

Witch 1211

Chapter 1211: A Farming Tractor

"Your Majesty, Your Majesty, what's Lady Anna driving?"

Roland turned around and saw Echo and Soraya rush toward him.

"It's a car, a Magic Cube-powered car!" Mysterious Moon supplied the answer fervently. "If you want to drive it, go line up."

"A... car?" Soraya echoed, "A car powered by a steam engine?"

"Yup, but the boiler of the steam engine has been replaced by the relic of the radiation clan, so that's why it's so small," Mystery Moon boasted. "It's still a lot larger than an electric motor though. I wish it could be powered by Dawn I. That'll be perfect... No, then we should call it a magnet-driven car!"

'You can barely manage to work with dozens of copper rods," Lily retorted while twitching her lips. "And now you want to power a car?"

"Er..." Mystery Moon faltered. "I, I just came of age, so obviously I'm not that powerful. Perhaps I could manufacture tons of Dawn I after I upgrade."

"I would rather put my hope in Miss Doris," Lily said scathingly.

"Shut up, or I'll take away all your Chaos Drinks!"

"I dare you — "

"Haha..." Phyllis burst into a laughter. "Actually, no matter it's powered by steam or electricity, we still call it a 'car'."

"Really?" All the other witches said together while looking toward her.

"Yes, in the Dream World, it's called a car," Phyllis replied triumphantly. "The cars in the Dream World are much better than this one Her Highness is now driving. They could not only shelter us from rain and wind, but they're also equipped with an advanced heating and air-conditioning system. It's pretty much like a mobile house, and it's a lot faster than horses!"

"Have you... driven a car before?" Mystery Moon asked, her eyes widening in curiosity.

"Of course," Phyllis bragged. "I once drove His Majesty's vehicle on an endless highway. The vehicle literally trembled when I drove at the maximum speed. I could only hear wind howling around me, and I felt I could conquer the whole world!"

Roland mopped his forehead, amazed that Phyllis could drive his battered mini van in the same manner as she drove a luxurious sports car. The truth was that his vehicle had poor noise insulation and it always wobbled violently on highways.

Nevertheless, even the old mini van functioned better than this cube-powered vehicle.

It had taken Roland only four days to complete the production. The vehicle was comprised of a steam engine at the front, a heating system at the rear, a power unit attached to the automobile frame, and a couch in the middle. Apart from a steering wheel, a clutch and a brake, the vehicle had no gearbox but only a valve next to the seat to adjust the speed.

Once the Magic Ceremony Cube heated up the water and set the steam engine in motion, the vehicle would start to move. As the air pressure in the conduits increased, the vehicle accelerated. Then the driver could switch the valve on to release some steam so that the steam engine would not overload. In this way, the driver adjusted the speed of the vehicle.

In other words, the driver simply needed to press on the brake and the clutch to slow down and release the brake to accelerate. Due to the high air pressure, the spinning cogwheel might sustain some extent of damage. Therefore, once the vehicle came to a complete stop, the driver must open the valve to release the steam and reduce the air pressure in the steam engine.

Despite the cumbersome power unit, the primitive automobile frame, and the crude steering device, Anna was over the moon. Like a little girl who had just received the best present in the world, she drove around the yard with the slightest intention of taking a rest.

In addition to Anna, the other witches were also aroused by the vehicle. They exchanged excited murmurs. It was the first time they laughed so heartily after the battle of Taquila.

Roland wished Tilly could share this happiness.

Nightingale told him that Tilly invested most of her time in training aerial knights, so she rarely came to the castle lately. Perhaps, for Tilly, the happiest thing was to defeat the demons.

When Anna finally alighted from the vehicle and asked who would like to try out, all the witches pressed forward to take the share.

Sylvie, who was the first to arrive at the scene and spot the car, got the opportunity to drive.

"How do you like it," Roland asked Anna.

"It's more fun than I thought," Anna replied with a smile. "Thank you, Roland. I'm so glad that you taught me how to drive."

Roland dazed for a second as he saw Anna's face split into a dazzling smile. He quickly averted his eyes, a little embarrassed, as though he had suddenly traveled back to the time when they had first met. Roland said, "Well, I'm glad you like it."

Anna blinked and said, "By the way, Celine found a way to stabilize the Magic Ceremony Cube. Does it mean that we could use the Cube in the Battle of Divine Will?"

"Technically, we could," Roland replied on a cough and pulled himself together. "We just need to keep supplying water to make sure that the cube-powered steam engine works. Time will tell how much this new steam engine could help with the logistics."

"Can we use the steam engine to create an armored war machine with a Longsong Cannon anchored to the top?" Phyllis cut in. "If you could make such a weapon, then we don't have to be afraid of the Spider Demons anymore."

It was true that a competent power unit would make an armored unit possible. With a powerful tank, they could instantly dominate the war. Even the crudest tank could easily repulse Mad Demons and block spears and bone needles ejected by Spidery Monstrous Beasts. It was a weapon as well as a defense.

Nevertheless, extensive research was required to create such an advanced weapon. Not only did they have to improve technologies, but they have to also educate workers. Anna could not manufacture the biplanes and the armored weapons at the same time, it was also unrealistic to directly create a tank. In short, considering the limited technologies and resources, most of the work had to be completed by plant workers.

The first project that came to Roland's mind, however, was not a tank or an infantry fighting vehicle but a transportation tool for civil services.

This transportation tool could considerably increase farming efficiency while saving a lot of manpower. As the principle and technologies applied to this transportation tool were quite similar to those related to armored vehicles, Roland could also, at the same time, provide soldiers with some training. Meanwhile, workers in the plant could also immediately start to produce armored weapons, if necessary.

This transportation tool was — a tractor.

Chapter 1212: Rainbow Stone

"Ahhh! Help! I can't steer it around. Someone help me!"

A piercing shriek interrupted Roland's train of thought. Roland looked up and saw the vehicle dash toward the flower bed at the center of the yard. In the vehicle sat Mystery Moon.

"You, you idiot!" Lily said through clenched teeth. "Hit the brake!"

"I did... but it doesn't work, ahhhh!" Mystery Moon screamed in terror.

The car ran wild. It bounced off the flower bed and streaked toward the castle gate.

"Your Majesty, watch out!" Wendy shouted.

There was instantly a great commotion.

"Holy crap," Roland said within himself, gaping at Mystery Moon who steered the vehicle frantically with her eyes clamp shut. He was astonished that a car without gas could go so wrong. What a monstrous driver Mystery Moon was!

Much to Roland's consternation, the crowd was not dispersed. All the witches, on the contrary, stopped in front of the car. In a second, all the witches applied their various abilities. Anna summoned a Blackfire wall; Lotus created a ditch to separate Roland from the yard; Iffy summoned her Magic Cage, and Andrea was about to shoot her Light Arrow; Nightingale grabbed Roland by the arm, ready to drag him into the mist anytime.

In the end, Phyllis and Lorgar stopped the vehicle by force.

They grasped the bumper of the vehicle and lifted the car off the ground.

Then Anna turned down the Magic Ceremony Cube with her Blackfire.

The steam engine was immediately silenced.

"Ahhhhh! Run, guys!" Mystery Moon yelled hysterically, her hand still on the steering wheel.

"You BIG THICKHEAD!" Lily strode across the ditch and slammed her hand on the back of Mystery Moon's head. Her scream instantly perished into a grumble.

Mystery Moon opened her eyes, her hands on her head, looking perfectly innocent.

"Mystery Moon!"

Seeing Wendy and Scroll dart in her direction in a hot rage, Mystery Moon realized that she had made a big mistake. She pleaded, "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry —" But it was too late. She had been dragged out of the vehicle and into the castle before she could justify her behavior.

"You always cause trouble!"

"No time off for you this week!"

"I order you to copy the rules of the Witch Union 100 times!"

"And you also have to complete five sets of homework before dinner!"

Mystery Moon's cry reverberated across the whole yard. All the witches shuddered at the long murmur of echoes, except Anna.

"I examined the vehicle. There's nothing wrong with the steering wheel or the brake," Anna said to Roland. "There's only one reason why Mystery Moon lost control."

"What's that?"

"She's not strong enough to maneuver the car," Anna said with a magnificently forgiving air.

Roland laughed at such an amusing truth. It appeared those who were weaker than Mystery Moon probably could not drive the car unless he installed an assisting mechanism to the steering wheel and the brake.

Lotus and Anna soon fixed the yard. Looking at a group of witch who was not able to disguise their eagerness, Roland said while shaking his head, "If you still want to go on a ride, then talk to Anna. As long as she agrees, I don't have any objections. Just make sure that you don't destroy the castle. Right, another thing. Don't forget to come back for lunch."

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

"Please let me have a go first!"

"Hey, I came here before you!"

The yard was again alive with laughters.

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"Sir, it's here."

A carriage staggered to a halt in front of a tavern. Victor Lothar alighted from the wagon and tossed two silver royals at the coachman before he got in.

"Mr. Victor!" a pretty young lady in a white robe greeted him at a trot. She took the luggage from Victor and said ardently, "We keep the room for you. Please, this way."

Victor's room was the largest one on the top floor. Everything was just as the same as when he had departed last time, including incenses, grape wines and his personal maid, Tinkle.

Victor nodded in satisfaction. This was the power of money. Although it could not bring the dead to life, it could freeze time.

"It has been a while since last time you were here," Tinkle said as she pulled back the curtains, opened the window and poured him a cup of tea. "My boss thought you encountered bandits or died in a shipwreck. He asked the accountant to check the gold royals you left here every day to see how long we can keep the room for you. He wants to let out this room to someone else but at the same time doesn't want to break Neverwinter contract law. It's really amusing to see that he was caught in such a disgusting dilemma."

Victor felt his fatigue gradually dissipated as he listened to his maid babbling. He asked, "Aren't you afraid that he'll know that you badmouth him behind his back?"

Tinkle stuck out her tongue and said, "Unless you tell him. By the way, where have you been? Was it a great undertaking?"

"Well, sort of," Victor said while sipping the tea. "I spent most of my time in the Southern Territory in the past half a year."

"The Southern Territory?" Tinkle echoed in confusion, her head lopsided. "That area isn't famous for gemstones, is it?"

"There are gemstones everywhere, provided that you know where to find them," Victor said, shrugging. "For example, in the south, gemstones grow on trees."

"Sir, you must be making fun of me," the maid said a little indignantly.

Victor smiled. He knew Tinkle would not believe him. In fact, he could not believe it either before he actually saw it. The cotton field was, to his surprise, even more beautiful than gemstones. The plants cultivated by Leaf were incredible. The cotton was large and soft like snow, completely different from the one he used to see.

Victor had been busy in the past few months. He summoned all the tailors in his native town, built a plant at the Port of Clearwater, and hired staff to work for him. Once the harvest season was over, he started to sell the cotton to the public. His business was better than he had initially anticipated. As this

new cotton was affordable and high-quality, they soon outstripped their competitors. All his products were fairly popular, from cotton blankets all the way to cotton winter jackets.

Nevertheless, Victor knew that competition always existed. He knew when other merchants also started to purchase cotton seeds from Leaf, his market would inevitably shrink a little bit. Therefore, apart from common cotton fabrics, he also produced high-end commodities, which were mainly clothes tailored to wealthy customers. All the clothes were carefully designed and made, with a tiny logo of a colorful gemstone at sleeves and collars that marked the uniqueness of his products.

Those clothes were soon acknowledged by a certain group of people and were subsequently called "Rainbow Stone".

Victor thus also granted the same logo to his low-end products such as blankets and robes, only that the logo is monochrome.

Victor predicted that even if other merchants sold their products at a lower price than his, people would still tend to buy his products because of the Rainbow Stone logo. Just like jewelry, nobles always preferred to purchase those processed by masters over the ones that were not.

"How long are you going to stay here this time," Tinkle asked after a long silence.

"Probably three or four days. I have a lot to do in the Southern Territory," Victor replied.

"That soon?" the maid asked in a low voice.

Victor understood that Tinkle would have to serve other customers if he decided to surrender the tenancy. She preferred to clean a vacant room than serving customers. Victor did not really care about the possible change, but he did like Tinkle to serve him.

He had not got tired of her yet.

"Don't worry. I'll pay a good amount of gold royals before I return to Neverwinter."

"Really?" Tinkle said, her facing lighting up.

"That isn't much, really," Victor said while straightening up and tossed a gold royal at Tinkle. "This is your pay. I need to pay a visit to the Administrative Office. Lead the way."

Chapter 1213: The Beginning of an Enterprise

Over the past six months, although Victor Lothar had stayed in the Southern Territory, he had paid close attention to Neverwinter, for he believed that this city would undoubtedly become the central city of the world in the future. The impact of this future capital would extend to not only Graycastle but also the other three kingdoms and the Fjords. Therefore, Victor asked his men to purchase Graycastle Weekly and send a copy to the Port of Clearwater every day.

He returned to Neverwinter because of two major events that had caught his attention. One was the sale of the Miracle Building and the other was the release of a new magic movie, "The Dust of History".

Victor did not understand why the King of Graycastle insisted that Neverwinter people had to show their identification cards to purchase the apartment. As a Neverwinter resident, he could still travel to the Port of Clearwater and the City of Glow. Victor did not know what the point of having a Neverwinter Identification Card. He was a merchant and basically traveled the world all the year around.

Nevertheless, nobody would miss the opportunity to become a resident of the tallest apartment building on this continent situated at the center of the new king's city. It was a perfect marketing strategy to further promote his brand, "Rainbow Stone".

However, even if Victor failed to obtain a room in the Miracle Building, he would not feel too regretted about it. As the designated distributor of the new cotton seeds appointed by King Roland, Victor was confident that he could outperform all other merchants. For him, he was interested more in the magic movie than the real estate transaction.

He would never forget the first magic movie he had seen.

It was mind-blowing.

The moment the curtains had been pulled back, Victor had felt his physical body melt into nothingness, his soul wandering in the darkness. He had watched "The Wolf Princess" many times, and would have watched over and over again had he not decided to grow cotton in the Southern Territory.

Victor had the faintest clue as to the content of the new magic movie "The Dust of History". However, he was particularly intrigued by the movie because of two reasons. One was that all the actors in the movie were from the Star Flower Troupe, and the other was that the screenwriter this time was famous Kajen Fels.

According to the introduction of the movie, it was based on a true story, and King Roland had even provided assistance with the background research. It was rumored that the king had disclosed a book that had been kept as a secret by the royal family for generations. Victor knew he should not take these rumors circulated among the public too seriously. The best way to confirm the validity of the information was to watch the magic movie himself. How could he miss it?

This was actually the main reason Victor came back to Neverwinter.

As soon as Victor reached the Administrative Office, Tinkle went to line up to purchase the tickets. Each ticket cost 50 gold royals, which was 10 gold royals more than the ticket for "The Wolf Princess". However, Victor immediately gave Tinkle 100 gold royals and asked her to buy two tickets.

Tinkle felt a surge of pride. Many people eyed her as she bought two tickets at a time. The price for the premiere was so daunting that even foreign merchants would hesitate for a while before making the decision. In fact, the ticket would be a lot cheaper the next day, and the price would further drop to 10 silver royals for civilians a week later.

The transaction of the apartment was much more complicated. After Victor submitted the application, he and Tinkle were led into a small cabin.

"I can't believe that you have a Neverwinter Identification Card!" Tinkle said in a hushed voice. "But you aren't a Graycastle man, and certainly aren't a resident of Border Town either."

Victor said, shrugging, "You've forgotten that one could become a Neverwinter resident as soon as he purchases a property here."

"Of course I know!" Tinkle defended herself. "But you always live in the tavern..."

"That doesn't prevent me from having a real estate property here," Victor said airily. "I prefer a tavern to a residential area, but I can still buy a property just in case."

"..." Tinkle was speechless, her eyes wide open.

Victor thought that was the beauty of a country girl. If Tinkle were a lady, she would have probably viewed him as an idiot.

Just then, a young lady in a uniform came in. "Hello, thanks for waiting. My name is Betty. I'm a clerk at the Administrative Office, and I'll be responsible for registration."

"I'm..."

"Victor Lothar. I reviewed your application, and you're eligible to make a purchase." Betty said quickly, "I have to admit that you have a really good taste. Out of all the residential buildings, you picked the Miracle Building. This is the landmark of Neverwinter. You can have a birdview of the whole city. Although the price is a little high, it's definitely worth it!"

Mildly taken aback, Victor suddenly had a strange feeling that not many people were buying. He thus cleared his throat and asked, "So, how much is it?"

"Here it is, Mr. Victor," Betty said as she handed him a piece of paper.

Victor spread it open, a muscle twitching around his lips. The prices of all the floors of the Miracle Building were listed. The first five floors were under 100 gold royals. From the fifth floor onward, the price doubled by each floor. The 14th Floor was listed as 2,000 gold royals.

Tinkle clapped his hand over his mouth.

"The 15th floor is not for sale?" Victor asked as he noticed the floor was not priced.

"The Astrology Association and the Alchemist Workshop have jointly bought the 15th floor. I've heard they're planning to found a Society of Sage and make it as the headquarters — "

"I'll take the 14th floor!" Victor cut across Betty, who looked as aghasted as Tinkle. He then added, "I'll take two."

4,000 gold royals was a large sum of money even for Victor. He had been hesitating at first, but after hearing the news of the Society of Sage, he immediately made up his mind.

If Neverwinter was the central city of the future, then this so-called headquarters would definitely influence the entire kingdom. If he could associate his business to these two eminent organizations, it would be very helpful to further promote his products, even though what he did was simply sharing the same building with the two societies.

"A wise choice, Mr. Victor!" Betty said while holding Victor's hand in excitement. "I'll bring the contract right away. Once you sign, the two rooms will be yours."

Watching Betty rush out of the room, Victor heaved a deep sigh and said, "I somehow feel that she is the buyer not me..."

"It probably has something to do with her sales target," Twinkle mumbled.

"What's that?"

"I heard about it from customers coming to the tavern. It appears that every official and clerk in the Administrative Office is subject to periodical evaluations. I don't know about the details, but the evaluation determines whether they could get a raise or get promoted."

"I see... Now I see why everyone here works so hard," Victor muttered. This was something new he could learn from.

Perhaps, he could also implement a similar system in his textile mill.

"By the way..." Tinkle said hesitantly. "You aren't leaving the rooms vacant, are you? You spent so much money on them. So, are you still living in the tavern?"

"I'll continue to live there," Victor said smilingly. "But the rooms I bought with 4,000 gold royals won't be vacant either."

"But you can't live in two places at the same time."

"It doesn't mean I'm going to use it as a residence. I'm planning to make it as the new headquarters of Lorthar Corporation, the headquarters for 'Rainbow Stone'." In the beginning, Victor had only planned to purchase one room and hang a banner outside to advertise "Rainbow Stone", but Betty's words inspired him. He could use the room for something else.

Chapter 1214: The Second Magic Movie

Two days later, Victor went to the movie theatre.

The premiere of the movie "The Dust of History" was at 3:00 PM. He arrived at the theatre pretty early and waited to check in. The movie theatre had expanded a great deal since his last visit a year ago. There were not only several new movie halls but also a yard and a waiting area for customers. Although Victor came here half an hour early, the hall had been packed when he got here.

"Are you Mr. Gammon from the Chamber of Commerce of the Crescent Moon Bay? Nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you too. I didn't expect to meet such a successful businessman from the Kingdom of Dawn like you."

"Are they actors from Kajen's troupe? I wonder if I could meet Kajen himself."

"Please present me to him if you ever get a chance."

"Sure thing."

The audience started to make conversations. As Victor had expected, those who could afford the premiere were all prominent figures. This was also one of the benefits to attend the premiere.

"Hey, aren't you Mr. Victor? I've heard that you're no longer in the jewelry trade, are you?" someone said to him abruptly.

"I'm still doing my old trade, but the business isn't good at the moment."

"I like your blankets. More customers come to my hotel after I use your products. I would like to order 100 more."

"I'm glad to hear that. We could have a chat after the magic movie."

"Sounds good."

Tinkle's eyes were wide open as she listened to their conversation. To her, it was unimaginable to suddenly have such a big order over a casual chat. When Victor was finally alone, she tugged his sleeve and asked, "Sir, are these people coming here for the movie or business? I notice many of them don't really know you. Aren't you afraid that they're frauds?"

"Don't worry. It's very common among entrepreneurs. Just get used to it," Victor said smilingly. Only successful businessmen were financially capable of attending this grand premiere. To some extent, this premiere told more about their financial status than any jewelry they were wearing, because the theatre experience was, essentially, an intangible service that would not give audience any monetary benefits.

While Victor was explaining to Tinkle, someone bumped into him.

"Ah... sorry," Victor apologized. However, he was rooted to the ground after he saw the woman.

It was a lifeless face, although quite pretty. Perhaps, the lady would have been even prettier than Tinkle had she put on some makeup. Nevertheless, her pale skin and absent look abhorred him. The sullen expression that the woman was wearing formed a glaring contrast with the animated atmosphere in the hall.

The woman did not say anything but simply cast him an indifferent glance before she drifted off.

"What a weird person..." Victor mumbled.

"Sir, the magic movie is starting in a minute. Let's get in," Tinkle, who apparently had not noticed anything, urged while grasping Victor's hand.

"Right... yes," Victor said. He soon put the lady out of his mind and followed Tinkle into the hall.

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"What happened just now?" Joe asked Farrina a little apprehensively.

"Nothing," Farrina answered in a low voice. "Someone bumped into me. Let's go. Since you brought me here, let's just get in."

"R-right," Joe stammered, not sure whether he should hold Farrina's hand, and finally decided not to do so. "Remember that you shall stay with me, no matter what happens."

Farrina remained silent. This was the best she could do to come here with him.

After staying in Neverwinter for nearly half a year, Farrina gradually came to the realization that the ancient witch who claimed to have been living for 400 years did not lie to her. Her wounds slowly healed up. Although the whip and brand marks persisted, she could at least walk on her own. Farrina found herself have nothing to complain about. Had she fallen into any pure witches' hands, she would have suffered more tortures. Neverwinter witches did treat her fairly well.

However, the trial Farrina had been waiting for did not come. She had not even got a chance to meet the King of Graycastle. Farrina was simply questioned by dozens of people. She had even lied, in an attempt to provoke the interrogators, but they simply gave her a searching look with an air of derision.

After Farrina was released from the prison, Joe bought a house to settle her down. Unlike her, Joe, as a former noble, soon found a job at the Administrative Office and quickly adapted to the new environment. If truth be told, Joe should not have been a church member in the first place. However, the life in Neverwinter tormented Farrina. The longer Farrina lived in Neverwinter, the more she realized how wrong the church had been. The witches were not the representation of evil. Apart from magic power, they were no different from ordinary people. Roland Wimbledon did not turn the city into hell with the power of witches but instead made people's life even better.

Farrina was torn between her belief that she had been indebted for half of her life and the glaring reality. Perhaps, this was the trial. Sometimes, it could be more brutal than tortures. She would have ended her own life had Joe not needed her.

Farrina didn't know how long she could live like that. Dimly, she knew the two tickets sent from the Star Flower Troupe would be her last straw. Kajen Fels created this movie on King Roland's request. The sole purpose of this movie was to disclose the truth about the church and thus further secure the dominant position of the Wimbledon Family.

Farrina could imagine that the church would become what everyone loathed after this movie. The sacrifice of Pope Tucker Thor and numerous Judgement Warriors killed in action would then become nothing but a joke.

Farrina did not want this to happen, but she still agreed to come with Joe.

Just as she had not refused the request of the church executives and agreed to stay behind to fight for Hermes.

Because Joe needed her.

Yet this was probably the last thing she could do.

Light gradually faded out.

Darkness fell on the hall, and the magic movie began.

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The story started on the Hermes Plateau 300 years ago when the New Holy City was simply boulders and rocks. A sheer drop of cliffs, the vast bleakness of the land covered in snow, and the great rapture down the Impassable Mountain Range swarmed into his view.

Although Victor had watched magic movies many times, he was still quite shocked as the whole continent dwarfed beneath him.

Across the great rapture, many church members were building their new city, as though this was really what had happened 300 years ago.

A moment later, the audience saw a huge hole in the ground. Victor heard the name "Prival Council", which was the most secretive organization of the church. A murmur, at this point, swept over the hall. Victor knew everybody was as surprised and intrigued as him and believed that this was probably the hidden history once only known to the royal family. Soon, the story caught Victor's attention.

It was rumored that a disastrous war broke out every 400 years. When the war started, a bloody moon would appear in the sky, and many enemies would creep out of hell and crush the mankind. For the sake of the human race, witches offered their blood to warriors and obtained incredible power. This was the truth of the God's Punishment Warriors.

To make sure this plan was successful, witches established the church and started to select potential warriors. The main character of this movie was a witch, and she was also the succeder of the current pope. Another main character was the pope's guardian, the commander of the Judgement Army.

Like the majority of plays, the two main characters, after overcoming the initial prejudice and hostility against each other, finally fell in love. The witch and the guardian promised to each other that once there was a succeder to take over the pope position, they would attend the incarnation ceremony for the God's Punishment Army and never part again.

It was such an ingenious stroke that Kajen Fels told this beautiful love story in such an emotional, unobtrusive manner. The excellent performance of the actors from the Star Flower Troupe further moved the audience. Tinkle even wept when she saw the couple make vows.

However, the situation suddenly turned for the worse. The guardian's father, having a strong desire for power, framed the pope and usurped the throne. The witch, as a candidate for the next pope, naturally became the first obstacle he was going to remove. He thus asked his son to kill the girl, but the guardian refused his request with inflexible determination.

It was a scheme that the usurper had conspired for a long time. When the couple discovered the conspuration, it was too late to change the situation. The couple thus decided to flee Hermes and inform the king situated at the foot of the plateau of this incident. However, the guardian's father sent soldiers to catch them. Apparently, he was determined to kill the young man and the woman.

The movie reached its climax when a battle broke out at the Coldwind Ridge in Graycastle.

A unit of the Judgement Army soon caught up with the witch and the guardian. It seemed that the two unfortunate lovers were doomed.

When the tension between the two parties became almost unbearable, something incredible happened.

"Please, help us! Please!" the guardian yelled, panting, and suddenly turned around. He grasped Victor frantically. Victor felt a coldness steal through him, and he shuddered uncontrollably.

It took him all his efforts not to cry out loud!

"They're there! Get them!"

"Anyone who resists us will be viewed as their accomplices. We're going to kill all of you!" the soldiers shouted, their arms aloft in the air.

"I, I'm not..." Victor said with great difficulties, his throat dry. Words failed him, and the Judgement Warriors had already pulled the trigger.

An arrow brushed past his cheek!

At the same time, Victor felt a sting.

His hand rubbed on his cheek tremulously and he peered down at his fingers.

There was a faint hint of crimson on them.

Chapter 1215: The Reoccurrence of the Legend

Farrina, surprisingly, found that her last straw had not fallen upon her yet.

It was hanging by a thin thread only a few feet above her.

The story portrayed by the magic movie was very similar to the "truth" disclosed by the ancient witch, only that it did not repudiate the church totally. When Farrina saw the main characters make all their efforts to save the church and shoulder the responsibilities of fighting against the enemies from hell, she felt a warmth long since forgotten wash over her.

Her hand balled into a fist when she saw more than half of the executives conspire against the pope, and had a sudden urge to beat them into the ground.

These people forgot the initial purpose of establishing the church and turned the church into a hideous monster.

What she loathed the most was that these executives kept the existence of demons from the public and people who were dedicated to saving the world like Tucker Thor. These faithful warriors did not die for a noble cause as they had believed. Instead, their death merely became a tool that those obnoxious leaders used to keep a firm grip on power.

Farrina should not have put her faith in a church like that.

She did not understand why the King of Graycastle did not reveal the dark side of the church. Wasn't it a perfect opportunity to further criticize the church and wipe it off people's memories?

Or was it because he had never taken the church seriously?

While Farrina was dealing with a multitude of thoughts in her mind, the soldiers from Hermes caught her attention.

For a person who had completely lost hopes, nothing could really perturb her mind. However, now, Farrina was touched, and her power slowly came back to her.

As one of the best soldiers in the Judgement Army, Farrina could sense even the slightest change in the surroundings.

She felt the ground underneath began to quaver.

The ground shook as the Judgement Army drew near.

Farrina had lived in Hermes for five to six years, so she was familiar with the pattering of horse hooves against the ground. She could instantly tell the number of the soldiers and how far they were without even looking at them.

There were 16 horses, two units of troops.

But she knew her feeling was not real. The magic movie was just an illusional image. Even though it felt so real, it was still not reality. As she was totally merged into the surroundings, all her senses had sharpened.

Farrina realized something had changed!

Then she could again feel her body.

"What happened?"

But something more incredible occurred.

She saw other people who were watching the magic movie rise in front of her.

Including Joe.

"Farrina, what the..." Joe asked blankly as he turned around.

Suddenly, a sense of evil foreboding possessed her. Farrina made an abrupt snatch in the air but caught nothing. The chair underneath her had disappeared.

"Please, help us! Please!" the guardian and the witch pleaded hysterically. They had now noticed the audience and started to run toward them.

"The traitors are here! Get them!"

"Anyone who resists us will be viewed as their accomplices. We're going to kill all of you!"

A few more arrows cracked through the air, and people at the front fell.

Most viewers were board members of Chambers of Commerce or members of a prominent family who had never experienced a war. For a second, they were all framed to the spot.

"Damn it!" Farrina swore. What were those witches doing? Was she hallucinating? Farrina would have shouted "This is a nasty snare set up by the witches. Everyone, follow me" in the past to calm down the audience. However, she fought down the urge, pushed Joe aside and rushed up to the front before all the audience. She yelled, "Stop! I'm the commander of the Vanguard Battalion of the Judgement Army, Farrina! Who are you?"

The soldiers reined their horses and asked, "The Vanguard Battalion? How come I've never heard of it?"

"Oi, what's your commander's name?"

"The Great Priest of the Prival Council, Sir Tayfun," Farrina lied. In the meantime, she put her hand at her back and gestured the couple to hand her a weapon.

"What?" Hearing Farrina's answer, the leader of the unit hesitated.

The guard wavered as he heard the name "Prival Council". Apparently, this secretive organization had quite a deep influence on church members. Yet Farrina knew it would not completely stop them. The Priest was obviously not as influential as the new throned pope.

She must fight before the other party did!

Unfortunately, the guardian did not really understand her gesture. He simply shuffled toward her with a sword in his hand.

"Why aren't you wearing the armor of the Judgement Army?" the soldier asked as he got off his horse and motioned his men to come with him.

"Because we're on a special mission," Farrina said placidly.

"I'm sorry. I must bring the traitors back to Hermes. This is the pope's order. Also, I must take you as well. I'm sure Sir Tayfun would understand it."

"Is there no alternative?"

"No," the soldier said resolutely while placing his hand on the hilt.

"Alright, I'll come with you," Farrina sighed. "As for Sir Tayfun..."

"What's the matter with him?"

"He's dead — only 300 years later." At these words, Farrina quickly drew out the guardian's sword and thrust it through the unit leader's helmet.

Blood spilled all over her.

"C-captain!"

"Kill them!"

Farrina grabbed the unit leader's weapon and fought fiercely against the other soldiers. The guardian finally realized what was happening and also joined her.

"This woman is — so difficult to deal with!"

"Darn it! Where's my bow? Shoot her!"

"Don't let the witch go!"

It was total chaos. Many people fell to the ground, and the audience goggled at the screen, flabberghasted.

Farrina knew there was no chance of winning since she was not wearing an armor. They had 16 people whereas there were only two of them. It was a matter of time that she got injured.

Soon she was wounded, but the pain searing through her did not slow her down. On the contrary, she fought even more ferociously.

For the first time since she had waken up, Farrina felt contented.

"How dare you defy the church!" the soldiers bellowed.

"The church? No... you don't deserve calling that name!" Farrina said while glaring at them. "It shouldn't have been like that. You destroyed it. You failed us!"

She would soon end up dying here, but somehow, Farrina was satisfied with this ending. In that split second, she had finally become the type of person she wanted to be.

However, death did not come.

A few gun shots cracked through the air over the clatter of swords. Farrina turned around and saw the men in black who had been guarding the yard suddenly appear in the magic movie. Their situation immediately changed. The enemies seemed to be frightened by those reinforcements. They got on their horses and soon disappeared in the mountain range, leaving the bodies of their fellow companions behind.

"Thank you..." said the wounded guardian and the witch as they limped to Farrina. "I thought my father has completely controlled the church, but I didn't expect that there were still loyal warriors like you."

"I thought there was no hope, but God hasn't abandoned us," the witch said while raising her tear-glazed face and smiled at Farrina. "You not only saved us but also the entire human race."

"I..." Farrina opened her mouth but did not know what to say.

"We're going to Graycastle next and tell their king about the coup that occurred on the Hermes Plateau. We hope it's not too late," the guardian said solemnly. "Run! Never come back to the Holy City again. We'll meet again once the church's mistake is rectified. Take care, my friend!"

Light gradually faded out as the couple disappeared from her view.

When the light was on again, Farrina found herself still sitting in the hall on her chair.

Even her wounds as a result of the battle had disappeared.

Was she really hallucinating?

"Good Lord... this is amazing!" The hall exploded into a tidal wave of applause as the audience came back to the present.

"Good heavens! I feel I'm changing the history..."

"What a brilliant masterpiece. I would be willing to pay 100 gold royals to watch it one more time, let alone 50!"

"You scared the hell out of me when you rushed to the front," Joe said while patting his chest. "It's so amazing to conceive such a story and make it so lifelike..."

Farrina did not answer, but she noticed the men in black looked around nervously with guns in their hands, as though something out of their expectation had happened. Two other theatre staff members dashed to the backstage, looking equally flustered.

This did not look like a great success at all.

Farrina held her breath, trying to figure out what was going on based on the few signs she had discovered. Suddenly, she heard distant explosions and people cry and execrate, but these voices were overpowered by the heated discussion in the hall.

This did not look right.

Farrina realized that something was wrong here.

She rose to her feet abruptly. Under the surprised gaze of Joe, Farrina passed the audience at the back and ran out of the room.

"Stop! You... hold on!" the men in black yelled, attempting to stop her, but it was too late.

Farrina ran across the yard and reached the street outside.

Neverwinter was in a state of chaos. Many people were running and shouting. Several residential areas had caught a fire. She heard more explosions in the industrial zone, and the whole city seemed to be out of control.

What scared her most was something above.

Darkness pressed in, and the sun had vanished into the thin air. A huge crimson moon appeared in the sky like a giant eye that snapped open.

Chapter 1216: A Chain Reaction

Not only Neverwinter citizens saw the Bloody Moon.

Margaret was standing at the bow of the "Snow Wind" early this morning while gazing at the distant ocean. It had been 66 days since they had crossed the Sealine. Ocean waves rushed toward them, high at one time and low at another. Their movements were almost the same as the waves at the Shadow Waters thousands of miles away as if the two types of waves shared the same origin.

If the Swirling Sea did have a source, it must be the greatest discovery in the history of time.

Margaret was confident that the ocean waves would lead her to her final destination, and she also put great faith in the "Snow Wind".

The "Snow wind" did not require a sail to proceed against gusts of wind and rushes of rain. Since the ship was colossal, they could put plenty of food and water on it. Thanks to this robust and sturdy iron ship, not a single ship fell behind in this expedition.

She believed that Thunder would definitely make some spectacular discovery during this journey.

"Any luck?" a familiar voice said to her from behind.

Margaret turned around and said smilingly, "If I did find something, I would have informed the lookouts perched on the mast. So, you should have asked them first."

The person who was speaking to her was none other than the captain of the fleet, Thunder.

"I don't think so," he said brightly. "Perhaps they've found something already but are too shocked to say anything."

Margaret stifled her laughter. She knew Thunder was referring to what had happened when they had crossed the Sealine. When the horizon became vertical, even the most experienced sailor had failed to react promptly. Everyone had fallen off the watchtower as the world had turned upside down, their legs too shaky to support them.

Seasoned sailors would normally cling to cables and masts in the event of a storm to prevent themselves from falling off the ship. However, the Sealine rendered all the common senses they had useless.

Thunder said while shrugging, "According to my intelligence, the Chambers of Commerce would later change their lookouts. They'll have the boldest person on their ship to serve as a lookout. Shame on them."

"Really?" Margaret said while shaking her head. "But I believe after the experience at the Sealine, nothing could really perturb them anymore."

"Who knows?" Thunder said while patting Margaret on the shoulder. His voice suddenly lowered. "Don't worry. Joan will be fine."

Margaret's smile faltered. She nodded resolutely and said, "Yes, she was born to live in the ocean. I'm sure we'll meet her again somewhere soon."

Being optimistic was an important ability for explorers. Margaret knew worrying would not help with anything. What she should do was to pull herself together and move on.

"By the way, the meeting is about to start," Thunder said after a moment of silence. "The other captains are already there. Come to the cabin with me."

"Okay, got it."

All the captains gathered to discuss the route, the status of their ships, and resources. They held this meeting every three or four days to make sure the whole fleet was on the right track.

Just at that time, Thunder and Margaret noticed that the seawater was suddenly awash with a sheet of a strange red color.

The sailors on the deck were all frozen to the spot, gazing at the far distance as if seeing something incredible.

A little farther on, several people fell off the mast and to the deck, as though they had seen the Sealine again. It really surprised Margaret.

Weren't they the boldest people on the ship?

Margaret turned around slowly, and the next moment, all her blood froze.

A gigantic, crimson round celestial object hung low over the horizon, far larger than the sun. It just came out of nowhere!

"In the name of Three God," Margaret mumbled. "Is this what His Majesty called the Bloody Moon?"

But Thunder did not speak. It was such a terrifying scene that even Thunder failed to formulate a proper answer.

A long whistle pierced the air.

It was the "Snow Wind".

The shriek of the ship shattered the dead silence and jerked everyone out of the trance.

The whistle indicated there were enemies!

Margaret and Thunder exchanged dark looks and ran toward the bridge.

"What happened?" Thunder yelled as he darted into the command room.

"There are... ships," his first mate stammered, "coming from the southeast... toward us..."

"What?" Thunder said. He quickly snatched the telescope from the first mate and looked in the direction the latter had pointed out.

Margaret's heart sank to the bottom. They were now thousands of miles away from the Shadow Waters. They hardly saw any birds around this area, let alone ships.

This was a new sea never intruded by human beings!

She thus got a pair of telescope from another sailor and looked in the same direction.

"Jesus..."

Margaret gasped. Two shadows were floating on the surface of the water. They had no sail but were proceeding against the water. What was more horrific was that the seawater around them was boiling, as though numerous fishes were coming with them.

However, Margaret soon noticed that what seemed to be fishes were actually the last thing explorers wanted to see.

They were sea ghosts.

Their fins slid in and out of their views. Sometimes, they leaped out of the water, throwing a splatter of water that reflected off the sinister red sheen of the Bloody Moon, which reminded Margaret of a pack of sharks vying for food.

"On my order, all the ships turn about!" Thunder yelled. "Full sail! Advance in full sail! Everyone, ready for the war!"

"Yes, sir!"

"We've got trouble..." the captain of the "Tuna" swallowed hard.

"May the God of Ocean bless us," the other captains all prayed.

Fjords people knew that no ship could outstrip a sea ghost, which meant their enemies would soon catch up with them.

Their situation worsened every minute.

As the two shadows got closer, Margaret saw what they looked like. They were half in the shape of a ship and half a skeleton of a monster, something that would have only appeared in one's nightmare. Their ribs exhaled clouds of dark green objects, and they were now only a dozen miles away from them!

When the dark green object fell into the water, the ocean stirred. Apparently, nobody wanted to be hit by such an ominous thing.

Thunder remained unflappable and issued another order. "Abandon all the food and supplies. Keep half of the drinking water only... No, just keep 30% of them and accelerate!"

Astonished, Margaret said, "Then we won't be able to explore."

"And it's probably not going to be enough for us to return to Neverwinter..." the first mate said hesitantly.

"We could fish and collect rain." Thunder took a sharp intake of breath and said, "However, if we could not outrun those sea ghosts and monsters, we'll all end up dying here. The exploration is over. Now, our goal is... to survive!"

Chapter 1217: The Doomsday (I)

In the Snow Reflection Castle in the Kingdom of Everwinter.

"Your, your lordship... the Army of Graycastle retreated!" When a guard rushed into the castle hall and reported the news, all the nobles rested their eyes on him.

"Are you sure?" Earl Marwayne asked as he stood bolt upright.

"I'm positive. More than one scout has confirmed that," guard said while nodding vigorously. "Some people saw them empty their campsite overnight and also abandon a lot of food."

"They're... finally gone!" exclaimed the earl who burst into a roar of laughter. His heart instantly lightened. A month ago, Graycastle men had suddenly appeared in the Kingdom of Everwinter and soon taken over many port cities. They accepted neither their surrender nor presents but started to evacuate the cities immediately. Their barbarous behavior was even more outrageous than the church's. At least, the church would provide them with an opportunity to negotiate.

The reason provided by the Graycastle men was also quite ludicrous. They claimed that the Bloody Moon would bring swift destruction to the kingdom. Therefore, everyone must leave as soon as

possible. This was the land passed down by generations, and the earl would not allow anyone to take it away from him. Neither the church nor Graycastle could do that!

"Your lordship," a withered, ancient scholar said oily, "the so-called full moon, sickle moon, dark moon and Bloody Moon are simply astronomical phenomena. They appear every now and then. If they believe that it omens ill, then let them do so. As long as your lordship holds onto this land, they can't do anything about it."

"That's right, the treacherous precipices around the Snow Reflection Castle will protect you from any invasion."

"We won't yield even if the Graycastle men are willing to negotiate."

"The church threatened you first as well, but in the end, they had no choice but to promote you to bishop."

His other henchmen all rejoined.

Earl Marwayne became more and more confident. As he gazed at the sinister Bloody Moon that had emerged three days ago through the window, his fear gradually dissolved into gratitude. Had the Bloody Moon not appeared just in time, the Graycastle men would have continued to advance, and he would have definitely lost his precious Snow Reflection Castle.

Although the earl had heard that those barbarians rarely attack or interfere with a city ruled by a noble, taking away his people was intolerable.

If all the surrounding cities were evacuated, who could he rely on during the Months of Demons?

Like his henchmen had said, this city was his asset. It was to the north of the king's city, situated among precipices. The gaps between the city and the precipices were around a few miles to hundreds of meters wide, connected by suspension bridges. These gaps were actually wide enough to house a few castles.

His ancestors picked this isolated land to build their castle because this area was well fortified. In fact, the Snow Reflection Castle had never fallen. Even though the Church of Hermes had conquered the entire Kingdom of Everwinter in a very short period of time, they had never managed to drive their army into the Snow Reflection Castle. Instead, they had sent ambassadors to negotiate with the lord and promised him that he could continue to rule this land as long as he pledged fealty to the church. This was what a normal person would do.

That was why the earl maintained his silence for such a long time, hoping to sell the city at the best price.

However, he could not accept Wimbledon's conditions.

Earl Marwayne did not think that the demons referred to by the Graycastle men would invade his castle. The towering cliffs were natural defense. However, he needed surrounding towns and cities to provide him with resources. Without people, his current stockpile would be exhausted eventually.

Fortunately, these Graycastle men all fled when they saw the Bloody Moon.

"Mr. Zac, what should I do next?" Marwayne asked the old scholar.

"Haha, of course we should launch an attack at them," Zac replied while stroking his long beard.

The earl stiffened. Attacking was a completely different story. He would have never defied the King of Graycastle had he not had this geographical advantage.

"Rest assured. I'm not asking you to attack the Graycastle men directly. However, you could seize the territories they looted. Look, the scouts said the Graycastle soldiers are scattered around. Each unit only contains around 100 soldiers. How many resources and supplies could they take away with so few of them?"

Marwayne's eyes glistened with excitement. He said, "You mean..."

The scholar nodded smilingly and said, "Those people who left with the Graycastle soldiers must have left a lot of their possessions behind. If we trace them down, we could probably retrieve some resources."

For example, food that was not easy to carry along.

Marwayne thus summoned his Chief Knight in excitement. While he was about to issue an order, a guard suddenly burst in and yelled, "Your, your lordship... there's a demon... outside the castle!"

"What demon?" the earl asked while scoffing at him. "You believe the nonsense those Graycastle men said?"

"P-pray forgive me, your lordship, but it..." the guard stammered in a hollow sort of voice. "But it isn't human indeed!"

Not human?

Everyone looked one another in bewilderment.

Marwayne's heart leaped to his throat. However, as the lord of the Snow Reflection Castle, he must maintain his composure.

The earl thus put up a straight face and said, "Well, take me there. Let's see what it actually is. I'm very curious about what the creatures living in hell look like."

...

With that being said, Marwayne still put on his best armor and took the largest God's Stone of Retaliation with him before he ascended the city wall. A dozen guards erected "a wall of shields" in front of him.

He felt hugely relieved when he saw the demon. The demon was, as his guard had suggested, alone.

It was standing on a protruding rock instead of the city wall. The rock was a little taller than the wall, right in front of which was the fathomless abyss. The patrolling knights had already ordered their squires to set up catapults and were ready to shoot their arrows.

After studying the demon for a while, Marwayne noticed that it was indeed not remotely human. The demon had hands and feet, but it had a much larger build than an ordinary man, its skin blue, with

protruding veins running underneath. The biggest difference lay in the tentacles that sprouted from its cheeks, chin and elbows. Marwayne was disgusted about those wriggling tentacles.

To his surprise, the demon's eyes were shut as if it was sleeping. Marwayne did not feel it threatening at all.

Marwayne wondered if the demon's visit was really the result of the Bloody Moon, but he soon convinced himself that this was a pretext the Graycastle men used to persuade ignorant villagers to leave the country. This monster definitely had nothing to do with the rumored doomsday. He just needed to ask his soldiers to shoot arrows, and then the demon would be dead.

At this thought, Marwayne took a deep breath and yelled, "Listen, you filthy, revolting monster! I'm the lord of the Snow Reflection Castle, Marwayne Caso. You illegally entered my territory. If you want to live, on your knees and surrender. This is your only choice. Otherwise, the icy abyss beneath will be the place you find your perpetual peace!"

Marwayne did not think the demon understood him. His hot statement was more like a demonstration of his own bravery than a warning to the demon.

If he scared away this demon that the Graycastle men were afraid of, then he would definitely rise to fame.

"My patience is limited. I'll count to five — five, four!"

In the meantime, Marwayne motioned his soldiers to get ready to shoot.

"Three..."

The demon's eyes snapped open. It bellowed, "Enough!"

Its voice pierced the air like thunders and rang off the precipices. Numerous icicles fell off as the cliffs shook. Marwayne felt the ground was about to shatter. There was a ringing silence, and he took a few steps backward in terror and fell to the ground.

Chapter 1218: Doomsday (II)

This monster... could speak human language!

The earl was reddened to temples when the guard helped him up. He had intended to exhibit his authority and valor in front of the demon to impress the other nobles. He had not expected, however, that the demon would uncover his carefully disguised gallantry with just one single word. What was more mortifying was that the demon was alone.

"Damn it. I must kill this monster!"

Marwayne raised his hand while gritting his teeth. He was about to order the soldiers to shoot when the old scholar suddenly stopped him and blinked. His lips took shape of a silent "stay put".

It took the earl a few seconds to realize that he should not lose his composure at the moment. Since the demon could talk, there was a possibility of negotiation and communication. Considering the situation

was uncertain at this point, it was unwise to resort to force. The earl realized that the rumor circulated by the Graycastle men did cloud his judgement, for he had also, for a split second, viewed the demon as his enemy.

Perhaps, the demon came here alone as an ambassador.

Why did he take no action in the first place but stood upon the city wall while doing nothing?

If the demon was ferocious like what Graycastle men had said, it should have raided the surrounding villages unprotected by the city wall a long time ago.

The more Marwayne contemplated the matter, the more convinced he was. Had he killed the ambassador, he would have bred enmity with the demon, which was exactly what the Graycastle men wanted.

However, the earl found it hard to change his hostile attitude so quickly and sit down to talk in an amicable manner, for just a moment ago, he had commanded the demon to kneel down.

Fortunately, the old scholar understood the earl's dilemma. He stepped forward and said, "Impertinent! If you can speak our language, why didn't you tell us the purpose of your trip? Our lord kindly gives you another chance to speak. What's your intention of coming here?"

Marwayne praised the old scholar internally. He had paid 10 gold royals for the service of this former butler at the king's city.

"Before I answer you, I have a question for you," the demon said placidly. "What's your relationship... with the human beings on the Fertile Plains."

The Fertile Plains? Where was it? They exchanged confused looks, utterly bemused.

But Marwayne was now very sure that this monster was an ambassador.

"I don't know where the Fertile Plains is," the old scholar replied again. "One place may have different names in different parts of the kingdom. We are of different races, and we may have very different ways to call a city. Bring a map, and I may tell you where it is."

"No, you humans came up with this name, and I'm just borrowing it." The demon then shook his head and said, "I see... I can't believe you're still like hundreds of years ago where each lord circled out their own territories without knowing anything about this world. I was expecting to see you yield to your fate in disbelief, terror and despair, but it seems that I was wrong."

What did it mean? What monstrous absurdity it was talking about. The earl frowned. For a moment, he seemed to capture a faint hint of disappointment in its horrific countenance.

"Are you referring to... the Graycastle men?" the Chief Knight suddenly asked.

"Yes?" the demon said while looking toward him.

"They've been saying that demons will creep out of hell when the Bloody Moon appears. They're gone now," the knight said contemptuously. "If you go after them now, you may be able to catch a glimpse of them at the port in the east."

"Really?" the demon said as it gazed upon the east, and then turned around again. "I'll go, but not now. Since you know nothing about the Fertile Plains, then I'll cut the crap."

"I'm the Sky Lord, the commander of the Western Front Army. Thousands of years ago, your race and my race made an agreement to fight against the witches and their underlings. Your ancestors agreed to serve us. I granted them land, power and wealth. This contract has yet been terminated. It won't terminate until the war ends. You, as the descendants of your ancestors, should continue to serve us," the demon proclaimed in a booming voice. "Now, I command you to offer this city in accordance with the terms set out in this contract and serve me!"

Earl Marwayne gaped. This demon was crazy! Who cared about a contract signed 1,000 years ago? He would not even take a contract after a lapse of two years seriously. What kind of stupid commander of the Western Front Army was! What kind of commander would come in person alone? This monster was out of its mind!

"What if I disagree?" the earl said defiantly. His patience was exhausted.

"Death will let you yield," the demon who called himself the Sky Lord said. "Look, this is your fate."

The earl looked up and saw the distant mountains had been enveloped by a thin mist. It was not the mist he normally saw in the Impassable Mountain Range but a horrendous, crimson one. The earl was not sure if it was because of the Bloody Moon or it was the color of the mist itself.

Another peculiar phenomenon he noticed was that the red mist did not float in the air but slowly flowed down the mountains, forming a hazy "waterfall".

Was the demon waiting for this moment?

Marwayne felt a jolt of uneasiness at the pit of his stomach. He cast a glance at his equally disturbed knights and squires and knew he must take action now.

"With you alone?" the earl said through clenched teeth and gestured his soldiers. "I've given you a chance. Kill it!"

The knights and guards finally pulled themselves together. They immediately released the arrows, which whistled in the air and streaked toward the demon.

However, not a single arrow hit it.

Everyone goggled incredulously. The demon dived into a black hole and vanished from their sight.

"Damn it. It has magic power," the Chief Knight said in a low voice. "Then how's it different from the witches?"

"No worries. We're all wearing a God's Stone of Retaliation. Magic power won't hurt us!" Marwayne yelled as he clutched the pendant in front of his chest. "Find and kill it!"

"The d-demon is there!" a guard shouted.

Within a second, the demon had flown over the abyss and landed silently on the street behind the city wall.

The earl was alarmed when he saw that the demon could instantly pass the precipices. Now, he was more certain that this dangerous monster, whether it was an ambassador or not, must be exterminated. After all, it was alone. "Shoot the God Stone arrows. Treat it as a witch! 100 Gold Royals for anyone who could kill it!"

As all the knights and guards charged at the demon, the demon slowly raised its arms.

The next moment, a "black screen" around hundreds of meters wide appeared abruptly behind the demon and blocked the street and houses like a wall.

What was it playing at? Was it planning to hide?

However, the earl soon found the answer.

Thick Red Mist suddenly flooded all over the black screen! Then a group of monster he had never beheld rushed out of the screen and clashed with the knights who dashed forward. The God's Stone did not help at all. The knights were thrown into the air by the howling monsters before they landed heavily a few meters away. The knights coughed out blood, their chests sinking. Apparently, there was no chance for them to survive.

Nevertheless, this was just the beginning of the nightmare.

More monsters came out of the black screen, bowed to the Sky Lord, and joined the battle. Every monster was far stronger and larger than an ordinary man. Soon, they gained the top of the city wall and began to slaughter the soldiers. The soldiers were torn into pieces, their blood and broken limbs flying in all directions.

Within seven or eight minutes, the city had been filled with painful groans. Many people were heading to the city gate, in an attempt to escape but they were stopped by the icy abyss.

Marwayne felt his legs give away. He staggered and fell to the ground. This time, nobody came to help him up.

His guard had been ripped apart by the demons.

His precious Snow Reflection Castle, the land passed down by generations that he took pride in, fell.

The air was heavy with pungent Red Mist, and this city had completely become a living hell.

Through the Mist, the Bloody Moon appeared to be even more gruesome.

The earl now understood what a doomsday looked like.

The end of Volume II: The Battle of Doomsday

Chapter 1219: The Investigation of the Abnormal Phenomenon

In Neverwinter, Graycastle.

The Police Department was stirred. Everyone was busy issuing orders and making reports. The appearance of the Bloody Moon became the latest topic of discussion, and the whole organization went on a sort of "rampage".

The Police Department kept close watch on the new king's city of Graycastle where Roland lived. They make records of every single trivial matter that occurred in the king's city, and certainly a major event like a fire or an explosion would be big news.

Carter Lannis had not slept for two days. After calming down his frightened wife, he immediately devoted himself to work. As the Chief Knight, he was obligated to protect the king and eliminate anyone who attempted to stir up trouble. Usually, multiple incidents implied an active underground criminal group. Therefore, he sent for the Neverwinter Detective Group at once to assist with the investigation. Carter believed that he would soon get to the bottom of it and find out the culprit.

However, after he submitted a number of reports, the king founded a Joint Investigation Team comprised of the Witch Union, the Security Bureau of Kingdom, and the Administrative Office to investigate the new magic movie instead of the crimes in the city.

"Sir, we brought the witnesses," a knight whispered to Carter. "Would you like to start the interrogation now?"

Carter drained his teacup and said with a firm nod, "Yes, let's get started. Send everyone in."

"Yes, sir."

Since they were making an inquiry to witnesses rather than prisoners, the interrogation took place in an office so that the witnesses would feel more comfortable to come forward with information. Apart from Carter himself who joined the Joint Investigation Team, Ms. Agatha and the assistant director of the Security Bureau, Vader, also took part in the investigation.

The first witness was a 21-year-old maid working in a hotel. She was not an official Neverwinter resident and had no criminal records.

She looked pretty nervous, for she kept rubbing her hands against the chair.

Carter cast a glance at the materials he had regarding this maid and asked sternly, "You're Miss Tinkle, right? I'm curious. The ticket price for the premiere of the movie 'The Dust of History' is 50 gold royals. How are you able to afford it?"

"Sir, I didn't steal or rob!" Tinkle explained hotly. "My customer, Mr. Victor, has a lot of money and he paid for me. There were many people in the hall that day, and I swear I'm not lying!"

Carter had conducted a background check before this interrogation. He reiterated the question simply to pressure the witness to tell the truth, as Miss Nightingale was not here to help him detect lies. Carter thus said, "Victor, right? I'll question him later. Now, let's talk about what you saw after the movie."

"Yes, sir..." the maid answered tremulously. "I didn't know what had happened at that time. Everything seemed so unreal."

15 minutes later, Tinkle finished her story. "Fortunately, the police repelled the soldiers. Otherwise, I couldn't imagine what would have happened to these two people."

Carter frowned. He had also watched the magic movie. "The Wolf Princess" was quite impressive but it was definitely not something so strange like that.

"Are you sure that the soldiers' weapons hurt the audience?"

"I... No, I'm not sure, but Mr. Victor did bleed, and I heard other people scream. I don't think they were faking this up."

"Do you remember when this happened?"

"About 10 minutes before the ending? Possibly even earlier than that... Sorry, I was too scared at that time to watch the movie, so Mr. Victor held me in his arms."

"Do you have anything else to ask?" Carter asked the other two investigators.

Agatha said thoughtfully, "If I remember correctly, the characters in the magic movie talked to you, right?" She then held up a picture and asked, "Is he this person?"

It was an actor from the Star Flower Troupe, who played the guardian of the witch in the movie.

"Yes, it's him. I remember very clearly that he thanked us!"

Carter felt a chill run down his spine. He knew that once the filming was completed, nobody could modify the contents of the movie. It was impossible for the characters to communicate with the audience.

Seeing that neither Agatha nor Vader have other questions, Carter waved his hand and said, "Bring in the next witness."

The statements of the other witnesses were pretty much identical. In short, the magic movie had suddenly become alive. Although they later confirmed that the incident was just a part of the movie, it did occur in real life. As multiple people gave the same story, Carter judged that this was not a hallucination.

Carter had been focused on the fire and explosion before, so he had not paid much attention to the incident in the movie theater. Now, he somehow understood why the king wanted to investigate this matter.

"The next witness is a police officer who was guarding the yard when the incident happened. He's the captain of Team No. 2."

"Let him in."

The captain was apparently more composed than the other witnesses. He quickly related the story. "I first heard someone cry for help outside. When I was about to get into the theater, I saw a red moon in the sky. To be honest, I was a little hesitant at that moment, as I didn't know whether I should remain in my post or help those people. Just at that time, a witch ran out of the theater and asked me to bring my men and protect the audience."

"And then you shot the soldiers in the magic movie?"

"It sounds very strange but that's what I did. They're probably just actors, but at that time, they did pose a real threat to the audience. I didn't think I was hallucinating, so I immediately fired."

The second last witness was the witch who broadcasted the movie on that day, Nightfall.

"What could I do? I was desperate. Normally, whoever has excess magic power would activate the Sigil of Recording. How do I know that this would happen?" Nightfall ranted. "Everything went well at first. Then, suddenly, the Sigil pushed me out. I should have immediately cut off the magic power but it didn't stop. I wanted to wake up the audience, but they were in a trance. Anyway, I did all I could. At last, I had no choice but to seek the police for help."

Agatha twitched her lips and asked, "The Sigil... pushed you out?"

"Pretty much like that. I felt a great force repelling me. The more magic power I put in, the greater this repulsive force was. Then, everything went back to normal."

"Alright. Next."

Carter was momentarily stunned when the last witness came in. The witness was none other than the screenwriter of the movie, Kajen Fels.

His hand clenched in a fist as soon as he sat down.

"In the name of God, this is definitely the most brilliant play I've ever watched in my life!"

"You were in the theater at that time?" Carter said while knitting his brows. As Kajen had once argued with Carter's wife, Carter did not like this famous screenwriter very much. "I looked at the list of customers. You were not on there."

"He was at the backstage. There are special seats for staff members. In fact, the members of the Star Flower Troupe didn't need to buy tickets to watch the show. Didn't your wife tell you that?" Agatha supplied the answer. "Actually, Kajen reported the incident to me and that's why His Majesty asked the Witch Union to investigate the matter."

"I apologize, but this is a personal habit of mine," Kajen said while placing his hand on his chest. "I like to watch my own play secretly so that I would know how my audience like the show. Ms. May knows it so she didn't tell you." Kajen's voice was again alive with excitement. "I have to admit that this is a miracle in the history of magic movie, because the audience changed the ending!"

"What did you say?" Carter asked in surprise.

"You heard it right, Mr. Knight. This wasn't my story!" Kajen Fels said eloquently while flailing his arms. "The original story has a sad ending. The guardian acts as a decoy to protect the witch. He then falls off the cliff. However, the audience saved them both. Is there anything better than that?"

The Chief Knight goggled at Kajen.

"I didn't write those lines. The audience created this spectacular ending. Like the characters in the movie said, the audience saved them and altered their fate!" Kajen gradually raised his voice. "This is the ultimate play that I've been trying to create for my whole life. If you find out the reason why, please tell me, please!"

Chapter 1220: The Origin of the Story

Roland had the most hectic week since his ascendance to the throne.

There had been various subtle indications that the Bloody Moon would arrive a lot earlier than usual, and he had been preparing for that day for a long time. However, unlike what the church had predicted that it would appear in 10 years or as the Taquila witches had anticipated in two to three years, the Bloody Moon emerged above the Western Region right after the implementation of the immigration policy, so suddenly that its appearance had caught everyone offguard.

And that was not the end of it.

A week ago, various urgent reports had been sent from numerous cities to Roland informing him of the abnormal astronomical phenomenon. It seemed that nobody had seen the Bloody Moon approach the city. The Bloody Moon appeared to have always been there, being invisible to people until very recently.

Roland found that he had developed this "Bloody Moon Complex". Whatever he was doing, he always had a tendency to turn to the window and daze at the Bloody Moon outside. The moon was enveloped by a red haze but was not completely obscured. Roland sometimes had an illusion that the Bloody Moon was also gazing back at him.

According to the Union, the emergence of the Bloody Moon meant the beginning of the Battle of Divine Will, which Roland had been preparing for over the past few years. However, when it was actually time to fight, he felt everything become somewhat surreal. No news came from the Fertile Plains, and he had not heard anything from the scouts in the north either. Neverwinter appeared to be the only city affected by the incident. The Administrative Office sent in a report every half an hour, but none of them was relevant to the demons.

"Your Majesty?" Nightingale's voice jerked Roland out of the trance. "You're staring at the sky again."

Roland blinked and was suddenly back to the present. "Ah... sorry. I couldn't help — "

Nightingale fed him a piece of dried fish and cut across him, "Don't apologize. There's nothing wrong with staring at the moon. You've been exhausted lately. I'm happy that you take a break every now and then. Do you want my company? Since the Bloody Moon has something to do with the Divine Will, let's study it together."

Amused, Roland took the dried fish and shook his head. Nightingale always had ways to justify her eccentric behavior. He replied, "I have a lot to do. Keep an eye on me. You mustn't let me slack off. Understood?"

Nightingale twitched her lips and went back to her couch.

Roland took a deep breath and returned to the stack of reports on his desk.

The Bloody Moon seemed to have caused more trouble than the demons. According to the statistics from the Administrative Office and the Security Bureau, there had been four fires and 16 crimes in Neverwinter in the past one week. Anna had also reported 21 deaths in the plants caused by malfunction of machinery. More than 500 people were injured, and 90% of injuries had occurred within

24 hours of the appearance of the Bloody Moon. This was the most chaotic moment in Neverwinter in the history of time.

At first, Roland had thought the Bloody Moon induced panic to the masses. However, after he analyzed the patterns of all these incidents, he found it was not that simple. Therefore, he asked the Joint Investigation Team to further investigate the matter, and the result was quite surprising. Those incidents were actually caused by the fluctuation of magic power brought about by the Bloody Moon.

The reports submitted by Agatha detailed the chain of events.

The Bloody Moon had appeared at around 5:35 PM. All the devices driven by magic power in Neverwinter were, more or less, affected. For example, the ending of the magic movie "The Dust of History" had suddenly changed, and the audience had failed to distinguish illusions from reality. The electric circuits in the industrial zone were overloaded, and some machine tools powered by Dawn I stopped working. The most serious accident took place in Machinery Plant 1. One old boiler suddenly exploded, and hot steam burned the workers. Subsequent investigation showed that due to the outdated technologies, the boiler had been posing potential safety hazards for a long time, although Candle had, at one point, remoulded some of its important parts, including its valve.

Testimonies from multiple witnesses proved that order had been re-established in 10 minutes. The various accidents further created chaos and made many people believe that the demons were invading Neverwinter. Although the plant workers had all received emergency training, the evacuation did not go very well. The death toll would have probably continued to increase had Neverwinter not established an advanced public health system. Meanwhile, Nana's contribution to reducing the death was also phenomenal.

Roland had thought the Union had known that such things would happen upon the emergence of the Bloody Moon, but the truth was that none of the Taquila witches had heard about it. It appeared that the previous two appearances of the Bloody Moon did not bring such a huge impact on people's daily life, as magic power had not been widely used among the public back then.

Considering that people still suffered from the aftermath of the incidents, and nobody knew whether there would be a second round of magic power fluctuation, workers in the plants conducted a thorough inspection and removed all the outdated machines. The Administrative Office also prepared a new contingency plan, which included how to stay calm upon emergencies. The term "magic-caused accident" was used in official documents for the first time.

As for the magic movie, it was broadcasted again in the theatre after a brief suspension that had lasted for three days. The public went crazy for the movie, and the theater was packed with people who had heard about what had happened during the premiere. Practically everyone came for the movie, in a hope of "changing the history". Even though the magic movie now followed its original storyline, the masses were still quite frenzied.

This was probably one of the very few pieces of good news in the past one week.

Nonetheless, the multiple accidents deterred Roland from using the Cube-powered steam engine right away. He wanted to first figure out whether the fluctuation of magic power occurred only upon the

appearance of the Bloody Moon, or it actually caused continuous events during the whole period of the Battle of Divine Will.

If it only occurred when the Bloody Moon appeared, he was totally fine with that. Roland wanted to defeat the demons, and both Dawn I and the Magic Cube were the key to the victory. They also played an important role in the industrialization of Graycastle. Once the public benefited from these two types of machines, they would soon get addicted to them. However, if the fluctuation would continue to exist until the end of the war, Roland would have to take the potential risks into consideration.

Just then, the telephone rang. It was from the Administrative Office.

Normally, only the director, Barov, would use this line.

Roland heaved a sigh and picked up the phone. "What's the matter now?"

"No, Your Majesty..." Barov said hesitantly. "Astrologer of Dispersion Star just burst into my office and told me that he made a major discovery about the Bloody Moon. He hopes... No, you must come to the observatory and see it for yourself."