

The First Order

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Chapter 1191: ccc

The culture of tattooing was not prevalent in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. Ren Xiaosu had only seen them on porters near the relay station as he traveled here from the south. At that time, Melgor explained to him that tattoos were used to identify those who were formerly criminals.

Therefore, tattoos were actually a mark of shame for the normal citizens in the Kingdom of Sorcerers.

But it was different in the underground world. They used tattoos as a symbol of their resistance, while the most loyal guardians tattooed their faces to show their determination to stand up to the magus order.

Meanwhile, bounty hunters like Chen Jingshu could disguise themselves as normal citizens and return to the surface at any time by blending in with the crowd.

But the same could not be said for the guardians. Once they returned to the surface, they would be out of place with everyone else.

In the quiet underworld, the guardian's facial tattoo made him look extremely ferocious.

The guardian wore a worn-out fur coat and a pair of torn boots that were split at the seams. Although it was already summer, 36 degrees Celsius, on the surface, the underground was still dark and cool.

When Chen Jingshu answered with the secret phrase, the guardian opened a rusted metal door next to him.

Everyone filed in. Ren Xiaosu, who was walking in front, felt that the underground had suddenly become bustling with activity. The open area in front of him was spacious like an underground factory.

There was also a lot of graffiti on the walls of the "underground factory." Furthermore, "guardians" were patrolling warily, armed with sabers in their hands.

Hundreds of people had gathered here. They were either the stall operators or customers inquiring about the prices. Most of these people had wrapped themselves up tightly as though they were afraid of being recognized.

Ren Xiaosu glanced at the goods on the ground and wondered, "There's clothes, daily necessities, as well as prohibited goods such as bladed weapons and crossbows. Where did all those items come from?"

"The entire black market in Ghent City is located here in the underground. There's dozens of smaller black markets like this one here and also two or three black markets that are over ten times larger than this." Chen Jingshu said, "If the forces from the surface want to conduct secret trades here in the underground, they have to pay some transaction fees, or they can use goods as a form of payment. 90% of the casinos in Ghent City and some special purpose marketplaces are found here as well, including intelligence brokering and black market bounties. All of those activities are enough to support the people living down here."

"Don't the Norman and the Tudor families outlaw such activities?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Of course they do. But half of the businesses in the casino are owned by the members of the Houses of Tudor and Norman," Chen Jingshu replied with a smile. "If nothing major happens, they'll just turn a blind eye to it. Of course, we also have to constantly be on guard in case they send people to infiltrate the other areas of the underground."

Next to them, Chen An'an said, "There's a big difference between people living on the surface and the underground. Those who live underground all year round usually have pale skin since they're not exposed to sunlight, while people from the surface will be discovered as soon as they step in. Everyone with normal skin complexion, other than those from the Sanctuary, can't proceed to the more secretive underground spaces, unless accompanied by Sanctuary members."

Ren Xiaosu nodded. So it could actually be said that a delicate balance had been achieved between those in the underground and those on the surface. The people from the surface understood very clearly that the people living underground hated them, but they also knew this group of people could not torment them.

When Ren Xiaosu and the others went into the factory-like underground black market, almost everyone inside suddenly turned to look at them.

Their group was obviously from the surface, but it was rare to see hundreds of people from the surface suddenly coming down to the underground world. Many of the stall operators cast wary looks at Ren Xiaosu and company, as though they were all a little worried.

“Keep moving and don’t stop here. We’ll scare them.” Chen Jingshu continued leading the way forward. When the black market stall operators saw them leaving, they resumed their normal trading activities as though nothing had happened.

“Don’t they know who y’all are?” Ren Xiaosu was curious. “You’re also a member of the Sanctuary.”

“Members of the Sanctuary don’t walk around announcing their identities.” Chen Jingshu said, “Only the guardians in the lower levels are aware of who we are.”

“Is that to avoid getting surrounded?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“Yes, it’s a complicated bunch here. There’s more money to be made in betraying a Sanctuary member than selling a 100 metal swords,” Chen Jingshu explained.

The group continued walking farther in. Ren Xiaosu even occasionally spotted some of the inhabitants living here, but he only saw the elderly and children.

“The young and strong ones, regardless of their gender, are all working below.” Chen Jingshu said, “There’s no good-for-nothings living in the underground. Lazy people definitely can’t survive down here. So you’ll mostly only see the elderly and children on the first sublevel.”

“What do the young and strong people do below?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“All kinds of shady businesses.” Chen Jingshu said, “For example, melting down silver pieces to recast into silver coins, forging iron arrowheads, smuggling goods, and manufacturing workshops for all kinds of prohibited goods.”

“This is a large lair for illicit activities,” Ren Xiaosu lamented.

Chen Jingshu shot him a glance and said, “If you were in their shoes, you wouldn’t be saying that. It’s already good enough the underground people can survive. Why would they care whether what they do is illegal or not?”

A moment later, a man in a brown linen robe suddenly appeared in front of them. The hooded man was waiting in the tunnel as though he were expecting the arrival of Ren Xiaosu and company.

Chen Jingshu looked at Ren Xiaosu. “Follow me. There’s someone who wants to meet you.”

The man, whose identity was concealed, turned around and led the way forward without saying a word.

They made their way through the underground, twisting and turning through the tunnels, and even going down some stairs to head deeper into the underground. When they walked past some of the secret passageways, the guardians keeping watch nearby would even bow to that man.

It was obvious the other party's status in the underground world was much higher than Chen Jingshu's.

After turning into a long and dark passageway, the sound of a few people talking suddenly came from the corner ahead.

As Ren Xiaosu walked in, he felt that something was off. He turned around and looked at Mel, who was frozen in place. "What's the matter?"

However, it seemed that Mel did not hear what Ren Xiaosu said. He just rushed forward in a daze.

Ren Xiaosu was surprised. "Did you see a friend?"

"Summer!" Melgor shouted anxiously, "Is that you?"

The voices coming from the corner ahead suddenly quieted down. Ren Xiaosu looked at Chen Jingshu. "Summer? Who's that?"

"Summer Russell, Russell's descendant." Chen Jingshu grinned from ear to ear. "She's also the love interest of Sorcerer Melgor."

"So the reason y'all went to York County was to help this girl look for Melgor, right?" Ren Xiaosu frowned and said, "Why didn't you say so earlier? You even fabricated such a strange lie."

"We were planning to leave some money for him in his Sorcerer's Tower, but who knew you'd suddenly come killing out of nowhere?" Chen An'an rolled her eyes. "Besides, we didn't even know who you were, so why would we tell you the truth?"

Ren Xiaosu was shocked. "Leave some money for him?!"

He didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Mel is really such an expert moocher!"

Chapter 1192: An old photograph

Melgor, otherwise known as Mel, barely had any great talents to speak of. His family's status was in decline, and he was an ostracized sorcerer who had been sent to the

border to herd sheep for two years by a top sorcerer clan. Meanwhile, his childhood sweetheart had been snatched away to become someone else's fiancée.

Such a life could only be described as pathetic.

Honestly speaking, one of the most important reasons why Ren Xiaosu chose Mel to lead the Prosperous Northwest's branch office was that he sympathized with him a little.

But at this moment, Ren Xiaosu was really shocked. He had previously thought his relationship with Yang Xiaojin was the purest in the world. But now, it seemed that Mel and Summer's relationship was also very legendary.

Seeing that Summer was about to be forced to marry someone else, she actually entrusted someone to quietly send money to her ex-boyfriend? What a touching love story!

However, Ren Xiaosu was a little puzzled. "Why did y'all act so sneakily when you're only delivering some money? You could've just sent it over openly."

Chen Jingshu stayed silent for a couple seconds before saying, "We still had to help Summer get some items back, of course."

Ren Xiaosu probed, "Love letters?"

Chen An'an's expression changed. "How did you know?"

"I was just testing y'all." Ren Xiaosu sighed.

When Chen An'an explained she had wanted to steal a book from the Sorcerer's Tower, Ren Xiaosu thought about it for a long time. What kind of book would a junior sorcerer like Melgor have that was worth stealing? Even if they were after the *Introduction to Sorcery*, it was still a book that had been edited countless times. If there were really any secrets in it, they would have already been lost in history.

Therefore, the only book more notable was that fucking scrapbook of love letters.

Back then, when Melgor foolishly took out those love letters, it seemed he had somehow gotten it right by chance.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Chen Jingshu. "Since she's Russell's descendant, why didn't she live in the underground with y'all and instead lived on the dangerous surface?"

Based on what Melgor had said, Summer had always been living on the surface. In other words, Russell's descendants had always been hidden right under the noses of the House of Tudor.

This was way too dangerous.

“If there’s treacherous servants, there’s naturally loyal ones as well.” This time, the man who led them here pulled back his hood and answered, “Back then, in order to help Russell’s descendant hide his whereabouts, all 17 of his remaining servants made a sacrifice by escaping from Ghent City with the child. But at that time, the Kingdom of Sorcerers had just been established. As Ghent City was the only city in the entire kingdom, those without any survival experience would find it tough living in the wilderness. Furthermore, they had to avoid being tracked down by the Knights of Tudor.”

The man who led them here was in his middle age. He had a long scar on his face that extended from his browline to his chin.

When Ren Xiaosu saw it, he immediately knew the scar was caused by someone wielding a saber. He could even imagine how the battle played out at that time.

Someone had slashed down with a saber in his face, but this man survived the attack by turning his face upwards and dodging it.

“In the end, the servants took a risk to send Russell’s descendant back to Ghent City and placed him in the care of a family.” The man continued, “That was the family of Russell’s servant during his early years. That servant’s family was expelled from Russell’s residence due to a case of theft and left to their own devices. But when real danger came, they stepped forward again and made the greatest sacrifice for Russell’s child.”

Ren Xiaosu thought that Russell was truly charismatic. As expected of a legendary figure of his generation. The servant actually repaid his expulsion with kindness to his former master.

But he wondered, “What do you mean by the greatest sacrifice? What did they sacrifice?”

The man looked at Ren Xiaosu and said, “At that time, martial law was implemented in Ghent City, and the Tudor family offered a large reward for clues to the whereabouts of Russell’s descendant. Whistleblowing was prevalent in the city, and citizens would report the slightest commotion in any household. If another child suddenly appeared in the servant’s home, his neighbors would definitely find out about it. So the servant killed and buried his own child in the backyard. After that, he took in and brought up Russell’s child as his own. Fortunately, Russell’s child was around the same age as the servant’s son, so he was able to keep everything under wraps.”

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Ren Xiaosu was stunned. “That’s too great a sacrifice.”

In this world, there was a saying that “even a vicious tiger will not eat its own cubs.” Children were one’s own flesh and blood. However, this servant sacrificed his own son in order to protect the bloodline of his former master.

“For the next hundred years or so, Russell’s descendants changed their names and stayed hidden. They continued living under the identity of that servant’s family, passing down their history through the generations as they waited for an opportunity to take revenge.” The man said, “It wasn’t until a few decades ago that we found clues as to their whereabouts.”

“So y’all started planning your revenge?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“That’s right, the Tudor family will repay everything they owe to the Sanctuary and the Russell family,” the man said.

“Then how did that naïve Melgor get dragged into this? Are you planning to make use of him?” Ren Xiaosu could not understand.

“Of course not. Melgor is someone Ms. Summer really likes. The two of them grew up together, but when Ms. Summer learned about her family’s blood feud, she changed her mind.” The man said, “She appeared before everyone as a genius sorcerer and hatched a plan to make the Tudor family’s eldest grandchild of the main household fall for her so she could enter the inner circle of the Tudor family. Sorcerer Melgor was a beautiful accident in her life, but to avenge her family, she could only choose to give up her love. In order not to implicate Melgor, she entrusted us to retrieve all the love letters and inform Sorcerer Melgor to give up on her.”

Chen Jingshu added, “If you hadn’t appeared, everything would have proceeded according to our plan.”

“What happens after y’all take revenge?” Ren Xiaosu asked, “What’s the plan?”

“After that, Ms. Summer will continue to lead the revolutionary reforms.” The man said, “Ms. Summer is a very independent thinker. Just like her ancestor, she has the air of a natural leader.”

Ren Xiaosu wondered if the goal of this woman, who was destined to become the new leader of the revolution, retrieving the letters was so that others wouldn’t know she had gone frog catching with a boy when she was young?

The man suddenly changed the subject and said, “Ms. Summer has also joined the Sanctuary, so her becoming the new leader is not a betrayal of her beliefs. But now, it seems that a more suitable candidate has appeared.”

Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, “Is it Melgor?”

The man paused for a moment before saying, "I was referring to you."

"Are you sure I'm related to your organization?" Ren Xiaosu asked, "Just because I mentioned the Riders and Ren He?"

"That's not it." The man shook his head. "The Sanctuary has always kept a photo of the founder. After Zhang Haoyun met you in Winston City, he relayed back the news that you look almost identical to that person in the photo. Of course, we can still tell there's some differences. Our founder has a much superior air of leadership than you."

Ren Xiaosu realized what was supposed to come was only a matter of time. Everything he should know would be revealed soon enough.

Chapter 1193: Solving the mystery

Ren Xiaosu had often heard Ren He's name being mentioned by people, such as Li Yingyun, Qin Sheng, and Zhang Qingxi. Even Yang Xiaojin had brought up his name before, but none of them had ever seen what that spiritual leader of the Riders looked like with their own eyes.

Whenever the Riders mentioned him, there would always be a look of longing on their faces.

When other people mentioned him, it was mostly in admiration of him.

It was as though he were a legendary figure that only existed in lore, not someone real.

And now, the people from the Sanctuary suddenly mentioned they actually had a photo of Ren He. This made Ren Xiaosu get the feeling the photo was a link that brought legend and reality together.

That legend was then dragged into Ren Xiaosu's world.

If even outsiders thought they looked really similar, Ren Xiaosu realized he could no longer avoid it.

Of course, what he avoided was never his own background, but his identity that might be linked to the Experimentals, as well as that mysterious period in his past.

What exactly happened in the past 200 years since The Cataclysm?

Perhaps the answer would finally be revealed.

When they were in Winston City, Chen Jingshu had painstakingly arranged for Ren Xiaosu to meet with Zhang Haoyun.

At that time, Ren Xiaosu was somewhat puzzled. Why couldn't Zhang Haoyun just get Chen Jingshu to pass on the message? Why did he have to go through all that trouble to meet him?

From the look of things, this meeting had only been arranged because the Sanctuary wanted Zhang Haoyun to observe Ren Xiaosu up close.

"I was still wondering why y'all dared to bring me to your lair. So it was because of this face of mine." Ren Xiaosu said, "Where's that photo? Can I take a look at it?"

The man shook his head and said, "Not right now. It's not that we don't want to show it to you, but the photo and other information are kept in a more secretive place and can't be retrieved anytime soon. But you don't have to worry. We've already confirmed your relationship with the Sanctuary, so we won't continue treating you like an outsider. I'll reintroduce myself. My name is Xu Anqing."

As he spoke, Ren Xiaosu noticed Chen Jingshu looking at Xu Anqing with a unique gaze. He wondered if there was a more special relationship between the two of them.

Ren Xiaosu said, "I only have one question. Back then, Ren He snatched a black Eye of True Sight from Russell. What was it used for? I read in *The Sorcerer Chronicles* that Russell's letters mentioned Ren He had wanted to use the Eye of True Sight to save his child. So what happened to his child?"

Xu Anqing continued saying to Ren Xiaosu, "An'an and Chen Cheng's father have already returned to Ghent City with our people. But as they still have other matters to attend to, they can't come and see you for the time being. You should stay here in the underground for a few days. He'll come and let you know the more important information."

"I understand. Is An'an's father the current leader of the Sanctuary?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Yes," Xu Anqing answered. "But Summer Russell can probably tell you the secret of why Ren He stole the Eye of True Sight."

An argument broke out around the corner of the passageway ahead. It sounded like someone was shoving Melgor and saying, "Can you keep your distance from Ms. Summer!"

Melgor roared angrily, "And who're you? Get lost!"

When Ren Xiaosu heard this, he was momentarily stunned. This was the first time he had seen Mel so testy. It seemed the power of love was enough to boost a person's courage.

"Let's talk later. I wanna see what's going on first," Ren Xiaosu said to Xu Anqing.

A second later, he passed through the dim passageway and went over to Melgor. When he turned the corner, it suddenly became bright in the passageway. Lit torches hung on the walls on both sides.

"What's the matter?" Ren Xiaosu asked Melgor.

Melgor said aggrievedly, "They won't let me through!"

Ren Xiaosu turned around and saw a dozen or so youths dressed in sorcerer's robes grouped together in the tunnel. They all wore the badge of a simple, silver sorcerer's hat on their chests.

The Berkeley family's emblem was a lion, while the Tudor family's emblem was a falcon. However, Ren Xiaosu had never heard of any clan that had a sorcerer's hat for their emblem.

Xu Anqing noticed Ren Xiaosu's gaze and explained, "The Sorcerer's Hat is a new organization formed by a new generation of sorcerers. Just as Russell had done back then, they're dedicated to overthrowing the old aristocracy to establish a new order and build a magus school to break down the clans' hold on power."

Ren Xiaosu looked at those people and saw a diverse group of more than a dozen youths. There were both men and women among them, and standing behind them was a young woman with blonde hair and blue eyes who looked especially dazzling. Her gaze was fixed on Melgor seemingly deeply concerned for him.

However, that concerned look went away in an instant. The girl said to Melgor, "Melgor, I'm already someone else's fiancée. Please go back."

When Melgor heard this, he became a little dazed. "Summer, I-I came here specifically to look for you."

"I know," Summer replied calmly. "News of your return has been spreading everywhere in Ghent City recently, so how could I not know? But if you come back in such an ostentatious manner, not only will you get yourself killed, you might also implicate me."

Mel's eyes slowly reddened. "Alright, I'll leave then. But you must take care of yourself. Although I don't know what it is that you're trying to achieve, you've always had your own views since childhood. I just hope you'll be fine. It doesn't matter what happens to me— What are you doing!"

Mel glared at Ren Xiaosu.

Before he had finished talking, he got interrupted by Ren Xiaosu stepping on his foot.

Ren Xiaosu said in surprise, "Doesn't your foot hurt?"

"Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch..." Only then was Mel able to react. He clutched his foot and leaned against the wall of the passageway as he cried in pain. He felt a burning sensation on top of his feet. It felt like his bones were broken!

Ren Xiaosu looked at Summer Russell and the group of youths and said, "Since y'all heard about what happened during Melgor's trip back here, you should be aware of how powerful he is now, right? No matter what y'all're planning, it'll be good to have him stay and help out."

Actually, Ren Xiaosu's guess was that Summer was only trying to keep Mel out of the conflict. That was why she cold-heartedly chased him away.

After all, that concerned look in her eyes just now could not have been faked. Moreover, if she had really wanted to draw a line between them, there wouldn't be a need to get Chen Jingshu to travel so far to deliver the money to him, right?

But as Ren Xiaosu did not fully understand their situation yet, he did not want to unintentionally point that out. In any case, he would have to help Mel stay here so this sweet idiot would not think he had his heart broken and start crying.

Speaking of which, Ren Xiaosu felt that he really was doing so much for the sake of the Prosperous Northwest.

But the young man standing closest to Summer Russell suddenly said, "Of course we've heard about Melgor's deeds, but wasn't it all to the credit of Chen Jingshu, An'an, and Chen Cheng that he was able to get to Ghent City so smoothly? We all know full well what his level as a sorcerer is. Surely you don't truly believe he's that powerful, do you?"

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. So it turned out not everyone believed Melgor was powerful.

Of course, these people were not wrong to think that way. Mel was indeed a little weak.

Actually, the level of Melgor's sorcery was no secret. Everyone knew he had only become a sorcerer less than two years ago. In that short period of time, even if Russell were to be reborn, he would probably not be able to achieve much either.

So when this group of people who knew the inside story heard the news, their first impressions were that Chen Jingshu, An'an, and Chen Cheng were the strong ones, not Mel.

After all, An'an and Chen Cheng were already sorcerers by the age of six. And needless to say, Chen Jingshu was much more dependable than Melgor no matter how you looked at it.

Someone said to Chen Jingshu and company, "It's been a tough journey for you guys. We heard that you killed many of the Tudor family's people. That was really satisfying to hear. Now that Archmage Kayle is also dead, the House of Tudor has been greatly weakened. This has also raised the chances of our operation succeeding."

The group of youths were overjoyed. It was as though all of them had a feud with the House of Tudor.

However, Chen Jingshu's and An'an's expressions at this moment were as strange as they could be.

They knew very well they were only able to arrive in Ghent City because Ren Xiaosu, that monster, had been helping Melgor along the way. They had nothing to do with the massacre of the Tudor family's people.

Chen Jingshu looked at Ren Xiaosu and realized he was smiling without refuting the youths. As such, she did not step forward to clear up the misunderstanding.

Since Ren Xiaosu did not bother to explain it himself, he must have some other plan.

Qian Weining, who was standing behind Ren Xiaosu, stepped forward and tried to say something, but he was also stopped by Ren Xiaosu.

"All of you look like you're the elites of the younger generation of sorcerers, so why can't y'all understand the simplest of principles?" Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "If y'all want to undermine the social order of the Kingdom of Sorcerers, you have to unite all available forces. What's the logic behind pushing away people who can contribute?"

The young sorcerer next to Summer frowned and said, "It's obvious that Summer doesn't want anything to do with Melgor anymore, so why are you people still pestering her? Isn't it better to remain as a fringe sorcerer at the border? Why come to Ghent City and risk your life? Hmm, and who're you?"

The way this young man addressed Summer sounded like he was quite close to her. Ren Xiaosu wondered if this could be Mel's romantic rival. Summer was a natural beauty indeed, so it was within expectations that Mel would have at least one or two rivals.

When these people saw Qian Weining and the others following close to Ren Xiaosu, they thought he was someone of status, so they were still quite polite when speaking to him.

Ren Xiaosu answered, "I'm Lord Melgor's steward. And you are?"

"So it's Melgor's steward." The young man suddenly laughed. When he heard that the other party was only a steward, he became much more relaxed. "My name is Titus Norman."

Ren Xiaosu then asked, "Titus Norman... eh, what's your middle name?"

Titus's smile immediately faded. "I don't have a middle name yet..."

In the magus order, having a middle name represented whether one had become an archmage or not.

In most situations, no one would suddenly bring up whether one had a middle name or not. By doing so, it was just like slapping someone without hitting their face.

But Ren Xiaosu felt that not "slapping" someone in the face first was pretty pointless when having an argument.

Sorcerer Titus frowned and said, "You're only a servant, so how can you address a sorcerer by name? That's being disrespectful to a sorcerer."

Ren Xiaosu chuckled. "Then how should I address you?"

Sorcerer Titus said coldly, "You're a steward, and I'm a sorcerer. It's disrespectful to address me by name. But addressing me as an elder makes me sound old, so what should you call me?"

Ren Xiaosu stayed silent for a moment before testing, "Doggy?"

Sorcerer Titus was stunned.

Melgor, who was initially feeling aggrieved and remorseful, burst into laughter. Even Qian Weining and the others laughed.

Mel thought to himself that Ren Xiaosu was still the best. He was even willing to stand up for him at such a critical moment.

Sorcerer Titus took out his Eye of True Sight from his waist belt as though he wanted to threaten Ren Xiaosu with it.

However, Summer said to the young sorcerer, "Titus, what's our purpose in seeking to overthrow the old aristocracy's rule and establish a magus school? Isn't it because we want to give normal people a chance? Everyone will be equal in the sorcerer nation of the future. Why do you still have such a messed up, class-conscious mindset?"

When Sorcerer Titus heard this, he hurriedly explained, "Summer, it's not like that, I just misspoke!"

Summer's tone softened. "I know it's still a little difficult for you guys to change your mindset, but don't repeat such behavior again, alright?"

Ren Xiaosu was amused. He chuckled softly to Mel, who was next to him, and said, "Your childhood sweetheart has great people skills. She spoke up to divert those people's attention to help me out of my predicament and immediately softened her tone after that so that infighting wouldn't boil over. She's someone who can achieve great things. She's better than you."

"If you didn't make that last remark, our friendship would have grown stronger." Melgor said, "What do you think I should do now? Leave?"

"Leave?" Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "Of course not."

The torches on the walls of the tunnel were flickering. It seemed that the atmosphere had suddenly turned a little tense. The young sorcerers and the Knights of the Inferno led by Ren Xiaosu were on the verge of getting into a fight.

In the end, it was Xu Anqing who stepped forward to break the deadlock. "This is not the place to talk. Let's get behind the enchanted doorway first."

With that, he called for everyone to continue walking deeper into the tunnel until they came to graffiti art and stopped in front of it.

On the wall was a drawing of an eastern divine dragon. However, it was not as muted in style as how they were drawn in the Central Plains. This particular drawing was more showy and vibrant.

Xu Anqing took out a red Eye of True Sight from his waist belt. Then he placed it on the divine dragon's eye and gave it a turn. The divine dragon seemingly came alive as it started "swimming" on the wall.

A soft mechanical sound started stirring within the tunnel before he walked straight towards a wall. Before going in, Xu Anqing turned around and said to Ren Xiaosu and Melgor, "Welcome to the underground."

That wall was like a rippling wave. After Xu Anqing walked through it, no one could tell there was anything strange about the wall.

When Ren Xiaosu saw this, he planned on asking the Sanctuary's people about enchanted doorways. This spell was perfect for those working in the intelligence field. A safe house created through such means would definitely be secure. Moreover, the other Central Plains forces had never experienced such tricks before.

Everyone filed in through the enchanted doorway, but most of them had not noticed that Summer had slowly fallen to the back of the group.

Melgor was about to walk straight through the enchanted doorway when Ren Xiaosu pulled him back and said in a low voice, "The lady is obviously slowing down because she wants to speak with you. Why are you in such a hurry to go in?"

Mel looked at her and saw her looking at him silently.

Li Chengguo and Liu Ting were looking all over the place at this moment. This was their first time seeing an enchanted doorway, so they did not dare to walk through it.

But even after everyone else had gone through the enchanted doorway, the two of them still remained standing outside like third wheels.

Ren Xiaosu slapped both of them on the back of their heads angrily. Then he grabbed them by their collars and threw them through the enchanted doorway.

Melgor looked at Ren Xiaosu with an emotional gaze. It was still his good friend who understood him and deliberately created an opportunity so he could be with Summer alone.

Then Ren Xiaosu looked at Melgor and said, "You can go in first."

"Huh?" Melgor was stunned.

"What?" Ren Xiaosu said to Melgor, "Let me speak with Ms. Summer alone."

Melgor suddenly felt a little dizzy. Why was this a little different from what he had imagined?!

Hadn't Ren Xiaosu intended to give him a chance to be with Summer alone? How did it end up with Ren Xiaosu spending time with Summer alone instead?

"Forget it, I'll let you stay here in case you misunderstand." After that, Ren Xiaosu turned to Summer Russell and asked, "Did your ancestors pass down any information regarding Ren He?"

"I knew you wanted to ask about this." Summer said calmly, "Actually, I knew it the moment I saw your face."

"Seems like my looks have saved me a lot of explaining." Ren Xiaosu touched his face. "Do I really look like him?"

"Yes, you look really similar." Summer said, "What do you want to know?"

Melgor looked at Summer, then at Ren Xiaosu. He could not understand why his sweetheart's family ended up being related to Ren Xiaosu.

However, he could only listen quietly for now. Ren Xiaosu was most concerned at this moment about his origins. Everything else was not too important.

Ren Xiaosu said to Summer, "Why did Ren He steal the Eye of True Sight?"

"To save his child," Summer answered. "His child had a disease known as cancer and needed treatment."

This answer matched many of the questions Ren Xiaosu had in mind.

The Pyro Company's Laboratory 39 was specifically researching cancer, while the Experimentals came into existence as a new species after the spread of their cancer cells reached equilibrium.

Currently, Black Robe, the leader of the Experimentals, was dead. However, Black Robe said before that a completely cured human had indeed come out of Laboratory 39. It was a powerful and perfect Neo-Human, who was also known as the No. 001 Experimental.

This No. 001 Experimental was completely different from those gray-skinned monsters. It had a perfectly mutated binucleated cell structure.

Black Robe had said that if the No. 001 Experimental blended in among humans, it would definitely be very powerful.

At that time, Ren Xiaosu thought the No. 001 Experimental might be Yan Liuyuan.

But now, Ren Xiaosu felt he might be the No. 001 Experimental instead.

"But what does the black Eye of True Sight have anything to do with cancer?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

In his opinion, cancer treatment would have to rely on scientific cures. But in the end, it felt more like they were delving into mysticism.

Summer said, "It was passed down through our family that Ren He's son was actually already cured of his illness. But after he recovered, his condition became even more difficult to handle."

"Why's that?" Ren Xiaosu was stunned. "What could be more troublesome to handle than cancer?"

"I only know a little about that." Summer answered, "Ren He said that if his sick child's condition was not controlled, he could dissipate from the world and switch to existing in another form. That was why that Rider needed the black Eye of True Sight, because it can help humans to concentrate their willpower."

These words completely struck a chord in Ren Xiaosu. Concentrating one's willpower, dissipating from the world and existing in a different form, all these clues finally linked the truths he knew.

Qing Zhen had speculated that cancer cells might not be a type of disease but an extreme form of evolution. It was just that humans were unable to withstand the energy required for this evolution process.

If there came a day when someone could control the nuclei mutation of cancer cells and had a strong enough body to withstand the evolution process, the first true god might appear in the world.

Li Shentan had once said his path was actually to develop his own brainpower. When a person's brain developed to 70% of its potential, they would only be one step away from becoming a god.

As for what would happen after becoming a god, no one knew.

There was the possibility of turning into a ray of light or a World Tree, but no one could be sure.

However, the higher probability was that one would lose their human form and emotions and turn into a one-of-a-kind world consciousness.

Based on this theory, Ren He's son had already become a true god after his cancer was successfully treated.

But after he was cured, the potential of his brain continued to develop. When the brain's development exceeded the threshold of human limits, it would become the consciousness of the world, and with that, become the true ruler of it.

If all these assumptions were true, Ren He's objective in taking away the Eye of True Sight might have been to help his son reconcentrate his willpower that was dissipating into the world so he could maintain his "human" form and keep his emotions.

When he was in the Jing Mountains, Ren Xiaosu had thanked himself seven times during the battle with the Experimentals. But before that, he had asked the palace if there was really no other way for him to come out of the battle alive. The palace asked him back, "Do you want to remove the seal?"

Ren Xiaosu then asked again what would happen if the seal was removed.

The palace's answer was, "Lose everything."

What it meant by losing everything probably included losing his body and emotions.

When he recalled these events, Ren Xiaosu felt that he was only one step away from the truth now.

He asked the palace in his mind, "Did I guess... correctly?"

"Quest clues have not been fully collected. Unauthorized to answer."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. Why was the answer totally not what he was expecting?

No, wait, the palace would not go off-topic.

Therefore, once the last clue was found, the quest reward would reveal the truth of his origins!

Ren Xiaosu was a little curious. If he were really that so-called No. 001 Experimental, how did he survive his cancer? Did the cells in his body all mutate into those legendary binucleated cells?

Moreover, if he were the No. 001 Experimental, how should Yan Liuyuan's origins be explained?

Summer interrupted Ren Xiaosu's train of thought, saying, "There's something that was passed down and left for you. It's right here in Ghent City."

Curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, "Who left it for me?"

"Your ancestor, that Rider," Summer answered.

Summer was also unaware of how complicated Ren Xiaosu's background was. She only felt that no one in the world could possibly live for more than 200 years, so she was under the impression that Ren Xiaosu was Ren He's descendant a few generations down.

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "Why would he leave something meant for me with y'all? This place is thousands of miles from the Central Plains."

"Because the Central Plains Rider was not confident of surviving the impending disaster." Summer said, "He had his responsibilities, and he foresaw that he might have to sacrifice his life for them."

...

Chapter 1194: Enchanted doorways

The Kingdom of Sorcerers was not located in a main disaster zone during The Cataclysm. It was only affected by the sudden cold weather that followed, but there were no fallout or explosions that occurred here.

At that time, Ren He could already completely crush Russell in a fight. Therefore, even during The Cataclysm, as long as this Rider remained in the region of the Kingdom of Sorcerers, he definitely could have survived it.

But Ren He made a different choice. Just as he had said, he had his responsibilities.

Therefore, on the eve of The Cataclysm, which was also the day before the global war, he chose to return home to lead his people towards another path of survival.

He had succeeded, but that success came at the cost of his life.

“What exactly did he leave behind at Russell’s place?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“A sealed box with no password,” Summer answered. “It’s hidden in the Rose Monastery in Ghent City.”

“Rose Monastery?” Ren Xiaosu wondered.

“Mhm, that used to be the Russell family’s property. After our ancestor was persecuted, that place was seized by Ghent City and converted into a monastery,” Summer replied.

The so-called monastery was basically a chapel-like building filled with statues of sorcerers from either the House of Norman or the House of Tudor.

That was because Ghent City was simply too large. It was so large it was several times the size of Vaduz City. Therefore, the residents there could not gather in front of the same cathedral for their worship service all at the same time. At the beginning of each month, everyone would put on their red robes and go to a monastery near their homes where junior sorcerers would conduct worship services.

It was very ironic for a place of killing to be turned into a monastery.

Ren Xiaosu asked, “When can I retrieve it?”

“When this matter related to the underground is over, I’ll take you there.” Summer said, “But before that, can I ask a favor of you?”

Ren Xiaosu asked, “What is it?”

Summer glanced at Mel and asked Ren Xiaosu, "Can you take him away from Ghent City? As a reward, I'm willing to give you a gold Eye of True Sight and a sorcery manuscript compiled by my ancestor. There's a lot of recorded spells and meditative visualization diagrams in it, all of which are for high-level spells."

Mel had been standing off to the side for a long time already and was bored. While Ren Xiaosu chatted with his sweetheart, it was as though he was invisible.

But it just so happened these two people in front of him were engaged in a serious discussion, and it was even on a topic he couldn't get a word in about.

Mel also wanted to join the conversation, but he really did not know what to say.

Should he say he couldn't bear to leave Summer? That would make him seem overly melodramatic as a man.

Or should he say that he would be fine with Ren Xiaosu's protection, so there wasn't a need for him to leave Ghent City? But that would make him sound like a thug.

When Mel heard that Summer was trying to chase him away again, he quickly gave Ren Xiaosu a knowing look in hopes he put in a word for him.

Ren Xiaosu immediately understood and said, "Are you looking for the bathroom?"

"No, I'm not." Mel snapped, "I don't want to leave Ghent City!"

"Can't you just say it plainly then?" Ren Xiaosu glanced at him. "If you're too afraid to even object when others ask you to leave, how are you going to handle big issues in the future? Don't worry, I won't bring you back to the south. Since we're already here, we should at least kick up a row, right?"

Summer frowned. "The gold Eye of True Sight is the best offer I can give."

"What's important is not what you can offer, but what I want to do." Ren Xiaosu said, "Do you really think that those good-for-nothing scions of the aristocratic families are sincere in starting a revolution with you? Just look at how class-conscious they are. After overthrowing the old aristocracy with their help, they'll just rise up to become the new aristocracy."

"I'm not intending to rely on them completely, obviously," Summer said calmly. "For now, my only aim is to make the House of Tudor pay with their blood. As for overthrowing the old aristocracy, there's still a long way to go."

With that, Ren Xiaosu understood Summer was not an impatient person. She was planning to take things slowly.

Summer continued, "Although I don't know why you brought Melgor to Ghent City, do you know you're putting him in danger by doing so?"

"Before this, Melgor told me that his sweetheart is someone with her own mind. But no one told me that you're Russell's descendant, nor that you're such an independent thinker." Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "However, I'm quite curious about something. Since you're so worried about him, why didn't you send someone to protect him when he was sent to the border?"

"Of course I did. I got the Sanctuary's people to protect him. It was only after they realized he wasn't in much danger that they returned to Ghent City." Summer said, "Not only that, but we even had gladiators secretly send him food, clothes, and medicine regularly so he wouldn't starve to death."

Melgor exclaimed, "I thought I hired those people with money?"

Summer looked at Mel. "The money you offered wasn't enough at all. No one would keep going to such dangerous places for that small amount of gold coins."

"I see." Ren Xiaosu nodded.

He finally understood. Ren Xiaosu had thought about this before. Mel, a barely capable sorcerer, had been sent to Fortress 178 to observe the enemy's movements. However, that guy's wilderness survival skills were not even passable, so how did he survive there for the past two years?

It turned out Summer was the one who made sure Melgor survived his mission.

This girl was really methodical in her ways. She really was someone who was meant for great things.

As for Mel the moocher, he was really too thorough in mooching.

1

As he thought about it, Ren Xiaosu even had the thought of supporting Summer to become the one to lead the Prosperous Northwest's branch office. No matter how you saw it, she seemed more suitable for the role than Mel...

Ren Xiaosu was a little puzzled. "Why are you so good to him?"

Summer said, "He's too naïve. He'll get hurt if there's no one to protect him."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. How the hell was this romance? This was practically motherly love!

But no matter what it was, that was between the two of them.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Mel. “Do you understand now? She was just making an excuse not to implicate you when she said that she didn’t want you to implicate her. You should work hard and not keep making others worry. Do you know what you have to do now?”

Mel nodded vigorously. “I do!”

“Then what’s your plan?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“Stay obediently by your side. With your protection, she won’t have anything to worry about,” Mel said.

Ren Xiaosu was speechless.

He got so angry he laughed. But when he thought about it carefully, this decision by Mel was still the wisest!

If he were to make Mel continue practicing his sorcery, he couldn’t become an archmage without at least eight to ten years of training. Therefore, in a situation where his efforts were futile, he might as well accept his situation and not burden everyone.

With Ren Xiaosu’s protection, there wouldn’t be too many people in the vast Ghent City who could do anything to him.

Honestly, Ren Xiaosu did not know now if Mel was actually stupid or just playing dumb.

Ren Xiaosu told Summer, “Don’t worry, Mel will be fine with me protecting him. I won’t ask you about your plans anymore, and neither should you ask me about mine. I’ll start taking action after I’ve retrieved what Ren He left for me. At that time, all you need to do is wait for an opportunity.”

“What opportunity?” Summer wondered.

“An opportunity that I’ll create for y’all.” Ren Xiaosu said calmly, “I’ve said this to Chen Jingshu before. My arrival from the Central Plains is the best opportunity for y’all to overthrow the old aristocratic rule of the Magi.”

When Summer heard this, she looked at Mel in surprise. Mel sighed and said, “You’ll get used to it. Besides, I can’t refute his claims.”

Summer sized up Ren Xiaosu in front of her. Although she did not know where Ren Xiaosu’s confidence came from, she somehow chose to trust him fully.

Suddenly, she remembered what her grandfather had told her before he died. "If someone from the Central Plains comes searching for clues related to the Riders one day, you can get them to help with any difficulties you might encounter.

"It's an amazing nation, and that Rider is the most amazing person in that nation."

At that time, Summer was only a child and did not understand what her grandfather meant. She often wondered if that Rider could really be so trusted by the entire Russell family.

Summer suddenly said, "My grandfather told me when the Rider took away the Eye of True Sight, he promised that in the Russell family's time of need, he would repay them with a favor. If he were no longer around to keep that promise, the favor would be repaid by his descendants. Since you're his descendant, can I depend on you?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment. Since Ren He had used the Eye of True Sight to save him, he was naturally willing to fulfill the promise made in exchange for the Eye of True Sight. "Sure, what do you want me to do? Destroy the House of Tudor?"

"No." Summer shook her head. "Can you make sure to protect Mel?"

"Sure, but this doesn't count. It's a promise that I've already made to Mel personally, so I'll naturally keep my word for that." Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "Alright, you can hold onto that favor for now. We'll talk again when you need it to be repaid. I'll leave you two to catch up while I go inside and have a good chat with my new sorcerer friends."

With that, Ren Xiaosu stepped through the enchanted doorway.

Mel suddenly felt what Ren Xiaosu meant about having a good chat with his new sorcerer friends was not that simple.

There was no one else in the tunnel anymore. Mel slowly walked towards Summer. The divine dragon painted on the wall was all quiet, as though it could not bear to disturb them both.

On the other side, Ren Xiaosu was a little stunned when he saw the scene behind the enchanted doorway. He was no longer in the underground. Instead, he was standing at the top of a tall, gray-bricked spire.

Beyond the spire was a cliff, and below it was a turbulent sea.

As the seawater crashed against the rocks, the shimmering surface of the blue sea could be seen in the distance.

The vast sea that stretched as far as the eye could see instantly gave rise to an endless sense of magnificence within Ren Xiaosu. After that, he felt an endless calm in him.

This must be the sea Li Shentan talked about wanting to see. He wondered if he had already seen it.

When Ren Xiaosu turned around, the others had already entered the interior of the spire through the stairway. Only Xu Anqing was still waiting out here.

The man smiled and asked, "Is this your first time seeing the sea?"

"It's probably not my first time." Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "I got an inexplicable sense of familiarity when I saw the sea, but I think I've already forgotten everything that I've seen in the past."

"This is the enchanted doorway created by An'an's father." Xu Anqing said, "Every time he comes back to Ghent City, he'll come to the top of this Sorcerer's Tower by himself. Sometimes, he'll sit here for an entire day and night. I asked him why he keeps looking at the sea. Initially, I thought he would tell me it helps to broaden one's heart, but his answer to me was that those who have seen the sea learn to feel reverence."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned for a moment. However, he quickly found these words to be very interesting. In the face of the vast world and sea, humans were indeed insignificant.

Then Xu Anqing asked, "I wonder, what was the feeling you had when you saw the sea?"

"Calmness," Ren Xiaosu answered. "By the way, when you emphasized that this enchanted doorway was created by An'an's father, does it mean that everyone's enchanted doorway is different?"

"Before The Cataclysm, the enchanted doorway was an exclusive spell of the Russell family. Later, Russell made this spell accessible to all to show his determination to break the sorcerer clans' stranglehold on power." Xu Anqing explained, "However, there's something special about the Enchanted Doorway spell. It can only be opened once in a person's lifetime. After that, the spell will remain in place forever."

"What if the person who opens this enchanted doorway dies?" Ren Xiaosu asked curiously.

"The enchanted doorway will not disappear with their death." Xu Anqing said, "There's only one way to destroy an enchanted doorway, and that's to completely change the terrain where it is located, such as destroying the wall we just came in through."

Ren Xiaosu frowned. "Isn't that really dangerous then? If someone outside were to destroy the wall, wouldn't we all be trapped here?"

Xu Anqing realized the young man across from him was a really cautious person.

When other people passed through the enchanted doorway, the first thing they were attracted to was the magic of this spell. But the first thing that Ren Xiaosu paid attention to was how to get back to the other side!

“Don’t worry.” Xu Anqing explained with a smile, “If anyone tries to sabotage it from the outside, all of us who passed through the enchanted doorway will ‘fall’ out. Therefore, there’s no such thing as not being able to return to the other side.”

“Where’s this place?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

Xu Anqing shook his head. “We’re not sure where this is either. After it was activated, it became our secret base. We only know that the entrance of the enchanted doorway and this place we’re at exist in the same dimension.”

“Is there any principle behind how these enchanted doorways are created?” Ren Xiaosu asked curiously.

“We think it probably opens up to a place where a person wants to go most?” Xu Anqing said, “I once had a friend plagued by bladder issues. When he activated the enchanted doorway, it turned out to be his home bathroom on the other side....”

“What the hell?” Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. “It really opens up to the place you most want to go then?”

“That’s most likely the case, but there’s also very strong randomness to it,” Xu Anqing said meaningfully.

“What do you mean by randomness?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“Not everyone knows where they want to go most.”

Ren Xiaosu fell silent for a long time. There was even a hint of philosophy in those words.

He moved on from that thought and asked again, “Are there any flaws with the enchanted doorway?”

“Of course.” Xu Anqing said, “The enchanted doorway is fixed. If you wish to get to the ‘opposing shore’ through it, you have to go to a fixed location to access the portal. Sometimes, it can be quite troublesome, just like how Chen An’an’s father has to return to the underground below Ghent City if he wants to come here.”

Ren Xiaosu suddenly took out a large metal door from his storage space and asked, “Then if I create the enchanted doorway on this door and carry it around with me, would that make my enchanted doorway portable?”

Xu Anqing was a little confused as he stood on the spire atop the Sorcerer's Tower with the sea breeze blowing at him. "... I guess so?"

When he saw Ren Xiaosu's serious expression, he suddenly felt a little helpless. Logically, the enchanted doorway could be made portable through the method he had just suggested. But the problem was, why the fuck was he carrying a metal door with him?

3

Where did he get that from!

Chapter 1195: One step away

Ren Xiaosu stood at the top of the tall Sorcerer's Tower while carrying a huge metal door. The turbulent sea behind him, he faced into the surging gusts from the sea.

Xu Anqing's robe, which he wore over his brown leather armor, kept fluttering in the wind.

He stood at the top of the Sorcerer's Tower in confusion and asked, "Where did this door come from?"

A long time ago, many sorcerers were troubled by the shortcomings of the Enchanted Doorway.

For example, every person could only open it once in their lifetime. Therefore, many sorcerers were not allowed to cast the Enchanted Doorway spell when they were still young, because they could very well end up wasting this opportunity.

Within the Sanctuary, children like An'an were not eligible to activate their enchanted doorways. They would have to reach 24 years of age before they could do so.

Actually, when An'an was nine years old, her willpower was high enough for her to cast this spell. However, no one was willing to teach her the incantation for the Enchanted Doorway at that age.

It would be such a pity if the enchanted doorway she activated only led to the candy shop.

An'an had spoken with her father before. The young lady said at that time, "What's the point of opening an enchanted doorway?"

Chen Jiu, who had already activated his enchanted doorway, answered, "Some people do it to seek a safe harbor for themselves, while others do it to find their paradise."

Actually, Chen Jiu's enchanted doorway was a combination of both. He personally erected this Sorcerer's Tower that stood by the sea, and it became a safe harbor for many of the underground residents.

Ren Xiaosu saw farmland and shepherds beyond the Sorcerer's Tower. In this place where no one knew of its location in the world, it had become a new settlement for some.

At that time, An'an stated, "If my enchanted doorway opens to the most famous candy store in Ghent City, I'll be so happy."

Chen Jiu's reply to her was, "A person can't only seek happiness in life. Moreover, a qualified Sanctuary member should never treat stealing sweets as happiness..."

Of course, this was only one of the shortcomings of the enchanted doorway that troubled sorcerers. More importantly, the location of the enchanted doorway was fixed.

Many sorcerers had tried moving it before. They wanted to modify the incantation of the enchanted doorway spell and turn it into a portable doorway that did not rely on external objects. In this way, everyone could greatly increase their means of survival.

But no matter how hard the sorcerers tried, their experimentation with the spell all ended in failure.

However, Ren Xiaosu had now provided the sorcerers with another option. "Since you can't move the enchanted doorway, just bring it with you."

Ren Xiaosu thought this was probably the true essence of the saying "breaking down doors to make an escape."

Meanwhile, Xu Anqing thought the enchanted doorway could become an Anywhere Door with such a hardware tweak!

Xu Anqing repeated his question again, "Where did this door come from?"

Ren Xiaosu looked at Xu Anqing. "If sorcerers can open up enchanted doorways, those of us from the Central Plains naturally have our own ways as well. Is it important where the door comes from?"

Ren Xiaosu was lying. Even now, he was the only person in the entire Central Plains who possessed a storage space.

However, there was no pressure in lying. After all, the people from the Kingdom of Sorcerers could not verify his claims.

He had taken this door from the standard prison when he saved Wang Yun from the Kong Consortium back then. It was not of much use to him, but he took it so he could use it as an occasional shield against bullets.

1

Under normal circumstances, Ren Xiaosu would choose to use the nanomachines to shield himself from bullets. However, those little guys consumed too much power too quickly. They relied on bioenergy to recharge their batteries. Sometimes, they could only last for five to ten minutes in a high-intensity battle even after a 24-hour charge. Therefore, Ren Xiaosu had to give himself a simple backup plan... the kind that did not require any electrical power.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Xu Anqing. "What's the incantation for activating the enchanted doorway? Why don't you teach me how to open it? I'd also like to know where's the place I want to go most."

Xu Anqing shook his head. "Don't learn the Enchanted Doorway spell; teach me how to conjure a door first."

"You can't learn something like that." Ren Xiaosu said with a grin, "Hurry up and tell me the incantation for the Enchanted Doorway."

"Actually, the Enchanted Doorway is the only spell in the entire Magi system that doesn't require incantations or meditative visualization diagrams." Xu Anqing said with a laugh, "Back then, Little An'an pestered her father for so long without knowing how to activate her enchanted doorway. However, the method is extremely simple. When she finds out the truth in the future, she'll definitely be furious, just like when I found out the truth."

"Oh?" Ren Xiaosu wondered, "There isn't even a need for an incantation?"

Xu Anqing said, "All you need is a red Eye of True Sight or better. Drip a drop of your blood on it and turn it 3,600 degrees against the door you're holding. The enchanted doorway will then open for you."

"It's that simple?" Ren Xiaosu was stunned. 3,600 degrees was equivalent to ten revolutions. He was a little curious about how the person who discovered the enchanted doorway had found out about this system.

Was he bored?

However, it required a red Eye of True Sight or higher to work. This added a lot of restrictions to the Enchanted Doorway spell. For example, Melgor could not activate it with his Eye of True Sight.

White, orange, red, gold, and black. Based on these different grades of Eyes of True Sight that existed, there were actually not that many people who could activate their enchanted doorways.

Ren Xiaosu seemed to remember that the archmage back at Vaduz Cathedral who presided over the worship ceremony only had a red Eye of True Sight.

As a matter of fact, the greatest difference between the magus order and supernatural beings of the Central Plains was that incantations had been explored by the Magi for generations and could be passed down as a legacy for future generations.

“Would you like to try it out now?” Xu Anqing said, “But you’ll need an Eye of True Sight first. That won’t be easy to get your hands on, and it has to be a higher grade than a red one, which is even harder to get. Perhaps, Chen An’an’s father can help you—huh?!”

Xu Anqing stared blankly at the Eyes of True Sight in Ren Xiaosu’s hand. The colored stones were lying in his hands like they were worthless sweets from a candy store.

His look was just like the blank expressions on the faces of Qian Weining and company. Although Xu Anqing was a core member of the Sanctuary, he had never seen so many Eyes of True Sight in one place before in his life.

Chen Jingshu knew what Ren Xiaosu had done in Winston City and had also witnessed the things he did after that meeting with Zhang Haoyun. As such, she did not have a chance to relay the news back to the Sanctuary.

Xu Anqing and the others could roughly guess what Ren Xiaosu had done, but they were still unaware of the details.

“Oh.” Ren Xiaosu said calmly, “I don’t need to trouble y’all with getting an Eye of True Sight. I still have quite a lot of them. By the way, will a higher-grade Eye of True Sight affect the spell casting? Like, can I have an enchanted door that opens up to a farther away location?”

“Uh...” Xu Anqing was stumped. “I really don’t know about that.”

Ren Xiaosu asked curiously, “Why not? Have you never tried it out with other grades of Eyes of True Sight?”

Xu Anqing was cursing in his mind. He had only had one Eye of True Sight all his life, so how could he know that much?

In other words, he just followed whatever others had taught him to do. That was because everyone's enchanted doorways were different, so no one could really identify a specific pattern in the spell.

Ren Xiaosu asked again, "An Eye of True Sight will allow a sorcerer to open up a permanent enchanted doorway, so if I had a few dozen Eyes of True Sight, can I open up several dozen enchanted doorways?"

"That won't work!"

"Why not? Have you tried it out yourself?" Ren Xiaosu seemed a little dissatisfied.

"... I've never tried it."

"Then it's just hearsay." Ren Xiaosu said, "Why didn't you test it out?"

Xu Anqing was crying on the inside. "Because I've never possessed so many Eyes of True Sight before...."

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and comforted him, "My condolences."

Xu Anqing nearly roared out loud. *'Condolences? What condolences?! Everyone else only has one Eye of True Sight each! You're the only one who has so many of them, alright?'*

Ren Xiaosu muttered, "We'll know when I test it out later."

With that, Xu Anqing saw Ren Xiaosu taking out a black Eye of True Sight. Before this, Ren Xiaosu had only ever revealed it to Melgor.

Xu Anqing started stammering, "That's... a black Eye of True Sight?!"

"In case the spell can only work once, it's better to test it out with the highest grade Eye of True Sight that I have." Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "Why do you look so shocked? Summer should have already told you that one of Russell's Eyes of True Sight was taken away by that Rider, so isn't it to be expected that it would be in my possession now?"

It was like this black Eye of True Sight was the last piece of evidence that verified Ren Xiaosu's identity.

He drew his black saber and sliced his thumb, then dripped his blood onto the stone before pressing it against the steel door and turning it.

In an instant, the black Eye of True Sight absorbed Ren Xiaosu's blood.

The small black stone seemingly reached a scorching temperature as the violet sigil on it suddenly glowed red.

Immediately after, the spot where the black stone came in contact with the metal door slowly melted into a completely fitting cavity.

Red molten metal flowed out of the depression, and sparks occasionally flew out. However, Ren Xiaosu was not burnt by the Eye of True Sight and only felt a sense of warmth from it.

“The magic of creation is really amazing.” Ren Xiaosu sighed.

After Ren Xiaosu was done turning the Eye of True Sight ten times, he removed the black stone and took out a gold one to drip his blood on. Ren Xiaosu was surprised to discover that the gold Eye of True Sight did not absorb his blood.

“As expected, it doesn’t work.” Ren Xiaosu felt a little regretful. “If only I could open a few more enchanted doorways.”

Each person could only open one door in their life. This was the rule of the Enchanted Doorway spell.

Xu Anqing looked at Ren Xiaosu and asked, “Where does your enchanted doorway lead?”

“That’s what I want to know too.” Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, “Please call my people over. Before going in, I must guard against anyone who might try something funny.”

Xu Anqing said helplessly, “Even if you don’t trust me, you could’ve put it more tactfully.”

At this moment, Melgor also came to the Sorcerer’s Tower from the underground tunnel. Ren Xiaosu had Summer, Qian Weining, him, and the others guard his enchanted doorway together.

Ren Xiaosu said to Mel, “I don’t know where this portal will lead me when I pass through it. They say it’ll be the place I want to go most, but actually, I don’t know where that is either.”

This was what attracted Ren Xiaosu the most about the enchanted doorway. It was very difficult for anyone to analyze their inner desires, but the enchanted doorway would give them a direct answer.

After that, Ren Xiaosu stepped through the newly created enchanted doorway.

A second later, Ren Xiaosu quietly took note of the environment in front of him and started laughing. So it turned out... the place he most wanted to go to was that humble residence on Anning East Road in Stronghold 144.

2

Ren Xiaosu had walked out from the enchanted doorway through the wall next to the sofa in the living room. Everything in front of him felt so familiar and reassuring.

Yang Xiaojin and he had bought this place together and got to know Hu Xiaobai and Wang Yuexi afterwards.

At this place, they experienced setting up a stall in the marketplace, did some reading, and Yang Xiaojin would go shopping for groceries and cook for him like a normal person.

They had also planted some Potato Shooters and an apricot tree in their backyard.

When they were upstairs, they would whisper to each other through the thin wooden walls before they fell asleep.

Ren Xiaosu had wandered around the world and met many people. Some of them became friends, some became enemies, and some were just passersby in his life.

In the end, what made him feel grounded was not some glorious official residence but this small house in Stronghold 144.

So this was where he wanted to go the most. This was great! In the future, no matter where he might be, he could return home instantly through the Anywhere Door.

"Is anyone there?" Ren Xiaosu shouted happily.

There was no response from the house. It looked like no one had lived here in a long time.

However, Ren Xiaosu was not disappointed. Before he came back here, he had guessed Yang Xiaojin had already gone to look for him in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. Therefore, it was within his expectations that she was not in Stronghold 144.

At this moment, it was evening. Ren Xiaosu went to the backyard to check on the Potato Shooters. However, when Hu Xiaobai, who was in the yard next door, saw Ren Xiaosu walking out of the house, her jaw nearly dropped to the ground. "Xiaosu!"

It should be the weekend today, so Hu Xiaobai stayed at home on her rest day. She had taken advantage of the sunny weather to put out her blankets and mattresses in the yard to dry. Now that it was evening, it was time to bring them back in.

The sunset cast a glow on the blanket and Hu Xiaobai's face and made everything look exceptionally gentle.

This made Ren Xiaosu feel like he had never really left this place. It was as though this was where he truly belonged.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Hu." Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "Why do you look so surprised?"

However, Hu Xiaobai ignored him and ran into the house with her blankets. She shouted, "Old Wang! Old Wang! Look who's back!"

Wang Yuexi's voice could be heard coming from inside the house. "I'm writing a document, so don't disturb me with all that shouting... Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch, let go of my hand!"

While protesting, Hu Xiaobai pulled Wang Yuexi out of the house by the ear.

When Wang Yuexi saw Ren Xiaosu, he nearly thought he was hallucinating. "Future Commander? Why did you suddenly come back? They said you went to the Kingdom of Sorcerers!"

Ren Xiaosu laughed and said, "We can catch up on that later. Summon Black Fox and Zhang Xiaoman for me."

Black Fox was P5092's adjutant.

After the war between the Pyro Company and the Wang Consortium, the remaining Pyro Company main forces retreated to the Northern Plains. In the end, they were all brought to the Northwest by P5092. Currently, Black Fox and Zhang Xiaoman should be the ones in command in the 6th Combat Brigade.

The reason why Ren Xiaosu did not call for P5092, the Great Hoodwinker, or Wang Yun was that he knew they were definitely on their way to the Kingdom of Sorcerers.

In fact, they might even be there already.

This was not just Ren Xiaosu speculating. All of them understood each other on a deep level.

Wang Yuexi hurriedly obeyed and said, "Alright! I'll get them to come right away!"

Then Wang Yuexi stumbled back into the house to make a call. Meanwhile, Hu Xiaobai called out to Ren Xiaosu, "Xiaosu, come over to our place. Big Sis will make you dinner. You must not have had dinner yet since you suddenly came back, right? What do you want to eat tonight?"

“Just a bowl of noodles will do,” Ren Xiaosu said with a smile.

At sunset, a dozen military vehicles drove through the gates from outside Stronghold 144.

The earth-shattering sight stirred a wave of speculation among the residents. Those who did not know better would think the military was about to arrest a spy ringleader.

The dozen military vehicles were all from the 6th Combat Brigade. A pedestrian wondered, “That’s strange. Those soldiers don’t usually come into the stronghold when Future Commander isn’t here. Didn’t they say they were holding a boot camp for the new recruits? So why did they come into the stronghold with so many people?”

At the same time, it wasn’t only the 6th Combat Brigade that had reported to Anning East Road. Wang Fugui and Jiang Wu also arrived.

Anning East Road was no longer peaceful. The neighbors were all looking curiously at the distinguished guests and saw the alleyways full of parked cars. The neighborhood was bustling with activity.

A middle-aged woman was picking vegetables at the entrance of her house and saying with a laugh, “The last time there was such a big commotion on Anning East Road was when Future Commander was caught.”

“Don’t you know how to word things properly? They found Future Commander; he wasn’t caught!” another middle-aged woman said disdainfully.

“At that time, Future Commander didn’t want to be the future commander yet, so wasn’t he caught so that he would be the future commander?” the vegetable-picking woman retorted.

But two old men, who were playing chess by the side, suddenly stopped when they overheard their conversation. “Could it be that Future Commander is really back?”

Just as he finished speaking, the neighbors saw the 6th Combat Brigade’s commander, Zhang Xiaoman, jumping out of an off-road vehicle. Then he shouted at the top of his voice, “Future Commander, you’re finally back! The Great Hoodwinker and those damn jerks went to the Kingdom of Sorcerers and left me here by myself!”

Following Zhang Xiaoman was Black Fox. The deputy commander of P5092 was obviously much more mature than Zhang Xiaoman.

When the neighbors heard this, they were immediately shocked. “Hey, Old Liu, did someone bless your tongue? Future Commander is really back?”

Ren Xiaosu welcomed Zhang Xiaoman and the others into Wang Yuexi's house. He looked at Black Fox and said, "I had already gone to Fortress 178 when y'all arrived, so I couldn't welcome you myself."

Black Fox said politely, "Future Commander, there's no need to stand on ceremony. We're already very familiar with each other."

Black Fox knew about everything Ren Xiaosu had done at the Pyro Company's front line back then.

Black Fox felt that anyone aware of the future commander's fearsomeness would definitely lay down their pride temporarily in his presence.

"Future Commander, how did you get back? Where are the Great Hoodwinker and the others?" Zhang Xiaoman wondered.

Ren Xiaosu explained, "I came back using sorcery. I haven't joined up with the Great Hoodwinker and the others yet."

"Sorcery?!" Zhang Xiaoman's interest was immediately piqued. "Future Commander, you've actually learned sorcery? Can you teach me?"

After all, Zhang Xiaoman felt that one could pick any person around him, and it would turn out to be a superhuman. This made him, a brigade commander, very embarrassed.

But more importantly, he was not one of those superhumans. They all had gone on a very exciting trip, but he wasn't able to join them!

Ren Xiaosu took out two red Eyes of True Sight and threw one each to Zhang Xiaoman and Black Fox. "Consider this a local specialty that I brought back from the Kingdom of Sorcerers. With it, you can become sorcerers too. This is the weapon of the Magi."

Zhang Xiaoman sighed and said, "Even the local specialties that Future Commander brought back are so unique."

"Alright, stop flattering me already." Ren Xiaosu taught the two of them how to meditate and practice. Then he asked, "Tell me, who went to the Kingdom of Sorcerers to look for me?"

Zhang Xiaoman said indignantly, "There's Future Commander's wife and that maid of yours, the Great Hoodwinker, Ji Zi'ang, Wang Yun, P5092, and even that fair-skinned chubster, Xun Yeyu, was brought to the Kingdom of Sorcerers. But they refused to let me go with them."

When Ren Xiaosu heard this, he was reassured. With this lineup from the Northwest, those people from the Kingdom of Sorcerers would have no choice but to become the Prosperous Northwest's branch office!

"Black Fox, how are things going between the Pyro Company and the 6th Combat Brigade?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

Black Fox said, "This is something I have to update you on, Future Commander. After Commander P5092 brought us here, we were initially worried the Northwest would not welcome us. In the end, Commander Zhang directly gave the approval for a reorganization. The 6th Combat Brigade has already become the 6th Field Division. The Pyro Company has trained really well with the 6th Combat Brigade. I've already redrawn the training directives of the 6th Field Division based on the types of troops available to us."

"Anything that you haven't adjusted to yet?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"No." Black Fox said with a smile, "Currently, the strength of our battle order is 21,317 men, including 3,021 new recruits who've just been drafted into the military. Other than these recruits who still cannot go into battle, the others are operationally ready!"

"Very good." Ren Xiaosu nodded in satisfaction. It seemed he had indeed done the right thing by getting P5092 to convince these Pyro Company troops to join the Prosperous Northwest. "I need all of you, other than the recruits, to quickly prepare for battle. After that, set up camp inside Stronghold 144. The vicinity of Anning East Road will have to be placed under martial law. But remember, don't disturb the nearby residents."

"Understood!" Black Fox accepted his combat orders first before clarifying his doubts, "Future Commander, what's the meaning of this? Are we starting a war in the city?"

"No." Ren Xiaosu shook his head and said with a laugh, "We're declaring war on the Kingdom of Sorcerers."

"How many basic supplies should we bring?" Black Fox asked.

Ren Xiaosu shook his head and said, "I'm not versed in warfare, so I'll just explain the situation and leave the judgment call to you. This battle shouldn't require many logistical supplies. We'll be facing over a 100,000 cavalry units, and there might be street battles or walled defense tactics in play..."

Black Fox silently made a note of it. "I already have a rough idea of what the situation is, but I still have some doubts. Future Commander, why do you want us to set up camp inside Stronghold 144? And surely we need logistical supplies for the march to the Kingdom of Sorcerers, right?"

Ren Xiaosu shook his head while smiling. "There's no need for that. If we run out of supplies, we can just come back and transport them. We're only one step away from the Kingdom of Sorcerers."

The moment Ren Xiaosu realized his enchanted doorway was connected to Stronghold 144, he knew how they should fight this war.

It was as though the enchanted doorway in his house had opened a path right in the face of the Magi. Originally, the Northwest would have to travel thousands of kilometers to send their troops to the Kingdom of Sorcerers, so their entire supply line would be a problematic issue.

But it was different now. The entirety of Stronghold 144 had become their forward operating base. With that, the 6th Field Division's firepower was really only a step away from the Kingdom of Sorcerers.

Chapter 1196: The final clue

Zhang Xiaoman could never have expected that he, the one who had been left behind, would actually be the first to rendezvous with the future commander.

"Future Commander, you mean to say there's a doorway leading to the capital of the Kingdom of Sorcerers right in your house?" Zhang Xiaoman asked in shock.

When Ren Xiaosu explained the principle behind the enchanted doorway to them in detail, they were all extremely fascinated.

Moreover, this was not a unique superpower but one that was replicable through an inheritable spell.

"Future Commander, do you think I can also open this freaking enchanted doorway?" Zhang Xiaoman asked.

"Yes." Ren Xiaosu nodded. "Anyone with a red Eye of True Sight or higher can activate it. This doorway will lead to wherever you wanna go the most."

At the side, Black Fox calmly tried to talk Zhang Xiaoman out of it. "I suggest you better not activate the enchanted doorway now. It won't be very nice if it opens into Triratna Alley."

Ren Xiaosu was curious. "What's Triratna Alley?"

Black Fox explained, "Future Commander, many young ladies need help on Triratna Alley. Zhang Xiaoman has to make a trip there twice a month."

“Why are you slandering me?” Zhang Xiaoman roared while blushing.

As he trailed off, Ren Xiaosu slapped him on the back of the head. “Don’t go to places like that anymore. You’re already a brigade commander. Can’t you settle down and find a wife?”

Zhang Xiaoman covered his head and looked at Black Fox viciously. It was as though he was saying, “Just you wait!”

However, Black Fox ignored him and confirmed with Ren Xiaosu instead, “Future Commander, do you require all our troops in the 6th Field Division to be fully armed? How should we deal with those sorcerers?”

“Leave the sorcerers to me,” Ren Xiaosu said.

“Alright, I understand.” Black Fox continued asking, “Should we convert Stronghold 144 into a field camp or turn it into an actual forward operating base?”

“A field camp.” Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, “When there’s another war after this, we’ll totally have enough time to train new sorcerers to activate their enchanted doorways. More importantly, this enchanted doorway is in my house, so don’t break my flooring when you guys shuffle in and out.”

Black Fox said, “... Understood.”

Actually, Ren Xiaosu had also given it some thought before. According to P5092, a war with the Wang Consortium was unavoidable.

But the problem was that it was likelier the Wang Consortium would be the one initiating this war rather than Fortress 178.

When that time came, Stronghold 144 would become the main battlefield, and his enchanted doorway would become less important in that war.

Right now, the greatest significance of the enchanted doorway was that Ren Xiaosu could summon a modern army from a 1,000 kilometers away to directly deal a devastating blow to the sorcerers’ main camp in Ghent City.

The only thing that worried Ren Xiaosu was that there were too many civilians in Ghent City.

Although those civilians were not related to Ren Xiaosu in any way, he could not be so deranged as to completely disregard their lives.

If Ren Xiaosu were so indifferent, he would never have become the future commander of the Northwest.

Ren Xiaosu said to Black Fox, "As for the specific battle plan, we'll talk again after I join up with P5092. Y'all get ready here first and ensure that you can move out at any time. On top of that, get all the equipment ready. Whatever that won't fit through the enchanted doorway, just leave it to me to transport."

An enchanted doorway would not open up bigger even if it were activated on a larger object. There were principles dictating the way they worked.

Under normal circumstances, the enchanted doorway could only allow one to three people to pass through at the same time. This rule seemed to be determined by the grade of the Eye of True Sight. Ren Xiaosu possessed a black Eye of True Sight, so his enchanted doorway could allow three people to pass through at once.

Zhang Xiaoman and Black Fox returned to the 6th Field Division's military base in high spirits and started making arrangements for the field camp to be set up inside Stronghold 144.

That same night, a large number of trucks entered Stronghold 144. Meanwhile, Wang Yuexi quickly organized the staff of the stronghold's management committee to conduct an eviction of the surrounding residents and draw up a compensation plan.

A military base to accommodate 20,000 soldiers would definitely be very large no matter how compact it was. They would definitely have to set up a cordon in the vicinity of the base and demarcate it as a restricted zone, so no civilians would be allowed to live inside the area.

However, it was not that easy to do the eviction. Wang Yuexi was so worried about this his hair almost turned white.

As there were ten residential zones around the future commander's residence, just the compensation alone would cost a large sum. Although Stronghold 144 was rich enough to afford such compensation now, the residents might not be willing to move away.

In such situations, it would not be practical to try and run the operations from behind the scenes. Wang Yuexi would have to take the staff from door to door to evict people through the night.

Wang Yuexi said to the staff around him, "Remember to remain polite. Even if the residents are unwilling to move, don't be rude to them."

"Yes, sir." The staff were all mentally prepared to fight a tough battle.

Military operations would, of course, take priority. If someone truly refused to move, they would have to be forcefully evicted.

But if things could be resolved peacefully, the Northwest Army would not want to come into direct conflict with the common folk either.

When Wang Yuexi knocked on the door of the first house nearby, a middle-aged woman opened the door in surprise. "Oh, it's Little Wang. What brings you here in the middle of the night?"

"It's like this: We're evicting the residences in the vicinity for the interim. Based on our 6th Field Division's plans, we might need to requisition your place for about a month." Wang Yuexi patiently handed over a document. "This is our requisition plan with the specific compensation details in it."

The woman was taken aback. "What's the purpose of this?"

Wang Yuexi explained, "Well, it's nothing confidential. The future commander is preparing to attack the Kingdom of Sorcerers. Have you ever heard of the Kingdom of Sorcerers? They're the ones who've been harassing Fortress 178. Right now, the future commander has found a way to attack them, so he needs to turn this neighborhood into a field camp to hold the 6th Field Division. But don't worry, they'll just be setting up military tents on the outside and won't go into your homes."

"Oh, so it's like that." The woman smiled and said, "Well then, I'll move out tonight to make space for you guys. Do you want me to leave the house key so the boys can go inside and take a hot shower or something?"

At this moment, someone opened the door of the house next to them. Another middle-aged woman said, "I overheard you all talking. We'll move out tonight as well."

Wang Yuexi was stunned. To be honest, he had expected this to be the most difficult step, but it turned out to be the simplest one.

Before the woman returned to her house to pack her things, she even said excitedly to Wang Yuexi, "Can you pass a message to the future commander for me? Tell him Auntie Li from the market says to attack those sorcerers without mercy! He has our full support!"

"Huh?" Wang Yuexi was stunned for a while. "Why don't you guys take a look at the compensation details first? This way, everyone will also know how much compensation they will receive in the future."

Auntie Li giggled. "It's fine. I'll just go live at my son's place for a month. Why would I need any compensation? You guys worked hard to solve the food shortage and fought battles to avenge the Northwest. If we want to be compensated over such a small matter, what does that make us?"

Wang Yuexi shook his head. "No, Auntie Li, those are two different matters. Rules are rules."

"Alright then, just pay as you see fit," Auntie Li said with a laugh.

"How can we do that?" Wang Yuexi got anxious.

However, Auntie Li punched Wang Yuexi in the chest and laughed heartily. "Why are you being so damn polite? Don't hold me up from packing."

Auntie Li punched Wang Yuexi so hard it made him cough twice.

Another middle-aged woman next door said, "Little Wang, since you're so close with the future commander, can you ask him for an autograph on our behalf after the war?"

Auntie Li said, "You were only asked to move away for a month. Why are you troubling others with so many requests? The future commander is very busy, so how would he have time to give you an autograph?"

Wang Yuexi was speechless.

Auntie Li said to Wang Yuexi, "Alright, stop wasting time here and go do your job. You guys have already toiled so much on the front lines. Surely we can't disappoint you all on your return to the stronghold, right?"

It took only one night for the stronghold's management committee to completely vacate the neighborhoods around the future commander's residence. Although not everyone was as easygoing as Auntie Li, the fact there were people like her somewhat made Wang Yuexi feel that all of their hard work was worth it.

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When Ren Xiaosu returned to the other side of the enchanted doorway, Qian Weining, Mel, Summer, and the others were still standing guard.

He casually put the metal door into his storage space, making it look like a magic spell. Everyone almost couldn't differentiate who was the real sorcerer here.

Melgor wondered, "You were in there for several hours. Where does this enchanted doorway lead to?"

"You'll know in the future." Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "I've roughly figured out how to deal with those old aristocratic clans."

Next to him, Summer shook her head and said, "Maybe you haven't encountered a true archmage before. That's why you think the Magi are a little weak. But I have to seriously

remind you that things are not as simple as you think. Otherwise, we wouldn't have stayed in hiding until now."

"Oh?" Ren Xiaosu said, "Tell me about it."

"It definitely wasn't down to luck that the Houses of Norman and Tudor have remained established in Ghent City for 200 years." Summer said, "There's too many exclusive spells in the world that have not been made public, so no one knows what trump cards they hold."

"Alright, I understand." Ren Xiaosu nodded and said, "Please take me to Ghent City. I've had a change of plans, so I need to get my hands on what that Rider left behind as soon as possible. I'm worried that I won't have a chance to retrieve it once it gets chaotic."

Summer was taken aback for a moment before agreeing, "Alright."

No one knew what Ren Xiaosu meant by that. But a moment later, everyone suddenly felt a strong warping force pulling at them. It was as though they were being dragged away from this part of the world.

With a loud crash, everyone was pulled away from the turbulent coast and fell back into the dark tunnel!

They saw two people in leather armor holding their Eyes of True Sight inside the tunnel. The wall that had the divine dragon drawn on it had been blown up.

Before Summer could steady herself, she was reacting, "They're not our people! It's the bounty hunters from the sorcerer clans! They've discovered this place! Fight back!"

However, someone else had reacted faster than her.

The moment Ren Xiaosu fell back into the tunnel, he pushed off the ground with his arm supporting him before his body fully hit the ground and shot towards the two bounty hunter assailants like an arrow.

During the leap, Ren Xiaosu's armor quickly covered his entire body and blocked the two bounty hunters' Greater Fireball spells.

At the rear, Chen Jingshu and Xu Anqing hurriedly raised their hands to fire the spring-loaded crossbows hidden in their sleeves. Although the concealed crossbow was small, it could shoot three bolts all at once.

However, because they were too hasty, the six bolts all deviated from the targets.

Chen Jingshu and Xu Anqing were annoyed. They knew they should have been calmer.

But to their surprise, the six crossbow bolts they fired were all caught by Ren Xiaosu in midair in this narrow space. Right after that, he threw them at the two bounty hunters facing him.

The diverted crossbow bolts were thrown at an even greater speed, and all of them pierced the heads of the two bounty hunters.

When Qian Weining saw the events play out from behind, he suddenly felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity. He finally realized this was probably the reason for his 100% kill rate in archery.

Ren Xiaosu went to check on the two bounty hunters. "No bloodline spell was activated?"

"It doesn't seem like they were sent by the House of Tudor," Xu Anqing analyzed. "They should be from the House of Norman."

"Wait a sec." Ren Xiaosu frowned. "That Sorcerer Titus from before was part of the Norman family, right? Where is he?"

Everyone looked around but couldn't find him anywhere.

However, Mel mentioned, "I saw him fleeing through the tunnel after we fell out of the enchanted doorway."

Ren Xiaosu lamented, "You seem quite concerned about your romantic rival."

Mel's face turned red. "I-I'm just observant!"

Ren Xiaosu looked at Xu Anqing and said, "Y'all're way too careless. Didn't you notice someone like him sneaking into the group?"

Xu Anqing laughed and shook his head. "How could we possibly not notice?"

As soon as he finished speaking, several people emerged from both sides of the tunnel. One of them was even carrying Titus Norman, who had just fled.

From the look of things, these were the members of the Sanctuary who had been lying in ambush in the tunnel.

After these people entered the tunnel, they kept looking at Ren Xiaosu knowingly, as though everyone was already aware of his background.

"So it was an operation to root out spies." Ren Xiaosu said, "What a heavy price to pay, sacrificing an enchanted doorway just for that."

"This enchanted doorway's location has already been exposed, so we thought of exploiting it for what it was worth," Xu Anqing said.

Chen Jingshu said to Ren Xiaosu, "Come with us. We'll head deeper underground. If the enemy dares to make a move at this time, they've probably already made other preparations."

"No," Ren Xiaosu said, "y'all can go ahead, but Summer and Mel have to follow me to the Rose Monastery. I must quickly retrieve what that Rider had left behind."

"But it'll be very dangerous to return to the surface now." Xu Anqing frowned.

"Yeah, it'll be very dangerous for them," Ren Xiaosu said.

Xu Anqing was speechless.

After Ren Xiaosu left, Xu Anqing led Qian Weining and the others to the depths of the underground. Eventually, a member of the Sanctuary couldn't help but remark, "He really looks so identical to that Rider."

"An'an's father said he wanted Ren Xiaosu to lead us. Jingshu, you've spent some time with him. Do you think he's qualified to be our leader?" Xu Anqing asked.

Chen Jingshu thought for a while and said, "He's much stronger than you guys think, and I know this for a fact. I'm afraid that even if An'an's father were here, he wouldn't be a match for him. However, his leadership ability is still debatable. We don't know whether he's capable of leading the entire Sanctuary."

"Mhm, he's so young, I doubt he has much leadership experience," Xu Anqing said with a nod.

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The nightlife of Ghent City was active beyond imagination. A dazzling array of taverns lined the busy streets of Rose Avenue, and there were even beautiful women smiling and welcoming guests outside the taverns.

Inside the taverns, the hearty laughter of men and women could be heard through the wooden doors. Occasionally, a dance tune would be heard, and the people inside would start embracing and dancing together.

Outside the taverns, luxurious carriages were parked on the side of the road, while the coachmen and servants smoked handrolled cigarettes as they waited for their masters.

Usually, the coachmen and servants would be required to wait a long time in such situations, as the young nobles reveled past midnight.

It would be late into the night when young men and women would be boarding their carriages with their favorite companions in their arms before returning to their respective homes to spend the night together.

Rose Avenue was well-known in Ghent City. If Ghent City was known as “The City That Never Sleeps,” this place would be known as “The Street That Never Sleeps.”

The long boulevard was not that wide, probably only wide enough for three carriages to pass through at the same time.

On both sides of the streets were three-story-tall Gothic buildings. Taking a bird’s-eye view, this large capital would appear very neatly structured. It was as though the buildings were blocks of chocolates placed next to each other, creating a pleasing sight.

But in the shadows of this glamorous city lurked a scent of blood that did not match its glamor.

In a dark alley next to the Rum Tavern on this lively Rose Avenue, a manhole cover was suddenly moved aside from the inside.

Ren Xiaosu, Mel, and Summer climbed out of the sewers one after another. At this moment, a man and a woman were secretly making out in the alley. Compared with the lively Rose Avenue on the main street, this alley was considerably quieter.

When the couple saw Ren Xiaosu climbing out of the sewers, they nearly cried out in alarm. But before they could make a sound, they were knocked unconscious by Ren Xiaosu.

“How should we deal with these two?” Melgor asked in surprise. Then he saw Ren Xiaosu stuffing each of them mercilessly into two dumpsters.

Summer whispered, “Head left. Ghent City is heavily guarded now, so we must be extremely careful.”

As they were talking, two patrolling soldiers suddenly passed through the alley.

When they saw Ren Xiaosu, Summer, and Mel, a strange look of intrigue appeared in their eyes.

When they walked past each other, the two patrolling soldiers even muttered, “These young people really know how to have fun.”

Mel, supposedly the most cowardly of the group, felt blood rush to his head. He said angrily to the patrolling soldiers, "You two, get back here! We're here to destroy Ghent City. We're not as nasty as you think!"

Ren Xiaosu was speechless. Summer was too.

Ten seconds later, Ren Xiaosu stuffed the two unconscious soldiers into the sewers. Then he praised, "Mel, I never knew you to be so ballsy. The power of love is indeed great!"

Summer smiled and said, "Melgor, you seem a little different from before. You've become braver."

Melgor scratched his head and said shyly, "... Really?"

Ren Xiaosu sighed, "People in relationships can really lose their minds."

Rose Monastery was located at the end of Rose Avenue. As the three of them walked on the streets, no one suspected them at all. They just thought that they were here to have fun.

The trio quietly climbed over the walls of the Rose Monastery, then descended into the well behind it.

After they went into the well, realization dawned on Ren Xiaosu. It was no wonder no one had discovered the secret hidden here even though the monastery had been renovated. It turned out the Russell family had hidden everything inside a secret chamber that was dug in advance in this well.

The secret chamber was not big. There were several boxes of books and some boxes of gold coins stored inside.

The boxes containing the books were covered with a layer of canvas tarps to protect them from the damp.

Summer rummaged around for a while before handing a wooden box wrapped in canvas to Ren Xiaosu. "This is what that Rider left behind. I swear on the Russell family's reputation that we have never opened it before."

The moment Ren Xiaosu took the box from her, the voice from the palace in Ren Xiaosu's mind said, "Clue collection quest complete. The reward is archived and can be retrieved at any time."

The palace did not mention what the reward was, and Ren Xiaosu was not in a hurry to retrieve it either. Instead, he continued looking intently at the box in his hand.

All the unsolved mysteries would be revealed tonight.

For some reason, Ren Xiaosu was not nervous at all. Rather, he was unprecedentedly calm.

At this moment, Old Xu, who had been sent out earlier, was standing on the roof of a building. It was quietly watching the commotion around Rose Avenue as the sound of galloping horses approached like a tsunami.

It could see several groups of soldiers holding torches even farther away.

Tonight's Ghent City had become even livelier than usual.

In the darkness, an iron arrow suddenly shot out from the shadows. The bowstring twanging and the incoming arrow sounded like rumbling thunder.

This iron arrow was headed straight for Old Xu's face.

But when this powerful arrow arrived in front of Old Xu, Old Xu casually put its palms together and caught the iron arrow in its hands.

It only took a moment for the arrow to go from extreme motion to sudden stillness.

A clamor erupted in the darkness.

The commotion outside the monastery traveled down into the well. Summer's expression turned solemn. They had kept their whereabouts discreet. If they still got encircled at this time, it would mean there were still problems within the organization and that the spies had not been wiped out.

Summer said to Mel, "They probably only know that we came to Rose Avenue through the sewers and don't know we're in the monastery. Only the three of us know about this place. I'll lure them away later while you stay hidden here. Make sure you don't go out!"

Mel looked helplessly at Ren Xiaosu and realized he was calmly opening the wooden box to reveal a letter inside.

The secret the Russell family had been protecting for over 200 years turned out to be just a letter.

Melgor said anxiously, "Xiaosu, tell us what we should do now."

Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "Don't worry, let me finish reading the letter first. Who knows, the problem outside might already be resolved by the time I finish reading it."

“Do you expect the problem to resolve itself? Then you might as well just say we can wait here to die. Have you ever considered there might already be thousands of Knights of Tudor congregating outside?” Summer asked.

Ren Xiaosu carefully opened the envelope. “Don’t worry, with me around, not even gods that descend from Heaven can kill you two. Moreover, those people outside are just a group of pseudogods.”

Summer’s expression turned even more solemn. She took out her Eye of True Sight and recited an incantation in the well outside the secret chamber.

A second later, a scene of Rose Avenue appeared on the water’s surface.

On the long boulevard of Rose Avenue, she saw countless corpses of the Knights of Tudor extending out towards the horizon. Blood was also flowing continuously along the gaps between the brick pavement.

...

Chapter 1197: Past events, revelations

Summer had heard of Ren Xiaosu’s strength before.

For example, the battle in Winston City had been confirmed by Chen Jingshu today to be the work of Ren Xiaosu.

And news of the battle where Ren Xiaosu returned to Winston City in pursuit of Wang Wenyan was also transmitted back to Ghent City through Zhang Haoyun.

But for such matters, it wouldn’t leave much of a particular impression on anyone if they hadn’t witnessed it with their own eyes.

However, what she saw on the surface of the water in the well left her so shocked she was speechless.

Summer looked at Mel while Mel shrugged. “I was pretty surprised too at first...”

Summer suddenly recalled what Ren Xiaosu had told her in the sewers this afternoon. “My arrival from the Central Plains is the best opportunity for y’all to overthrow the old aristocratic rule of the Magi.”

At that time, Summer responded with a polite smile because she felt she should not view others with suspicion willy-nilly.

And now, Summer was very glad she did not dismiss those claims on the spot.

“Was it your companion who slaughtered the Knights of Tudor on Rose Avenue?” Summer wondered.

“Yes.” Ren Xiaosu remarked offhandedly, “It’s my good friend, Old Xu.”

“How many of you from the Central Plains are here in the Kingdom of Sorcerers this time?” Summer asked.

“It was only me at the beginning.” Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, “Mel had abducted and brought me here. At that time, he used the Earth Bind spell to restrain me.”

In an instant, Summer started reevaluating Mel and thought to herself, ‘You’ve actually been hiding your strength all this time?!’

Mel hurriedly explained, “I’m not that strong. He’s been helping me behind the scenes.”

Ren Xiaosu looked at Mel and Summer and said, “Wait a minute, I need to finish reading this letter first. Don’t worry, I’ll think of how to deal with it before more enemies arrive.”

Summer wondered, “Why do I get the feeling you’re deliberately waiting for the situation to get worse before taking action?”

“Of course.” Ren Xiaosu nodded. “It’s not really difficult to lure them away or get you two out of here now, but that’s not in line with my current plan.”

“Your plan?” Summer asked.

“That’s right.” Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, “To quickly bring an end to this matter of the Kingdom of Sorcerers, the most I can do is help y’all clear out the obstacles. As for whether y’all can handle the remaining issues, that’ll have to depend on yourselves. Otherwise, you can wait til I have the freedom to come back to the Kingdom of Sorcerers again. After all, this will be the Prosperous Northwest’s branch office, so I’ll definitely support y’all til the end.”

Summer asked again, “You didn’t think that way previously, right? What made you suddenly change your mind and become so radical?”

“Part of the reason is that my companions will be here soon.” Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, “The other reason is that I have to go back to the Central Plains.”

When he returned to Stronghold 144, Ren Xiaosu received news that the Wang Consortium had completed the unification of the Central Plains.

After the unification, the Wang Consortium entered a short reorganization period. Once they finished reorganizing, the Wang Consortium's main forces got activated again, and they were about to arrive at the borders at the Northwest and Southwest.

Therefore, Ren Xiaosu had to make a trip back to the Central Plains.

He unfolded the yellowed letter in the well's secret chamber. "Quiet."

This letter was written so long ago it felt like it came from the opposite bank of the river of time.

...

Xiaosu, many years might have passed by the time you read this letter. Dr. P. says that when you wake up, anything could be a possibility. Perhaps you will have turned into a world consciousness. Perhaps you will have lost all your memories. Or perhaps everything will remain the same as before.

I'm not sure where fate will lead us in the end. I only wrote this letter because I hope that when you see it one day, you will understand that your mother and I never really left you.

Time is a measure of everything in the world. The young will grow old, flowers will wither, the sea can turn into mulberry fields, and mountains can become plains.

I can't be sure what the world will look like by the time you read this letter. I don't think I'll have a chance to witness it. I have my responsibilities, and in the future, you'll have yours as well.

I've been pursuing the meaning of life my entire life. I've tried freefalling from a great height. I've tried surfing the waves in the sea. I've scaled mountains of ice. And I've also soared above peaks.

Your mother and I traveled to almost every corner of the world, but it wasn't until you were born that we finally felt a sense of home.

When I picked up my pen to write this letter to you, there were so many things I wanted to share with you. But in the end, I suddenly realized how useless words are in the face of time.

Xiaosu, are you living your own life yet?

The majority of people spend most of their lives in observation. They observe the different paths others take and the lives they lead in an attempt to figure out what they should do for themselves.

But in fact, what they're observing is not life, paths, or choices. Rather, they're observing how others succeed, because they need to use other people's success to motivate themselves. But it will be too late if they wait until others have already succeeded.

Xiaosu, have you found someone you love?

What is love? It's the sudden feeling of weakness, but at the same time, a sense that you're protected by armor. It's when you can suddenly grasp the meaning behind love songs after you've fallen for her. It's when you suddenly feel like you don't have to conquer the world, that you don't have to make a name for yourself, that you don't have to be successful, that you don't have to be rich, and still feel a sense of bliss. You might even feel like you've lost a little of that ambition and still think it's not a bad thing. It's when you grow conscientious of everything yet are able to reach a compromise on all of them.

Xiaosu, do you still have dreams?

The path of pursuing one's dreams is like trekking through the wilderness, braving the brambles, the wind, and snow. Only you know how lonely it feels in that icy and snowy terrain, but the burning passion in you keeps you going.

This path is fraught with difficulty. You can be covered in wounds and feel like you're suffering from cold and hunger, but as long as you still have a wisp of breath left, you have to keep walking.

When you finally achieve your dream and the sun rises, how exciting does it feel to stand atop that cliff and look down at the magnificent scenery that was unknown to you before?

Actually, the purpose of having dreams does not lie in what happens after you've achieved them. Its significance is in the process of making it come true.

Xiaosu, are you still courageous?

Most people only come to realize after their youth has passed that the most precious thing in life is the courage to see the world while they were young, and the unyielding passion that used to fill them.

Now that I think about it, how brave was the pioneer of aviation? The courage that made people look back on the history of humanity's first flight is just like watching a warrior slay a dragon. Those people were the true dragon slayers of our ordinary lives, and the metaphorical dragons represented their invisible shackles. They broke free of those chains and pushed forward bravely.

At this point in the letter, the handwriting suddenly changed:

Xiaosu, it's Mom. Your father is starting to lecture again. Don't listen to him. You have your own life and loves.

The two of us only hope you are happy and healthy when you read this.

Xiaosu, Mom might not get to see you again in the future.

I'm sorry, I didn't take good care of you.

...

At this point in the letter, the paper became crumpled, wet by water.

Tears started rolling down Ren Xiaosu's face as he read the letter. He wiped his tears away and started laughing.

So it turned out he also had parents, and that his parents were just like other parents as well. His father liked to lecture while his mother was gentle and kind.

Ren Xiaosu took a deep breath and said with a laugh, "What are you going on about? There aren't even planes in this era anymore."

This letter was like the call of the people closest to him in the world, standing on the other side of the river of time. It was warm and beautiful.

The letter did not mention anything about The Cataclysm, nor did it mention anything about his illness. It was just the gentle advice normal parents gave, and it was nothing too remarkable.

But Ren Xiaosu felt that this was enough.

This was enough for him.

He said in his mind, "Palace, extract the quest reward."

"Quest reward: Dusty Memory. Confirm extraction?"

"Yes, extract it."

The world dimmed before brightening again.

Ren Xiaosu sat at a campfire and watched as his father roasted the fish he had just caught from the lake in the mountains. Meanwhile, his mother sat at the side and muttered, "Our child is still so young. Why did you bring him here for free solo climbing?!"

His father laughed nonchalantly. "What's the big deal? I'll take responsibility if anything happens."

"Stop uttering nonsense. If anything happens to him, I'll divorce you!"

Then Ren Xiaosu set off with his father in the wee hours of the morning. When dawn broke, he saw with his own eyes the words his father had carved onto the rock face at the top of the mountain: Forever young.

...

Ren Xiaosu stood on the edge of the platform at the top of the Alps and watched as his father did some final adjustments to his wingsuit. "Remember, Xiaosu, the most important thing about flying in a wingsuit is not the flight pattern or your sense of balance, but courage.

"This is your final challenge. The moment you land safely on the ground, you might hear a cracking sound in your body. Don't panic. That's not a fracture but the sound of your genetic code being unlocked."

The young Ren Xiaosu said, trembling, "Dad, what if something happens to me?"

Ren He comforted him with a smile, "Don't worry, Dad is still young. I can still make a younger brother for you."

Ren Xiaosu was speechless.

Ren He had led Ren Xiaosu through eight extreme challenges, and every one of them was a close shave with death. There was skydiving, BASE jumping, extreme surfing, free soloing...

Every time, Ren He would fool Ren Xiaosu into thinking he could unlock the genetic code and become a superhuman after completing each challenge.

And then, Ren Xiaosu really heard a crack as his genetic code unlocked.

...

Ren Xiaosu lay quietly in the ward and watched as his parents and the doctor spoke anxiously outside.

Actually, he already realized at that moment he would probably have to bid farewell to the world.

How pathetic! He actually got cancer after unlocking his genetic code? Who could he go reason with?

His mother came into the ward to comfort him and told him not to worry. She assured him there must still be a way to salvage the situation.

Although Ren Xiaosu responded to her positively, he knew his life force was already starting to diminish.

One day, his father brought him to another place to meet someone called Dr. P.

The other party said to Ren Xiaosu in seriousness, "The Pyro Company has always been dedicated to cancer research. The other patients did not make it because they were not strong enough, but you're different. You've unlocked the genetic code."

It turned out the unlocking of his genetic code had given him a renewed chance at everything.

...

TRX-001 genetic serum.

TRX-007 genetic serum.

ESK-001 genetic serum.

WKP-003 genetic serum.

Ren Xiaosu could no longer remember how many genetic serums he had been injected with. It wasn't until one day that he felt his mind, which was gradually getting muddled, suddenly become clear again.

The cells in his body started breaking down one by one before restructuring.

If he had not previously unlocked his genetic code, Ren Xiaosu could not have survived that period.

He started to feel the changes happening in the world and could even perceive the value of time in scale.

After that, his consciousness started dissipating. Even his body began turning into dust slowly. It was a very gradual but irreversible process.

Ren Xiaosu's thoughts were moving faster and faster, but he realized in despair he could not stop his body from dying.

In the end, he did not even feel any sense of despair.

His ward was clean and white. The two pets in a glass tank on the window sill did not pique his interest either. Ren Xiaosu started pondering about what was at the core of the world.

It was as though he could see to a place beyond the ceiling.

His consciousness seemed to be able to change the physical form of objects.

His thoughts could be transmitted to the minds of others, and he could also hear what they were thinking.

As such, at some point, he heard a little boy in the ward next door “calling” him “Bro” softly.

...

One day, Ren Xiaosu’s father went to the Pyro Company’s research laboratory alone and stuffed a black stone into his hand before leaving in a hurry.

At that time, no one knew what the black stone was or where it came from.

It was from that day onwards that his consciousness stopped drifting off, and even what had dissipated was slowly coming back to him.

It was also from that day onwards that he could not keep himself from descending into a chaotic darkness every night.

Dr. P had said this was an adaptive mechanism of his body. That large source of willpower with nowhere to go had to find an outlet, but his current body could no longer act as its vessel as of now. Therefore, Ren Xiaosu’s subconsciousness would help him find a way to deal with it.

Ren Xiaosu asked when he could stop suffering headaches and the darkness.

Dr. P assured him it would be fine once he found a way to deal with it.

This way was probably the only solution for him to continue existing in his human form.

Dr. P said to Ren Xiaosu, “You can also try out different ways yourself. There’s talented people in the world who can build a palace in their mind to store their memories. You can also try building the same thing to store your willpower. When you want to make use of it, you can retrieve it from the palace.”

But it was precisely because his mind continued plunging into darkness and chaos every day that Ren Xiaosu was kept in Laboratory 39 for treatment.

...

Dr. P suddenly made a request of Ren Xiaosu one day. "The little boy in the next ward is dying. The genetic serum is completely ineffective on him. If he is to survive, we'll need your help."

Curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, "What help do you need?"

Dr. P replied, "He needs a bone marrow transplant from you."

Actually, their HLAs¹ were not compatible matches. In other words, the leukocyte antigens of Ren Xiaosu and the little boy did not make them suitable transplant candidates for each other. However, Dr. P had no choice but to hope for a divine miracle.

Ren Xiaosu asked, "A divine miracle? Doctor, do you also believe in the divine?"

Dr. P shook his head. "The gods I'm referring to are not those entrenched in secular faiths and beliefs. It's you I'm talking about."

Later, Ren Xiaosu found out the little boy was actually Dr. P's son. The original intention of establishing Laboratory 39 was actually to save his own son's life.

If their HLAs did not match, it meant an organ rejection would be enough to make the treatment fail. But Dr. P had no choice but to take a gamble.

Ren Xiaosu agreed and was wheeled into the operating room together with the little boy.

A few hours later, he woke up in darkness and saw Dr. P looking extremely excited with tears brimming in his eyes. "It worked! It worked!"

As the first true god in the world, it was very difficult to explain Ren Xiaosu's existence with the current science.

The god's bone marrow was transplanted into the boy's body. It then replaced his original bone marrow and restarted hemopoiesis.

The little boy in the next ward did not even have to go through the pain of his cells restructuring that Ren Xiaosu had experienced. The cells in his body would be thoroughly replaced by the metabolic process of hemopoiesis.

There might be some people in the world who had obtained the blood of a god through the Pyro Company's research, but this was the only person who had obtained the bone marrow of a god.

Ren Xiaosu asked with a smile, "What's his name?"

"He took his mother's surname. You can call him Yan Liuyuan."

After the operation, Dr. P drew 200 milliliters of Ren Xiaosu's blood and sent it back to the research base in the north of the Central Plains via armed escort.

However, no one noticed Ren Xiaosu had tried to feed his blood to his two pets on the windowsill after the operation.

Afterwards, the world collapsed when The Cataclysm struck. Laboratory 39 also became buried deep underground in the disaster.

Meanwhile, the armed escort responsible for transporting the blood sample encountered earthquakes and landslides along the way. In the end, the survivors only managed to bring three drops of the blood sample back to the research base.

These three drops of blood then became known as the Blood of God.

...

Ren Xiaosu reopened his eyes in the small, secret chamber at the bottom of the well.

So it turned out he knew Yan Liuyuan in the past. Yan Liuyuan must have gradually regained his memory when he unlocked his path towards becoming a god.

That was why Yan Liuyuan asked Ren Xiaosu, "Bro, have you recalled anything?"

In fact, the two of them were connected by a blood relationship more than 200 years ago.

And it turned out his mind palace was created by him himself.

The purpose of its existence was to carry the burden of that large source of willpower that had nowhere to escape to.

This palace shouldered a huge responsibility. It was to gradually strengthen Ren Xiaosu's body until it could finally bear that vast willpower.

At the same time, it had to make some final preparations. If it were irrevocable that Ren Xiaosu had to become the world consciousness someday, it would have to ensure he became a good person first. This was to prevent human civilization from being pulled directly into the abyss by the world consciousness.

The palace did not have its own will. This was what Ren Xiaosu subconsciously wanted, because his father, Ren He, had once told him his only expectation for him was to be an honest person.

Ren Xiaosu remembered everything. He had once lived in a prosperous human civilization before The Cataclysm and witnessed the rise and fall of a city that contained buildings hundreds of meters tall.

He had also lived in an era where the Internet was fully developed, and he nearly witnessed the birth of a virtual world pioneered by the Qinghe Group.

Standing in the wastelands and looking back on everything that had happened in the past, that glorious human civilization was so nostalgic it made him want to cry.

Ren Xiaosu knew exactly what was sealed inside the palace.

He was not yet qualified to unlock that seal at this time. Or perhaps Ren Xiaosu always felt it was good enough for him to continue being human. If he really became a god one day, his feelings for Yang Xiaojin would also disappear from the world.

Just like how Xiaoyu had become Yan Liuyuan's "anchor," Yang Xiaojin was now Ren Xiaosu's "anchor."

The purpose of such emotions was so they could find their way back no matter where they were.

Therefore, even though he had regained his memory, Ren Xiaosu's strength had not changed much other than the fact he might speak with less restraint now.

Today, Ren Xiaosu finally knew where he had come from. The next thing he would have to start thinking about was where to go next.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Mel and Summer and said, "You two, remain in hiding here. Only come out when I call for you."

Mel said anxiously, "Where are you going?"

"To end things in the Kingdom of Sorcerers, of course." Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "After tonight, this place will become a little different."

"And then?" Mel asked in a daze.

"And then?" Ren Xiaosu turned to Summer and said, "I'll remove all obstacles for the Sanctuary. In the process, you'll understand how powerful Fortress 178 is now. As for how you want to govern the Kingdom of Sorcerers in the future, that's up to you. Today, our Fortress 178 will form an eternal alliance with you. To express Fortress 178's

sincerity, I've decided to give Mel's hand in marriage to you. We can kinda consider this a matrimonial alliance."

Summer was confused.

"Huh? Hey, hey, what do you mean by giving my hand away in marriage?" Mel's expression changed greatly. "And shouldn't you inform me beforehand if you're aiming to topple the regime of the Kingdom of Sorcerers?"

"Are you worthy?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

Mel thought for a couple seconds. "I'm not..."

Ren Xiaosu chuckled before scaling the walls of the well. Then he climbed onto the high dome of the Rose Monastery.

He looked out into the distance. During the time he was extracting his past memories, Old Xu had helped him to open up a path by slaughtering the enemies.

But Ren Xiaosu did not intend to leave just like that. He was waiting for more people to come and encircle them.

In Ghent City, the torch-bearing Knights of Tudor and the Norman family's Knights of Radiance who had gathered resembled a flowing stream that kept converging. In turn, the neatly laid out streets were like the riverbed of that flowing stream.

"So they've joined forces," Ren Xiaosu said with a smile.

After Winston City was attacked by Ji Zi'ang and the others, the Berkeley family's patriarch finally decided to put aside the civil war and join forces with the other clans to resist the foreign enemy from the Central Plains.

It was not that the Berkeley family's patriarch had a sense of unity, but that this ambitious person from the south knew very well that the Kingdom of Sorcerers would never, ever be united.

However, the Central Plains was too powerful now, so powerful the Magi had to be on guard!

As such, he sent two groups of envoys each to the Houses of Norman and Tudor to share all the information he knew.

Although the sorcerer clans had been leading a comfortable life for over a 100 years, it did not mean they had completely turned ignorant.

Summer, Chen Jingshu, and the others thought the people who had suddenly appeared tonight were probably here to encircle the Sanctuary members or to capture Russell's descendant.

But in fact, neither the Sanctuary nor Russell's descendant were the protagonists since the start of tonight.

The three sorcerer clans only had one purpose, and that was to capture Ren Xiaosu.

Especially after the appearance of White Mask, the House of Tudor had become extremely focused on appeasing their rage.

Chapter 1198: Faithfully loyal

In the underground world below Ghent City, Xu Anqing and Chen Jingshu led the group and quickly moved off to a more secure location.

As they walked through some of the passageways, they could even hear the sound of galloping horses on the streets above them.

The commotion caused by the cataphract regiments moving caused Chen Jingshu and the others to realize the seriousness of the problem. There was such a huge din in Ghent City tonight that it made them feel uneasy.

In the underground black market and casino, many of the merchants closed their businesses in panic.

A lot of people suddenly recalled that Ghent City also became this hectic after the death of Donnelly from the House of Norman.

As such, chaos broke out in the underground.

But everyone quickly realized something else. The chaos tonight was different from that previous time. The knights of the sorcerer clans did not swarm into the underground.

Instead, they sounded like they were all charging towards the center of Ghent City.

At this moment, Qian Weining was following the leaders of the group. Ren Xiaosu had already departed from the party, and so had Melgor. Therefore, all he could do was follow the Sanctuary members as they fled.

The pathways in the underground were complicated, but Xu Anqing led everyone around with a sense of familiarity.

While they were moving, Chen Jingshu suddenly asked, "Could they be targeting Summer?"

“That’s the most likely possibility.” Xu Anqing said, “The identity of Russell’s descendant is enough to make the sorcerer clans mobilize this many people. It looks like we’ve revealed ourselves too soon.”

“Then should we go and save her?” Chen Jingshu frowned and said, “It’s very dangerous for her to be alone...”

Xu Anqing turned around and looked at Chen Jingshu. He said in a serious tone, “Jingshu, it’s useless even if we go. You probably also estimated that more than 400 knights just passed overhead, and this is only on one of the streets of Ghent City.”

“Then are we not going to do anything about it?” Chen Jingshu said.

“All we can do now is pray she can turn the situation around on her own.” Xu Anqing said, “I’m not heartless; we really have no other choice. Let’s get to the temporary shelter first. We can only wait there patiently tonight.”

While talking, they could already see a “guardian” in front of them. Perhaps due to the tense situation, the black tattoos on his face even appeared quite distorted.

The rusty metal door behind the guardian led to the shelter they were headed to. This was a secret passageway the underground residents had dug out themselves.

Xu Anqing looked at the guardian and asked, “Anything unusual happen here at the temporary shelter?”

The guardian answered, “Nothing for now. Those who were allowed in managed to match the secret phrase.”

“OK.” Xu Anqing nodded and said, “Stay alert.”

The guardian pulled open the metal door to let them in. More than a 100 people had gathered in the wide passageway behind it. There were the elderly and children among them, and everyone seemed to be trembling in fear.

Xu Anqing led his group through the crowd to head deeper inside. However, he suddenly stopped in his tracks.

“Where are you from?” Xu Anqing looked at a young man and asked, “Why haven’t I seen you around before?”

The young man hiding behind an old man at the side said nonchalantly, “There’s so many people underground. You can’t have met everyone before, right?”

Xu Anqing frowned and said, “At the very least, I should recognize those who are allowed into this temporary shelter.”

As he spoke, the last subordinate behind Qian Weining stepped into the temporary shelter. Immediately after, the metal door behind them was slammed shut by the guardian outside.

The young man who spoke earlier suddenly gave a strange laugh. "It doesn't matter whether you recognize me or not. You parasites living underground will rest here forever after tonight anyway."

As soon as he finished speaking, hundreds of muscular men in the temporary shelter simultaneously drew short swords they had concealed on themselves.

Xu Anqing was more shocked that there were four or five sorcerers already armed with their Eyes of True Sight among these few hundred people. The young man in front of him was even holding a red Eye of True Sight in his hand. This signified he commanded a high status within the sorcerer clans.

Above that, only an archmage like Kayle who had been famous for a long time would be allowed to use a gold Eye of True Sight.

Xu Anqing said calmly, "You were targeting us? You've really mobilized a lot of people then."

"Well, no." The young man said with a light chuckle, "You lot are only the supporting cast tonight. The patriarch has decided not to tolerate you all anymore, so he thought we might as well get rid of you people in case you collude with the Central Plains."

Central Plains? Xu Anqing was shocked.

So it turned out the troops in Ghent City tonight were not targeting Summer and the Sanctuary. Their target was Ren Xiaosu!

But something strange suddenly happened in the temporary shelter's passageway. Everyone felt as though their world had turned upside down. What was originally the ceiling had become the ground, while the ground had become the ceiling!

Caught off guard, everyone fell towards the "ceiling" as though they were falling from a great height.

Only Xu Anqing, Chen Jingshu, the other members of the Sanctuary, the elderly, and the children were the exceptions as they hung upside down from the "ceiling." Hands of mud had reached out from the walls of the passageway and grabbed their ankles to hold them so they wouldn't suffer from the sudden switch of the gravity field.

Xu Anqing and the others were hanging in the air like gigantic bats.

Meanwhile, the Tudor family's knights and sorcerers, who were lying in ambush in the passageway, lost their balance in the chaos. Their sorcerers could not even recite the spells they wanted to cast.

Some of the sorcerers also lost grip of their Eyes of True Sight as they rolled off into the distance.

Xu Anqing was relieved to see these two spells, the Inversion spell and the Swamp Hands spell, be cast at the same time. Meanwhile, Chen An'an cheered in surprise when she saw this. "Father is back?!"

The Knights of Tudor and sorcerers struggled to get up after falling once. But before they could grab their short swords and Eyes of True Sight again, the inverted gravity field returned to normal.

All of a sudden, the enemies, who had already taken a hard fall, fell from the ceiling back to the ground again.

The metal door outside opened, and a burly man came in carrying the head of the guardian outside. Meanwhile, more than a dozen people emerged from the walls of the passageway.

This was not an enchanted doorway but an earth-elemental spell.

Tonight, Chen Jingshu and the others were ambushed, but Chen An'an's father, Chen Jiu, had returned long ago. The reason they did not show themselves was because they were waiting for the moment when their enemies revealed themselves.

The spies from the House of Tudor who infiltrated the underground thought they had successfully ambushed the core members of the Sanctuary, but actually, Xu Anqing and Chen Jingshu were merely the bait set by Chen Jiu.

These dozen-odd members of the Sanctuary who had suddenly appeared wore black cloaks. They quickly killed the spies who had sneaked into the temporary shelter and spared all the Knights of the Inferno who came in with Qian Weining. This made Qian Weining realize these people from the Sanctuary must have been hiding here for a long time.

Xu Anqing looked at Chen Jiu. "Boss, when did you all get back?"

"Not long ago. When I learned the enchanted doorway had been destroyed, I quickly rushed back." Chen Jiu pointed at Qian Weining and asked Xu Anqing, "Who are these soldiers? The way they walk and move their arms suggests they're from the Knights of the Inferno. What are you all doing with them? Did I miss something?"

“Ren Xiaosu has arrived in Ghent City. After the enchanted doorway was destroyed, he brought Summer up to the surface and said he was going to retrieve something the Rider had left behind in the Russell family’s safekeeping,” Xu Anqing explained. “You also heard what the sorcerer from the House of Tudor said just now. They’re out to kill Ren Xiaosu tonight.”

“It’s not only the House of Tudor.” Chen Jiu shook his head. “When we rushed back, we discovered that the Knights of Tudor and the Normans’ Knights of Radiance had already started making their way back to Ghent City. Zhang Haoyun sent news that the Knights of the Inferno in the south are also heading north. It seems that the three clans have joined forces.”

Xu Anqing and Chen Jingshu were dumbfounded. “They’re deploying that many soldiers? Is that really necessary?”

“I’m not sure,” Chen Jiu replied, shaking his head.

Logically, no matter how powerful Ren Xiaosu might be, there shouldn’t be a need to mobilize the main forces of the three biggest chivalric orders just to kill him, right? Ren Xiaosu was only one person, after all.

This was totally illogical!

Xu Anqing said, “What are we going to do? Should we save him?”

“Yes.” Chen Jiu said firmly, “The sorcerer clans must have their reasons for mobilizing so many troops to kill him. Who knows? This might be our opportunity to rise up.”

The members of the Sanctuary did not kill the sorcerers of the House of Tudor. Instead, they severed their tendons and left them in the tunnel so their bloodline spell would not be triggered.

They could not be sure there were no children of any archmages among them. If they accidentally summoned the Tudor family’s patriarch here, it would be troublesome.

Once the Sanctuary departed from here, these sorcerers of the Tudor family would be left to wail and curse in the passageway, but no one would bother about them.

...

Some people said Ghent City was so big it would take seven days to get out of the eastern district on horse. This was undoubtedly an exaggeration.

If there were really a need, the warhorses could traverse the city in half a day’s sprint.

But at this moment, as Ren Xiaosu stood on the dome of the Rose Monastery and looked around him, he really felt that the vast Ghent City stretched as far as the eye could see. He felt like he was on a mountain.

The Knights of Tudor and the Knights of Radiance rushed in from outside the city. Those knights who were originally headed to the battlefield in the south had all rushed back to Ghent City's rescue.

Knights were garrisoned in Ghent City to begin with. Now that the main forces had all turned around, it was really an astounding sight.

The Tudor, Norman, and Berkeley families even abandoned fighting a civil war due to their persistence in wanting to kill Ren Xiaosu in Ghent City.

"Wang Wenyan." Ren Xiaosu smiled. He believed the Berkeley family's claims would definitely not be able to influence the Houses of Tudor and Norman to arrive at this decision. Therefore, Wang Wenyan must surely have contributed to this ambush that was waiting for Ren Xiaosu.

At the southern gate, the heavily armored Knights of Tudor poured in like a dark torrent.

The Knights of Tudor riding their steeds galloped through the streets with cold expressions on their faces, and the hooves of their warhorses clopped noisily on the stone pavement in the night.

The Tudor family's falcon banner was fluttering in the wind at the front of the group. All of a sudden, Ren Xiaosu saw a fireball rising into the air from a small alley and flying towards him before exploding high above his head.

This was not an attack but to point out Ren Xiaosu's location for the knights who had just entered the city.

A moment later, the St. Tudor Knight commander at the distant city gate raised his lance high up and pointed it in the direction of the fireball.

In an instant, the most elite knights in the Kingdom of Sorcerers suddenly changed directions without any hesitation.

Amid the thunderous galloping, the residents of Ghent City remained silent out of fear. Everyone understood something big was about to happen tonight.

Ren Xiaosu stood at the top of the dome and took in the sight of everything surging towards him. It was as though the night sky was boiling over.

But so what?

He took a deep breath and jumped down from the dome, just like how Ren He had jumped off the mountain peak with him.

Ren He had asked him in the letter: "Xiaosu, are you still courageous?"

"Most people only come to realize after their youth has passed that the most precious thing in life is the courage to see the world while they were young, and the unyielding passion that used to fill them."

Without a doubt, Ren Xiaosu had never lacked courage.

White Mask had already returned to his side. The two figures darted into separate alleys like two parallel rays of light that kept advancing, like two shooting stars.

The St. Tudor Knight rode over and clamped the end of the lance under his arm. When Ren Xiaosu came up to him, the knight commander suddenly pulled the reins of his horse.

The warhorse immediately reared up. As it came back down to the ground, the St. Tudor Knight thrust his lance forward with the momentum!

The heavily armored knight's lance penetrated through the air like a heavy cannonball. This was an attack that heavily armored knights were proficient in. Using the huge inertia of their warhorses, even if the enemy had their shield raised, they could not block the impact of such an attack.

But a moment later, the St. Tudor Knight was surprised to see the young man in front of him taking out a steel machine from somewhere and holding it in his arms.

A long, flaming tongue erupted in the darkness of the night. The metal storm fired from the heavy machine gun only took two seconds to completely cover the entire alley.

The dozens of Knights of Tudor who had just surrounded Ren Xiaosu in the alley were instantly wiped out!

Ren Xiaosu carried the heavy machine gun that was still emitting smoke and walked out onto the long boulevard to face the knights who were surrounding him from the front and back alone.

In front of him were the Knights of Tudor, and behind him were the Normans' Knights of Radiance.

He was fully surrounded by foes.

Ren Xiaosu hefted the heavy machine gun in his hands again and fired wildly. "C'mon, sorcerers, make your move."

Right from the beginning, he had taken out a lethal weapon like the heavy machine gun to tell those sorcerers, "If y'all don't make a move, no one can do anything to me."

When the Knights of Tudor on the south side were utterly defeated, Ren Xiaosu put away his heavy machine gun and continued running southwards. At this moment, another group of knights appeared from the alley on the left and tried to outflank Ren Xiaosu.

But before these Knights of Tudor could rush out of their alley, they were intercepted by Old Xu.

With Old Xu around, it would be impossible for these knights from the era of melee weapons to surround Ren Xiaosu.

Perhaps the magi from the Kingdom of Sorcerers did not understand that Ren Xiaosu had not come here to sacrifice himself, nor perish together with the Kingdom of Sorcerers.

As Ren Xiaosu dashed forward madly, a group of soldiers suddenly emerged on the roofs of the Gothic buildings on both sides of the street and started shooting arrows.

The rain of arrows that blotted out the sky was like an enormous swarm of locusts or a storm cloud sweeping over.

When the arrows were about to reach Ren Xiaosu, the young man leaped up and instantly covered himself with his armor. When the arrows hit the armor, they all shattered into pieces.

Before Ren Xiaosu could land on the ground, a steam locomotive suddenly appeared out of thin air under him. Amid the barrage of arrows, it was as though an Eastern dragon had crashed through the ominous clouds.

Ren Xiaosu landed on the front of the train and stood upright. He was wearing gray metallic armor and riding on a ferocious black train. All of this seemed to have come from Purgatory with its finger pointed straight at the hypocritical kingdom in front of it.

The steam locomotive was very fast. When it whizzed through the city, everyone seemed to hear the sound of a storm.

Many of the knights who were shooting from the roofs felt that in the blink of an eye, Ren Xiaosu, who was standing at the front of the train, had gotten very far away from them.

The archmages could no longer sit still. If Ren Xiaosu were to force his way out of Ghent City, what would become of the gods' reputation?

All of a sudden, the hot summer temperature dropped.

Ren Xiaosu frowned and realized that Old Xu, who had been protecting him throughout this battle, was gradually being covered in a layer of frost.

In that instant, several icebergs erupted from the ground and broke through the buildings next to the street as they rose into the air. The bricks of the buildings were all shattered, and the icebergs forcibly trapped Old Xu within them.

Just as Xu Anqing and Chen Jingshu had said, they must not underestimate the archmages no matter what. The Houses of Tudor and Norman were able to stand tall in the Kingdom of Sorcerers precisely because they were capable of doing so.

Ren Xiaosu had never faced a figure like the Tudor family's patriarch who stood at the top of the pyramid of power. And now, the other party had imprisoned Old Xu with a single attack.

That iceberg was extremely dense, and no matter how hard Old Xu tried to shatter through it, there seemed to be no end to its size as it kept "growing."

Ren Xiaosu made up his mind and decided to simply take out an RPG to help Old Xu shatter the iceberg. Although this would hurt himself a little, it would definitely be effective.

If that still didn't work out, he would resort to the thermobaric bombs!

But before he could make his move, he suddenly saw the ground in front of the steam locomotive splitting apart. An icy crack snaked towards Ren Xiaosu like a bolt of lightning.

When the frost hit him, Ren Xiaosu even felt that the armor's movements were slowed a little. Inside the armor, his eyebrows were covered in a thin layer of frost.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly kicked off the steam locomotive and leaped away from it.

The moment he separated from the steam locomotive, the icy crack on the ground turned into a real abyss. A natural moat seemed to have appeared out of thin air on the long boulevard.

The steam locomotive plunged into the abyss of the crevice, having lost the foundation to hold its tracks.

When the sorcerers did not make a move, everything seemed easy. But the moment they struck, it was as if they were out to eliminate what was the greatest threat to they sorcerers.

Of course, the opponent had always regarded Old Xu as an independent entity. By targeting Old Xu first, the sorcerers probably thought it was far more of a threat than Ren Xiaosu.

The Tudor family's patriarch had made his move, but Ren Xiaosu did not panic. He was still determined to break through any encirclements as he headed south.

When the Knights of Tudor and Knights of Radiance saw that Old Xu and the steam locomotive had been restrained separately, they turned fanatical again.

Amid the perilous situation, Ren Xiaosu suddenly made his way into a small alley. He wanted to use the dense buildings in Ghent City as cover to escape the sight of the archmages.

According to Chen Jingshu, the casting range of an archmage's spell should be around a 1,000 meters. Be it the Tudor or the Norman families' patriarchs, they would definitely keep a distance that reflected their desire to live.

This also meant that after Ren Xiaosu entered the alley, the other party would not be able to deal a precise blow to him unless they voluntarily got closer.

A huge ice sculpture of a falcon materialized in the sky. It flapped its wings and flew in Ren Xiaosu's direction in an attempt to identify his exact location from a bird's-eye view.

Each time the falcon flapped its wings, a large amount of frost scattered into the air. The icy aura was an astounding sight to behold.

It flew straight through the air as it searched for Ren Xiaosu below with its sharp eyes.

But just as it was approaching Ren Xiaosu, it looked down and realized he was pointing a black steel weapon at it.

The young man hiding behind a building looked at the falcon through his scope and seemed to be smiling.

A gunshot rang out. Finally, the House of Tudor understood how the falcon the advance guard had sent out went missing back then!

"He actually dares to stay still and ambush us?" An aged voice at the back of the Knights of Tudor sneered, "Close in on him. Don't let him escape from Ghent City."

An archmage looked at the elderly Tudor family's patriarch. "Won't too many civilians become collateral damage if we fight the battle in the city? This might affect our reputation to a certain extent. More importantly, some vital trade goods are stored in this area."

“What’s there to be afraid of? His escape route leads diagonally to the southern gate. That’s where the Norman family’s territory is located.” The Tudor family’s patriarch said calmly, “We’ll kill him right there.”

...

On Rose Avenue, Xu Anqing and the others emerged from the sewers. But at this moment, the knights were already in pursuit of Ren Xiaosu and headed to the south of Ghent City.

As such, all they could see were corpses strewn all over the ground.

Just as Summer and Melgor had first witnessed this sight, everyone was shocked and speechless as they stood on the now silent Rose Avenue.

“Did he really fight his way out single-handedly?” Xu Anqing asked with a gasp.

Chen Jiu scanned his surroundings and said, “All of them suffered sharp slash wounds. I’m afraid that this was really the handiwork of one person.”

“There’s around 710 dead.” Qian Weining had identified the death toll with just a glance.

“Someone like that from the Central Plains coming to the Kingdom of Sorcerers is just like a wolf among sheep.” Xu Anqing sighed.

Chen Jingshu suddenly said, “He once said he’s actually here because he wants to destroy the Kingdom of Sorcerers.”

“Let’s go, the commotion is happening in the south.”

With that, Chen Jiu led the way towards the end of Rose Avenue. When they turned south at an intersection, they were surprised to discover no fewer corpses on the other street than on Rose Avenue.

As everyone walked on, they sometimes felt like they were walking in Hell. Although the Sanctuary members had also killed before, they had never truly fought on a real battlefield.

Therefore, they were shocked by this sight.

It was as though the world’s cruelest scene was right here in front of them.

“Aunt, do you remember when we previously speculated whether Ren Xiaosu had killed anyone before?” Chen An’an said in a low voice, “At that time, we guessed he had killed no more than 10 people.”

But in actual fact, they had been traveling with the most ferocious superhuman in the world for so long.

Everyone continued chasing southwards for a long time.

Chen Jiu suddenly said, "Create an observation deck for me."

"It will be dangerous. What if you stand too high and attract the attention of the Tudors and the Normans?" Xu Anqing said anxiously.

"I can't care that much anymore. I have to see what's happening," Chen Jiu said firmly.

Qian Weining took out a pair of military binoculars from his knapsack. "This was given to me by my master. You can use it to see farther out."

"Thank you," Chen Jiu said to him after taking the binoculars.

After that, a member of the Sanctuary next to Chen Jiu held a red Eye of True Sight in his hand and recited an incantation. The gray brick ground underneath Chen Jiu's feet suddenly rose up. This earth-elemental spell instantly provided Chen Jiu with a platform and sent him dozens of meters up into the air so he could visually survey the entire city.

But before the observation deck could reach its highest point, Chen Jiu raised the military binoculars to his eyes and was stunned by what he saw.

In front of him, no one in the vast Ghent City turned their heads to look at him. Everyone only had one target: the young man sprinting madly in the distance.

Chen Jiu swore this was the most magnificent sight he had ever witnessed in his life. All of the enemy's forces were converging in one direction like a dark torrent, and their target was only that one person.

As he was standing high enough, and with the aid of the binoculars, Chen Jiu could see the entire battlefield.

Ren Xiaosu had already deactivated his armor, so it might not seem like there was anything magnificent about this scene. However, there was another sense of spectacularity in the speed and strength of that mad sprint.

Chen Jiu suddenly realized there was another trick to the young man's escape route. It was not without pattern as the other party traversed the alleys.

During this grand pursuit, Chen Jiu saw Ren Xiaosu constantly avoiding the residents' homes, and it was as though he were worried the innocent would become collateral damage in the battle.

It was not that the young man did not have a chance to fight back, but that he was not obsessed with the battle as he fled southwards.

No, he was not trying to escape. Rather, he was trying to lure the knights and sorcerers to pursue him southwards.

“Why?” Chen Jiu muttered, “What are you trying to do?”

...

There was a massive goods distribution center located near the southern gate of Ghent City. All the tribute transported from the south to the House of Norman was loaded and unloaded here.

Just when Ren Xiaosu arrived at this area, the heavily armored Tudor family’s patriarch got up from his palanquin. Due to his old age, the heavy armor was a burden for him. He needed someone to support him so he could properly stand up.

The huge palanquin was being carried by 16 shirtless gladiators. Silk and tassels were hanging from the pavilion-like structure.

On the palanquin, the Tudor family’s patriarch stood still and stared ahead with the black Eye of True Sight in hand.

Hundreds of Knights of Tudor surrounded the patriarch in case anyone suddenly ambushed him.

“Go and create an opportunity for me.” The Tudor family’s patriarch’s aged voice crackled from behind his armor.

The second-in-command of the House of Tudor nodded next to him. “Understood, Father.”

The archmage used the Wind Bind spell to lift himself into the sky. During this short moment in the air, the gold Eye of True Sight in his hand gradually started glowing.

The chanting of the mysterious incantation sounded like a distant hymn.

The Knights of Tudor who were guarding the palanquin sat solemnly on their warhorses, their expressions concealed behind their dark-gray visors.

Ren Xiaosu was getting close to the southern gate and was only one kilometer away.

Suddenly, he felt a tremendous silvery glow flaring up behind him. The killing intent the House of Tudor had suppressed for a long time was finally about to bloom.

The two archmages had joined hands, with one archmage's sole intention to create an opportunity for the Tudor family's patriarch to kill Ren Xiaosu. In their opinion, Ren Xiaosu was a dead man running.

The incantation, which went on for several seconds, was recited for just the moment it would take effect.

But to their surprise, it was not just time that was a step ahead of their sorcery, but guns and explosives as well.

The sound of a gun being fired came from the top of the walls.

As the clap of thunder boomed, Ren Xiaosu smiled at the cap-wearing girl up ahead. She was smiling back at him.

It was as though the two of them did not care where the bullet that was just fired was headed. Time seemed to have stopped in their world.

Just like countless times in the past, she would always turn up when Ren Xiaosu needed her.

There was no prior agreement between them, but the girl was unwilling to miss out on any part of Ren Xiaosu's life.

The spinning bullet stirred up the darkness of the night and traveled across time and space, piercing all the way through the archmage who had flown into the sky.

The person Ren Xiaosu had been waiting for had finally arrived, and those who were supposed to be here were finally here as well.

Luo Lan was jumping up and down on the walls as he waved his hands. The golden martyred spirits set up their guns while Zhou Qi had a look of disdain on his face.

Wang Yun, Ji Zi'ang, the Great Hoodwinker, and P5092 looked at each other happily while the chubster, Xun Yeyu, stood off to the side with a look of despair.

Meanwhile, Zhou Yingxue stood behind Yang Xiaojin like an obedient kitten.

They were all covered in dirt, and it looked like they had not wasted any time in rushing to Ghent City.

Yang Xiaojin and Zhou Yingxue had arrived earlier, even earlier than Ren Xiaosu.

A second later, Ren Xiaosu spun around and looked in the direction he had come from. The Tudors' and the Normans' knights were surging towards him from that direction.

The galloping of their steeds' horseshoes sounded like the ocean tide, and their battle cries sounded like the howling wind.

All of the world's foes?

Ren Xiaosu laughed and said, "Y'all done chasing? It's my turn now. Welcome to my world."

In the deep darkness of the night, the tens of thousands of gratitude tokens in Ren Xiaosu's mind palace were rapidly decreasing. Light gray Proficiency Stones were dispensed out of the vending machine and dissipated into dust as they came rolling out, turning into the foundation of Ren Xiaosu's sorcery.

"Prosperous! Northwest!"

In front of the boundless incoming tsunami, a stellar gate opened.

The stellar gate was no longer the same as before. It had become more than 10 times larger and looked as though a divine kingdom were about to descend on Earth.

The revolving particles were as dazzling as starlight!

Yang Xiaojin looked quietly at the sight behind the stellar gate and felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity. That was the Jing Mountains, the place she had first met Ren Xiaosu.

...

A group of troops who had been stationed in the Jing Mountains for a long time were checking on the vital signs of the two huge monsters in front of them daily.

Groups of tiny nanomachines were swimming inside the monsters' bloodstreams.

Five tactical military laptops were set up in front of the sleeping behemoths. These troops had even brought along a power generator.

At this moment, one of the huge monsters suddenly opened its eyes. The vertical black pupils in its amber eyes were an abyss sharp as knives.

The other creature was still sleeping under the control of the nanomachines.

The awoken monster slowly stood up.

A red warning alert appeared on the computer screens in the form of exclamation marks indicating danger.

“We’ve lost control of the evolved creature, A002!”

“We’ve lost control of the evolved creature, A002!”

The nanomachines in Creature A002’s body gradually inactivated. That creature’s huge willpower started resisting all external electromagnetic waves coming from its brain stem.

In the end, it broke free from the “lock” in its body.

Everyone in this group of troops was simultaneously looking at the stellar gate next to Creature A002. The seven satellites in the sky quickly searched for all activity on the surface of the earth and finally zoomed in on the stellar gate in Ghent City.

This was a... dimensional portal.

The program running on the tactical laptops seemed like it had encountered an error. It was as though it could not understand what was going on.

They could only let that creature plunge headfirst into that dazzling portal.

...

“Roar!”

A terrifying roar rang out from the stellar gate and sent the oncoming knights and warhorses into panic. Those trained warhorses seemingly turned into ordinary frightened foals and were unwilling to take another step forward.

A red figure large enough to blot out the sky emerged from behind the stellar gate. Then it lowered its head and nudged Ren Xiaosu affectionately.

Ren Xiaosu smiled in return and stroked its snout. “Are you Midnight or Dusk?”

Midnight and Dusk were the names of the two terrifying creatures.

This was an old friend who had accompanied Ren Xiaosu through a difficult time back in Laboratory 39.

It was a gift from Ren He for Ren Xiaosu’s 12th birthday, two pet leopard geckos.

On that day in the Jing Mountains, it did not climb out of the volcano due to its rage but because it sensed its master’s aura.

They had consumed the Blood of God. Upon receiving the summon of that god, they returned to their master’s side again, all the while faithfully loyal.

Chapter 1199: Quite unexpected

When the leopard gecko stepped out of the stellar gate, the Kingdom of Sorcerers' residents at the southern gate of Ghent City could no longer restrain themselves.

When the Knights of Tudor and Knights of Radiance entered the city, the residents did not flee. That was because everyone felt that the battle would not affect them. As long as they stayed at home obediently, there would be no problem.

During this period, there were even quite some people secretly watching from their windows to see what was going on. It was even weirder for some of those watching as they felt an inexplicable sense of participating in history as it was written.

But the moment the creature appeared, everything changed.

That was because this was a fear of the unknown.

In their eyes, the leopard gecko was more like an evil dragon that had emerged from Hell.

The Knights of Tudor might not casually involve the innocent, but what about the unknown lizard creature? The answer on most people's minds was, "The lizard doesn't care whether you're a subject of the Tudors or the Normans."

The commoners screamed as they fled from their houses. Their fancy array of attire was in stark contrast to the dark armor the knights had on.

As some people fled, they turned around and were surprised to see the mysterious young man at the city gate touching the lizard's snout gently.

That lizard was probably several hundred times the size of the young man, but at this moment, it obediently and affectionately lowered its body and head for him.

All of a sudden, there was a stark contrast between that young man's "diminutiveness" and the lizard's "enormity."

But be it the young man or the lizard, neither of them felt like they were threatened much by the sorcerers.

In this chaotic situation blaring with screams, the man and the lizard appeared so peaceful and harmonious.

Before the people fled from their houses, everyone thought Ren Xiaosu and the lizard were emissaries who had escaped from Hell and were ordered to destroy their divine kingdom.

But many of them suddenly felt that this was probably the true God, while the sorcerers were demons who pretended to be the messengers of God.

“You’re ‘Midnight,’” Ren Xiaosu said as he touched the lizard’s snout affectionately.

He could feel the creature’s warm breath next to him. There was a small, black crescent birthmark on the left side of its snout, which was how Ren Xiaosu differentiated between “Midnight” and “Dusk.”

In the past, he always felt that Midnight and Dusk were a little silly-looking. Now that they had grown to such size in a volcanic environment, he was a little unused to it.

However, it was always a good thing to be reunited with an old friend.

It was no wonder the summoning spell had become lost. If it were any other archmage who summoned such a monster through the stellar gate, they would probably be dead by now.

Just like how Melgor was attacked by the goats after summoning a few of them.

If an archmage practiced the summoning spell to the 90,000 proficiency of Ren Xiaosu’s spell, they would just serve as Midnight’s snack after they summoned it.

Therefore, Ren Xiaosu was the only person in the world who was suited to learn the summoning spell. That was because he now had the most fearsome pets in the world.

The appearance of Midnight sent all of the Knights of Tudor and Knights of Radiance into a panic.

Even the Tudor family’s patriarch stood dazed and speechless in his palanquin.

The warhorses started retreating involuntarily from the fear they felt deep inside, as well as the instinctive oppression carnivores enacted on omnivores. It wasn’t only the warhorses; even the knights riding on them were frightened!

A hubbub of exclamations could be heard in the crowd, and even the knight commander’s angry roars to control the troops were drowned out.

The surging torrent was starting to recede as it retreated several hundred meters away.

It was not that the elite knights were mentally weak, but that they did not know how to defeat the monster in front of them.

Farther behind this torrent, Chen Jiu’s jaw dropped as he stood on the high observation deck. What else could he say?

Initially, the Sanctuary was debating whether to save Ren Xiaosu. But he was surprised to discover the other party did not need to be saved at all!

Dark clouds seemed to loom in the night sky, and the stars also appeared to be eclipsed by the ongoings. Chen Jiu stood high in the air like a spectator watching an exciting stage play.

Tonight, regardless of where the story led, this performance would no longer have anything to do with the Sanctuary.

This was a war between several people and a 10,000-strong army.

Only a few people were standing behind Ren Xiaosu, making him look helpless in the face of a tsunami. However, everything would turn around tonight.

In this world, there was no such thing as the weak defeating the strong. There was only the truth that someone stronger was always out there.

“So this is the descendant of that Rider?” Chen Jiu muttered.

...

On the battlefield, Ren Xiaosu was catching up on old times with Midnight like no one else was there. Then he patted Midnight affectionately on its snout and said with a smile, “Go on, I’ll leave the incoming enemies at our rear to you. You’re only allowed to kill them, not eat them.”

Midnight roared at the sky. Suddenly, a dark cloud was seemingly pierced apart as the starry sky behind it came into view.

The huge red lizard turned around and rushed towards the southern city walls. When the magnificent walls of Ghent City appeared in its path, Midnight smashed right through a section of it.

Everyone in the Kingdom of Sorcerers used to be proud of their majestic Ghent City. The towering walls symbolized the rule of the Magi and the authority of the Houses of Tudor and Norman.

Someone once boasted that no matter how majestic the goshawk in the sky was, it could not soar past the crossbow bolts fired from the battlements of Ghent City.

But now, a creature had suddenly knocked down the thing they were most proud of.

Then Midnight headed south into the wilderness without looking back.

Zhou Qi, who was standing atop the walls, felt lingering fear. "We were fortunate we weren't standing right behind Ren Xiaosu. Otherwise, that lizard would have crashed right into us!"

Luo Lan hesitated for a long time before saying, "Cool!"

Luo Lan and company had been scattered across the top of the city walls. The lizard named Midnight did not know them at all. If they had somehow stood in its path, they might really have ended up dying a baffling death.

The Great Hoodwinker praised, "Future Commander is the Stronghold Destroyer, and this pet of his is just like its master."

Wang Yun ridiculed, "Why's there a tone of pride in your words?"

"Of course there is." The Great Hoodwinker said with a grin, "I definitely have to brag about my future commander since my pay raise depends on him."

"Hey, where did that lizard go?" Ji Zi'ang wondered.

P5092 calmly explained, "The Knights of Tudor and Knights of Radiance have suddenly returned to reinforce the Magi, but there's still the Berkeley family in the south who has their eyes on us. The three clans must have reached an agreement, so the Knights of the Inferno are probably on their way to Ghent City. I think Future Commander sent that leopard gecko south to intercept them."

In fact, P5092 had accurately guessed Ren Xiaosu's thoughts. Be it the Great Hoodwinker or Wang Yun, although they had their own unique skill sets, they were not good at observing the big picture on the battlefield.

The reason Ren Xiaosu did this was because he knew full well that even though Midnight was massively large, it was not immortal.

If the battle were to escalate, archmages like the Tudor family's patriarch and the Norman family's patriarch who possessed the black Eye of True Sight could very well pose a threat to Midnight. Moreover, the ice spells the Tudor family's patriarch was most adept in happened to be Midnight's bane.

But if Midnight were to face the House of Berkeley, it would be completely different.

90% of the Berkeley family's exclusive spells were related to fire. Be it the Berkeley family's patriarch or their archmages, almost all of their spells were fire based.

And why should a creature like Midnight that could bathe in a magma pool be afraid of fire?

...

The Knights of the Inferno in the south were advancing northwards. For the sake of this encirclement, they had even broken ahead of their supply corps and directly led their troops towards the battlefield in light gear.

As they advanced, the sounds of armor clashing rumbled like a thunderstorm.

But while their horses were galloping, an even louder explosion suddenly boomed ahead that slowly drowned out the commotion caused by the Knights of the Inferno.

With a wave of the Knights of the Inferno's war banner, tens of thousands of elite soldiers immediately reined in their horses and stilled.

The St. Berkeley Knight commander rode forward. He lifted his helmet visor and listened carefully to the distant noise.

The sound was getting closer and closer. The ground was also rumbling like it was beaten ruthlessly like a drum.

"Footsteps?" The knight commander frowned.

But he immediately felt that something was off. How could there be such a huge creature in this world whose footsteps sounded like beating drums?

But a moment later, a red figure sped over like lightning from the horizon.

The knight commander's expression gradually changed. He suddenly drew his sword from his hip and roared at the top of his voice, "It's the enemy! Form up!"

Dozens of golden Garudas with hawk faces and human bodies suddenly soared out from the formation of knights. They flapped their flaming wings and set off a scorching heat wave.

The Garudas flew over the Knights of the Inferno and pounced ferociously at the oncoming Midnight.

However, just as the Knights of the Inferno thought the terrifying lizard creature would be burned to death, they realized it was not afraid of the high temperature at all. Instead, it became even more excited!

The gold-winged flaming Garudas in the sky were all scooped into Midnight's mouth one by one with its tongue.

"Ready your arrows!" the knight commander roared. The soldier holding the war banner next to him immediately waved it.

In that instant, the Knights of the Inferno drew their bows and nocked their arrows.

“Loose!” the knight commander ordered.

The war banner on the warhorse pointed at Midnight from afar as tens of thousands of arrows were released at the same time, blotting out the sky.

But just as everyone thought that Midnight would get pierced by the countless arrows, they landed on its body like matchsticks hitting a rock.

Midnight seemed to be getting a little impatient. It was still licking its tongue after devouring the Garudas when it looked towards the Knights of the Inferno.

The knight commander shouted, “... Protect the patriarch! Retreat!”

But it was too late.

...

In Ghent City, the flustered knights and sorcerers gradually calmed down. It was not that they were good at adapting their mentalities, but that Midnight had left after breaking through the city walls.

Everyone looked at the huge breach in the walls of Ghent City and felt an indescribable sense of shock.

Many people thought to themselves, ‘The calamity of the gods was probably nothing compared to this.’

In the myths and legends of the Kingdom of Sorcerers, the Cataclysm over 200 years ago was the Calamity of the Gods.

As the gods were angry at the crimes committed by their subjects, they activated their destructive power.

In that calamity, the Tudors’ and the Normans’ patriarchs received the Mandate of Heaven and led those who did not commit any crimes to live on.

These legends were not derived from folklore, but from the literature that had been specially revised by the magus order.

Since gods were a thing, they would need to have an entire set of evidence to support it.

At this moment, the people from the Houses of Tudor and Norman knew very well that the behemoth had probably gone south to intercept the House of Berkeley. Thinking of this, they heaved a sigh of relief.

If the House of Berkeley could kill that monster, that would be a bonus. But if they could not, they could at least take some pressure off Ghent City.

After the monster battled with the Berkeley family's patriarch, it should get exhausted, right? After all, the Berkeley family's patriarch was a rare genius in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. The Tudor family's patriarch knew full well that since the Berkeley family's patriarch had the courage to incite a civil war in the north, he naturally would have some aces up his sleeve.

However, the Tudor family's patriarch could not possibly know Midnight had actually climbed out of a volcano's crater and was not afraid of fire-based spells.

"How long are you going to hide for?" the Tudor family's patriarch said loudly from behind his armor. His voice was transmitted a long distance through the use of sorcery. He was not speaking to his own clan but to the Norman family's patriarch.

On the other side of the battlefield, a grand and distant voice exploded in the air. "Let's join forces. Activate your Tudor family's bloodline spell."

With that, the Tudor family's patriarch held his Eye of True Sight in his steel-armored hand.

The archmage who was shot out of the sky by Yang Xiaojin was bleeding profusely from his wound.

When the surrounding Knights of Tudor heard the bloodline spell would be used, their eyes lit up. Importantly, the archmage who had just died was the son of the patriarch. As the second-in-command, he would definitely be extremely powerful if he were used as the medium for the bloodline spell!

After Archmage Kayle perished in the south, they heard their patriarch had descended upon Sun City and destroyed nearly half of the city.

Therefore, the reason the House of Tudor had always been feared on the battlefield was because they could exploit the full worth of their dead!

However, after waiting for a long time, everyone realized there was a problem. The blood under Archmage Beck's corpse did not form into the familiar magic circle of the bloodline spell. There was no reaction at all!

The Knights of Tudor looked at each other. Many of the House of Tudor's sorcerers also looked at each other. No one knew what was going on. Why was the patriarch still not making a move?

The angry and trembling voice of the Tudor family's patriarch came from behind his visor. "He's not my son?!"

When he said that, everyone around him was stunned.

After all, Archmage Beck was trained by the Tudor family's patriarch as his successor, so it could be seen just how important this person was to the Tudor family's patriarch.

When Archmage Beck died just now, the Tudor family's patriarch could still control his emotions. But now that he knew the son he had placed all his hopes on was not his own, he could not hold it in any longer.

The bloodline spell was indeed powerful. It could even be used as a paternity test on the battlefield!

Although it was only a one-use paternity test, it was definitely precise!

The Tudor family's patriarch fell backwards. The knight commander beside him quickly caught him and lifted his visor so he could take a breather.

But right as he lifted up his visor, the knight commander realized the 97-year-old patriarch had fainted from anger!

"Retreat! Adjust formation to protect the patriarch!" the knight commander roared.

Even Ren Xiaosu and the others who were still on full alert in the distance were dumbfounded.

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. "Uh... that was quite unexpected."

Chapter 1200: Leader

The night continued.

Bloodline spells were the specialty magic of all first-rate sorcerer clans, such as the Winston family's Substitute spell. Ren Xiaosu had made several attempts on the lives of the Winston family's archmages, but they all used the Flame Substitute spell to deflect the attacks, leaving their sons to die in their place instead.

In the past, in the Kingdom of Sorcerers, everyone's criteria for whether a sorcerer clan could be considered first-rate was whether they had any bloodline spells.

For example, during Archmage Kayle's battle in Sun City, although the House of Winston had surrounded and killed Kayle, his death still caused great damage to the entirety of Sun City.

It was as though every sorcerer in the House of Tudor were doubly effective in battles.

All these years, the Tudor family's status had remained firmly established in Ghent City. No one dared to conspire against their sorcerers even during their out-of-city trips.

Why was that? Because they were worried about triggering their Bloodline Summoning spell.

Back then, Ren Xiaosu had controlled Old Xu to kill a bounty hunter of the House of Tudor. Disregarding how powerful the Tudor family's patriarch was when he descended on the scene with this spell, just being able to see and remember the enemy's appearance with it was enough to make many enemies tremble in fear.

No one had any good ways to deal with this bloodline spell, so the Tudor family's status as a top clan became even more entrenched.

The House of Tudor once said, "Don't provoke the Tudors. Otherwise, we will surely find you sooner or later."

These words shocked many people over the years.

However, someone finally found a flaw in the Tudor family's bloodline spell. 'As long as they're not your biological sons, it will be easy to deal with...'

The Knights of Tudor retreated like the tide and set up a defensive shield wall 800 meters back to reorganize their formation.

The Knights of Tudor had suddenly fallen into a leaderless state. The commander-in-chief had fainted, while the second-in-command was killed in action. As such, everyone did not know what to do.

On the other hand, the House of Norman was suddenly confused by the situation. As such, they did not dare make a move while hoping to quietly observe the situation.

Luo Lan, Zhou Qi, and the others took this opportunity to get off the walls and join up with Ren Xiaosu. Only Yang Xiaojin took advantage of the chaos to leave the group and quietly make her way into Ghent City.

She was like a lone wolf hiding in the shadows, ready to deal the enemy a fatal blow at any moment.

Yang Xiaojin was acting alone not because she was confident or arrogant, but because she was able to remain calm. She knew what to do and where to be as the sniper of the group.

For a sniper, wandering alone at the edge of the battlefield was the wisest choice.

A sniper who could not be seen was the most threatening sniper.

Before she got together with Ren Xiaosu, Yang Xiaojin already had her own mindset. She had an independent and complete personality, and she was also capable of taking care of herself.

This had never changed.

Ren Xiaosu was not surprised by this, nor did he intend to interfere with Yang Xiaojin's decision. He turned around and asked Zhou Qi, "Were you the one who controlled the blood flow and blocked the bloodline spell from taking effect?"

Zhou Qi was puzzled. "What? What's a bloodline spell?"

Ren Xiaosu explained to everyone what a bloodline spell was, but Zhou Qi was still confused.

"Looks like it wasn't you." Ren Xiaosu sighed as he looked at the Tudor family's patriarch with a hint of sympathy in his eyes. "He must've been cuckolded then."

Who could have expected that while everyone was thinking about how to neutralize the threat of this bloodline spell from the perspective of sorcery, the way to do it actually had more to do with morals?

"I guess no one expected something like that to happen." The Great Hoodwinker said, "How tragic."

Ren Xiaosu nodded. "Yeah, it's way too tragic."

However, the Great Hoodwinker was actually wrong about one thing. Someone had actually predicted this outcome.

The identity of the second-in-command of the House of Tudor was much more complex than they could have expected.

Sixty years ago, the father of the Berkeley family's patriarch, after planning for many years, sent more than 20 trained female spies to the patriarch of the House of Tudor.

All the women were peerless beauties and seemingly from noble backgrounds.

Furthermore, several days before these women were sent to the House of Tudor, they slept with the Berkeley family's male spies who had infiltrated Ghent City.

The previous patriarch of the House of Berkeley had done all this to lay a trap for the House of Tudor.

How could the Berkeleys, who had been planning for their northern expedition since 60 years ago, possibly only plan for a military campaign? It would have to be a subversive plan that was all-encompassing and unscrupulous.

This was the kind of struggle that went on between sorcerer clans, and it was a 100 times or even a 1,000 times worse than what was recorded in history.

However, even the previous patriarch of the House of Berkeley could not have expected that one of the babies would end up not being discovered and also became the favorite son of the Tudor family's patriarch.

This was one of the contingency schemes that gave the current patriarch of the House of Berkeley the confidence to begin the northern expedition!

As a matter of fact, this contingency scheme was indeed very effective. Without even needing to wield 10% of his combat strength, the Berkeley family's patriarch successfully angered the Tudor family's patriarch to the point he fainted!

The Tudor family's patriarch alone had several hundred sons.

It was definitely not possible for one wife to bear him so many sons.

Therefore, there would naturally be loopholes to exploit since he took so many wives. Ren Xiaosu realized there should be many more illegitimate offspring in the House of Tudor.

However, there was no way to verify such matters in the Kingdom of Sorcerers. Surely he wouldn't kill his sons just to verify their relationship, right? If he killed them, the bloodline spell would no longer be useful.

Next to him, Zhou Yingxue asked in a low voice, "Do you think we can provide a science-based medical procedure for these sorcerers once we've unified this place? I think they should need it, right? It'll definitely be a very profitable venture."

Everyone looked at Zhou Yingxue in surprise. Ren Xiaosu sighed and said, "You're such a business whiz!"

Everyone's thoughts and standpoints were completely different from one another.

For example, P5092 was thinking about their attack and defense strategy while he stood atop the city walls. As for Wang Yun, he sought to memorize the map of Ghent City first while the Great Hoodwinker was thinking about how to flatter the future commander.

Meanwhile, the moneygrubbing Zhou Yingxue was thinking about how to make the citizens here willingly spend their gold coins.

“What do we do now?” P5092 asked, “Do we occupy the city or should we kill them all? Future Commander, you have to set an objective first before I can formulate a battle plan.”

Ren Xiaosu gave it some thought and replied, “How can I force the Norman family’s patriarch to show himself? Only by getting rid of him first can we occupy the city without incurring too many casualties.”

“Should we force him to make a move?” P5092 thought for a moment and said, “We’ll have to force him to come out and save the Tudor family then.”

“These sorcerer clans are always scheming against each other, and the Norman family has been at odds with the Tudor family for more than a 100 years already. He couldn’t be happier if we wiped out the Tudor family at this moment, so why would he appear and save them?” Ren Xiaosu asked humbly.

P5092 calmly explained, “Since he’s unwilling to help them, we’ll just have to hurt him first. We’ll do so until he understands their interdependence with the Tudor family.”

When Wang Yun and the others heard this, they gasped. “That sounds really ruthless, yet you said it in the most civil of tones.”

However, P5092’s suggestion was indeed simple to comprehend. Ren Xiaosu understood what he meant.

Zhou Yingxue stood next to Ren Xiaosu and said eagerly, “Master, why don’t you leave it to me instead?”

This woman had been kept in check by Yang Xiaojin for too long. Now that Yang Xiaojin was off acting alone, Zhou Yingxue finally felt like she could showcase her powers.

“No, wait for a little while more.” Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, “You have a more important mission to handle now. P5092, can you do it if I hand command of the 6th Field Division over to you?”

P5092’s eyes lit up. Although he was not aware of the enchanted doorway yet, he trusted everything Ren Xiaosu said.

If Ren Xiaosu promised to let him take command of the 6th Field Division, he would definitely deliver on it.

There were no such things as humility or arrogance in P5092's dictionary. All he cared about was war and victory. "Future Commander, if you let me take command of the 6th Field Division, I'll definitely help you capture Ghent City."

"Deal."

...

Not far behind the Knights of Tudor and Knights of Radiance, Chen Jiu was still standing on the sorcery-constructed observation deck in a daze as he watched the entire performance play out.

In the dark of the night, he saw the Tudor family's patriarch passing out while the tens of thousands of knights retreated 800 meters into Ghent City like a receding tide. He also witnessed those knights forming a defensive formation.

When Chen Jiu first saw Midnight, he thought the strange, fiery red "dragon" would be Ren Xiaosu's greatest weapon. But before he could react, Ren Xiaosu sent Midnight south to intercept the House of Berkeley.

This confused Chen Jiu a little. "With your greatest reliance gone, what makes you think you can take on tens of thousands of knights with just a few of you? What's more, the archmages of the Houses of Tudor and Norman have not even taken any serious damage yet."

Chen Jiu couldn't be blamed for doubting Ren Xiaosu. After all, Ren Xiaosu's backup seemed too few in number.

From his vantage point, the humans on the ground of Ghent City looked like ants. On one side, there were tens of thousands of troops, and on the other side stood about eight or nine individuals.

Without Midnight, this contrast was simply too stark.

Chen Jiu did not know much about the Central Plains, so he did not even have a vague idea of how Ren Xiaosu and company could emerge victorious.

Previously, Chen Jingshu and Xu Anqing raised an objection. Ren Xiaosu might be very strong, but he might not necessarily have the ability and wisdom a leader should have. That was because the Ren Xiaosu they saw was basically always fighting alone.

Currently, Chen Jiu was thinking that even if Ren Xiaosu and the other individuals were powerful, even more powerful than the Houses of Tudor and Norman, they would still get exhausted to death if they were to go up against tens of thousands of opponents.

And most importantly, how were eight or nine people going to occupy Ghent City? If they were unable to quickly wipe out the Tudors and the Normans, the old aristocrats could go into hiding and rise up again someday.

After the Central Plains people left, the Kingdom of Sorcerers would still remain as the Kingdom of Sorcerers of the old aristocracy.

Normally, that should be the case. However, Chen Jiu somehow felt that something did not click. He felt that Chen Jingshu and Xu Anqing's judgment was wrong!

How could someone who could face the pursuit of tens of thousands of troops and summon an evil dragon calmly, and who had inherited the legacy of that Rider, possibly not have thought of this before charging out recklessly?

How could the future commander of Fortress 178 always be fighting alone?

In that case, where were Ren Xiaosu's people? Chen Jiu raised his binoculars and scanned the surroundings, but he saw nothing.

A moment later, Chen Jiu suddenly saw through the binoculars that Ren Xiaosu had taken out a large metal door from somewhere and wedged it into the ground.

Chen Jiu was stunned. The two sorcerer clans and their knights were also stunned. No one knew why Ren Xiaosu had suddenly taken out a door.

Right after, everyone saw soldiers, three per rank, starting to rush out of the door.

Black, multifunctional tactical helmets, multipurpose tactical bulletproof vests, automatic rifles with attached grenade launchers, and dark menacing heavy machine guns, all of which seemed out of place in the Kingdom of Sorcerers.

But it was also an extremely valiant sight.

Everyone finally realized this was the enchanted doorway the Magi specialized in. And the Central Plains forces had opened a doorway that linked to the Central Plains with a favorite spell of the Magi!

When some of the sorcerers saw this, they immediately wanted to destroy the enchanted doorway. The reason why they only retreated 800 meters was so the archmages could still cast their spells at the enemy.

The archmages of those clans were already on guard against Ren Xiaosu and the others if they were to make any further moves.

The enchanted doorway appeared too unexpectedly. No one could be sure whether the corroded metal door was linked to a power that could destroy the Kingdom of Sorcerers.

The archmages wanted to make a move, but just as one of them gripped their Eye of True Sight, a sniper bullet came out of nowhere and pierced his chest.

Everyone looked into the distance. They vaguely saw a girl in a cap jumping off a roof in the darkness and disappearing into the streets and alleys again.

The darkness of the night was her best camouflage.

Someone in the Norman family's group ordered coldly, "Advance guard, quickly escort Bailey and Billy over there!"

Bailey and Billy were two sorcerers of the House of Norman. The commander wanted to send these two sorcerers to their deaths for a chance to cast the Norman family's bloodline spell.

The Norman family's bloodline spell was a spell that could be used for close-range destruction, so they had to get closer for it to work.

But just as this group of people rushed out of the shield formation, they were knocked to the ground by another round of shots from the shadows. In just a few seconds, more than a dozen corpses were added to the streets.

This time, no one saw where the bullets came from.

This invisible deterrent was like a shadow that shrouded everyone in fear.

...

A moment ago, on Stronghold 144's Anning East Road.

This neighborhood had been turned into a huge military base. The area within a three-kilometer radius had become a temporarily military-controlled zone. Checkpoints were set up everywhere to enforce martial law, and there were even temporary sandbag bunkers built on the roofs of the residential buildings here. There were also heavy machine guns mounted on the roofs in case of an offensive approach.

It was 3 AM currently. In the temporarily military-controlled zone, dozens of spotlights illuminated the entire camp, making it appear like daytime.

In Ren Xiaosu's humble abode, everything in the living room on the first floor had been cleared away. Black Fox even had the Engineering Battalion build a temporary steel structure on the floor as the future commander had warned them not to damage the floor.

However, Ren Xiaosu's house door had been widened to allow three people to pass through at once. After all, in Black Fox's opinion, the future commander had only said not to damage the floor, but he did not say they couldn't dismantle the door.

At this moment, Black Fox was standing quietly in the living room with his eyes closed. Meanwhile, Zhang Xiaoman was pacing back and forth uneasily in the living room. "When will Future Commander take action? When will Future Commander call for us? Hey, what do you think the Kingdom of Sorcerers is like..."

But no matter what Zhang Xiaoman asked, Black Fox remained silent throughout. It was obvious he was used to Zhang Xiaoman's anxiety.

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu's voice rang out in the living room, "Begin operations."

Black Fox suddenly opened his eyes. He went onto the radio's broadcast channel. "Report readiness."

"1st Infantry Brigade, standing by."

"2nd Artillery Brigade, standing by."

"3rd Infantry Brigade, standing by..."

"4th..."

Black Fox said calmly on the radio, "Muster for battle. We'll start passing through the doorway! Everyone, don't disgrace the 6th Field Division on this trip to a foreign land, and don't disgrace the future commander either. We'll return to base for celebratory drinks in three days. To victory!"

Outside this residence, more than 10,000 troops of the 6th Field Division were standing solemnly while awaiting orders.

The parade formations stretched out into the distance like a black sea.

"To victory!"

"To victory!"

"To victory!"

Rallying cries erupted.

When Black Fox heard the commotion outside the house, he silently prayed for this battle that would ensure the Northwest's continued survival. Then he stepped through the wall in the living room carrying a huge safe.

Everyone stepped into the living room in an orderly manner as planned and disappeared through the wall one by one.

None of them knew where they were going exactly, nor did they know if they would return. However, it was never for a soldier to think about such useless concerns. All they had to do was walk through the enchanted doorway and pull the trigger on the enemy.

This army was too orderly, so orderly it was difficult to imagine.

The enchanted doorway could only fit three people at once, but the soldiers of the 6th Field Division managed to fit nine people through in just one second by filing into the portal with sharp precision.

This might sound simple, but it was actually very difficult to execute.

By this point, even Zhang Jinglin, Wang Fengyuan, and the other high-ranking commanders of the Northwest had arrived in Stronghold 144.

They stood on the roof of a residential building somewhere and watched the elite troops who were awaiting orders. However, they did not issue any instructions to them. The high-ranking commanders behaved as though they were just a crowd of onlookers.

Wang Yuexi had followed Ren Xiaosu's instructions and reported the Prosperous Northwest 3.0 battle plan to Zhang Jinglin. When the high-ranking commanders found out about it, they rushed over eagerly.

They even contributed the best equipment from their own armies, such as the 40 mm underbarrel grenade launchers.

Everyone was getting a little excited.

"Commander, I heard that Future Commander has found a way to accurately launch an attack on the key region of the Kingdom of Sorcerers. Is that true?"

"Commander, I heard that Future Commander..."

The high-ranking commanders kept bombarding him with questions, but Zhang Jinglin just smiled and did not say anything.

Zhou Yinglong looked at Zhang Jinglin and asked, "Commander, what do you think are our chances of winning?"

Zhang Jinglin smiled but did not answer the question. "Everyone, relax. Just watch patiently. After today, history will be made in Fortress 178. Today, you and I are no longer the ones writing our history but the witnesses of it. A new era is coming."

"Commander, are you thinking of retiring again?" Zhou Yinglong asked suspiciously.

Zhang Jinglin looked out of the military base and saw that the residents of Stronghold 144 were not flustered at all despite the impending war. Everyone stood outside the security perimeter and waited quietly. It was as though they were getting ready to cheer the moment the military returned victorious.

It was already 3 AM, yet the 6th Field Division was still awake, and so were the residents of Stronghold 144.

This was the cohesiveness of Stronghold 144, as well as Ren Xiaosu's ability to bring them all together.

Zhang Jinglin smiled and said to Zhou Yinglong, "If I really choose to retire now, it's not like that would be a problem, right?"

...

Inside Ghent City, Black Fox arrived in front of P5092 and Ren Xiaosu the second he stepped through the enchanted doorway. He saluted them and said, "Total strength of the 6th Field Division, 16,780. Present strength, 16,780. The estimated time required for everyone to pass through the enchanted doorway is 31 minutes and 7 seconds."

31 minutes might seem like a long time, but it was only an instant in a large battle.

Ren Xiaosu had read in a book that it could take two hours for a cataphract unit to get its formation ready during a battle. This was not an exaggeration at all. Seeing that the Knights of Tudor and Knights of Radiance had yet to fully adjust their entire defensive formation, Ren Xiaosu was not worried they would miss any opportunities to fight during this period.

P5092 had already taken over command of the entire battle. Before Ren Xiaosu could say anything, P5092 said to Black Fox, "Let's begin."

"Understood." After that, Black Fox opened the black box he had brought with him.

"Sir, I've brought the portable command center." Black Fox took out an earpiece from the box and handed it to P5092.

P5092 issued orders one by one from here. The troops who came through the portal first immediately set up machine gun positions in the designated area to cover their comrades who were still passing through at the rear. They did so to prevent the enemy from rushing over and destroying the enchanted doorway.

More than a dozen snipers from the Pyro Company quietly left the group and went to look for a satisfactory vantage point to camp at. Their aim was not to suppress the enemy with their firepower but to use their calm minds to search for sorcerers armed with Eyes of True Sight among the enemy troops.

This was a compulsory requirement for every sniper. Just like in the modern warfare of the Central Plains, they would have to quickly identify enemies carrying RPGs and heavy machine guns. Only by finding the sorcerers could they reduce the casualties of their own comrades.

The 6th Field Division's fighting force that gradually passed through the enchanted doorway quickly formed into several assault columns under P5092's orders.

This was going to be a large urban battle. The 6th Field Division's only goal was to wipe out all the enemy forces and occupy this city.

P5092 took a deep breath and said, "Let's begin."

In that instant, the heavy machine guns that were already set up started firing.

When the bullets hit the knights' shield formation, their shields were nearly destroyed. In an instant, an expanding wall of ice blocked the front of the formation and prevented the knights from getting penetrated by the bullets.

Under the cover of the heavy machine guns, the assault columns started infiltrating the city like a stream.

Ghent City was very large, and the defensive formation laid out by the sorcerer clans spanned a kilometer wide.

Meanwhile, the infiltration coverage of the assault columns was even larger. From above, it resembled a huge fan.

Chen Jiu, who was at the rear, had a clear view of this sight. He felt that he was watching a one-of-a-kind army.

The other party had a command style that was incomprehensible to those in the Kingdom of Sorcerers, with their troop movements meticulous and orderly.

Even though the infiltration coverage was so wide, it was not chaotic at all.

The heavy breathing of the soldiers could be heard over the radio. "Check the streets and eliminate any potential threats!"

"Zone A1 clear."

"Zone A2 clear."

"Zone A3..."

Before the real battle broke out, Ren Xiaosu had asked Xu Anqing for a map of Ghent City, which he passed on to Black Fox. So Black Fox had not really been idle either. The 6th Field Division had already drafted the initial battle preparations and marked out strategic areas on the map.

Black Fox had done all this so P5092 could take over immediately once they rendezvoused.

It was just like how a nurse had to be particular about the angle at which to pass the scalpel to the doctor during surgery. As an adjutant, Black Fox's responsibility was not to participate in the development of the tactical plan but to get everything ready for P5092.

However, just as the hundreds of assault columns had officially begun infiltrating into the streets, several columns that were advancing in parallel suddenly saw their future commander walking over from the rear.

The young man in the darkness drew his black saber and raised it diagonally. Old Xu, who was wearing the white mask, had escaped from its constraints at some point and returned to Ren Xiaosu's side.

A man and a shadow clone, one walking in front of the other. It was as though two identical saber wielders were strolling down the long boulevard and walking towards the shield formation hundreds of meters ahead.

P5092 said calmly, "Future Commander, you should stay next to me."

Ren Xiaosu said with a smile without turning his head, "How can I let our soldiers charge into enemy lines while I hide at the back? Don't worry, our 6th Field Division will always be led by their commander."

When Luo Lan heard this, he laughed out loud. "Things like killing and arson are really the most interesting."

The golden martyred spirits next to him carried their heavy machine guns and followed behind. "Satisfying!"

Seeing the situation, the Great Hoodwinker, who was scratching his feet at the side, put on his shoes and followed along. "Future Commander, wait for me!"

The troops who were preparing to infiltrate the danger zone silently viewed the backs of their future commander and Old Xu with indescribable emotion.

They felt as though their blood was gradually starting to boil, like a fuse had been lit in their bosoms and started moving towards their throats.

Ren Xiaosu raised his saber and picked up speed as he approached the shield formation. Gradually, the young man broke into a crazy sprint.

P5092's voice rang out on the radio, "Assault columns, don't disrupt your attack rhythm by trying to follow Future Commander's pace. You'll only tire yourselves to death. Future Commander is only doing this to provide cover for you all. Just advance according to the original plan."

P5092 looked at Zhou Yingxue. "Let's begin."

"Mhm." Zhou Yingxue nodded. A green glow appeared at her fingertips and dropped to the ground. Then something started growing crazily underground.

The underground vines meandered across the ceiling of the sewers of the underground world and extended all the way to the defensive position where the knights were.

Immediately after, P5092 continued: "T5s, move out. Follow Future Commander and charge into the enemy's formation! The assault column on the left taking Zone A118, spread out your infiltration approach. I want all of you to attack the flank of the enemy's position to distract them."

P5092 stood in front of the temporary command center as though he were playing blindfolded chess. He did not have a visual of the overall situation, but the battlefield was in his mind.

A moment later, 22 muscular soldiers broke away from the numerous assault columns. They left their original groups and started running faster and faster. They were just like the wolves running behind the Wolf King.

A lot of people did not know that P5092 had not only brought the Pyro Company's remnant troops back from the Northern Plains. He was also joined by some T5 combatants who others would consider as human tanks.

One or two T5s might not make much of a difference in battle, but 22 T5s would act as a sharp blade cutting through the knights' formation that was still stuck in the era of melee weapons. Unless an archmage endured the pain and attacked with the knights, the T5s would surely bulldoze them.

Initially, P5092 wanted to use them to break the knights' formation from the side, but he was worried they would get overwhelmed by the enemy's numbers. But it was different now. They had the future commander leading the charge.

P5092 believed that even if the T5s got trapped, the future commander would still be able to lead them out of trouble.

Chen Jiu watched all this quietly from afar. Tonight, the more he watched the battle, the quieter he became.

So did Ren Xiaosu possess any leadership skills? To get an answer to this question, one would first have to think about what leadership was.

Was it about having precise command? No.

Was it about having immense combat strength? No.

Leadership was about having the following traits when you stepped onto the battlefield:

Influencing those around you to charge forward together without hesitation and with no regrets, and be willing to fight to the death in battle. In addition, to have people waiting expectantly for you to return home, to cheer for you, and to celebrate the spoils of victory.

Ren Xiaosu possessed all of these.

That was why Zhang Jinglin said that even if he were to retire now, it wouldn't be a problem.

...

The range of the archers was a 100 meters. With Ren Xiaosu and Old Xu's speed, it would only take a few seconds for them to close the gap, a fact the sorcerers were also well aware of.

If they wanted to stop Ren Xiaosu, they would have to rely on sorcery.

So when Ren Xiaosu started sprinting madly, a few of the sorcerers hidden among the knights finally made their move.

Strange spells were cast one after another, so much so that Ren Xiaosu had to advance in an irregular trajectory to avoid getting hit.

The sorcerers then chanted a second round of incantations. But before they could finish reciting, everyone heard the sound of a manhole cover getting blasted into the air next to them. The next second, countless green vines surged out of the manhole.

The needle-sharp vines did not directly attack the knights' armor. Instead, they crawled through the gaps in their armor and stabbed into the bodies of the sorcerers and knights one by one.

The vines that were originally green in color slowly turned red after sucking out their blood. The mesmerizing scarlet red color made the vines look extremely eerie.

A huge commotion broke out within the knights' ranks as everyone was shocked by the sudden appearance of the vines.

This sudden turn of events helped to take away the last bit of attention that was on Ren Xiaosu.

Now was the time!

Ren Xiaosu accelerated again in an attempt to break the formation with his saber.

But before he could make a move, the T5 combatants behind him were one step ahead. One by one, they smashed into the shield formation like artillery shells. This group of intrepid human tanks directly used their brute force and created a "wave" of people upon contact with the front of the shield formation!

There was also the Great Hoodwinker, with his monster strength, who kicked the front of the formation and sent the knights holding shields flying backwards.

Ren Xiaosu could only smile helplessly. He had been slowed down because he had to dodge the spells, but he did not expect that the group of T5 combatants would charge ahead of him because of that.

Ren Xiaosu, who had always been a lone wolf, rarely had others fighting alongside him in battle. Now that he had occasionally experienced it, it actually felt quite good!

Ren Xiaosu said through the earpiece, "Ji Zi'ang, Wang Yun, help me find the Norman family's patriarch. I want to know where he is."

Having reached this point, the other party would surely have to make a move.

At this moment, Ji Zi'ang created a high platform at the rear with his superpower to ensure Wang Yun could get the widest view of the situation.

Wang Yun was sweating profusely as he stood on the high platform and surveyed the battlefield with his binoculars.

The Norman family's patriarch was wearing a knight's armor and hiding among the crowd. If he couldn't find the other party in time, it would probably cause a lot of trouble

for the 6th Field Division if the archmage completed the incantation for whichever spell he was best at.

But reports said that the Norman family's patriarch was already in his 80s, so his movements would definitely not be as fast as those in their prime. He would definitely also have his subordinates protecting him, so Wang Yun needed to locate him on the battlefield.

"Have you found him yet?" Zhang Xiaoman shouted from below.

Wang Yun muttered, "Stop rushing me! I found him! Future Commander, he's to your 9 o'clock! But I can't judge the distance for now!"