

Witch 1071

Chapter 1071: The Glider (II)

After everyone got on the plane, Tilly walked toward Roland and asked, "What's wrong? Are you still worried?"

"You could tell?" replied Roland.

"A day hasn't even passed, yet everything you've said sounds like a farewell. Of course, I could tell." She shrugged and said, "Are you doubting my technology, or are you doubting Anna's ability?"

Regarding this difficult question, Roland could only smile bitterly.

The structure of The Seagull was extremely simple. Except for a few operating levers and corresponding movable control surfaces, it was basically a human vessel. It was essentially less complicated than the test model. With Anna's processing skills, it would be difficult to make mistakes.

After it was built, it had gone through several test flights and had even gone through an emergency landing simulation. The results were quite satisfactory—Other than Tilly's extremely powerful controlling ability, Wendy had also made great progress after explorations. She could now generate airflow in the right position to keep the aircraft stable at all times.

In order to ensure the safety of this voyage and that everything would be absolutely foolproof, Shavi and Molly were included among the passengers.

But even so, he still felt nervous.

It was worrying enough that half of the witches of Neverwinter were concentrated on a brand new aircraft, but on top of that they were going to travel alone to the Wild located 500 kilometers away. If it was not due to the fact that he had many tasks to do in Neverwinter, he would have wanted to come onboard The Seagull as well.

After he gently let his breath out, he looked at Tilly. "I don't think it's got anything to do with doubting your abilities. I just care too much about it. I hope that you'll all be able to live in a new era after the Battle of Divine Will ends."

After the two of them stared at each other for a moment, Tilly turned her head away. "You know, I was just making a joke... If I were in your shoes, I would be uneasy too."

Before Roland could react, she already went on top of the ramp.

"In that case, I'm off, Brother."

...

After the cabin door closed, a guard came and said, "Your Majesty, everything's been prepared outside."

Roland took a deep breath and replied, "Let's start."

"Yes!"

After the order was given, a series of programs started to run in an orderly manner.

"The stopper's open!"

"The road's empty!"

"All personnel leave the runway!"

"Open the hangar door!"

When the hangar's door slowly slid to both sides, the dazzling sunlight shone into the room and a path of light was reflected on the ground.

The guides raised their green flags higher.

"The Seagull can take off!"

At the same time, the steam whistle sounded throughout the airport—

Roland felt the wind start to pick up.

It was a wonderful feeling—He was standing in a place that was supposed to be absolutely windless, but he still felt the slight airflow over his cheeks.

It was, in fact, unfair to think of The Seagull as just a glider, when compared with its fellow machines as the latter was trying to obtain something that it had possessed from the very beginning.

The airflow violated the common sense of airflow movement, and it accurately appeared on the side of the airfoil—the breeze pushed the upward aileron like an invisible hand. This power may have seemed insignificant, but Roland knew it was the result of Wendy's deliberate control. The gentle wind released was within the range of the left and right wings, but it was a strong wind that could hinder people's mobility.

In other words, the direction and speed of the wind in the areas affected by Wendy's ability were completely under her control.

This also meant that The Seagull did not need to rely on its wings to maintain flight. It could also carry out actions that would be impossible for other gliders, such as the near-vertical short-ranged take-off and landing—The speed was only needed to achieve a greater lifting power. If it could get lifted directly, speed would no longer be an indispensable thing.

Of course, flying away in such a frivolous manner might be an eye-catching feat that could subvert the opinions of the experts. However, in the eyes of the laymen, it was lacking propriety.

What could be more shocking than seeing a few tons of machinery, yelling at the top of its head, and then slowly climbing until it vanished into the clouds?

When he remembered Tilly's excited expression as she spoke of this idea, Roland could not resist shaking his head in amusement.

It seemed she has now treated The Seagull as her big toy, and could not wait to show it off to the others.

...

"Woo—Woo—"

While the steam whistle sounded, Good also noticed a strange vision at the end of the Blackstone road—The soldiers quickly dispersed and the iron gate of the shed opened. A strange gray "giant bird" slipped out slowly. After doing a half-turn, it went onto the road where they were.

"Hey, did you see that? What's that?" It was evident that he was not the only one who had discovered the giant.

"A train? It doesn't look like it... There are no railway tracks on the ground."

"Could it be a new invention by His Majesty?"

"Was this the invention mentioned by Lord Eagle Face?"

"It seems to be coming towards us."

"Hang on a second, I seem to have seen this before!" Good pondered for a moment, and a light flashed across his mind. "Didn't Her Highness Tilly's collection of books have such a cover on one of them? It seemed like a bird with a pair of long identical wings... It does look like a bird, yet also not like one."

On second thought, he felt that the two were not completely alike. The shape and the number of the wings were different. Also, on that cover, he could at least see the rider, and he could perceive the reason why the machine seemed to be floating in the air—A machine that was not much bigger than a human and could support large wings, would be interpreted as an enlarged kite. Although the King and the Princess would certainly not have seen something that simple, theoretically it would still have made sense to them.

This object in front of them seemed to be an unclassified object.

When compared with the surrounding soldiers, its head was clearly far above them. Other than the wings, its body was completely round and the whole body was wrapped tightly. The slender belly seemed as if it could hold a lot of things. According to its body type, it would be very difficult for it to fly. Even climbing on the ground seemed to be very difficult—

The very next instant, however, Good found out how ridiculous his ideas were.

The machine began to speed up.

And it soon exceeded the speed of horses running and showed no signs of stopping at all.

In the beginning, the platoon members were still heavily discussing and speculating. Now they suddenly quietened down.

Everyone heard the loud roaring from near and far.

"Oh my God..." Finkin gulped. "It's going to hit us."

This was also how most of the trainees felt at that moment.

Rationally speaking, as long as you stood still, you would not be hit. Though there was no reason to be afraid, everyone's bodies seemed to be shaking uncontrollably.

Not everyone could face a giant that could turn them into mincemeat with a step, and still be emotionless.

Yet this was exactly that type of giant beast—

They were not even as tall as its wheels!

As it got closer and closer, the whistling wind was almost hissing, and a slight tremor could be felt from the ground. According to legend, when the cavaliers were charging, just the horses' hooves alone could scare the enemy. As compared to a monster tall like a mountain, Good discovered that the cavaliers were not that scary.

He suddenly remembered Eagle Face's cold unfathomable laugh.

"Had the examiner... already experienced this?"

A gust of strong wind passed him before he could even think about it anymore!

In this short period of time, it seemed to have run hundreds of meters and went past the two rows of people on its sides.

Under the pressure of the airflow, Good was unable to control his feet, and his knees fell softly to the ground—Perhaps he had subconsciously decided to dodge before the gusts of wind arrived.

Although he could not get up, he still turned to look backwards.

What he saw next left him stunned!

He saw the beast raise its head, with both its feet off the ground, before slamming into the air and flying toward the blue sky. The sun was reflected on its wings and formed circles of colorful spots.

"Is this... an Aerial Knight?"

Good could not resist clenching his fists.

He really wanted to control such a monster—even if he had to sacrifice everything!

Chapter 1072: Underground Breeding Farm

Only when The Seagull had completely disappeared into the sky, did Roland look away.

"Sometimes I think that we should just build a command post," he whispered, "build it in a place where everyone can see so that it would not only boost morale, but it would also be a part of the Battle of Divine Will. Later on, when historians need to note it down, it would be something to brag about."

"Why would you be concerned about that?" There was a faint reply coming from the emptiness. "If you want to be recorded in history, you will need to endure Wendy's and Scroll's chatter until you make the first move to admit defeat and change your mind—I've experienced it. However, it's definitely not what ordinary people can tolerate. I think it's better if you give them less trouble."

Roland could not resist saying, "Yes, I guess you're right."

The battle with the demons would most likely last for months, even years. He would have to work hard to adapt to this new normality.

While he was thinking about this, he looked at the guard who was standing in the distance. "Call everyone, I'll go to the Third Border City."

The latter immediately bowed and replied, "Yes, Your Majesty! I'll tell the guards right away!"

According to Kyle Sichi's report, new progress has been made in the study of the rubber worms.

It was time to examine the results.

"Let's go," he nodded his head sideways and walked towards the airport exit.

...

After confirming that the secretion of rubber worms was valuable, the Taqila witches not only opened up a series of new caves for them, but they also served as keepers during their leisure time.

After all, it was not easy to find common people who could calmly face devouring worms and work in the wormholes. Long-term work underground made it more likely to develop psychological instability. The breeding part had now been fully taken over by Taquila. The workers were only responsible for the shipment and the processing of rubber.

This could be interpreted as another error in Roland's prediction. He had underestimated people's tolerance level in a claustrophobic environment.

Rubber worms detested the sunlight and liked damp and moist areas. They would also make noises when moving. Even if they were not attacking, the constant moving swishing noises would be enough to cause a mental breakdown for the people around.

He could not provide every worker with lighting and communication equipment, formulate detailed shift regulations, or get a psychological comforting guide—it was not that he was unable to do it, it was more of the fact that the price-performance ratio was too low. A large number of factories outside could find and fill their manpower needs easily. There would be no need to spend it on the processes that required witchcraft. Therefore, he simply transferred ordinary people to work on a more relaxed follow-up process.

The Chicken-and-duck Knight Prius Dessau was not idle. He spent his free time on the preparation of breeding manuals and guiding the production. The reason why the related products of Neverwinter could emerge numerously was certainly due to his credit.

The expansion of the breeding structure created more samples for the testing of the rubber liquid. It was due to this groundwork research, that Roland could allow the entry of the Ministry of Chemical Industry, and prepare for the next steps of the plan.

After going underground, Pasha came forward. "Welcome, Your Majesty. Your people are currently in the rubber worm laboratory. Should I inform them that you've arrived?"

"That's not necessary. You can just take me there," Roland said laughingly, "by the way, I heard that Celine built a new breeding plant, which was even bigger than the previous ones?"

"Yes, it's just across from the lab." Pasha moved her main tentacles. "Not only did it apply the latest research from the Quest Society, it also drew on ideas from Dream World—would you like to take a look?"

"Oh?" He said excitedly, "Of course."

"In that case, please follow me."

Passing through a long aisle, Pasha then led Roland to a big hole.

There was an iron fence at the entrance, apparently used to prevent insects from escaping. From a small door at the edge of the cave, he could not help but be stunned by what he saw—the environment in the cave was designed in accordance with the ruin of the snow mountain. There were luminous plants, water systems, and giant mushrooms that were readily available. The three were clearly created after reasonable adjustments. The plants grew along the edge of the stone wall and the water fountain, thus becoming a new streetlight. As they were the insect's staple food, the mushroom was obviously the most abundant species. The huge mushroom umbrella almost covered the entire ground. Numerous insects were flying around and under the dim fluorescence light, only clusters of white bodies could be seen. They ate the mushrooms heartily and the dense buzzing sound made Roland think of the silkworms that he raised as a child.

What stunned him the most, however, was the size of the cave.

Judging from fact that he could not see the end of the light-emitting plants, this place seemed bigger than the main residence of the Third Border City—He assumed that the new farm was just a combination of several old caves, but now it seemed to be the contrary. The organized blue spots and the well-shaped water system gave him the feeling of a large factory.

"This is exactly on the edge of the Impassable Mountain Range, which is about the same height as the surface of Neverwinter." Pasha volunteered by saying, "If you open a hole from the south side, it's only one kilometer away from the Kingdom Main Street."

This meant that there was only one wall dividing the new breeding farm and Neverwinter. If he remembered correctly, by estimating the distance passed just now, it would be no more than two kilometers away from the main city area. The outside of the rock wall should be the temporary residential area for the migrants.

Roland asked rhetorically, "In order to transport the liquid secretions?"

"Exactly." Pasha raised her main tentacles. "Your Majesty, please look at the southern end."

He glanced at where she was pointing—He only saw a deep trench under the wall, like an escape route deliberately made for rubber worms.

"What's that?"

"Extracting area," Pasha explained. "Celine used the vocalization of insects to create an aisle that would get more and more narrow on the wall. As long as a specific buzz was let out on one end, they would crawl into the aisle, toward the source of the sound—but due to limitations on the width of the aisle, they could only explore halfway and their bodies would be stuck in the aisle with their heads above."

"And then?" Nightingale, who had been listening on the side, could not help but ask.

"Then we will start the magic core at the end of the aisle." Pasha went on to say, "It's been adjusted to the razor blade mode. This cyclone is generally used to defend against the enemies of the narrow aisle. The core emits a magic light and fills up the aisle, shredding any obstacles that are in front of the light. The horizontal aisle is the path through which the magic light passes."

"The bugs will be split in two, and the mucus in the belly will gather together with the drainage trough in the lateral groove. In this way, you don't need to kill them one by one, and you can get a lot of mucus at once." She paused and said, "The one-kilometer distance is reserved for the collectors. According to Celine's idea, ordinary workers can enter the receiving area from the outside of the extracting area, but other than the trenches and the pools where the mucus flows, nothing can be seen. This is an easy way to collect and also less likely to cause panic."

"..."

Roland was silent for a moment.

He had nothing else to add.

This program could be said to be extremely mature under the existing technology. It took into account the entire process from breeding to harvest. If you built a rubber plant outside the mountains, then it would include even the production and processing. In particular, this type of modern-style, streamlined slaughter line was a concept that had been learned from Dream World.

Would using the precious magic core and Celine's lifetime research as a butcher's knife be considered as too mediocre a task?

Even if you could not find the Chosen One and activate the Instrument of Divine Retribution, you did not have to be so self-punishing.

Suddenly, Roland thought of a problem.

"How many rubber worms can this breeding farm accommodate?"

"It's expected to be around 100,000. However, given their speed of reproduction, it will take about a year to fill this new farm."

"What about the dead bodies after the secretion's extracted?" he asked. "How are you planning to get it out?"

This was not a small problem. Roland once saw in a documentary that a modern chicken farm had hundreds of tons of chicken manure every day. If it was handled carelessly, it could result in serious soil and water pollution. Once the production was scaled up, any small detail could cause immense trouble.

It was still possible for the God's Punishment Witches to transport the bodies. Once the worms multiplied to more than 10,000, it would be easy to kill them, but difficult to clean up. If the bodies were not disposed of in time, the accumulation in the hole would definitely have a disastrous effect.

"Don't worry, Your Majesty." Pasha chuckled. "Fran and the rest of the witches are not reluctant about coming. In fact, it's amazing how much the three worm carriers can exhaust when digging fully."

"Coo—" After she understood this sentence, Nightingale let out a stomach gurgling noise.

Uh... okay.

Now Roland finally understood why the entrance had a small gate, but still needed a large fence to be installed.

That was just reserved for the three witches' entry into the aisle for dining.

Chapter 1073: Gelled Fuel

After leaving the rubber worm farm, Roland came to the lab.

He felt as if he had come into a wizard's lab. In this 30-square-meter room, many places were smeared with milky white solidified rubber liquid. Along the wall, stood a row of buckets filled with fresh worm liquid. Some rubber blocks seemed to have got burnt in a big pot, emitting a strong pungent smell. Like a wizard, Kyle also used long-handled spoons and stirring sticks in this lab.

Seeing that, Roland could not help thinking, "If there're some toads and bats in this lab, it'll look exactly like a wizard's lab."

"Your Majesty," Kyle Sichi simply nodded to greet Roland. "I think I've found what you wanted."

The alchemist looked very pale, and one of his fingers was wrapped in gauze. Seeing that, Roland became a little worried and asked, "Are you injured?"

"Don't worry. It's just a minor injury," Kyle waved his hand and said. He picked up a cup filled with light red rubber liquid and continued, "Your Majesty, look."

The next moment, he turned the cup upside down, but the liquid did not spill out at all. Instead, it just slowly slid down and then formed a soft hemisphere clinging to the rim of the cup.

Roland was intrigued. He stretched out his hand, wanting to touch the jelly-like substance, but the Chief Alchemist immediately stopped him.

"No, Your Majesty!" He took back the cup and explained, "This gel is corrosive."

"I remember that the worms' rubber liquid is non-toxic and harmless," Roland said with one eyebrow cocked. He had already used the liquid to manufacture food bags and straws.

"But it changed after mixing with blood."

"Blood?" Roland was startled and looked at Kyle's wounded finger again. "Did you hurt yourself for experiments..."

"Of course not, it was just an accident," Kyle said smilingly while stroking his beard. "Yeah, I'm crazy for chemistry, but I can't as yet go so far as to deliberately hurt myself for an experiment. There're lots of things waiting for me to explore in the chemistry world. I need to take good care of myself."

After that, Kyle explained to Roland how he had found this gel.

Something secreted by the rubber worms' glands could make their mucus become sticky. That was how the worms produced the rubber liquid. Due to the difference in the proportion of the secretion in the liquid, it could solidify into biological rubber blocks with different hardness. Once it solidified, it could not be melted back into liquid.

Given that, the Chief Alchemist had used lots of materials and had done lots of experiments, trying to find a way to solidify the rubber liquid into a gel. In the beginning, he tried to add various types of elementary substances, pure acids and alkali liquids to the rubber liquid, but none of these mixtures could achieve the desired effect.

Afterwards, he had tried many inorganic salts and even organic matters, and had discovered quite a few interesting gels during this process. However, none of them were what the king wanted.

Things had begun to change when an accident had happened to Kyle.

One day, when he had been cutting a rubber strip, he had inadvertently cut his own finger. His blood happened to drop into a cup of rubber liquid and reacted violently with the liquid. Instantly, a large amount of white smoke rose from the cup and the Bird Beak Mushroom in the liquid quickly melted into yellow water.

In the end, the liquid in the cup had somehow turned into a light red gel.

"This gel's biggest feature is that it can keep the chemical structure of the things added to it," Kyle said and then threw the light red gel into the furnace. Suddenly, the fire burnt much more violently. The flames roared high into the air, and the gel was swiftly burnt into ashes. "I only added a spoonful of oil to it. Burning the gel alone can't achieve this effect. I can say that it's even better than the gel you asked for!"

The alchemist looked tired, but he sounded excited. Seeing the reflection of the raging fire in his eyes, Roland somehow felt his bursting feelings and guessed that he must have been thinking about how powerful this thing would be in the forthcoming war.

Roland needed this jelly-like substance to make napalm bombs.

In his previous world, napalm usually referred to a mixture of a gelling agent and either petrol or a similar liquid fuel. Compared to inflammable liquid fuel, which had a low flash point and high volatility, gelled fuel was more convenient and safer to use. Meanwhile, they could also be very destructive. A napalm bomb was able to set a large area on fire. No one within this burning area could get rid of the thick, sticky fuel quickly, and at the same time, they would be suffocated, as the burning would consume a great amount of oxygen.

Since the moment he had heard about the worms' rubber liquid, he had been thinking about using it to develop a gelling agent, which could be used to make napalm bombs.

He planned to use these bombs to destroy demons' outposts, which had given the Union lots of headaches in the past.

Back in the Taquilla age, the Union's Blessed Army had not been able to move freely around an outpost without being protected by witches who had been able to block off or clean out the Red Mist. Given that, the army consisting of the common people had been responsible for demolishing the demons' mist

storage towers. Every time the Union had launched an attack on an outpost, the Blessed Army would have suffered a heavy loss, and all the common soldiers would have been killed in the battle.

The Union could not have afforded to launch lots of such attacks which would have quickly consumed its strength and resources. Once they had been surrounded by lots of outposts, they would have abandoned their land and run for their lives.

With napalm bombs, the demons' outpost would no longer be a major threat to the city. The fire could not only destroy their facilities but also dispel their Red Mist.

Hearing that rubber worms could provide raw materials for making napalm bombs, which could easily burn down a demons' outpost and clean out the Red Mist around it, Pasha had immediately agreed to raise these worms in the Third Border City. Alethea, who had complained a lot about these strange worms in the beginning, showed great enthusiasm in them after knowing their use.

In fact, Roland already had enough weapons for long range attacks by now. Even without napalm bombs, he could also let his army shoot down all the moving things in an outpost with those firearms before sending them there. However, he still hoped that the alchemists could successfully produce some napalm bombs. If they did, he would not have to prepare that much gunpowder for the battle, which could significantly reduce the burden on the chemical plants.

He was really delighted to see the light red gel, but he still had some concerns about it.

"Does it have to be a human being's blood?"

"No, Your Majesty," replied the alchemist. "Please rest assured. An animal's blood also works. I've tested it. The only requisite for the blood is that it has to be fresh."

Roland felt much relieved hearing that, but soon he thought of another question. "Why does it have to be blood?"

"Well..." Kyle was speechless.

"I think the reason lies in the worms' origin," said Pasha. "The Multi-Eyed Monster used them to capture and store its preys. Blood may be one of the triggering conditions causing them to react. Although they were left behind by the monster, their instinct still exists."

"That's a reasonable explanation," Roland thought. "The monster apparently didn't store its preys as food. It's more likely that it was collecting information about the other species. Given that, it's possible that it would let the worms store them as jelly."

'No matter what, let's start to develop the new weapon as soon as possible," said Roland. "Now that we have the ideal gelling agent, the remaining work will be easy. You can let the alchemists from the old king's city take care of it. After all, you need to take a good rest now for your future exploration into the chemistry world."

"Yes, Your Majesty," Kyle said with a hand on his chest.

"I've an idea," Pasha said suddenly.

"Oh, what's it?" Roland looked at her and asked.

"We can bring a special guest to the weapon test," she replied while swaying her main tentacle cheerfully.

Roland immediately realized who she was talking about and asked. "Is that demon still alive?"

They had transferred Kabradhabi's soul into a crippled body to confuse its mind and had taken the chance to interrogate it and get much useful information. Unfortunately, since it had gotten used to the human body, it had remained silent. Apparently, it would not give them any more information. Roland had left it to the Taquila witches, thinking that it would either kill itself or get tortured to death by the vengeful witches. Surprisingly, it was still alive.

"Yes, it's alive and well. It eats up all the food we bring to him every day." Pasha said.

It seems that it doesn't want to die at all.

It refuses to surrender or confess.

It's confidently waiting for the complete failure of humanity, believing that it'll be free sooner or later.

It's so ambitious and determined.

Is it because it thinks being killed by some bugs is a huge humiliation?

Roland thought and smirked mockingly. "That's a good idea. Let's take it to the weapon test."

Chapter 1074: An Unexpected Letter

In the inner city area of the old king's city, Kajen Fels was reading a script at his study inside his theatre.

After a while, the silence was broken by a round of warm applause from outside his study, which meant that a wonderful play had come to an end.

At this moment, he also finished reading the script.

He took off his glasses and rubbed his sore eyes, then he closed the script and placed it back on the shelf beside his desk.

The title of the story on the script's cover page is "The Wolf Princess".

This movie script was placed together with many other scripts from Neverwinter, including those such as "The Witches' Story", "New City" and "Dawn". May had given them to him as a farewell present, which his students had regarded as making a mockery out of him. Surprisingly, Kajen Fels, a well-known playwright, had accepted all of the scripts and brought them back to his own theater. He placed them in the most convenient position on his bookshelf, and by now he had already read each of them several times.

In his view, all these scripts lacked an engaging plot as well as a vivid story-telling style. He reckoned that the writer must have been a beginner who was only able to write the story in a straightforward manner. However, he still kept reading these stories since he had nothing else to do at the moment.

He found himself unable to write a stage play anymore.

Whenever he picked up his quill, he would think of the scenes that he had seen in the magical movie.

Those images would somehow sneak into his mind and occupy his thoughts, making it difficult for him to envision a stage performance.

Someone who had tasted honey could hardly be satisfied with the sweetness of dew. That was how he felt now. Watching the magical movie was a really eye-opening experience for him. Unlike stage plays, the magical movie could show much more realistic scenes and can even present close-up images of the characters to its audiences. Such a mind-blowing experience had inspired him and given him many new ideas, but unfortunately, he had not acquired a chance to take part in a magical movie production.

But this discouraging fact did not stop him from thinking about the new techniques he had spotted in the magical movie.

Whenever he had an idea for a story, he would begin to wonder on how he was going to present it in a magical movie. He wanted to use close-up images of the characters' smiling faces to show audiences how they felt when they met each other for the first time. For their separation, he wanted to show a bleak background that gradually widened. Such ideas kept coming to him continuously.

But none of these ideas were suitable for a stage play.

He became stuck and felt depressed.

Only by reading the scripts from Neverwinter could he temporarily forget about his troubles.

However, he was clear that reading them could not solve his problems.

But he had no choice at the moment. May had refused to disclose more details about the magical movie. The Administrative Office had not responded to his request. It seemed that Neverwinter had completely shut him out. Until he could find a different way to learn more about the magical movie, he knew that he would continue to suffer.

At this moment, his maid knocked on the door and said, "Mr. Fels, here are some letters for you."

While closing his eyes, he leaned back into his chair and said, "Put it outside, I'll check them later."

Every time after a play, his students, such as Roentgen and Egrepo, would come to his study to discuss their performance with him and ask for his advice. He intended to take some rest before they arrived.

"But... there's a letter with Graycastle's royal seal on the envelope. You told me that if it's a letter from Neverwinter, I should give it to you imme—"

Before the maid finished her sentence, Kajen suddenly opened the door.

"Where is it?"

The maid was startled and hurriedly handed a stack of letters to him. He quickly picked out the letter from Neverwinter and threw all the other letters back to the maid.

The next moment, he slammed the door upon the stunned maid and swiftly returned to his desk.

He opened the wax-sealed envelope and examined the letter.

To his great surprise, it was from the king!

Does the king finally know that we went to Neverwinter and wanted to perform a play for his coronation ceremony?

If I can directly contact the king, will I have a chance to know more about the magical movie?

Thrilled by the thought, he excitedly read the letter.

...

"How many roses did you receive today?" Egrepo asked Roentgen as they walked together towards Kajen's study.

"About a dozen, I didn't count them," Roentgen replied as she shrugged. "I've received much fewer roses than before, but that's alright. I don't care."

"Aha, if your admirers heard these words, their hearts would break," Egrepo laughed and said. "It's inevitable. We have smaller audiences for the plays ever since the king had sent over half of the nobles to the mines and made Neverwinter the new king's city. But as long as this city still stands, things will gradually improve."

"We're lucky enough to receive flowers in the current situation," Bernis muttered. "There were six toupes in the city, but now three of them have already become bankrupt. I hope that we won't be the next one."

"Alas, that war changed everything..." Roentgen sighed.

"Ahem, ladies, we also need to see the benefits." Egrepo cleared his throat and continued, "We've expanded rapidly after taking in the former members of the three disbanded troupes. We can survive regardless of who is the king. Come on, hold your chin up. Don't look so frustrated because Mr. Fels is waiting for us."

Thinking about the drama master, everyone simultaneously nodded their heads and cheered up. After Kajen Troupe's bitter return from Neverwinter, they all worked hard to improve themselves in trying to win honor for their teacher, Mr. Fels. They all hated May because she had refused to tell Mr. Fels how the magical movie was made and had even said that it was confidential.

"Mr. Fels."

Egrepo opened the door of the study and then stood agape.

He found that Mr. Fels did not look normal.

He had expected that his teacher to be waiting for them comfortably in his chair as usual, but now he saw him listlessly standing by his desk.

"Mr. Fels, is there something wrong?" Bernis asked with concern.

"I have received a letter from Neverwinter. It's from the king." Kajen picked up the letter on the desk and said to them. "Here, take a look."

"Is it... okay?"

"That's alright. Read it."

Hearing that, Egrepo took the letter.

The people around him all leaned over to read it.

Seeing the excited look on their faces, Kajen discreetly sighed. He knew that they must have taken it as a letter of apology like what he had thought in the beginning. Just as he expected, his students were delighted to see the letter from the king and believed that the king must have already discovered and punished the person who had prevented Kajen Troupe from performing a play for the coronation ceremony.

However, the content of the letter was entirely beyond their expectations.

The king was forthcoming in answering questions about the magical movie. In the letter, he explicitly explained that it was made by a special instrument which was capable of recording images. His Majesty also said that he could not provide this instrument for another troupe since it was extremely rare. According to the letter, this instrument could only be made and operated by witches and was made of some rare materials from an ancient relic.

"At present, we need to mobilize all the resources in all the regions of Graycastle for the imminent battle. Given the unique viewing experience and the great disseminating effect of magical movies, both of which I think you've already witnessed in 'the Wolf Princess', I've decided to let these movies play an important part in spreading information and awareness for the war effort. It's regrettable that at present, I can't afford to use the instrument to shoot other movies that are not directly related to national policies."

"But please rest assured as this situation is only temporary. After the war, when Graycastle returns to peacetime, magical movies will gradually become a popular art form and everyone will be able to shoot such a movie one day. When the time comes, I believe you and your troupe will produce an outstanding movie."

Kajen could accept this explanation about the magical movie.

But he still felt heart-broken after reading the letter.

This was because he knew from the letter that it was the king himself who had turned down Kajen Troupe's offer to perform a play for the coronation ceremony.

He felt hurt.

It turned out that from the very beginning it had only been his own wishful thinking to perform for the king.

Considering that such a well-prepared play had failed to garner favorable attention from the king, Kajen believed His Majesty was just being nice to compliment his troupe in the letter.

He felt regretful for being so full of himself and for unjustly blaming May.

Chapter 1075: A Young Heart

"..." After reading the letter, everyone fell into an awkward silence.

After a long time, Bernis mumbled bitterly, "I knew we shouldn't expect too much from him. Think about what everybody said about Prince Roland in the past and his favorite hangouts in the city. I thought he changed after he became the king, but..."

"Hush." Egrepo pulled her arm to stop her. "Be careful. All the nobles who can still come to the theatre are his supporters. Even if they are not, they will pretend to be loyal to him. If someone heard what you just said, you would have been in trouble."

"It seems that we can never make it to Neverwinter in this lifetime," Roentgen sighed and said.

"That's not a big deal. We're very popular here." Egrepo comforted her. "Kajen Troupe is still a first-rate troupe in all cities except Neverwinter. We can support ourselves."

"But magic movies will come here sooner or later," Kajen suddenly interjected. "Recently, I've been reading the scripts May gave me, and I found the stories had one thing in common. All of them are set in an imaginary world, an ideal world His Majesty wants to achieve. He intends to use these movies to spread his ideas and promote his national policies, so he won't just play them in Neverwinter. Can you still be so confident about stage plays when magic movies come here?"

Egrepo thought for a moment and suggested, "We... we can go to another country, such as the Kingdom of Dawn. Mr. Fels, the theaters there will be more than happy to accept us, if you ask—"

"No, I won't go to the Kingdom of Dawn," Kajen replied while shaking his head.

"How about we..."

Suddenly, Kajen looked up and said, "I want to go to Neverwinter again."

"What?"

"Mr. Fels, are you sure?"

Everyone was shocked.

"It'll take at least a month for the troupe to go there and back, and during this period of time, the troupe will have no money coming in." Egrepo said urgently. "We'll be alright, but the new actors and apprentices will be unable to make ends meet and will probably leave the troupe for this."

Kajen knew that it was hard to take the whole troupe to Neverwinter. Without a theater that was willing to take them in, they would have to prepare all the props and goods by themselves, which was not an easy task.

The next moment, Kajen said something, which was completely beyond everybody's expectations. "I'll go there by myself."

This time, his students remained speechless for an even longer time before they asked hesitantly, "What... are you going to do in Neverwinter?"

"Try to be a magic movie actor," Kajen said slowly. "His Majesty said that these movies are going to become a popular art form someday, but he didn't say how long it'll take to popularize this art form... 10 years or 20 years? I can't wait for such a long time. Even if it only takes five years, it'll be too late for us to learn the magic movie at that time, and by then Star Flower Troupe will be far ahead of us."

Kajen believed that the best time to catch up with a trend was at the beginning of it.

"But His Majesty has Star Flower Troupe already..." Benis murmured.

"Star Flower Troupe only has May and Irene," Kajen glanced at his students and said. "Any troupe has to practice repeatedly to present an outstanding performance. May's troupe can't cope with all the movies His Majesty wants to shoot, so Neverwinter may be willing to let us stay to reduce Star Flower Troupe's workload. And if we can outshine them in some type of drama, which they're not good at, such as a farce, we may have a chance to act in a magic movie."

"Are you willing to play a role in a... farce?" Egrepo could not believe what he had heard and asked.

"Life is about trade-offs. Most of the time, if you want to get something, you have to give up another thing for it," Kajen nodded and replied. "Even if we can only act in a farce, we should do our best."

He paused for a moment before adding, "Of course, His Majesty may turn us down again. When that happens, I'll join Star Flower Troupe. Do any of you want to come with me?"

No one answered.

Kajen guessed that they might just be too stunned to say anything at this moment or reluctant to leave the old king's city.

He understood their feelings.

They reacted just as he had expected. In fact, he himself also got shocked by this sudden idea. As Egrepo had said, as the most venerated playwright in the world of today, he could continue his career even in the Kingdom of Dawn. However, he decided to give up the theater for magic movies, which was not an easy choice at all.

Because of his age, he could not move quickly and easily on the stage, and his memory was not as good as before. If this drama master really worked as an actor, he would only be able to play a walk-on part. No matter how well he acted, it would inevitably become a joke in the eyes of others.

Many years ago, as a famous actor, he had given up his acting job and begun to write plays. Since then, he had never thought about returning to the stage as an actor. However, now he had no choice. The king had turned down his troupe and he did not seem to appreciate his stories very much. Meanwhile, he was unable to write plays like "New City" and "Dawn". Given these, he thought he probably could only join Star Flower Troupe as an actor to take part in magic movie production.

This is incredible! His students still stood agape.

Kajen could see how shocked they were at a glance.

It was indeed an incredibly bold decision, but after making this decision, he finally felt relieved.

He was not young anymore, but at this moment, he felt young at heart. This feeling reminded him how happy and inspired he had been during his first visit to the theater.

Since then, 30 years had passed and he had never felt the same impulse until he saw the magic movie.

Nothing could stop him from pursuing his dream.

"Among you, Egrepo has worked with me for the longest time and he knows how to manage a troupe. When I'm away, he'll run the troupe on behalf of me," Kajen said calmly. "Many talented young people have joined our troupe recently. Give them more chances to make an appearance. As long as audiences come to our theater to watch plays, you'll be able to support yourselves."

"Mr. Fels..." the students still wanted to say something but were immediately stopped by Kajen.

He decided to listen to his heart.

He wanted to follow his dream.

He wanted to act in a magic movie.

...

Neverwinter had produced its first napalm bomb.

As Roland had expected, it did not take the alchemists a long time to make it.

Only a week after finding the ideal thickening agent, the Ministry of Chemicals successfully manufactured the first napalm bomb.

It consisted of a dozen identical iron cylinders, which were one meter high and 30 centimeters in diameter. Explosives were contained inside the cylinders, and the fuses of all the cylinders were connected together.

"Your Majesty, this is the bomb I designed. I call it Burning-city Thunder," Retnin said excitedly.

"There're three different substances inside the cylinders. At the bottom, there's the snow powder layer. The combustion-supporting layer is in the middle, and the fuel layer is at the top. When the snow powder is ignited, the flames will go up and reach the combustion-supporting layer and then the jelled fuel. This process resembles that of a volcanic eruption, and..."

The former Chief Alchemist of the Alchemist Workshop of the old king's city thought he finally got a chance to replace Kyle Sichi and talked on and on. Apparently, he was very proud of his work, and many details in his design did impress Roland. Apart from the clear arrangement of the three layers inside the cylinders, he also used an electric detonator and adopted the delayed ignition technology to further boost the bomb's killing power. When this bomb was ignited, the cylinders would explode one by one and would not affect each other adversely. Roland had to admit Retnin was very talented.

He found Retnin was particularly interested in creating bombs and explosives.

He only doubted his ability to name his works.

But for Roland, it was not a big deal. After all, when this kind of weapon became operational, he was the only one who had the right to name it.

"Well then, let's test your Burning-city Thunder now," Roland said smilingly.

Chapter 1076: The Power of "Worms"

The test site was at a valley down the Impassable Mountain Range.

It was surrounded by mountains and never before imprinted by the foot of man. With no access to public transit, it was quite difficult for people to reach this area unless with the help of an airplane or a tunnel. Therefore, this was the best place to conduct some secret projects.

Napalm weapons were by no means something of extreme secrecy, but there were some rare spectators.

"Ah... the air here is so refreshing. I can smell flowers and fresh soil," said Celine as she emerged from the crack of rocks while swaying her tentacle. "It has been over 200 years since I saw the blue sky last time."

Retnin shuddered. He looked at Roland, panic-stricken and lost.

Everyone would be horrified by the sight of a giant blob monster coming out of the ground. If this was a disaster movie, the appearance of such a monster was definitely a turning point of the story where background music normally kicked in.

Not to mention that the giant monster could actually speak.

If one could still maintain his composure upon such a sight, Roland would think he was a competent official.

This was also why Roland had selected this valley as his test site.

"Don't worry. They used to be human too, but the demons turned them into monsters," Roland comforted the alchemist as he patted him on the shoulder. "They communicate through their minds, and that's why you heard their voices. If you want to talk to them, just say it aloud or within yourself, like this..."

Roland turned to Celine and said, "It isn't hard for an original carrier to take a look at the blue sky and clear water once in a while, is it?"

"That's because Celine locks herself up all day in the research room," said Pasha's voice as she emerged from the earth. "The God's Punishment Witches have been talking about their experience in the Dream World lately. There's a specific word that describes her lifestyle. I remember you call a person like her a... shut-in?"

"I somehow remember there are two adjectives before that." Alethea put in as she appeared with the Senior Demon.

"Do you really want me to say them?"

"Oh, not really..."

Roland raised his brows at Retnin and said, "See? They aren't that scary, are they?"

"Y-Yes, you are right..." Retnin agreed quite reluctantly.

"They sacrificed their human bodies in exchange for a life of eternity. Their new bodies are highly resistant to heat and corrosion, which means they can directly touch many chemicals. Their tentacles are sensitive to different materials, which enables them to conduct multiple experiments at the same time. In other words, their bodies are perfect for chemical research. What do you think? Are you interested in working with them?" Roland asked with a shrug.

Retnin swallowed hard. After a long silence, he answered, "I... I'm fine, Your Majesty."

Although Retnin declined Roland's offer, he no longer avoided eye contact with the Senior Witches from Taquila. Instead, there was a bite of curiosity in his look.

Roland shook his head in amusement and walked to the demon binded by ropes.

Although the demon had lost its legs, Roland did not want to take chance.

This body used to belong to a God's Punishment Warrior after all.

Roland crouched down, looked straight into the demon's eyes and said, "You are Carb... Radaby, right?"

Without connecting to a person, the demon could not understand the human language even though it was currently in a human vessel. However, the overt hatred and animosity in the demon's eyes seemed to have transcended the language barrier between them, so blatant that everyone knew what it was trying to convey.

Roland continued indifferently, "I prepared a firework display for you. You committed atrocities against the human population on the Land of Dawn and destroyed more than half of our kingdom. Now, it's time for us to retaliate. Enjoy the show."

He then nodded at Retnin and said, "Go ahead."

The alchemist cast a glance at the demon. Knowing that he was not supposed to question the king's order, he simply shouted, "Yes, Your Majesty!"

Everybody descended into the underground tunnel after everything was in order, leaving the demon alone on the cliff.

"Explosion countdown, ten, nine... one, fire!"

An operator ignited the bomb.

In an instant, red flames erupted from the center of the valley. Unlike the high explosives used in their maneuver, the firelight was dimmed by a cloud of thick, black smoke. Neither the noise nor the impact produced by the explosion was as impressive as that by the high explosives.

But they soon noticed a big difference between this new weapon and the old one.

Through a porthole, they could clearly see thick smog rise slowly and spread across the sky, as though some giant hand had dropped a misty mantle. The hot air pushed fuels up into the air, which cascaded down to the ground like fiery lava and blasted like open umbrellas.

After these "umbrellas" opened up, flickers of red light grew brighter and soon turned into a flood of flames!

Roland knew this was a result of the reaction of the aluminum with the iron oxides in the combustion-supporting layer.

The energy released from this chemical reaction caused a second explosion that lasted for several seconds.

As the explosives rained down, the valley was immediately ablaze. Although Roland and his party were currently in a relatively safe area, they could still sense hot waves coming from the explosion.

Due to the pull of gravity, the thick smoke and the flames finally separated. The smoke dissipated while the fire spread throughout the entire test site. There had been a forest and a brook at the center of the valley, but they were now both aflame. Roland did not think it necessary to check whether their testing animals were still alive at this point anymore.

On the other side of the tunnel, Alethea curled up her main tentacle.

"If only there was a weapon like this in the Taquila Age!" thought she.

Since fire was the natural enemy of the Red Mist, the demons never left any visible combustible materials around their outpost. It was impossible to ignite firewood to disperse the Red Mist. Even if the witches managed to produce flame sources with a high temperature, they had to apply their magic power to make them work. Nevertheless, the new weapon offered them a possibility to instantly wipe out the demons' lair. If they could successfully transport the weapon into the outpost, they would be able to cut a path for the army.

In that case, the God's Punishment Witches would also have a greater chance of survival as they no longer needed to protect common soldiers from the demons and the Red Mist.

Alethea almost foresaw a flaming mist storage tower gradually turn into a blinding pillar of fire.

The three Senior Witches exchanged their ideas quickly in their original carriers. Without a single word, they reached a mutual understanding among themselves.

Alethea stole a glance at the mortal man and heaved a sigh... It was a pity that he had not been born 400 years ago.

The flames finally subsided after four hours.

The whole valley was razed to the ground.

When Roland came out of the tunnel, he had an illusion that it was mid summer rather than early spring. The scorching air had turned the valley into a temporary greenhouse.

He looked at the demon on the cliff. As they had cleaned up the surroundings earlier, the fire had not reached their shelter. As for the God's Punishment Witches, they could not sense heat anyway, so the explosion caused them no harm by any means.

But Roland clearly spied a hint of disbelief in the demon's eyes.

This was probably what Pasha and the other God's Punishment Witches expected to see.

The Taquila witches did not think the demon would yield.

They just wanted it to know —

That the creatures they had been looking down upon all this time had now the capability to annihilate them

Chapter 1077: The Front on the Fertile Land

"These are the last steel rails you need to work on today," Leaf said as her head peeked out from the treetops. "Thank you."

"No problem!" Molly cheerfully replied. She patted her flat chest and blew a whistle, "Come out, my servant Momota!"

A blue ball instantly appeared in midair and gradually grew bigger until it reached the height of the treetops. It stretched out its two arms, scooped up the rails on the ground and gulped them down. However, the rails were too long so the two ends of the rails stuck out of the ball. It looked as if the blue ball was punctured by the rails.

"Momo...ta? But I remember that last time you called it Momoka."

"Really?" Molly said with her head lopsided. "That doesn't matter. What matters is that I pronounce her name out loud. Isn't that how you demonstrate your power?"

"Um..." Leaf pondered for a while and asked, "Did Mystery Moon tell you to do that?"

"How did you know?" Molly asked in surprise. "She also asked me to join the Detective Group."

After the release of the magical movie "The Wolf Princess", many viewers were impressed with the scene where Lorgar transformed into a wolf and bravely lunged at her enemy to save her sister. Further encouraged by the Detective Group, young witches in Neverwinter started to shout their slogans out loud whenever they applied their abilities, and this had gradually become a new trend. Molly was surprised that Leaf also knew about the latest trend in the city considering that she usually confined her activities within the Misty Forest. The last time she had seen her in Neverwinter was at the king's coronation ceremony.

"I... No, nothing," Leaf evaded the question with a cough. She turned in the direction of Neverwinter and said, "They have delivered new supplies. I've got to go."

Although Molly really wanted to know how Leaf kept herself up to date, she suppressed her curiosity and waved goodbye to her.

In the next second, Leaf transformed into a spirit and disappeared into the thick forest.

Molly learned that Leaf could cross the Misty Forest within a blink of an eye. Leaf practically knew everything about the forest. As Leaf drew magic power out of thousands of trees, she could manipulate plants and thus continuously supply construction materials to the front. Compared to her, Molly's Magic Servant worked much more slowly.

Now Molly had a vague understanding of the power of evolution.

Molly wondered when she would become as powerful as Leaf. She had been living in Neverwinter for four to five months and had learned the basics of reading and writing. She thought her ability might evolve after she finished reading "Principles of Nature".

Molly clambered up the Magic Servant and directed Momota to leave the forest.

As soon as she walked out of the forest, she saw a busy construction site.

"One, two, three, go!"

"A little to the left!"

"Take it easy, take it easy!"

Thousands of workers were busy repairing Tower Station No.0 which was located near the railway that stretched away to the northeast. The station was the first stop on the way to the Taquila ruins and also the terminus station of the route to the forest. A blockhouse stood at each corner of the station. The four blockhouses were connected by trenches and parapets as one unit. The workers were wearing various clothes, some of them were even half-naked. It was hard to associate such a scene with the upcoming battle had Molly not known about the king's plan beforehand.

"Hey, isn't it Miss Molly? Thanks for coming to help us."

"We're going to bother you again today. The train unit is swamped."

"Miss Molly, we tipped over a steam engine. Could you make it stand upright?"

Many people stopped to greet Molly or asked for her help as she pushed through the crowd and slowly walked down the railway. She was remembered by many workers even though she had been here for only a week.

Although Molly's main task was to make sure nothing happened to the "Seagull", she was ready to help others, just like what she was used to be doing back on the Sleeping Island.

Molly felt really happy when her help was appreciated.

When she had been on the Sleeping Island, only the witches and a small number of people from the Fjords would show gratitude for her work. There had been little she could do other than loading and unloading ships back then. But now, she could help with many things here and was treated as a celebrity. Her heart was constantly filled with pride and happiness. As long as the "Seagull" remained on the ground, she was free to wander around the railway construction site.

The scenery beyond Tower Station No.0 was slightly different.

Wisps of smoke came into Molly's sight.

They billowed from trains.

In fact, these steel monsters were the main transportation tool. They supplied materials to the front nonstop, as if they would never become tired. Molly had transferred only a very small portion of the materials.

Unfortunately, according to Princess Tilly, it was not easy to build these trains. They needed the "Seagull" to facilitate the transportation between Neverwinter and the front because there was only two to three trains in the entirety of Neverwinter. Regardless of how the battle on the Fertile Plains would unfold, they had to make sure that the logistics and production at the rear were not interrupted.

As Molly approached the end of the railway, she saw more uniformed soldiers.

After a week of observation, Molly could now distinguish the new recruits from the veterans. Those who stole a glance at her every now and then during a class were usually newbies, whereas those who bowed their heads or were too focused on polishing their weapons to pay attention to her were normally seasoned soldiers.

"Look carefully. There are different types of demons!" said an instructor as he tapped a picture on the blackboard. "The most common type is the Mad Demon. They have large bodies, thick arms and are good at throwing bone spears. They don't throw spears in rapid succession unless it's of an utmost emergency."

"Hahaha..." The crowd erupted into laughter.

"Silence!" The instructor barked. "I hope they won't scare the hell out of you when you come across them. The only way to save your lives is to pull the trigger and finish them before they kill you. Neither fleeing nor yielding would work in this situation. Do you understand?"

"Yes!" the class shouted in unison.

"Now, next one," the instructor said as he pointed to another picture. "This one, with its eyes on its forehead, is called the Fearsome Demon. There are not many of them, but they're far more powerful than ordinary Mad Demons. They can paralyze your movements when they see you. You basically can't do anything except to wait for your death. However, you can protect yourself with a God's Stone of Retaliation. Everybody at the front will receive a God's Stone, although there is a chance that you may encounter them when you are not wearing a God's Stone."

"What should we do then?"

"Pray to your grandmother or picture someone or something you adore in your head. Use every possible means to overcome your fear!"

At these words, someone turned around and glanced at Molly.

Molly smiled back, winking at the soldier.

"Hey, where are you looking?" The instructor snarled at the soldier. "Get out of here and go back to the construction site if you don't want to be in my class!"

The man immediately ducked away.

Molly felt she preferred the new recruits over the veterans.

She twitched her lips and urged the Magic Servant to move forward.

After another few hundred meters, she reached the very end of the railway where some laborers, soldiers and witches were working together.

She immediately caught sight of a girl with flaxen hair in a work suit.

It was the Queen of Graycastle, Queen Anna Wimbledon.

Chapter 1078: Gunshots on the Plains

Whether it was her figure, fashion or appearance, Queen Anna was not the most outstanding one among the witches. To keep it out of the way while she was working, she tied her smooth hair into a ponytail. Her work clothes, which were designed by Roland, focused on functionality over style. The cuffs and collar were tightly bundled and it was stained with dust as she had stayed in the wild for long periods of time. If someone met her for the first time, they would be not believe she was the Queen of Graycastle.

But Molly greatly admired her.

Because even if someone didn't know Anna was the queen, they would understand that she was an important person. She was surrounded by high officials in Neverwinter, for example, Karl Van Bate, the Minister of Construction; Edith Kant, the head of General Staff, etc.... The route of the railway, the speed of advancement, and the construction arrangements, all needed to be discussed with her. In other words, even if she were not a witch, she would still be the focus of everyone's attention.

Despite being completely ignorant of what they were discussing, Molly felt that Anna, who stood tall, surveying the land, holding maps, and discussing plans, was really gorgeous.

Especially when she focused on work, Anna's lake-blue eyes shined with light like unblemished gems.

When working with Anna, both recruits and veterans would defer to her.

Molly thought for a moment and ultimately decided not to interrupt Her Highness. Instead, she directed her Magic Servant to avoid the crowd and unloaded the rails in the storage area.

Just after she laid down the rails, Shavi peeped over a pile of bricks and asked, "Did you go over to the forest again?"

Molly immediately had a bad feeling.

She ran around the brick pile and found that the other witches were playing cards.

"Hey, if it isn't little Molly?" Andrea grinned.

Margie was also there, but looked very uncomfortable.

"How can you guys slack off and play cards here?" Molly yelled, "If you're discovered, what will people think of Sleeping Spell? I'm going to tell Lady Tilly!"

"I was... forced by them to come here," said Margie, lowering her head and wringing her hands.

"Who is slacking off?" Shavi retorted, "I unloaded all these bricks from the train. Otherwise, the workers would still be unloading them. I'm just resting after I finished my work. How can you say I'm slacking off?"

"You should know that tea time is as important as work. An elegant lady knows how to keep a balance between them," Andrea said, combing her blonde hair with her fingers. "Since Margie is here, she can make sure no one will find us. After all, it's definitely not allowed to cause trouble for Lady Tilly. Don't worry about it. By the way, do you want to join us? For playing cards, the more the merrier."

"Of course not—" Molly was interrupted by an alarm as she was preparing to argue with Andrea.

"Woo— Woo— Woo—!"

Three short blasts meant the discovery of hostile forces!

She quickly looked to the northeast, only to see nothing but half-melted snow and weeds across the vast plain.

"The enemy was discovered by either Sylvie or Lightning and they gave an advanced warning, so you won't see anything yet," Shavi reminded her.

"Oh, no—Her Highness!" Molly suddenly remembered that the Queen of Graycastle would be in harms way. She had heard more than once about Anna's unique significance to King Roland and Neverwinter. Therefore, she should do everything possible to guarantee her safety.

As Molly started to run back, Shavi caught her.

"Her Highness is naturally protected by the guards. You won't be of much help if you go back there," Shavi shook her head. "Based on the speed of the flying demons, Her Highness has at least 10 to 15 minutes to take shelter before the enemy arrives. According to our orders, if there is no prior arrangement for a combat plan, the first thing to do when confronted with an unexpected enemy is to protect yourself and then go to the nearest First Army, Taquila God's Punishment Witch or other combat groups."

"So you don't have to go anywhere. Stay here and protect me," Andrea had already climbed up on the top of the brick pile with her rifle. "Leave it to me."

Just as Shavi said, after Molly climbed onto the brick pile, she found the huge construction site was empty, as if the previous busy scene had never existed. She could faintly see heads in the trenches and some gun emplacements. The train shut down and a sense of seriousness pervaded the entire front.

"Sylvie, were you the one who spotted the demons?" Andrea took out a Sigil of Listening and asked, "How many are there?"

"... No, this warning was sent by Lightning." Sylvie's reply came from the Sigil after a while, "It seems that there are only four Devilbeasts with Mad Demons. The direction is on your right side. There is no trace of Senior Demons."

"Only four? It seems like this is just an accidental encounter."

"Probably, but don't take it too easy." Sylvie warned, "You should be able to see them in five minutes."

A few minutes later, the demons arrived as expected. The four dark spots were particularly striking under the bright sky. They undoubtedly saw the railway on the Fertile Plains. What was strange was that the demons did not attack, but instead hovered at a distance.

"What are they hesitating about?" Shavi frowned, "that's not the demon's style."

"Can you hit them?" Molly asked.

"No, they're too far away," Andrea shrugged. "Too many variable for the coin toss. Of course, there is another method—"

Molly automatically ignored the part which she could not understand and asked, "What method?"

"For example... a gun with a larger-caliber." She smiled and pointed to the side of the brick pile, "Can your Magic Servant do me a favor?"

Until then Molly hasn't noticed this gun of incredible size. Its barrel was over a meter long. She immediately realized what Andrea meant— she could not use such a heavy weapon alone.

"Have you... been taking this with you when you played cards?"

"Thanks to Margie," Andrea said, shrugging. "Besides, carrying a variety of weapons is just a basic requirement for a soldier."

Molly stopped talking and raised her hand to summon her Magic Servant. She grabbed the giant gun and placed it on top of its head. At the same time, she ordered Momota to lower its body and spread itself into an oval cushion.

"It's a pity that I hadn't brought you along for the last fight," Andrea laid down on Momota. "This gun base is much more comfortable than Ashes. Raise the head a little. Right, that's the right angle."

"How about now?" Molly adjusted the shape of the Servant.

"Perfect. By the way, can you shrink its arms? As small as your fingers."

"No problem... But then it won't be able to hold heavy objects."

"That's okay. Perfect." Andrea squeezed the shrunken arms of the Magic Servant into her ears and then held the gun handle. "Don't forget to cover your ears!"

Simultaneously, she pulled the trigger.

A loud bang exploded from the gun!

A few seconds later, a demon exploded into red mist in the air.

Chapter 1079: The Demons' Intentions

The other three demons responded immediately. They controlled the Devilbeasts and scattered in all directions. They then zigzagged in a direction where they came from and soon disappeared into the distance.

While retreating, a demon even turned back to toss its spear toward the head of the Devilbeast which had a broken wing and was spiraling down.

Although Andrea concentrated on the target, the second standing coin never appeared.

"They escaped?" Shavi asked in surprise, "What did they come for?"

For the first time, the demons escaped before a direct confrontation. In previous cases, the brutal demons would not give up until they attacked their targets severely. It was indeed surprising that they just hovered rather than attacking or spying.

"I don't know..." Andrea released the trigger, "They seem to have figured out how to dodge the sniper. The enemies learn very quickly, don't they, little Molly?" She laughed, looking at Molly who was rubbing her ears.

"You should remind me earlier next time," Molly complained. The sound of this weapon was not lower than that of a cannon. She hardly had time to cover her ears. Even so, she still felt dizzy due to the thunder-like bang.

"I'm sorry. I didn't expect the 'guiding lines' to appear so fast. Probably my ability has improved again." Andrea blinked her eyes, "I'll give you a special compensation to apologize."

"You didn't do it on purpose. You don't have to apologize," Molly scratched her head. "After all, defeating the enemy is more important."

"But I'll feel sorry for it."

"Well..." She had to agree in face of the earnest stare of Andrea, "What's the compensation?"

"Chaos Drinks," Andrea said, covering her mouth.

"Are you... sure?" Molly asked in surprise. When they were on the Sleeping Island, she only knew that Andrea was born in a prominent family and was one of the most powerful combat witches, so she was nearly as important as Ashes. In addition, Andrea used to stay with Lady Tilly, so Molly had few opportunities to communicate with Andrea in the past. After coming to Neverwinter, the gap between combat witches and non-combat witches completely disappeared. It was then she found out that Andrea was not as cold as she imagined, but elegant and friendly.

However, she had not expected Andrea to be so generous!

"Yeah, the general rule is a cup for each round. My special compensation is that if you lose, you don't need to give me a cup. If I lose, I'll give it to you. How is this? It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

"I see. If I don't have to lose, it's indeed... Wait, it's not!" Molly suddenly understood, "Doesn't it mean that I'm going to play cards? I won't join—"

"But you've promised it, just now," Andrea revealed a "too late" expression. "Stay here and don't leave. I'll go to the command post and come back soon!"

Before Molly had time to explain, Andrea had already jumped down from the brick pile and rushed to the end of the dump site.

She turned to Margie who obviously had the similar feeling and finally knew what she meant by saying "I was forced by them to come here".

...

Frontline command post.

Within half an hour, all the information about this "accidental encounter" had been gathered and placed on Iron Axe's desk.

Lightning and Maggie who had been wandering around the watch circle were the first ones to discover the enemy's trail.

At that time, they were flying through the clouds one after another and happened to have been out of the sight of the enemy. After that, they followed the demons at the six o'clock direction and sent warnings to Sylvie through the Sigil of Listening.

According to Lightning's description, the demons' flight route was a straight line on the map which linked the railway front and the Taquila ruins. In other words, they were not patrolling but they came after the First Army from the very beginning.

The entire encounter lasted for about a quarter of an hour. Miss Andrea was the only one to achieve the victory, as the anti-Devilbeast sniper rifle was the only effective weapon which could hit the target at this distance. After one demon was shot, the rest of them immediately chose to retreat and zigzagged to avoid Andrea's further shooting. It was proved to be effective and Andrea failed to shoot them again.

Sylvie monitored their process of leaving the watch circle.

Lightning and Maggie did not take any further action, either.

Fifteen minutes later, the alarm was lifted.

Iron Axe laid down his report and took a deep breath.

This was the integrated war intelligence system designed by His Majesty. Each unit would report their actions level by level. The General Staff department would then collect all information, sort out and refine it in order to review the whole combat process. With the assistance of a map and a sand table, the military commanders could have the most direct understanding of the front battle.

Though having operated the system several times before the expedition, Iron Axe was still shocked by the initial practical use of the system. For the first time, he felt that the war was so clear that it felt like he was standing on a cloud that overlooked the entire combat.

In Iron Sand City, even the battle of hundreds of people between the clans could be chaotic. If he wanted to sort out the result of the battle, he could only get a rough conclusion even if he devoted a lot of time and energy to it. Yet, it was different now. Both the enemy's action and First Army's response were clearly presented in his mind. The feeling of being on top of it made him realize that the battles between the Mojin clans were merely street fights.

Of course, it was far from being sufficient enough to know the overall situation. The most important task was to figure out the demons' intentions.

Iron Axe looked at Edith, who was carefully staring at the map. She was the only one not to discuss with other Staff members.

He had previously reported to King Roland his private contact with her, but Iron Axe had no regrets. He had pledged allegiance to the king. Even if he felt sorry for her, he would not make a second choice. Nevertheless, he felt guilty toward her and was prepared to be ridiculed or ignored by her. What she did was out of his expectation. She acted as if it had not happened, and still invited him to participate in the gatherings of the General Staff Department. However, she did not have any private discussions with him anymore.

He realized that he indeed did not understand this woman's thoughts—since they were in the Southernmost Region.

"Did you find something?" Iron Axe walked behind her.

"No," Edith shrugged. "I'm not a demon and I just met them once. How can I know what they think?"

"You didn't discuss with them. I thought you had some idea."

"Discussion without clues is meaningless. You can neither prove it nor deny it. It contributes nothing but anxiety."

"In that case, I'll take it as the final decision of the General Staff and report to His Majesty," Iron Axe nodded. If even Pearl of the Northern Region could not figure it out, there was no need for them to continue the discussion.

"Well, go," Edith paused, "but..."

"But what...?"

"I don't think it'll end so easily. If the enemy really came for us, they'd definitely take actions again in the near future."

What happened later proved Edith's guess.

Just two days later, the demons once again appeared in the northeast.

Four Mad Demons again.

They were farther away from the front this time. Only four black spots could be barely observed by the naked eye.

Chapter 1080: A New Station

"Miss Sylvie has confirmed that there are no other demons nearby."

"If the enemy launches an attack at this distance, we have at least five minutes to react."

"That's enough for the anti-aircraft machine gun squad to prepare. How about the threat judgment?"

"There is no Senior Demon among them. The threat to Her Highness is almost zero."

"If we continue the construction, the greatest loss may be from the rail removal team, as it's inconvenient to evacuate such a large number of workers in a short time. It's estimated to result in one or two casualties."

Everyone in the command post was busy analyzing the intelligence and discussing. Their conclusions were listed on the board. This was a habit gradually cultivated by the Staff members. In face of complicated and diverse information, written words left more of an impression than oral ones.

"In conclusion," Ferlin Eltek, with a hand on his chest, said to Iron Axe, "we think that it's better to keep construction than to stop and defend. The demons will probably know our intention, but His Majesty already expected this. As for the four flying demons, we only need to be on the basic alert."

In a word, the conclusion they got from all the information was "no threat".

The General Staff assisted in analyzing the information and giving advice while Iron Axe was the final decision-maker. He realized that he totally agreed with the conclusion.

The First Army was different from the ancient army 400 years ago. A vanguard unit of 5,000 soldiers was huge and would definitely not be affected by four Mad Demons. Even if they killed the demons at the price of the injuries and deaths of several workers, it would not be accounted as a loss for His Majesty's plan.

After all, the risk of working in Barbarian Land had long since been written into the contract.

Iron Axe looked at Edith, who did not say anything.

At the command post, silence meant approval.

"I got it. Order the construction team to continue working and the anti-aircraft machine gun squad to be on alert. The rest stand by as usual," Edith suddenly said when Iron Axe was ready to give orders to the lieutenant.

Not to him, but to Agatha and Phyllis.

"Do you have a way to swat those flies directly?"

"Do you want us... to take the initiative to attack?" Agatha frowned.

"That's right. I always feel it's not good to allow them to spy on us," the Pearl of the Northern Region nodded. "As I know, the two little girls who can fly have excellent combat ability, don't they? With the assistance of Lady of Dawn, they probably can kill all of the demons. This is beyond the capabilities of the First Army. Only you can do it."

"Well..." Agatha hesitatively said, "In theory, they won't be in danger only when there are two demons. Otherwise, if the demons throw spears, they can hardly dodge at a short distance. Even if Andrea were to shoot a demon down, there would still be three demons..."

She gradually stopped talking, as she found out what she said not so convincing.

Since it was a war, the risk was unavoidable, not to mention this war was so important that it would determine the future of humankind. To get an opportunity of survival, thousands of witches had fought with and been killed by the demons. Lightning should not get special treatment.

In fact, she had sensed Lightning's oddness since they had come to Fertile Plains. Though Lightning tried to hide it, Agatha, who had experienced the Battle of Divine Will, was not unfamiliar with this state, which was, the confusion after encountering an unimaginably powerful enemy. The strength of the enemy overpowered her and made her feel powerless. Even many Blessed Army witches who had been to the battlefield for many times could not get rid of it and had to use medicine or magic abilities to cure or wait to recover little by little by themselves.

As long as they could defeat the demons, Agatha did not mind the risk. She was willing to participate in any extremely dangerous plans if they were beneficial enough. She believed that other Taquila survivors would make the same choice.

Nonetheless, Lightning was different. Compelling her to confront with the demons in such state was not different from sending her to death.

Agatha feared no risks but she could not push others to the abyss, especially her partners and sisters.

After waking up again in Neverwinter, she realized that she had been changed a lot by these witches.

"Well..." Edith raised her eyebrows but did not insist, "How about driving the demons away? They can conceal themselves by using the Magic Ark. Then Lady of Dawn can try to find an opportunity to shoot at the demons. Even one is better than nothing. I think it's better than allowing the demons to spy on us."

Agatha looked at Iron Axe and said, "No problem. I'll inform the Special Action Team."

...

In the following days, a strange "chemistry" formed between the demons and the First Army.

Nearly every day a team of Devilbeasts would wander around the outer defense line, and sometimes two or three teams would appear. They came from different directions. Nevertheless, as long as it was within Sylvie's vision, their actions were clearly monitored by her. The First Army would know their whereabouts before they entered the range which could be seen by naked eye.

Since the demons probably failed to find an opportunity to launch an attack, they did not do anything except flying around.

At the very beginning, the demons caused certain chaos in the construction team. Several days later, people became accustomed to it and devoted to their work even when the demons appeared. After all, the "potential threat" was far away from them while the wages were more attractive.

The only "inharmonious part" came from Andrea.

Every time when a demon was shot and fell down, the crowd would burst into loud cheers.

It was completely unpredictable. Sometimes nothing would happen for a day, and sometimes the demons might be shot down for two or three times.

Most people did not know the existence of the Special Action Team, but they realized that the army was taking counteractions.

The workers even started a new type of gambling game.

That was to guess the doomsday of the demons.

They guessed how many demons would show up and how many could leave. This game became popular in their spare time.

As the construction went smoothly, the First Army soon advanced to the second section of the railway.

According to the combat plan, the railway line which was unprotected by the Misty Forest would be equipped with a station every 50 kilometers. The blockhouse built with concrete and steel could facilitate a small number of First Army soldiers to defend against demons multiple times. Meanwhile, the vanguard unit could coordinate with the previously stationed troops, and the logistics would also be more convenient.

The area between the stations would be protected by the armored train which cruised on the railway. Even if the demons destroyed part of the rails, it would not be difficult to repair.

With these stations, it would be impossible for the demons to destroy the "dark river" in a short time. The stations were like nails which facilitated the First Army to take roots on this fertile land.

What they needed to do at present was to knock in the second nail— "Tower Station No.1".