responded immediately, “Yup, you're right.”

The team was at the lowest available location in the “sewers”.

They followed the sewer into the city. After many twists and turns spanned more than 20 minutes, they found a building that looked like an enormous well.

The wellhead extended three meters above the ground, but it wasn't difficult to climb on top of it. There was a stair leading up to the well, and each step was spacious. The team didn't need to tread sideways to climb the stairs.

This showed that the designer had considered the possibility of someone coming to this place via the sewers from the very beginning.

After the team climbed to the wellhead, they noticed U-shaped steel pipes like staples being punched on the interior wall. These pipes were arranged on opposite sides of the interior wall, forming a ladder-like structure from the wellhead.

Soon, the team started climbing down the ladder. After five minutes, they came to this freezing place. The further down they climbed down, the colder it got. Halfway through their journey, they saw the steel pipes were frozen with a layer of ice on top of them. After progressing down the ladder for three-quarters, their surroundings turned into a world of ice and snow.

Indeed, there were no windows and doors in this place.

After going down the ladders facing each other, the team saw the wood table at the center of the well.

They stepped on the table and then jumped off it.

The ground and the walls were all covered with solid and thick ice. Even after hundreds of thousands of years, the ice here had not melted.

The frigid cold air was filled with tiny pieces of ice visible to the naked air flying in the air. Dove had shrunk into a ball and stayed in Chocolate's clothes. Suuankou couldn't help but shiver and march on the ground to keep warm. He could barely keep his voice from shaking.

Citalopram could feel the chill clearly, but her body showed no sign of trembling.

“They donated their bodies before they died to hold a ritual. The name of the ritual was [Nine Faces of the Unburned]. Nine Transcended with the same profession had ingested the poison wrapped in honey pills, performed a mystical drama called [Nine Sacrifice], and died during the play to interrupt the ritual.

“It's not that they need to rely on this ritual to achieve any purpose. It's to acquire the by-product of this ritual. In the self-sacrificing type of ritual, the dead Transcendeds' corpses will not turn into nightmares. Instead, the corpses will become 'incomplete cursed material'. All curses remain sealed in the soul.

“After the ritual absorbs their souls, all that's left is the body overflowing with curses. Since this ritual comprises nine Frostwhispers, the overflowed and accumulated curses around them will be converted into pure frigid air.”

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Citalopram translated everything thoroughly.

Hearing this, Suuankou was a little confused, “They've spent a lot of effort on this. What's their goal? Just to make a refrigerator?”

“Seems like it.” Citalopram paused and replied in a low volume.

These two sentences were not translations, but her views, “The technology of the elves seems to be concentrated on the curse energy, at least the elves of the Third Age are like this.

“They wanted to eliminate their curse by consuming this energy in making a refrigerator. In fact, we all know the refrigerator runs on something, and we can't keep the cooling process running without any energy consumption.”

“Kelvin closed the coffin board with relief and lay back in there.” Dove complained in the forum, “The world is always unexpectedly scientific in such a strange place.”

“Let's collect the material first.” Citalopram instructed, “The light blue liquid under the ice layer is 'Frostwhisper's Eternal Frozen Blood'. I don't know how much Annan wants them. Let's get half a catty first of them first.”

“That is too much!” Suuankou complained.

“What can I do?” Citalopram said helplessly, “We didn't bring a container. Who knew that the 'Eternal Frozen Blood' was actually still in the liquid state.

“It's better to cut off an arm and take it away after sealing the opening with ice. I saw that Annan had already arrived. We should quickly go out and hand it over to him. Then, we don't have to worry about sending it back.”

“If we're going to contain it with ice, we might as well cut the head off. At least the opening will be smaller.” Dove complained in the forum.

“It's still not right?” Suuankou suddenly realized something, “If the elves are trying to create an eternal refrigerated area, what are they trying to preserve?”

“When we first came down, nothing was on this table.”

“Boffis had mentioned it.” Citalopram shook her head and explained, “It wasn't that there was nothing there, but it was taken.

“It's indeed a well in a sense. It's spacious enough to allow something to be craned out of it, even when there's a ladder on both sides of the inner wall. Boffis said already that the place where the sacred bone was once stored was along the way to collect the 'Frostwhisper's Eternal Frozen Blood'.

“I speculate that this should be where the elves originally planned to store the sacred bone. This shows that the elves should have given up the idea of signing a covenant with the sacred bone at that time, or maybe they could not sign it.

“From the perspective of the timeline, this place should have been built sometime before the elves held the great ritual. We can even deduce that the sacred bone is dug out using magic energy or something cheat-like akin to the creative mode [3].

“At that time, the elves thought that the sacred bone would be kept here. So they made this ritual to suppress the activity of the sacred bone as much as possible and prevent the curse from leaking out.

“Since the wine can anesthetize the sacred bone, there is no reason why low temperature cannot reduce its activity. Moreover, the reagent will always deteriorate at room temperature. But if it is stored in a low-temperature environment, the storage time will increase somewhat.”

Citalopram had a clear idea about this. In this instance, they did not find the bottle storing the sacred bone here.

In other words, Boffis' mother took away the sacred bone stored here sometime after the ritual was completed.

Annan's discovery could further confirm this speculation.

The bottle he picked up over the other side was the bottle left after the [Heart of Justice] was taken away.

Judging from the fact that it “had lost its efficacy”, the bottle appeared in that location because the sacred bone was out-of-control after leaving the cold storage.

But these were the little details.

Annan and the Child did not go down the well but waited for them to come back at the only entrance and exit.

When the item was delivered to Annan, Annan did have a way to keep the ice on the surface from melting, no matter if it was a hand or a head.

If Annan could not even do this, he had to re-evaluate his path of transcendence.

The remaining parts that he did not use up could be sold to the players as pieces of equipment.

I'm finally advancing in my rank... Annan carried the "sacred bone extract" wrapped in his coat and took a deep breath with a bit of nervousness.

Is it time to settle my score with that painter?

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 329

"...Tsk." Longjing Tea smacked his lips.

Through the conversation between Annan and the Child, he could roughly guess what the Child did in the nightmare.

Unfortunately, Longjing Tea didn't see it with his own eyes. He didn't manage to record the moment and mock him immediately, giving him the feeling of missing out.

After all, Longjing Tea had witnessed the Child's awkward chatting.

Cade (the Child) was not plain-looking at first. Instead, he could even be called handsome.

The only issue was with his receding hairline.

When the Child hadn't retired yet, his family sent him on blind dates. At that time, Longjing Tea went to assist as a wingman.

Even the well-informed Longjing Tea was shocked the first time he saw how Cade functioned in front of an unfamiliar and beautiful girl.

During the first meetup, the process was rough, "Hey, what zodiac sign are you? I'm a Gemini, and we should get along very well", "What's your job? It's amazing", "Do you have any favorite games? Ah, you don't play any games."

Then, he ran out of bullets (conversation topics).

If the Child failed to capture any topic in a short while, he would suddenly blurt out questions like "The weather is good today", "where are you from", and "how do you think about the temperature here".

He was especially good at forcing a conversation out — that shocked Longjing Tea.

Of course, Longjing Tea also learned the truth later.

This was actually Cade's approach to indirectly push the date away.

In Cade's words, if he tried to run away from the blind date, he would use such a euphemized approach to lower the energy of the date, making his date unable to continue the conversation.

But Longjing Tea finally got a definite answer after careful close-up (referring to him sitting at the next table) observation several times. All of the above was a lie.

The real reason was that the dumb Child had inexplicable low self-esteem and timidity.

Every time he was interested in his date, but he didn't feel like having a good chance, he would give up on his own and distance himself. Then, he would get a reason "It's not that I don't chase after her. It's because she looked down on me."

That way, Cade wouldn't feel guilty for not taking the initiative, nor would he regret the outcome.

That put Longjing Tea into questioning how marvelous Cade's parents were.

Generally speaking, when they meet during the blind date, they would know what position they had in the matchmaker's heart.

Usually, the results were lower than expected. The Child had such a comedian-like escape method. It stood to reason that the favorability of him was deducted to nothing long ago with the matchmakers.

But the surprising mystery was that every time Cade went on a blind date, the quality of the woman he was introduced to was always abnormally high. There were several times even Longjing Tea at the next table was enchanted.

As a matter of fact, Longjing Tea came from a wealthy family.

He thought about it and realized that Cade shouldn't waste his youth like this. What if my best bro couldn't find such a good partner in the future?

So Longjing Tea was like Cade's father, cheering Cade up, talking to him, and giving him counseling talks.

But he never imagined that after Cade read to himself, "I can't run away this time," a couple of times, he still escaped immediately after arriving at the scene.

So Longjing Tea gave up completely.

From then on, he decided to use shock therapy. Every time the Child was pushed by his parents for a blind date, he would rush to the scene as soon as possible and mock the Child after the date ended.

Longjing Tea would continue to do so until he inherited his family business.

But fortunately, this situation for the Child had stopped.

The reason was quite simple.

The Child had gone bald.

As a result, the quality of the woman he was introduced to dropped significantly. The situation wouldn't push the Child to the extent of being too nervous, and he could cope perfectly. Later on, as the Child became a popular streamer after retiring, he was exposed to more people. At the very least, the Child wouldn't be nervous when he met other female streamers on the Fighting Cat Streaming Platform.

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What happened today was unexpected. I haven't seen the Child in this state for a few years, but I see it again here.

I'm really curious. What does the girl look like?

What a headache! I'm so curious.

"I really want to meet her..." Longjing Tea muttered, sighed, and closed the book.

I don't think I can continue reading anymore.

The live streams nowadays are so interesting.

There was the event about the Child awkwardly approaching a girl with "how's the weather?", Citalopram being a tour guide in introducing "my family ruins", Sister Hyphen's in real life stream (IRL) about Dong Juan arriving in Rosebury, and Xiang Tiange smuggling dangerous goods into the city.

I really can't sit still and study.

Longjing Tea's state was like watching an entertaining stream on the phone while doing the literature review for the postgraduate entrance examination.

There was no way for him to focus and learn anything.

Even when the system only required him to read through the text from the beginning to the end, he realized that his learning process had stopped, given that the text on the 4th and 5th pages remained red. Thus, he gave up the idea of multitasking.

Maybe I should give myself a break... Longjing Tea thought to himself.

When Longjing Tea packed up and prepared to go back to his dormitory, he saw Teacher Clarence at the door, whom he hadn't seen for about a couple of days.

Clarence wore black-rimmed glasses and the same red robe. He was listening intently, fidgeting his fingers on his right hand subconsciously. The noise was audible even at the current distance, so much so that it gave off the impression of cutlery scratching each other.

In front of Clarence was a gloomy old man in a wheelchair.

The old man was wearing a white coat that resembled a hooded gown. He lowered his head, exposing dark yellow bandages covered with dense black, strange runes.

At first glance, the old man gave off the impression of a mummy.

For some reason, the moment Longjing Tea saw the old man, he suddenly felt a chill in his heart. The old man then stopped his whisper at the same time.

Longjing Tea tried to recall but couldn't remember what the old man had said previously.

This isn't just an illusion.

Longjing Tea walked over without hesitation and respectfully greeted Clarence, befitting his status as the apprentice, "Good evening, Teacher Clarence."

"En." Clarence nodded. With a rare stern expression on his face that tended to smile, he said solemnly, "It's very late. Head back to rest early."

"Yes, teacher."

"—Oh?" The old man let out a low, hoarse laugh at this time.

The laughter gave off the air of death, and it was terrifying.

"Is that your student, Clarence? Are you not going to introduce him to me?" The old man slowly raised his head with a kind smile.

His exposed teeth were as yellow as a corpse. It was as if the being under the bandage was not a person but a skeleton.

Clarence just nodded respectfully in reply.

He calmly pointed to Longjing Tea and introduced in a low voice, "Let me introduce him to you. This is Longjing Tea. An apprentice who has not officially embarked on the path of transcendence."

He did not explain to the old man that Longjing Tea was neither his disciple nor his student.

But he also hinted at Longjing Tea, "It would be better for you to get to know him a little bit.

"This is Master Bernardino, Bernardino Telesio. He is the pope of the 'Bell Ringer', a Gold Rank wizard with the 'Pure Spiritual Medium' title. His magic falls in the school of Soul Snatch. He is also the founder of the profession [Telesio Spiritual Monk].

"At the same time, he is also my teacher and David Gerald's mentor."

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"...Master Bernardino." Longjing Tea held his urge to throw up and barely suppressed the disgust tumbling in his stomach. After recovering himself, he respectfully greeted the old man.

As a matter of fact, it wasn't like he had an ill opinion against Bernardino Telesio, nor was it about Bernardino's words irritating him.

Instead, there was an immense sense of fear striking his nerves.

Those weren't human eyes.

Those black runes flowed like living things under the face covered with withered yellow bandages. The runes were like cockroaches crawling on the ground, making a low, almost inaudible rustling sound.

Two rare gems were revealed in the gaps of the bandages.

It wasn't a metaphor of the pupils as beautiful as jewels like Annan. Of course, there wasn't any slight resemblance to Kafni's doll-like eyes.

Instead, they were genuine gems.

One of them was a sapphire the size of a quail's egg with many facets. Yet, no matter from any angle, the pure white, solitary rune remained suspended in the middle of the gem.

Bernardino's left eye was a high-quality chrysoberyl [1] cat's eye the size of an eyeball. There was a straight and bright gold vertical line on top of the jewel, and it seemed to shine steadily.

Longjing Tea could vaguely see that Bernardino's eye socket had turned into a golden gem through the bandage.

Bernardino was covered in bandages as if he had survived a fire scene. So naturally, he wasn't wearing any ring, necklace, or bracelet.

Perhaps the inlaid gem or the golden frame fixed to his eye socket was his curse vessel.

If the old man sat there without speaking, no one would think that he was a living person.

Just being watched by the old man's two jewel eyes, Longjing Tea felt his body trembling uncontrollably.

That feeling was like wearing a sweater and walking against the wind in winter.

He felt the chill pierced from the chest to his back, seeping deeply into his bones.

Maybe it's just an illusion.

"Don't bully my student." Suddenly, Clarence spoke in a low voice.

Clarence raised his right hand and pointed to Longjing Tea.

Longjing Tea keenly felt that the chills that crept upon his chest faded.

Longjing Tea could vaguely see that the tips of Clarence's slender and sharp fingernails shone with a faint blue brilliance. What is that?

"It seems that you are quite satisfied with him." Bernardino chuckled softly.

His laughter was dry and hoarse, not pleasant at all. It sounded like the smirk of a bad actor.

"That happens when Master Bernardino's spirit grasps a hold of your heart."

Clarence briefly explained to him, as if he sensed Longjing Tea's doubts, "Your current soul rank is too low to see them.

"In addition to being good at manipulating emotions, memory, and perception, the Soul Snatch school is also good at controlling the 'soul' itself. Master Bernardino is a [Telesio Spiritual Monk] who specializes in controlling the soul."

Clarence stated calmly, "One of the master's eyes can destroy, absorb, and bind other people's souls, while the other eye enslaves hundreds of souls. If your rank is higher, you can see the ghost behind the master pushing the wheelchair."

So, that's why he can control the wheelchair while both of his hands are entangled in bandages. Longjing Tea suddenly realized.

“Heh... manage to see Lafiss... What a great skill.” But the old man just let out another laughter again and said slowly in a low voice, “Fellow Spiritual Monks, can I regard this as your official reply?”

“That's my reply.” Clarence replied calmly and earnestly, “You know, I'm not interested in this. I have my own path.”

He said, raising the index finger of his right hand and bending his knuckles slightly, “I won't tell others that you have been here. But if you don't leave, I can only report it to the tower master.”

Like writing in the air, the tips of his long fingernails glowed fluorescently, swiping rapidly in the air, leaving behind a dim azure blue light trail. These light trails remained vaguely in Longjing Tea's vision, forming a somewhat complicated rune.

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“Heh, heh, heh... things don't have to go like that, Clarence. I'm not coercing you into anything. It's just an invitation.”

While still curling up in his wheelchair, Bernardino let out his signature dry laugh, “If you don't agree, just pretend I haven't been here today.”

As he spoke, the wheelchair under him suddenly turned by itself.

Longjing Tea felt the familiar coldness creeping on him again. A soft yet solid power pushed him back. The door opened automatically, and all obstacles between the old man and the door were lined up to the sides.

Even the heavy bookshelves anchored to the ground by Swamp's Black Tower made way for the old man.

As Bernardino passed by Longjing Tea, his wheelchair suddenly stopped.

The old man turned slightly and asked in a low voice, “Book of Divine Transporter?”

“...What?” Longjing Tea was stunned for a moment.

“Oh, you don't know...” Bernardino sighed regretfully and shook his head, “What a pity...”

The old man didn't stop after that. At the moment he crossed the door, the wheelchair disappeared.

While Longjing Tea was stunned, Clarence patted him gently on the shoulder.

“Don't be nervous. He's here because I'm about to advance in my rank. The master is here to ask me if I want to advance into a Spiritual Monk.

“It's not about Gerald, and it's not about Jude.”

What the hell? Longjing Tea was suddenly shocked.

I haven't asked anything yet. How do you know everything? But, he calmed down almost instantly.

Clarence spread his hands, “See, this is the advantage of the rank difference. I'm just demonstrating it to you.

“Soul Rank does not fully represent combat power, but it determines how vulnerable you are to the transcended abilities.”

Clarence smiled helplessly, “If you want to keep a secret, it's best to embark on the path of transcendence quickly.

“You have a soul that isn't corrupted by the curse. Basically, everything you think about is reflected in my mind.”

“So, Master Bernardino also knows everything?”

“Not really. That isn't necessarily true. The gap from Silver Rank to Gold Rank is unlike Bronze Rank to Silver Rank. It isn't an improvement of one's overall qualities.”

Clarence disagreed, “After entering the Gold Rank, what has changed is your race status. The abilities you had before will experience a significant shift too.

“After becoming a [Spiritual Monk], you will lose the ability to read minds and change emotions at will.

“If you want to get something, you have to give something. The bridge from the Silver Rank to Gold Rank cannot be filled with a curse.

“I know who killed my teacher and Jude's situation. But I won't avenge my teacher because his death is inevitable. Even without your lord, he will die there as well.

“It's all because he went the wrong path, and it has nothing to do with me. That's his destiny.

“As for Jude, he died for his reasons, but also because of my command. Thus, I will avenge him. But I will only kill your friend once because that's what happened, giving your friend an equal fate.”

Clarence looked at Longjing Tea and replied softly, “Are you relieved now?”

Longjing Tea swallowed his saliva and smiled reluctantly, “I thought you were from the Prophet school... Talking about fate and all...”

“Prophets never tell the future they see to others.” Clarence replied calmly, “They're just a bunch of cowardly 'centaur'.”

He raised his right hand, showing off his long, dagger-sharp fingernails.

It was made of a centaur's corpse and could tear apart “destiny”.