

## The Righteous Player(s)

Chapter 441: So Annan, What's The Price You're Paying?

Salvatore certainly knew what Sacred Fire was.

The first master of the Swamp's Black Tower was Prometheus, the "Fire Stealer".

In the endless desert, the most dangerous thing was not the scorching sun.

Instead, it was the boundless darkness when night fell.

That living desert would devour the people inside when night falls. In other words, they would be engulfed by the sand underfoot as long as the [Light] was lost in the desert.

So to get through the endless desert, there needed to be enough lights and fuel.

The hardest part was the fuel.

Ordinary flames had limited illumination range in the desert. The darkness in the desert had become something with texture and weight.

To solve this lightless dilemma, an elf named Prometheus chose the advancement into becoming a "Fire Stealer".

He stole the "Third Luminary" of the sun: "the bright fire that burns forever".

Using his flesh and wisdom as fuel, he extracted the "Endless Fire" — "Sacred Fire" in people's mouths. A bright white flame that burned forever as long as people were still thinking.

People rushed out of the living desert with torches blazing Sacred Fire.

At that time, Prometheus was as dry as a corpse. He looked like a lanky ghost with a thin waist, and his legs and arms were slender enough to be held by an eight-year-old girl with a single hand.

At that time, the Mysterious Lady had 24 wizard towers to be built all over Yaselan to support the Great Barrier.

Aside from the primary responsibility to "just exist", each wizard tower had a different meaning and mission.

Swamp's Black Tower was meant to produce "Sacred Fire".

Sacred Fire was one of the top cursed materials. It was the necessary flame for Father Flint in his craft. The fire was capable of gradually affecting the mortals within its range, granting clarity to their minds. At the same time, it could also be used as an Order Power, blessing the transcender holding the torch and rushing out beyond the barrier.

The Gray Mists could not enter the range of the Sacred Fire.

During the heyday of the Yasefan Empire, there were Sacred Fire stations all over the empire. Each Sacred Fire stand was a giant statue of a hero.

The elf sages sat in front of the statues, meditating or debating intensely. They would offer their wits to keep the Sacred Fire burning. However, people no longer needed the Sacred Fire to resist the Gray Mists when the Great Barrier was built.

Its significance was to remind people not to forget the sacrifice of the sages in the past and make a commemoration of them.

However, all the Sacred Fire stations went out during the Blood War.

War had exhausted people's minds. The more important mission of the wise people was to assist the lord in conquering the world instead of expanding their knowledge.

At the current state, the Sacred Fire could only be obtained through the Fire Stealer.

Hugo was currently the only fire stealer in the world.

Of course, Salvatore would become one in the future.

"Why would Bernardino need Sacred Fire?" Salvatore blurted out subconsciously.

Bernardino is a Soul Snatch Wizard advanced through the "Necromancer" school. Why does he need to use Sacred Fire to complete "the creation"?

But he quickly reacted, "No, it doesn't matter. Where's my teacher? Did he kill my teacher too?"

Salvatore grew anxious, "What can he rely on to defeat my teacher? Teacher is the most powerful Alteration Wizard in the world!"

His fingers were trembling.

Annan reached out and grabbed Salvatore's left hand silently and firmly. Feeling the warmth of Annan's palm and the pain of Annan's pinching his finger, Salvatore calmed down a little.

To tell the truth, Salvatore's heart had no sorrow or pain.

There was only being at loss, panic, and disbelief.

Hearing this suddenly, he felt restless.

“I don't know what he's going to do either.” Silver Sire replied calmly, “As for Hugo Blacktower, he is still alive and has the upper hand. The entire swamp has been dried up due to the battle, and there is no living thing within the surrounding marshes.

“Before Hugo's soul burns out, he may be able to suppress Bernardino all the time. That's because the Swamp's Black Tower will give him infinite order mana. But after all, the wizard tower can't provide him with elemental power.

“Bernardino sacrificed his body and made it into an unfinished version of Sage's Stone. When he attacked Danton previously, he obtained a Sage's Stone in high purity. He also constructed an automatic magic circle, transforming his killed targets into Sage's Stone. With that, the feat of the “four rotating wheels” is completed.

“If Hugo decisively burned all the wizards in the tower to death, he could have defeated Bernardino in 37 hours. But he didn't commit to that act until the end. So those wizards couldn't help their master but helped their enemy instead.

“He also brought 'Jade Record Issac' and 'Dream Stealer Danton' this time, as well as 12 Frostwhisperians' souls. He threw all his reserves as 'countermeasures' to defend against Hugo. Bernardino seems to have prepared for an endurance battle. With the Swamp's Black Tower's wizards as soul supply, Hugo can no longer defeat Bernardino.”

Therefore, it was a matter of time before Hugo would lose.

Silver Sire calmly pointed out the cruel truth, “In about 52 hours, Hugo's soul will be burned out.

“However, with Spiritual Monk's [Spirit Magic], Bernardino can probably still retain Hugo's consciousness. With his spiritual art and using other souls as nourishment, Hugo can be resurrected at the soul level. If you can defeat Bernardino one day, you might be able to get Hugo back.

“Oh yes, Bernardino still keeps Clarence's soul,” said Silver Sire slowly.

He seemed to be implying something.

Salvatore gritted his teeth.

“I...”

I'm going. That was what he wanted to say.

However, his rationality made him realize that he probably wouldn't be able to defeat the enemy since even Hugo couldn't defeat an enemy in the wizard tower.

He was an [Alchemist], the weakest transcender.

The opponent was someone who could even kill his teacher.

Even if he went, there was nothing he could do.

“Go, Salvatore.” However, the Shadow's serious voice sounded hoarsely in his heart, “You want to go.

“What if you die? You're Black Tower's Son! If the Black Tower is gone, isn't your last name absurd and shameful?”

“But I...” Salvatore gritted his teeth, his fingers no longer shaking. However, there was a tightness on his chest.

Annan turned to look at Silver Sire at this moment.

“If I want to request your intervention...” He stared at Silver Sire and asked slowly.

Silver Sire appeared here and told Salvatore about it when Annan was around.

It showed that His goal was to tell Annan about it.

If Salvatore found out about it himself, he would leave secretly to avoid involving Annan.

Since Annan knew about it, he wouldn't allow Salvatore to die.

Seeing Annan asking so, a smile appeared on Silver Sire's face.

It was like he had been waiting for this question for a long time.

With a clear voice, he asked word by word, “Then, Annan—

“What's the price?”

“The price...”

“Yes, we'll keep your life safe, and we have even made mirrors to speed up your emergence.

“But I won't kill your mirror for you. That's your mission. We can pay you tuition, teach you knowledge, and help with your revision. But, we won't help you on the real test.”

Silver Sire said calmly, "He's your mirror, Annan.

"Your first mirror is Don Juan Geraint. A boy with the same talent, wisdom, and gentle personality, and the 'third son' who is about to become the heir to the family, but was murdered by the Rotten Man in the nurturing period. He is a swordsman and Falteration Wizard and even has a similar bloodline. There is no doubt that you are similar to him.

"But your talent is far superior to his, and your mind is stronger than his. The purest is powerful and bright, diverging onto different destinies. This is the first luminary."

"Your second mirror was originally Danton. But he was afraid of the confrontation with you in the supporting role, so he escaped his fate and put his unhatched Truth Fragment into the Roseburg Viscount's soul.

"You are the same as him who has suffered from thousands of failures, but you have never given up hope. The indelible and ever-new hope is the second luminary."

"Your third mirror is Henry VIII. Like him, you have never felt love since birth. But, you have a family you cherish, a kingdom you value. On the contrary, he hates his bloodline and mission.

"Both of you are people who did not understand love from the beginning of your fate, but your love for the world and others in your heart will never go out. The fire that never goes out is your third luminary. It's also the third Truth Fragment that is coming soon to you."

"But since there's a price to pay..." Annan said slowly, "In other words, there are still chances for me, right?"

"Yes, after all, I am the Trade Deity. As long as there is a price, there is nothing that cannot be negotiated."

The corner of Silver Sire's mouth was slightly raised. He patted Annan's shoulder, stood up, and turned his back to Annan, "Go to the funeral first. This is what you promised me. I'll talk about the rest later.

"We still have a lot of time."

—At least there are 52 hours left.

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Henry VIII's funeral unexpectedly made quite a clamor.

It was their king who died.

However, as "Child in the Cup", he had always been treated as a tool to continue the royal bloodline.

People respected him, obeyed him, and feared him. However, they did not love him, much less of any reverence toward him.

This was also why Princess Royal Elizabeth did not encounter much resistance, as she held power when "Henry VIII was terminally ill and dying". Elizabeth had a better grasp of the people's hearts than Henry VIII.

Even a fool knew who to choose between the future king and the dying king.

Even so, whether Henry VIII had chosen an heir remained unknown. After all, his will would only be handed over to Silver Sire, and Silver Sire had no obligation to publish his will.

In other words, unless the king had publicly chosen a new king before his death, his "will" had no practical significance. What it represented was not the will of the late king but the will of the Silver Sire.

If Silver Sire was dissatisfied with the first-in-line heir or was utterly disappointed with him, He naturally had the power to establish a new king.

After all, this country was under the Silver Sire's asylum.

The Silver Sire Church had infiltrated every aspect of Noah's life. The price of the Silver Sire Church not managing the kingdom's policies was their power to intervene in the royal succession.

In the typical ritual standard, the new king would not officially attain the throne until May 1st, the festival belonging to Silver Sire. At the current state, it was still early spring, having two months left for the heirs in their showdown.

Suppose there would be no major changes until May 1st.

Princess Royal Elizabeth would be the first in-line heir to complete the succession to the throne. However, Silver Sire might not necessarily let her inherit the throne if there were any major changes in the Noah Kingdom when she was supervising or a severe problem arose on her side.

In fact, this was also the reason why His Royal Highness Albert, the fourth prince, was ostracized and suppressed by his older brothers and sisters. That was because he had a good relationship with the Silver Sire Church.

While everyone was gearing up for Silver Sire Church's eventual support or neutrality, he seemed to have befriended the judges.

But, he claimed at that time that he did not want to inherit the throne and had no interest in the throne.

Would anyone believe this?

Ministers and nobles formed different factions at the king's funeral according to interests and kinship. Many people also surrounded the three heirs.

They did not chatter loudly but whispered and discussed in low volumes. But when more people gathered, the whispers became quite audible.

But the whole place instantly became quiet after Annan's group entered the hall.

It was Silver Sire who walked in with Annan and Salvatore.

People sparsely stood up, then bowed respectfully to Silver Sire and held their hands on their chests.

“—Tribute to the silver coin.” Nobles, royal heirs, bishops, and the Supreme Pontiff saluted Silver Sire in unison.

“In the name of silver coins, I bless you.” Silver Sire smiled, placing his hands on Salvatore's and Annan's shoulders, raising his head, and speaking in a loud and clear voice.

People ended their salutes, looking up curiously at the two close to Silver Sire — Annan and Salvatore.

The nobles who could attend the king's funeral had their intel sources.

At least 80% of them knew Annan and Salvatore. The remaining 20% did not know Annan only.

However, they were not quite sure why Silver Sire was appearing at the same time as them.

What does this portend?

“Go, Annan.” Just then, Silver Sire patted Annan on the shoulder.

Annan nodded. He calmly walked towards Henry VIII's coffin under the puzzled and surprised gaze of everyone.

The sky above the capital quickly became overcast.

It was gloomy weather with a chilly wind blowing.

As Annan was getting closer to the coffin, it suddenly started raining at the funeral.

After all, it was a funeral. The guests' entourage must carry black umbrellas because it was also a requirement of etiquette. Sometimes, it was even necessary to pray for rain to maintain a solemn atmosphere.

Those entourages immediately put up umbrellas for the nobles in their seats.

Fortunately, they moved quickly.

When Annan walked to the coffin, the icy drizzle turned into heavy rain accompanied by thunder in the blink of an eye.

The smell of this heavy rain would put the attendees in silence. An inexplicable and complicated suffocating air pressed on everyone's hearts.

It was like clenching fists in enduring something.

It was like looking up at the starry sky, expecting something.

Mr. Kai, who was originally guarding the coffin, nodded to Annan and took two steps to the side.

Mr. Kai's long black hair fell to his waist. He was wearing a white robe and a pure white mask. The bloody smiling face on the mask had turned into a clown-like crying face.

“Do you need me to open it for you?” Mr. Kai bent down slightly and made a gentle and magnetic voice to Annan.

Following his movements, an invisible barrier emerged above the two and the coffin.

Annan nodded respectfully, “Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Kai.”



“Don't worry about it,” Kai replied briefly.

He reached out and touched the coffin.

The coffin's lid was like a magnetic levitation slide, which floated up and slid down, revealing Henry VIII's overly young face.

Although he died, there wasn't a gloomy death air on him. His face was still solid without sunken cheeks. Besides the slightly pale face, he appeared like he was sleeping peacefully.

Amid the surprised nobles chattering, Annan reached out his right index finger and lightly tapped on Henry VIII's forehead.

The moment Annan touched Henry VIII, a glimmering panel flashed:

[—You have discovered a Truth Fragment.]

[Condition 1: No conflicting torn Truth pages currently held.]

[Condition 2: Hold Elite Rare (Purple) and above status template.]

[Truth Appears—]

Then...

Intense white light spread out with the point of contact between Annan and Henry VIII as its center. Then, it shot off from the ground!

That was the most sacred brilliance the attendees had ever seen.

Staring at that light alone would put them at peace.

The guests were basked in white light, but everyone present did not feel uncomfortable from the dazzling light and just stared at it subconsciously. They were like puppets whose mind was captivated by it.

Apart from Silver Sire, the only people present who could retain alertness were Salvatore, Mr. Kai, and Prince Philip.

After more than half a minute, the light finally dissipated.

Paper-like white pages with a jade-like tactile were suspended in the air.

Dark golden text swam across it like waves.

A glimmering panel popped up:

[Book of Divine Transporter, Page 3]

[Type: Truth Fragment (1/6) (locked)]

**【Remaining fragment holders: 3】**

[Appeared: 3]

[Description: A freshly-born Truth Fragment. Gather all the fragments to grasp a new "Authority".]

Annan tapped on it silently.

Like a burst bubbled, it shattered directly out of thin air and merged into Annan's body.

After a short delay, a few new lines of words appeared in front of Annan's eyes:

[Book of Divine Transporter (3/6): Summon or dismiss a specified number of players from another world (80/300).]

[Current special effects (3/6): Allow players resurrection; Shared Experience Pool (2%); Teleportation Keystone.]

[Shared Experience Pool: 2% of the experience points (It has increased by '1%',) obtained by players whose level is not higher than the host in any way (bonus experience points from 'dungeon instance') can be deposited into Shared Experience Pool. It can then be allocated to any ally unit (not limited to players).]

[Teleportation Keystone: It is possible to establish a teleportation keystone in a town of not less than "medium" size. Players can teleport at will via different teleportation keystones or return to the last registered teleportation keystone after a simple ritual. However, the current teleportation cannot overcome the barrier yet.]

"Let me introduce you," The Silver Sire's resounding voice came behind Annan, "This is Annan Austere-Winter. Austere-Winter's Grand Duke, who is about to succeed the throne, the beloved descendant of the Old Grandmother, the newly born vessel of the Book of Truth, a coming deity in the future!

"—Congratulations to Your Excellency, Annan!" Silver Sire said with an impassioned voice in front of the deceased king and the future deity.

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