

Righteous Ps 341

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 341

Dove had curled up in a ball, squinting, snuggling on the sofa by the fireplace to keep warm.

But when she heard the movement behind her, she immediately raised her head alertly, turned her neck back 180 degrees, put her head on the sofa's armrest, and looked at Annan on the bed, "Meow?"

Oh, you came out of a nightmare? Dove let out a curious meow and asked silently.

She craned her neck, trying to see what the curse was on Annan.

But when her eyes met Annan, who had just woken up, she was shocked.

"Meow?!"

What the hell?

Annan's left eye turned into a pure aquamarine.

It was like the emerald, seemingly radiating light from within.

It was not just a metaphor.

At first glance, it seemed to be an alluring pupil with a color different from the other eye. She realized that Annan's left eye did not have a disc-shaped pupil upon a closer look.

Dove could even vaguely see some tiny white runes inside, forming several light bands.

But the green eye was really enchanting!

Even if Dove wasn't having a crush on Annan like Jiu Er and Yiyi, she was still amazed by this spectacular scene.

Dove couldn't help but take a screenshot and publish a post on the forum.

"Guess what treasure I saw?! @Jiu Er @Yiyi."

The Child seemed to be active on the forum at the same moment. Even when Dove didn't tag him, he was the first to comment: "I guess you saw Annan get up from bed?"

Citalopram: "Don't you think it's lewd to say that?"

Yiyi: "Did you take a candid photo of Cutie Annan getting up and changing clothes? Send it to me quickly!"

Jiu Er: "Me too +1."

"You all have guessed it wrongly!" Dove happily sat up Annan from the bed, opened his eyes, and posted a screenshot.

Yiyi: "What the hell?"

Jiu Er: "What the hell?"

Citalopram: "Ok, this is a little interesting (Annan calm down.jpg)"

Yiyi: "Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!"

Delicious Wind Goose: "What's the matter, Sister Hyphen? Such a loud noise all of a sudden? (alert)"

Jiu Er: "Okay, I'm going back to the Freezing Water Port now!"

Delicious Wind Goose: "Calm down! I'm in prison now, so I can't do the mission. You should do my part too!"

Jiu Er: "Tsk..."

Jiu Er: "Indifferent eyes (Kafni Limited Edition.jpg)"

Citalopram: "Don't be like this, be obedient. Annan is also going to the capital. Once you have completed the mission he gave you, wouldn't it be nice to earn a lot of affection ratings?"

Jiu Er: "Ugh..."

She let out a groan and stopped going mad.

Sure enough, there is a solution to everything. Dove sighed.

As expected, Citalopram calmed Jiu Er down again.

This was the fifth time that Citalopram had stopped Jiu Er's rampage since she entered the game.

After all, Jiu Er was a real eldest lady of a prominent family, about the same level as Longjing Tea. She was usually well-behaved and cute, easygoing and humorous. The only issue was she would turn crazy for what she wanted.

For example, Annan.

Lin Yiyi's role in this context might have just been her inclination to join the fun.

To put it more accurately, she didn't just like Annan.

She was just enchanted by the cute and good-looking faces.

She firmly acknowledged herself as someone who liked a pretty face.

For example, Lin Yiyi stuck closely to Kafni and Jiu Er in addition to Annan.

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But, that wouldn't work for Citalopram.

Although Sister Wen was good-looking and had an elegant aura, she was in adult size. Lin Yiyi didn't like her that much.

Of course, Dove wouldn't fit into Lin Yiyi's equation too.

Although Dove's age wasn't yet at the level of Yiyi's mother, she was indeed filled with the majestic aura of Yiyi's mother. In addition, Dove was a genius. She was an all-rounder in fighting, archery, rock climbing, and swimming. Moreover, she was a senior in the field of live streaming.

Lin Yiyi felt like she was the game enthusiast Otakus in the house, speaking softly in front of Dove and not daring to have an overly intimate physical contact.

Jiu Er was different from Lin Yiyi.

She might be the first player to fall in love with someone from another world.

Aside from the Child's unrequited love for Miss Boffis, her feeling for "Annan·Austere-Winter" was one of its kind among the current players.

Jiu Er's unabashed love for Annan also made Dove, the oldest "elder" among the players, worried about her.

This invitation code mechanism was equivalent to pulling people in from their contact list.

All players knew each other.

For example, Dove's and Jiu Er's parents have been close friends for a long time. This friendship could be traced back to the classmate relationship between Dove's father and Jiu Er's grandfather.

On the other hand, Dove knew Jiu Er's parents because they were both in a band when they were young.

Jiu Er's father was a vocalist, her mother was a guitarist, and Dove was the drummer.

Rock and roll were quite popular in their days. Dove still retained her unique and instinctive talent on the drums.

Of course, Dove didn't know that Jiu Er's father was a noble son who could only go back to inherit the family wealth if he couldn't play music; Jiu Er's father didn't know either that Dove only learned archery for half a year, and she could trounce a monster.

Besides, Jiu Er's father and Delicious Wind Goose were alumni of the same university.

Dove had a deep impression of Delicious Wind Goose because the Goose was her young self.

He could learn anything and master it quickly, allowing him to flourish in any field he was interested in.

However, there was only one difference.

Dove was better than Delicious Wind Goose in all aspects.

She knew very well long ago that she could not maintain her grades while studying and mastering many skills.

Therefore, she did not take the college entrance examination directly but participated in the computer training class that was emerging at that time. After quickly mastering this skill, she started taking jobs in cybersecurity.

At the same time, she started learning drums and met Jiu Er's father.

After she mastered the drum, she learned combat skills and wrestling. Then, the small band disbanded after Jiu Er's mother took the postgraduate entrance examination. Dove used the money she saved to go abroad to learn Jiu-Jitsu. In the process, she saw the program "The Secret Techniques of Wilderness Survival" which would be on air soon, and thus became interested in the survival of the wilderness.

So she went to teach young people archery and wrestling, saving money while learning swimming, rock climbing, and survival skills in the wild.

Delicious Wind Goose met her at this time.

At this time, Jiu Er was just born.

Her parents gave birth to her too early.

Her grandfather was in poor health, so his father gradually took over the company's affairs. Her mother was a strong and independent woman until she studied for two doctorates simultaneously. But as a result, the two weren't at home almost all year round.

In Jiu Er's childhood, the people accompanied were the deceased grandmother and Wen Xue (Citalopram).

As Jiu Er's cousin, Wen Xue watched Jiu Er growing up. Her words worked better than Jiu Er's biological mother's.

At the same time, Wen Xue developed Jiu Er into an Otaku who played games and streamed.

Wen Xue's original goal was simple. She wanted to help the active Jiu Er develop some hobbies to make it easier for Jiu Er to make friends.

However, the outcome seemed a little overboard.

Jiu Er had just grown to adulthood, but she had already become a game addict.

In contrast to this, she still had not many friends in reality.

This guilt turned Wen Xue into the most strict supervisor. She always checked on Jiu Er's academic performance and tutored her when she fell behind.

Even when the popularity of Jiu Er's live stream declined, Wen Xue would play a role in planning the next step.

In comparison, Lin Yiyi had brought in a younger brother, and Xiang Tiange brought an old friend into the game.

Jiu Er was much more straightforward.

She grabbed her "mom" into the game.

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In Dove's view, Citalopram was still quite reliable up to this point.

Dove could be regarded as Jiu Er's elder. Naturally, it would be the same for Citalopram.

Citalopram's father was Jiu Er's father's brother.

Dove had seen him several times back then. He was an elegant and calm man. However, he somehow had a daughter who went with the label of “erotic” on the Internet every day.

Dove was speechless with her encounter with Citalopram giving weird speeches.

Mainly, she didn't know whether it was because she was outdated or whether Citalopram had a problem.

But at least in the case of Jiu Er, Citalopram was still reliable.

At this moment, Dove suddenly noticed that Citalopram had sent a private message to herself. A mail icon was flashing in the upper right corner of her vision.

When it came to the “private message” function, Dove had a lot of complaints about it already.

In this epoch-making, high-tech “game” that could traverse the world, the UI design seemed amateur.

Dove calmly tapped on the mail.

Citalopram: “Any more pictures? Take a few more. Annan isn't wary of you while you're a cat now. Can you get a few pictures of him changing clothes?”

Dove was stupefied.

Dove: “???”

Dove: “What's up?”

Citalopram: “Don't get me wrong! I'm using it to appease Jiu Er. Also, if Jiu Er wants you to send it to her, don't send it.”

“Even if you say so...” Dove was still hesitant.

In the end, Dove agreed to Citalopram's request.

“Meow...” So Dove jumped off the sofa, rubbed against Annan's bed, and let out a light meow.

She stood up, paws on the edge of Annan's bed, and stretched.

“What's wrong?” Annan asked softly, “Do you want me to carry you up? Wait a minute, can you help me get my earrings? Wait, get me the necklace instead.”

He hesitated for a moment on whether to use earrings or necklace as the curse vessel of Silver Rank.

After Annan advanced to silver, he finally knew why those Silver Rank Wizards unleashed their curse vessel in “Nightmare: White Tower” during the battle.

No matter if it was “Frost Tower” or “Frost Lingual”, Annan could only use it after unleashing the curse.

Besides that, Annan had not yet sealed his curse into the vessel.

He could feel his thinking becoming clearer and the curse in his body being abnormally reactive. It appeared as if he could utilize any spell and materialize any transcended abilities as he will. Moreover, the consumption of energy seemed significantly reduced as well.

At the same time, his body was still continuously consuming the curse, replenishing his physical strength and energy.

Annan had just woken up from a nightmare and coughed up a lot of impurities in his soul. Thus, he was already mentally exhausted. However, he had almost recovered fully at this moment.

Undoubtedly, Annan was in the Transcended exclusive "battle readied state".

In the gamer's eye, it was a superb buff that continuously consumed the "power of the curse" to enhance all of his ability checks, increase his speed, and continuously restore vitality and physical strength.

The most precious thing about it was the quick recovery. Only the Transcended in the [Hunter] profession and the Transcended of other professions, that were unable to consume and use the native power of "curse directly", could not achieve that.

It was only useful for those professions in improving the ritual success rate. And, it was pretty effective in the rituals to harm a target or peep into the future.

Other than that, those professions wouldn't enjoy many benefits.

The resistance to transcended abilities came from the [Oath Power] and the [Soul Rank]. It had nothing to do with the power of the curse.

Only the hunter-type Transcended with many curses could activate more than ten curses in a short period, quickly depleting the curse's power.

For the Transcended of other professions, it would take more than two hours of an intense fight to deplete the curse power by activating their respective curse.

Before that, other combat resources would have long been exhausted.

Of course, if the curse's power were exhausted, it would bring adverse effects.

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Firstly, all the positive abilities brought by the curse would be invalidated, and then the transcended abilities above Silver Rank would be temporarily unavailable. However, the normal swordsmanship, archery, divine art, and spells below Silver Rank and special swordsmanship were unaffected.

Moreover, when Annan looked down at his hand, he could vaguely see a faint rainbow-colored halo penetrating his skin.

That was the color of Annan's soul.

It had already revealed itself through his skin and was exposed. His palm was seemingly illuminated with a flashlight. Transcended of the same rank could vaguely see this brilliance.

In other words, it was the color brought by the curse [Angel's Left Eye].

In Silver Rank, Transcended couldn't "dye" his soul directly.

That was to say, the Transcended's souls were transparent at this stage. Only when their Silver Rank curse was activated would their soul light up.

Of course, it was pretty recognizable.

"So, the Transcended above Silver Rank see through other's identity quickly during the battle state." Annan thought.

This was a very crucial piece of information.

This meant that he couldn't go all out if he wanted to retain "anonymity" in the combat state. Otherwise, he would easily reveal his identity.

Thus, Gerald didn't activate his curse immediately at that time.

It was possible to pinpoint the Silver Rank Transcended curse based on the shape, color, and where it was attached. When the soul's color was hidden, the Transcended below Bronze Rank might not be able to see it. However, there was still a chance of the curse location being exposed.

Annan was lucky.

His curse was in the eyeball of his left eye.

If he wore a blindfold and activated the curse as soon as possible before the fight, it would be difficult for others to tell where his curse was.

So Annan gave up the "ring" that was far away from the eyes.

Considering that he still had to unleash the curse [Butcher's Knife] from time to time, he had also prepared a couple of possible vessels like earrings and a monocle. However, he chose the necklace in the end because the other accessories were quite far from his right hand.

It was a silver necklace with a hollow space in the middle, seemingly reserving a place for gemstone engraving.

Through the baptism of ritual, gems would gain extraordinary buffs.

The same goes for other accessories like studs, earrings, rings, and belts. For financial reasons, he did not install gems into them yet.

It would be better to buy and inlay the gems after he finalized his pick.

After all, the size and number of gemstones used in earrings and belts would be different.

After taking the necklace Dove brought over, Annan picked up the cat and placed it on his lap.

Then, he put the necklace on, took off the ring, and put the bronze ring on the necklace.

The ring trembled slightly, and then a tiny crack suddenly appeared.

Black mud poured out of the ring and slowly infiltrated the necklace.

The rainbow-colored brilliance in Annan's eyes also flowed out of his eyes. They were like tears and even like slugs; they smeared across Annan's cheeks without leaving any traces and entered the necklace.

After the black mud and iridescent and transparent goo submerged into the necklace, it began to shrink, and its weight began to decrease. It didn't stop until Annan felt it was just right.

Although Annan lost his eyesight, his eye socket didn't seem empty.

Annan probably felt his left eye through his eyelid.

He found the entity laid within to be exceptionally hard.

So he boldly opened his eyelids and touched it again but only felt the strange textile sensation of gems.

Annan's vision wasn't affected by the touch, nor did he feel any pain.

Although his Perception attribute had enabled him to attack and dodge with his eyes closed within a few dozen meters, the sudden loss of vision from his left eye still threw him a little out of balance.

"I have to train myself a little bit before going to the capital..." Annan muttered.

The training was the same just like the last time he trained himself to sense his surroundings by utilizing his Perception attribute.

Since my capability is limited, it should be two hours of training.

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"Luckily, we still have Citalopram around." Delicious Wind Goose took a deep breath.

Now that he was locked in the prison, only Jiu Er could execute the plan Annan laid out previously.

The remaining two players on the team (Van Helsing & Yokai Sensei) were Silver Sire's priests. Just yesterday, they had successfully entered the church.

According to them, the typical procedure for the priest of another diocese to enter the Royal Capital would require at least five years of excellent performance before submitting the application.

However, when Yokai Sensei and Van Helsing came to report in, there wasn't any obstacle to changing their diocese to the Noah Capital.

They were granted 20 silver coins per month even during their probationary period!

The other players were jealous about it.

However, Yokai Sensei and Van Helsing immediately explained it to the players.

The [Priest] profession wasn't that great, but the Silver Sire treated the players preferentially. The reason seemed to be pointing at Annan.

Silver Sire had issued the Noah Capital's cardinals in helping out "the people from the Freezing Water Port and Roseburg".

This was undoubtedly in Annan's favor.

The Silver Sire even gave Annan the silver robe already, and thus He might as well help Annan to get the players into the royal capital. At the same time, the silver robe represented a certain level of authority which would prove helpful for Annan.

Silver Sire told Annan it was a piece of cake, but it had saved Annan a lot of trouble.

Judging from this, the Silver Sire was sincere in befriending Annan. Otherwise, He wouldn't need to trouble Himself so much at all, given his status as an upright deity.

However, although Yokai Sensei and Van Helsing had obtained legitimate identities and official jobs, it also meant that they couldn't traverse the city at will.

Silver Sire Church had been very busy lately.

After Yokai Sensei and Van Helsing swore an oath to the statue of Silver Sire, they learned this piece of important information.

Silver Sire suddenly issued an oracle to arrest all Rotten Man believers in the Noah Kingdom more than a month ago, which amounted to 17,648 people.

Their status could go low as gardeners, grooms, and grave keepers. At the same time, it also encompassed people of high status such as queens, princes, counts, generals, and royal guards.

After receiving the name list, even the pope was shocked, not to mention bishops.

The pope didn't even know that the Rotten Man's Church had infiltrated the Noah Kingdom to such an extent.

Including the priests belonging to the Silver Sire in the entire Noah Kingdom, it was still far fewer than 20,000 people.

Their number couldn't even make up half of the population.

Was the Noah Kingdom following the Silver Sire or the Rotten Man?

The Silver Sire Church had strict recruitment standards, and the Rotten Man did not conduct any assessments at all. The Rotten Man would recruit anyone having faith in Him, thus allowing the widespread of His followers.

This matter involved too many people.

Arresting the queen and the general would inflict severe chaos. If the news of the arrest leaked, the rest might flee in a swarm.

With such a huge list, it was already challenging to lock onto their specific locations.

Therefore, the Silver Sire Church had planned the arrest process.

First of all, they would work on those with the highest status on the arrest list through fundraising, open classes, and public welfare activities. Next, their target would be the "non-transcended" who had higher status and stayed in Noah's capital.

Immediately afterward, the Silver Sire Church would gradually increase its control over the subway.

As for the Transcended believers in the capital, they would put them on hold for now. As long as the subway entrance was blocked, they would not be able to escape. Driving them out of the capital could also reduce the destruction of the environment during battle.

At present, those “people with higher status” were “invited” to the Silver Sire Church by various means.

Although the Silver Sire Church didn't know why the Rotten Man didn't warn his believers, the Silver Sire priests would still do their best to keep their operations a secret.

Their ultimate goal was to isolate the highest and most dangerous Rotten Man believers.

Specifically, they had five targets in this category:

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1. Prince Albert's wife, the mother of Princess Kafni.
2. Prince Philip
3. The eldest son of the crow family.
4. General Ryan
5. Supreme Judge Philip Shelley.

This operation even involved the direct descendants of the royal family, intelligence agencies, the Imperial Army, and the legal system. The targets would definitely realize if the Silver Sire Church followed the typical procedure.

Silver Sire Church did not investigate the people around them to avoid alerting them.

For example, the Silver Sire Church was only certain that the King, Prince Albert, and Philip Shelley's younger brother, Chief of Police, Stilwell Shelley, were not the Rotten Man's believers. However, they weren't sure if these people would leak their operation.

When the time was right, the Silver Sire Church would arrest its targets by force.

It would be a sudden raid that would capture all five of them.

It must be a grand plot.

Players speculated that this plot would be directly connected to the main storyline of Annan's return to the capital. So Yokai Sensei's group worked on the prelude mission in dedication. Thus, they didn't have time or dare to contact Jiu Er.

In the end, the party was only left with the neurotic eighteen-year-old girl stranded alone in the capital of a foreign country.

Besides getting Jiu Er to take care of herself, she also had to inquire about the intelligence of local organizations and infiltrate them. It might be a little difficult for her.

Delicious Wind Goose was also very helpless with the circumstances.

They wouldn't have anticipated that the party was only left with one person after the four of them entered the capital.

"I hope Citalopram can remotely micro-manage Jiu Er." It was best to tell Jiu Er what she should do first, what to do next, how to speak when she met people, and how to answer when others ask questions.

It was best to direct her as a first-person role-playing game (RPG).

After all, Delicious Wind Goose had also launched another mission to get a more detailed intelligence.

Delicious Wind Goose fooled Klaus Cass for a while before getting the "designated leakable information" that Dove sent him.

Delicious Wind Goose was busy with another matter before the questioning came again.

He wanted to learn as much information as possible.

"Do you get that?" A low, hoarse voice sounded in front of Delicious Wind Goose.

A petite old man squatted in front of Delicious Wind Goose. He was being held in the cell opposite Delicious Wind Goose.

He was struggling to open his eyes as he hunched, seemingly going to pass out anytime soon.

Delicious Wind Goose only had his coat, equipment, and curse vessel taken away.

On the other hand, the old man was wearing only a pair of shorts. Besides that, he only had half a tattered bowl in his prison cell.

At this moment, the old man shattered the tattered bowl.

He took a piece of soil and drew many patterns on the ground.

Delicious Wind Goose squatted in front of the cell, trying his best to stare at the ground of the cell opposite in the thin sunlight.

"...I remember it." He observed it in silence for about thirty seconds before replying respectfully.

The old man didn't say much.

He just continued to doodle on the ground, and the squeaking sound of rock scratching against the floor came, "Then, remember this literal. 11 is the number that belongs to fire and creation, such as the eleven-pointed star. In the magic circle, the easiest way to distinguish the element of fire and the element of creation is to use the material to draw the magic circle.

"If you use a thermal material, such as cinnabar, copper, or ruby powder, it can be directly regarded as the magic circle of the fire domain. Likewise, neutral materials such as crystal and silver, plus the symbols of the sun, moon, and stars, can be used as a magic circle for the domain of creation..."

These were all taboo knowledge involving the ritualist.

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“Bernardino Telesio?” Salvatore, in pajamas, frowned slightly, holding the hot water cup in both hands, “Why is he here?”

Clarence, sitting on the side, shrugged. “He wants me to follow his path.”

“Telesio Spiritual Monk? Heh... forget about it.” Salvatore yawned and sneered casually, “I'm not going to lose most of my ability to read minds just to become a ghostly person.

“Isn't that the legendary traditional and conservative school? No way.”

“It's still a tradition after all.” Clarence pushed his glasses and chuckled, “The 'Necromancer' is indeed our predecessor and ancestor. It seems like we're going retro.”

“Nah, it's called going backward in time.” Salvatore said unceremoniously, “Senior Clarence, don't believe his nonsense.

“There must be a reason why the necromancers are eradicated. Today, the eight schools of wizards had undergone the challenge of the times and the test of the blood in the Unification War before they finally took shape. The Soul Snatch School has embarked on the path of manipulating the mind instead of manipulating the soul. There must be a reason for it. Most probably, its practicality is the defining factor.”

“Oh ya...” Salvatore took a sip of the hot honey drink and sighed in a low voice, “You must have sentiments attached to it.

“It's like me being stubborn to choose [Alchemist] profession despite knowing that fact that [Great Wizard] is the most practical advancement, given it being the most popular choice.”

Salvatore had completed the advancement exam with excellent grades.

After that, he made a selection of his curse type. Then, the tower master handed him the “dream key” to enter the designated nightmare, and told him about the available choices, what would happen, and the potential curse he would acquire.

This was also the benefit of being a wizard bound to a wizard tower.

The database of wizard towers would be inherited from generation to generation so that the wizards had a considerable understanding of the nightmares and curses.

Generally speaking, besides the [Hunter] profession, the rest of the Transcended picked their choices in two approaches.

The first approach would be choosing the curse with as little adverse effect as possible, like Annan.

Secondly, the wizards would make their selection based on the special mechanism involving the curses.

In the process of collecting the data, the wizards had subconsciously discovered the mechanism revolving around the curses.

Covenant and clergy were the most advanced curses. Sure enough, they were the higher priority of selection than all other curses.

Below them was the advancement curse obtained during the advancement from the Silver Rank to Gold Rank. The ranking was then followed by the curses of Silver Rank advancement and then Bronze Rank advancement — the curses granted to those who just embarked on their path of transcendence. Lastly, the curse ranking at the rock bottom was the temporary curse, which was the curse that was stripped away from the others.

The distinction of the curse ranking was also one of the main reasons the Transcended was divided into Gold Rank, Silver Rank, and Bronze Rank.

When a higher-priority curse was conflicted with a low-priority curse, only the high-priority curse would be effective, which was the “law of curse ranking”.

For example, when the curse of Bronze Rank was “no pain” and the curse of Silver Rank was “I will have a headache after dark”, then the curse of Silver Rank would be applied instead. Conversely, if the curse of “pain relief” were in Silver Rank, the host wouldn't have a headache after dark.

The second law was that when a high-priority curse and a low-priority curse act on one effect at the same time, the most severe negative effect would be selected, while the positive impact would amplify on one another.

For example, having two curses of fire resistance -30% and fire resistance -50% would not contribute to a total deduction of 80% in fire resistance. Instead, it would be -50% on fire resistance. On the other hand, the positive effect of Strength +5 and doubling the Strength would take effect simultaneously and stack in the order of the curse ranking.

In other words, if the curses were matched correctly, it was possible to have one “weakness” only.

This path revolved around choosing a similar high-level curse to overlap the low-level curse, preventing the host from having multiple weaknesses and being able to concentrate on protecting their only disadvantage. Some hunters also adopted this principle when collecting curses.

In addition to these two approaches, the rest made their selection blindly.

In the end, the stray Transcended who chose their curses blindly would pay their due price sooner or later.

“Speaking of which, do you want to be my secret keeper, senior?”

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“I don't mind.” Clarence asked casually, “But why don't you go to Teacher Benjamin? He seems to be a pope. That's much safer.

“Also, the little brother you found outside the wizard tower.”

“It's alright. I chose an overlapping curse, and it doesn't matter if I simply tell it to others.” Salvatore embarked on the second approach too.

Hearing him say that, the red-robed wizard Clarence was surprised, “So, it's still possible to nullify that curse?”

“Yes, through a reverse approach. Let me explain to you.” He said with pride and helplessness, “My new curse is that 'I can't sleep more than six hours a day'. My apparent age will shrink by one year for every hour of additional sleep, but my lifespan will not increase.”

“If I'm not wrong, you can't sleep more than 6 hours originally, don't you?” Clarence was silent for a long time and asked in doubt, “This curse is still useful when you are old, right? At least it will keep your body from getting too old.”

“The premise is that I can really live to grow old.” Salvatore sighed gloomily, “I always have the hunch that I'm going to die suddenly.”

“Don't talk nonsense. You're an alchemist. Sudden death doesn't exist for you,” Clarence waved his hand to brush it off, “If you think you're going to die suddenly, you should equip yourself with a 'reagent to prevent sudden death'. I remember alchemists can do that.”

“That's true.” Salvatore nodded.

The [Alchemist] profession would significantly weaken the host's combat prowess. But for Salvatore, this wasn't much of a problem because he was inherently poor in combat already.

Having combat power of 2 reduced by 40% would only make it 1. That was all.

This profession would weaken the combat effectiveness because it made it impossible for him to “perform alchemy without material”.

The [Alchemist] was the ancient version of the profession, [Alteration Wizard], which dramatically increased the efficiency of converting the matter. For example, the original alteration process involved converting the wood into iron, then electricity, and later fire, only to convert fire into the red crystals for the transmutation into diamonds. Instead, he could convert wood into diamonds immediately.

In the past, he could have used a cane-sized piece of wood to alter it into a diamond wall five or six meters high. However, he could only turn it into a diamond the size of a walking stick.

The advantage was that now Salvatore could perform “alteration in a reverse manner”.

That would be turning diamonds back into wood or turning gold into brass.

This ability was useless for combat.

However, it allowed Salvatore to terminate any alchemy reaction at will, letting the reactants change back directly or completing the catalysis in an instant rather than a lengthy period.

If Salvatore managed to harness this trick well, he had succeeded in time reversal in a way.

This was why modern alteration wizards rarely invented new alteration techniques but focused on the optimizations of ancient alteration arts.

Since the modern alteration wizards considered the issue of “efficiency”, they abandoned the production of such small workshops but focused on production lines instead.

Salvatore didn't want that.

Perhaps at first, he also wanted to learn the alteration spell to make money.

However, after getting to know Annan, he understood his heart more and more.

It might be a simple passion for the alteration magic.

Salvatore believed that his friends would help him with fighting and his safety.

His primary goal at this moment was to study "Sage's Stone of the Hermetic School".

Then, he wanted to complete the recipe without the help of Miss Vatore's (the shadow) power.

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Annan didn't immediately return to Roseburg to look for Bishop Daryl.

After all, when Annan finished advancement, Mr. Eugene Geraint (Don Juan's second brother) had not yet set off to return to Noah's Royal Capital.

Through Lin Yiyi's vision, Annan could see Eugene's attitude towards "Don Juan," who was temporarily absent from the fief.

Eugene was forthright with nothing to hide at all. Thus, Annan easily noticed that he had no intention of figuring out where the real "Don Juan Geraint" was.

Still, the players decided to treat him politely. He stayed in Roseburg without being nervous at all and didn't put up any defense against the people under Annan, even when Annan did not show up.

Eugene did not urge Lin Yiyi or ask where Annan went. At the same time, he did not return to Noah's Capital. Instead, he stayed in Roseburg for three days, left a letter, and returned leisurely.

Then, Annan immediately realized what Eugene was here for.

Eugene didn't come to see his brother "Don Juan Geraint".

He obviously knew where the real Don Juan was.

Fortunately, Annan was not in Roseburg at this time.

Otherwise, it would add embarrassment to both parties.

Eugene came here in person probably to pass on some wrong information to mislead someone in the capital.

Since he had stayed in Roseburg for three days, it showed his standing was friendly with Roseburg's forces. If he returned and proclaimed he had met Annan, the others might believe that Don Juan did arrive in the North Sea Territory safely.

Annan also noticed a clue based on Eugene's behavior.

Benjamin might have settled down with Don Juan's soul already.

Old Crow was the person who handled this matter directly. So, he should know the truth.

If Ferdinand hadn't been imprisoned, the Old Crow would continue using him as a tool.

The crow family only obeyed the King, no matter who the King was. They only served the one on the throne.

So before His Majesty issued a command, the Old Crow would never take action against Prince Philip. Instead, the Old Crow would only utilize strategies to disrupt Philip's plans.

In retrospect, many things had happened that the Old Crow would not easily forgive. Firstly, Ferdinand Geraint believed in the Rotten Man and murdered his brother. Most importantly, Don Juan was the Old Crow's favorite son.

Old Crow had sent Don Juan over to the border for safety.

Suppose something terrible happened to the Crow Family. In that case, Don Juan could at least escape into the Austere-Winter Dukedom and survive there with his mother's noble blood of the Austere-Winter Dukedom.

However, Ferdinand's betrayal had almost put all his efforts in vain. Given his status as the Rotten Man's believer, he might have plans to harm Old Crow himself and the other siblings of the family.

It wouldn't be surprising if the Old Crow killed him outright. He couldn't harm Philip directly, but he could do something against the executor who desired his son's harm.

However, Annan had never heard information such as "Ferdinand died unexpectedly".

Apparently, Eugene knew the truth.

Then again, Klaus Cass was still alive and well.

Annan had gradually deduced the story and even vaguely outlined the political situation in Noah's capital.

It was classical deceit wrapped in three layers.

The first layer covering the matter was the "news that could be made public" in which this matter was euphemized before being known to most people.

The narration went with, "Klaus sent Don Juan Geraint to Freezing Water Port safely. After the unfortunate death of Roseburg's viscount, the governing power was officially handed over to the Great Wizard Benjamin, who remained at Freezing Water Port to take care of Don Juan".

On the second layer, the understanding of the matter would be "Klaus had assassinated Don Juan and the Great Wizard Benjamin. At this moment, there was an unidentified black-haired and blue-eyed person impersonating Dong Juan at Freezing Water Port".

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On the third layer of deceit that warped up the story, the narration was "Don Juan and Benjamin had inexplicably survived. Benjamin also completed the advancement ritual and became the new deity's pope".

Of course, all three layers of narration were lies.

Very few people could unveil the manner to the third layer. For example, Prince Philip. He was probably the person closest to the truth, but he had no proof.

Klaus himself was on the second narration, and he thought Old Crow had only figured out the matter at the first layer of lies.

However, the Old Crow had uncovered the matter clearly.

He was the only one who knew everything aside from Benjamin.

Eugene should have access to the third piece of narration. Ironically, the eldest son of the Crow's family, Ferdinand Geraint, was still the only person fooled in the first layer of deceit.

This way, Annan had figured out what the Old Crow's goal was.

He would send Eugene to "take a look". In Ferdinand's view, it represented his father's suspicion that "Don Juan was still alive."

But after Eugene returned to the capital, he said that he saw Don Juan.

Then, Ferdinand would think that Don Juan was not dead.

He would then pass this information to his master, Philip (the Third Prince).

In this way, the three pieces of information Philip got from his three sources – Klaus, Ferdinand, and the connection of the Roseburg's viscount were utterly contradictory.

Philip would have thought that Klaus' mission had failed. At present, he was more willing to trust another person who provided him with information than Klaus.

However, Philip didn't punish Klaus either, which meant he wasn't sure if the second layer of deceit was the truth, even though it was the closest narration to the fact.

With this deduction, Annan believed Philip was a doubtful person. He wasn't an authoritarian leader and acted cautiously.

Ferdinand, who was the first to defect to him, gave him a completely different third answer.

After that, Delicious Wind Goose would give Klaus pieces of evidence again. (TN: the dungeon cell part)

All three pieces of intelligence were credible, but their content was contradictory.

Philip would be put in chaos.

He wouldn't dare to make a move until he found out the truth.

In other words, the Old Crow's conspiracy was to buy time.

If Annan guessed correctly, the Silver Sire Church had already communicated with the Old Crow.

If the Old Crow agreed to the plan proposed by the Silver Sire Church, there could only be one answer.

"Has the King or Princess Royal been persuaded?" Holding up the envelope Eugene had left for him, Annan murmured.

With the support of the upper echelons, all this should be calmed down soon.

But why am I a little uneasy?

What did I miss?

Annan thought and opened the envelope.

He skimmed through the letter roughly and found that his speculation was accurate. In addition to that, Eugene also offered another piece of information.

"...Hermetic School?" Annan muttered.

He narrowed his eyes slightly.

He recalled what he had neglected.

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"The Hermetic School?" Hearing Annan's question, Bishop Daryl held his bald head in distress, "Annan, you may not know, I left the capital quite early. So I have never heard of what you just said.

"Or rather... the 'Hermetic School' I know is not necessarily the one you asked about. Maybe it's just the same name."

"And what about Nicholas Flamel?" Annan pressed on with his questions.

Hearing the name, Daryl frowned slightly.

His expression gradually became serious. He propped up his belly, sat up from the sofa in struggle, and took away the leisurely demeanor of a chubby otaku. "Where did you hear the name?"

"It's the Hermetic School. Their leader is a man who calls himself 'Nicholas Flamel'."

Daryl repeated, "You have said it yourself. It's a self-proclaimed name."

"That's true. But that Nicholas has long curly white hair, dark green eyes, and is a Gold Rank Wizard from the Alteration School." Annan said slowly.

As Annan met Daryl's gaze, he noticed that Daryl's face quickly turned ugly after hearing his words.

"Tsk..." Daryl frowned suddenly.

He rubbed his bald head, which was so smooth and reflective, with a sigh.

The Fatty Bishop stood up from the sofa, touched his stomach, and paced around the room.

He thought for a long time, frowned tightly, and said to Annan in a low voice, "If it's really him, you better be prepared."

"I have to go," Annan shrugged and poured himself a cup of black tea, "Silver Sire personally ordered me to go. Hmm, your tea is great."

“That's why I just told you to be prepared, but I didn't tell you not to go.” Daryl glanced at the tea and said casually, “I still have two cans of tea leaves over there. Just grab it when you leave. I rarely drink it myself. No, wait, the point is Nicholas – how much do you know about him?”

“Senior Salvatore and I suspect that he may be the Jade Tower Master of Denizoya Kingdom more than a hundred years ago.”

Annan rubbed his brows and said with some distress, “I speculate that he may have developed the Hermetic School Sage's Stone. Then he used Sage's Stone to counteract soul power consumption, so he got immortality.”

“Impossible.” Daryl replied without hesitation, “No way.”

“Why?”

“He is indeed the founder of ancient Sage's Stone technology, and he is indeed able to craft the Sage's Stone by himself. But that is not the final version of Sage's Stone. Instead, it is a lite version.”

The fat bishop shook his head, “Do you know about Elixir? They're the same kind of Alteration product. The full version of Elixir requires a rare golden mistletoe fruit, and the cost is too high. That's why Alteration Wizards work on keeping the costs down and creating a budget version of Elixir.”

“The Sage's Stone he 'improvised' is the same.”

That is to say, the beggar's version of Sage's Stone? Annan immediately understood.

No wonder Salvatore, a Bronze Rank Alteration Wizard, could also make a usable semi-finished product.

It turns out that Nicholas has lowered the production cost and difficulty in making it.

Annan couldn't help but ask, “Thus, he called the Sage's Stone he improvised as “the Hermetic School Sage's Stone”?”

Daryl nodded, “Yes. It's because he has always called himself 'the Second Hermes'. He hasn't given any Sage's Stone to anyone, so no one knows exactly in what way his Sage's Stone is flawed. But what he made is definitely not the real Sage's Stone.”

“Why are you so sure?”

“It's because even the deities cannot artificially create the Sage's Stone.” Daryl answered with confidence in an unquestioning tone.

“...even the Silver Sire?” Annan asked.

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“Not even the Mysterious Lady. It's not a question of difficulty, and it's simply impossible.”

“Why?” Hearing Daryl's tone being so certain, Annan was a little confused.

Daryl hesitated for a moment, then stopped. “I can tell you, but you can't tell anyone else.”

“Is it related to the Silver Sire?”

"It's related to all upright deities. It might even be about the world." Daryl replied solemnly, "Do you still want to hear it?"

Annan hesitated for a moment. He was well aware that some knowledge was better not known for his safety, but he still followed through with his desire for knowledge, "Yes."

After all, Senior Salvatore was still researching Sage's Stone. He wanted to help his senior gather any helpful information he could.

Sure enough, even the wizard tower would struggle to gather secrets related to the upright deities.

But then again... What's the status for Grandpa Daryl?

"You have a special status, so I won't let you swear to keep it secret. Although this secret is important, it is actually very brief."

Daryl took a deep breath and said slowly, "Sage's Stone is not a product of this world."

"What?"

"It isn't from the very beginning. Sage's Stone can replace any perfected element. Do you think such a thing may exist by nature? The reason Sage's Stone can't be replicated is simple. Its main raw material fundamentally doesn't exist in this world."

Daryl replied solemnly, "Do you know Father Flint, Your Highness Annan?"

"The Deity of Fire and Creation?"

"That's right. Father Flint's name came when he ignited the flint before becoming a deity. But do you think that merit alone is enough to become an upright deity?"

Just as Daryl said this, Annan vaguely noticed something. "You mean..."

"You have guessed it right. What Father Flint ignited was not the world's first flint, but the world's first 'Sage's Stone'."

Daryl said slowly, "From then on, this world has 'elemental power'."

"Can you understand? That is to say, the purpose of trying to copy the Sage's Stone is not as simple as 'getting immortality' or 'resurrection'. What he wants is to create a world unique for himself."

"In fact, Nicholas didn't die because of 'overuse of the elemental power' but was murdered. This matter was more or less known to the world's bigwigs at the time. But it was a righteous murder because Nicholas did a taboo thing that is absolutely not allowed."

"Is he trying to create a new human?" Annan blurted out.

He felt that he was becoming more and more familiar with the plot.

Daryl looked at him in surprise, staring for a long time before slowly nodding.

“Yes. Strictly speaking, it is an 'artificial and independent entity without relying on any parental and maternal samples. To be more precise, it is not a copy of anyone nor a child of anyone. Nicholas just made a human out of thin air.”

So, it happens without using any human genetic samples at all? Annan was stunned for a moment.

How did he do that?

“So he ended up failing? Creating a monster?”

“No, he succeeded.” Daryl paused and replied in a deep voice.

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“...What?” Annan was shocked.

The answer surprised him.

He was deeply lost in confusion.

How the hell did Nicholas do it? A human who doesn't need a parent.

“Before answering this question,” whispered Bishop Daryl, pulling a book from the shelf, “Have you heard of the [Gift of the Cup] ritual?”

“Sounds like the Cup-holding Lady's ritual.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Daryl as he sat back on the sofa.

Maybe it was because he was old, or perhaps because he had gained weight again; walking a couple of steps like this made him a little tired.

After the fat and bald bishop sat down, he put the thick book on the table and took a long breath. He gulped down the slightly cold black tea in his cup.

Later, he turned the page and explained in a low voice, “The Cup-holding Lady is an upright deity. She proclaims her domain, desire, is the cornerstone of humanity. But in many places, the public openly perceives the belief in the Cup-holding Lady to be frivolous and even degrading.

“However, many noble families still openly display their faith in the Cup-holding Lady. But this does not necessarily mean that they indulge in sensuality. Instead, they do so to practice the [Gift of the Cup] ritual.

“To perform this ritual, one must openly believe in the Cup-holding Lady for at least nine years and hold a formal, public worship ritual every September. Then, they have to prepare a pure gold cup. Finally, the ritual's host has to fill the cup with one portion of uncorrupted blood for each month within the nine months.

“Then, the ritual practitioner will add a tube of “liquid” with his genetic information and then close the lid. After each month, the liquid level in the cup will drop by one-ninth, gradually revealing the embryo in the cup; after nine months, a newborn baby will appear in the cup.

“They're the so-called 'Child in the Cup'.” Daryl replied.

Clones?

This should be an emergency measure when the bloodline cannot be continued, something like infertility?

Annan was stunned for a moment, then asked, "Then, is the 'Child in the Cup' the same as the ritual practitioner?"

"Roughly so. On this basis, their bloodline will be optimized, their appearance will become more beautiful, and their intelligence and physical strength will be more outstanding. Although they are not called the Cup-holding Lady's children, they will also receive a part of Her blessing traits.

"Therefore, when some families have their bloodline completely cut off for some reason." Having said that, Daryl took a deep look at Annan and then slowly replied, "They will hold the 'Gift of the Cup' ritual.

"The Cup-holding Lady doesn't ask them to keep their faith in Her. So after the baby is born, they can claim to renounce their faith in the Cup-holding Lady. However, as long as this ritual is used, the ritual host will show the Cup-holding Lady's Traces — that is, the eyes turn red.

"The family with red eyes will still get a child if they hold the 'Gift of the Cup', but the bloodline will not continue to be optimized. It will only get a child with a similar talent to the ritual caster.

"Supposed, some merchant families can afford to buy gold cups or aristocratic families have a rare-to-come-by 'genius' being born in the family. They will run this ritual in the hope of continuing the glory of their families. However, this ritual is still a 'last resort' used to leave a seed when the bloodline is about to perish in most cases.

"This is a typical 'artificial human that needs a sample of a father or mother'. Although the ritual borrows the power of an upright deity, the Cup-holding Lady doesn't operate it, nor does She possess this technique as Her divine art.

"Ritual belongs to the power of man, not deity. This kind of artificial man still belongs to the life of unnatural birth in essence."

When Bishop Daryl said this, he paused, "I think you've guessed it."

"For example, the royal family of the Noah Kingdom?" Annan asked softly.

Noah's royal family was the only red-eyed family Annan could think of.

Bishop Daryl nodded slowly.

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I see. This statement answered one of Annan's doubts.

That was why Philip dared to publicly proclaim his faith in the Cup-holding Lady as a royal heir in a country that widely believed in Silver Sire. His action wouldn't even be considered bad conduct by others.

Instead, it had become a tradition.

Noah's royal family had their bloodline endangered once. Now it was a bloodline continuation effort.

When exactly did the bloodline stop?

Annan pondered deeply and realized that he didn't seem to have heard of His Majesty's brother or sister.

Perhaps the natural bloodline was cut off in Henry VIII's father's generation.

Suddenly, an idea popped into Annan's mind.

Could it be that Nicholas appeared in the Noah Kingdom and nowhere else because Henry VIII was an artificial human?

"What about Nicholas?" After understanding that there are artificial humans in this world, Annan immediately noticed the problem, "Is his technology for creating humans better than the ones made by the Cup-holding Lady?"

Hearing what Annan said, Daryl sighed. "You're really smart, Your Highness Annan. And you're very sharp.

"You may have been right previously. What Nicholas created is indeed a monster.

"But it's not because they're ugly, and it's not because they're not sentient. It's quite the contrary.

"The human Nicholas made is handsome and beautiful even by the strictest aesthetic standards. You could call them synth's – easy to craft in a flask with Hermetic Sage's Stone and some cheap material.

"They are strong, healthy, smart, and free from disease. They are in solidarity with each other. Nicholas also gives consideration to common sense and the ease of living, so he started his project by tying their minds together and sharing one soul. Therefore, there will be no conflict between his creations, and the efficiency of work and study is also superb. Instead of calling his creations 'them', it's more accurate to call them 'He'.

"I have to admit that this is indeed a better species than humans. Nicholas did create new life, a new race... just like a deity.

"However, there is a fatal problem with his creation. The person who discovered the problem was the Motherly Moth, in charge of the Truth of 'Breeding'."

"Although these creations can be born only by relying on Sage's Stone without the need for human flesh and blood, they can reproduce with each other through the normal means of reproduction after being born, as normal as human beings. However, they can't produce any offspring with human beings." Annan's pupils dilated slightly.

Annan then realized, "So they became out of control?"

"No." Daryl said forthrightly, "If the situation is out of control despite having twelve upright deities overseeing the world, it's an Epoch Disaster.

"But it's actually not too far from the Epoch Disaster. They didn't run rampant. It wasn't because they didn't, but because we found out in time.

“The creation is a spiritual consciousness instilled in the human society as a high-ranking substitute for all aspects of human beings which looks the same as humans, but has reproductive isolation from humans, and can reproduce as quickly as humans. Undoubtedly, they're a significant threat compared to the elves and centaurs.

“That's how Nicholas died and what he's guilty of.

“Finally, after his death, all his research and writings were eradicated. All the Hermetic Sage's Stones were destroyed; all the synths were captured, executed, and burned; their corpses were laid into waste. The Transcended knowing this has their memory cleared. Hence, even if a nightmare is born, there will be no traces of this incident.

“From the point of view of an alchemist, Nicholas is indeed the most extraordinary alchemist in the world, the second Hermes. He truly accomplished the great deeds that belonged to the deities as human beings.

“But he betrayed all mankind for his greatness.”

Daryl said slowly, “That's why I said if that person is really Nicholas, even if he is merely related...

“Then we're in big trouble, Your Highness Annan.”

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Annan completely understood what kind of taboo did Nicholas Flamel violate.

It wasn't just ethics or moral prudence, nor was it limited to maintaining the authority belonging to the deities or monarchs. Although Nicholas challenged his peers, monarchs, and deities simultaneously, the real cause of his death was his betrayal of “humanity”.

If the synths made up their minds to hide, it was almost impossible to seek them out.

Firstly, there was the “veto” power of Silent Lady to abolish the synths' ability to use Transcended power. Then, the Mysterious Lady's power of “secret” was crucial to cutting off the connection between synths. There was also the element of “luck” and “accident” in finding out the traces of synths. Deity's level of “decomposition” to destroy and “darkness” to bury them played a role in ensuring the total annihilation of “synths” so that the false deities wouldn't find ways to exploit them. Finally, the Bone Burying Grandma would personally validate the synths' death.

“Without the help of the deities, we can't defeat those synths. But in this matter, the deities will help us after all,” said Bishop Daryl solemnly.

None of the twelve upright deities were human or the “Yaselans” — the native race of the Oasis.

The deities didn't seem to have any reason to act against Nicholas in the perspective of maintaining the racial status of the Yaselans.

Instead, it would even be a piece of good news for the upright deities to have a superior race born.

However, the popes were human beings.

“At that time, we convened the first 'Holy See Council' of this epoch.”

Bishop Daryl replied, "Twelve popes and thirteen saints were present. The final voting result was 23 to 2."

"So in the end, the twelve popes and the thirteen saints all appeared."

"The catastrophe that could bring about the end of the Fifth Age was over in just two days."

Nicholas's creation offended too many people.

Anyone with a little sense of reason could realize that human civilization would be replaced entirely by the synth as the synth community developed further.

Aside from the false deities, even the upright deities were offended.

As a creation without a father and mother, they undoubtedly violated "tradition". Their ability for spiritual communication made them no longer have "secrets", removing the need for "trade", no "war", and no "nobility".

If synth replaced humans, they would offend five upright deities' interests, especially the Silver Sire and the Red Knight. They were both upright deities with only one realm.

The demise of the concepts represented the cessation of the Truth. Under normal circumstances, "trade" and "war" would not die. However, there was an abnormal situation ahead.

Nicholas was not stupid.

He was the most brilliant alchemist and the synths' creator. He must have noticed the issue first. He also knew what he was going to face.

But he still chose to remain silent and even acquiesce to his creations. He just didn't want to destroy his creations.

Of course, he did not resist when he was arrested and executed.

"I see," Annan nodded cautiously, "I fully understand now."

"You have done nothing wrong. Synth must be eradicated to protect all human beings. This is indeed a disaster that only the upright deities can stop."

Regardless of the identity of the leader of the Hermetic School in the capital, Annan had to be cautious, no matter if the leader was the real Nicholas Flamel, the last surviving synth, or the successor of Nicholas' academic and ideological heritage.

As long as he was not a liar who knew nothing about Nicholas' secrets, then his mere existence was a devastating threat.

"What are you going to do now?" Annan was silent for a long time, then spoke to Bishop Daryl, "This is obviously a serious matter, but I can't go back to the capital just yet."

Daryl struggled for a moment but sighed, "Neither Nicholas nor his partner has seen me. As long as we meet once, he will know that his existence has been exposed."

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“Then, where are you going?”

“I'm going to Denizoya.” Fatty Bishop said solemnly, “I'm heading toward Nicholas' cemetery. Not many people know the location of his cemetery. There are few people there, and there will definitely be clues.

“I'm not a Transcended either. I'm going by boat, and I'll be there in half a month.

“Whether he came back to life from the dead or didn't die at all, or someone moved his body, there must be clues in the cemetery.”

“You are right.” Annan nodded slowly.

This is indeed a solution.

The capital is dangerous. Grandpa Daryl is mighty, but he isn't a suitable candidate to be there.

We have to validate the information at Nicholas' cemetery sooner or later as well.

At present, Daryl can't go to the capital. So it's best to send him over to the cemetery.

But how do I get Daryl to pass on the information to me as quickly as possible?

Letter?

That won't do. What if the letter is lost?

Let Silver Sire help spread the word?

Or get some divine art about it?

Or else, I shall get a player to follow Grandpa Daryl and be a moving observer ward?

Oh ya, divine art...

“Okay, then it's settled.” Annan exhaled, and his tone became more relaxed, “I almost forgot what I came here for.”

“Isn't it about what we discussed just now?” Daryl was visibly frozen for a moment.

He looked up in disbelief.

Annan didn't know if it was an illusion, but he vaguely saw a trace of fear in Daryl's eyes flashing past.

“It's not a troublesome thing this time,” Annan explained quickly, “Although it happens to be a troublesome matter every time I come to you, it's really not bad news this time.”

“Because the news just now is dire enough.” Daryl groaned, “I haven't heard bad news as dire as this, Your Highness. Of course, it wouldn't be any worse than this, would it?”

“That's true. But this time, it's really good news.” Annan finally couldn't help but laugh.

He reached his right hand forward, palm down.

Just like when Daryl showed Annan his holy light engraving. The delicate and mystical, shimmering silver rune came from the back of Annan's hand. It flipped over and emerged into pieces.

These runes spread upward quickly, covering Annan's entire right arm, extending to Annan's right cheek, and even covering the entire right neck.

In these complicated silver runes, there was a strange power. It wasn't much with only one or two runes. However, having so many runes connected, the power turned from water droplets into turbulent tides.

"I'm here to ask you something. I've been lucky recently, and I have just acquired 300 holy light engravings from Silver Sire. Is there any high-end, practical divine art that you can recommend for me to learn?"

Looking at Grandpa Bread, who looked at him motionless as if he had been disconnected from the game, Annan asked modestly and gently.

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Chapter 349: I Go Wherever I Want

"How did you do this?" Daryl looked at Annan in disbelief, "In any case, it is impossible to purify so many nightmares in such a short period!"

"Unless?"

"There is no exception. The mechanism for holy light engravings is strict. Even if you purify the nightmare with the assistance of others, engravings will only be obtained by the person who purifies the nightmare." When Bishop Bread Daryl said this, he suddenly paused.

He seemed to have realized, "Those are your guards, right?"

"Although I'm not sure if you know, I hold the Book of Truth in my body." Annan said slowly, "One of its abilities is to summon these humanoid creatures from another world. They only exist in the projection mode in this world, and they are immortal. This world is like a game to them, so they call themselves 'players'.

"Their souls are summoned by the Book of Truth, and their bodies are also made by the Book of Truth's power. So they are actually part of my Book of Truth — the nightmares they purify will naturally have the merits counted in me."

Annan was honest and told all the truth he could tell.

After all, he was here for advice. It was in his best interest to tell the situation as detailed and truthfully as possible to get reliable and useful advice.

Given Bishop Daryl's status, he wouldn't do anything bad to Annan. After all, Silver Sire was currently on Annan's side.

Moreover, Bishop Daryl's identity was probably not simple.

It was apparent from the fact that Bishop Daryl knew Annan's grandfather and Nicholas Flamel. Also, he was at least a hundred years old.

He even knew of the first Holy See Council of this epoch. Moreover, he knew the entire matter and the location of Nicholas' cemetery without having his memory purged.

Thus, it was likely that he was a participant of the Holy See Council.

To become a saint, one not only has to be a Transcended but at least Gold Rank or above.

However, Bishop Daryl was not a Transcended.

Then, there was only one answer.

There was a high probability that Bishop Daryl was once the Silver Sire's pope or at least the cardinal bishop who had access to the center of power.

That was why he could summon Silver Sire.

But, even if Annan knew that Bishop Daryl's identity was not simple, he wouldn't say it out. Since Daryl didn't tell him directly, then he wouldn't ask.

This was the tacit agreement between them.

"I see." Daryl murmured absentmindedly, "It actually works like that."

Obviously, the fact that Annan could steadily increase holy light engravings even if he went idle and did nothing was a shock for Daryl.

Upright deities' church wasn't inferior to the false deities. The false deities would grant holy light engravings at will, but the upright deities wouldn't because they had to consider the fairness of the rules.

The bishops distributed the rewards of holy light engravings for "doing work for the church".

As they grew above the ranks of bishop, they didn't need holy light engravings to strengthen themselves. After all, the Silver Sire's priest was different from the priest of other deities.

The clergy of Silver Sire itself "trade", and thus it was given that His priest would spend more silver to buy more potent divine art. This led to the fact that the Silver Sire's bishop would not need holy light engravings to improve their strength. After all, it was useless to buy divine art without silver coins.

Conversely, the Silver Sire highly recommended His priests use holy light engravings to "buy" services directly from Him.

In the churches of other upright deities, getting holy light engravings was not so easy. The believers would have to either do a favor to a big shot or do a great deed.

The hundreds of holy light engravings on Daryl's body should have been the fruits of him going through dungeon instances one by one.

For a priest, three to four hundred unused holy light engravings carried the value of a platinum trophy in the games' achievement system.

In the face of Annan's situation, this fat bishop who always smiled no matter what happened lost his smile for the first time.

Annan gave off an embarrassed and shy smile of the seal meme who only surfaced in chat groups to show off their rare cards in Gacha [1] or loot boxes.

Daryl sighed helplessly, "You got to tell me what type of divine art you want, Your Highness Annan?"

"What I'm good at is mid-to-long range areof-effect (AoE) controlling ability and mid-to-short range strong single-target control ability. I lack a more effective long-range ability. I prefer a powerful ability that can harm my enemy at such a distance."

Annan answered clearly, "I plan to purchase two divine arts at the top grade. I have about 300 holy light engraving on me. For the rest of the engravings, I want to buy blessings and buffs that take effect forever.

"I don't know what I can buy, so I have to ask your help to get me a list." Before he came to Roseburg to consult Bread Daryl, he had already thought about the purpose of his trip.

[Clanging Object] was good divine art, but its power was not enough for now.

The power of [Clanging Object] in shooting out a silver coin was roughly equivalent to an ordinary bullet. Moreover, the blow wasn't piercing, but a shocking attack with its might diffuse on the surface area.

To put it simply, when a [Clanging Object] struck a person, it could hardly penetrate the target but caused bruises and fractures.

Taking Captain Klaus as an imaginary target, if Annan wanted to damage a Silver Rank Transcended Swordsman, he would need to send out at least 8 to 15 shots.

It was not that Annan found it to be a loss of money. It was still profitable.

However, it was inconvenient to carry so many silver coins.

Silver Sire did not support the service of using gold coins or paper money to unleash divine art instead of silver coins.

The main problem was that the range of [Clanging Object] was limited.

[Clanging Object]'s range was positively correlated with Annan's perception. However, even at his current Perception level, he could only hit the target of about fifty meters with this divine art.

It was too underwhelming.

Another problem was related to the Energy Falteration School's wizard common issue.

Annan was short of AoE damage ability.

The expression of the Old Bread was like that of an African boss who was bitterly thinking about how to assemble the team after finding out a new and cute leopard.

Old Daryl frowned and thought for a while, then formally suggested to Annan, "Since you're not short of controlling ability, I will recommend two divine arts, [Silver Blade] and [Silver Blaze].

"[Silver Blade] is a relatively common and practical high-level divine art. It is also the standard divine art of a [Silver Knight]. It requires a silver weapon or a weapon that has been blessed by the [Silver Hand] to

utilize it. You will have to sacrifice the weapon and send out the powerful silver sword qi in the next attack or before the blessing effect of the [Silver Hand] is wholly consumed.

“The most important thing is because this divine art uses your weapon as a medium, then if your swordsmanship is excellent or has special effects, it will also have the same bonuses. The greater your Strength, the greater its power and speed. Your Perception attribute will affect this divine art by enhancing the blessing effect of the [Silver Hand]. You can also consume a large number of silver coins and silver utensils to make a better [Sharp Object] and use it to increase the might of this blow.

“This art has a devastating might, suitable for a frontal assault too. Its maximum distance is about three times the [Clanging Object], and it can lock the enemy within its radar. So I think this art is just right.

“At the same time, this divine art is not expensive for you. You only need 30 engravings to buy it.”

“It's cheap.” Annan was a little tempted.

It was an ability that could be blessed and buffed in multiple aspects, thus giving it an all-rounded enhancement. The complementary effect expanded more than a simple addition of $1 + 1 = 2$.

Moreover, it was a single-target ability with high enough power that Annan needed.

“As for [Ritual: Silver Blaze], it is a divine art that only cardinal bishops could buy because it is so powerful it is almost forbidden. But I think you should have permission to access it too. Although you are young, I think you are sensible for it.”

Grandpa Daryl's expression was serious, “This divine art has an overwhelming might, but it's also costly.

“At least 500 silver coins are needed to activate it once, and that's the minimum value. For every 500 coins increment, the power can be increased by one notch, with the limit at five notches of increment.”

“In other words, it takes a maximum of 300 silver coins to activate it once?” Annan was a little thrilled to hear it.

“Yes.” Daryl nodded, “If you need to continue maintaining the divine art, you have to continue consuming silver coins.”

“Since you recommend this divine art to me, it must have irreplaceable advantages,” Annan complained politely and indirectly.

But Daryl didn't seem to hear it and just nodded thoughtfully, “Yes, indeed. Its greatest value lies in its spell casting distance.”

The Old Bread replied calmly, “I strongly recommend you buy it because the original version of this ritual can unleash its might within five kilometers. You can designate an area with a diameter of about 5 meters and a height from 2 meters to 280 meters. Within the cylindrical range, there will be a bombardment of the silver blazes that arrived instantly and had an extremely high temperature.

“This divine art will last for five seconds. The temperature is enough to melt the solid city wall, and it will do extra damage to the living enemy. The metal exposed to the blaze set off from the sky will turn into molten silver, instantly destroying the enemy's armor and weapons. If you keep putting in the same amount of silver, it will maintain that temperature or spread from the sides.”

Daryl continued, "Of course, I recommend you to buy an optimized version of it — [Daryl's Silver Blaze]. After my improvement, it can be safely released within twenty kilometers, and the range has been expanded to a diameter of 13 meters, and positioning is also more accurate. It can be released precisely through the [Silver Coin Imprint] and even supports a time counter to cast the spell. Of course, the temperature is also reduced to a certain extent, but the effect of dissolving metal still exists.

"The original divine art alone costs 200 engravings. As for my improved version, I have a certain authority to give you a discount, and I only charge you 180 engravings. Plus, I will give you the [Silver Coin Imprint] worth 3 engravings for free to you."

"Wow, there's a discount?" Annan was silent for a long time, then he blurted.

He always felt that this Bread looked familiar as if he had seen it before soul-crossing to this world. But for a while, he couldn't remember why it felt familiar.

Daryl said sternly, "I have already given you a great discount, Little Annan. I think you can also know the meaning of this divine art. Although it requires a lot of silver coins, it overcomes the shortcomings in the difficulties of carrying around so many silver coins because of the increase in spell casting distance.

"Its power is enough to destroy most enemies. Most importantly, it is almost a sure-fire kill for the Transcended of Gold Rank and Bronze Rank. Although liquid silver can still carry the curse of the Silver Rank Transcended, Gold Rank and Bronze Rank Transcended have to avoid them.

"Before they find a new vessel, they will keep the curse activated. If the curse's power is exhausted and a new vessel is not found, their soul will be quickly eroded by the external curse.

"It's a simplified ritual that can be activated with 500 silver coins. It can also be used to break the traps of the ancient ruins and forcibly open the metal door. Also, you can use this divine art to transform a large amount of metal into silver, and then you can use it along with the [Silver Hand] art. Isn't it quite handy?"

"Yes, I will buy it, I will buy it." The more Annan was told, the more tempted he became, but he still reluctantly responded.

This was indeed the divine art that Annan needed.

A divine art for a long-range attack. As a melee magician, what he lacked most was the long-range artillery type of spell.

Although [Daryl's Silver Flame Bombing]'s power output had decreased, its versatility had indeed been greatly improved.

It came with the functionality of time lock and target lock.

Combined with Annan's [Frost Arena] spell, he could use it to weaken the enemy's defense and thus make up for the loss in output power.

The most valuable part was that this art could also form a combo with Annan's other divine art. If Annan were lucky, he could use the silver produced by this divine art's metal molting property to replenish the silver coins consumed during spell casting quickly. Although these silvers could only be consumed by the [Silver Hand] art, the ability to utilize the silver coin another time was a profit.

“As for passive abilities, do you have any ideas on your direction?”

“Yup!” Annan answered with great certainty, “I want to become Tanky!”

“What?”

“I want to have more resistance to damage! Or, the passive abilities can make me fight more safely, without worrying about sneak attacks, sniping attacks, and the lethal ability that targets me!” Annan didn't want to be an ADC [2] who died suddenly.

He was a close-combat magician. If he became tanky, the enemy would fall into despair.

Your damage doesn't hurt me even when it hits. You can't run away from me when I rush over. If you want to attack my teammate, you can't get rid of my controlling ability. If you ignore my attack, you will die immediately.

Annan hoped that he could declare one day that “I, Annan, can go wherever I want”.

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Annan had a fruitful harvest on this trip.

Besides the three divine arts Daryl recommended, Annan also acquired multiple blessings for himself.

Under the [Priest] description, it became like this.

Priest (Silver Sire 0):

Divine Arts: Clanging Object, Sharp Object, Eternal Youth, Silver Coin Imprint, Ritual: Daryl's Silver Blaze

Permanent Abilities: Medium Resistance to Fire [remaining validity one year], Silver Muscle [remaining validity six months], Scotopic Vision [Permanent], Cleansing [Permanent]

Additional Abilities: Robust (Strength+1, Constitution+1), Sturdy Physique (Constitution+3), Flexible Body (Agility+2, Constitution+2)

As for [Silver Blade], it was merged into Silver Knight's profession skill list after consuming Annan's final available skill point.

Annan's Constitution attribute just soared to 31 points.

Then, it reached 36 points after counting in [Silver Muscle] bonuses.

Among the divine arts he purchased, the most expensive was not the “additional abilities” that permanently increased his attributes but the diving art [Silver Muscle].

There were two powerful divine arts that contributed to the Constitution.

The first option was the [Silver Muscle], and the other was [Clear Body].

They were all complex and high-level divine arts that only those at the bishop level or above could master.

According to the Old Bread, [Silver Muscle] could transform one's skin into sanctified silver through the 'tensing of the muscles' when suffering piercing or cut, or when the user was attacking."

On the other hand, the system provided a much more detailed explanation.

Silver Muscle: Constitution +5 when attacked, Strength +3 when attacking (cannot take place simultaneously); if "Silver Muscle" is activated when attacked, piercing and cutting damage suffered is negated by 30%. You're immune to lightning damage below Gold Rank.

Purchasing this divine art alone would cost a whopping 180 engravings.

Although it was not as expensive as a ritual divine art, renting for half a year would cost 30 engravings.

Annan thought carefully for a long time.

During these six months, the player could earn many holy light engravings.

It felt like a loss to purchase this "buff" type of divine art. He didn't need to bless the others with this divine art. Also, it would consume a lot of "sanctified silvers" — silver coins that were blessed by those above bishop rank.

Rather than an outright buyout, it was better to rent it temporarily.

Since it was a buff, it was utterly rentable.

Annan also compared the [Silver Muscle] with the [Clear Body]. The latter could also increase the Constitution by five points. The advantage would be thorough immunity to negative energy damage below the Gold Rank, and the negative effects imposed would be halved — such as poisoning, aging, burns, and other effects.

However, considering that Annan owned the curse [The Last Work: David], the [Clear Body] had a minor benefit on him.

On the contrary, the [Ritual: Silver Blaze] could not be rented. It was better off to purchase the divine arts: Silver Muscle, Scotopic Vision, and Cleansing.

Then, Annan got himself some flame damage resistance. After all, neither his body nor marble statue form gave him high heat resistance. Just relying on the cooling of Energy Falteration School alone was difficult to cool down the flame spell to an acceptable level immediately.

They said every profession had a specialization. For example, it was difficult for the Silver Sire's priest to demolish a city wall. But, it was easy for a Destruction Wizard of Silver Rank to bring the entire city into ruin.

Corrosive Acid, Heat, Explosion, and Earthquake were prominent Destruction spells.

Annan had to consider the possibility that Nicholas could also utilize Destruction spells.

After the shopping, Annan's combat power increased by a notch. Even though he was still a new and fresh Silver Rank Transcended, he was confident that to fight against multiple Silver Rank Transcendeds at the same time.

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Annan hadn't really fought against Gold Rank yet, so he wasn't too sure.

If intelligence, physical fitness, lifespan, and talent would all improve by leaps and bounds, like evolution after advancing to Silver Rank...

Gold Rank should have attributes that overwhelm Transcended of a lower ranking.

For example, the defenses of [Silver Muscle] couldn't resist the elemental power coming from a Gold Rank Transcended.

Father Flint's ability system was quite overwhelming for Transcended, who had no elemental power.

However, with the combo of Silver Blaze, Silver Hand, Frost Sword, and Silver Blade, Annan felt that he wasn't utterly powerless against the Gold Rank now.

But I'm pretty concerned with my wallet now.

Needless to say that Old Bread was a great salesman, living up to the reputation as the former Silver Sire's pope. Before Annan could react to what he bought, he had spent all his holy light engravings.

Moreover, Old Bread also got himself 18 holy light engravings as commissions.

Such a big sale was a favor. In return, Annan convinced Bishop Daryl to let Lin Yiyi follow him to the Denizoya kingdom for "experience".

However, the actual goal was to make her a moving observer ward [1]. While she explored the map, she could send intelligence to Annan in time.

At the same time, Lin Yiyi's Transcended profession was "Treasure Diamond Island Guard Knight".

The full name of the United Kingdom was called Denizoya & Fildes Archipelago United Kingdom. The Treasure Diamond Island was located in the Fildes Archipelago, not far from Denizoya.

In other words, there might be clues of Lin Yiyi's silver rank advancement near Daryl's destination.

On Annan's side, he could take one person with him when he headed to the capital.

Eugene Geraint left Annan the password in the letter before leaving.

It was the password to call upon the special intelligence agency "One-Eyed Crow".

He granted Annan and one of his guards a safe entry to the Noah capital through the special route One-Eyed Crow founded, bypassing the surveillance of the city gate directly. However, the group couldn't be on a large scale, with two people being the best man count.

Of course, Eugene had never thought of Annan coming alone. After all, he was the son of the Grand Duke, the future Austere-Winter's Grand Duke. Thus, it would be too indecent to travel alone.

Since Lin Yiyi would be going abroad to expand the map, Annan would choose another player to accompany her from the Child's party.

Annan planned to have Dove and Chocolate with him.

Citalopram, Suuankou, and the Child were suited to lurk in the dark. Annan didn't want to get them involved in the official matters blatantly.

The team combination of Dove and Chocolate would be considered 1 slot, and their combat power wasn't inferior at all. Dove's cat body was deceptive, which was convenient to scout for intelligence.

Annan had contacted One-Eyed Crow to head to Roseburg. He would be departing in about a few days.

Old Bread won't be leaving until the day after tomorrow.

He was going to send someone away with Annan tomorrow.

It was the first priest that Annan saw after entering this world — Priest Louis.

The 1.9-meter tall, muscular young priest with a stunning crimson slicked back hairstyle. He had served the people of Freezing Water Port for many years. After Annan cleaned up [Nightmare: Gallery], his mission at Freezing Water Port finally came to an end.

Having acquired ample holy light engravings, he was about to return to the capital to become a true "Silver Knight".

Indeed, Priest Louis was an emissary originating from "the Silver Hand".

This organization was the "Silver Knight" reserve team.