

The Righteous Player(s) Chapter 381

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“Since you will be fine here, I will be leaving.” Annan looked at Jiu Er, whose body was still trembling slightly, and reached out to support her arm with concern, “Can you go back by yourself?”

“Also, do you need me to help you resolve the problem of those two?” said Annan. He looked at the two corpses at the end of the alley who had lost their souls, but their bodies were intact.

They should be the watchers monitoring Jiu Er.

If the two of them died here, it might cause some trouble for Jiu Er's job or her missions. However, Annan could help her deal with the follow-up problems if Jiu Er needed it.

The way to deal with it was also simple. He would inform the Crow Family and intimidate the relevant party. Count Geraint offered much more deterrence for these Noah's underground gangs than the police.

It was a good benefit to have the boss helping her deal with the troubles for free. There was even a slight chance of her entering the higher ranks earlier or simply using the small force as a catalyst to reach higher-level forces.

From the player's standpoint, this was the best option.

The ultimate goal of all players' actions was to obtain benefits.

Annan was quite aware of the player's psychology.

Even though Jiu Er asked for help, Annan still prepared compensation for her to make up for her lost interests.

However, Jiu Er did not opt for that.

A strange and strong competitive spirit that should not belong to the player came about in her heart.

It was an intense feeling that she did not want Annan to look down on her and treat her as a burden, a sidekick, or an immature minor who needed special care.

“I appreciate that, Lord Annan.” Jiu Er glanced at Annan, then lowered her head and answered fluently and softly, “But I can handle this myself.”

“Do you have a plan? Why don't you tell me about it and let me offer you some tips?”

“Yes, milord. My plan is to report the name, Bernardino. No matter if they sent a ritualist or other transcendents, they wouldn't be able to find out the real cause of death of these two people. Also, if they can identify Bernardino being the killer, they can only choose to believe my words.

“The possibility of 'me having a special ability or connection to escape from Bernardino, or at least make him dare not attack me' is much higher than the possibility of me conspiring with Bernardino to suppress their forces.

“As long as they're smart, they will see more value in me. No matter how I survive the attack, it can show that I'm not an ordinary Bronze Rank transcender who is likely to be associated with that high-level power. Not only do they dare not to attack me, but they will also try to win me over.”

Jiu Er fluently stated the plan she had conceived.

“Not bad. I'm pleased to see you planning so much ahead.” Annan agreed with her.

However, he still offered some tips to optimize the plan, “At the same time, you should describe Bernardino's abilities in detail, but it is best not to say his name out directly.”

“Is it because they will doubt me to some extent? Even if they value me now, they still have doubts about me?”

“You're right. We don't want them to be defensive and suspect you. On the other hand, you should not be explicitly aware of the existence of 'Bernardino' in your current identity.” Annan pointed out the loopholes in Jiu Er's plan, “You are a berserker, not a wizard. Although they think you are in a unique profession now, you are still just a berserker after all. They will notice this flaw sooner or later.

“If you don't want to be suspected, don't say the things you shouldn't know.”

Annan is brilliant! Jiu Er widened his eyes and looked at Annan in disbelief.

The idolization was evident in her sparkling, pure eyes.

Annan noticed Jiu Er's gaze and couldn't help but laugh out loud, “It's normal you don't think of this. After all, you are still young, and you have never gone through such an experience before. Isn't it?”

But you are obviously much younger than me!

I reached the legal age not long ago, but I'm just a little tender and short.

The baby-faced Jiu Er complained in her heart.

But she did not say it out loud.

Probably it was because of cowardice or some sort of unspoken reserved nature. At the very least, Jiu Er did not plan to tell Annan her actual age when Annan treated her as an equal.

She wanted to utilize the identity of being a “peer” first to get closer to Annan.

Annan sighed softly as if he had finished what he could say.

“I respect your wishes. Since you don't want me to meddle in, I won't mention it anymore.” Annan asked gently, “Does your stomach still hurt?”

“It still hurts.” Jiu Er hesitated for a moment but replied in a low volume.

She was embarrassed to voice out the spot where the pain came from. However, the unbearable throbbing pain made her face the problem immediately.

If I don't ask while Annan is here, maybe the pain will intensify after Annan leaves.

At that point, wouldn't it be more shameful to ask strangers again and possibly expose my weaknesses or wounds?

Only Annan can be trusted...

However, before Annan could answer, the Paper Princess behind Annan explained, "It's because your soul was hurt. You've been eroded so much by the curse, so your curse vessel can't take it anymore. The pain you're feeling now is the spot where the curse is after being unleashed.

"Remember to change your curse vessel when you return, and you'll be fine. It's best not to enter a nightmare for two days.

"It's not necessarily a bad thing. Even though your soul erosion rate has increased a lot, you will get a little bit of curse power that your body manages to purify after waking up. This will make you stronger."

Simply put, I get a small amount of experience by signing in daily.

Jiu Er bit her lips.

However, she still felt that the sudden increase in erosion rate was not good.

Annan comforted as if reading through her mind, "You were implicated because of me. Afterward, I will find a way to clear off your erosion rate. The previous erosion rate will be removed except for the newly afflicted soul erosion. Just treat it as your compensation."

"Sorry to trouble you, Lord Annan." Jiu Er opened her mouth and wanted to say, "Actually, you don't have to do that." But, she finally gave in and whispered, "Thank you very much."

Even if she said no, she still wanted it a little in her heart.

But after agreeing to it, for some reason, she felt that she owed Annan more and more.

"If there is any need or you face any trouble in the future, just call out my name." Annan said, "As long as I can come, I will come."

"...Yes." Jiu Er was silent for a moment, then replied in a low voice.

But after hearing this sentence, she made up her mind completely.

As a player, dying once was no big deal.

If she encountered an enemy that was difficult for her, she would not want to implicate Annan again.

So she would never ask for help...

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It was highly possible that Bernardino would look for Nicholas after his resurrection.

However, Annan and the Paper Princess did not plan to stop him.

It seemed unnecessary.

There was a saying that having the thieves eyeing your possession was much scarier than the thieves themselves. As long as Nicholas was alive, Bernardino could go to him anytime.

However, Annan would not have the Paper Princess by his side all the time. After all, he would not be roaming around the world freely.

If Bernardino had a grudge and followed Annan, he had no solutions to that.

However, Annan had another place to visit.

In front of Noah First Bank, a large amount of white dust gathers in the air, piling up into the figure of Annan and the Paper Princess.

"It's here." The Paper Princess replied.

Naturally, she held Annan's hand again.

When Annan took her hand, even Annan's presence was wiped away by the incantations revolving around her.

The Paper Princess was a deity with the element of "beauty". She usually would not reveal herself when traveling. Instead, she only showed herself when looking for someone to sell her paintings. Otherwise, the 'Influence' she incurred on the world would harm many ordinary people.

This was what the Paper Princess did not want to see happen.

So she used her original ritual, "Shadow in Painting", to remove her sense of presence.

She also handed this ritual to Annan.

To put it simply, when the Paper Princess did not make a sound, anyone who saw her with their eyes would not be able to perceive that she was a "three-dimensional" existence in this space. It was just like Paper Mario but turned sideways, becoming a real "paper man".

No matter from any angle, she was only that "thin piece".

Only those with outstanding perceptions could capture the three-dimensional existence of the Paper Princess.

This ritual might be useful in the future, so Annan noted it down.

However, the material required was to consume the influence from the Paper Princess. It was pretty limited, and it was not effective against wizards and priests. At the same time, it was only effective until "sound" was made.

On the other hand, this ritual could remain in a state of no consumption and continue forever if no sound were made.

Thus, it probably could come in handy during nightmares.

As a material that could create the required 'influence' at any time, Annan learned the Paper Princess' real name.

"My name is [Lisa Gladini]. This is the name my lover who gave me life, once gave me."

The Paper Princess said, "If you use up this knowledge, just call my name in the ritual. I will charge the magic back up for you."

Since the Paper Princess told Annan personally, this had fallen into the category of occult knowledge, imbuing it with remarkable power.

[You have acquired the occult knowledge: the Deity of Painting and Illusion "the Paper Princess" real name.]

[This occult knowledge can be used as "Ritual: Summoning 'the Paper Princess'", "Golden Spell (Idol): Assimilation into the Painting", "Novice Influence: Remains of the Most Beautiful".]

[This occult knowledge will be forgotten after using "1" time. You may recall this knowledge only after "listening to the voice of 'the Paper Princess'"]

This was the fourth real name Annan got.

The real names Annan learned included Old Grandmother's [Reguetto], Rotten Man's [Atabanus], and one of the Man in the Mirror's two real names. However, that could only be utilized after Annan learned the second real name. After that, Annan learned about [Lisa Gladini] from the Paper Princess.

Also, it was a name that Annan found somewhat familiar, just like how he was exposed to the names "Michelangelo" and "Nicholas" previously.

Annan happened to have heard this name before.

Lisa Gladini.

The name had another widely known identity.

That was the prototype of the famous painting "Mona Lisa".

In every sense, it was a suitable name for her.

Annan and the Paper Princess infiltrated the Noah First Bank directly after using the ritual to be invisible.

Of course, they did not come here to rob a bank.

It would be fine if it were another country or city.

However, the Silver Knights guarded the bank in Noah's capital.

It was the bank...

If the Silver Knights were determined to hold the fort, even a Gold Rank transcendence team might be unable to break through it.

They came in here just because Annan was looking for someone.

A senior Silver Knight, which Old Bread mentioned to Annan previously.

He was not a bishop, but he had personally killed a Gold Rank Hunter without a high-level divine art nor divine blessings.

That transcender's profession was "Shadow Hunter", which was challenging to deal with. It was a unique profession that could jump and traverse in the shadows at will. He would attack the opponent's shadow to inflict immobility, curse, poison, and physical damage. They said that this profession specialized in dealing with human targets.

However, such a remarkable hunter was beheaded by that Silver Knight.

His name was Alexander Robin.

Alexander was the chairman of Noah First Bank and the director of Noah Second Bank and Iris Bank. Old Bread had written to him long before Annan set off, informing him of Annan's visit and the news that he would appear with the Paper Princess. Of course, it included a letter of introduction to Annan.

Old Bread told Annan that if he faced troubles inconvenient for him to attend to personally, and he did not want to rely on the Crow's family, he could use this letter to visit Old Robin; if Annan had a conflict with the Crow's family, he could also seek asylum at Noah First Bank.

Well, if nothing happened for the time being, Annan could visit Alexander to learn sword arts.

Alexander's swordsmanship was remarkable. He had only changed his profession to Silver Knight after acquiring the Silver Rank. Before that, his Bronze Rank profession was called "Champion". Before stepping into the Transcendence path, he had to win the Noah National Swordsmanship Competition before he could get the "Champion Medal" and acquire this rare profession.

The profession was a relic that the "Deity of Sword and Duel" Marquis Iris left in the world.

He was the third generation of false deity, the holder of the world's most famous Book of Truth, "The Sword of Victory and the Crown of Glory". A rare elven deity, who was now one of the only three subordinate deities of the Red Knight.

When he was still a mortal, he got the title page of the Book of Truth.

Afterward, he traveled the country as a mortal and a "future deity". At the same time, he participated in all the swordsmanship competitions he learned about. He would utilize the Book of Truth to remove the unbalanced power, regardless if it came from his opponent or himself. Under the context where both parties had equal attributes, they would have a fair duel only in swordsmanship.

As he won the championship in all competitions, the empire made him a marquis.

After that, he became known as "the strongest of swordsmanship". He quickly advanced to the Gold Rank and entered the desert as an elf, embarking on a lonely journey eastward alone. His goal was to look for the legendary Orser remnants who did not go to the western oasis but stayed in the desert.

It was the empire that the elves' ancestors lived in and abandoned.

No one knew what happened to him in the eastern deserts.

But when he returned to Yaselan again, he had become a deity.

His four favorite medals were engraved with the swordsmanship of Marquis Iris. Those who won the national swordsmanship competition and entered the nightmare with this medal could attain the profession "Champion".

Of course, it was naturally impossible for this curse vessel to be given directly to the winner. Therefore, after the advancement and the power accumulated from the swordsmanship competition were exhausted, the medal must be returned to the country.

But even so, Noah would at most give birth to one "champion" every year.

Old Bread hoped that Annan could learn this swordsmanship from Alexander.

Annan also happily accepted it.

Although his usual weapons were a bone knife or a hammer, he would not say no to goodies.

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Nicholas II had three test tubes prepared on the test tube rack at the corner of his desk.

He sat at the table, thinking slowly and earnestly before scribbling on the paper. He was in the midst of adjusting the ratio and magic ritual.

Since it was still in the research and development stage, Nicholas II did not concoct it in a large quantity. After all, the "Hermetic Poison Dust" was unlike the Sage's Stone with a guaranteed demand.

Although the "poison dust" could effectively kill other-worldly beings, it was not a commonly used alteration product. Not everyone would encounter other-worldly beings.

Of course, Nicholas II was not short of money.

Instead, the material he lacked was not something that could be bought with money.

"I have to use it sparingly." Nicholas II sighed.

If he had the freedom to go anywhere, he would make something and sell it out so that he would not lack materials. However, he was an artificial human reactivated and was under Father Stone's supervision. Never mind what he was doing, he was limited to being in a certain area only.

This led to the fact that he did not have many resources at his disposal.

Instead, it was true to say that he was facing scarcity.

What he lacked the most was the "Demon Blood" that would be shipped in at this time.

He was promised to be given two dozen of them.

However, what reached his hands was half of the promised quantity.

When the material was insufficient, Nicholas II could only try again after recalculating the dosage.

If it weren't for the "poison dust", which could only be produced in the "kingdom's capital", he would no longer want to stay in the capital. The logistics inspection here was too strict.

Nicholas II also asked Father Stone why he could not contact Silver Sire Church and ship what he needed directly here, but he did not get an answer.

Father Stone did not answer his question directly.

This had indeed troubled Nicholas II.

Could it be that you can't trust me? Then you shouldn't just send Father Stone, who doesn't care about anything, and put me in the capital.

If I really want to, there's no difficulty for me to poison or blow up millions of people.

As the strongest Great Sage who inherited all the memory and knowledge of Nicholas, the strongest alchemist who should not exist in this world, "Nicholas II" could indeed do it.

"Let's try again!" After the short break, Nicholas II regained his spirit and stood up.

This was the fourth time Nicholas tried to concoct the poisonous dust today.

He raised his hand casually and tapped his fingertips three times in the air, which summoned dark ripples in the air on each tap.

Then, red runes lit up on the narrow basement wall, and it soon rotated its color between black and white. The entire room was illuminated by its brilliance.

It was the forbidden barrier under the Silent Lady. On the one hand, it could isolate possible internal explosions or leakage of the raw materials. On the other hand, the barrier acted as sound insulation. It could be used to stop the prying eyes of others and calm down the host's mind from the disturbing external noises.

This time, Nicholas II chose a brass astrolabe [1].

He tapped his hand in the air. A hexagonal amethyst levitated in the air and stood in the center of the astrolabe.

Immediately after, he tapped twice in the air. The two boxes containing pink pearl powder and red gem powder were opened. A set ratio of it flew out and sprinkled evenly on the two designated positions of the astrolabe, outlining a strange shape.

Afterward, Nicholas took out a bottle of holy water and poured it into the air.

After the pure white liquid left the crystal bottle, it shone with a white shimmer.

The holy water slowly fell on the astrolabe like a feather. After quickly immersing and wetting the two portions of dust, Nicholas II took out a glass rod and quickly drew something on the powder.

Deep red complex lines surfaced on the dust drenched in holy water. But the moment the holy water and the brass astrolabe came into contact, the heat surged and quickly dried the dust.

The dried dust turned into a bizarre compact powder on the astrolabe with hollow lines drawn. With that, the patterns were immediately constructed based on the astrolabe's existing outline.

If he wanted to modify the ritual, he had to do it from scratch. It extended more than disassembling and optimizing the formula but writing it directly from scratch.

He then placed three glass bottles about the size of a perfume sample and a gold bottle the size of a thumb on the circles drawn on the ritual plate. The three glass bottles soon began to undergo the alteration process on their own, and the substances inside were under rapid changes.

He opened another flat, curved metal bottle that looked like the lighter's oil container.

If Delicious Wind Goose saw it, he would have recognized it immediately. It was the Demon Blood he had seen before.

As Nicholas II opened the Demon Blood container, a ferocious growl came out from the bottle.

This roar was not loud, but it was audible. Otherwise, the noise could be vague, like the wind's howling.

Nicholas II ignored the bellows but let them roar slowly.

He took out a new glass rod and opened a bottle of holy water. He first dipped the glass rod into the holy water exuding white mist, stirring gently and whispering occult knowledge with the element of "purification".

"The sixth luminary is the light surging inside the sun and constantly splitting and converging; the seventh luminary is seen when the transcender's soul is sent to the light realm in the Divine Transporter's hand in the ascendancy ritual. Finally, the eighth luminary is the light in the sky before the earliest sunrise."

This was a fragment of occult knowledge about the "Secret of the Eight Luminaries of the Sun".

All the occult knowledge in the Sun Realm was more or less related to the "Eight Luminaries", which was the core power of Mr. Ray. Even the birth of "Mr. Ray" was related to the Eight Luminaries. Thus, he was blessed with the title "Mr. Ray". His sacred number and the asylum month he belonged to was "8".

As Nicholas II recited, the holy water gradually turned into something like cotton candy, wrapping around the glass rod.

When he took out the glass rod, the transparent glass rod tip was wrapped in a pure white flocculent that shone with stable brilliance. It looked like a giant cotton swab.

Nicholas II threw the cotton swab into the Demon Blood. Soon, the roar in Demon Blood was filled with pain as it weakened.

However, Nicholas II only dipped a small portion of it.

The pure white "cotton swab" that shone with brilliance turned dark red, like a cotton swab soaked in blood.

Then, he concentrated on moving the cotton swab in the three bottles with a specific frequency and firm movements.

A violent “chirp” sound could be heard whenever a blood-stained glass rod entered a bottle. The ongoing alteration process was interrupted and underwent a mutation. Then, a light flew out from the ritual plate connected to the other two glass bottles. At the same time, a light flew out of the third glass bottle, bridging to the small gold bottle.

Although the process looked troublesome, Nicholas II could hand it over to the machine once the synthesis process was arranged in detail.

After about ten minutes, Nicholas II breathed a sigh of relief.

The substances in those three small bottles were exhausted.

The golden bottle had become heavy.

With anticipation, Nicholas II poured the hot red powder into a glass test tube after cooling it a little.

I wonder if it will work this time.

The Righteous Player(s) C384— A Deal Between The Two

Chapter 384: A Deal Between The Two

Nicholas II cast an Edict spell with great anticipation. However, after checking up on the effect of the reagent, he quickly showed a disappointed expression.

“This reagent has become a specialized poison against the elemental creatures again.” He sat down in annoyance, “It's way more far-fetched than the previous attempt.”

Forget it. Let's memorize the recipe first.

It is rare to have a relatively high product completion.

“How should I name it? Well, forget it...” Nicholas II pondered for a while, then pulled out a piece of tape and wrote, “No. 23 Poison Dust—Effective on Elemental Creatures—Concentration 289%—Adhesion Coefficient 64%.”

After he wrote the recipe, he took a small portion of it with a spoon and wrapped it on paper. Then, he wrote “Sample No. 23” on the paper and put it into a thick book of obsidian texture that looked a bit like a photo album.

“But I'm a little tired.” Nicholas II removed the barrier and sat back in his chair, muttering in a low voice.

This part of occult knowledge was unlike the deity's real name, which would be forgotten after using it. However, there would be evident fatigue after using it, even for a Gold Rank soul.

Those Silver Rank or below would not be able to contain the power of occult knowledge, which would pull them into hallucinations and incur 'influence' into the world. There was even the possibility of being burned by the knowledge.

After all, occult knowledge had its weight.

The exhaustion of using occult knowledge on the soul was like carrying heavy objects.

“You can't rest yet.” Behind him, the stone statue with frowning and closed eyes blurted out, “Meditate for a while before continuing.”

“Seriously, is it impossible to get the Demon Blood?”

“Yup.” Father Stone replied calmly, “Now, Noah's situation is getting tenser, and you can't go out. Otherwise, you may be entangled in some troublesome events.”

“How troublesome can it be?” Nicholas II sighed.

Can it be more troublesome than my current situation?

I'm locked here every day, drawing on Noah's leyline's power to construct a ritual. If I want to go out, I have to meditate and go out with my soul.

But that was how it would be.

As an artificial human, that was his mission.

“Then, can I utilize my soul state?”

“Yes. Just don't get caught.”

“Even if I go out in person, I won't be found out.”

“It's different.” Father Stone answered briefly.

Nicholas II knew that he would not get an answer even if he continued to ask questions.

So he gave up asking questions but quickly sat in front of the chair and began to meditate to recover his energy.

He rose from his chair with an orange outer shell and a crystalline soul burning with gentle fire.

“I'm going out for a walk.” He glanced at Father Stone, bowed politely to him, and left the room.

To relieve the pressure on the soul, he must let the soul temporarily leave the body. Anyway, the soul of a Gold Rank would not be seen easily. So it did not matter if he went for a walk.

Nicholas II was unclear why Father Stone had not let him go out. However, as an artificial human, he could only survive because “Nicholas was dead”.

From the beginning, the original Nicholas had no intention of sharing the technology for creating artificial humans. Only his soul could make such an innovation, and those artificial humans had dedicated prohibition installed in them.

The artificial humans could not manufacture and synthesize the Sage's Stone, let alone create new artificial humans. Even Nicholas II, born as a replica of Nicholas, could not break through this limit.

If artificial humans wanted to expand their population, they could only reproduce in the same way as other animals.

Everything was obvious.

From the beginning, Nicholas intended to be the king of all artificial humans... or the Deity of Synths.

That was why Nicholas II was allowed to be kept alive.

An alone synth could not continue the growth of its race.

From this point of view, perhaps "Nicholas II" was a backup when Nicholas thought he might die. Thus, it came about an inheritor who had all his talents and would not be executed.

Considering Nicholas' talent and intelligence, this arrangement was also likely.

"...Um?" As soon as Nicholas II left the basement, he vaguely felt that his soul was being pulled by something.

He was curious but not the slightest vigilant and fearful about it.

He immediately flew over at high speed.

Although he could not refine the Sage's Stone, he inherited all the power and experience of Nicholas, and he was even much younger than the original Nicholas. Even for typical Gold Rank transcendents, Nicholas II could easily defeat three of them with one hand.

Nicholas II could overwhelm his opponents with his sheer experience and wisdom.

Nicholas II followed the feeling that attracted his soul and flew to a large, luxuriously decorated hotel.

The floors of this hotel were installed with hand-woven wool carpets. There were famous paintings on the walls and small sculptures placed between rooms. Even the chandeliers were crystal chandeliers studded with gold. The decoration in the room was also far more luxurious than the typical local viscount. A filled bookshelf and premium quality daily necessities were available in each room.

This was a top-notch hotel dedicated to nobles and business people from other places, as well as foreign big shots who come to Noah through the subway.

As a hotel, the decorations here were majestic. The quality of their staff was at an equal level too. Thus, the hotel was only feasible in the royal capital.

Nicholas II frowned slightly.

In his view, this was nothing but mundane mortal stuff.

It simply spelled out as a waste of time and resources in his eyes.

Chipped gems were inlaid on the wall. If he were to ground them into gem powder and use them to craft magic reagents, their price would be twenty-folds of their current value.

The statues of these historical Great People contained "historical air", which could be used in the ritual to talk to people from the past or modify the location of nightmares based on its influence.

He could use the crystals and gold on each chandelier to create a holy shield that could withstand a single blow from the Silver Rank Destruction Wizard—even the furniture made of high-quality wood was a waste, in his opinion.

These woods were not the best woods for furniture. They were expensive because they could be used for ritual after treatment, not because of their excellent quality as wood.

It was simply a collection of wasting resources.

Nicholas II was disgusted by it. He could not help but feel a little contempt for the person he could be meeting.

However, this contempt quickly dissipated when he saw the other party.

Sitting in the room was a spirit who had lost his head.

Indeed, the spirit had lost its head.

He sat securely in the seat, and only his head was empty. The light converged to the head, allowing it to regenerate slowly.

“Who are you?” Nicholas II asked politely.

The other party spoke warmly and kindly, “You can call me Bernardino.

“I know who you are, and I know your father.”

“But, my father doesn't know you.” Nicholas II searched his memory silently but responded indifferently and vigilantly.

He did not have memories of the original Nicholas knowing the man in front of him.

The headless old man just let out a laugh and said nothing.

Then, he said plainly, “Let's speak straight to the point. I hope to get the formula for 'Hermes School Sage's Stone'.”

“That's impossible.” Nicholas II immediately rejected, and then he turned to leave.

However, Bernardino said from Nicholas II's back as he turned around, “Do you know about your father's story?”

“What?”

“—Nicholas Flamel, son of Hermes. The greatest alchemist in the world... A sage who accomplished the great deeds at the deity level as a human being,” uttered Bernardino.

He “looked” at Nicholas II and replied.

“He did not die back then... Do you know that?” Nicholas II was silent for a long time, then turned to look at Bernardino silently.

The headless Bernardinohehe smiled.

"I can first teach you the recipe for 'artificial soul' as a deposit." The headless old man said slowly, "This is something that Nicholas Flamel invented in recent years. If you go back and study it, you will know that this is Nicholas' style, but it is not in your memory.

"If you ever want to give me the technology of Sage's Stone, come and find me here."

—I will always be here.

—Waiting for you.

The headless Bernardino "stared" blankly at Nicholas II.

Nicholas II was silent for a long time, neither agreeing nor rejecting it. Instead, he stood there as if waiting for something.

Then, Bernardino laughed again and slowly revealed the recipe for "artificial soul".

He is confident that he won't be waiting here for too long.

The Righteous Player(s) C385– Alexander

Chapter 385: Alexander

As a matter of fact, Annan was taken aback when he met the former [Champion].

"Alexander Robin's" appearance was far beyond Annan's expectations.

He looked to be a middle-aged man in his fifties, height reaching at least 185 cm.

Alexander had a tan skin tone and reddish-brown hair. He had a well-defined face, deep eye sockets, a firm gaze, and a beard carefully shaved off, leaving neat stubble. There was a diagonal scar on his cheek, slanted across his lips, and approached his eyelids.

If the injury went a little further up, the blade would gouge his right eye.

His golden-orange pupils seemed to glow under the light, making Alexander look even more intimidating.

He did not look like a world-renowned banker, a legendary investor with sharp eyes, and a philanthropist known for his generosity.

Instead, he resembled a fierce fighter or stern and reliable mercenary leader. His thick and heavy hand was covered with sword marks and calluses. He would subconsciously clench his hand into fists from time to time; his steady, broad arms as he walked further illustrated this.

Although he was wearing the Silver Sire's priest robe, it looked more like a long white suit jacket. However, the muscles in his shoulders propped up the robe and even grew a little wrinkle due to the muscles.

This middle-aged man seems to be the type who can happily chat with Delicious Wind Goose. This was the first thought that popped into Annan's mind.

They say that proper fitness attracts the opposite sex, but excessive fitness attracts the same sex.

He and Delicious Wind Goose are similar in height and size. It's just that his skin seemed rough and thick, while the Delicious Wind Goose's skin is quite fair.

Sure enough, the most noticeable difference was that Alexander had hair... thick hair. On the other hand, Delicious Wind Goose had sacrificed his hair for strength.

After leading Annan and the Paper Princess to his office, Mr. Alexander invited the Paper Princess and Annan to sit across the table, and then he returned to his seat with a hearty smile, "Hey, did I scare you?"

He spoke charismatically, "Am I a little different from what you have imagined?"

"Yes." Annan nodded with the corners of his mouth rising. He almost laughed aloud, "But it's not really a shock.

"After all, I've also seen a Silver Sire priest about the same size as you." Annan was talking about Salvatore's friend, Priest Louis. In a sense, Alexander and Annan could at least be regarded as friends of friends. It was a good connection.

Of course, Annan would address him as "Knight Louis" the next time they met.

"Oh?" Alexander raised his brows and asked, "Is he from the Silver Hand? He is also in the capital, ready to become a Silver Knight."

"Do you know him?" Annan blinked, not particularly surprised.

After all, the Silver Knights were composed of the same bunch of people.

Old Bread had introduced him to meet Alexander to learn swordsmanship, which showed that Alexander was not stingy in hiding his skills.

Since Alexander was the best Silver Knight in swordsmanship, there would be many young Silver Knights and reserve Silver Knights who wanted to learn from him. So it was not surprising that he knew Louis.

However, if Annan were to look closely...

Alexander reached out his hand and tapped on the table. He laughed cheerfully and raised his voice a bit, "Is it that kid, Louis?"

"Yes, I met him at the Freezing Water Port."

"En, he was indeed dispatched to the Freezing Water Port. He's a good boy. It's no surprise that he took on a mission so dangerous and life-threatening."

Alexander's voice returned calm again, "He is my pride. He's the same like his father."

Eh?

Annan was a little surprised, "He's your...?"

"He's my nephew." Alexander said slowly, "His father is my younger brother and a Silver Knight. I'm the captain of the Silver Hand. When he was still in the Silver Hand, I taught him personally.

“When he was investigating the case of a Black Widow's believer who poisoned the well and caused the death of the whole village, his wife was killed in revenge. At that time, Louis was just born, and my wife raised the kid in our house back then.

“At that time, Louis' father utilized a hefty ritual, which rendered his state unstable. Later, he died on his progress to purify the nightmare. When he finally became a demon, I executed him myself.

“I agreed to his last request and took care of his son for him. When I was young, I made a sterilization oath and abstinence oath for stronger power. So, I also took Louis as my son.”

I see.

No wonder.

In that case, Louis and Alexander's physiques were not much different. In Noah, there were not many men taller than 180 cm. The average height of male adult elves was almost 180 cm tall, but the oasis humans were shorter.

After looking closely, their hair color was a little red, but it was not the same tone. Their faces were somewhat similar. It was just that compared to Alexander, who was like a lion and seemed to be angry at any time, his nephew Louis looks much gentler and calmer. His skin was much fairer, and his body had fewer scars.

But another question came to Annan's mind.

Seemingly realizing Annan's doubts, Alexander said, “Are you trying to ask me why I let Louis go to the Freezing Water Port?”

“I'm just a little curious.” Annan nodded and explained, “After all, you should also know that the Freezing Water Port is too dangerous.

“Having the nightmare successfully purified has nothing to do with Louis. This is a mission that he can't handle. Why send him?”

“It's not that I want him to do it, but someone has to do it. It's been many years since the Freezing Water Port's nightmare corrupted the last priest. Before he became a demon, he took poison and died before turning into a demon after being summoned to the capital. But, he died with honor as a human being.

“But after that, we don't know what happened to the Freezing Water Port. We understand that the Venerated Skeleton has been there for a long time, trying to hold some ritual. Again, Freezing Water Port is a border area, and we need to send a priest and bring the place under control.

“This is a difficult nightmare that has not been purified for 50 years, at least one priest needs to be sent to monitor it. There needs to be a messenger reporting to the capital or Roseburg as soon as possible before it's too late. The Freezing Water Port has to be purified before bad things happen.”

Alexander said calmly, “Actually, we didn't plan to recruit a 'purifier' at first, and we just planned to recruit a 'watcher'. There is no need to choose a young and capable Silver Hand with a bright future. We just need to send an old bishop to take over.

“For other distortion-level nightmares, 'monitoring' is much simpler. He has to enter the nightmare and carefully observe the changes in the nightmare, and then exit in time. But in this nightmare, you will lose your memory if you're not careful. The more you want to 'survey' the place, the more you're lured to 'purifying' it.”

This was a dead end.

In any case, the dedicated must try to purify the nightmare. However, the more the person got involved, the easier it was for the nightmare to corrupt him with the curse and kill him in the nightmare.

Annan finally understood.

That was why Louis could not understand the mechanics of the nightmare, and did not explore the mechanics.

In the case of purifying his nightmares through luck, he confronted [Nightmare: Gallery] head-on and walked silently forward in the infinite nightmare corridors without turning his head back.

He was sticking to his mission.

He did not explore the nightmare further so that he could survive longer.

That was to prevent others from taking his place and stop others from being sacrificed.

Annan finally realized it. The nightmare the players and he used as a “dungeon instance” to upgrade their levels meant something else for the “indigenous people”.

They were actually—nightmares.

The Righteous Player(s) C386– Upright Deity

Chapter 386: Upright Deity

Freezing Water Port's “Gallery” had proven that the distorted nightmares could grow and heal if left alone.

According to the Silver Sire Church, nightmares could grow to the point where they affect reality directly.

Worse still, Silver Sire Church could not do anything about the “Gallery”.

The nightmare was not a mechanism that could be solved through “brute force”. Although the priests had a significant advantage in the field of nightmares compared to ordinary people, nightmares were still relatively fair to everyone.

There was no guarantee for any challenger to purify a nightmare successfully.

The typical outcome would be having some sacrificed. In a sense, it was using human life as disposable and utilizing the erosion of their souls in exchange for more opportunities to see the full picture of the nightmare.

Then, they would try to purify the nightmare and stop its expansion and growth. That was the second stage of the mission.

Annan couldn't help but ask, "So, no one wants to go in the end?"

"No, many have already prepared to sacrifice themselves."

Alexander shook his head lightly, denying, "There are many bishops in the capital who have left office. They can no longer supervise a territory alone because they are too old or because their erosion rate is too high.

"However, they are ready for the final sacrifice at any time. As long as they're needed, they can go to places and use their rich experience and last reasoning to peer into the hardest and most dangerous nightmare rules, or purify them directly."

"It was just because Louis was the first to sign up when he learned that someone needed help and that someone had to put himself in danger.

"No one else in the Silver Hand signed up except him. But that was beyond reproach because Lord Pope did not intend to choose 'victims' from the Silver Hand. We have a rich 'reserve team', and we even have a respected elder being on standby near the Freezing Water Port."

Alexander sighed and spoke in a complicated tone, "But Louis... he is an earnest man. He thinks from the bottom of his heart that he needs to use his life to help others. He firmly believes that the youngsters, who have more reasoning to resist erosion, can last longer than the elders. Thus, he went for the mission. I recognize and respect his choice."

Annan remained silent for a long time after Alexander finished speaking. He felt that something was surging in his heart.

However, Annan was still able to maintain calm amid the surging emotions because of [Winter Heart].

"I see." After a long time, Annan slowly exhaled, "I thought that with the Silver Sire here, you wouldn't have any hardships that can't be solved. My perception of the Gallery is false. I'm deeply sorry about it."

Hearing this, Alexander laughed heartily, "What is there to apologize for? You helped Louis defeat this nightmare, and I should thank you for that.

"You're still too young, Your Highness Annan. Not everything the deity knows is right..."

"Including Silver Sire?" Annan hesitated before asking in a low voice.

After all, they were at the Noah First Bank.

The highest church in the Silver Sire was above the First Bank's warehouse. It could be less than 500 meters away from here.

It wasn't nice having a Silver Knight speak ill of Silver Sire at this distance.

However, Alexander had no scruples about it.

He waved his hand casually, "Of course, don't be nervous. Even though you're not wearing that outfit, I know you're the one Silver Sire favors. Silver Sire doesn't mind this kind of thing."

Alexander looked at Annan and teased, "Why? Is it a surprise for me to say such a thing?"

“To be honest, it caught me off guard.” Annan nodded honestly.

The complex relationship between the priests and the deity did not match his common sense.

Alexander brushed through it with a smile and suddenly asked, “Your Royal Highness Annan, do you think transcoders are the same species as mortals?”

“I think so,” Annan answered quickly.

“Isn't that clear?”

The middle-aged man who gave people a sense of reliability laughed, “Transcoders are just mighty and noble mortals, and deities are only stronger and more noble than transcoders.

“There is no naturally born deity in this world. It's just that the souls of upright deities rose from the earth a long, long time ago. It's normal for deities to lie, make mistakes, and get angry. “

Speaking of which, Alexander glanced at the Paper Princess next to Annan.

The Paper Princess nodded, turned her head to look at Annan, and said, “Annan, don't be too afraid of deities. We were all mortals once.”

“Even the twelve upright deities?”

“Of course. The difference between upright deities and subordinate deities with ordinary false deities is that we never die. We would expect rebirth on our respective Holy Day every year if we were dead. That's what 'Remembrance Day' is all about.”

The Paper Princess explained slowly, “It's not necessarily that all upright deities are stronger than false deities. They are stronger because their domain is essential and survived for long, not because they are stronger upright deities.

“There is no need to eat, drink, sleep, and no lifespan constraints. We can use the power of elements infinitely and bestow believers power. Other than those, there is no essential difference between deity and the powerful Truth Rank transcoder.”

No, I think the difference is already huge. Annan thought so in his heart.

A question that had troubled Annan for a long time finally arose in his heart at this moment.

In the presence of a Senior Silver Knight and a subordinate deity, perhaps he could get the answer to his question, “Then, why is an upright deity an upright deity?”

Annan asked the Paper Princess, “What is the essential difference between an upright deity and a false deity? Can this question be answered?”

“Ha, it's the same question again!”

“Have I also asked this question back then?” Annan was stunned.

“Yes. The first question you ever asked me about the deities was this. This knowledge is not a deep secret, nor is it too burdensome for you. I suppose I can tell you.”

The Paper Princess organized the answer in her heart, silently screened through her words, and then slowly said, "Let's put it this way, Annan.

"At least in the first era, there was no difference between 'upright deity' and 'false deity', and there was not even the title of 'deity'. Although at that time, twelve upright deities have already become deities.

"At that time, in the language of the elves, they addressed a 'deity' as 'feudal lord'. The centaurs called them the 'living pillars', the dragons called them the 'kings', and the giants called them the 'elders'. Everything changes at the end of the First Age.

"The fall of a 'deity' has led to the demise of the realm under his control in the world. In fact, the fall of a deity has happened many times. Each time it has caused some concepts to be wiped entirely from the world, but only that one case was particularly serious.

"I can't tell you exactly what concept was erased. That knowledge is too heavy for your current soul to bear... At least you won't understand until you reach the Gold Rank and complete the perfect 'dyeing' process.

"You only need to know that the race 'demon' was born at that time. With the lack of a certain concept, the 'people' can become 'demons'. This led to the Epoch Disaster of the First Age.

"To avoid repeating the same mistakes, all the deities joined forces to arrange a grand ritual later at the beginning of the Second Age. They divided the year into twelve parts, called 'twelfth months'. We utilize the power of time and history to preserve the twelve most important deities, guaranteeing that they will not die and avoid the disintegration of the realms associated with them that are capable of bringing the demise of the world or civilization.

"Subordinate deities come later. With the increase of false deities, the number of important and immortal deities increases. After they are born, there will be upright deities to invite them into their subordinate deities, giving each of them a portion of the power of rebirth, just for safety.

"Apart from the ability to be reborn as time passes, the subordinate deities are virtually indistinguishable from false deities."

The Paper Princess concluded, "That is not because upright deities are 'powerful' enough, but because they are 'important' enough.

"They are the twelve pillars that support the world. As long as they are still there, the world will not be destroyed."

The Righteous Player(s) C387– The Memory Fragments of Annan's First Life

Chapter 387: The Memory Fragments of Annan's First Life

Are upright deities the pillars of the world?

When Annan heard this statement, a chill surged up from his neck. A deep buzzing rang in his mind.

In that instance, many hallucinations afflicted Annan.

It was like hearing someone whispering words that he could not understand behind him, and the rustling voice in his ears was incessant;

It was like seeing a stranger looking at him silently in a dusty space, and a chill crept upon his heart;

Annan felt like he was in a space with all the surrounding folks smoking, filling the air with substantial smoke that he could not even open his eyes. Soon, he struggled to breathe due to his throat being overly dry and thus constantly coughing, "Cough, cough—"

What is this?

The Paper Princess and Alexander's figures in Annan's vision suddenly began to blur.

As Annan coughed, smoke and dust stirred up a haze. Its density was enough to obstruct the healthy air around him, painting his entire world gray.

Sure enough, Annan had already realized that he should have triggered a specific condition and then fell into a hallucination somewhere.

When the surrounding smoke cleared, Annan tried his best to peek into the fog.

A few fragments of memory flashed before his eyes.

A white-haired woman who looked somewhat similar to the Paper Princess, but was taller with a majestic face and a cold and stern temperament, appeared in front of Annan, "Annan. Anna." ** (Raw: "——安南。安娜。")

She spoke in the dragon language. Her voice was low and complicated, "Is this the name you gave yourself? I shall allow it. I will speak for you to your father."

Then, the second memory was: "Your luck is not bad."

The blond little girl, playing with dice, appeared to be around twelve years old. She had smiling eyes like a crescent moon, "At least this year..."

"...next year? Well... the next year isn't for you."

"I'm already at the Eighth Luminary, and you will be the Seventh Luminary."

The sixteen-year-old boy in a white robe with white hair and fair skin had colorful rainbow lights in his eyes. He said with a gentle smile and a clear voice, "Divine Transporter, don't make us wait too long."

"Frostborn." The black-haired blacksmith with burly muscles and a naked upper body was covered with scars. Every scar was shining like lava. At first glance, he seemed to be a man who was not good with words.

He looked at the blueprint in his hand and frowned, "This is weird. A Frostborn is looking for something new. Can your heart still freeze?"

"Fine. It's called an internal combustion engine, right? It's not utilizing the boiling heat but the intense heat of the explosion. I will remember that. That's a good idea. I'll give it a try."

“Nice story. You call it — Hamlet, don't you.” The prideful old man with an aquiline nose and deep eyes put down the manuscript, tapped the armrest rhythmically with one hand, and looked over with a half-smile, “But, you didn't craft this. I can feel it. These stories don't belong to you.

“Don't repeat other people's stories, boy. You might as well tell me about your life in another world. That's your own story.”

“I can feel it.” The beautiful woman with long blood-colored hair on the ground and a thick crimson pope robe showed a gentle smile of compassion, magic, and motherhood. She held a blood-filled gold cup in both hands and placed it in front of her lower abdomen.

She knelt behind Annan, with Annan's head resting between her chest and staring straight at the blood in the Holy Grail in front of her belly. She lowered her eyes softly, touched the top of Annan's head with her warm chin and neck, and whispered in a dreamy voice, “What you long for is flawless light. You long for the fire of justice.

“You will have light as your blood and fire as your heart — the Pillar of the Divine Transporter.” Under the woman, the long hair and robes that touched the ground turned into dark red bloodstains. Behind her dragged a carpet of blood from the other side straight to this place.

“Is that your choice, Annan?” The youth girl had silver hair, purple eyes, and a gorgeous face. She seemed to be about eighteen years old, looking over at Annan with some anxiety, “The path of justice? You don't need to listen to the Cup-holding Lady.

“‘The Heart of Justice’ is the fussiest sacred bone. With all due respect, it certainly won't bat an eye on you. Why don't you try ‘perseverance’ or ‘patience’?” The girl was sitting in the arms of a black-haired woman four or five years older than the girl. Notably, the woman's eyes were wrapped in a strip of black cloth. Her lips were tightly shut without uttering a word. She had the silver-haired girl sit on her lap and wrapped the girl in her arms.

But, Annan somehow felt that the woman was conveying something silently.

But just as Annan tried to listen, he suddenly realized that it was just a dream.

Immediately afterward, Annan vaguely heard something.

“Annan? Annan?” He heard the anxious cries of the Paper Princess.

He suddenly woke up from his dream.

At this time, Annan realized that he was resting on the table, and the Paper Princess was concerned and nervous. She hugged Annan's shoulders from behind and put a hand on Annan's forehead.

She felt Annan woke up at the first moment and was relieved, “What's wrong?”

The Paper Princess helped Annan sit up and asked, “You have triggered a ritual. I saw traces of the Silent Lady, so I didn't dare to interrupt.”

“That's the correct move...don't...interrupt...it...” Annan felt his voice becoming hoarse.

The more he spoke, the more he felt like voices refused to leave his mouth. Finally, he opened his mouth but could not say anything.

At this moment, the Paper Princess suddenly reacted. "Wait, I get it. Annan, calm down. Stop trying to speak."

She comforted Annan a little, patted Annan's back while looking at Alexander, and asked, "Is there a glass container? I need it to be pure glass. Water glass and an ashtray are also fine. It's better to be bigger."

"Ah...wait a minute." Alexander nodded, turned around, and walked to the back.

With a ferocious face but offering a sense of security, this man quickly took out a fish tank with some water droplets remaining in it from the inner room.

No one knew where the fish in it went.

"Does it need to be wiped clean? Is this big enough?" He asked the Paper Princess.

The Paper Princess shook her head and looked at the fish tank with a bit of hesitation, "It's a little too big, but that's fine."

She put the tank on the table and asked Annan to stand up. Then, he put her hands on the tank and put her wrists under the bask of sunlight.

"Remember not to speak. If I don't let you speak, so don't say a word." After warning Annan, the Paper Princess made a light cut on Annan's slender wrist with her fingernails while whispering, "Silence befalls this urn... Forgetting blood returns to this urn."

Blood gushed from Annan's wrist in an instant.

However, it was not crimson red blood, and it was not dark red either.

The viscous liquid was like a gray-black paste as thick as ink. As soon as it appeared, it was like escaping from the sun, flowing quickly over the skin and falling from the fingertips.

It did not leave the slightest trace on Annan's skin or even discolor his skin.

Looking at this thing, Annan instantly thought of the filling of black sesame dumplings and then thought of the ready-made black sesame paste.

"This is the 'Silent One's Ointment'." The Paper Princess explained to the curious Annan, "It is also called 'the Forgetting Blood', and it is a high-level curse material."

The Righteous Player(s) C388– The Silent One's Ointment & Black Widow

Chapter 388: The Silent One's Ointment & Black Widow

Even though Annan still had doubts, he followed the Paper Princess' instruction to "stay silent". Thus, he did not ask questions immediately.

Under the sunlight, "the Silent One's Ointment" was slowly drained. As they flowed out of the blood vessels, Annan felt that the strange feeling of having dust stuck in his throat was quickly relieved.

It was not until about 80 ml of the “black sesame paste” poured out of Annan's wrist that Finally, the ointment-like blood stopped draining out.

After the Forgetting Blood was drained, Annan's blood did not flow out and contaminate the liquid.

Although the bright red scar was still there with the blood within visible, the blood seemed to stop by a transparent preservative film. It accumulated on the wound but stopped flowing out.

Then, an eraser appeared between the Paper Princess' fingers.

She took the eraser and rubbed it on Annan's wrist, wiping away his wound directly.

At this point, the Forgetting Blood had filled up the fish tank for at least two fingers' height.

The liquid in the fish tank could no longer be called blood.

It was a mass of gray ink that seemed to have come to life.

To avoid the sun, the mass of gray ink shrank to the shady side of the fish tank, shivering.

“Okay, now you may talk.” The Paper Princess breathed a sigh of relief, indicating that Annan did not need to remain silent any longer, and asked again, “By the way, can you sell the Silent One's Ointment to me? I can use them to paint a picture for you, which may help bring back some of your memories or get some kind of new influence.”

“Sure, but I'm just wondering what it's used for.” Annan frowned slightly and asked probingly, “Or what's its purpose? It's not that I won't sell it to you. It's just to satisfy my curiosity.”

“That,” Alexander stood by, folded his arms in thought, “I've heard of it.

“The Silent One's Ointment can be used to make poison. For example, it can make a person mute. Some Black Widow's church members will use this poison to make themselves mute to win the sympathy of others. Then, they will take the antidote when needed and get their voices back.”

“Not an antidote.” The Paper Princess explained, “It's the ritual I just performed. That's the only way to get the ointment out. If Annan spoke just now, the remnants of the Silent One's Ointment in his body would immediately turn into a gaseous state and evaporate quickly.

“The ointment is not poison, but a gift from the Silent Lady after directly begging the Silent Lady to 'make me forget something'. After recalling the memory, there's a chance to acquire it by cutting the wrist. Unfortunately, the source of this material is limited and scarce.”

Then, the Paper Princess glanced at Annan with complicated eyes.

Annan vaguely realized something.

Sure enough, the Paper Princess explained, “Since it is the 'rejected memory', the memory you can't remember has been entirely dissolved by the Silent Lady's power within you. The more thorough the memory is erased, the greater the amount of ointment.

“Its realm lies within the 'negation of silence' concept, which can neutralize the toxins accumulated in the blood. After neutralization, the toxins are excreted from the body over time. From this point of view, it is equivalent to a liver.

“When the ointment is diluted with the Mysterious Ritual, it can be made into the [Mixture of Lost Things]. The significance of this is that the mixture can still be 1/12 or even 1/10 as potent when diluted a hundredfold. The purpose of diluting it is because the material is too precious.

“After the injection of the mixture, the victim won't be able to speak, but at the same time, they won't get drunk and be immune to truth serum and sleeping pills. This allows the spies to keep calm at all times. Its biggest advantage is the difficulty in resolving the mixture. It doesn't rely on the toxicity of the new reagent but its dosage. Only when the new reagent surpasses the active ingredient of the ointment will the new reagent take effect.

“Generally speaking, the lethal poisons that can kill people quickly are quite expensive. Thus, the poisoner won't simply inject a hundred folds of the lethal dose. At the same time, the active ingredients of the mixture will neutralize with the poison and then simultaneously lose the 'mute' effect.”

“Even if the target is afflicted with a strong curse or injected with a strong poison directly, it will only turn the ointment into a dormant state of detoxification for a long time. Although the efficacy of this part of the ointment is ineffective, losing the 'mute' ability temporarily. However, those poisons won't be able to hurt the target. In a sense, the mixture is even more advanced than the liver.

“Thus, the Black Widow's believers injected the Forgetting Blood not to gain sympathy but to improve their tolerance to poison. This way, they can store some poison in their bodies or keep themselves safe from being poisoned to death.”

“So that's the case?” Alexander's eyes widened slightly, obviously thinking of a lot of things in an instant.

The Paper Princess explained to Annan what kind of deity Black Widow was.

The evil deity was not a class but a name.

An innocent deity or church in one place might be an evil deity in another country or even another region. Taking Black Widow for example, she was the deity many lurkers had their faith in, the Deity of Poison and Spider.

Regarding profession strength alone, choosing the advancement as the “Spider Whisperer” and the “Spider Walker” were excellent choices.

No matter it was the spider's ability to crawl silently on the ceiling or wall, or the spider's ability to spit out viscous cobwebs and the varieties of poison-making techniques, they were highly practical. Thus, many people would pick the faith in Black Widow, particularly lurkers who sought to master poison skills. There were also wizards and wizard apprentices, who had no hope of advancement, picking up this faith too.

But She was also the Deity of Poison.

Black Widow's body was a massive poisonous spider. She was one of the very few deities who would request a living sacrifice. She would impose a passive curse on Her believers, making them kill one person every month with the designated poison She bestowed.

After poisoning the person, the believer had to find a way to take a certain part of the victim's body as proof of the ritual. This area must be poisoned, so it would usually be the liver. Sometimes, a highly effective poison would require only the hair, neck, or nails as evidence.

When this poison almost killed the murderer, the Black Widow would detoxify him personally and give the believer a complete immunity to this poison. She would also provide a reward according to Her mood. It could be ritual, divine art, holy light engraving, mutation toward a spider, or a new poison.

That was the believers' "mission".

Therefore, the Black Widow was considered an evil deity in the Noah Kingdom, the United Kingdom, the Austere-Winter Dukedom, and the Papal Kingdom.

Only in the Underground Federation that Black Widow was not alienated but existed as a common false deity. So, Black Widow's churches were established underground.

However, considering everyone who worshiped the Spider Cult had someone around them die every month, their density was limited. Otherwise, they would be easily discovered.

So even in the excluded Three Kingdoms, there would be many people who worship Black Widow. If other believers find that people of the same faith had strayed into their "web", even they would poison the brothers and sisters in the same faith.

Worse still, they often target those of the same faith first.

That was because every Spider Deity worshiper with unknown origins might expose their initially stable life.

Silver Sire's priority had always been the mission of uprooting these evil deities, arresting and executing the evil deity believers.

Hearing this, Annan suddenly thought of a person.

Joseph Buckel...

The Righteous Player(s) C389– The Entangled Fate

Chapter 389: The Entangled Fate

Joseph Buckel... Elle's biological father, the "Brother Hammer" in the Gallery nightmare.

At that time, Elle Morrison's name was also called Elle Buckel.

Elle's mother (Clara) was Joseph's apprentice back then. At that time, Joseph left Elle and divorced Clara because she planned to use this child to blackmail Joseph.

She sought more benefits from Joseph, like becoming a real wizard or even a Great Wizard and mentor.

Actually, Joseph had already given her a lot of things.

After Annan cleared the Gallery nightmare and spoke to Joseph about the outcome, he explained the whole truth to Annan, which was the last piece of the story.

In fact, Clara had no talent at all to become a wizard.

Joseph had provided many occult knowledge to Claire, including the tome written by someone from the Austere-Winter family in regards to the Black Widow, the tome about the Venerated Skeleton, and many books of other deities.

His intention was clear.

Joseph knew she did not have the talent to become a wizard, so he gave her the books, hoping she could become a ritualist.

Claire was not the kind of person who was particularly keen on being a wizard anyway. Instead, she learned spells hoping the magic could improve her status and become a great person.

It was just that Joseph did not imagine Claire chose to become “the Spider Whisperer” in the end.

He did not want to be with a Black Widow's believer for long.

After all, he could be poisoned to death unknowingly.

However, Joseph ended up having his family break apart because of his fault.

Clara was elected to the White Tower back then because of his recommendation. At that time, Clara had not started to believe in Black Widow, nor had she come into contact with the taste of power and wealth. She was fourteen years old, an innocent and lovely young girl.

Simply put, Joseph lusted for her, and he changed the trajectory of her life.

As to what Clara looked like, that could be seen from Elle.

Her family background was ordinary.

Her father was a dock worker, and her mother was a female textile factory worker. Not to mention that she wasn't from a noble family and hardly knew any words. Her biggest advantage was her outstanding appearance and willingness to endure hardship.

That was why Joseph fell in love with her. He even made Clara his Silver Rank Secret Keeper. The oath power immediately boosted Clara on some Perception attributes, barely allowing her to pass the exam.

By the way, Annan's secret keeper was Dove, who guarded him during the advancement process. Then, he told Kafni about it later, just in case.

There was no additional value in the secrecy anyway.

It was just that “his left eye could not see anything”. Other than that, it was not much.

After Annan found out that the “curse” of Silver Rank could improve his attributes, he planned to set it as a reward for the players' main mission of the next phase. That would not only strengthen the players but also show that he trusted the players and strengthen the oath power.

In a way, it was “three birds” with one stone.

However, Joseph did not expect Clara's personality to change quickly after being invited to enter the White Tower. She had already learned of Joseph's curse and gradually began to blackmail him.

It might not be at the level of blackmailing, but she did keep asking Joseph for more things.

Instead, it was precisely because she was used to a hard life and lacked a sense of security that she cared more about her future quality of life. Due to Joseph's desire to be in control, she did not get to know other wizards, so she could only ask Joseph for more stuff.

In her original life trajectory, she should marry a foreman, a government clerk, or a teacher. If she was lucky, she might marry a young priest.

Unless this priest suddenly advanced to the bishop level, she would never be able to achieve a rank promotion in her life.

After she came into contact with the wizard's world, this became possible.

As long as she could graduate to become an official wizard, she would be hired by the local nobles, and she would not be worried about her daily necessities for a lifetime. Even the nobles had to respect her. Coupled with her well-cared-for appearance and figure, she could become a noble lady if lucky.

Even though the status of a Silver Rank Great Wizard was much higher than that of the local nobles.

Clara still wanted Joseph to get a title, preferably a fief, or get more money. But, Joseph knew he did not need that.

As an Edict Wizard, he was the only transducer with “the ability to detect falsehoods”. He could verify the owner of an item, interpret whether the other party was lying, carrying poisons and dangerous items, check the cause of wounds, see people's real names, and space manipulation abilities. For example, pushing someone away or swapping the two people's locations.

The Edict school was the most convenient wizard school in real life.

He would be the best cop, detective, and bodyguard. Any nobleman must befriend at least one Edict Wizard, or else trouble would come.

If Edict Wizard had his territory and title, doing things would be much more inconvenient. It was because he was no longer impartial.

However, Clara could not understand it. She even contacted some jobs and asked him to use his spells to do some illegal things. If Joseph refused, Clara would mention that Joseph, her mentor, did not allow her to graduate and advance to become a wizard.

That was actually the direct cause of the intensification of their conflicts.

Considering the age...

Louis was 30 years old this year, and his father died shortly after his birth. Moreover, he was personally taught by his uncle, Alexander when he was in the Silver Knight. Thus, the time when Alexander executed the mission should be 50 years ago. At the same time, Elle's mother died forty-six years ago.

So, Joseph might have even fought against Alexander back then.

It was because of a major problem with intelligence that Alexander must have spared many people, perhaps including Elle's mother.

Annan thought of this, so he immediately asked, "Your Excellency Alexander, do you know a man named Joseph Buckel?"

"Where is he from?" Perhaps because the time was too long, Alexander was confused for a while.

After Annan reminded him that this was about Freezing Water Port 45 years ago, Alexander soon came to a realization.

"Do you mean the 'Hand of Justice' Buckel? I know him, but I haven't seen him in a long time. He is probably dead.

"Yes, I've seen him. I was hunting down his ex-wife, who believed in Black Widow. Even though I failed in arresting her in the end, she broke her limit and concocted a poison capable of killing me as I pushed her to the edge. However, she was inadequate and died because of the backlash of the ritual's failure."

He shook his head regretfully, "It's a pity because I did not intend to kill her even though she would be subjected to death penalty if arrested. However, Buckel had already talked to me at the time."

When Alexander talked about it, he paused and added calmly, "I accepted his bribe. Of course, it was within the scope of the 'transaction' allowed by the Silver Sire. After all, his ex-wife believed in Black Widow not long ago, which she only had the time to kill one person. She almost killed her second husband, but luckily I came just in time, and the man survived. I remember that the man seemed to be a well-known painter. I don't know the details, so I don't have a deep memory about it. Since she didn't commit multiple murders, her crime can be changed from 'living sacrifice practice' to 'murder'. If she pays for the bail fully, her punishment can be shortened to 10 years in prison.

"It's just that his ex-wife didn't trust me... or rather, she didn't trust Buckel, and she died in the end. I had taken the potion Buckel gave me, and I couldn't give it back to him. I was deeply sorry about it.

"So after he returned to the capital, I could only compensate him with my weapon. Although he did not want to accept it and said it was not my fault, I gave him the hammer in the end.

"That's my favorite curse vessel, but not the curse vessel he needs the most. So I need to give up what I treasure most to discipline myself."

Alexander sighed and said with some regret and nostalgia, "Although I know this is not in line with the value of what he handed me, this is the greatest compensation I can make."

The Paper Princess asked curiously from the side, "Is it to warn yourself to be serious about making a promise to other people?"

"No, but that's to stop myself from making random promises, especially things that I may not be able to." Alexander's eyes were calm, and his gaze was deep.

Wait, hammer? Annan was surprised.

No way?

Annan was amused.

Fate is the best and worst director.

Alexander indirectly killed Clara, which led to Amos starting to study Ritual Spell, summoning the Venerated Skeleton, betraying Elle, and eventually forming “Nightmare: Gallery”. Amos himself was killed by Buckel, who held the “Barrier Destroyer's Right Arm”.

Meanwhile, without Annan's intervention, Louis might end up dying at Freezing Water Port, given his stubbornness. Perhaps, the Angel of Betrayal had hatched by that time.

If Alexander gave that overkill hammer to Buckel, the story was connected.

This was the karma that existed even outside the nightmare.

The power of destiny.

Annan asked probingly, “Can I ask? Do you remember the name of that curse vessel?”

The answer was as expected.

“It's called 'Barrier Destroyer's Right Arm', and it's a one-handed hammer. It's a custom-made curse vessel from the blacksmith in my church.” Alexander replied with nostalgia.

The Righteous Player(s) C390– [How many Nicholas are there?]

Chapter 390: [How many Nicholas are there?]

“Your Excellency Nicholas, have you made up your mind?” Bernardino's spirit body sat on the wheelchair, tilted his head slightly, and gave Nicholas a warm and kind smile.

Nicholas II frowned slightly but said nothing.

But he still regretted it a little in his heart. When he saw Bernardino's remaining spirit body, he knew he could not kill this old man directly.

Rather, it was too late already.

Bernardino's limbs and head were restored. Thus, he had regained his complete form.

With the astral body fully restored, he could even exert pressure on Nicholas II, which surprised this artificial human.

After all, Nicholas II was stuck in the Gold Rank just because he lacked the Book of Truth.

In Nicholas' memory, only five transcendents could fight against him in the entire civilization west of the desert.

The Man in the Mirror was the strongest among them, who had successfully ascended into a deity.

Then, there was the Howling White Tower Master Michelangelo, “Time Stopper Eye,” recognized as the world's strongest wizard.

He could create artificial life forms (his stone statues) and travel through time at will. He could see the future years later at a glance and enter the timeline of the past to change the world.

His curse vessel allowed him to go back in time to a certain extent. Subsequently, he could even enter the "past" to attack enemies who were unaware and unprepared at the time and remain invincible.

It could be said that "Time Stopper Eye" was the apex of wizardry.

Only in the case of a prolonged battle would Nicholas, at his peak, have the confidence to defeat Michelangelo. In that memory, Nicholas held Sage's Stone.

The reason for the short lifespan of a Gold Rank transcender was that if they wanted to use the elemental power, they had to burn their soul. The more potent the element was used, the deeper its awakening depth would be.

But obviously, he would not survive after the soul was burnt to crisp.

Therefore, it was necessary to replenish the soul from nightmares, rituals, and rare curse vessels or increase the awakening depth of their elements.

Sage's Stone would not replenish the soul consumed, but it could act as the fuel to substitute for his soul. Moreover, its efficiency as fuel was superb.

A Sage's Stone made by a Bronze Rank Wizard could replace about 1/10 of the Gold Rank Wizard's soul. At Silver Rank, it made up to 50% of the soul. At the same time, a brief battle (3~5 minutes) usually only used about 3% of the soul.

Of course, the Sage's Stone meant more than increasing resourcefulness.

It could quickly increase the awakening depth of all elements to 100%.

In fact, the four elements that Nicholas had awakened were raised to 100%, granting him the capability to overwhelm ordinary Gold Rank transcendents.

But when Nicholas II faced Michelangelo, he had no chance of winning.

Such was the strength of Michelangelo.

It was an old man who could fiddle with time and soul.

He was even stronger than the Venerated Skeleton and the Rotten Man.

Among the only three deities who did not rely on the Book of Truth to attain deityhood, the Venerated Skeleton and the Rotten Man were still incomplete. The Venerated Skeleton was already considered a deity to some extent, but he was missing half of the truth. Likewise, the Rotten Man could only be regarded as a half-deity.

The Man in the Mirror Michelangelo was the first deity in the true sense who did not rely on the Book of Truth and was a perfect deity.

Not only was the ritual complete and perfect, but his ritual was also sealed in the distant past. Therefore, those who wanted to ruin the ritual would have to travel to the past.

At the same time, the Man in the Mirror had the total grasp of the authority to travel back to the past in his hands.

The only difference between using the Book of Truth and ritual was that the Book of Truth existed in the body and was integrated into the soul. On the other hand, the ritual that existed outside the body was limited to a certain region.

As long as the ritual was destroyed, the related false deity would fall.

For example, the Venerated Skeleton's ritual area was the skeleton buried in the Elegy Dukedom. As long as these skeletons were dug up and reburied, the Venerated Skeleton would lose its power and fall directly.

In this aspect, the Rotten Man was better off than the Venerated Skeleton.

His ritual was not completed yet. Thus, his power was far lesser than that of a typical deity. Even the saint who inherited the sacred bone could confront him.

However, it was hard to seek him out.

After the Man in the Mirror had accumulated a period of newly acquired truth, he might be able to ascend directly to a higher position than the Venerated Skeleton and the Rotten Man.

However, that was not the case for Bernardino.

There was no trace of this man in Nicholas II's inherited memory. He had never heard of this person.

Originally, Nicholas II thought that this was because Bernardino was not strong and acted in a low-key manner, so Nicholas had no knowledge of him.

But now, after Bernardino's spiritual body was restored, Nicholas II felt a distinct pressure emitting from him.

It was an entirely different power level compared to when Bernardino's soul was incomplete.

The previous state was probably accumulating power or performing a seal on himself.

At this moment, it was definitely a life-threatening level of pressure on Nicholas.

This not only made Nicholas II doubt his memory if something went wrong.

In fact, Nicholas traveled the world for more than 100 years.

How can I have never heard of such a strong Gold Rank transcender?

Or did Nicholas deliberately erase all memory related to Bernardino?

Is it because "Father" doesn't want procreation with Bernardino?

"If you agree, I'll tell you the secrets about your father and your background." Bernardino had a mysterious, gentle smile on his face.

He said slowly, "It's something you don't know and can't recall."

“I swear. If you don't know about this, you'll regret it one day.”

“Then, if I know about this, will I still not regret it?” Nicholas II asked rhetorically. The old man just smiled and said nothing.

The suave, white-haired youth stared at the old man's spirit body, thinking quietly and silently.

Perhaps, this is a trap.

Maybe Nicholas didn't want me to know this man.

Maybe, that's why...

I want to...

“I can agree to that.” Nicholas II replied, “But one of the ingredients of Hermetic Sage's Stone is the fresh marrow of a wizard. It is not an easy-to-get material.”

Nicholas II was aware that this might stir up a massive turmoil, and even Father Stone might find out about it. Worse still, it could be Father Stone releasing his soul to lure Bernardino into a trap.

But he had a clear intuition in his heart.

If I refuse him, I will definitely regret it.

“It doesn't matter.” Bernardino said slowly, “While we're at it, before you tell me the recipe, I will pay you a friendly deposit. You can also use it as a gift.

“[How many Nicholas are there?].” The corner of the old man's mouth rose slightly, “You better think about this matter.

“Think with your heart, Nicholas.”