

Witch 101

Chapter 101 The Ancient Book and the traces it gives (Part 2)

What does this mean? Roland rubbed his fingers over the handwritten line, had the original owner of this ancient book also had to fight against those monsters in the wild lands? He turned his view further down and continued reading –

“The Devils grew each day in number, but every day we became less.”

“God’s Stone of Retaliation was also unable to stop them. It would only work against their unparalleled strange powers, but even without relying on their magic, they were still fierce and terrible enemies.”

“The Holy City of Taquila has already fallen into the enemy’s hands, the only option left to us was to scatter in all directions.”

“Over the mountains, across the rivers. Trying to flee as far away from the Gates of Hell as possible. ”

“But for the next time, where to should we flee?”

“But, this isn’t something I have to think about. I am going to die, Natalia.”

“The Devil’s power is corroding my body, and every one of our drugs are malfunction.”

“I’m writing all this down because I have a simple matter I want to request of you to do for me.”

Alice’s test of the God’s Punishment Army is already approaching its end, and the test was a success. Even when facing the extraordinary Devil Warriors they have nothing to fear, but she forgot the important point, even if the God’s Punishment Army will win, this victory won’t belong to us.”

” That’s right. The God’s Punishment Army, will lead to our end. ”

“To stop her, only you are left.”

The text he managed to read wasn’t long, Roland swept his gaze once more from beginning to end. He then closed his eyes and began to think about what he had read. Trying to see it from Cara’s perspective.

Assuming that she wasn’t aware of the existence of the Devil’s. And she thought the Devil to refer to a witch. Using this assumption, it would be easy to imagine that the book was written from the perspective of a member of the Church, fleeing from the witches. Then in combined with widely circulated rumors – after all, the rumours say that the witches are all the Devil’s minions, and that they gained their magic from the Gate of Hell.

Cara most likely thought that the Church actually wanted to hide the truth: That they changed the entry to the Holy Mountain to the Gate of Hell, and that for several hundreds of years, witches already had access to the Holy Mountain, and that they found there an eternal life. So the witches became more and more, yet the warriors of the Church became less and less.

Of course, this theory had many holes to it For example, the author of the text said that the other side possessed strange powers when compared to ordinary people, clearly there were no witches who possessed these characteristics. Another example was that even under the suppression of the God’s

Stone of Retaliation, the witches were still able to let the church suffer a crushing defeat, which seemed too bizarre. So in the end, the reason why Cara went on the journey to the wild lands, was still unknown. Maybe she had just been so eager that she didn't realize that it had already affected her judgment. There was still some content that he wasn't able to understand, maybe the real cause stood therein?

Roland preferred the latter possibility.

At least he knew now, that the Devil that was described on the last page wasn't a witch, but was the description of the real alien race.

But all this didn't reduce his doubts, instead it only his increased his already numerous problems.

In the end, since when was the Church fighting against the Devils?

Even so, again and again Roland went through the content of the book, but he was still unable to find the relevant content. The Church had established their base in the North, since the end of the war of faith. The base was built to defend against the huge gap in the Impassable Mountain Range against the demonic beasts. Later, they simply built a fortress on the plateau of the Hermes, and simply called it the New Holy City. These two cities are now connected together, one on the high ground and the other was low lying, but both were used to withstand the demonic beasts attack and not the Devils. Besides, he had never heard before of a place called Taquila.

If all of this was true, the Church would have no reason to hide it. According to church's history books, they were always able to resist the attacks from the demonic beasts, and were also able to achieve great victories in their battle against the witches. This was all described in great detail as if they feared that anyone would forget of their great merits.

But compared with the confrontation against the Devils, how can they still treat the matter of the demonic beasts and the witches to be more worthy to particularize?

The last question concerned the God's Punishment Army.

Evidently this member of the Church didn't want to see the God's Punishment Army to appear, furthermore, they even entrusted others to stop the person in charge of the experiment. Apparently, they seemed to have succeeded? Roland only knew that the Church had an Army of Judges, but he had never heard of the God's Punishment Army – of course, that doesn't rule out that the former 4th Prince was simply just ignorant.

However, if they really could foster warrior strong enough to fight against the Devils, wouldn't it just increase the power of the Church? So why would the author of the note write that it would cause their destruction?

The place where they found this book, should have additional information.

"It was Cara who found the book. Do you know where she found it?" Roland raised his head and asked Nightingale.

"When I joined the Witch Cooperation Association, the sisterhood had already set foot on the road towards the Holy Mountain." Nightingale who was still chewing the dried fish, answered absently.

“But Wendy had mentioned, that at the beginning the sisterhood didn’t call themselves the Witch Cooperation Association, they were just a couple of witches from the Sea Wind Region. Also among them were Cara, Wendy and Scroll. Afterwards when they left the Sea Wind Region, they found a secret meeting place within a forest. But no one had expected that there would actually be a secret entry to an ancient ruin hidden there.”

She took another bite from her snack, licked her lips and then continued, “But except for Cara, no one else had went down to explore it.”

“Did she find the ancient book within the ruins?”

“At least, that’s what Cara said,” Nightingale curled her lips.

“And later then, they began to gather more and more witches. But it seems that their hiding place accidently got leaked to the Church, which later then brought a large army to surround the meeting place. Only twenty witches were able to escape, which was less than half of them. It was then that Cara decided to search for the Holy Mountain. So they established the Witch Cooperation Association, with the goal of finding the Holy Mountain as their highest priority.”

After hearing this story, he once more began to think about it, to study mysteries while knowing so little was just too inconvenient, even more so when it was history mixed with legends, leaving a blank in his mind. The ancient book didn’t mentioned the year that it was written, and there was also no other big war mentioned in other history books he had read.

The first person involved in discovering it was already dead, but maybe we can go to find the ancient ruin ourselves, he thought.

But to Roland it was also clear that it was basically an impossible task. The forest in the east was just too far away from Border Town, it was much more than just a short walk, it was a journey across the whole Kingdom of Greycastle. But at this moment the development of his territory was his highest priority.

Roland stood up and walked to the window, there he had a perfect view over the back gardens. In the garden, the witches were training according to his training program. Now that his group of witches had grown to twelve, it was finally time to set up an organization.

In his conception, the organization didn’t need any program or guideline. It was just designed to facilitate the management of the witches and the ability they were able to wield, its function would be similar to the future generation of industrial associations.

The rules of the organizations would also be as simple as possible, there would only be two rules: Do not take advantage of your ability to violate the law of the territory. And, It is forbidden to use your ability to evade the law.

At the beginning Roland wanted to use the three laws of robotics, restricting the ability of the witches by not allowing them to injure or attack ordinary people and so on, but then he thought that it would actually be unnecessary. Their ability was just the same as guns. When confronted with hazards, there was really no difference between using a gun or a witch’s ability to defend themselves. And by deliberately stressing the difference between witches and ordinary people, the gap between these two groups would only grow further apart.

So it wouldn't become illegal, he couldn't avoid his responsibility as a scientist and engineering dog, he had to express himself in the most concise way.

As for the name of this organization, Roland had already long ago found a good one.

The name of the new collective will be "Witch Union."

Chapter 102 The Honeysuckle and the Elk Families (Part 1)

After nightfall, the Elk Mansion was brightly lit, while holding his invitation, Petrov was welcomed into the hall. The banquet to celebrate the birthday of the 3rd young lady of the Elk family, Aurelia had just begun.

Only people with a prestigious or aristocratic background in Longsong Stronghold were allowed to attend the banquet. As for the Count himself, the birthday banquet was also very important. A woolen carpet was spread throughout the whole hall and all the chamberlains wore a custom-made uniform so that they would easily be recognized. After all, it was Aurelia's sixteens birthday, which means that she reached the marriageable age.

String music sounded throughout the hall, and attendants were walking in the crowd and handing out glasses of wine. The steaming food was placed on circular tables which were spread within the hall. Aurelia, the protagonist of the birthday banquet was wearing a canary dress and stood in a corner of the hall surrounded by a group of friends, seeming to be having a very lively chat with them.

This was a new popular trend to celebrate, directly coming from the King's city. Previously the banquets were held like this: Usually, there was a long wooden table placed in the hall and all the guests were sitting at the table, waiting for the chef to serve the meal. Then huge bowls with pork and whole chickens was served with butter and bread. In addition, there was also double-sided fried eggs served together with a large pot of lettuce leaves.

But some years ago the king came up with a new way to celebrate and today this was now a mimic of the new style but only in form.

For example, the glasses given out were all made of different colors, instead of the normally transparent glasses. Within them, the wine was unable to bring out its mellow color. The circular tables are also covered with white tablecloths, rather than the greasy tablecloths they had used. As for the cooked food, the Elk family was still serving the old western style – very greasy and coarse. Seeing this, Petrov shook his head, the cook could at least have cut the meat into several small pieces.

As usual, Petrov had already filled his stomach at home in advance, since he didn't want to cut the big pieces of meat like a surgeon. He was invited to this birthday party as the representative of his family, so he had to eat at least a mouthful of this oily food, even if it was only to save face. After all, Petrov didn't want to become a joke for the ladies.

"Long time no seen, man," Suddenly his neck was hooked by someone from behind,

"I heard you've been appointed as the Duke's messenger? How was the harvest of ore in Border Town. Were you able to steal a lot from them?"

Hearing this familiar voice, Petrov immediately knew that it was Rene, the second son of the Elk Family, who was bent on becoming a knight, even though there wasn't any territory for him to manage, such an idiot. As a friend Rene would count as "not bad," but Petrov still didn't want to speak about what he had encountered in Border Town. So he changed the topic, "Shouldn't you be in the camp at the Cold Wind Mountain Range at this moment? I thought you were sitting in a tavern and trembling."

"Damn," Rene pushed Petrov away, "it seems your mouth is unable to speak a single word of praise. This time, I wasn't even able to enter the New Holy City. The day before the departure for the border guard, I got infected with a cold and had to lie for a whole week in bed."

"Good, you seem to have improved compared to the last time, but skipping the journey saved the guards a lot of inconvenience."

"This time you're wrong," Rene said suddenly, while a mysterious smile spread over his face. "If I hadn't been lying in bed for a week because of the cold, I'd now be lying on the icy walls of the New Holy City forever."

"What do you mean?" Petrov raised his eyebrows in confusion.

"Listen, I have something to tell you," Rene the second son of the Elk family came close to Petrov's ear and whispered, "The New Holy City almost fell, the demonic beasts were even able to rush into the inner city, if not for the church's timing to release their strongest warriors, they would have been unable to hold the city. But during the fight, the armies of the four kingdoms had suffered heavy losses, only a few soldiers of the Cold Wind Mountain Range were able to come back alive. In just a month, there are many wives who had become widows, without any savings..." He winked his eyes, then stretched out two fingers, "and now they will get two silver royals as compensation. Hey, don't use that look on me, I can't do anything about it."

"Are you sure this news is true? What happen to the border guards?"

"Of course, I've seen it with my own eyes, when the Lord received the news he fell ill." Rene shrugged, "As for the guards... What else could they do, instead of slowly recruiting new guards. Now the North is desperately in need of experienced soldiers, if not for my call to come home, I would be commanding a cavalry squad right now."

That isn't the important point, Petrov thought to himself, the border guards from the Cold Wind Mountain Range was also the primary defense against the Church's Army of Judges, now the generals and soldiers of the four kingdom are buried at the Hermes, if that doesn't taste a little bit of a conspiracy, then I don't know what does. If they plotted to attack us, the North of the Kingdom of Graycastle which is now like a nearly stripped-bare woman, "How many soldiers are lost in the Army of Judges?"

"They didn't fare much better than the other four armies, think about it, they always rush to the front like fanatics. On the other hand, if the Army of Judges didn't attack, the soldiers of the other four kingdoms certainly wouldn't have moved," Rene said in disdain. "Knights shouldn't be like this, always speaking about honor, but when they have to confront demonic beasts, shrinking back like little girls."

“You mean knights like the one in front of me now?” Perot smiled, perhaps I’m just thinking too much into this. Even if the Church wants to start a war against the North, it will have nothing to do with us here in Longsong Stronghold. Should the new king get headaches from thinking about this.

“Unfortunately, until now, no one has accepted my allegiance, or, perhaps they just don’t have the qualification to take me in,” Rene paused, looked towards the door, “The people of the Wolf Family have come, I’m just going to greet them, and then I’ll come back.”

“Go, but don’t come back.”

“Oh, that’s right,” Rene retorted as he looked back. “Have you noticed the handkerchief in the invitation?”

“Were you the one that put it in?” Petrov asked.

“Oh, if it was me, I’d only have given you some two day’s old socks,” Rene shook his finger, “That, was my younger sister’s personal decision. Although the age gap is rather big, but as long as you have the intention; I can only say that you shouldn’t wait my friend. After all, you’re already twenty-two years old by now.”

Petrov gave him a dirty look, but Rene just whistled innocently, then turned around and laughingly went away.

After taking a glass of wine from an attendant, Petrov strolled by himself to the corner, while quietly looking through the lively hall. He noticed that Aurelia was still busy talking lively with her friends. But at the very same time as himself, she also took a secret look at himself, so that for a short moment, their eyes met. But immediately afterwards Petrov saw that Aurelia quickly changed her line of sight and on her cheeks emerged a touch of red of embarrassment.

Petrov in return just smiled kindly. In his view, the other was just a little girl.

All of a sudden, the sounds of a fierce discussion came from the other side of the hall, attracting the eyes of all the people present.

“What! He dared to say that?”

“Yes. Cornelius, that coward, unexpectedly didn’t even dare to let out a fart, he just came back with his tail between his legs,” said the man with the loudest voice, “Shaming the whole of Longsong Stronghold!”

Petrov knew the man, if he remembered correctly he was called Simon Elliott, a member of the Wolf Branch Family, who was also married to a very pretty woman. Petrov had seen the woman once, she really was charming.

“It seems as if you have a way to solve the problem.” Someone teased.

“I may not be able to do it alone, but if you can get the Duke to notice of this ridiculous affair, I don’t believe Roland Wimbledon would still dare to act so rampant any longer!”

Hearing the familiar name, Petrov was startled and started to follow the conversation, fully interested.

Chapter 103 The Honeysuckle and the Elk Families (Part 2)

“What happened?” Petrov went through the crowd and asked.

“Sir Hull, they were talking about the Lord of Border Town,” answered someone that had seen the Honeysuckle crest on his chest. “He has confiscated all the belongings of our people from Longsong Stronghold!”

“You can call me Petrov. Tell me about the situation,” Petrov ordered.

“Let me explain it to you, Mr. Petrov,” Simon said while pressing through the crowd, revealing a pleasing smile. “This is how it is. We serve the Duke with our lives, so I lived in the Border Town where I was responsible for managing the mines. Every Winter we will take the town’s residents back with us to the Longsong Stronghold, where we are able to protect them from the demon beasts attack. But this year, after the end of the Months of the Demons, when one of my colleagues, Cornelius Fletcher came back to Border Town, the lord told him that his house has been demolished by the town’s people and that he wouldn’t receive any compensation for it!”

“If you don’t admit that the house didn’t belong to you I will put you in prison for desertion, where you will wait for the day of your hanging,” he said, exactly copying the 4th Prince’s words, “Sir you have to understand, what he called defection, is the procedure we have used for over a hundred years.”

Petrov couldn’t stop himself from imaging the young man’s appearance in his mind. Although to the outside world the Prince was extremely unbearable, but compared with his personal experience of their two meetings, Roland Wimbledon was no pushover. Also, his method of handling the crime of defection hit the nail on the head, however, the other side didn’t try to think the matter through and was only looking for a reason – but the Prince never thought to convince the group of people with reason.

He has already broken away from Longsong Stronghold long ago, Petrov thought. Or, when he thought about it further, how can it be that the Prince never knew that the nobility would seek refuge in Longsong Stronghold? Obviously, that isn’t possible. He clearly knew, yet he still forced a criminal charge upon them, forcing the other side to make a choice. But in the end, he still let the other party come back to Longsong Stronghold to report such a barbaric act, in the end, what is it that the Prince wants to achieve?

“But he is still the Lord of Border Town,” said the man who Simon previous laughed at, “As the Lord, he has the power to dictate the rules within his own land.”

“Border Town still belongs under the jurisdiction of the Western territory!” Simon retorted unhappy with a cold voice, “Do you question the authority of Duke Ryan? As the Duke, it’s his job to supervise the mine, and he appointed the nobles to do it in his name. But now Roland had taken all the houses of the nobility for himself, which is openly pitting himself against the six Families, Duke Ryan will never stand by and only look as he does as he pleases.”

“You’re speaking about the man who hanged Dimitry Hill?” Petrov didn’t know when Rene came over, “My father has been furious.”

“Young Lord,” Simon said greeting him with a salute, “It is exactly that man, and now he is behaving even more wildly. I’m afraid that only Duke Ryan can stop the Prince, and I hope that you will convey this issue to the Duke.”

“Don’t worry, even with or without this matter, Duke Ryan is already prepared to play his cards.” Rene seemed not the least bit concerned about the future, “It is for exactly this matter that I’ve come back, it is just that at this moment my eldest brother is still in the King’s City setting his name under a trade contract, so at the moment only I can lead the Elk Family.”

“Really? That’s great,” Simon said happily.

Petrov frowned, he himself knew that since the moment he came to deliver the trade offer and the Prince chose to stay for the Winter in Border Town, that such a day would come sooner or later. But he had never expected that his own friend would be fighting in this battle. Despite all the onlooking eyes, he pulled Rene directly to his side, trying to discourage him: “You shouldn’t go to battle, that is a Prince you’re fighting.”

“I know he is a prince, the Prince of the Mountain,” Rene patted on Petrov’s shoulders, “Rest assured, Duke Ryan will not hurt the Prince, maybe just as in the past he will surrender when he meets resistance. Even if he wants to resist, as long as we launch an attack on our horses, those farmers and miners will scatter. The 4th Prince has never brandished a sword or spear, I think he won’t even manage to cut a hair.”

No, I was worried that you would be hurt by him... But he was unable to say it, he knew that the others would never believe him, because even for himself it was still difficult to believe. The Prince can only rely on farmers and miners, while the Duke can rely on knights. I do not know why, but my heart becomes uneasy when I think about it.

“Master Petrov, your father called for you, he has something to discuss with you.” A white-haired steward suddenly rushed to the side of Petrov and talked into his ear.

“I’ve got it,” Petrov nodded, and after an early goodbye to Rene, he took a coach back to the House of Honeysuckle with his housekeeper.

“Father,” he entered the study and saw his father Shalafi Hull writing something by the table.

When he heard Paul’s voice, the count did not pause his writing, “You have to sum up the number of people and their income within our domain and deliver your summary to me, I will then arrange the soldiers for the spring expedition. Duke Ryan has already sent out his call for weapons, When the snow melts, we and the other five families have to provide him with knights and mercenary, which will then march against Border Town.”

“How much do we have to provide?”

The count put the pen down and raised his head, “What happened? Until now you have never concerned yourself with this kind of problem.” He reached to the side of the table and opened a letter, “We have to send at least twenty-five knights, together with their corresponding squires and horses. Also for the mercenaries, they must be fully equipped, and lastly we have to send 100 free people or serfs, who have to be equipped with simple weapons.

Petrov summed up the troops within his head if I add all the soldiers provided by the five families we will provide more than 1000 soldiers. Together with the

Duke's own troops, it will add up to a force able to sweep away any power in the western territory. Even if the Longsong Stronghold didn't send their

defending troops, this force isn't something that Border Town can resist. After all Border Town only has two thousand inhabitants.

"Father, can you please stay away from the battlefield?" Petrov asked hesitantly.

"What do you want to say son?" the Count asked strangely.

"I'm worried about your safety."

"His Royal Highness only has a few knights and less than 50 guards. Our numbers are more than ten times greater than his!"

Theoretically, this was the case, but his father had never seen the Prince before, but Petrov did. "But... Father, everybody said, that the wall made up out of mud paste will soon collapse, but the Prince presided over the construction and it still stands. They also said, that Border Town using only miners and farmers as soldiers, cannot stop the demonic beasts. His Royal Highness has not only done this, he was even able to defend his town until the end of the Demons of the Months, and during the whole months, no one fled from Border Town. "The more he said the more disturbed his heart became," Now, once more, everyone thinks that Duke Ryan will defeat Roland Wimbledon, running over the Prince as easily as running over an ant. Father, are you certain that it will be as easy as you think?"

"That's enough!" Shalafi slammed his fist onto the table. He shook his head and stood up, then he went to the wall – the wall on which the portraits of their ancestor hung. "You always liked more to be a businessman and buy and sell goods than riding a horse and going to war, this is fine for me. But being a merchant is not equal to being a coward. Those merchants who cross the ocean were threatened with death every day," he shouted, pointing at the wall. "Look at the portraits, your grandfather, your grandfather's grandfather, they all leaned on their longbow or their sword and defended themselves against demon beasts, bandits and brigands. You disappoint me, being so afraid of fighting! "

No, Father. Petrov bowed his head, no longer motivated to argue, but within his heart he thought, you are talking about grandfather and grandfather's father but if you took a closer look at those powerful faces, and then take a look at your loose belt and your overflowing double chin. Father, do you really believe you are able to use the bow?

Chapter 104 Planning and Entertainment

On a sunny afternoon, it was finally time for Roland to fulfill his promises.

He conferred the title of Viscount to Sir Payne. In addition to the title he also received a territory to the south of the Shishui River and the right to set up a small village on the other side of the river. Currently, this new territory was still covered by jungle, but Roland had already planned to develop the land. In order to make him give up the autonomy of his newly acquired territory, Roland promised Sir Payne that he would give priority in opening up the territory as soon as possible.

Furthermore, on the open ground Roland would also establish several different kinds of industries, that would generate shares to be given to Sir Payne and his descendants. Roland of course, used his technical abilities as the reason to describe why it was needed for him to supervise the industries. He also explained to him that it was a pretty good possibility to receive money without having to do anything.

Sir Payne readily agreed to this offer – after all, he didn't like this kind of work, in his view, there was nothing more interesting than riding a horse into battle. But after he had his daughter, he instead put his focus into hunting. The industries in his old territory had already long since been ruined, so he simply asked Roland to help him sell his land which was located east of Longsong Stronghold, after all his family had already completely moved and started to live in Border Town. Roland naturally agreed to his request.

Another person he conferred a title to was Brian, who was awarded with a knighthood. Afterward Brian had to choose if he wanted to get his own territory or still wanted to serve in the army.

If he chose the land, then he could no longer serve in Border Town's first Army. If he decided to join the army, he had to, just like the others receive his land due to the achievement of his military merits. Without any hesitation, Brian chose the latter option.

As a result, Roland could finally start with planning the general layout of his territory.

With the Shishui River as one boundary, and the Impassable Mountain Range as the other. The living area had a length of three kilometers and a width of seven to eight kilometers. After the construction of the residential areas, it could also later be used as a prize, which could be given as an additional reward to promoted officers.

The other side of the Shishui River will become the future industrial areas and agricultural areas. The land could be extended to the south, but the only problem was that it was still covered by forest. In addition, its topography sloped higher and lower in the further distances. To meet the needs of the population, Roland must begin to reclaim the land.

The border area to the west of the garrison and the forest where the demonic beasts hid themselves were also important areas to open up.

The forest has a wide range of treasures, such as wood, edible fungi, wild animals, herbs and more. In addition to using wood for construction and in industry, it could also be used as a fuel source. The vast area covered by the forest was staggering. Roland had already sent Lightning to explore it, but even flying more than thirty kilometers she still hadn't been able to see its end, that meant that if all of the wood in the forest was to be used for building a fire, it would burn for a very long time.

The last area was the territory between the Hiding Forest and the Impassable Mountain Range – it was a no man's land, a restricted area, in other words, a barbarian wasteland. He could only speculate how big the area between the Impassable Mountain Range and the border of the forest was. Both borders were extremely vast, it had to be much bigger than the territory of the Kingdom of Graycastle. In the face of such an extremely large and ownerless land, Roland's heart began to itch. But he also knew that for the moment he was temporarily unable to bother himself with this piece of land. At present, the most important thing for Border Town was to increase its population.

Back in his office at the castle, he called for the artist Soraya.

“How was your work, are you still helping out in the Town Hall?”

“I have never painted so many paintings in one day,” she seemed to be in a much better condition than the last time he had seen her, “today I have already finished the basic pictures, but only painting pictures of their heads while looking through a window, feels a little strange.”

“They would easily become scared when they see your magic pen”, the prince smiled, “they know that there are witches in Border Town, but if you get in close contact with them, it could easily cause accidents, so we just took some simple hidden measures, not letting them know that you are a witch. Later their opinion will slowly start to change.”

Soraya’s photographic ability helped to bring Roland’s citizenship registration program to a new level. For this plan, he had emptied a room in the Town Hall and then used the room to store the information about the town’s citizens. It was similar to a population register, on each piece of paper were written their names, ages, addresses, blood relatives and so on. This information was all the statistics he had gathered during the winter, and now the records were expanded with new content. The biggest change to all of their personal accounts was that he added to each of them a “color photo.”

According to Roland’s request, the Town Hall had set up a small room large enough for one person that was enterable without being seen, it had only a small window through which Soraya could see the face of the person she should paint. So when she painted the portrait of her subject, the other person couldn’t see her using her magic pen.

As to how it was possible for him to let the town’s residents come over and give their personal information so freely, Roland’s method was very simple, whoever came over and gave their information, got 10 copper royals – he ordered the Town Hall to allocate the money.

“Today I called you here to draw something else.” Roland took out some cutout papers and gave them to Soraya.

The latter noted that the sizes of those pieces of papers were exactly the same, with a size of half a palm, and in a rectangular format.

“What do you want me to paint?”

“Some props for entertainment,” Roland said.

He had this idea within his mind for a long time already, every day the witches had nothing to do besides practicing their magic, this life had to be a bit boring. The same could be said for the Prince, especially when he had to wait for the moment the snow finally melted, until then he was stuck within the castle. Therefore, he came up with the idea of reinventing some games from his old world and finding a way for the witches to relax.

The simplest possibility was to create a card game. But the soft ordinary paper he had wasn’t suitable for card games, shuffling was also a hassle. However, with Soraya, he could finally make some more advanced things.

“Entertainment?” She crouched her head, wondering what kind of entertainment she was painting on a square piece of paper, “Okay, you have the final say.”

“First, on this piece of paper, you have to draw a soldier with a heavy crossbow.”

“Imagine?”

“Yes, the armor, the body shape, age, and the surroundings, everything up to you to freely imagine, as long as it has a heavy crossbow.”

“Uh... I will try it,” Soraya closed her eyes, meditation for a while, then she summoned her pen into her hand and soon a bright light streamed from her hands onto the paper.

Soon, a middle-aged man looking just like a crossbow soldier appeared on the paper.

“Very well,” Roland praised, “Let me think about what the next painting should be, ah... in the upper left corner of the paper and the middle position, draw a small circle at each of these positions,” he recalled the card in his head “The first circle is white in the center with a golden coating, and the second one has an orange color together with a golden coating,” he said.

When the circles were finished, Roland let her add a number to the first circle, “and to the second circle you will add a bow and an arrow mark into the circle.”

The beauty of Soraya’s ability lied in her ability to ignore the material she had to paint on, it didn’t matter to her if it was a blank sheet of paper or an already painted piece. The second design can perfectly cover the former painting, like a layered mask.

Thus, a delicate “crossbow card” appeared in front of Roland.

“Is this what you wanted?” She asked.

“This is just the card of one unit, there are still many similar cards waiting to be painted by you. By the end, you will get a deck and then I’ll teach you how to play.”

When looking at Soraya who was painting with her eyes closed, Roland felt a kind of hunch from his heart. Perhaps soon a dialog like this would be heard within the castle –

“Do you have anything important to do? If not, let us first play a round of ‘Gwent’!”

TN:

Thanks to the help of “busnuss” and “lordVortex” are here some more information about Gwent

Chapter 105 Army Marching Song

Echo was sitting on the highest point of the castle – on the roof of the watchtower, from where she was able to overlook the whole town.

She was only able to reach the top thanks to Lightning taking her up on a piggyback ride, now she had to stay here until sunset, only then would the little girl come back and take her back down. At the moment, Lightning should have already been on her way to the Longsong Stronghold.

The weather was very good today, the sun was shining brightly, and the river in the distance looked under the sunlight like it was made of satin, slowly flowing westwards and dividing the green leaves on the one side and the snowy landscape on the other side into two sides. Lying comfortably in the sun, she

felt as if her whole body was embraced warmly by the sun. It was completely unlike her previous time in the extreme south, where the scorching sunlight was so aggressive that it easily hurt her skin.

Even the wind isn't the same, she thought, during my life I've already felt six different kinds of wind. The slightly salty sea breeze in Port of Clearwater, while in King City I felt the wind of the hot and damp monsoons, during my travel through the Impassable Mountain Range we were constantly accompanied by the freezing cold North Wind. And now, here in Border Town, the light breeze has an earthly aroma to it. No matter what, the wind here is pure and independent.

In the Ironsand City, it was either so hot that there was no wind, or we would have an overwhelming storm. Then the wind became visible and the storming air mixes with the stones and gravel, from afar it looked like a giant black monster. Every time the wind came up, I had to hide inside a house or any place else which wasn't in the open. There was nothing that was able to stop the wind.

Echo still wanted to throw up. And taking her revenge when she thought about her past, it was nearly four years ago that she left Ironsand City. Her Osha clan, unfortunately, was defeated during a fight for power, her father killed by their enemy even after he surrendered. Echo who witnessed all this, wanted to rush to the enemy and take him down by herself, but at that moment she had been caught off-guard from behind.

She didn't know how many member of her clan were still alive after these four years.

Before she was sold as a slave to the Port of Clearwater, she heard that her Osha clan had violated the agreements of the sacred duel, and were now spurned by the Three Gods. Who then exiled them to the Endless Cape, never being allowed to return to Ironsand City.

But Echo knew that it was all a conspiracy by the Tibia clan, they had smeared black oil on their whip and as long as this oil was ignited, even water was unable to put it out. It was this trick which caught her brother – the clan's strongest warrior – off-guard in the duel, so that he was burned alive, leading to the chaos in their team's formation.

In the Endless Cape the only thing beside the hot sand were the ever-burning fires of Mother Earth, who was even more maniac than her brother the Emperor of the Sea. Soon the people of her clan would have turned into bones; but in the end, her fate as a slave was even more miserable.

When Echo awakened to her power – she knew that she had become a witch. Naturally, she thought about revenge, but in the end her ability was useless, she was only able to release sound. No matter how much she begged the gods, they never heard her prayers.

Six months later when she was living in the Port of Clearwater, she came to an understanding, the thought that they were loved by the three Gods was in truth only their self-deception. Under the jurisdiction of the Church, the witches were all hunted inside the four Kingdoms. From that day on, Echo completely gave up on her hope for revenge.

At this moment, suddenly a billow of smoke rose from the distance. She looked to the East Bank of Shishui River and she saw several lights of green flames flash through the trees. The black smoke of the burning trees mixed together with the vapor of the melting snow forming a gray plume in the sky.

It was Anna's green flame.

When they arrived for the first time in Border Town, Wendy had briefed the sisters about Anna and Nana. When Echo heard about Anna's ability she was very envious.

Anna was able to freely manipulate flames, it could even reach the temperature hot enough to melt swords... If she had such a powerful ability when she had lived in Ironsand City, the people of the Tibia Clan would never have been able to hurt them.

Echo shook her head, thoughts like these were totally unnecessary, most probably her people had already turned into bones. Since she was still alive she could count herself as lucky. Since His Royal Highness was willing to accept her, she should complete the orders given by His Royal Highness.

She cleared her throat and began to hum the song according to the Prince's demands.

It was a cheerful ditty, the Prince had only hummed the melody once, but she completely remembered the whole ditty.

Music was nothing new to Echo, as a superior slave she was taught many things. Seductive dances and flirtatious crooning were skills she'd had to master. But the music given by His Highness was completely differently... it was full of rhythm, full of powerful energy. Especially when he asked her to simulate the sound of a flute, every note was like a pulsing beat, people hearing this couldn't help themselves from wanting to dance.

The difficulty lied in playing several instruments at the same time, later there were also drums and string-instruments that were added. So she had to simulate three different kinds of sounds at the same time, which overlapped each other. Something like this was something that she had never done before. Previously she would have never believed that music could also be played in this way!

In the beginning, it was hard for her to make sure that the drums didn't disrupt the rhythm of the flutes, so Roland gave her the tip to play the beat with her hands or feet, and only later gradually start to fuse the two sounds together.

After a few days of practice, Echo had gradually mastered this kind of music.

After playing it for several times she was self-assured enough to finally add the in the string-instruments.

When Echo played the new melody for the first time, she had to change the notes again a little –if the sound of the cheerful flute were the torso, the heated drums were the bones, and the last seemingly embellished strings were the soul. She increased the beat, over and over again, until the three instruments were finally fully integrated, the sound was getting higher and higher until she couldn't stop herself from starting to sing –

*

"My attack power is higher than yours, so it's my win."

Roland put his last card on the table, and Soraya who set across of him covered her face and said with a low voice.

"One more round," then she thought for a moment, and shuffled through the cards. "Let me pick your ten cards this time."

“Well,” coughed the Prince, “It’s already late, I have still several things to do, you should go to the other.”

After laying down a groundwork of different cards, the next part was to copy the already invented cards. With the template in front of her, Soraya’s speed of drawing was comparable to a printer. Soon, Roland got several copies of the same units.

So naturally Soraya became his first opponent.

After explaining the rules to her, the first card war was started. During the games, he quickly learned that the thinking process of the witches was completely differently from ordinary people. Soraya quickly figured out the right way to use the skills. After playing for several rounds, Roland was still able to win, but this was only due using several special cards. When Soraya asked him to create her own special cards, he shamefully rejected.

“All right,” Soraya said, then she took the cards into her arms and ran into the direction of the door. At this moment, a cheerful melody came through the open windows. Hearing this Soraya paused, turned around and ran to the window, taking a probing look outside, “Is that Echo?”

“Well, it looks like she has completely mastered it.” Roland leaned back in his chair and admired the familiar music.

Border Town’s first Army would soon enter the first stage of comprehensive maneuvering. Compared with the training for shooting while standing on the wall, the comprehensive maneuvering would be carried out in the wild. At the same time that they moved through the wild, they had to hold their formation – always forming a shooting line.

In order to make the soldiers march with the same pace, he had to rely on drums and slogans. But now with Echo, he could simulate several instruments at the same time. Now they had only had to simply to learn English, then they could implement several famous marching sounds.

Compared to the simple drums, the marching song would not only control the marching speed, it would also effectively boost morale. Of course, the most famous marching song was the “The British Grenadiers”, but Roland only knew its name, but he didn’t know the full tune.

But this didn’t pose a problem for him, as long as he had the tune to “The British Grenadiers”, he could always rearrange its lines later.

During the “War of Resistance”, the sound could be heard through the whole nation, north and south of the Yangtze River. And nearly everyone was familiar with its melody, after all, it was the famous “Guerrillas’ Song.”

When Soraya turned her head in the direction of the Prince, she heard the Prince following the song, gently singing. He sang in a language she had never heard before, but still, the melody and the lyric fitted together perfectly.

“We are all sharpshooters,”

“Each bullet takes out an enemy.”

“We are all soldiers with wings,”

“Unafraid of tall mountains and deep waters.”

“In the dense forests,”

“Our comrades set their camps.”

“On the tall mountains,”

“Our countless brothers are there.”

“...”

TN: Information to the Guerrillas’ Song

Chapter 106 It’s not the same for him

When Scroll knocked on the door, she quickly heard an answer from the other side, “Please enter.”

Hearing this she pushed open the door and stepped into the room. Within the room she saw Anna sitting at her table in front of the window, busy reading a thick book.

The sunlight was flooding the room through the window, stretching the woman’s silhouette until it was unusually long. Within the sun her soft cheeks and neck were dazzlingly white, and her shoulder-covering flaxen hair seemed to be made of white gold.

After nearly a week of living together, Scroll had a basically understanding of Anna’s temperament. For example, if she had something to say she would speak bluntly and never equivocate. She was calm and quiet, especially studious... In short, it was difficult to find any other civilian born person like Anna who was totally at peace with herself.

“How is it that you aren’t playing that... card game?” Scroll took a chair and placed it next to Anna. During the last two days, whenever her sisters had finished their daily practice, they would immediately rush back to the castle, crowding Soraya’s room playing the so-called Gwent card game and competing against each other to collect more cards. It seemed like they would never get tired of this. She even saw that Anna and Nana played this game every day after they learned the rules. There were only rare occasions where they didn’t play. Unlike the previous days, she would often see the young girl with the healing powers coming to the castle to play.

“I just wanted to read some books,” Anna turned to the next page, “Since I don’t have your ability, I have to spend more time to read the books.”

Anna almost read everything, from historical biographies to long poems, including every book she saw on the streets even if it was only a variety of folk tales, as long as they were collected into a book, she would read them with relish.

Scroll touched her head sympathetically, “Don’t worry. Remind me that I wanted to give you a new book to read.”

It was only because of her, that the fate of us survivors of the Witch Cooperation Association had so greatly changed, Scroll thought. If it wasn’t for her, Nightingale would never have left halfway for the direction of Border Town. So we would never have met the 4th Prince of Kingdom of Graycastle, and so

would never have come to know the method to staying healthy. In a sense, she was the savior to all witches.

Which was also the reason why Scroll had from the beginning felt only goodwill for Anna, while the latter also quickly accepted the other witch who had so much knowledge and experience. But it was also clear that Anna greatly envied Scroll for her ability, which in return to Scroll was a little ridiculous. In the Witch Cooperation Association, the sisters never showed any envy for another witches' abilities. It was even more ridiculous since Anna had the largest magic capacity Nightingale had ever seen a witch possessed before, furthermore the ability of her green flame was also one of the strongest.

"Your hair has become a little long," Anna's curly bangs were nearly covering her eyes, "Is there no one who can help you cut them?"

Anna shook her head. "No, I'm all on my own."

Suddenly Scroll became totally motivated, "Your tangled hair isn't good-looking, let me cut it for you."

"You'd do this for me?"

"I've cut the hair of most of the sisters during our time in the camp," Scroll answered happily. "Wait a minute, I'll go get the tools."

She soon came back while holding a cloth bag. When she spread the bag's content out, Anna saw several white pieces of clothes and a bronze scissor. The scissor was V-shaped, and at both it ends it had many scratches, already losing its gloss and clearly showing that it was well used.

Before Scroll had joined the Witch Cooperation Association, the scissors were used to help her cut the hairs of her customers in the Sea Wind Region. All the copper royals she didn't need to buy bread were handed over to an old captain with a broken leg. This captain was the one who'd taught her to read and write until he died of old age.

Scrolls skillfully put one of the white clothes on Anna's neck, and started cutting her hair.

"I had some questions I wanted to ask you," Anna announced.

"What do you want to know?" Under her skillful fingers the scissor flew through Anna's hair, always releasing a crisp Kaka sound. Soon the first cluster of finger length hair was cut and fell to the ground.

"Many of the stories described in the books I'd gotten from you yesterday, almost always have the same ending. Will the Prince always take a princess as his bride?"

Hearing this question Scroll's hand paused for a moment, the stories in the book were not stories of a real people, instead it was a collection of stories she had heard within her ten years in the Sea Breeze Region. They were stories told to her by the sailors. But Scroll had specifically put this kind of stories together, and every story where the Prince wouldn't marry the Princess didn't have a happy ending. These kinds of stories were put together in one book and which she then gave to Anna to read.

Always knowing that after reading Anna would ask her exactly this question, but now that she really had to answer the question, she hesitated.

“Most of the time this is the case, of course, some princes will also marry the daughter of a Grand Duke or a Duke, for example, Graycastle’s King Wimbledon III, his wife was the daughter of the Duke of Silvercity.”

Answering the question like this, Scroll suddenly felt very sad. Wendy and Scroll herself had already talked about Nightingale’s situation but compared to the mature and calm Shadow Killer, she was more worried about the possibility that the Prince and Anna would develop deeper feeling and become closer.

Anna was a woman who was very important to His Royal Highness, and everyone could clearly see this. When Anna and Roland were in the same room, his eyes would always fall on her. Anna’s life was several times busier than that of any other sisters. Even more important than that was that even Nightingale had to share her room with Wendy, but His Royal Highness didn’t change Anna’s room into a double, making her the only one was allowed to have a room all to herself. The reason for this was that when Nana came over to sleep in the castle she could share the room with Anna – he seemed to not realize that he was the owner of this place and that there was no reason that he had to explain himself.

And for Anna it was the same case, when she was together with the other witches she was a person of few words, she was even for most of the time just a quiet listener. But when Roland was by her side she would immediately become active. If there was anything which was able to let her forget about her books, Scroll thought that only the Prince was able to achieve this.

Unfortunately, Roland was the 4th son of the former King of Graycastle, the future King who will support the witches, and Anna was only a witch.

Since Roland was a Prince, Scroll was unable to order him, so she had no other choice than to influence Anna in the direction she thought would be correct. She didn’t want those two to be estranged from each other, but she also didn’t want to see it ending in the only possible result, a tragedy.

“Why?” asked Anna shaking her head, as if to try to get the memories of her destroyed dreams out of her head. “Does he have to do this, even though he doesn’t like the princess or any other woman of the nobility?”

“Uh...” Scroll hadn’t thought that she would continue questioning, “Even then he had still has to marry them.”

Because the Prince would most likely become the new king and the king’s marriage can’t be his own personal decision. She tried to recall some of the knowledge from the books that would help her,

“In order to stabilize the powers within his own country. In order to appease the neighboring countries. In order to achieve a good deal, these are all important reason for marrying a princess. But the most important matter is that the King has to have heirs.”

Hearing all this, Anna did not ask any further, which in return made Scroll a little relieved. This kind of thing was something only slowly achieved, not something she could force. But she believed that one day Anna would understand her thoughts.

When the trimming came to its end, Scroll scratched the fringes on Anna’s shoulder away, “Now, you’re looking great.”

“Thank you,” said Anna and bowed thankfully.

“Well, for today’s book...” Scroll thought for a moment, then she decided to tell her about the Wolfsheart Kingdom’s history, trying to reinforce the impression she had installed today, “her own selection of the royal family biography.”

When Scroll was finally ready to leave, Anna suddenly began to speak, still holding the book of illusion within her hands, “I think Roland isn’t one of those Princes from your stories.” Her voice was very steady and powerful, nothing as if she was only speaking to convince herself, “He will do whatever he wants to do. His decision won’t be influenced by anything else.”

“...” For a long time Scroll was startled, and in the end, she could only merely ask, “Why?”

“If he were one of those princes, he would never have saved me.”

Chapter 107 Asking for his intention

After dinner Roland returned to his office to continue to copy down all the primary mathematical knowledge from his mind onto paper.

He wasn’t gifted with an extraordinarily retentive memory, and also not to forget that his memory would decline over time. Because of his former job, he had often used mathematical and physical knowledge to get the job done. But his knowledge about other subjects such as History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry and the other classes, had in the years degraded back to entry level. Therefore, even if it was a little early, he still wanted to write down all of his knowledge, so that other people could at least learn from it.

Each time when he filled up a piece of paper, he gave the letter to Scroll, letting her read it. As long as she saw the content, it was equivalent to permanently preserving his work. Unfortunately, Scroll’s ability was only being able to remember everything, even with all the content it didn’t mean she was able to self-teach herself high school mathematics knowledge. So whenever Roland had time, he would explain to her the knowledge she had previously read.

Of course, with regards to lecturing others, Roland liked it very much and thought that it was an interesting job. Especially when he at first saw the confused look on Scroll’s face, then when her expression would turn into one of concentration only to suddenly turn into a look filled with realization. Whenever he saw this look he would feel a sense of accomplishment. However, Roland clearly knew that it also had to do with the target of his lessons.

Although Scroll was already nearing the age of forty, but the aging of her face had been greatly slowed by her magic. The skin on her cheeks was still tight and had a healthy touch of red, her hair was tied behind her head, giving her a mature and capable look. The tiny crow’s feet in the corner of her eyes didn’t damage her overall aesthetic appearance, instead, it brought out the impression of someone with a stable temperament. If she were to be placed in a movie, she would definitely give off the impression of an elegant and versatile teacher. Now, when he was able to stun this “teacher” with his knowledge, the sense of contrast felt quite good.

Roland was silently asked himself, in the end, what is magic in this world?

Magic is everywhere, whether one is in the depths of the Northern Slope Mine or in the Impassable Mountain Range. In the barbarian wasteland west of us or in the east within the Sea Wind Region. A

witch would always be able to cast her incredible magic. If I look at the magic to be the same as energy, then the witches are the same as an electrical instrument. But the magic power obviously has many more possibilities to offer than electricity would have, it was more like it was the “origin” of all energies.

For example, Wendy had said that Cara was able to summon four different kinds of magical snakes, namely: death, pain, petrification, and nothingness. Each of them had a different kind of venom. Another example was Nightingale, her ability to enter into the fog would almost distort space.

The witches’ magical abilities varied so much, that other than being related to the origin of the world, Roland couldn’t think of any description more appropriate.

To give a definition of the origin, someone has to look at the universe and its rules. In my former world, Einstein determined the four fundamental forces of the universe and put them into a theoretical framework, the so-called grand unified theory. In other words, what he did was to find the origin of the universe. In case someone found the rule to the universe, could this rule then be applied in every universe?

Coming to this point, Roland couldn’t help himself from questioning, if he returned to his former world, would there also be the same power, yet, because they had no witches who could access this power, the power got just ignored by the people?

No matter what, at the moment Roland could only think about it. After all, with the current level of technology, he couldn’t analyze this power closer.

So promoting the industrial revolution and promoting the standard of civilization, was the most important work for him.

Maybe one day, the power could not only be used by the witches with their direct access to the origin – converting it into a kind of energy, that could be used for a variety kind of effects at the same time, just thinking about it made him feel totally excited.

“Your Royal Highness? When Scroll saw the Prince lost in thoughts with an intoxicated look on his face, she couldn’t stop herself from speaking out.

“Well,” Roland said, slowly coming back from his thoughts, after embarrassingly coughing twice he glanced at the burning candle and told her, “That was enough for today, come back tomorrow.”

“Yes, Your Highness,” Scroll bowed once, but when she was already on her way leaving the room, she unknowingly slowed her pace.

When Roland even after half a minute didn’t hear the closing sound of the door, he raised his head in confusion. Seeing that the other one was still standing in the doorway he asked. “Was there anything else?”

“Your Highness...” Scroll hesitated for a moment but then she said. “I want to ask you a question.”

“Ask freely.” Roland nodded and put his quill down and instead raised his cup and drank some tea. There was really no problem with the witches, that was, if someone searched for it, someone could point out that they weren’t confident enough. They were just the same as rabbits, slowly sticking their

heads out of their hole, always ready to flee back into it even if the grass was only moved by the wind. It would be better if they weren't any longer so afraid and would act more freely.

Roland's estimation was that her question, would be the usual kind of, why are you willing to host us? Aren't you afraid of the threat by the church and the likes? Nightingale and Wendy had asked him this kind of question so many times, that he couldn't count it any longer. But since Scroll was in such an earnest mood, he naturally had to give her a seriously answer. So that they could experience his honest comrade like treatment, giving them the feeling of being surrounded by a warm spring breeze.

"Is it... possible that you would ever marry a witch?"

"Pfft," Roland nearly sprayed the tea out of his mouth. "Uh, why would you ask that?"

"I..." Scroll opened her mouth, but in the end, she was still unable to answer him.

To marry a witch? When thinking about this question, the first person appearing within his mind was Anna. From the time he met her in the cage, and he saw her pair of lake like blue eyes, she had left a deep impression on his heart. Before their awakening, witches are just ordinary human women, but afterwards, their ability made them superior. And the same could be said about the appearance of their body, both were superior to that of an ordinary woman. If he were to place them in modern society, they would definitely become the focus of everyone's attention. So, is there any reason why I should hesitate? That not being the case –

He looked at Scroll and replied with a smile: "Why would I not?"

*

On the way back to her room, Wendy rubbed her sore shoulders.

My chest is just too big, it's causing nothing but trouble. Especially when I have to stay on the roof of my small sheet on Little Town. I have to raise my hands when I summon the wind, but when I do, I also have to bend backward, if not I will lose my balance.

Compared to the first test trial, Little Town had gotten a number of improvements. For example, she had gotten a simple shed at her workplace, both to block the wind and rain, but also to avoid the sun's exposure. Another improvement was the tree bark which was now fastened around the hull, it was used to reduce the incoming collision force when landing at port. Also, both sides of the ship were now equipped with two cement blocks, to make things easy for fastening the ship with hemp rope.

And after nearly a month of training, her ability to control the wind had gotten substantial better. Now, regardless if the ship was stable or not, she could always control the degree of the wind, letting it blow fast or slow. She had also learned to use the already existing wind to adjust her own magic consumption, so that in the end she would be able to summon her wind for a longer period of time.

Nightingale who came home before Wendy had already finished her bathing and was now sitting in pajamas on the bedside waiting for Wendy's return.

But when Wendy saw her, there seemed to be something strange, Nightingale had an irrepressible smile on her face

“What kind of good thing happened to you?” Wendy asked. But the later shook her head without saying anything, with only her smile growing even deeper.

Wendy curled her lips, after their talk some nights ago, Nightingale’s mood wasn’t very good, but after the creation of the new card game it had somewhat improved again. But today, how was it that she was full of smiles? Where had the expressionless Shadow Killer from Silver City gone?

Without getting an answer, Wendy took off her clothes and stepped into the bucket filled with hot water. Most probably, she had won a good card today.

TN: Today we learned three things

The card game is the excuse for everything

Nightingale is the ultimate stalker

It’s time for Roland to introduce modern underwear like any other good MC

Chapter 108 Echo (Part 1)

The Months of the Demons had already ended two weeks ago, and the snow has finally turned into streams which ran into the Shishui River.

The spotlessly white landscape slowly faded away, and the trees on both sides began to sprout again, becoming green once more.

The land to the east of Border Town was the land Anna that had already cleared of trees and snow, and because of this it had now been turned by His Highness into the temporary practice ground for the First Army.

At the practice ground, Carter was holding a gun and checking if the bayonet was securely installed.

This was the newest invention of His Highness, but compared to the automatic operating machine and the modified snow powder, this new invention seemed to be a little too simple. The moment he had for the first time taken the new weapon into his hands, Carter knew almost immediately that it wasn’t a qualified weapon.

In short, it was just a sharp iron triangle, with the middle line as the base, which had two small iron pieces pointing downwards. Although it had a sharp edge, it was absolutely impossible to slash with the weapon – the blade was just too short, if it had to bend, it would immediately break. It had hardly any tip to speak of while the other end was only around a thumb thick. Even if he was able to attack an enemy, if he tried to slash out horizontally, Carter couldn’t say whether he would even be able to cut apart the enemy’s clothes.

This weapon had only one use, and that was, stabbing. And before it could even be used it still had to be connected to the gun. Used by itself, even a dagger would be a better weapon.

In the eyes of the knight, it was totally unqualified to be used as a weapon and a big waste of pig iron to create such weapon with only one type of attack. If a blacksmith within his territory had dared to create such a weapon, he would have tied the man and given him one fierce beating.

But even if it was such a bad weapon, Carter could still see His Highness originality and his passion for the all of the details. For example, the design for the connection between the gun and the bayonet. The mouth of the barrel had two grooves with a right angle at its end, as long as the two small iron pieces at the bayonet were fitted into the grooves and the bayonet was turned half around the barrel then the bayonet would become fixed. Thanks to this concept the grooves and the iron pieces didn't need to fit perfectly, if they were a little too loose, the gunner could just insert some pieces of paper between the two iron pieces and the grooves, and when it fitted better, only then should he rotate the bayonet. In the case that they didn't have any papers, tree leaves would also be okay.

"Put the bayonet on the gun!"

When they heard the keyword, the gunning team took out the bayonet from their bag, and put it on the gun's barrel – until now they had only been able to produce forty of the new weapons and their supporting bags. So the soldier who didn't receive the new weapons had to put a short stick on their guns.

This kind of action was almost trained through the whole morning, and now most soldier only needed to adjust the bayonet two to three times until it was fixed. According to His Highness' words, the bayonet should only be used as a last resort. He didn't want his men to start a close combat attack on their own with the bayonet. Carter disagreed with this statement, as long as a man didn't personally stab a weapon into an enemy, they would still be considered as children. Only if they saw their first blood, would they transform from ordinary miners and hunters into soldiers.

Iron Axe also stood among the ranks of trainees. Although he had previous claimed to only be a hunter, but from his skills Carter could see, that the man had absolutely received special combat training before. His skills weren't any worse than the skills of any other knight.

His Royal Highness had asked Carter to teach the soldiers how to use the new weapon correctly. Having received this order, Carter felt a little guilty. The bayonet was a kind of weapon he had never seen before, so it was impossible that he couldn't know how to use it.

However, after seeing the prototype, Carter was once more immediately filled with confidence. After all, the bayonet was nothing other than the equivalent of a short spear. In addition, due to its special blade, it was much easier to use than the pike.

Due to its unique blade design, the bayonet training method has also become very special. They didn't need to learn how to split, lift, block or sweep with the bayonet, they only had to train one move, stabbing. So the knight let all the soldiers line up and then began to teach them the most suitable method for stabbing – placing one foot before the other, bending the knees and then pushing their arms forward with their maximum amount of power.

This kind of repetitive training method was extremely boring. So Carter was amazed that everyone was so meticulously completing this kind of training exercise. Before the winter they were all still a bunch of weak and lazy civilians, but now they behaved like a decent group of trainees. When Carter shouted a command they would immediately take action, and he had to acknowledge that they even put more effort into the training than the squires he had previously trained. Of course, if he were to give them a sword, or to say it using the words of His Royal Highness, if he gave them "cold weapons", he would still

be able to defeat them with a stick in a mere three strokes. But in terms of their willpower, their progress is already worthy of acknowledgement.

After an hour of training, Carter let the gun team sit down and gave them a break. At this moment His Royal Highness the Prince also showed up on the practice ground, followed by a woman who was wearing a hood. This didn't take the Knight by surprise. Previously, at the beginning of the training, His Royal Highness had informed him in advance, that during today's practice they would be assisted by a witch.

However, Carter hadn't known that the witch would be so tall, as far as he could determine it with his eyes, she was almost as high as His Highness. But nevertheless she is still exquisite and good looking, Carter thought. Then he came back from his thought and let the soldiers stand up, allowing them to greet the 4th Prince with a salute.

"Your Highness!" The soldiers shouted and raised their hands.

"Thank you for your effort," receiving their greeting Roland nodded, and walked around since he also wanted to speak with just Carter alone. But at this moment a soldier suddenly rushed in the direction of the Prince. Discovering this Carter frowned, placed his hand on the hilt of his sword and took a step forward, placing the Prince behind himself. Nightingale had been even faster to react, her hand appeared out of the fog and grabbed Roland's arm. As long as the situation turned out to go even slightly wrong, she would be able to pull the Prince into the fog.

But then they discovered that the person was rushing out was actually Iron Axe.

And even more, he didn't run to the Prince, but instead to the unknown witch, immediately falling down to his knees in front of her. Not the Kingdom's normal kneeling on one knee, no, he threw his whole body flat on the ground, with his head deeply buried between his arms, "My Clan Leader!"

With this, the training of the gun team came to a forced break.

*

"First tell me, what's going on?"

Back in the Castle Hall, Carter, Echo, and Iron Axe stood in a row, while Roland sat at the Lord position, he asked clearly dissatisfied.

Discipline, you have to always maintain discipline! This is one of the most important rules within the militia and now the army should also have the same iron discipline! Not to speak about seeing the Clan Leader, even if you were to see the King you shouldn't move even a toe out of line. This is the only requirement, there will be always time to report later.

From the beginning on Roland had a very good impression of Iron Axe, but with his action of today, he could only sigh. So his final analysis was, it seemed that his inner cultural quality wasn't able to keep up with his practical talents, he clearly hadn't understood the meaning of the word discipline.

"Your Royal Highness," Iron Axe couldn't help himself to wait any longer. He wanted to kneel down, showing his regret. But when he was already halfway down on his knee, he was stopped by Roland.

"Stand straight and speak!"

'Yes!' Iron Axe swallowed nervously, and then began to speak, "I grew up in Ironsand City and vowed my loyalty and devotion to the Osha Clan and the new Clan Leader Silver Moon."

"No, Kabago, I am not the Clan Leader..." Echo quickly disagreed.

"No, you are," Iron Axe retorted, "Your father and brother already died, in accordance with the Osha custom, from the moment of their death you became the Clan Leader of our Osha Clan. When I heard that you were sold to the Port of Clearwater I immediately went there, but I was unable to find you, I thought that you had ... died.

"But I -"

Roland interrupted Echo, "One by one, first let Iron Axe finish his story."

"I will obey you until the end of my life, Your Highness."

...

The story wasn't complicated; Roland was quickly able to understand the general idea behind what happened.

Echo was originally a member of the Ironsand City's Osha Clan. Her former name was Silver Moon, and her father had been the Clan Leader of the Osha Clan.

The people of Sand Nation didn't have an easy life. Ironsand City was only able to accommodate a limited population, so every three years, each clan had to take part in the sacred duel, and the six clans who won would receive the right to live in the city, while the other clans either lived outside of the city, or went together to the Green Sea. These places were dangerous places to live, although they offered water, but the demonic beasts and sandstorms would cause a great threat to the Sandpeople. So during each Sacred Duel, the warriors of various clan would spare no effort in order to win.

Chapter 109 Echo (Part 2)

However, in the duel, the Osha Clan lost to the insidious means there were used by the Tribian Clan, not only that but in the end, even their Patriarch was killed and the Clan ended up being exiled to the Endless Cape. Silver Moon, the daughter of the former Patriarch now known as Echo, because of her outstanding appearance was sold as a slave by the slavers to a businessman from the Port of Clearwater.

Iron Axe with his identity as a mixed blood, despite being an adopted member of Sandpeople was not a real member of the Osha Clan. And therefore he hadn't been sentenced into exile. But because of his strong combat abilities, the other clans took a liking to him and wanted to recruit him to their side. Yet Iron Axe who had over years received a type familial care from the old Patriarch coupled with the hope of saving Echo, did not hesitate to reject the offers of the other Clans. After a long and a difficult journey, he finally arrived at his goal, the Port of Clearwater. But he never got to know that at this time, Echo had already been sold to the King of Graycastle.

However, in the end the latter was rescued by a witch, who'd belonged to the Witch Cooperation Association; while the other disheartenedly moved to the West border of the Kingdom of Graycastle. Yet today, these two people unexpectedly meet once again in Border Town.

“Then what are your plans for the future,” Roland asked after pondering for a moment about what he had heard just now, “Do you want to return to the South, take Echo with you and revive the Osha Clan?”

“No, Your Highness!” Iron Axe went down on one knee, “I have already sworn to the Three Gods, that for the rest of my life I will always work for you... I was just... I was just too excited to see Silver Moon again. I couldn’t control my emotions, please punish me!”

“What about you?” The Prince asked Echo. “Do you want to avenge your people?”

Being asked this question, Echo also knelt down before Roland, “When I awakened to my witch powers, I truly had the thoughts of seeking revenge. But today I no longer harbor such feelings.” She bit on her lip and weakly asked, “Please allow me to stay here... I don’t have anywhere else I can go.”

“I understand. Please, stand up,” Roland said quietly, “You don’t need to act in this manner, don’t worry I won’t banish you.” He paused for a moment, then said strongly, “In fact, letting you achieve your revenge also isn’t impossible.”

“What?” Iron Axe exclaimed in shock, he was unable to believe his own ears. Echo, however, didn’t show much of reaction, after all, she had already let go of her hope of ever going back to Ironsand City.

“Of course, right now I’m unable to achieve it.” Roland waved his hand dismissively. He didn’t think of this idea on a whim. During Iron Axe descriptions of the Extreme South, he had heard some very interesting things – that this piece of land was hot and dry and that the environment had many strange things to offer. Especially the orange flames coming out of the ground that had burned for decades without going out. The orange fire was often times burning above a huge pit. And at the bottom of the pit, someone could see the black Styx flowing endlessly.

Orange fire, black Styx, were both words worth mentioning. When Roland listened to this description, one question immediately popped up in his mind, wasn’t he talking about oil? Even more, open-flowing oil! How important this black liquid was to the industry’s development no one really had to ask. After all, more than half of modern warfare was because of the need for Oil. The rise and fall of the oil prices could even affect the rise and fall of a number of countries, and even change the patterns of the world. If he could somehow get control over the people in the south, he could maybe get a stable source of oil.

However, for now, Roland did not have the time to think about disputes happening in a faraway area, which was out of his control. So without any better option, he had to postpone the show “since in ancient times” to a later day.

“When I get hold of the throne, I will try to get justice for you.” Roland went in front of the kneeling Iron Axe, “But today you violated the discipline of the First Army. From now on you are sentenced to two days of confinement, during these two days, you will reflect on your wrong doings.”

“Yes, Your Highness,” Iron Axe returned excitedly.

“Then let us continue the training,” said Roland to the Knight, “and you will also be responsible for the next march.”

*

Bryan thought that today's training had already come to its end, but everyone was still sitting on their place in the driving range, no one dared to disperse on their own.

After all, before Carter left with the Prince, he gave them the order to rest where they were, but not to dissolve.

What should he do, if he had to wait until the time of his patrol, he didn't want to imagine such a scenario.

"Sir Knight, you said that Captain Iron Axe won't come back?" asked Nail, who was in the same group as Brian himself, "His unexpected action just now nearly gave me a heart attack."

"How many times have I told you already, you shouldn't call me Sir," Brian corrected him again, "In the First Army, you should call me group leader." After he was knighted by His Highness, his rank within the army had become a lot of higher. It even came to the point that other people didn't dare to talk to him, except for Nails – the little man worked as a miner before he joined the Army. He was the only one who would often come to him to talk. According to Nails story's, don't mention that he dared to talk with a knight, he even said that he'd had close conversations with His Highness.

"This kind of thing... His Royal Highness won't blame him too excessively, right?" Although he gave him a reassuring answer, but the wariness in his heart didn't want to quell down. Once he had seen a civilian who accidentally collided with the occupants of a carriage and afterwards got stabbed to death by the guards on the spot, such a tragedy.

Even so, Iron Axe came from another country, it was still very daring to kneel in front of another woman when His Highness stood directly beside him. Even calling her "Patriarch", adding all this together was a big break of etiquette.

"I guess that will be the case," nodded Nail. "I've spoken to His Royal Highness personally, he isn't like the other nobles, uh..." He scratched his head and seemed to try to find the right words. "Even though they almost look the same as him, they act totally different."

Brian also didn't want Iron Axe to be punished too hard. After more than one month of collective training, he already felt a deep sense of admiration for this foreigner. Especially when he taught them how to build a tent for the case in which they happen to be stranded in the wild. They all benefitted from the superb skills he patiently taught to them. In the eyes of the Knight, Iron Axe was even more suited to be the Commander of the First Army than Carter was.

"They're back!" Nail brushed against Brian's arm, "Hey, I can't detect Iron Axe within their group."

No, it was time to stop his imagination from running wild, Carter had already ordered them to line up, according to how they had previously trained. When they were ready, His Highness stepped in front of them and began his speech: "The woman beside me is another witch, her name is Echo. She and Iron Axe had been separated before for many years... According to the rules, Iron Axe was sentenced to days of confinement for disrupting the formation and violating the military discipline. No, I will repeat it once more, you all now belong to the regular army, and the most important rule for a member of this army is to always obey orders and maintain the discipline! Can you understand this?"

“Yes! Your Royal Highness!” Brian like the others shouted his consent. When he had heard that Iron Axe was sentenced to confinement, his heart was finally able to calm down and when he looked in Nails direction, the other one made a wry face.

“During the following training, we will use her ability to simulate a variety of sounds, including musical instruments like horns and drums. She will play several kinds of marching songs, which will be your command to act! Everyone will move in accordance with the drums, always holding the same rhythm, keeping the team in one line.” Here, His Royal Highness paused, “On the battlefield, Echo will always stand behind you. You can think of her as the banner of the First Army, and you have to always protect her with everything you have! Now that I’ve finished saying all this... everyone should become familiar with the next tunes.”

What is a Marching Song? Brian’s head was full of confusion, is it something like the music I occasionally hear when I visit a pub? This kind of soft music should be able to motivate you to move forward?

But when he heard the melody coming out of Echo’s mouth, he realized that he had never heard something like this before. He almost instantly understood the meaning behind His Royal Highness words – the rhythm of the drum directly went into his bones, giving him the desire to move his feet, while at the same time the light melody was provoking his desire to fight.

– This so-called marching song, hearing this it would boost everyone on the battlefield, it was a “Battle Hymn” to encourage everyone to keep on unceasingly moving forward.

Chapter 110 Battle of Eagle City (Part 1)

Through the misty morning fog, Timothy Wimbledon could vaguely see some flags fluttering in the wind at the top of the city’s towers that were in front of him.

He raised his gaze, trying to identify the emblem that was depicted on the banner. The sailboat with a crown pattern on top of a green foundation undoubtedly belonged to his sister, Garcia Wimbledon. It was the city’s largest banner.

The second banner had a white background and the image of a snake twisting around a pagoda. This emblem belonged to the Bayer Family. When Timothy had first become aware of this flag, a feeling of contempt had risen up within his heart. But even after they coming and seeking refuge under the protection of the Queen of Clearwater, they still had enough pride that they’d hung their banner above the city, they were simply too brazen. Wait until I catch you, I will make you eat your own flag, Earl Bayer, he thought.

Finally, there was the Red Lion Tower, belonging to the equally shameless Sheet Family. Outwardly, Timothy appeared expressionless, but inside his heart, he had already condemned Elin Sheet to death. It was also the same for Toman Bayer. Of course, both of them would get their very own banner to eat.

“Sir Neiman, lift my banner, the banner of the Kingdom of Graycastle,” Timothy ordered.

“As you command, Your Majesty.” Agreed knight Linden, and then rushed in the direction of the troops behind them “Long live the King, raise the flag!”

The newly crowned king turned around and saw his banner being raised. The gray flag was waving in the wind. The black pattern on it looked stately and awe-inspiring, it had a huge tower with two crossed spears on both sides depicted on it. This was the emblem of the King of Graycastle.

“Under this banner, I will condemn all traitors for their crimes against the throne.”

The moment Timothy received the news of Garcia’s declaration of independence, he had immediately taken action to show her his answer – he had mobilized all of his troops together with the troops of the Eastern Duke, and given them the order to attack Eagle City. Although his self-confidence had clearly been shaken by Garcia’s unexpectedly fast action. However, on the surface he seemed to remain calm, this greatly increased the faith that all his supporting minister had in him.

He needed nearly a month before his summoned vassals and their troops could be gathered. Then it had taken a week to get to the East, from there they again needed half a month to reach their destination.

It was only yesterday evening when the sun was already on its way down that Timothy had finally arrived in Eagle City. Fortunately, the Months of the Demons hadn’t affected their march; the road to the South hadn’t been blocked by the snow, his situation was almost the opposite of that in Border Town. The roads had become even stronger thanks to the cold temperature thereby allowing his carriages carrying the food and his soldiers to move faster than usual.

Timothy’s team was very large. The forces were put together mostly from his own guards, the Knights of King City and the special forces from the Duke of the Eastern Border, Duke Frances. Together they numbered six thousand men, divided into three battalions, of which a thousand men belonged to the well-trained and well-equipped rank of knights. According to the reliable intelligence he had been able to gather, he knew that the size of Garcia’s troops was less than three thousand people, and most of them belonged to the rank of Clearwater Port’s free people. They were usually former farmers and businessmen who had just grabbed the nearest weapon they could reach. They would never really be a threat to his genuine knights.

When his Finance Minister Sir Arthur Goldness had become aware of Timothy’s battle plans, he had immediately raised objections. So shortly after the end of the Months of the Demons, the farming operation would become the highest priority, if the farmers were to be recruited into his troops, it would later affect the harvest.

Acknowledging this objection, Timothy didn’t require his vassals to deploy their serfs, instead, they had to convene the freedmen in their territory and send them so that they could take over the responsibility for the delivery and logistic. As a result, even if they were to fight in the South, it wouldn’t affect the harvest in the fall.

From Timothy’s perspective, no matter what he had to do, in the end, Garcia could not be allowed to stay in the south of his kingdom any longer.

Eagle City wasn’t a well-developed city. After all, previously it was only a marketplace situated in the middle of the surrounding towns. But later, just less than a century ago, with the increase of its importance to the surrounding towns, it slowly developed into a city. Because of the previous Lord’s plans to further promote the importance of its market, he decided to not build any insurmountable walls.

How strong could an army of three thousand civilians together with the men from two Earls possibly be? So the sooner Timothy started his counter measures, the better were his odds for him to win. If he was to give her even a little breathing space, she would quickly take over the whole of the Southern territory, making it very difficult for him to push her back.

After a night's rest and a good meal, his troops were now ready to fight. The sun gradually turned from a weak orange into a ball of shining gold, dispersing the morning fog. Soon Timothy could see Eagle City's earth-colored walls – in the eyes of the new King, they didn't deserve to be called walls. At best, they could be called an earthen slope. From the bottom to the top of the slope, it was just a ramp. Even without a siege ladder, his troops would still be able to directly climb it on foot. Furthermore, the slope only had a height of one person and just enough thickness to accommodate one person on top of it. While this so-called wall was good enough to block refugees and bandits, it would never be able to stop his heavily armed soldiers.

It seemed the city walls were only very sparsely manned, apparently they weren't ready to defend the wall.

"Your Majesty, the cavalry which was in charge of observing the South Gate have come back to report. They finally saw a group of men and horses moving." Reported knight Linden, who ran back to the King while leading his horse by hand.

Timothy turned in the direction of Duke Frances and said with a knowing look, "It looks like she wants to run."

Duke Frances took a careful look for himself and nodded, "That is most probably true, and can be considered a decisive action on her part. Eagle City isn't suitable for a siege, if she tried to defend this city with her troops, it will only become a clear victory for us."

"It turned out the same as you had expected during the combat meeting last night, she really did not expect us to react so fast," he laughed.

"We arrived at just the right time," Timothy said. "She was unable to move at night, even if she had wanted to."

"You are correct, a march during night-time is a big taboo. If she really had done it, and we then took the initiative to attack, her troops would easily collapse. And once the troops collapse during the night, they will seldom have the chance to gather again. Even if she was able to flee back to Clearwater Port, it would only be delaying the inevitable.

"So, my dear sister had to wait until the morning to order the troops to retreat." Timothy looked with satisfaction at the Castle of Eagle City, which seemed to be waiting for him to take it. It has to be hard on her, after all she has done, yet it didn't turn out as she expected.

Garcia was too fond of the symbolic status of Eagle City, and the possibilities she felt when she stationed troops here – when holding the mansion of the guardian of the southern border, it would indeed be easier to conquer the hearts of the southern nobility. But the benefits were also accompanied by its own risk. Timothy had intentionally sent a slow moving diversionary army along the way, while at the same time rushing with a division of cavalry to the East, without any infantry.

The needed rations were transported by cart, which were following them. When they arrived at the Duke's mansion they took the rest of the cavalry with them. From there they bypassed Eagle City and neared the city from the opposite side. The first mission of the cavalry was to block all roads, reducing the ability for the spies to pass on messages.

But such big military activity was impossible to hide forever, Garcia should have gotten the news of their attack two to three days earlier than their actual approach. So that when they started their retreat this morning, it could be considered as a hasty move. Retreating from Eagle City to Clearwater would take one day on foot. So even if they ran on their two legs, Timothy could still easily overtake them with his thousand men strong cavalry unit and easily kill them, which would naturally lead to the collapse of her ridiculous armies.

Unfortunately, as long as she threw her three thousand troops away, Garcia still had a chance to escape from Timothy's clutches by leaving the city on her own by horse. Like this staying alive and returning to the Port of Clearwater wouldn't be difficult.

Even in the case that she was able to flee, I would still have ended this farce, he thought.

"Your Majesty, according to the previously drawn up plan we should separate now," said Duke Frances, "You will wait for me in the inner city after you bypassed the city and attacked from the South Gate, right? And if we run into strong resistance or get cut off we will take a detour."

"I still think it's better if I attack from the southwest," Timothy answered, "For us knights, it isn't easy to move in the narrow streets, and Garcia may also obstruct our troops from moving forward by blocking the streets with lots of debris. Even if we have to take a detour and fight into the night, we won't let ourselves be prevented from chasing them down and slaughtering them."

"Then I'm out, Your Majesty."

"Be careful," Timothy reminded him, " Even if Garcia didn't leave any troops in the city, she could still have left behind many traps. In addition, be aware of the narrow streets, there might still be many people left in the houses. Only waiting for the right time to ambush you, so slay everyone you find, you can't leave any threat to your safety alive. "

"Ha ha ha," Duke Frances frankly laughed, "Your Majesty please rest assured, I have followed you father into many battles, I have personally cut off hundreds of heads and until now I have never been hurt." He waved with his hand and signaled the guard beside him to move, "Everyone, attack!"

The troops behind him got ready, split into several smaller formations that were under the leadership of other knights and started to move in the direction of Eagle city – the troops in the frontline were made up out of the freedmen, followed by the armored mercenaries, that were the main force in the siege. While the Duke's knights were fully focused on his commands.

When the main force began to hit the walls, Timothy led the rest of the knights and their squires in the southwestern direction.