

Witch 1261

Chapter 1261: A City Beyond Understanding

“Such a brilliant battle,” Sylvie commented involuntarily. U.p.dated. by

“Yes,” Tilly agreed smilingly and cast an airy look at Camilla. In the end, even Camilla was fascinated by the battle and started to watch the two biplanes attentively.

When Plane No. 2 successfully shook off its opponent with the help of the upwind, Tilly knew there would soon be a winner.

However, the result was not important anymore.

She saw what she wanted.

For example, when a plane was outnumbered and cornered, the dominant party took control of the air space and the pace of the battle.

Nevertheless, this was not an inflexible rule. The outcome of the battle was always subject to change depending on the dynamics between the two parties. By changing formations and tactics, the party in disadvantage could also defeat the party taking control.

Given that, teamwork seemed to be extremely important when fighting even more cunning Devilbeasts.

Another thing she had noticed was that the plane above had a better chance to win. Therefore, the best way to start a battle would be that one unit held the Devil beasts back while the other fired from above.

What she needed to work on now was the air force formations and how many planes that should be included in one unit.

But Tilly understood that training was different from a real battle. She still had to experience a real battle before she decided what to write in the Flight Manual.

Tilly was pleased that the students learned even faster than she had expected. Based on the current rate, the aerial knights could probably fight in the Kingdom of Wolfheart and the Kingdom of Everwinter by the time the “Fire of Heaven” went into production.

She would definitely not miss such a perfect opportunity to seek revenge.

The “Unicorn” was simply a trainer aircraft. She believed that Roland was now making a brand new fighter aircraft for her.

She should visit the castle and remind him once more after the training.

At this moment, the last plane finally landed on the airport.

The students and the spectators all burst into cheers and applauded.

“Now I know why you divided the group in this way,” Sylvie said quietly.

“I didn’t expect it would work so well. I thought I’d have to wait for another half a month,” Tilly said with a smile as she waved at Eagle Face and handed him a list. “Well, let the next group get ready.”

Tilly looked toward the north. Soon, she would have the demons to pay for what they had done.

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The ship produced a long, deep whistle.

It indicated there was another ship coming in this way. Manfred heard this kind of whistle every hour, and it became increasingly frequent after he entered the territory of Graycastle. Now, he could hear them pretty much every half an hour, and the interval between each whistle was getting increasingly shorter.

He had never known that Graycastle had such developed marine technologies.

It was commonly believed among the nobles in the Kingdom of Wolfheart that Graycastle was a country vast in territory with few resources. Its land was as infertile and thin as that in the Kingdom of Wolfheart. The Kingdom of Dawn was the wealthiest country on this continent.

However, it seemed that this was not true.

Stories could go awry in the retellings from one village to another, let alone that these rumors were circulated between two kingdoms. One thing that Manfred could ascertain was that Graycastle had indeed defeated the church. This fact alone was sufficient to prove that the King of Graycastle did know how to play political games.

But he did not know exactly when he would arrive at Neverwinter, this mysterious city.

Manfred yawned languidly at this thought.

The long voyage was more relaxing than he had thought. The ship did not immediately head to the next port after it reached the north of the Kingdom of Dawn. Instead, the crew cleaned the crowded cabin a little bit and asked passengers who suffered severe seasick to get off the ship and travel by land. The rest of the passengers thus had plenty of time to take a rest. The residents in the Kingdom of Dawn had even built many temporary buildings at the dock area as if they had prepared for the arrival of the refugees. Their services in collaboration with the Graycastle men were seamless. Had Manfred not seen the flags of the Kingdom of Dawn upon the city, he would have thought this was a part of Graycastle.

Apparently, the two kingdoms had reached a sort of agreement. Manfred was not sure at what cost King Roland Wimbledon had persuaded them to help him.

It had only taken him a week to recover from his injuries, and he had not used the strange pill given by the two ladies ever since.

Manfred wondered how they were doing now. His hand reached for the pill in his pocket when he thought about the two women. Although they were emaciated and dirty, there was a hint of hidden beauty underneath their straggly hair. If they had put themselves together and dressed themselves up, they should have looked pretty stunning.

Manfeld hoped that the two women could reach the destination and become freemen. In that way, they could cut ties with their dismal past and live a brand new life.

Suddenly, Manfeld heard a strange buzz, as though something was flying above him.

Then, running footsteps came from the cabin on the upper level.

“Be quiet!”

“What are those guys doing? I can’t sleep!”

Someone complained at once.

Manfeld slid off his bed and peeped out of the porthole.

If he was right, those footsteps came in the same direction of the buzzing sound.

Nothing was changed. The sky was as blue as ever, and the vast ocean stretched away before him. A few big birds were chasing each other in the sky.

“Hang on. What kind of birds are they?”

Manfeld rubbed his eyes and could not believe what he saw. When the “birds” were perpendicular to the horizon, he could see their unusually sharp wings and tails, which made them look not remotely like real birds!

When they brushed past the ship, Manfeld could finally ascertain that this was not his imagination. They were not real but artifacts made of metal. What was more incredible was that the machines were manned!

For a moment, a phrase tried to take shape in Manfeld’s mouth and his lips parted like a dumb man’s. How could that be possible? He had gradually accepted the existence of the First Army and the steam-powered boats and had also somewhat foreseen what a prosperous city the king’s city of Graycastle would be, but this was beyond the scope of his understanding.

Suddenly, he had a strong feeling that Graycastle belonged to a different world from the one that the Kingdom of Wolfheart was situated at. It was actually different than all other three kingdoms. Otherwise, he should have heard about these extraordinary inventions.

Since when had the other three kingdoms fallen so behind?

When Manfeld was aghast and confused, the ship whistled again. This time, it was a much longer whistle that indicated that the ship was about to dock.

He had arrived at Neverwinter.

Chapter 1262: A Conflict in the New City

“Keep in line. Don’t push!” a Graycastle clerk wearing a black uniform yelled as he pushed his way through the crowd. “Remember the number on your boarding pass and go to the corresponding checkout. Make sure you go to the correct one!”

Manfeld, still flabberaghasted, was pushed onto the dock.

He saw the whole port lie before him.

It was the largest port he had ever seen. The dock stretched away along the bank and disappeared at the end of the horizon. Unlike the damp, moldy port he usually saw, this dock was clean and tidy. The pavement was covered with white slabs. Thousands of ships traveled back and forth. Even the port in the Kingdom of Dawn was incomparable to this one.

Many people gasped at this magnificent scene. However, Manfeld was still in such an immense shock that he was now emotionally numb after he had seen the flying iron birds.

Manfeld constantly looked backward in the direction he had come, in a hope of seeing the iron birds again. Instinctively, he wanted to convince himself that it was not a delirious illusion.

But by the time he reached the trestle, he had still not seen them.

Manfeld was a little disappointed.

“Please have your boarding pass ready and go to the corresponding checkout according to the three digit number on the pass!” Many people were shouting through a strange metal object at the refugees, their voice amplified by multiple times, so that everyone in the crowd could hear them clearly. “Please follow the guide and go through the security check. Welcome to the king’s city of Graycastle. We welcome every one of you!”

Manfeld calmed himself down and put away his thoughts.

He thought it was a very strange way to welcome new people because the refugees did not come to Graycastle willingly. Everything these Graycastle men had done in the Kingdom of Wolfheart was, in a way, a sort of dictatorship. Yet, surprisingly, he found himself a lot more self-assured after hearing these words.

The towering cliff suddenly caved in at this point and formed a natural outpost. The refugees formed a long line behind it and slowly proceeded to the checkouts in various directions. There were more than 10,000 people at the dock area, and apparently, not all of them were from the Kingdom of Wolfheart. What astonishing national power that was to bring so many people from the three kingdoms together in such a short period of time!

Just then, the refugees stopped moving, and Manfeld heard a commotion from behind.

Not only the people waiting in line but also the clerks in black maintaining the order were surprised.

Manfeld turned around and saw a colossal ship slowly dock. It was long and made of metal. There were no paddles on either side of the ship, its freeboard aloft and straight. Nobody would ever miss noticing such a superb ship. It was evident, however, that the Graycastle men was not astounded at the ship itself but the way it looked.

“Are they mental? I can’t believe that they use iron to build ships!” someone around Manfeld muttered in disbelief. “Don’t they know that iron will rust after in contact with water?”

“Perhaps the King of Graycastle wants to show off his wealth. The iron ship does look pretty nice. I didn’t believe that such heavy things could float in water before I saw the concrete boat.”

“What’s the point in making such a wonderful ship when it can only last half a month? I used to sail on the sea and know a lot about ships. Seawater erodes ships far more quickly than you could possibly imagine. Regular paints won’t last long. You see, this is what they’ve got in the end.”

Rusts could be seen all over the iron ship. Its body, which had once been polished and shiny, was now bumpy and damaged, which created a glaring contrast with the neat dock. The mast above was snapped and broken into several pieces. The ship was shuffling with great difficulties toward the dock like an exhausted, withered sea monster that had entered its decrepitude.

Did King Roland Wimbledon really intend to show off by building a ship like this?

The men in black immediately elbowed their way through the crowd for the sailors on the ship. Manfred had a vague feeling that things were not that simple.

Peace was soon restored, and the refugees started to march forward again.

When it was his turn, the clerk only confirmed his name and number before he let Manfred pass.

After 30 people passed the security check, a man walked up to them and said, “I’m a clerk working at the Administrative Office of Neverwinter. My name is Matt. I’ll assist you in settling down in the city for the time being. I know you must have a lot of questions, but please don’t worry. I’ll explain to you in detail on the way to the residential area. Now, please drink the Cleansing Water on the table first. It can cure the demonic plague if you’re infected. If you aren’t, just view it as a tasty beverage.”

“Do we have to follow you?” someone questioned. “We’re now Graycastle residents, too. We should be allowed to go wherever we want. Don’t you think so?”

“You’ll only become His Majesty’s subjects after you receive your identification cards,” Matt replied while shaking his head. “Usually, people can apply for identification cards after having one to two years of working experience, provided that they don’t break the Graycastle law. However, you’re all skilled workers, so you can immediately become an official Graycastle resident after passing the psychological test. However, the examination officer is quite busy. Since there are so many applicants, you’ll have to wait for two to three days.”

“Psychological test? Isn’t it just a screening process?”

“You’ll know it when you take the test,” Matt answered with a smile. “We focus on your present and future rather than your past. I became a city clerk after I passed the same test. Now, please drink the water and follow me.”

Manfred thought this must be the “lie detector test” that the coachman had mentioned.

Matt did answer a lot of their questions that the refugees were most concerned about, such as what work they would have in the future, their salaries, etc. According to the policy implemented by the King of Graycastle, the refugees would be treated equally as the locals once they obtained their resident status.

Matt also shared his personal experience and told them how he had gradually adapted to the new life here, which greatly alleviated them.

When they entered a residential area in the suburb, a roar of laughter caught everybody's attention.

Manfeld then saw some refugees corner a woman and slowly approach her. Many people saw the incident happen but nobody came up to stop them. Somebody was even egging them on, looking tempted to join them.

"Damn it. Why do these things happen everywhere?"

Manfeld had thought that Neverwinter would be different.

Frowning, he asked, "Did anyone inform the guards in black?"

Matt had told them earlier that the men in black had replaced the previous patrol team and were called the police. Manfeld was not sure whether they were reliable, but it seemed that there was no better way at the moment.

However, nobody took action. "Young man, don't meddle with this matter. You'll still have to live here for a few days before moving to the inner city."

"That's right. If those scumbags come to avenge, they won't do you any good."

"You — " Manfeld said. His voice suddenly abandoned him. Then he looked toward Matt and said, "I'll hold them back. You go and inform those guards!"

But Matt grasped his hand and slightly shook his head.

In an instant, Manfeld felt utterly disappointed.

He wrenched himself away and pronounced each word slowly, "I thought it'd be different here in Neverwinter from the other kingdoms, but I was wrong." With these words, he rolled up his sleeves and rushed toward the crowd.

Chapter 1263: Future Work

"Excuse me, sorry. Excuse me!" Manfeld said as he elbowed through the crowd. The refugees who stirred up trouble immediately rested their eyes on him.

"Who's this guy?" a man snarled. "I know you can't wait, but you've got to until I'm done with her."

He was the person who had just laughed. Manfeld soon figured out that he was the leader of the gang. It was almost impossible to rescue the woman from the hands of a dozen gangsters since he had no weapon. The only way was to beat the leader and take away the woman when the others were still in a shock at the resultant chaos.

Manfeld extended out his hands and walked a few steps forward as calmly as he could before he said, "I'm here to remind you that someone has already informed the guards in black. If you don't run now, it'll be too late." In the meantime, he eyed the woman, in a hope that she would understand that he was

not one of them. However, the woman was non-responsive. She simply tilted her head, looking utterly confused.

“Damn it. Doesn’t she know her situation?”

“Why’s she still so... composed?”

“What guards in black? Aren’t they just the patrol team?” the leader threatened, his face splitting into a nasty smile. “You never know whom they’d help in the end exactly. Hey, you little brat. You’re green, aren’t you?”

“Haha. From his look, he was probably a young lord.”

“So what? He’s now the same as us.”

“Get lost! Run as far away as you can before our boss loses his temper — ”

They roared with laughter. Just at that moment, Manfred moved. He shouldered the leader abruptly and then punched him in the face. The leader soon fell to the ground.

Compared to Mick Kinley and his two trained servants, these gangsters were much easier to deal with. The leader did not even get a chance to struggle before he fell.

There was an uproar among the crowd.

“Sh*t! You f**k!”

“Save the boss!”

Manfred got several hits in the back and legs but he did not care. He extended out one hand to the woman while using the other hand to block his face, and then yelled, “Come with me!”

Then, something extraordinary happened.

The woman immediately reached out her hand. Instead of holding his, however, she grasped Manfred’s wrist and pulled him toward her.

“Oi, you...” Manfred said irritably and suddenly saw an electric ray flashing across her body.

“Hang on... an electric ray?”

Before Manfred realized what had happened, the flash became an arc that emanated an intense blue glow. It dashed toward the gangsters who rushed forward and, like a barbecue skewer, the electric arc went through them one by one. The mischief makers had no way to resist such an incredible force. Before they could even produce a short shriek, they all stiffened and fell backward to the ground.

“Now, that should work,” the woman said casually as she clapped her hands.

“Er... are you a...” Manfred stammered as he gaped at the woman.

“Yes, I’m a witch,” the woman immediately admitted.

Manfeld had the impression that all witches should have been extremely beautiful and charming. However, when he studied this woman, he found her not remotely pretty. It was a very homely face, and she was as lanky as a little girl.

“Then, what should we do with them?” Manfeld asked as he pointed at the gangsters on the ground.

“I’ll call the police department and ask them to deal with them. Don’t worry. I only used 10% of my power, so they’ll wake up in half an hour, but they’ll be probably sent to the mine or the Furnace Area. I think they’ll probably stay there for half a month.”

Manfeld suddenly did not know what to respond.

He somehow had a feeling that she had planned this whole thing.

“By the way, I’m Sharon. May I know your name?” the woman asked and pulled Manfeld back to the present.

“Well, Manfeld...”

“You’re the first person I saw who came forward. Why?”

“Why what?” Manfeld returned as he rubbed where he had been hit. “Isn’t it a matter of course to stop crimes? I just didn’t expect that you actually didn’t need any help.”

“A matter of course?” Sharon echoed while twitching her lips. “If everyone thought that way, those onlookers wouldn’t have run away so fast.”

“But there’s always someone who understands it,” Manfeld said. According to the history book, all nobles used to be ordinary people. They maintained the order and developed the society.

“That’s right. There’s always somebody who knows right and wrong,” Sharon agreed with a smile.

“You’re a new immigrant to Neverwinter, right? Are you interested in joining the police department?”

“Are you saying... to become one of the guards in black?”

“Yes. They crack down criminals and protect residents. I think it fits you. Also, they don’t always wear black uniforms. For example, like me right now.”

“Huh?” Manfeld was confused.

“Alright. I’ll have to report to the Administrative Office. Someone is waiting to receive you,” Sharon said as she waved her hand and then headed to the inner city.

“You know why I stopped you now, don’t you?”

Matt smiled to Manfeld after the latter returned to the team.

“What... what’s going on?” Manfeld asked, still quite puzzled.

“An effective way to deter criminals,” Matt said as he marched forward. “The residential area in the suburb wasn’t like that before, at least it wasn’t when I lived here. However, after more and more immigrants come here, this area becomes increasingly unsafe, and most of the crimes are targeting women. Of course, I’m not saying that you cause this because among them, there are also many

migrants from the other parts of Graycastle. Since the number of refugees is overwhelming, the police can't take care of everything. More importantly, if people only calls the police after the incident happens, the criminal may have already caused permanent injuries or harms to the victim by the time the police get there."

"That's obvious, isn't it? With so many scumbags, no place can be safe," someone muttered. "I think the King of Graycastle shouldn't have accepted these shady people in the first place."

Matt shook his head and said, "His Majesty hopes that everyone could be of use, especially when the Battle of Divine Will is coming. But this isn't His Majesty's idea but the witches'. They can use their power and kill time. In the meantime, they can also help maintain public order, so this method kills two birds with one stone."

"K-kill time?" Manfeld thought in surprise and twitched his lips.

"Actually, it works pretty well. Any refugees could possibly be a disguised witch and attack people, and this deters those who want to commit crimes. Since the police department will punish all the criminals, chronic wrong-doers would probably think it over before taking action. With the help of the witches and the police, it's much better than before."

"I see..." Manfeld mumbled. It seemed that the men in black in Neverwinter were completely different than the patrol team. They were more like ideal knights that he wanted to be.

If Sharon had not lied to him, this was possibly an ideal job for him.

After they arrived at the temporary residence and got their own rooms, Matt said goodbye to the refugees. "I'll come back tomorrow and show you around the Neverwinter city. It'll be very helpful to get to know about the local culture. Also, please feel free to ask me if you have any questions."

Manfeld wanted to ask how to become a policeman, but for some reason, he said something else instead. "On my way here, I saw some huge iron birds. I wonder if you could — "

"Ah, I saw them too. If you stay in Neverwinter longer, you'll know it's not a big deal," Matt interrupted him smilingly. "I was also very shocked at first, but you'll get used to it. If you're a talented man, you may be able to operate the machine yourself."

"R-really?" Manfeld said. His heart skipped a beat.

"Naturally. Princess Tilly has put up a job post at the central square. She's hiring new Aerial Knights."

Chapter 1264: Persuasion

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"Your Majesty, Your Majesty... Mr. Sander Flyingbird returned from the Swirling Sea! It seems... that they had big trouble!"

Roland was mildly taken aback by this unexpected news. After the meeting regarding the industrial expansion, he returned to the office and was about to finish the rest of his drawings when the news interrupted his train of thought.

Sander Flyingbird was Thunder's alias.

"Where's he now?" Roland asked as he stood up abruptly.

"In the castle hall. He said he would like to speak to you right now."

"Send him in!" Roland ordered and then added, "Also, ask the kitchen to make some more tea."

"As you command, Your Majesty," Sean said as he quickly turned around and disappeared at the doorstep.

Nightingale asked apprehensively, "Do we need to inform Lightning?"

Roland shook his head and answered, "He should be OK, considering that he managed to get here. Let's see what he'll say first."

It had just been half a year since Thunder had set off, and the commute normally took around three months. Since the fleet had also lingered at the Shadow Islands for a while, the actual expedition was actually a lot shorter than Thunder had planned. Thunder had predicted that this expedition would have at least taken a year to a year and a half. He had even wanted to see what the end of the Swirling Sea looked like and confirm whether the land depicted in the ruins was truly buried deep down the ocean.

Apparently, an overpowering and irresistible force had sabotaged the exploration plan that Thunder had prepared for so long.

Roland could not help looking out of the window.

Did it have anything to do with the Bloody Moon?

Thunder, disguised as Sander, immediately entered the office under the guidance of the guard. Roland could tell that he was in a rush, for he had not even put on the fake mustache as he normally did, and the flamboyant ornamental feathers had pretty much fallen off. Had Lightning seen him right now, she would have probably recognized him.

Nevertheless, he sustained no injuries, which was good enough for Roland.

"Your Majesty, nice to see you," Thunder said as he bowed. "I thought I wouldn't be able to come back again."

Roland poured a glass of refreshing Chaos Drinks for him and said, "What happened? You took the best sailors at the Fjords with you this time, and I don't think it was a storm or a tsunami that held you back."

"Storms and tsunamis have signs, but thousands of Sea Ghosts don't," Thunder said, still feeling a little shaken. "Plus, I encountered monsters even more horrible than Sea Ghosts..."

Roland could resonate with his despair feeling. When numerous Sea Ghosts swarmed toward the fleet, and the seawater began to boil, any ships that failed to keep up would be dragged down to the bottom of the ocean immediately. In addition to the Sea Ghosts, there were also horrendous ships comprised of

blood and flesh that could eject acids that traveled several kilometers. Anything that made in contact with the acid fluids would be instantly eroded, including iron and wood. It was almost impossible for the fleet to shake them off even if they had traveled at a full speed.

“The Sky-sea Realm...” Roland said darkly.

“Your Majesty, what’s that?” Thunder asked.

“This is how the demons call this civilization,” Roland answered and told Thunder about the demons’ double plan. The description of these monsters that consisted of ribs, flesh and inner organs was consistent with what he had seen through the God’s Relics. They could float in water like a ship but could also dive to the bottom of the sea.

“Are you saying that we invaded their territory?”

“Possibly, but this can also be attributed to the appearance of the Bloody Moon. There’s a possibility that these monsters become more active than usual and start to expand their territory,” Roland said. “Then what happened? How did the fleet escape?”

“In fact, we didn’t shake them off. The monsters started to attack each other,” Thunder said with a bitter smile.

“Attack... each other?”

“That’s right. They pursued us relentlessly as though they were never going to stop. By the time we reached the Sealine, we had lost half of our ships. Most of the survived sailors were on the verge of a breakdown after sailing day and night. Only the ‘Snow Wind’ you created still had strength to move further, as we didn’t need to adjust her sail or change her direction.”

“So, just when everyone was desperate and about to give up, a huge monster suddenly leaped out of the water and attacked another monster. It looked like that the two monsters were biting each other. Although they were both monsters, the first one was much stronger than the second one. It soon ripped the other apart with his auxiliary limbs and tentacles that sprouted from its body. Then, all the Sea Ghosts and monsters stopped chasing us, as though they were spellbound. We thus got a chance to cross the Sealine and return to the Fjords.”

Roland heaved a sigh and was also pretty shaken by the horrid story. “You were very lucky. It seemed that I got the right name for the ship.”

“What does it have anything to do with the ship’s name?”

“No, nothing,” Roland said while waving his hand. “So, what’s your plan next?”

Thunder, for the first time, looked a little weary. He said, “To be honest, many people are now too scared to have another undertaking. I don’t really care much about the loss of the ships, but the sailors at the Fjords, who have been sailing for their whole life, go livid in fear when they look toward the east. I believe that nobody wants to sail out to the Shadow Waters again in a long time.”

Roland fell silent. This was not totally unexpected. Like Thunder had said, one could predict storms and tsunamis and find a way to get away with them, but nobody would like to struggle to survive an irresistible force, as such a trip could no longer be called an adventure.

“Those big Chambers of Commerce asked me to deliver a message to you. They wish to buy a land at a high price in Graycastle where they can take refuge in the future,” Thunder sighed. “After all, nobody knows whether the monsters will come back or not. The ocean is a natural barrier for a lot of Fjords people. However, if our enemies could roam the sea, then the whole Fjords Island would be in a very dangerous position with literally nothing to defend itself.”

It was such a rapid change. Just one to two years ago, Roland had planned to use the Fjords Islands as the last retreat in case they were defeated in the war. Now, it appeared that the situation had reversed.

Had Roland still lived in Border Town with only an asset of 300 gold royals, he would have immediately given his consent. But now, as transactions were all carried out in the new paper currencies, the so-called “high price” became no longer attractive.

“What do you think?”

“If they plan to found a kingdom within a kingdom, then forget about it,” Thunder replied while shrugging. “You won’t allow “islands” like that in Graycastle.”

Roland smiled. Thunder was indeed the most outstanding explorer in the Fjords. “If they only want to survive rather than gaining power, then Graycastle will always be open to them.”

“I’ll take your message to them, Your Majesty.”

“You must be exhausted after this expedition. I have some afternoon tea. Please take a shower first and then tell me about your adventure. It’ll take a few days to repair the ‘Snow Wind’. You can stay here to recuperate and then head back to the Fjords.”

“Thank you,” Thunder said while placing his hand on his chest.

When Thunder was about to withdraw, Roland suddenly asked, “By the way, are you still planning... not to tell Lightning?”

“I ...” Thunder was at a loss for words for a second.

“You said you’d reveal your true identity to her after this expedition. Although the trip wasn’t very successful, the Sky-sea Realm has indeed taken over half of the ocean. Fjords people are in a panic. It’s likely that you won’t go on a trip in a long time,” Roland said as he propped up his chin. “And I need people to fight the demons. I think Lightnings would like to see her father still alive. So, how about just staying here after you’ve taken care of your matters?”

Thunder lowered his head. After a moment of silence, he replied, “I’ll think about it, Your Majesty.”

Chapter 1265: The Witches’ Life

“Do you think he would stay?”

After Thunder’s footsteps died away, Roland asked Nightingale.

“I don’t know,” Nightingale said slowly. “But he was serious about the last sentence he said.”

Roland nodded in silence. Apart from Lightning, Roland wanted Thunder, the most extraordinary explorer in the Fjords, to stay also because of a personal reason, that was, Thunder could attract many Fjords people to Neverwinter, and he was the ideal man to command the fleet.

According to Agatha, the Red Mist probably had already permeated half of the Kingdom of Everwinter by now and might have also reached the border of the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Under such circumstances, he had to carry out his rescue operation from the coast and attack the demons from the sides. Judging from the battle at the Northernmost Port, he believed that a powerful fleet was absolutely necessary to alleviate the stress of the army.

Although there were many merchant ships traveling back and forth, it was impossible to rely on them to fight the demons in the area covered with the Red Mist. Roland could definitely build several large ships, but what he urgently needed were sailors and a commander.

If Thunder was willing to help him, all these problems could be instantly solved.

But Roland also knew that he could not force Thunder to stay. He would have to let him think it over.

Roland thus went back to his work. Suddenly, the telephone rang.

It was from the Witch Building in the Castle District.

“Hello?”

“Your Majesty, it’s Wendy,” Wendy’s voice came from the other end of the line. “We found witches at the checkout at the Shallow Port.”

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“Sir, where are you taking us?”

Thylane asked gingerly while holding Momo’s hand.

Not a long time ago, they had been waiting in the line like any other immigrants to pass the security. However, when they entered the registration area, they were taken to a heavily guarded room separately by the guards in black.

They immediately turned nervous.

They had heard that a few refugees had to go through a series of “special interrogation” when they entered some cities and would have to bribe the examining officers to avoid being punished.

However, the officer did not do anything but simply leave them alone in the room. He asked them a few strange questions and released them. After that, another man in black took them to the inner city.

“You don’t have to be so nervous. My name is Joseph,” the man in black said mildly. “You’re witches, aren’t you?”

Thylane was startled. She did not expect that Joseph would soon see through their true identities. She did not know how he had figured it out, for she thought that she was in heavy disguise.

“Why... did you say that?”

“I don’t know anything about magic, but the witches told me,” Joseph said while scratching the back of his head. “I know they use a special stone to detect magic power. As for where I’m taking you, I’m taking you to the witches’ residential area, of course. You must be tired, right? Don’t worry. Ms. Wendy will take good care of you.”

Thylane and Momo exchanged surprised looks.

They were astonished that Neverwinter had so advanced technologies to detect witches. Had the church and the nobles in the Kingdom of Wolfheart also possessed such technologies, they would have been captured and killed years ago.

Also, it appeared that people in Neverwinter did not discriminate witches at all.

Their master had told them about this city in the far west of Graycastle as well as its ruler, Roland Wimbledon. They had also heard a lot of rumors before they had boarded the ship. Nevertheless, what they had heard from their master was very different from those rumors. Their master described the King of Graycastle as an arrogant and vile tyrant who hired witches to satisfy his own wicked desire, while people on the ship believed that witches were treated in the same way as ordinary people in Neverwinter.

That was the reason they had decided to move to the south.

As the Kingdom of Wolfheart was so far away from Graycastle, nobody knew what life in Neverwinter truly looked like. Therefore, they planned to conceal their witch identity and see what was going on first before taking the next move. They did not expect, however, that they were soon exposed.

Luckily, people here treated them just as normal residents.

When they reached the outer ring of the Castle District, a red-haired woman came up to them with two smiling little girls.

“I’ll take it over from here.”

“Yes, Ms. Wendy!” Joseph said and administered a salute. Then he waved at Thylane and Momo and quickly left.

Thylane started to study the woman named Wendy attentively.

“My name is Wendy. I’m the superintendent of the Witch Union of Neverwinter. These two are my assistants, Ring and Grayrabbit,” Wendy said with a smile. “Can I have your names? Although from the list I have, I see that your names are Thylane and Momo, I do want you to pronounce your names in person.”

Thylane instantly felt a lot at ease. It had been a long time since she had met such a nice person. To her, Wendy looked more like a noble than those true ones. She was mature and elegant, who reminded her of someone depicted in a portrait.

“I’m Thylane,” she replied in a low voice.

“Momo,” her companion also pronounced her own name.

“Good names,” Wendy commented as she held the two witches’ hands. “Welcome to Neverwinter. From now on, this will be your new home. Come. I’ll show you around and take you where you’re going to live in the future.”

They passed the fence and the yard before Thylane noticed that the Lord’s castle was actually not the highest building in the city. Behind that stood a more magnificent edifice. Between these two buildings lay a large, lovely garden carpeted with grass. Several beautiful ladies were chatting leisurely.

This was perhaps the dream life she had been longing for.

“Are they also... witches?” Momo asked involuntarily.

“Yes,” Wendy said with a nod. “You’ll see more when they’re off work.”

“Er... off work?”

“It means finishing working,” Ring explained. “In Neverwinter, witches, like everybody else, have work to do every day.”

“Then what about them...”

The little girl twitched her lips and said, “Like ordinary people, some are hard-working while some are lazy.”

“Didn’t your sister tell you that I have good hearing?” a girl with pointy ears said as she turned around and walked up to them smilingly.

“Ah... Lorgar, I was not talking about you,” Ring explained while waving her hand. “I was talking about —”

“Hey, new members to the Union?” Another person joined the conversation as she ambled over. “Hello, I’m Mystery Moon, the captain of the Neverwinter Detective Group! Whatever ability you have, feel free to join us. How does it sound? Are you interested?”

“I was talking about her,” Ring said as she covered her face in embarrassment.

“Really? Were you introducing me?” Mystery Moon said while resting her hands on her hips.

“Remember, the Detective Group is dedicated to solving problems using your brain. If someone asks you to join the Exploration Group, please ignore them. They only want people with great physical strength and never take personal qualities into consideration. This wolf girl is a perfect example.”

“Hey, do you want to have a taste of my fist?” Lorgar snarled while baring her teeth.

“Look, this is the proof!” Mystery Moon said as she hastily made an attempt to block Lorgar’s upcoming attack.

“So embarrassing...”

“Well, can I go back to my reading?” some other witches murmured.

Thylane gaped.

It appeared that the life here was a little different than what she had pictured.

Chapter 1266: The Past

Wendy stroked Thylane's head smilingly and said, "Believe it or not, Mystery Moon used to be even shyer than you."

"Ah — S-stop!" Mystery Moon begged. "This was something a long time ago."

"Really? I've never heard of them," Lorgar said while pricking up her ears.

"At that time, she always came to look for me after everybody fell asleep. There were so many interesting stories that it'll probably take more than one day to —"

"Stop!" Mystery Moon yelled. "What's your condition, Sister Wendy?"

"Don't worry. I won't say anything... But Scroll complained to me yesterday that she has been so busy in the Administrative Office lately, and someone hasn't cleaned up the file room for a long time..."

"I'll go right away. We'll see each other again tonight! Now, please excuse the Detective Group!" Mystery Moon even blinked at the two new witches before she withdrew.

"That was boring," the wolf girl said while twitching her lips and crossed the yard with the others. "I'll go help her as well because I'm such a nice person."

Grayrabbit elbowed Ring after all the witches left and muttered, "I think Lorgar doesn't want to be labeled as a 'lazy' person, so she went to offer help."

"Er... really?"

Momo, however, at this point, burst into a laugh.

Thylane was a little surprised. The smile faded away instantly, but it was the first smile since Momo had escaped from her master.

"You'll like it here, although it can be a little too noisy sometimes. But you'll get used to it," Wendy explained gently. "Come, I'll show you your room."

Thylane was utterly astonished after the tour.

She had never imagined such a comfortable room. Although it was not spacious by any means, it was equipped with everything. Even the mattress was soft and clean. Thylane had seen a noble's bedroom before. In fact, although shackled, she had been staying in her master's bedroom for years. Nevertheless, the bed and the cotton fabrics here were far better than those in her master's room.

When Wendy urged her to try the bed, Thylane could not help sighing comfortably. She almost succumbed to the fatigue that had been constantly trying to take her over during the trip, and, for a second, she did not want to get up.

Momo also felt the same way.

Wendy explained that the mattress was supported by hundreds of springs, which was why it was so soft. No matter what your sleeping position was, the bed would be able to support your body perfectly.

Thylane did not know what a spring was, but she somehow understood that it was made of steel, a material normally used to make armors. She was not sure whether she should say this was a creative innovation or a pure waste of resources.

The mattress was just one of the amazing things here.

For example, water automatically came out from the tap.

The mirror in the bathroom reflected every single hair on her body.

There was soft anti-slippery floor.

The lamp was powered by magic.

Even the simplest wooden furniture looked somewhat different. Thylane did not know what made them different, but they were excellent. Compared to the noble's grand mansion, this room felt more like a "home".

Wendy said, "The Witch Building went through several refurbishments. In the past three years, many sisters helped with the renovations. Some of the technologies applied to the Witch Building are also applied to the Castle District and the new residential area. Of course, if you want to be the first person to experience the latest technologies, the Witch Building would be the best option."

"Can we really... live here?" Momo asked hesitantly.

"Yes, but you'll have to join the Witch Union first."

"Is it optional?" Thylane asked in surprise.

For a moment, Wendy looked sorrowful. "Because many of us suffered a lot in the Witch Cooperation Association. Well, let's not talk about this. Anyway, it's up to you. Do you remember the questions the officer asked you at the customs?"

Thylane nodded. At that time, only she and Momo had been taken to that room, so she had been nervous for quite a while.

"These questions are only put to witches. People who possess magic power can bring more damage than ordinary people if they have an ill design. Once they confirm that you pose no threat to Neverwinter, you can live anywhere in the city. In fact, apart from the Witch Union, there's also a similar organization called the Sleeping Spell, which was founded by escaped witches. The leader of this organization is King Roland Wimbledon's sister." Wendy paused for a second and then resumed, "Of course, you can also choose not to join any organizations and live on your own. I'll also help you settle down, in my own capacity, of course."

"But our abilities..."

"That isn't the point. The point is what life you want to live," Wendy said with a smile while shaking her head. "If you don't mind it, can you tell me your past?"

Thylane felt a warmth steal through her.

She felt that she could trust this red-haired woman.

Even if this was just an illusion, she did not want to walk away.

Perhaps, everything would disappear in the end, but now, she wanted to stay here a bit longer.

Thylane bit her lip and slowly divulged her past experience.

Before she had become a witch, she had been just the same as any person in the village. After she was awakened, like so many witches, she was banished, hated and persecuted. Just when she was about to give up, she heard about the Bloodfang Association and believed it might be somewhere she could settle down. Having a strong desire to seek protection, Thylane survived the relentless pursuit of the church and arrived at the Archduke Island where she contacted the agent of the Bloodfang Association.

She had never expected that what awaited her was an even more terrible disaster.

The Bloodfang Association not only turned her away but also sold her to a noble in the Kingdom of Wolfheart. In the next few years, she had been sold several times before she met her master, who used her ability as an entertainment. The “magic pill” could delay not only pain but also other emotions such as anxiety and pleasure.

Nevertheless, the pill could not eliminate pain or provide treatment. Once the effect of the drug faded away, the pain would all come back and become even more intense. If a person sustained serious injuries in the first place, the second wave of pain might be fatal.

Her previous master thus treated her simply as a plaything. He took her pill to indulge in more intense sensual pleasures. In addition to that, he also asked her to serve other nobles as a way to bond with them. This was how Thylane met Momo and some other witches betrayed by the Bloodfang Association.

It was not until that point that she realized that the so-called “home for witches” was a fraud jointly created by the Bloodfang Association and the nobles. It was easier to wait for witches to contact the association themselves than going out to seek them voluntarily. Later, to Thylane’s great horror, fewer and fewer witches showed up in this “secret party” after the church invaded the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Finally, there were only her and Momo left.

Then she overheard from one noble that the church ordered the nobles to hand the witches over to the church or execute them in private, and she quavered at the various ways of execution.

Thylane thus decided to leave with Momo when the city descended to chaos caused by the Church of Hermes.

Their escaping method was to make the nobles overdose the “magic pill”.

Chapter 1267: The Invitation

The so-called “magic pill” would be only effective when the magic was injected into a physical pill. Thylane had never told these nobles that she could actually induce her power into any object. The reason she chose pills was that it was easy for her to control her power, but it also made the nobles forget about the true nature of her ability.

In that party, Thylane had applied her ability to all the food and drinks. This was the only situation where the nobles would put their guard down.

It then appeared that people could also die of extreme pleasure as they died of pain. By the time the nobles realized what had happened, it was too late. They fell to the ground while holding their chests painfully as their bodies spasmed. Even those who did not overdose were also seriously impaired, their strength gone, with a mesmerized and dreamy look on their faces as though they were enjoying the most blissful moment in their life.

The girl slaves in the room all fled in a fright, and the guards outside could not stop them. Thylane and Momo thus escaped from the mansion.

They hence commenced their arduous journey as refugees.

When they heard about the immigration campaign to Graycastle, the two witches decided to try their luck at the Sedimentation Bay.

"I see..." Wendy murmured as she pulled them to her bosom. "You must have suffered a lot. I promise it won't happen to you again."

"Don't... don't you despise us?" Thylane asked while biting her lip.

"Why so? Just because of your miserable past?" Wendy said quietly. "The church treated me like that too. I have no reason to blame the victims. Instead, it is those nobles that I should put blame on."

"But our abilities... may bring misfortunes to people," Thylane said while clenching her fists.

"That isn't up to you to decide."

"But once you take the pill, you'll never forget the sensation it has brought to you. You'd like more. In the end, you just want to indulge in the pleasure with no regards to anything else... If we stay, I'm afraid..."

"You fear that the king can't control it and will view you as demons?" Wendy said. "Rest assured. Our king... How should I phrase it? He isn't like any ordinary king. He's an eccentric but nice person."

Thylane was stunned for a moment and echoed, "An eccentric... but nice person?" This was the first time that someone used such words to describe a royal.

"It means that you'll never know what he's thinking. You can't view him as a normal person. Therefore, there's no point in worrying about the consequence now. Trust is the most important thing to build a relationship," Wendy said. Her voice suddenly became extremely soft. "He also saved the witches from the Witch Cooperation Association in this way."

After a moment of silence, Wendy looked toward Momo and asked, "You said 'our' abilities. Does Momo also — "

This time, the two witches hesitated for a long time before Momo spoke, "My previous master didn't want me to use my power, so he took away my magic eye after I was awakened."

Wendy had noticed that Momo had covered half of her forehead with a dirty rag. She had thought that it was a branding scar underneath, but the truth was indeed much worse than she had expected.

Momo then took off the cloth and revealed her hollow socket.

“But they don’t know that I still have my power. By removing my eye, I only lost half of my vision. Only the God’s Locket of Retribution can completely block my power.”

Wendy heaved a sigh. Only Extraordinaries could integrate their magic power with physical bodies. Momo was definitely not an Extraordinary. The presentation of her ability was through her “vision”, so the loss of her eye was just unfortunate collateral damage.

“Those nobles didn’t really take Momo’s ability seriously at first until something happened. Then her master removed her eye,” Thylane said in a low voice. “They called Momo the Child of Hell and inflicted various punishments on her. She barely survived.”

Wendy caressed Momo’s scarred socket and said, “What did you see exactly? Could you tell me?”

Momo lowered her head and answered, “... A number.”

“What?”

“A countdown number that tells when you’ll die.”

It took Wendy a while to understand the implication behind it. She gasped.

“The incident Thylane mentioned — ”

Momo nodded and said, “My prediction became true. The noble labeled with the number one died the next year.”

Wendy fell silent.

She now understood why those nobles had done such horrible things to her. Nobody would like to know when they would die beforehand, especially when they had only a few years to live. Even Momo herself would not want to know that answer.

“But... is the prediction really so accurate?” Wendy questioned after a moment of reflection. “Anything could happen.”

The two witches were both mildly taken aback.

“What’s the matter? Did I say something wrong?”

“No...” Thylane said while waving her hand. “I just feel... that you’re quite different from others. I didn’t expect that you would first ask about our abilities.”

“Hmm, so, what did you expect?”

Thylane replied in embarrassment, “You’d push Momo away and ask her whether she has used her ability. Then you’d drive us out of the castle and order us to stay as far away as possible.”

Wendy burst into laughter and said, "You can't judge a person by her ability. The key lies in the person who uses it. The more we know about the ability, the better we can use it in the future."

"Do you think... that my ability will also be useful?" Momo asked in disbelief.

"I don't know, but His Majesty once told me that every ability is useful, only it takes time for some abilities."

Momo remained motionless for a long time before she said slowly, "I can't predict accidents. I once saw animals still have many years to live before they were slaughtered. However..."

"What?" Wendy pursued.

"Some of the numbers have different colors... I don't know what they represent for, but I have a feeling that they're telling me something."

"If you join the Witch Union, you'll probably soon know the reason. Every newcomer should learn and practice their abilities first. Then they'll have to do various tests. Only when they know well enough about their abilities can they upgrade."

"Upgrade?" Thylane asked in confusion.

"You'll see later. The awakening is just the beginning. You'll have a lot to learn," Wendy said while extending out her hands. "How does it sound? Did you make your decisions?"

Thylane and Momo looked at each other.

"If you can accept someone like us..."

"Then we'd like to join the Witch Union."

Momo and Thylane also reached out their hands, slowly, tentatively and hopefully, and then held Wendy's hands.

Chapter 1268: Party

"Welcome our new members! Cheers!"

A long table was placed in the yard before the Witch Building in the evening, and a raucous party began. Wendy and Scroll made toasts and drank for the two new witches.

"Cheers!" all the other witches rejoined.

Thylane and Momo raised their glasses in bewilderment.

Thylane had not expected that Wendy would immediately force her to have a hot shower after she joined the Witch Union. She put on new clothes, including underwear, socks and shoes. Before she could thank Wendy and confirm that everything she had experienced today was real, she was again taken back to the yard. This time, however, the back yard had looked completely different.

“You should say ‘cheers’ and drain your glass,” Lorgar said as she showed Thylane what to do. “Like this...”

“Ch-cheers,” Thylane imitated a little clumsily. She closed her eyes and raised the glass.

A loud wave of applause broke over the back yard.

Someone even whistled in the crowd.

“Lorgar is pushing people to drink again,” Lily said while twitching her lips. “Who says that you must drain the glass at one shot? I think she just likes revelries.”

“But this is the strawberry white wine brewed by Evelyn. I’m impressed that the new girl can actually compete against the wolf girl,” Mystery Moon said while clicking her tongue. “She must join the Detective Group.”

“That’s why all your team members are drunkards and lazybones. A perfect match for you.”

“You’re a member too!” Mystery Moon returned while sticking out one finger.

“I — I’m not! You still owe me ¥10!”

“Forget about it. Let’s scratch it out and start all over again.”

“Stay away from me!”

Thylane burped loudly. After finishing one whole bottle of wine, her vision blurred. She had been forced to drink with nobles in the past, but no wine was as spicy as this one. The wine was not bitter at all. Instead, it was mellow and much more tasty than ales.

But the biggest difference did not lie in the wine but in her current feeling.

Watching the wolf girl refill her glass in excitement and the laughing witches around her, Thylane, for the first time in her life, found that drinking did not necessarily have to be painful. She wanted to join the others and relax herself.

Just at that moment, a tall lady walked up to her with a glass in her hand.

“Welcome to Neverwinter. My name is Annie, also from the Kingdom of Wolfheart. I also went to seek the Bloodfang Association for protection.”

Momentarily stunned, Thylane asked, “You were also sold by the Bloodfang Association?”

“Yes, but I escaped in the end. Many witches traveled from the Kingdom of Wolfheart to Graycastle. For example, this one...” With these words, she pushed one witch who looked pretty shy to the front. “This is Iffy. She used to be a member of the Bloodfang Association, but she didn’t know that Heidi Morgan was selling witches at that time. Fortunately, the association is now over.”

It took Thylane a while to learn how the Bloodfang Association had been founded. It appeared there were also many other witches like her and Momo who had been forced to travel to Graycastle because of the betrayal by Heidi Morgan. The abhorrent Bloodfang Association had, in fact, been disbanded two years ago.

At these words, Thylane felt profoundly relieved.

On their way here, Thylane and Momo had had numerous nightmares where they had been caught by the Bloodfang Association and sent back to the nobles. Now, hearing that this organization was gone, they did not need to worry about it anymore.

“Sorry,” Iffy said while lowering her head. “If I could stop Heidi back then, nothing like this would have happened...”

“This isn’t your fault,” Momo said while shaking her head. “Even if you tried to stop her, you couldn’t stop those nobles.”

“Exactly. It doesn’t matter whether the leader was a witch or not. If not Heidi, someone else would have also done it,” Thylane agreed. She knew perfectly well how avaricious people were. Once they benefited from the deal, they would not easily let it go.

“See? I told you that they wouldn’t blame you,” Annie said smilingly. “Now you’re in Neverwinter. Don’t hesitate to let me know if you encounter any problems. Even Iffy has no problem in living here. She’s pretty slow at many things. I think you’ll be just fine.”

“Cheers,” Annie said while raising her glass.

“Cheers,” Thylane returned quickly.

“It’s my turn now!” Lorgar exclaimed, a rosy flush on her cheeks.

“Don’t forget about me!” Lightning rejoined. “I’ve come of age and can drink now!”

“Coo, coo, coo!”

“No, you can’t. Pigeons can’t drink.”

“Coo?!”

“Oi, eat something with the wine.”

“Nana, you haven’t come of age, so don’t follow them!”

The back yard was filled with laughter.

“It has been a long time since we had new members. Now we suddenly have two. It appears that everyone is excited,” Scroll commented at the end of the long table.

“I did the right thing to show them the Witch Building. Now I gradually understand why His Majesty did that,” Wendy said with a smile. “Even if they first contacted the Sleeping Spell, I would also have a way to win them over. His Majesty calls it sugarcoated... something along that line.”

“You’re more and more like a leader,” Scroll joked. “I remember at first, you found it hard to manage. Now, you even intend to compete with Princess Tilly.”

“It’s an analogy. You were a leader back in the Witch Cooperation Association, so you have experience,” Wendy said while pouring herself a glass of Chaos Drinks. “But to be honest, I’ll never be tired of this kind of party.”

“Unfortunately, we can’t join them,” Scroll said, shrugging.

“I don’t mind it at all. I would like to always protect and guard them, if possible,” Wendy said quietly.

Both of them became silent. They watched the noisy witches while savoring the delicious food. For them, they did not necessarily have to talk to understand each other, for they had been working together for years.

Then, suddenly, a familiar voice said to them, “His Majesty wants to see the witch called Momo after the party.”

Nightingale revealed herself from the Mist.

Wendy immediately understood Roland. Her smile instantly faded away. “Well...”

“Take her to him,” Scroll spoke. “You knew this would happen when you wrote down her ability. His Majesty is always the most curious one among us.”

After a moment of silence, Wendy replied, “Alright.”

“If you don’t want to know the answer, you can leave now. I think His Majesty will understand.” Scroll paused for a second and then went on, “Whatever that answer is, we’ll always support him, right?”

“... Yes,” Wendy confirmed to Scroll as much as to herself. “Whatever that answer is.”

Chapter 1269: The Eye of Time

After the glitters of lights in the back yard went out, Roland met the witch Wendy had mentioned in her report.

She looked pretty young and extremely thin, around 16 to 17 years old at most. Apparently, she did not eat well. Although she had already taken a shower, her tawny hair was straggly and unkempt. What caught Roland’s attention was the black eye mask over her face. Although she had already put on a new one, the eye mask did not really sit well on her face.

“Your Majesty, this is Momo,” Wendy introduced.

Wendy’s words jerked the girl out of the trance, who scrambled to kneel down and bowed even lower. “Your, Your Majesty...”

“Please help her up,” Roland said as he put down the drawing and said mildly, “Don’t be nervous. It’s not a formal meeting or anything. I just want to see your ability.”

Momo looked frightened as she straightened up. “Your Majesty... I’m afraid...”

“I know. Not everyone will be satisfied when they know when they’ll die. Some people will even take it on you after they know the answer,” Roland comforted. “But I just want to know when that is. No matter what the result is, I won’t blame you. I promise.”

Normally, he should have seen Momo after Wendy tested her ability. However, as Momo's ability was so special, he could not help. His curiosity was too strong to overcome. In fact, after the Battle of Soul against Zero, there remained a suspicion in Roland's mind that he could not confirm.

But now, he finally had an opportunity to do so.

"Your Majesty..." Momo replied through clenched teeth. "Aren't you... not scared at all?"

Roland knew he would have never thought about when he would die in the past because he had believed such a question was meaningless. Knowing how long he could live would only create unnecessary fear and worries. However, as he was now the king of the state, he felt great responsibility be placed on his shoulders. He had to think further. If Wendy's report was accurate, the date of his own death could be very useful information. It might be viewed as a "top secret" that would not be so easily divulged in his previous world. He would thus feel very regretted if he did not obtain this information when provided with such an opportunity.

Roland smiled. He knew Momo would not understand his thought, so he said, "Even if I'm scared, the answer is still there."

Momo clenched her fists. After what seemed to be quite a long hesitation, she replied, "Since you insist, then please excuse my impertinence."

"Your Majesty," Wendy said after taking a deep breath. "Please excuse me."

Roland stared at her for a moment before he said, "... I thought you and Scroll wanted to know it more than anyone else."

"I can't be that calm like you. However, like Scroll said, whatever the result is, we'll always be with you."

After Wendy shut the door, Roland turned around and asked, "What about you?"

Momo was stunned.

"Do I have to answer?" Nightingale said, whose sudden appearance really startled the little girl. "I want to know everything about you, both good and bad."

Roland was amused by the big difference between Nightingale and Wendy. "So, let's begin."

Momo's eyes shoveled from Nightingale to Roland in surprise and then took off her eye mask decisively.

When she looked up again, a jet of red flash appeared in her socket.

It was an eyeball made of magic, which looked extremely creepy against the scarred face. Roland could imagine what it looked like when her real eye overlapped with the magic eye. People in his previous world must like this type of strange pupil very much. However, in this era, it would be only viewed as the eye of devil.

"Any luck? Did you see anything?"

Momo looked toward Roland, and her eyes widened. The red flash quavered as though swaying in invisible wind. In a few seconds, the flash was extinguished. She stepped a few paces back and slumped onto the floor.

Roland noticed perspiration on Momo's face.

"What's the matter?" he asked as he stood up.

Nightingale strode over to Momo and helped her up. "She lost too much power."

"Can she only inspect one person at a time?"

"No... I've never seen such things before," Momo said, panting. "I saw a lot of numbers flicker but they all disappeared. They were in various colors... It took a while for them to finally stabilize."

"What's that number?" Roland asked.

Momo swallowed hard and replied with some difficulties, "17... It's red."

"How come?" Nightingale asked in surprise.

Roland's heart skipped a beat. Just like he had speculated, the winner of the Battle of Soul could obtain everything, provided that the winner possessed magic. Only magic could increase his lifespan and afford him power. Extraordinaries and huge demonic beast hybrids all relied on magic to sustain their physical bodies. Without magic power, he would not benefit anything from the victory of the battle.

17 years was a lot shorter than Roland had thought. Although he knew the old Prince Roland did not have a strong physique, he had not expected that the latter would be that weak. Had years of debauched life consumed him?

"Maybe... I should take another look," Momo said as she struggled to rise.

"No, that's fine. Please go take a rest," Roland said while waving his hand. "You'll faint if you overuse your power. Plus, we haven't figured out how your power functions. There's no point in taking another look."

"But Your Majesty..."

"I told you that I just wanted an answer. You don't need to blame yourself," Roland talked over her decisively. "Have a good rest. From tomorrow onwards, Wendy will start to test your ability and teach you how to control your power. If I want you to take another look, we can do it later. Also, can you keep this just between us?"

Momo stared at Roland for a long time, still quite astonished, and then nodded vigorously.

After the girl left with Wendy, Nightingale returned to the office and walked up to Roland who was standing before the French window.

"Do you regret knowing it?" Roland asked while turning around.

"Are you kidding me?" Nightingale returned gruffly. "I never regret. Now, what are you going to do? You only have 17 years left."

"It's better to know it now than later. Plus, this is probably not the final result yet," Roland said while watching the flickers of lights outside. He found himself strangely calm and peaceful. "The soul

container from Taquila may be able to retain minds. Once we figure out how magic power works in general, we can probably even build a new body in the future.”

“But there should be a ‘future’ in the first place,” Nightingale said, frowning.

“That’s right. Therefore, the first thing we should do is to win the Battle of Divine Will,” Roland said slowly.

He currently had no retreat anymore.

Chapter 1270: A Battle at the Front

In the king’s city, City of Tusk, in the Kingdom of Wolfheart.

This city, which had been ravaged by the church, had yet to fully recover. From above, the outer city still lay in ruins. Nevertheless, compared to the Broken Tooth Castle that had been completely destroyed by the demonic plague, the outer part of the city looked much better. At least, there were not piles of decaying human remains down the wells and drainage facilities.

Just a few months ago, this place had still been under the ruling of the Tusk Family, a branch of the royal family of the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Iron Axe had initially planned to evacuate the towns and villages before he dealt with the nobles. As such, he had not interfered with the relentless battles between the Tusk, Token and Redstone Gates Families immediately. However, the sudden appearance of the Red Mist forced him to adjust his original plan. As the Tusk City was the central city that connected the south and north of the kingdom, he had to seize it to let the troops retreating from the Kingdom of Everwinter through.

It was a fairly quick and boring battle. Even without the support of the Longsong Cannon, the five temporary units, which totalled 500 soldiers, soon breached the well-fortified Tusk Castle and the Tusk City with the mortars and the anti-demon grenades. The local lord, Hilburke, was shot dead when he was supervising his army. The city thus fell even before the nobles launched a proper counterattack. The other nobles thus all surrendered, which officially ended the dominance of the three major families in the Kingdom of Wolfheart.

As a commander who had been following Roland since the first battle in Border Town, Iron Axe knew the military strength of Everwinter better than anyone else. Five years ago, they had still been struggling to defeat the Longsong Duke; but now, the First Army could flatten any kingdom on this continent on His Majesty’s order.

They had far outstripped those nobles.

However, this did not give Iron Axe any self-contentment, nor did it relax his mind.

He understood the unbridgeable gap between the human race and the demons.

As the Red Mist continued to spread, the First Army was forced to constantly retreat from the Kingdom of Everwinter to the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Casualties increased every day. As the army was not able to build a permanent defensive line, the units were often caught unprepared by the enemies. Intelligence

showed that the demons frequently appeared on the path that the troops had to pass, despite that they had confirmed several times beforehand that the road was clear.

The constant defeats would definitely lower the morale among the soldiers. Iron Axe knew that he should have directed the army to the Cage Mountain and given the troops a good rest. However, His Majesty's order superseded everything. As the king needed people, he had no choice but to keep advancing despite the surging casualty rate.

There was no other way except fighting back.

They had to punch the demons in their ugly faces! Only in this way could they shake them off and raise the morale.

Iron Axe thus picked the Tusk City as his temporary stronghold.

"The demons are putting their guard down," Brian reported as he looked through the telescope. He had returned from the Southernmost Region to the Sedimentation Bay on Roland's order with 1,500 Mojin warriors. This was also the first formal Sand Nation army in the history of Graycastle.

"They started to put their guard down at the border the Kingdom of Everwinter," Iron Axe agreed with a nod. "Edith was right. Erecting the Obelisk on the ridge of the continent can be both good and bad. Although the ridge is a perfect hiding place, the demons can't easily march down to the south from there."

He could see dark, crimson clouds spread across the sky as he gazed upon the north from the watchtower of the castle. The Red Mist had already crossed the border of the Kingdom of Everwinter and the Kingdom of Wolfheart, and was now pressing slowly toward the Tusk City.

Right below the clouds was Goldwater Town, which had been half enveloped by the Red Mist. Nevertheless, surprisingly, Iron Axe did not see a single Fortified Monstrous Beast. Only very few Devilbeasts were hovering in the sky, as though they had been completely abandoned by their peers.

This would have never happened at the early stage of the war.

After several fruitless fights, the General Staff had formed a basic idea of what the demons were planning on.

The intention of their military operation was, in a way, the same as His Majesty's, which was to take more populated cities and have the men there serve them. Therefore, the demons were making every effort to stop the First Army from taking refugees away.

To seize men's territories as fast as they could, the demons normally used the Fortified Monstrous Beast to circle out a small Red Mist zone to enable their troops move from one area to another swiftly like frogs, and then attack the city before the Red Mist completely spread out.

By the time the demons took most of the cities in the Kingdom of Everwinter, they had advanced significantly slower. This indicated that as their territories expanded, the demons found it increasingly hard to manage the cities they had taken.

It was actually pretty easy to understand why it had happened.

It took time to force men to work and manage encampments. As the territories expanded, the demons' troops were further scattered. Another key factor was that the demons did not really need to send their main force to attack humans. With sufficient Red Mist, they just needed to dispatch a unit to destroy one unit of the First Army. It was thus totally unnecessary to assemble a large army.

Given that, after the demons reached the border of the Kingdom of Everwinter, there were fewer attacks from them. Perhaps, the demons did not necessarily reduce their total force. However, as the Red Mist had expanded significantly and stretched away for several hundred kilometers, it was almost impossible to monitor the whole area without increasing the force.

This was exactly what Iron Axe had observed.

"Sir, all the 'supplies' shipped from Neverwinter have arrived at the Tusk City," a soldier ran up to the watchtower and reported.

"Finally!" Iron Axe exclaimed in excitement as he turned around to face Brian and said, "Let's go take a look."

They thus walked out of the castle and saw several hundred iron barrels at a clearing in front of the city gate. These barrels were round, about half as tall as a man, one cubit in width, without a single crack on the surface.

"Sir, what are they?" Brian asked as he studied the barrels up and down, looking utterly confused. They did not look like regular containers since there were no handles. They did not look like weapons either. Numerous battles had told him that fixed explosives were far less powerful than cannons. It was a little too unrealistic to use these barrels to fight the demons off.

Brian pushed the barrels but they did not budge at all. Apparently, these barrels were filled with something. Nobody would like to spend time and effort shipping hundreds of heavy iron barrels to the front unless they were extremely important.

"This is His Majesty's new invention. You were still in the Southernmost Region helping His Majesty expand his territory when they were being tested, so naturally you don't know," Iron Axe replied smilingly. "These barrels will be the key to this battle. If they really work as perfectly as they did in the test, we would then be able to catch the demons off guard even in a mobile warfare!"