

Witch 131

Chapter 131 The Manifestation of Magic

Early at dawn of the next morning, Roland was woken up by Nightingale, who had stolen his blanket. He remembered that the last time he was woken up this way was when Nana's father had discovered that his daughter had become a witch.

So, he sleepily asked while rubbing his eyes, "What's going on? Did we discover a new witch in town?"

"No, Your Highness," Nightingale was totally excited, "Anna... her ability has changed!"

Roland, who at this point wasn't completely awake yet asked, "Wasn't she already a grown-up?"

"Our ability can change even after we become an adult, but until now I have never seen such an amazing kind of magic. It's just like a completely different entity." Nightingale went to the washbasin, "Even Scroll and Wendy have never heard of something like this, make haste, you have to see it; the others are already waiting for you in the office!"

Roland casually washed his face, threw some clothes on and went with Nightingale to the second floor and into his office. When he stepped into the room, the eyes of eleven witches immediately focused on him. One of them was Anna, whose eyes were completely swollen, giving the impression that she hadn't gotten any sleep last night.

"Who can tell me what happened?"

The first one who opened her mouth to speak was Nightingale, "Early this morning I passed by Anna's room and saw her laying her head on the table and sleeping. On the table were also a pile of iron lumps. When I approached her to wake her up I discovered that the magic within her body had turned into..." She paused for a moment, seemingly having to think about a way to describe it, "it fused into a fixed shape, like a constantly rotating cube."

Roland went to Anna and stopped directly in front of her. There, he carefully examined her all over, but other than seeing that she was clearly tired, he couldn't detect any differences. Then, he noticed the lengthy cylinder standing on the table; it seemed to be made out of iron, but its gray surface was very smooth and the top was also cleanly cut off, dazzling Roland's eyes. "This is..."

"This was created by Anna," explained Nightingale, "She made it with her new ability. When a witch awakens to her power, her body will begin to gather magic. At the beginning, the gathered magic looks like a cluster of fog. However, after a few years, it will turn into a colorful whirlpool. For example, Wendy's magic is white while Leaves' magic is green... Previously Anna's magic reservoir was already very large and condensed into a dark green whirlpool on her day of adulthood, but now, the magic within her body has become fist-sized, solid and completely opaque." She picked up the quill on his desk and began to draw its outline, "It's almost like that."

Although Nightingale's painting skills were very rudimentary, Roland could still distinguish that it had the form of a cube.

Roland turned in Anna's direction. "What happened last night?"

Hearing this question, Anna began to recount everything from last night. When she finished her story, the other witches were wearing a confused expression on their faces. They were totally unable to understand what these things that were coming out of her mouth, like small balls, vibrations, and connections had to do with the change to her ability.

Only Roland's heart had begun to beat faster.

In his opinion, magic was a kind of energy, and the witches were its outlets. Magic could endlessly be transformed into different kinds of abilities, and in the end, the witch herself would decide what kind of effect her magic had. It always depended on how the witch manipulated it, or more precisely, it depended on the witch's own imagination.

If his guess was right, imagination could have a far-reaching impact on the developing of their abilities.

In short, for a person who had never seen an airplane, it would be difficult to think of the idea that a huge iron bird could fly in the air; a person who had never seen the universe naturally didn't know how wide the world was. The height of their own imagination and the breadth of their knowledge limited their use of magic. Each further understanding of the nature of the world had brought great advances in science and technology, so why wouldn't that also be true for the witches' abilities? The deeper their understanding of the world became, the closer their magic and their effect would come to the origin.

"Let me see your new abilities," Roland asked, full of curiosity.

Anna spread out her arm, and on top of her fingers a black flame appeared out of the thin air. Even when taking a closer look, there was still no difference between the appearance of her flame and that of an ordinary flame, with the exception that it was black and didn't create any light.

So, Roland asked further, "Can you change the shape of your black flame?"

Anna nodded, and under her control her flame moved down to the top of the desk. Then her naturally-shaped black flame turned into a cube. Not giving anyone the chance to react, the block began to spread out and turned into a black sheet-like cloth, covering almost the entire desk, then gathered at the center, gradually changing into a thin, upright line. Roland could not help but touch, only to discover that this long and slender object, resembling a hair, didn't move a single jot. This was simply inconceivable. It seemed to be as hard as steel, but moments later he could easily bend it with his fingers. She could decide if it was flexible or absolutely rigid; a true body didn't exist.

"Can you make it even thinner?"

"Yes, but then you cannot touch it anymore," said Anna, "or else it will easily cut into your hand."

"But you can still freely control its temperature?"

"Right, and compared to my previous green fire, I can now control it to such a degree that different parts of my flame can have different temperatures."

Roland could now somewhat understand what Nightingale meant by completely new ability. Compared to her former green and warm fire, her ability at the moment had become completely different; describing it as flame like before wouldn't be appropriate. When Anna accepted the idea that the universe was built out of microscopic particles, her control of the temperature had also achieved a

completely new stage after connecting it with particle motion. It was certain that Anna wasn't manipulating the particles the same way she had manipulated the flames before.... No matter if it was her original flame, her green flame she got on her day of adulthood, or now her black flame, they were her form of expressing her magic.

Although she converted her magic into heat in both methods, the true effect was very different.

She is truly a genius, Roland couldn't stop himself from sighing, anything else than genius, he could not think of a more appropriate adjective. In the same evening of learning new knowledge, she was immediately able to fully comprehend it and apply it to create a new ability. Only very talented people could have this absorptive capacity and way of thinking.

Anna's changes also made him more interested in exploring the true nature of the world.

Unfortunately, I don't have my own magic, Roland thought, this is definitely my biggest regret after crossing over. After all, within the hearts of most people there is the dream of becoming a superhero, accidentally gaining an incredible power, and walking down a unique path. How much fun would that be?

"I might know why Anna's ability has changed," Roland spoke aloud, pushing back his regrets and coming back to reality.

"How has she achieved it?" The crowd asked.

"Through studying."

"Do you mean something like yesterday's teaching class?" Scroll unsurely muttered.

"That is exactly what I was talking about," Roland began to explain his own speculation again, "The understanding of the world can help you improve your ability, or even completely change it."

"I can... also change?" Mystery Moon timidly asked.

"Of course," Roland reassuringly patted her shoulder. If there wasn't a limited number of steam engines, and I hadn't found the rubber, I would have been unable to produce wires, so her ability to create strong magnets would have become very handy.

The original purpose behind his action of imparting his knowledge to Scroll was to avoid forgetting what he had learned in his ordinary memory. But now, he had accidentally discovered that knowledge played a big role in forming the effect of the witches' abilities. So, it became necessary that all the witches partake in his evening lessons.

Of course, he also understood, that not everyone had Anna's outstanding talent. For example, he didn't have the tiniest piece of hope for Nightingale, who always fell asleep during his lessons. He didn't know how many of the witches would cross the difficult path of simply remembering something to completely understanding it, then understanding it to actually using it.

"Last night you didn't get any sleep, so it would be the best if you got some rest now," Roland said to Anna, "I'll take another look at your new ability in two days."

"Alright," Anna nodded earnestly.

“As for the rest of you,” he looked to the other witches, “from today on, you will all come together in the living room after dinner to start with the basics and learn how to read and write on Mondays to Fridays. Scroll will be your teacher.”

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Chapter 132 The Knight of the Elk Family (Part 1)

Prius had already been locked up for five days.

Although it couldn't be called a cell, after the transformation, there was not much difference between the former house and a cell – the original wooden doors were replaced by wooden railings, all the furniture had been removed from the house, and only a few blankets were left. The only advantage compared to a cell was that the room was clear and that it had neither holes for draught nor rain.

In addition to Prius, there were four other prisoners. Three of them belonged to the house of the former Duke, the other belonged to the Wolf Family, and Prius himself belonged to the Elk Family.

“What the hell, he really wants to lock us up in here!” Shouted one of the Duke's Knights, who belonged to the oldest people who have taken part in the battle, “The wheat on the fields in my territory haven't even been sown yet! And my woman doesn't know how to manage everything.”

“Your territory?” asked the young knight of the Wolf Family with a lot of contempt in his voice, “Do you really believe that the Prince will let you keep your rank as a knight? Even letting you keep your Horse, Armor, and weapons so that you can start your revenge whenever you feel like? Really, as long as he doesn't send us to the gallows, he can still be considered as a kind person.”

“What did you just say!?” The old knight stared furiously at him.

“To tell you the truth,” the young knight explained further, “The Duke did indeed plan to start a rebellion against the throne in doing so becoming a first-rate convict, taking all of his elite knights with him, and only letting a few stand by the side of his son. As for us, we would naturally be forced by the Duke to follow him onto the battlefield.”

“I see that you would really like to die now!” Hearing him talk like this the old knight suddenly went over, picking the young knight and lifting him up, while at the same time clenching his right hand into a fist, already going through the motion to hit him, but suddenly his hand was firmly grasped from behind.

“Stay your hand, Halon. Do you want that the guards come over?” the fist was grasped by a young handsome knight, “What he said is right, we were knights under the command of the Duke, so if we are to be convicted we are likely to be sentenced to a heavy punishment. Just look at the Knight of the Elk Family, he is waiting calmly for the result, and now look at how you are acting. Do you think you're showing the right kind of demeanor?”

Prius could immediately recognize this man, he was the star of all of the Longsong Stronghold's knights, Ferlin Eltek, also nicknamed Morning Light. He had captured the hearts of many aristocratic families' young ladies. However, after coming around, he finally settled down and married a civilian, creating a lot of heated discussions. After being mentioned, Prius decided that now wasn't the time to stay quiet, so he said to them: "I don't know what will happen to your territories, but I'm certain that the Prince won't kill us."

"Oh, why's that?"

"If he had killed us all in the stronghold, he would have achieved a deterrent effect, but after spending so much effort to bring us to Border Town, why should he kill us here? To impress the civilians?" Prius shook his head, "During the battle, we weren't even able to set one foot inside the town."

As long no one attacked them, burning down and looting their houses, the town's people naturally wouldn't have any extreme hatred against them. Therefore, since the Prince didn't kill them during their stay in the stronghold, he also wasn't likely to kill them here in Border Town.

After thinking about this for a moment, the knight called Eltek nodded in confirmation, "What you said makes sense. May I have your name, please, mister...?"

"Prius Dessau."

"Thank you for your encouraging words, Sir Dessau." After he expressed his thanks, Ferlin grasped Halon by his arm and took him back to another corner.

The young knight of the Wolf Family also sat back down, and leaning against the wall and began to hum.

He really doesn't seem to be afraid of it, Prius thought, but my staying "calm", isn't anything other than a facade.

Prius knew that he wasn't made out of the things needed to be a knight. He did not inherit his father's bravery, nor his mother's wisdom, and instead of training with the sword he had always preferred to take care of their territory. Raising chicken and ducks, fishing in the pond or doing anything else similar to this. As a knight for the Elk Family, he was really a helpless case, not to mention killing someone, he didn't even like to participate in hunting. So, during their charges against the defenders of Border Town, Prius had always kept as far to the back as possible, never expecting to come into a situation where he had to retreat for his life.

Hold on... when he thought about the battle he got the feeling that there was something wrong, as the star of the Duke's Knight, why was Eltek still able to stay alive? Shouldn't he have been the first line in leading the charge?

"His Royal Highness wants to see you," a guard suddenly shouted by the door, "Sirius Daly, you're the first to come with me."

Hearing his name a young knight jumped up, waved once to say goodbye to the others and left the cell.

"Hey, we also want to go!"

Seeing that one of them was allowed to leave Halon also chased to the door, only to be stopped by the blunt end of the guard's weapon. After locking the door, he turned once more into the direction of the prisoner and coldly said, "Do not worry, it won't be long before it will be your turn."

Knowing that it was soon time for his own trial, with each passing minute Prius became more and more tense.

Damn it, previously the day of the trial couldn't come along fast enough for me, but now that the day has finally arrived, I've become afraid. Prius thought angrily. But he couldn't stop his body from shaking from time to time. Every few moments he would look towards the door, feeling the same as if his first child was soon to be born, feeling hope and panic at the same time.

Fortunately, the waiting time wasn't all that long, probably only half an hour had passed before the guard responsible for escorting the prisoners came again, "Prius Dessau, it's your turn."

Panic-stricken he jumped up, but his feet accidentally tripping about one of the blankets laying on the floor, but Eltek seeing that just took a step forward and supported him, stopping him from falling down.

"Th-thank you." Prius pressed the words out of his parched throat.

"It's nothing much." Said his helper with a soothing voice, taking away a lot of Prius' tension.

He nodded once more thankfully in Ferlin's direction and then followed the guard out of the cell.

Leading the way was a young man, who was about seventeen years old, was wearing a dark brown leather armor and boots while holding a strange weapon in his hands.

"Don't you need to tie my hands together?" Prius asked confused.

"When we locked you up you were already searched thoroughly, so what can you even do without a weapon?"

"Where are you going to take me?"

"To His Highness's Castle."

"What's happened to the previous man? The knight, how is he?"

The guard just shrugged his shoulders and didn't give him an answer.

Well, maybe he doesn't know what happened to him, or it is also possible that he just doesn't want to tell me. When it became clear that he wouldn't get another answer, Prius just closed his mouth.

Prius had a very strange feeling as he looked at his escort. The guard dressed and looked like an ordinary civilian, but when he just spoke to the knights he didn't show even a trace of fear, he wasn't even using the most basic form of honorifics. He seems to not understand, that during peacetime, we knights can easily decide his life and death.

But there was also the expression in his eyes – Prius had looked into the eyes of many people who were always fighting to survive, their eyes were all stiff and indifferent, just like the eyes of a soulless corpse, but in this young man's eyes, he saw arrogance and pride. It was obviously that he was a civilian, but he

was showing the same prideful demeanor as a full-fledged knight. This extreme incongruity confused Prius to the extreme.

In the end, what kind of environment was needed in order to give birth to such a person?

While walking, Prius viewed his surrounding, although he had never been to Border Town before, he had still heard about what a barren and desolate place it was. But the vibrancy he felt from the town, stood on the complete opposite end of the image he had previously formed of it. Everywhere on the streets there were people coming and going, always moving at a fast pace, giving the impression as if everyone was busy. From time to time, there were other people dressed in the same way as the young man escorting him. Everyone's face was rosy, full of spirit, and not a bit like people who had just experienced the ordeal of the Months of Demons.

Close to the castle district, he saw an area where more than 100 people had gathered together – it seems this group of people were responsible for the construction of residential houses, but looking at the scale it seemed that they were building more than one. The materials they needed to build the houses were neatly accumulated on the side and within them, there were also plenty of fired bricks.

In general, only the aristocracy would choose to use this more expensive material, but assuming that the building was supposed for a noble, the area built was just too small for nobility. Looking at an already previously built house, he discovered that it was only as large as his family's drawing room. In addition, all those houses were built with the same design, which aristocracy would like such houses?

With his head filled with questions, Prius entered the Lord's Castle.

Chapter 133 The Knight of the Elk Family (Part 2)

Before he was allowed to enter the parlor, Prius had to once more go through a complete body search. But this time it was a much more detailed search than the previous one. From the top to the bottom, they had touched every possible place in which he could hide a knife, even his soles weren't forgotten.

He was then led into the hall and was finally able to see the person responsible for the Duke's defeat – the 4th Prince of the Kingdom of Graycastle, the Lord of Border Town, as well as the new Lord of the Western Territories, Roland Wimbledon.

The Prince carried the typical symbol of the Wimbledon bloodline, the gray hair. His face still looked very young, at most he was still in his early twenties. Besides his gray hair, there wasn't any other sign of his royal blood. He didn't wear a crown nor did he have any other kind of jewelry on his slender fingers, instead he was holding a quill in his hand. Furthermore, he didn't wear any bracelets either – all of this was a very rare sight when facing a member of the aristocracy.

"Are you Prius Dessau, a knight belonging to the Elk Family?" Roland asked while he leaned back into his chair and looked at the parchment.

"Yes, Sir," When spoken to, Prius knelt down on one knee.

He couldn't believe it, such a young man without even the trace of a beard, was able to lead a group of miners and hunters to defeat the whole combined forces of the previous Lord of the Western Territories, Duke Ryan.

“Are you able to read and write? You may stand up and answer.”

“I can, Your Highness, this is a knight’s most basic of requirement,” Prius stood up and suddenly thought of some of the old Knight who got their title conferred during the time where the Kingdom of Graycastle wasn’t as powerful, they even knighted civilians with good military achievements, so he quickly added, “I mean, like all other knights of the younger generation are able to.”

Over the past three decades, with the reduction in exploration and wars, the possibility of achieving military merits and getting canonized had become smaller while at the same time other traits became more important for a knight. If you didn’t pick up the pen and wasn’t able to read or write a document, it would become very difficult to rule over your own territory. With the king’s establishment of the camp in the Cold Wind Ridge, the area at the western border of the Kingdom of Dawn had a sudden rise in the number of talented men appearing there. But at the same time, the requirements for being knighted was also placed at a new height.

So now during the training to become a knight, the first thing trainees would learn was how to read and write, while later on, if they wanted to rise higher in rank, they would also have to master a variety of etiquettes.

But Prius couldn’t understand, why had His Royal Highness asked him this question?

“Very well,” the Prince nodded. “Then it’s time for my judgment.”

Hearing this sentence, Prius instantly held his breath.

“There are two options you can pick from, one is to go to the North Slope Mine and mine there for twenty years to redeem your sins while your second options it to become a teacher and start to teach my people how to read and write. Furthermore, as a miner you won’t be treated as a slave, you will be paid and every month you will have three days of rest. But teachers are not only paid, they will get free housing and two days rest each week. However, if you choose the latter option, you must work until you reach the age of fifty, only then will you be allowed to lay down your post. By that time though, even if you don’t continue working any longer, you will still be paid as usual.”

After listening to all this Prius was a little relieved, sure enough, just like he had expected, they don’t have to face death or exile. But these two options still left him very puzzled, it sounds like the job as a miner requires a lot of hard work, but His Royal Highness had also said that they would get a salary and... holidays?

And, as a teacher wasn’t it important to be a knowledgeable person? But besides reading and writing, I have no further knowledge. And what meaning did it have to teach civilians anything? His Royal Highness could not truly believe that he could teach the civilians the complete aristocracy culture, could he?

But the most critical point was that both options didn’t mention what would happen to his own territory.

So, Prius gathered his courage, looked up at the Prince, and carefully asked: “Your respected Highness, I do not know what will happen to my territory when I chose one of the two...”

“From the moment you raised the sword against me, your territory no longer belonged to you,” answered Roland bluntly. “On this point, I have already reached an agreement with the heir of the Elk family, that after you made your choice, the new count will send a compensation together with your family to Border Town, so that your territory is vacant and he can confer the knight’s title on someone else.”

Prius’ heart sank, but that is my territory, my house it also on my territory, and there also a group of chickens and ducks and a pond full of fishes, how much can these things be worth? The new count would certainly use a sharp knife to cut it down as far as possible... It was hard to say whether he would even get thirty gold royals for it. The Count has just died, and his heir had already abandoned his own family, such ruthlessness deeply disappointed Prius.

“As an accomplice of the traitor, who rebelled against the throne, this is just a minor verdict.” Roland paused, “Moreover, why are you even showing such a large regret pity for a barren little territory? Whether you choose to become a miner or a teacher, as long as you save enough money you can purchase your own territory.”

Hearing this sentence, Prius spirit raised once more, mining was certainly not his favorite work, but for the other choice... “Your Royal Highness, may I get to know how high the salary for a teacher is?”

“As a Junior Grade Teacher, you would get a payment of 20 silver royals each month, with an increase of 5 silver royals per year, until you reach the age of 50. After reaching the age of fifty, your salary will be the same like your highest previous salary, however, your job as a teacher cannot be inherited nor can it be transferred.”

With his little arithmetic knowledge, Prius calculated that he would receive a yearly income of nearly 3 gold royals, even more, it would increase yearly. So as long as he was able to work for four to five years his income would be as high as his own territory’s income. “Your Royal Highness, what does the title Junior Grade Teacher mean... are there any other types of teachers?”

“Of course there are also other occupations. The Primary Teachers merely teach the reading and writing of characters, while Middle-Grade Teachers and High-Grade Teachers are responsible for teaching all kinds of different knowledge. As long as it is a unique skill which is able to help with the development of a Border Town you can get the position.” Roland sat himself straight up, “How is it, do you have any other good skills? I’m not asking about riding or fencing skills.”

That doesn’t matter since I’m bad at them anyway, Prius thought. He hesitated, but then he said: “Your Royal Highness, I’m good at raising chicken and ducks. I am also very good at fishing.” The moment he had said it aloud, was the moment he already regretted his words. What kind of skill was that? If he was thrown into the wild he would be able to survive. Other nobles were also raising cats or birds, but wasn’t something which interested Prius very much. As for fishing... this was the same as hunting, it could only be counted as his personal hobby.

But he would have never believed that His Royal Highness would be so interested into his skills, “Oh? How do you raise them, can you please explain it to me.”

With no better option than to brace himself and start explaining or to fall, Prius began to state his gathered knowledge.

“Uh, according to my experience in the area of raising broods, it is important to put some grain into the hey, that way they will grow faster. In addition, the grain should be mixed with sand, it will have a similar effect while at the same time, saving on food. It would also be good to set a shed in a well-ventilated area, where they are safe from the sun, rain, and the cold. Especially during the hot summer, if there is no shelter, the hen will most likely stop laying its eggs. While during the winter it’s important to give them some straw, to avoid the chickens from freezing to death. In addition, if you feed them some small fish every month, the chickens will rarely get sick, of course, it is also important to clean up the chicken manure regularly...”

When his speech came to its end, he had to discover that His Highness actually had begun to laugh. “Yes, it appears that the aristocracy of the Western Territory truly aren’t useless.”

“Your Royal Highness?” Prius couldn’t understand what the Prince meant.

Fortunately, Roland Wimbledon quickly lifted his fears, “I will send people to buy a group of chickens and ducks from the Longsong Stronghold, while at the same time I will also give you a piece of land to the west of Border Town, where you can raise the birds. Your payment will be according to that of a Middle-Grade Teacher. For the first year, you will get 50 silver royals each month, with an annual increase of 10 silvers. Of course, if you fail to raise the birds, your only option left will be the mines.”

Chapter 134 Morning Light

First, Roland recorded Prius future treatment on a paper, and he then put down the quill and rubbed his aching neck.

Moments later Nightingale’s voice could be heard from behind, “Your Royal Highness, would you like me to help you relax?”

“There are still more than 30 other prisoners I have to deal with, maybe later.” Roland smiled and nodded in disagreement, he instead took the bell which was placed by the side of his table and rung it a few times. The earlier he finished these chores, the sooner he could start with the Border Town General Education task. After seeing Anna’s new ability, he was now full of expectation of what the future would hold.

The next person who was brought into the hall by his guards was a tall man and Roland’s first impression of him was that he seemed extraordinarily handsome. He wasn’t that far off compared to Carter, who had the face of a male god. Of course, in Roland’s eyes he immediately got negative points for his handsomeness. After glancing on his list, he asked, “Ferlin Eltek?” But there was something different between him and other people, behind his name there were also additional comments, so Roland read further, “Head of the Knights of the Lions, Morning Light, First Knight in the Western Territory... you have so many titles.”

“I do, Your Highness.” Ferlin acknowledged, at the same time going down on one knee.

“I thought people like you, the Head of the Lions would be in the first in line during the charge,” Roland raised his brow. “How were you able to survive?”

"I hid within the rows further behind," admitted the knight, "so long as your control over your horse and its step size is good enough, you can let it look like you are in full sprint, while in fact, you haven't raised the speed by much."

Roland had never expected that he would get such a straightforward answer, he thought that the other side would try to find some excuse to cover up their own fear of fighting, hiding the fact that they had escaped. It seems that this matter wasn't as simple as he had at first thought.

Sure, enough, the knight quickly explained his behavior further: "On the morning of the third day of your pursuit, in other words, at the day of the Duke's death, I have been standing by his side, trying to find an opportunity to kill him, but he still had a large number of guards by his side, which were tightly surrounding him. So, I did not find the right opportunity to start my assault, but fortunately, your troops were able to kill him in the end," during the whole time he told his story he had held his head down. "Your His Highness, I express my gratitude for what you did, so regardless of where you will send me, I will give it my best."

The last sentence could be nearly seen as a plea of allegiance, stunning Roland for a moment, when he had finally collected himself he said: "Stand up and explain it to me further, in the end, what has happened between you and the Duke?"

"As you command, Your Highness. My wife, Irene, was originally a civilian who worked at a well-known theater in the stronghold. We met each other on a lucky encounter and we immediately fell in love. I had hoped to marry her, but my father and mother did not support the wedding. So, I had to leave the territory, and rent a room on a farm near the stronghold. That was also the place where we had held the wedding. However, shortly after our marriage, Irene finally got the opportunity for her first formal performance." Speaking up to here, the Knight's voice became smaller, "The Duke also watched the drama and immediately took a fancy to her, and it didn't take long before he broke into our room and assaulted Irene while I was still out on a mission.

"It took me a long time before I finally got her to tell me what had really happened, and the moment I heard about it, I wanted to find the Duke and hold him responsible for his deeds, but Irene knelt down and begged me not to act recklessly. Deep down, I also knew that if I tried to do something, my chance of success weren't very high. Even if I was able to kill him, I would never be able to escape the hands of his personal guards, and Irene... most likely would become the object of revenge for the Duke's heir. With no other option left to me, I could only suppress my thoughts of revenge, until he decided to go on march against Border Town.

"Although I wasn't able to take personal revenge, but now Irene will finally be able to feel fall asleep without having to worry that someone will break into her room during the night. For me it was also a heavy burden which is now finally lifted from my heart, so please allow me to thank you once again."

"So that's what happened." Roland tapped with his quill on the table, a sign he had previously agreed on with Nightingale, telling her to check whether the other side had lied. Soon he could feel how Nightingale pinched his left scapula, which represented that the other side had told the truth... but this pinch was slightly too hard, letting Roland a little flinch. "Are you able to read and write?"

"Uh..." Now it was Ferlin's time to get startled, showing that he clearly was unable to follow the Prince's train of thoughts, "I can."

“Then I’ll announce my verdict now,” Roland gave him the same choices that he had given to Prius, “... what is your choice?”

“Your Highness, do you not want me to fight for you? Whether it is a solitary riding duel or a group battle, I -”

“No, I do not,” interrupted Roland him, “there are no aristocrats within my army, and in the future, I won’t be recruiting any of them. They are a fully-armed civilian army, and you yourself, during the rest of your life you won’t ever get the opportunity to again take up a weapon.”

“Yes... so?” Ferlin was silent for a long time before he finally nodded, “I understand, that being the case, I choose to become a teacher.”

“You made a wise choice. Teachers can get free housing and their salary is also very good. I will send someone back to your home, to get your wife, so that you can live continue to live a good life here together.” After giving his judgment, Roland gave the signal that Ferlin could now leave.

“Wait, Your Highness, I beg you please let me ask a favor of you,” Ferlin, however, did not leave. “Did you mean that the other knights, as long as they are unable to become a teacher, the only option left to them is to work in the mines for twenty years?”

“That’s exactly what I said.”

“Your Royal Highness... I have a man named Harlon, he is an experienced and old knight, but he is unable to read. Can I pay for him with gold royals, so that he won’t be sent into the mine?”

“Of course not,” Roland directly disagreed, “if you could redeem your crime with money, you would just go back to the stronghold.”

“But he’s almost fifty years old, and this kind of work where he doesn’t get to see the light of the day would only destroy his body.”

“He isn’t strong enough to mine, but he was still able to attack Border Town? Furthermore, my ore mine isn’t such a dark coal mine as you’re imaging. I also have a steam engine, which helps with the pumping and transportation and the staff even have a fixed holiday, don’t you think that’s good enough? Roland picked up the bell, ready to call for the next prisoner.

“My Lord!” Ferlin got frantic and went once more down on his knee. “My family has a treasure map, which is at least four hundred years old and I am willing to use that to buy his freedom.”

“A treasure map with an age of more than four hundred years...” The Prince became uncertain, “Are you sure that it wasn’t one of your ancestors who took some charcoal and casually drew a map to coax the younger generation?”

“No, it’s not written with charcoal or ink,” the knight shook his head. Then he placed his hand on head as if was trying to recall the drawing. “I can’t tell you out of what material it is made of. The lines are very delicate, smooth and supple, and it’s been stored in our basements for decades, but the drawings and the text don’t have any signs of discoloration. My father told me that it was handed down from generation to generation and it describes the location of a treasure. It should be hidden deep in the

Northwest of the Concealing Forest, but to get there you would have to cross past the Desolate Lands, so to us it was simply impossible to go there.

Roland tapped his quill once more against the table, and once more Nightingale pinched his left side.

“Well, even in the case that what you said was the truth, there is still the problem that this treasure map should be hidden in the basement of your family home. You have already given up the right of your inheritance, and I’m afraid they won’t willingly see you ever again.”

“What you say is the truth,” he firmly nodded, “But I have completely memorized the content of the drawings, the above patterns and the text I can roughly depict it”.

“Then draw it for me,” Roland pushed his quill and paper over the table into his direction. “If what you said is true, I can make an exception to your request.”

“His Royal Highness is too kind.” Ferlin went to the table and began to depict the treasure map.

It was true, Morning Light wasn’t only good at fighting; no, he was also talented in painting and calligraphy. Soon, a rough topographical map appeared in front of Roland.

The map actually showed the area behind the Impassable Mountain Range, the lower right corner of the map was occupied by mountains. Then around the center, he drew an equilateral triangle, and the three corners pointed to different places. One corner ended at the foot of the Northern Slope, and another corner pointed to a hexagonal star mark inside the Concealing Forest, which was most probably the so-called treasure’s location.

However, Roland’s attention was entirely attracted to the third vertex of the triangle, pointing to the middle of the Wild Lands, on top of a sawtooth-shaped mountain top, stood the word: “Taqila.”

Chapter 135 To start with the basics

– “The Devils grow in number each day, but we become less.”

“The Holy City of Taqila has already fallen into the hands of the enemies, the only option left to us is to scatter in all directions.”

“We fled over mountains and across rivers, as far as possible from the Gates of Hell.”

“But next time, where should we flee?” –

“What do you think about it?” Back in his office, Roland closed the illusion of the ancient book and turned to Scroll to get her opinion of it.

“In case what the Knight remembered is the truth, this would really be an incredible coincidence.” Scroll pondered for a moment about her next words, “The content of the treasure map and what’s recorded in the ancient book is the same, so this proves that the Church had once stepped into the Wild Lands and constructed a point of resistance against the Devils there. In addition, the points marked on the map are perhaps the defense towers, posts, warehouses, or whatever they built there.”

“You mean... this isn’t really a treasure map?”

“Of course. After all, the Church isn’t a group of bandits or pirates; they do not need to hide their treasures, but they would leave behind a drawing to help the future generations.”

Roland nodded, “Well, so... this is just such a map?”

“Although it is not clear why the Church did not record this period in history, I believe that the ruins buried in the eastern forest aren’t the only one of its kind.” Analyzed Scroll, “If the locations marked on the map are just some facilities, the chance that we find something after all these centuries aren’t that high, but if it has a storage warehouse in the basement, it will probably be another underground site, and we might be able to uncover some clues from it.”

“What kind of clues?”

“Like the reason that the Church is concealing the existence of the devils? Why do they resist the devil, but still carefully conceal it?” She paused, her voice becoming a little unsteady, “and... why do they call us witches the Devil’s messengers and why do they want to kill us?”

Roland did not know how to comfort her, so he was unable to find the right words as he fell silent after a moment. Only after a while he slowly began, “Unfortunately he didn’t know how accurate the picture was. According to his statement, the original map wasn’t drawn by hand.”

“Do you want Nightingale to go to the knight’s house?”

“That doesn’t sound right,” Roland denied, “The treasure map has already been passed on for hundreds of years, so the possibility that the storeroom is filled with God’s Stones of Retaliation or other traps is high.” Pointing at the triangle symbol, “For now, this place is out of reach, in any case. If this is the area of our North Slope mine, then the location of the hexagonal star is at least 50 kilometers away from us, almost as far as the distance between Border Town to Longsong Stronghold. With the exception of Lightning, who can travel that distance within a day, the rest of us would need to walk for two to three days. What will we do if we were to meet some of the Devils during the journey... I don’t want you to have any kind of mishap.”

“You can let Lightning explore the forest from the air; maybe she will be able to find something,” Scroll suggested.

“That is a viable option.” Roland immediately stood up, “The next time she comes back I will give her her new mission, but for now I want to go to the North Slope Mine while you get ready to give your next lesson. If you need more copies of the books, you should find Soraya, she will handle it for you. Don’t forget to continue to give them lessons this evening.”

Now that Roland had already held the first lessons of his new primary course, he could give the teachers position to Scroll. With her phonetic reading and writing and her ability to repeat everything from memory she had once heard or read, Roland believed she had everything that was needed to become a good teacher.

“Yes, Your Highness,” Scroll said as she saluted and left.

The testing and production area near the North Slope Mine was now more than two-times as large as it was before, and the two holes needed for the production of the twelve-pound cannon were still left on

the ground. When Roland arrived in the testing area, he immediately saw Anna practicing her new ability. On the table next to her, there laid two finished products that looked exactly like steel pipes.

He immediately held them up to take a closer look; the steel pipes were perfectly round and had a totally smooth surface without any pores, the hole in the middle was equally wide on both sides, and the sunlight passed through without any problems through the hole in the pipe. To compare the thickness of the pipe-walls, Roland placed his fingers into the holes. This way, he discovered that they were exactly the same size.

Roland couldn't stop admiring her work, "How were you able to make this?"

"Take a look," Anna picked up a freshly cut steel bar, laid it flat on her hand, and inserted a thread of her black flame into one end, leading it through the complete body. Then she let the thread rotate around the center of a circle, and soon the hole was complete.

What an amazing ability, he thought, with her magic, she is capable of hot wire cutting, and at the same time her accuracy and control are incomparable. Anna alone is enough to push the industrial production to a new height inside Border Town. Trying to restrain his excitement, he said, "Let's do some basic tests first."

The basic test included the testing of the scope of her abilities, her ability's strength, and its duration.

Nightingale also took part in the test; she appeared out of her fog and was responsible for observing if there were any changes to the magic inside of Anna's body.

The results showed that in addition to a substantial increase in the strength of her ability and the duration at which she was able to cast her magic, the range at which she was able to use her flame was still around five meters, and it was only within a range of three meters that she was able to carry out her precise control.

Furthermore, her magic still belonged to the category of summoning, and could still be suppressed by God's Stone of Retaliation. When Anna ordered her black flame to enter the range of the stone, the flame would still suddenly disappear.

Unless she could evolve to the point of directly accessing her magic, she wouldn't be able to get past this hurdle.

However, Anna's new capabilities still belonged to the category of earth-changing. With her black flame, it became much easier to produce the industrial machinery, and her ability to reproduce all kinds of tools could be considered as the method to push the level of machine processing to a whole new level.

However, a large-scale industrial production wasn't something that one person could do on their own. For example, Karl had already finished one of the furnaces he had to build on the hillside near the North Slope Mine. However, by the time they tested it, they discovered that although they could use it to produce clay bricks for the creation of cement, its temperature tolerance was not up to the level that they had needed. So, in the end, they still had to rely on Anna alone to produce the required cement – fortunately, since her day of adulthood, it was no longer required of her to step inside the dusty room to complete the calcining process.

It wasn't the case that Roland was unable to find a solution to the temperature problem. For example, they could use the steam engine to create enough wind in order to improve the furnace's temperature, and they could then let the heated up air circulate to minimize the heat loss. But without Anna, they were unable to create another steam engine. After all, only she could complete the welding of the key components.

It could be said that the creation of industrial machinery was built on the Anna's shoulders. The moment they lost her, the so-called industrial revolution would be nothing more than flowers in a mirror and the moon reflected in the lake.

During the Months of the Demons, Roland had done everything he could in order to survive, and now that the threat of the demonic beasts no longer existed and Longsong Stronghold had provided them with enough additional population and capital, he naturally wanted to change the present situation.

– “First, let us start with the basics.”

He let Anna cut out a two-finger wide and one millimeter-thick steel sheet. He then measured a centimeter-long distance on it, and repeated this until he had a ten-centimeter-long ruler. Then he let Anna's black flame climb up the steel sheet, and create vertical marks at a regular distance. Under her fine control, the distance between each vertical mark was almost exactly the same.

Roland's intention was that this ruler was only the start. Afterwards, he wanted to create various kinds of measuring tools to define the samples for uniform weights and measures. These standard units would then be written as the norm into manuals, becoming an inseparable part of his educational courses.

Chapter 136 The Dilemma

The last two weeks in Clearwater Port seemed to be one day of festival after another, even standing above the ground, on the balcony of the Lord's Tower, Ryan could still feel the exuberant atmosphere within the city.

The people and materials they had moved from Eagle City had greatly expanded the strength of the harbor city, the looters had really a fruitful harvest and the slavers haven't been any less successful. After this series of fighting, the Black Sail Fleet not only did not have many losses, they could even increase the ranks of the sailors with new slaves who were currently standing at the edge of the harbor undergoing a rigid drill. In a few days, they would set sails towards the Islands of the Fjords beginning this year's first looting operation.

Her Majesty the Queen has also openly declared the Slave Act, as long as these captured slaves from Eagle City were able to capture new slaves, they could exchange them for their replacement. Like this, they could jump from the rank of a slave to a full citizen of the Clearwater Port. With such a decree of encouragement, they could guarantee that the former residents of Eagle City, who had now become slaves, would do their best to fight for her Majesty.

Today, the defeated Timothy should have returned to King's City and shouldn't have any possibility to block the conquest of the Queen of Clearwater. As long as time passes, Garcia Wimbledon was bound to become the Queen of Graycastle. Thinking of this, Ryan couldn't understand why he didn't see even a small trace of happiness on the Queen's face, but to the contrary, her eyebrows were always forming a frown.

“Your Majesty, the Clan Heads of the Sandstone Clan and Black Bone Clan have come to see you.” At this moment, the voice of a guard could be heard through the door.

Ryan looked at Her Majesty, only to see that the latter didn’t show any sign of listening, so he could only shout, “Bring them in.”

His Majesty, whether it was to rest, to convene a meeting or just to meet with people, she was always at the top of the tower. As long as the weather was good, the terrace was the place where Garcia’s could be found. Most people weren’t conformable with standing in mid-air, facing the slightly fishy smelling sea breeze. And the people from the Extreme South were no exception to this.

The Clan Head of the Sandstone Clan was a petite woman, but she also acted as the clan’s own goddess. When Ryan had heard of this for the first time, he had scoffed within his heart, what Goddess? She is nothing more than a corrupted witch. The Clan Head of the Black Bone Clan was a tall man, whose face was covered in scars and whose arms and legs were exceptional muscular. Each meeting, they had to place three to four guards to surround him, in case he planned to act against Her Majesty the Queen.

The moment they set foot on the terrace, the two Clan Heads invariably raised their eyebrows, but they soon changed their expressions back, and instead they went down on one knee to pay their respect to Her Majesty. “May there always be an oasis in front of you, and may the stars of heaven always light your path.”

“Stand up,” Garcia said while she herself sat down on the parapet. “How is it, are you satisfied with your new home?”

“Everything is fine,” answered Goddess Kaaba rushed. “Here the land has water and forests, which is much more comfortable than the life in Sand City, where the wind blows the sand all over the place.”

“When everything is to your liking, then why did you come to me?”

“Your Majesty, you have to”

The moment the Black Bone Clan Head opened his mouth to speak he got already interrupted by Kaaba, “Yes, your Majesty. After the last battle, many of our warriors became weak and dispirited, only after a new dose of pills did their symptoms get any better, but we don’t have enough pills in our hands. So, we would like to ask you if you could give us more pills.”

“I meant to say the same thing” muffled the Black Bone Clan Head after he received a glare from Kaaba.

“These pills are very complicated to produce and have rare ingredients, I do not have much surplus. But rest assured, when the new batch of pills is produced, I will give them to you as soon as possible. But don’t forget to prepare the gold royals, if they aren’t enough, you’ll have to pay in other ways.”

“Your majesty, I beg your pardon for my asking,” Kaaba hesitated for a moment. “I wonder when the next batch will be made.”

“I’m unable to give you this information,” Garcia stroke through her hair, sorting the chaos created by the sea breeze, “All the news about the pills are top secret, you can only go back and wait patiently. Those soldiers are just dispirited, just let them rest a little bit more, then everything will be alright.”

After receiving a hint from Garcia, her guards walked forward to surround the Clan Heads and lead both of them back down, without giving them any chance to say a few anymore words.

When the door closed behind them, Garcia sighed softly.

Ryan who had rarely heard such a tone from the Queen had to ask: "Your Majesty, don't you think that it was wrong to let the Sandpeople settle down at our southern border? One day, when they become stronger..."

"No, Ryan," Garcia shook her head, "I have never been worried about the Sandpeople, they won't ever be a threat to Clearwater Port. The lake in their territory is exactly in the middle between the two clans, but the river ending in the lake goes first through the Port of Clear Water. So as long as I block up the river, the amount of water in the lake will be reduced and they will start to fight against each other. This is also exactly the reason, why I chose the Sandstone Clan and the Black Bone Clan, their relationship was never harmonious. "

"Then are you worried about the matter of the pills?"

Garcia didn't give him a reply, however, just at this moment a guard knocked once more on the door and announced, "Your Majesty, the priest of the church, Dicar."

"Bring him in," the Queen stood up and her face became darker.

"Your Majesty, Garcia Wimbledon, I greet you on behalf of the Holy City," the priest entered the terrace while bowing.

"Pills? Why is it that the previous batches of pills that had always been served timely, but this batch got so much delayed?" Garcia asked coldly.

"Your Majesty no need for anger, this is exactly the reason I came," Dicar had to wipe the sweat from his forehead, "You asked to buy 5000 pills, but that is just too much, even if we take all the pills produced for the Hermes we can't fulfill your request. This time I brought as much as I could with me."

"How much?" Interrupted Garcia.

"One thousand." Said Dicar in a consoling voice, "the rest will be sent after a while."

"And it will still be the same as previously promised?" Garcia's facial expression got a bit nicer, "You now I want to have as many as I can. Also where have you stored the pills? I'll immediately send someone to fetch them."

"In the church, the gold royals..."

"This time, I won't reduce the number of gold royals," Garcia stepped directly in front of Dicar and whispered into his ear, "but if the delivering of the pills get further delayed, your head will hang on the highest mast of my flagship, and I can guarantee you, the archbishop won't shed a single tear for you."

Hearing this the priest turn pale and directly asked to be excused.

When he had left, Garcia went back to the railing and looked out over the sea. Her hair was lifted up by the sea breeze, just like the flags of her ships, waving in the wind.

“You were right, I’m worried about the pills.” Garcia’s voice seemed distant. “If Timothy had waited two months longer, my preparation would have been more adequate, but he had moved too fast.”

“You’ve done a great job,” Ryan thought to himself, who could have done a better job? The moment she had occupied Eagle City, she had already started to prepare the path for her retreat. She had ordered her soldiers to take away all of the usable materials and residents, while at the same time she let ditches be dug out everywhere in the city, afterward filling them up with black water. Since they had a shortage of manpower, Garcia exchanged the territory between the Southern Border and the Wildland for the support of the Sandpeople. She then gave the Clan warriors some pills and let them attack Timothy’s knights from both sides, however, to ensure that her loyal supporters were able to resist the last overwhelming charge, they didn’t hesitate for a moment to swallow the secret drugs themselves.

“The secret medicine provided by the church wasn’t like what they had told, allowing alive without any obstructions. After swallowing them once, if they didn’t get the next dose fast enough, the medication will turn into poison, letting them become weak and later die in pain because of muscle atrophy. If it were only the Sandpeople I wouldn’t care, but the people who worked for me deserve something better. “She paused,” Ryan, take some men to receive the pills and distribute them under our heroic warriors. But only use half of them, this way we can last a little longer.”

“Just as you wish, Your majesty.”

As Ryan was already halfway to the door, they could hear the guards voice for the third time through the door, “Your Majesty, we have just received a secret letter from King’s City.”

“Wait a moment, let’s read the letter first and then you can go,” Garcia ordered.

“Yes, Your Majesty,” Ryan received the letter from the guard, broke the seal, and removed the parchment. Most of these letters contained information sent by the spies hidden in all parts of the country. They were never signed, never had a recipient written on it and its content was also always as concise and clear as possible normally. But when he saw the first sentence, his whole body was suddenly rooted.

“On the twenty-second day of spring, the church seized the capital of the Kingdom of the Eternal Winter, declaring that the kingdom is now under their rule.”

Chapter 137 Secret Meeting

When he opened the thick wooden door, the light fragrance of straw hit him in the face, Archbishop Maine liked this mixed smell of herbs and spicy candles, especially in a space which had no windows for ventilation. Every time he smelled this combination of scents, his mind became clear and he felt at peace.

The chamber wasn’t particularly large, it offered just enough space for one round table and four chairs. The other two archbishops were already seated on their chairs, while the chair facing the wooden door was still empty. The Pope’s physical condition had been deteriorating in recent times, it was almost half a year ago, since the last time he had shown himself in front of anyone. Only for cases that were too difficult to solve by themselves would he leave Hermes’ underground castle, seeking the answers for himself.

"It seems everyone is there, so let's get started," Mayne announced. He then bolted the door and sat between the other two, "Archbishop Tayfun, what are the last reports from the Kingdom of Eternal Winter?"

"Besides some former nobles, there are only a few other places where they still rebel against our rule, 'au contraire' it seems the civilians are even welcoming us to take over the kingdom." Tayfun explained while stroking his beard, "Of course, those stubborn nobles, holding on to the dreams of their past glory, will be eradicated soon enough."

"That sounds really good" Heather licked her lips. "In the case that you let me hold the next trial, the civilians will all become more aware of how ugly and dirty the former nobility were, but unfortunately, I still have a lot of things I still have to do here, so I can't go to the Kingdom's of Eternal Winter's King's City."

Mayne ignored her words, and instead spoke to Tayfun, "We have to fill those vacant positions of power, as soon as possible with our own people. During the years that have passed, the Church has trained a lot of skilled people and now the time has finally arrived that we can use them." However, the Kingdom of Eternal Winter has forever been the kingdom in which our Church had the biggest influence, but if we are able to ride on this wave, we will be able to handle the Wolfsheart Kingdom and the Kingdom of Dawn a lot sooner.

"That seems only natural."

"What should happen with the nobility who have always relied on the Church, or to the ones who always turns in the direction the wind blows?" Heather asked, "the reason why the Church was able to attract so many good believers, was because we didn't ask for their lineage, but for their actual skills. However, those idiots would shake the foundation of our entire Church... so my idea is..." She made a gesture of slicing open her neck.

"In the beginning we still have to use them, to reduce the resistance we received, but after the kingdom has become stable, we can talk about them then." Regarding this point, they had deliberately decided to ask the Pope, "the church can provide them with the same authority equivalent to their title, but this position can not be inherited by their future generations. After all, our end goal is to destroy the kingship, so don't be anxious for the moment, Lady Heather."

Heather had been born poor and before she had been accepted by the Church, she had suffered from hunger and living a homeless life. But with a naturally keen mind and gift of extraordinary judgment of the human character, she had climbed up in the ranks until she had reached the position she held today. Mayne was well aware of her dislike for the nobility, but for the moment it was more important to look at the overall situation.

"What is the actual situation within the Kingdom of Graycastle?" Mayne asked.

"Our spy network reported that after his defeat, King Timothy didn't come back to King's City and instead went to directly stay within the Eastern Territory." Replied Teflon.

"A smart choice," Heather snapped her fingers, "he has taken Duke Frances with him to challenge the Queen of Clearwater, yet the Duke died during their attack and now he immediately went back to the

east and divided the Duke's territory to stabilize the morale of his soldiers and at the same time to win over the other nobles, Gee... the royal family doesn't only consist of fools."

"In this way, we can save a lot of trouble, let the High Priest of the Kingdom of Graycastle get in contact with him. Timothy's situation has become so precarious; he won't be able to refuse our offer. We will reduce Port of Clearwater's drug supply by 30% and with this balancing the strength between those two. This situation will be handled by you Tayfun," Mayne decided, "After two years' there won't be any soldiers in the kingdom left to stop our conquest."

"You can rest assured," Tayfun nodded. "But ... there is something wrong with the situation at the Longsong Stronghold in the Western territory."

"What is the problem?"

"The 4th Prince Roland, after his victory against Duke Ryan, he immediately went back to Border Town, and furthermore he didn't answer to High Priest Taylor's offer, doesn't he have any intention of fighting for the throne?"

"Well ... what are your thoughts about it?" Mayne asked while looking in Heather's direction.

The latter just shrugged: "What else can I say... What were the rumors about him again? He has a nasty character, is incompetence, has neither any learning nor skills to speak of and he's also known to be greedy. How was it possible that such a person could win against the Longsong Stronghold? The answer to this question is very simple, he deceived everyone, whether it was the other nobles or us."

"You mean ..." Mayne frowned.

"We have chosen the wrong person, Lord Mayne," she sneered. "He is the one who should have been on the main stage, not the 3r Princes Garcia."

"That he was able to defeat the Duke truly showed his talent, but even if he was such a skilled person, without the resources he will be unable to fully display his skills." Tayfun shook his head in disagreement, "Since he chose to return to that piece of desolate earth, it seems that he has given up on his chance to reach the throne, and because of this he won't be causing any threat to our plan."

"That's seems to be correct, theoretically. But there is another interesting piece of information you shouldn't overlook either," Heather threw out a note, "This information was something I gathered with my personal eyes."

Mayne spread open the note and quickly swept through it's contents, "Witch?"

"Uh-huh, they're one of those witch organizations. They call themselves the Witch Cooperation Association and claim for themselves to have a firm foothold in Border Town and now ask others sisters to also gather there. While this is only hearsay and could be a groundless accusation, but this doesn't seem to be the case. We already know that the name isn't fictional. We have already sent our Army of Judges against them once and after their defeat in the Eastern Forest, they crossed over the whole country, only to ultimately disappear somewhere west of Longsong Stronghold. Border Town is just west of Longsong Stronghold, directly next to the kingdom's border and the foot of the Impassable Mountain Range. Two important powers situated at the same location, isn't that a little too much of a coincidence?"

Witch Cooperation Association... I also have some impression of that name, during their whole journey they often had to face the Army of Judges and even after losing a lot of their staff they still insisted on moving in the direction of the Impassable Mountain Range. According to the information gathered from some of the tortured witches, it seemed they wanted to find the Holy Mountain, located somewhere to the west of the mountain range. It was just a suicidal move, so we did not put much energy into this matter. There are even similar witch organizations within the Kingdom of Dawn and the Wolfsheart Kingdom. They are always lurking within the cities, and after some time they suddenly rush in the direction of the Wild Lands, only to throw away their lives against an even stronger threat."

"You mean, the Prince and the witch organization both hooked up?" After reading the news Tayfun's face became a lot darker.

"Maybe, maybe not." Heather smiled, "That is only a simple guess on my part. What do the witches fear the most? 'Exposure'. And it is obvious that they will draw all the more attention when they use the name of their Witch Cooperation Association, but they still use the name for their underground message. Why is that?"

"Because it's a familiar name to us," Mayne said quietly. "However that's also the same for the other witches."

"Full marks!" exclaimed Heather clapping her hands, "This will effectively reduce the wild witches wariness, perhaps there will really be someone who could be attracted by this news and decides to go to Border Town to explore what the actual situation might be. It's not hard to imagine this, since Border Town is without any member of the Church to overlook them, they would perhaps dare to do such a thing. We often say that it's better to choose the lesser of two evils. Obviously, the other side has considered this and decided that the consequences of being unable to recruit witches is more serious than the consequences of them being exposed..." Here her voice became gloomy, "And I don't like the feeling of being underestimated."

"This isn't a small problem," Teflon roared angrily, "Once the witches have settled down, they will be able to fully display their capabilities without any fear, it's also very likely that the so-called demon phage can also be avoided. This is exactly the reason why we encircle every settled down witch, only when we can force them into hiding or let them run into the exile, are we able to keep it a secret from them."

Mayne knew that the Teflon side of the argument was right, a witch alone wasn't a real threat to the Church, but as a group, it was a completely different matter altogether. And once they got rid of their identity as the "Devil's messenger", the Church's propaganda would soon be exposed. Resulting in a great loss of influence for them, maybe even shaking the Church's foundation.

He was now caught in a dilemma as they encountered such a possibility of whether they should send a large number of Judges to encircle the witches' base, but in the end Border Town was too far away from Hermes, and furthermore, the Church's army should be attacking the Wolfsheart Kingdom soon. So, it was now too difficult to split off the manpower that they needed to wipe out this remote town. Coupled with the problem that if they were to send out such a large number of troops into the Kingdom of Graycastle, it was guaranteed that the nobility of the kingdom and of the other two countries would soon become vigilance, which could lead to a failure of the entire plan overall.

After much deliberation, they finally came to a decision.

“I will send a priest with ten Judges on a mission to Border Town, they should investigate this matter together with the High Priest. If the Witch Cooperation Association was acting independently from the Prince, the force should be strong enough to eliminate all the witches.”

“But what about if they are related to each other?” Heather asked.

The God’s Punishment Army was only allowed to march if they were led by Mayne himself or a few other high ranking members of the church, this rule had been personally made by the Pope. Remembering this he answered: “Then they should bring the news back to us and I will personally lead the God’s Punishment Army to march against Border Town.”

Chapter 138 Establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture

The Forest south of the Shishui River had been nearly been fully cleared out, and the day to start with its cultivation was getting ever closer.

In order to facilitate the people who were crossing over the Shishui River, Roland had commissioned for a nearly one-hundred-meter-long pontoon to be used. The pontoon was created from tens of wooden rafts, which were connected together with thick hemp ropes. He had also specially ordered for the carpenters to build the rafts both of the ends being pointed, in this way minimizing this the amount of water resistance as far as possible. The hemp rope had been tied around four wooden pillars on both sides of the river, fixing the rafts position together as far as possible. Between each raft laid four long planks with one end of it on each deck, they were two meters long and together they were four-meter wide from side to side.

A pontoon built out of rafts was very simple to set up, yet its service time wasn’t as short as would be expected. As long as the water level didn’t rise or fall by too much, which could lead to the wearing out of the hemp rope. The pontoon could easily be used for two or three years – the trees of the forest was an excellent material. For example, the Border Town’s pier was a good indicator and built out of the giant trees of the forest, it was nearly as old as the town itself by now. Despite the fact that walking on top of would give off a creaking sound, it still didn’t show any sign that it would collapse.

On the western side of the pontoon, the first part of the reclaimed land of the forest became Leaves’ testing area. Now that they were no longer surrounded by the forest, it had now been tidily enclosed by the members of the First Army. During these past few days with the exception of eating, going to school and sleeping, Leaves spent all of her time here inside of her garden. Out of the window in his third story office, Roland could faintly overlook the scene in this wooden enclosure – where the wheat was growing at a crazy rate, while in the morning there would only be green seedlings, and in the afternoon the whole area has turned into a golden wheat sea.

When relying on magic, her Golden Ones would only need one day after being planted to become ready to be harvest, if this was to be seen by an outsiders, they would surely fall to their knees in disbelief and cry out “Miracle, truly this must be a miracle”.

Seeing that the land, the population, and the seeds had all been set, Roland decided that it was time to decide on the last element— the custodian.

He called his constantly busy assistant minister Barov.

And when he entered his office, Roland asked him: "Your chief apprentice should be able to take over by now, right? I need to set up two new departments at the Town Hall."

"Your Royal Highness, this is... our manpower is not enough for this." Barov insisted.

Previously you would always first agree with me and only later would we slowly work out the details. But now it seems you always directly start with complaining. Roland secretly criticized his assistant minister, but on his face, nothing could be seen of his thoughts, "How can it not be enough, didn't I recently allocated a group of knights to you?"

During his preliminary round of screening, Roland had discovered that more than 50 knights met his requirements of reading and writing. Naturally, that would be too many teachers, so after once more screening for the best ones, he finally selected nine knights as junior teachers, and assigned all the others as apprentices in the Town Hall.

"Your Royal Highness, those people are totally lazy and dragging their feet on every job, their response time is also very slow and by the time they finally manage to copy over some information, they even end up making a lot of mistakes, in the end they are simply unqualified to become apprentices."

"How to discipline them is up to you," Roland slammed the table, "If they bluntly disobey the arrangement, send them directly to the North Slope Mine! But these two departments must be set up!"

"Well, Your Highness, you will always have the final say." Barov gave up helplessly.

Roland said: "The first is the Ministry of Agriculture, which will be responsible for supervising the agricultural territory and the planting process."

Barov was immediately stunned, it was the first time that he heard that the Town's Hall was even responsible for managing food production, "Your Highness, shouldn't this matter be directly decided by the serfs themselves? We have nothing to do with how much and what they decide to plant, we are only responsible for making sure that all their taxes are paid in full."

"That's exactly the reason why you... no, I mean why the crop's we harvest in the past was so low."

Roland quickly took his cup and drank some water, trying to cover up his slip of the tongue, "The Town Hall should be responsible for taking care that everyone has enough to eat and drink."

"Let everyone have enough to eat and drink... certainly you must be joking, right?"

"Of course not, how important it is that everyone should have something to eat and drink doesn't even need to be said, if the town's hall is unable to ensure that everyone has enough to eat, then they aren't doing their job, but by then I will also be guilty of neglecting my duty. As for the latter part, wasn't the public toilet project started for exactly this purpose?" Roland no longer spoke in a relaxed voice, and instead seriously said, "I don't know how the Capital's City Hall used to handle this, perhaps the life and death of the civilians do not matter so much to them, but here in Border Town, I want to implement a holistic political organization. It is absolutely necessary that the people in my territory know about it so that they will wholeheartedly support us, and we can easily keep on governing them. At present, it is important that we create this ministry and have them undertake this mission."

"Understood, Your Highness." Barov said as he had to wipe the sweat from his forehead.

“You will go to the archives and look for three or four people who are experienced farmers and can work in the Ministry of Agriculture, and you will then choose two of your own apprentices who will be in charge of the keeping the records and statistics, finally forming a group of six people.”

“Wait... you want those civilians to become Town’s Hall officials?” Barov looked shocked at the idea.

“Not only are they obedient, they are even more likely to work with plenty of enthusiasm, so why shouldn’t they serve as officials? Officials aren’t equal to nobles, and the Ministry of Agriculture also need some professional farmers to guide the future generation.”

“Most of them do not even know how to read or write...”

“That is exactly the reason why you have to send two of your apprentices out there, they will go along to do the paperwork,” Roland directly interrupted.

“And this problem won’t exist for too much longer. I’m going to implement an educational program for everyone soon, or at least that is the plan for now. By then nearly all of the people will be able to read and write and you will no longer have to worry about whether you won’t have enough hands.”

Obviously, the message that civilians would start to work in the Town Hall was an enormous surprise for Barov, his mouth was slightly open and for a long time he was unable to say another word.

Roland, disregarding whether Barov could accept it or not, just continued with giving his speech: “Back to the topic of setting up the Ministry of Agriculture, when the serfs began to farm their own land, it’s bound to happen that they will use various kinds of methods, for example how deep they will plow the soil will all be done differently.

This is an excellent opportunity for observation, so the Ministry of Agriculture should split all the farms into groups of six and each member of the ministry will record every step taken by his designated farmers. Things like how deep they plow, what kind of planting interval they use and so on. It will be necessary that they work on it in as detailed a manner as possible, and that all of them will get some measuring tools and be taught on how to use them.

“You mean we are going to measure their... contrast?” Barov was clearly old fashioned in some areas, but he was definitely a quick thinker overall.

“That’s right, for the first time, it was needless to care too much about the harvest. We will still maintain importing the food as we have been... furthermore, we will also start to use some new wheat seeds to make sure that no one has to starve anymore. The job of the Ministry of Agriculture is to find the best method to planting, and later they have to promote, teach and supervise the way in which wheat is planted in the future .

Roland didn’t know much about farming, but this did not prevent him from using a scientific approach to summarize a set of optimal solutions. With this program, both the expansion of the cultivated area, or to add several new kinds of seeds to try, would help him to raise the average output to a whole new level.

Barov nodded at first but then he hesitated and after a while, he finally asked, “Your Highness, there is one thing that I don’t understand, when the serfs are promoted to free people, why will you only charge them 20% of their harvest as a tax? Even if you asked them to hand over 50%, letting them keep 50% for themselves, you would still be seen as extremely benevolent.”

“Because there is no meaning in hoarding all the money in the basement,” Roland explained, “When I need more than the 20%, I will buy the rest of the food from them at a fixed price – in Border Town, the trade with food only belongs to the right of the Lord. They have to deliver all the food to the castle and will be paid for it. After some saving they will most likely want to buy things like cattle, iron tools, beef, cotton clothes, and good brick houses. And all of this can only be provided by me for the town’s people, if they want to buy food it will be the same thing for them, they can only buy it from the castle. In this way, the coin will still flow back into my pocket, but as long as it is cycling, it will be able to raise everyone’s standard of living. Are you able to follow me with this?”

Barov wore a frowning expression, it was clear that he was still caught up in processing this information.

Roland smiled and shook his head, “It isn’t a problem if you don’t understand it yet, you can go back and think about it later, at the moment it is more important that you follow my orders.”

Hearing this the assistant minister stood up as if he were in trance, but when he reached for the door, he suddenly looked back.

“Your highness, you just said you want to build two departments, what is the other one?”

“The Ministry of Education,” Roland replied, “However, for that I will be the one personally responsible.”

Chapter 139 The Devil’s Power

When Barov returned to his office in the Town Hall, he immediately closed the door behind himself.

My God, cold shivers were running down his spine, he immediately firmly grasped the God’s Stone of Retaliation hanging around his neck, once more starting to feel safe. It seems His Royal Highness really has become possessed by the devil. Previously he had only thought of it as a sort of crazy speculation, but now he was almost certainly, the one with whom he had just talked was definitely not the 4th Prince.

Barov could still accept his huge character changes with him becoming somewhat eccentric, but how was it possible that he would suddenly have so much new knowledge about topics he had never had any former contact with? Such a thing he had only heard of happening in myth, but in the legends, it was always God who had possessed a mortal body, moving to lead humanity out of their predicament. But since when did the Devil start loving to do the same thing?

If Roland Wimbledon acted like a king and engaged himself in the management of his territory (though that would become a challenging situation), Barov would not be too surprised to learn that the previous information of the 4th Prince was without learning or any skills turned out to be false, but his character still couldn’t be disguised. After all, it was always possible that someone had just secretly taught him how to govern a city or even a country.

But Barov had never heard anything about the ideas and programs coming out of the Prince’s mouth. Yet, he had previously worked for twenty years in the Capital’s City Hall, even becoming the finance minister, so he should have a deep knowledge about how to organize and operate a Town Hall. As a minister, he had had been in charge of many areas, and he even had made numerous secret deals before, but he had never betrayed his higher ups.

The King had issued a decree, that a minister could decide who would work under him. So, each minister had his own power, and they all ended up handling it differently. For example, the minister responsible for the defense of the King's City had hundreds of knights and mercenary under his control. At the same time, those underground organization also had a lot of influence. When these forces began to rampage, they would most of the time be eying the criminals, but even as a noble it would soon become difficult to stay in the city. They could only wait for the king to place them into prison.

But this wasn't only in the King's City, other cities also had the same situation.

So, if I want to become a Lord or King, the most important thing I would need is a big aristocracy or others with an influential background.

If they did not have enough money to recruit any men, could it be that they had any other option that they could lean on? And the more people they controlled, the more they would be valued by others, after all so many people can't be wrong, right?

But the Prince's approach completely subverted Barov's concept of how things worked. He was still the minister and still had his own apprentices, but everyone else was directly recruited and paid for by the Town Hall. In other words, even if he was to die, they could easily exchange him for a new person, or directly raise a person up from below him.

This was a completely new system to him, Barov was now sure of it, the Price was implementing a completely new political system for the Kingdom of Graycastle.

Some people may think that this was just some kind of wishful thinking on the part of Roland, or that Roland believed himself to be infallible. But Barov didn't think so, he took a quill and recorded down all of His Highness' requirements.

Looking at the plans, it seemed everything was intertwined, nothing was forgotten.

First, he had to manage the eat and drink for all project.

Barov naturally knew that with a stronger control over the people the instructions issued by the Lord would be executed faster. But doing it in this way, it would also greatly increase the workload for the management, from where was he meant to get all these people who would need to know how to read and write? Furthermore, this would also greatly burden the Lord's own treasury, only a few Lords would be willing to do this.

And then he turned his attention to His Highness second project, the recruitment of civilians into the City Hall and the education of all civilians.

When Barov thought about these two projects, he couldn't suppress a shiver.

If His Highness ends up being able to implement everything, how will Border Town look like?

Any civilian will be able to read and write, and as long as the Town Hall wants to increase their workforce, they would be able to find a large number of suitable personnel. And with the possibility to enter the Town Hall, this will, in turn, promote the universal access to the education system. Getting a rewarding position, while at the same time getting a social upgrade, I'm afraid that it would only take

one or two years, until everyone will take the initiative to request for an education, even if they cannot get it for themselves, they will definitely plan to send their children to college.

Plus, with all the previous employers' compensation paid for by the Town Hall, the civilians will no longer need to work all the time to get enough to eat, which is equal to completely breaking away from the situation that only the nobility has the capital to serve as administrative officials.

There is no doubt that only the Devil is able to come up with such a revolutionary system.

Barov took a deep breath, gripping the God's Stone of Retaliation with his hands, there was now only one question left, could the devil also be something good?

If someone said that the Prince was evil, he would be the first one to stand up to defend him.

In his eyes, the actions of the 4th Prince could be even seen as the moves of a wise King. Even those Kings from the legends of the past never cared as much about the lives of the civilians as did the king. He even bought enough food to feed the civilians using his own money, so that all the common people who had stayed with him inside Border Town, would be able to safely cross the Months of Demons. Furthermore, all these Devil's technologies and equipment were all meant for the development of Border Town; even these evil witches, they all used their abilities in order to improve the people's lives.

Barov suddenly had the feeling that even if Roland became the next King of the Kingdom of Graycastle, it wouldn't be such a bad thing after all.

Thinking of his father's own teachings: If he had nothing to say he shouldn't be the one to speak, if he didn't want to know the answer then he also shouldn't be the one to ask, so he decided to hide his discovery deep within his heart. Since it was the devil, and the Church are already eyeing us, if the outer appearance was wrong, he could start an ambush in the Devil's own camp and expose him for a lot of eyewitnesses.

He shook the bell, calling for Sirius Daly who had recently joined the Town Hall.

Compared with the other stupid and arrogant knights, this young knight from the Wolf Family could be regarded as someone truly outstanding, although he still had the pride of being a former knight, he was still willing to listen to what his teachers had to say.

"Teacher, what do you have for me?" After shutting the door behind himself he saluted before Barov.

"His Royal Highness plans to open up a new ministry, it will be in charge of supervising the crop's cultivation and we will need at least two apprentices to help them with the records," Barov repeated Roland's request in front of him, "In addition, you should go to the Town's Hall and pick out ten people who meet the requirements, searching for at least ten possible candidates, and afterwards go through another screening.

"Although the others are only civilians, His Highness has insisted on putting them into the Town Hall as well. If some of them show outstanding performance, perhaps they can even become the head of the Ministry of Agriculture, hey..." He sighed, "You will be in charge of the record keeping, however when the spring plowing is finished, I will take you back."

“Teacher, only two people will be selected from the Town Hall,” he proudly said, “I am also very familiar with this procedure.”

“You?” Barov became stunned.

“Yes! Before I became a knight, I had helped my father to manage the farm, so I know everything about the wheat planting.” Sirius paused. “But when His Highness asked me if I had any other expertise, I did not say it... because I feared that he would send me to the farmland, to work with the serfs.

Barov liked what he heard, he had both requirements, the education and knowledge of farm work, even if the civilian population joined the Ministry of Agriculture, he still have a candidate that could take over the lead position. For now, Sirius was loyal to him, so after he became the head, it would be the same as having the influence of the Ministry of Agriculture.

“Well,” Barov began, forming his words into a profitable promise, “Do a good job, and maybe you can climb to an even higher position than before.”

When Sirius had left his office, Barov leaned against his chair while humming a light tone.

Since he now knew that His Highness was possessed by the Devil, he had to seize as much power as possible. The Devil was always full of appreciation for ambitious people, this was commonly known and recorded in the legends. And for himself, whether his rights were conferred by the King or granted by the Devil, both privileges were equally as sweet.

Chapter 140 Seeds

Shortly after the assistant minister had left Roland’s office, the Prince received some good news.

The guard whose mission it was to travel to the Port of Clearwater and buy a few crops had just come back.

Directly after having received the message Roland went into the back garden, where he saw Shawn already busy unloading several sacks from the horseback.

It was almost a month since the day of his departure, and now as Roland looked at Shawn’s present appearance he discovered that the man’s skin had become a lot tanner while his body became somewhat thinner.

When he saw that the Prince had appeared in the garden, Shawn immediately stood up straight and greeted him with a salute. Roland then trotted forward to his side and patted his shoulder, “Well done, have these sacks all been filled with seeds?”

Shawn squatted down and unlocked the sacks on the ground, “Pearl Rice, Earth Eggs, Sugar Sticks... those plants are exactly as you have described them. All of them I could only buy in the Port of Clearwater and they were indeed mostly produced in the Fjords. There they have a lot of farmlands where they are cultivating these crops.”

“Did you ask the businessmen about the what the right planting method are?”

“I asked, but they couldn’t tell me any specific methods to use, they could only tell me that after these plants leave the South it will become difficult to plant them.” Shawn grasped a handful of yellow seeds

from one of the packages, then showing it to Roland said, "Your Royal Highness, this is pearl rice. The trader said that if I bought them together with the pearl rod, I could get them for a little cheaper. But taking all the pearl bars would be too heavy and inconvenient to carry, so I only bought a sack full of pearl rice and the rest are all only normal seeds."

There was no doubt that the pearl rice was the corn he was most familiar with. So, Roland excitedly picked up some corn grains and took a closer look at them. Some of them seemed to be dried fruits apparently they had been stored as winter rations. The yield of corn production was much higher than that of the natural wheat and it had a much lower soil quality requirements, coupled with Leaves' transformation ability, he might be able to replace the wheat with corn as the new main ration.

Afterwards Shawn opened another package, within it Roland could see a mass of round and leather-like brown crop, "These were the earth eggs, I was able to eat them during my stay in an inn in the Port of Clearwater, they were peeled and cut into small pieces and then thrown into bubbling water. When chewing, it is very crisp, and has a light sweet taste."

Seeing this familiar shape, Roland heart was full of emotions. This was clearly a potato! He dug his fingers into the potato and peeled it open, revealing the deep yellow potato meat. The next potato's size wasn't as big and its color also wasn't to the darker side, not one earth egg looked like the other. He also noticed that there were some potatoes which had the same lengthily form similar to carrots.

"If this stuff get crushed first and then later steamed until it turned into a paste, the potatoes will become even more delicious."

"Uh ... you have already eaten them, Your Highness?"

"Well, it was during one of the feasts in the palace," Roland decided to sprinkle a little lie, after all always hearing the name earth egg was just too confusing, "In the royal kitchen they didn't call them earth eggs, but instead they called them potatoes and this delicious steamed snack is called mashed potatoes."

"So it was something like this, it seemed that Your Highness is indeed really well-informed." Shawn exclaimed, then he went straight to the next sack and open it, within it Roland could see many black sticks, "Your Royal Highness, I think this crop is the most important one I brought with me. The honey in the Port of Clearwater is so cheap, and it was largely because of this crop. I heard the news in a pub that more and more farmers have began to switch the crop on their farmland into these sugar sticks, and this magical plant is actually really sweet. When you cut open it's outer skin, you can squeeze out a kind of syrup from it. Furthermore, its price is only one-tenth of that of honey and when it is mixed into a drink it tastes isn't inferior at all to that of honey water."

"..." Roland would have liked to say that he had also already seen this crop and that it was called sugar cane, but after thinking about it for a short moment he didn't care any longer. They had already started to plant it in huge amounts, so by now it would already be too late to try and change its name. The other materials of the sugar cane, could also be used for many other things. For example, they could also be used to produce ethanol and this crop was able to raise the civilians' happiness to a completely new level. After all, the bread made from normal flour was nearly tasteless, but after sprinkling some sugar on it, its taste would be enhanced by several times, even salt wasn't as important as this, Roland thought.

“Were you able to find any other crops seeds?”

“This was all I could find in the Port of Clearwater,” after saying that, he took five to six small bags out and gave them to the Prince “But before I started my journey you explained to me, that in case I find any crop which we don’t already grow here in Border Town, I should bring them back with me. Within these packages are seeds of some plants I’ve gathered as I passed through the Fallen Dragon Ridge and Willow Town, they are grapes, soybeans, cotton, flax and olive tree seeds. But the farmer say that the grapes won’t grow out of seeds but you needed to stick the branches into the ground for it to grow. Although its seed can still be planted, but its germination process is very slow and the appearing grape has neither the highest amount nor is it very tasty.

Since I have Leaves here, this shouldn’t be a problem for me, Roland thought. Now that he had grape seeds, maybe he could have another try with his idea of a wheat tree. As for soybean, cotton, flax and olives they were also all very useful crops. After I let Leaves improve the soil in the West I will let some serfs cultivate them at a small-scale. So, that the Ministry of Agriculture who is responsible for summing up the planting process can add them to their manual.

“Your Highness, there is still some other news I have to report to you,” Shawn whispered, “it is about the situation in Clearwater.”

“Are they about my sister Garcia?”

Shawn nodded, “I spent nearly two weeks in the Port of Clearwater, and with the exception of the time I needed to buy seeds, I spent most of the rest of the time in pubs. There were rumors that your sister Garcia Wimbleton and the Sandpeople have reached an agreement. She has allowed them to live at the southern edge of her territory and the Sandpeople had instead decided to accept her as their Queen and to follow her recruitment orders. During my stay in the city, I also saw plenty of Sandpeople walking through the streets.

The Extreme South is the territory of the Sandpeople... Although the people of Border Town don’t ask others for their origin, but letting a large number of people from a foreign territory settle in your own territory is a completely different matter. It seems that in order to insure that she can conquer the throne for herself, Garcia is really willing do almost anything, Roland thought.

“The Sandpeople are divided into many smaller factions, so I cannot believe that all of them decided to listen to her instructions. Do you know which clans are the ones following her orders?”

Shawn shook his head, “The Sandpeople are very wary of the people from our kingdom, even using some gold royals I still wasn’t able to buy any more information, but... there was one more strange thing that happened on the day prior to when I’d intended to leave the Port of Clearwater. On that day Garcia had returned after her victory at Eagle City and everywhere within the city they celebrate their Queen’s victory against the pseudo-king, King Timothy. But the next day, they detected four to five people murdered and one victim was even torn to pieces in the middle of the street.”

“In the following days the Port of Clearwater was closed down and so I had to stay continue to stay there for the next three days. During the time, all the pubs were closed, and everyone would gather in the inn’s lobby to talk about what information they had heard. Some people thought that it was the revenge of the pseudo King, but one of the fishermen said that he had witnessed one of the murders.

The murderer wasn't tall and also was clearly not a man of the Sandpeople, but his strength and speed wasn't anything like what a normal man could reach. He was later killed by the guards, but even after being hit by a lot of knife slashes he still didn't go down. In addition, his blood looked completely differently than that of a mortal and only after even more guards rushed to the crime scene, were they finally able to wear him down with their spears. When the closing order was lifted, I didn't dare to stay for any longer, and immediately came back to bring you your seeds."

"You have done a good job," after thinking for a short moment Roland continued. "You don't need to return the gold royals you still have left over from buying the seeds to the Town Hall."

"Thank you so much for your reward, Your Highness!"

"A strength and speed far beyond what is possible for an ordinary person, ignoring the pain caused by knife injuries, all this just sounds like... the Church's pills." When Shawn had left Nightingale's voice immediately sounded next to Roland's ear.

"I thought the same," Roland frowned, "according to Shawn's explanations, Garcia got the pills even earlier than me. The Church supported both sides that are competing against each other for the throne at the same time... In the end, what was it that they have in mind?" Within his mind the traces of a bad possibilities popped up, can it be that the purpose of all their actions isn't in order to insure a stable future for the Kingdom of Greycastle, but something else?