

## Witch 1321

### Chapter 1321: High-energy Experiment (Part 2)

Fifteen kilometres away.

The steel-framed tower stood tall in the middle of the white plain of snow. It looked as if it didn't belong to this time period; its organized and dense structure, the icicles that hung from the beams and cables, and the layers upon layers of barbed wire wrapped around it couldn't help but betray the beauty of the construction work.

Hundreds of people bustled around the tower, making the necessary preparations before the explosion.

Because the entire apparatus was almost ten tonnes and Hummingbird had gone to the front lines, they were unable to assemble the entire thing in Neverwinter; instead, the parts were transported to the test site separately and then assembled onsite.

Fortunately, it's structure was very simple. They had considered the need for transportation during the design process, so the requirements for workers were not high.

This was also where "Glory of the Sun" differed from the other weapons—even though they had already completed setting up the site and the equipment, they still needed to spend one or two days to complete the final preparations.

At this moment, Roland and Anna were standing at the top of the tower, giving out instructions for the assembly work.

"Next is the No. 3 core component, pay attention to the direction of the connector, be careful not to bump it!"

"Everybody follow my command! Three, two, one!"

Following the construction captain's call, a long, silver-white cylinder was slowly pushed into the apparatus.

Only after the completion of this step did Roland slowly heave a sigh of relief.

Inside the body of the round cylinder was the main energy source of the test explosion: two separate Uranium-235 cylinders, each weighing 20 kg. When the two were combined, they formed a total mass of 40 kg. The mass had to be below the limit of 53 kg, the critical mass. Theoretically, an extremely intense fission reaction would not occur but it would resemble something like he described previously. After all, the critical mass was not a set, unchanging number.

Conditions such as shape, temperature, and pressure could all affect this number. This was also why a nuclear weapon created from just purely piling the materials had basically no practical value in war. For example, a spherical 52kg Uranium-235 seemed pretty stable, but in reality it was like a volcano on the brink of eruption. Even a small bump or jolt would push it over the limit.

Similarly, although using several small pieces of Uranium was safe, it would multiply the difficulty in triggering the explosion. It would indeed exceed the critical mass in the instant all the pieces combine into one, but the high temperatures produced from the fission reaction would cause the pieces of Uranium to rapidly expand and the distortion would reduce its density. The intense explosion would push the original materials outwards, causing the reaction to stop in the middle.

In summary, a suitable configuration not only needed the Uranium to reach a supercritical mass, it had to be able to maintain this state for as long as possible, in order to release the full power of the fission reaction.

The gun configuration was called the 'gun' configuration because its principles were extremely similar to an old-fashioned cannon. Through the detonation of an explosive, a Uranium bullet would be violently smashed into another piece of Uranium. Under immense pressures, the density of the Uranium piece would rapidly increase. Even if the mass of the Uranium was a little lower, it would still be able to become supercritical.

When the outer shell of the apparatus was connected, Anna personally inserted a can with a radioactive warning label into the designated tail port.

That was the last essential component of this test explosion trial.

There was a moment when Roland almost felt like he got pricked by something in the face, he even stopped breathing for a half a beat.

"Polonium Beryllium neutron source".

Just like its name described, it provided the fission reaction with a large amount of free neutrons, which was the most direct way to lower the critical mass. Inside the metal canister that resembled a ring-pop can was a row of hollow spheres—every sphere was around the size of a table tennis ball and at their core was a polonium ball shaped like a marble wrapped firmly in gold foil surrounded by a ring of honeycombed beryllium sheets.

When the Uranium pieces collide, it would also smash the small can at the bottom of the barrel and all the hollow spheres would be compressed to be thinner than paper by the detonated explosive fuel gas. After the gold foil breaks, the beryllium sheets would stick closely to the polonium balls and accept the alpha particles from the latter, firing several times as many neutrons in turn.

These neutrons participated in the Uranium-235 fission reaction and, if lucky, the system would be able to use up more materials before the reaction stopped and dramatically increase the power output of the nuclear weapon.

Because the half-life of Polonium-210 was only 138 days, providing a replaceable port was an essential design. Moreover, leaving neutrons in the weapon for too long was extremely dangerous, as after all, Polonium released neutrons just from contact. As soon as there was a rupture in the gold foil, the consequences would be unthinkable.

After the Polonium Beryllium neutron source was loaded into the principle device, the apparatus would turn from a mild and harmless object to a monster that could engulf every single person present at any moment.

Even though Roland knew that what he felt was just his imagination—it was impossible for humans to sense the change in the number of neutrons in the environment—nevertheless, his breathing still relaxed subconsciously.

Only at this step had all the pre-detonation preparation been completed for the experimental device.

Anna held his hand tightly.

“You can pass the command now.”

Under her calm and stable gaze, Roland gave a very slight nod of his head.

No matter what the result, at least the “Glory of the Sun” plan had come this far.

And after they took this step, humankind would advance to a whole new frontier.

He looked towards personal guard. “Pass my command: Notify the command post that we will begin the six-hour countdown until ignition!”

[6:00]

“Wu—wu—wu—wu—”

“Unit One has entered the firing stage, I repeat, Unit One has entered the firing stage. All staff in the site, please immediately pack your belongings and leave the site as practiced in the drill! Attention, this is not a drill, the test explosion site will close down in one hour. All personnel must evacuate to the safe region within an hour!”

Very quickly, evacuation announcements and sirens filled the entire site.

“Hurry, everybody gather in the open area in front of the tower, do not leave a single person behind!”

“Construction Team 2 reporting numbers, one, two, three...”

“Locking the main gate of the test explosion site!”

“All members of the God’s Punishment Witches team are present, beginning group evacuation.”

The silent snow plain was now rowdy as people shouted in the midst of the repeated warnings and sirens. It made the atmosphere turn tense and serious. Everybody knew that they were about to witness a never-seen-before experiment.

[3:00]

Inside the command post, Roland and Anna dug out two pairs of keys and opened the lid of the console together.

They pressed down all of the switches and the corresponding green lights on the console lit up.

“Sending power from the main cable!”

“Mystery Moon No.1 is working normally, the load is rising stably.”

“Switch to Line One now.”

“Understood, Line One is connected, current flow to the device is normal!”

The observers loudly reported the situation of the detonation system until the last green light lit up, which meant the current had already passed through several booster cycles to a platform fifteen kilometers away.

[1:00]

An alarm also sounded over the command post, which meant that there was only one hour left till detonation.

All the doors and windows of the bunker were closed and candle lights pinched one by one in order to avoid accidents due to the shaking from the explosion.

The higher-ups from Neverwinter entered their designated observatories. According to Roland’s instructions, its exterior was made into a trapezoidal shape to better withstand shock waves, while the interior end was deepened to accommodate the massive body of the original carrier.

Pasha and the other Taquila witches had already waited for a long time.

[0:15]

The sky had gradually turned dim.

The last wave of urgent warning alerts finally arrived.

Whether it was the higher-ups, soldiers or construction workers, all followed their previous training and wore black sunglasses to block the bright light, despite many of them being puzzled over the reason why they needed to wear glasses that obstructed their vision in such a dark and snowy day.

Now they couldn’t see a thing.

[0:05]

“Five-minute countdown!”

When the warning notice sounded once more, the surroundings had already become deadly silent.

All conversation and discussion stopped. Everybody stared at the murky blackness in front of them without averting their eyes and subconsciously held their breaths.

“Three-minute countdown!”

Roland felt sweat ooze out of his palms

Anna glanced at him with a smile and lightly held his hand.

“One-minute countdown!”

Another hand reached over from his other side and entangled its fingers with his.

“Ten-second countdown!”

“Nine!”

Although it was a pity that he couldn't press the detonation button himself, Roland knew that the long road of history was only just beginning.

"Three!"

"Two!"

"One!"

"Detonate!"

The snowy plain in the distance was quiet, as if nothing had happened—time seemed to freeze at that moment. It felt like a long time had passed, but at the same time it felt also like only a brief moment.

Afterwards a dazzling streak of blue light expanded from the horizon and in an instant, ripped apart the darkness before them!

### **Chapter 1322: The Light That Breaks the Darkness**

Pasha saw it clearer than the others.

Original carriers didn't rely on eyes. For her, Alethea and Celine, any one of their tentacles was enough to replace their eyes and they couldn't wear anything to block the light.

Even though Roland had warned them that it was best to avoid looking directly at the explosion five to ten seconds following detonation, she didn't avert her gaze until the very last second.

It was not only her, the other two did the same.

None of them wanted to miss this much-anticipated scene.

Can humans defeat demons?

Nobody dared to ask this question over the centuries while the Taquila survivors spent hiding underground. At the time, they gritted their teeth and persevered mostly out of a sense of responsibility, persevering on for their dear sisters who had been sacrificed. As for the final outcome, a sense of rejection would arise just from a mere thought regarding it. It was caused by a fear that if they thought too deeply it would destroy the tenacity and fighting will that had lasted them thus far. The pitch black roof of their underground burrow that they saw every time they raised their heads would remain forever etched in their memories.

And just then, the cage of blackness was broken apart by a streak of resplendent blue light.

It wasn't a pure blue color; it was different from the color of dye, paint, crystals and lake water, Pasha couldn't find the words to describe it—It was like the light had become so white that it was unable to become any whiter, causing an illusory blue hue.

Sticking close to the horizon, the light rapidly expanded and, in an instant, lit up the entire plain in front of them!

She couldn't help but stand agape.

Apart from the sun and the moon, this was her first time seeing something that could light up the entire landscape—it was definitely not her imagination, she clearly witnessed the dark, nighttime snowy plain return to the state as if it was morning; the trees cast long, black shadows onto the fallen snow and the closer the distance to center of the white light, the clearer the silhouette of the terrain.

Almost simultaneously, Pahsa felt an intense, piercing pain caused by something in front of her, as if her skin had been burned. It felt exactly like how one would feel under the bright, midday sun.

However, she didn't feel a single shred of fear; instead, she opened up all her tentacles and invited the darkness-breaking light.

If it could bring the humans brand new hope, what did this little pain matter?

It would only give her more pleasure!

The light lasted for not even a second. Afterwards, the blue turned into white and then into red. The ground began shaking violently as the rushing shockwave churned the snow and smashed into the outer wall of the bunker, producing cracking sounds. The ear splitting sound of the explosion came after everything else and dragged out for a long time, like the entire earth was roaring.

After the thunder of the explosion passed, the world regained its quietness.

A strange, fascinating cloud appeared over the distant horizon. It was large at the top and small at the bottom, like an upward blooming mushroom. Dark red flames could still be seen rolling and tumbling at the top of the mushroom.

Lighting up the skyline all by itself was certainly a feat that no other weapon could achieve!

If its power could be felt to such an extent fifteen kilometers away, then what would it be like if they were right next to it?

Pasha could already imagine the weapon detonating in the midst of a group of demons.

She had originally considered the onslaught of over a hundred cannons as the most shocking thing she had ever seen, but now that seemed insignificant compared to what she had just witnessed.

If the cannon exercise from two years ago transformed every single Taquila witch's world view, then the experiment this time once more reshaped their hard-won ideas of the world.

Whoosh—!

An explosion of cheers and applause spread throughout the command post and observatory.

The three high-level witches wrapped their main tentacles tightly with each other.

"Is this really something we created?" For the first time, Alethea didn't use the word 'mortals' or 'ordinary humans' to create a distinction between herself and them.

"Of course! I was responsible for processing a part of the outer shell." Celine's voice was full of excitement. "But truthfully I didn't think that this thing would actually be exactly like what His Majesty described—"

“Why?”

“Uh... because leaders like to glorify results in order to encourage everyone to work, didn't the Three Chiefs do that too before... Wait, I'm not saying it's wrong to do so, don't you guys tell His Majesty Roland!”

“Okay, okay,” Pasha interrupted. “How do you think the Battle of Divine Will will end now?”

“We can win, we can definitely win!” Celine replied without even giving it thought.

“It might not even last until the next Bloody Moon,” Alethea agreed.

One year ago, they would have considered themselves victorious if they managed to resist against the demons' attack, persist on until the Battle of Divine Will ended, develop for another four hundred years, and then look for another opportunity.

Unknowingly, their standard for 'victory' had risen substantially.

“As expected...” Pasha finally laughed. “We share the same opinion.”

Humans can defeat demons.

And it might even happen faster than they thought.

Because the darkness is gone.

...

Among the crowd of ecstatic people, only Roland and Anna remained calm like usual.

“How was the result?” Anna took off her sunglasses and asked.

“We have at least made the first step.” Roland answered with his hands spread out. A fission reaction was undeniably triggered in the experimental device—the blazing light was proof. It would have been otherwise impossible to create such a huge impact with only over a thousand kilograms of dynamite inside the apparatus. Observing the aftershock and smoke column, the result was evidently significantly different to what he had predicted—it was theoretically supposed to be more powerful. “As for the specific result, we can only make a judgement after the people in the command post have gathered all the field data.”

Half an hour later, various small research teams brought back the 'detectors' that were placed around the site—floating paper. Because it was impossible for them to precisely measure the explosive yield with Neverwinter's current technological means, Roland thought up a method of 'using paper to measure power'.

When the air blowed at them, the paper would be lifted up due to the wind. When they were influenced by the blast of the explosion, the distance at which they landed would be farther. Through the difference in these distances, the approximate explosive yield was calculable. Roland didn't need to calculate it himself, he had already copied a complete parameter table from the Dream Word and all he had to do was compare the data.

Although this method left some room for error, it was enough to guide the experiments.

After comparing the data, the results were indeed much like what he expected.

The explosive power of this time's experimental bomb was equivalent to only around three thousand tonnes of TNT, yet the amount of Uranium-235 invested was forty kilograms. If only 6% of the original materials participated in the fission reaction in the first atomic bomb used in an actual war, "Little Boy," and its explosive yield was 13 kilotons of TNT, then the nuclear material utilization rate of this test was not even 2%. It could be classified as a 'dirty bomb.'

It wasn't that Roland was disappointed of course. After all, there had never been a strict definition for a dirty bomb in the history of weapons. Compared with the dozens of small nuclear weapons that have since been deployed, these veteran bombs that had been used in real wars could all be classified as dirty bombs. A 152mm grenade with just a few kilograms of charge could do substantial damage, let alone three kilotons of TNT.

In terms of the experiment, the No. 1 experimental bomb couldn't be described as terribly successful, but it was still a deadly weapon.

"It's going to be a long road ahead." Anna put down the form in her hands and exhaled deeply. Yet, there was not a shred of disheartenment in her eyes; instead, they were filled with fighting spirit.

"Indeed." Roland nodded.

He had never hoped to reach his goal in one go anyway. Next, what he had to do was find the cause for this and continuously modify and improve accordingly until it could truly compete with the sun for glory.

### **Chapter 1323: Flaw**

A week later, a strange-looking vehicle drove slowly into the test explosion site.

It was the first crawler tractor ever constructed by Neverwinter's Ministry of Industry according to the complete blueprints provided by the Design Bureau of Graycastle. However, the only thing that was the same was the base plate, its outer appearance did not resemble the prototype at all. The sides of the car were wrapped in thick armor plates, causing it to look somewhat like a moving box.

After it drove into the center of the test explosion site, it stopped before the melted metal tower for about half an hour, and then turned around and drove back south in the direction it came from.

After it covered around five kilometers of ground, a truck drew up close and picked up all the passengers on the tractor. The box-shaped tractor was directly abandoned in the snow.

The passengers were restless throughout the journey, returning to Neverwinter from the Great Snow Mountain the next day.

Upon receiving the news of their arrival, Roland immediately summoned them into the castle.

"How was it, you didn't run into any trouble right?"



“Rest easy Your Majesty, everything went well.” Phyllis smiled and brought a sigil before him. “Summer found the scene of the explosion really quickly so we stayed there for a shorter time than we thought we would.”

“I-It’s because I was given a specific time so it wasn’t very hard,” Summer said shyly, “Compared to my other sisters, my control over my ability is pretty bad...”

“Enough, you don’t need to be modest.”

“I-It’s true...”

His expression still solemn, Roland took the sigil and then turned and looked over to Momo who was beside him, “Sorry to trouble you.”

“Not at all, you exaggerate, Your Majesty.” Momo partially blocked her eyes with one hand in order to avoid looking at the king while she was using her ability. A while later she lowered her hand and gave Roland a bow. “Everybody’s numbers and colors have not changed noticeably and are pretty much the same as when they set off.”

It was only after hearing these words did Roland heave a sigh of relief. He smiled and said to everyone, “Thank you, you’ve worked hard.”

“You too,” the witches replied in unison.

“Why don’t you go and fill up your stomachs first? Your meals are already ready in the parlor and you can have as much Chaos drink as you like.” Seeing the faces in front of him light up, he shook his head with a smile. As for the Taquila witches who had also participated in the mission, there was no need to give them any other reward as they were frequent visitors of the Dream World anyway.

Using Summer’s past event recreation ability to closely observe the changes that had occurred in the instant of a weapon’s activation had always been what the Ministry of Engineering relied on the most for making improvements to weapons. By adjusting the speed of the replay, they could clearly see the trends in the changes that occurred every second, allowing most problems and mistakes to be spotted in an instant.

But as mentioned before, the Glory of the Sun was completely different to all the other weapons. Especially for dirty bombs that had not finished reacting completely yet, many substances that gave off fatal radiation would remain at the site. If someone were to rashly enter, they would inevitably suffer severe radiation injuries.

To tackle this, Roland didn’t hesitate to sacrifice his first crawler tractor prototype and convert it into a radiation-blocking vehicle—he covered all of its sides including the bottom with several layers of lead plates with gold foil and beryllium sheets sandwiched between them. The thickness of the entire thing was ten centimeters, causing it to be a highly effective shield against photon, electron and neutron rays. The increased weight due to the protection required the Cube-powered steam engine to drive it, as only that was the only thing that could handle the weight.

The inside of the vehicle was provided with its own oxygen so it was basically completely separate from the outside of the vehicle, removing the risk of radioactive dust entering the vehicle through its

ventilation channel. In order to observe the scene of the explosion, a large slate of lead-containing glass was attached to the front of the vehicle, and had a shocking thickness of thirty centimeters.

He had also considered that the tractor's tracks and armor plates might be contaminated when entering and leaving the test site, and especially ordered them to immediately change vehicles after the armored vehicle left the dangerous zone and abandon the armored vehicle in the snow.

It could be said that Roland took all the safety measures that he could think of. However, even so, he was still worried.

Thankfully, the final results showed that the observation mission had been a complete success.

After the data was in his hands, Roland, Anna, and Celine immediately started their experimental analysis.

...

They used the Sigil of Recording to repeatedly replay the recreated scene which had been made to play hundreds of times slower. Gradually, the flaws of the No.1 experimental configuration emerged.

"The performance of our explosives are too poor," Anna said in a low voice.

"I noticed too, the force from the explosion didn't seem to travel successfully to the barrel of the 'gun.'" Celine nodded her main tentacles. "Can we use batch detonation to solve this problem?"

"I'm afraid it's unlikely we can achieve that within a short amount of time." Roland rubbed his sore eyes. Watching the live explosion recording for two days straight had made him feel as if there were only two colors left in the world—white and blue.

Although the problems with the explosives had been anticipated, he didn't think that it would be so obvious.

Up until now, Neverwinter had been mass producing double-base smokeless powder. Although it wasn't as powerful and fast as high explosives such as RMX, it was sufficient for the purposes of the army. Even if the power was lacking, they could make up for it with numbers. However the fallbacks of it became evident when using it in the experimental configuration.

Over a thousand kilograms of explosives was most certainly not a part of the original blueprint. When they were piled up, they were as large as a safe. In order for the energy of the explosion to travel towards the piece of Uranium, Roland specially created a lens that looked like a funnel in an attempt to focus the energy of the blast to one point.

There was nothing wrong with this idea, but a problem occurred before the detonation reached this step. As the size of the cluster of explosives was too large and every point exploded simultaneously, the energy waves created by the bombs on the front and back cancelled each other out partially—this could be clearly seen in the slowed-down recreated scene. The colliding waves warped the entire steel lens and even the outer shell. This meant that a large amount of energy was used up outside of the 'gun barrel,' and naturally less was used to push the piece of Uranium.

Next was the chain reaction.

The pressure inside the barrel was not enough to quickly stop the fission reaction and most of the Uranium vaporized due to the high temperatures; this in turn weakened the effect of the neutron source.

“We can only search for other means,” Roland said with his hands spread out. Without electronic explosive control technology, detonating all of the explosives within a millisecond in order to render the front and rear waves impossible to overlap, was unachievable. Even if they changed them into high explosives, it would only attenuate but not solve the problem

He could get the Ministry of Chemical Industry to try and develop low-speed explosives and position them in front of the lens in order to possibly decrease interactions between the explosives, but the process of creating it would involve a large number of experiments, and it might not even be successful. The most reliable method at the moment was obviously to make up for the lacking detonation technology with structural design.

“It looks like we’ll have to work overtime tonight as well,” he stretched and said weakly.

“I’ll be here with you,” Anna said with a smile, “How about I reward you with a Blackfire massage?”

“I suddenly feel full of energy.” Roland jolted. “Is there any other reward?”

“For example?”

“Let me think... Oh yeah, how about the one you mentioned last time...”

*Was this also knowledge that they learned from the Dream World...*

Celine covered up her large, hot and flushed face with her main tentacles, and then quietly left the North Slope lab.

### **Chapter 1324: New Dream**

When Scroll climbed up the stairs to the third floor of the castle with a thick stack of paper in her arms, she met the yawning Nightingale, who was just preparing to leave, in front of the office.

“You haven’t slept yet?” Nightingale stopped and raised her eyebrows in surprise.

“It might be because I’m getting old, I’ve been finding it hard to sleep recently.” Scroll smiled and shook her head. “Where’s His Majesty? Has he already slept?”

“Yeah, he returned to his bedchamber half an hour earlier.”

“Then why are you still staying in the office?” Scroll put her hand to her mouth. “You weren’t secretly eating His Majesty’s snacks, were you?”

“Eh... haha.” Nightingale was stunned for a moment before coughing. “Yeah I was, I ate his spicy shredded beef and drank a bit of his Chaos Drink. Don’t tell His Majesty, alright?”

Now it was Scroll’s turn to be shocked.

*What happened to her... why was she being so quick to admit?* In the past, as long as she was not caught red handed, Nightingale would never have admitted to stealing food.

But thinking of how she and Wendy often stole Nightingale's drinks as well, Scroll was momentarily at a loss for a reply.

"Um, I'm going to sleep now..." Nightingale avoided her eyes and walked towards the second floor. "Don't stay up too late, I heard from Roland that the older you are, the worse the side-effects are from lacking sleep." She looked up from the bottom of the stairs. "Goodnight."

"...Goodnight." Scroll replied, feeling a little confused. Then, she turned around and walked into the office.

Even though the flames in the fireplace had already been extinguished, its warmth still lingered. There seemed been in there for quite a while.

Without thinking any further, Scroll familiarly opened the book cabinet and placed the data that was in her hands into the categorized columns on the shelf before taking out the information that needed His Majesty's answers.

It held lines and lines of extremely lengthy equations; she could tell from the handwriting that some portions were written by Roland, and others were written by Anna and Celine. One of her daily jobs was to deliver information like this to the Arithmetic Academy and get that group of astrologers to calculate the answer. Then she would hand it over to the central carrier to compare the answers.

From the written descriptions within the information, the information was probably related to His Majesty's new experiment. But what she couldn't get her head around was how one could derive the dimensions of an apparatus that no one had ever seen before—or even imagined, just by doing calculations on a piece of paper. It was as if what was written on the paper were not numbers, but sketches of reality. This, in her eyes, was no different to predicting the future.

Scroll couldn't help but be amazed whenever she saw Anna's graceful handwriting. Anna was born in Border Town as a simple girl; yet, she had now reached a level that she and the others could no longer understand. Even when everyone sat in this office watching His Majesty do those interesting science experiments in the beginning, any one of them could make a meaningful comment or two. But now, the only person that could follow His Majesty closely at his side was Anna.

But she didn't feel sad at all; in fact, she felt full of pride.

—Because that was her sister.

Scroll sat in front of Roland's desk and opened the folder of data, planning to memorize everything like usual. This way, if there were omissions in calculations when she distributed them, she would be able to catch them in time.

However this time, she noticed something strange.

"Are... my eyes going bad?"

Scroll rubbed her eyes and spotted vague strings of characters floating below some of the equations, as if they were the corresponding answers.

It wouldn't have been odd if she had been reading test papers or permanent residency files. Ever since she discovered the way to do rapid search, she would usually be able to derive where the information came from and think up all content related to it just from looking at a file once.

The problem was that it was her first time seeing this folder of information.

Not only was she unable to understand the meanings of those calculations and equations, even the 'answers' floating below them baffled her.

Also, the strange symbols didn't follow every row of equations, most of the columns were still completely blank.

If she stared at the hazy, illusory symbols for too long she would even feel waves of dizziness.

It appeared as though Nightingale was right—sleep deprivation was indeed taking a toll on her. Scroll sighed softly. Alas, she hadn't been feeling sleepy at all recently; it was as if her brain was working at high speeds all the time.

*Maybe I should just go to the hospital tomorrow and get some sleeping pills*, she couldn't help but think. The side effects of those on witches weren't huge; using it one or two times wouldn't do her any harm.

After forcing herself to memorize all the information, an intense wave of dizziness suddenly overcame her and her mind went blank momentarily. Her body uncontrollably tipped forwards and she accidentally knocked over the penholder on the desk.

But the dizzy spell disappeared as fast as it came and she became normal again in a short span of a few breaths. Not only did she no longer feel any discomfort at all, but her thoughts seemed to become much clearer than before.

Scroll blinked a few times. After confirming that her body was now fine, she smiled bitterly and bent over to pick up the penholder.

At this moment, she felt as if she had been struck by lightning.

Because the appearance of the floorboards had... changed.

She would never remember His Majesty's office incorrectly. The floorboards were made of pinewood from the Misty Forest with sheep wool carpet rolled over of it. Although it looked a bit outdated, His Majesty had never changed it. And now, although the carpet below her feet was still made of sheep wool, the floor in the distance had become another material.

It had turned from wood to stone.

How was that possible?

Scroll carefully raised her head and her heart sunk further.

It wasn't only the floor; the appearance of the entire office had transmogrified. The recliner that Nightingale often sat on had vanished without a trace. In its place was a row of old, iron filing cabinets. It looked much like the archives you would see in an executive office.

But just then, she was clearly inside Graycastle!

*The window!*

The floor-to-ceiling window was His Majesty's favorite feature and was the speciality of his office. If you looked out, you would be able to see the the city of Neverwinter at night, spotted with light—

Scroll jerked around and pulled open the velvet curtain behind her.

But what she saw was a gray, brick wall.

Undeniably, this place was no longer the King's office that she was familiar with.

She frantically stood up, leaped towards the window and banged on the wall twice. The wall didn't budge at all—from the deep and steady echo, it was clear that the wall wasn't an illusion but completely real.

Scroll felt a shred of hopelessness.

Anybody would feel a strong sense of helplessness and vulnerability if they suddenly got teleported into an alien, completely enclosed place.

*No...* She inhaled deeply and forced herself to calm down. It wasn't accurate to say that it was completely enclosed, in the corner between two rows of filing cabinets was an inconspicuous iron door. It was basically the same color as the cabinets, so it was easy to miss if one didn't look carefully.

It seemed to be the only exit out of the room.

*Where would the iron door lead to?*

*Was whatever that was waiting for her outside a trap or another wall?*

Scroll couldn't help but think of these questions as she slowly grabbed the door handle.

"Clack"

The iron door opened.

A golden ray of sunlight shone into the room and the silence was broken. Hundreds of noises surged inside along with a blast of icy cold air—there was the clamor of conversation, the tooting of whistles and the ceaseless pattering of footsteps. In front of her, an uncountable number of people were busily hurrying along with their heads lowered. Once in a while, some of them would glance at her and reveal expressions of amazement.

And behind the crowds of people, numerous, gigantic buildings towered like mountains, occupying Scroll's entire field of view.

## **Chapter 1325: Territory**

After Roland woke up, he lazed on bed for a while as usual, before dragging himself very unwillingly out from underneath the warm blankets.

Anna had clearly gotten up a while ago and was already immersed in work. There was a plate of breakfast beside her on the table which she had brought over. Roland sleepily put on his coat, planning to go to the water room outside to wash up first, and then come back to fill his stomach.

To his surprise, a crowd of witches were waiting outside when he opened the door.

“Your Majesty!”

Roland was startled, the scene before him seemed familiar—undeniably something huge must have happened in the Union for all these witches who had not participated in battle yet to gather here. But because he was still in the Dream World, everybody just waited outside the door for him. Remembering that it was currently winter during the Months of the Demons, and seeing the excited expressions on Nightingale and the others, he asked without thinking, “Did someone evolve on their day of entering adulthood?”

“It’s Scroll! She has evolved into a Transcendent!” Nightingale cried.

...

When he followed the chattering witches into his office, Roland saw the ‘Transcendent’ that everybody spoke of. Phyllis and Anna were also there, standing around a stack of paper containing data, as if discussing something. Seeing Scroll’s unperturbed expression, he almost thought that that the Transcendent was one of the ecstatic witches that crowded before him, rather than the Witch Union teacher that was as tranquil and stable as usual.

“So... what exactly happened?” he asked curiously. “Did Scroll really...”

The trio noticed his arrival and Phyllis was the first to speak, “Your Majesty, I’ve already confirmed it several times with a Stone of Measuring. Her Excellency Scroll could be the first non-battle type transcendent in history—all her magical characteristics have changed. Although everybody evolves differently and there are no specific examples that we can compare her too, according to The Union’s customs, she is indeed qualified to be a Transcendent.”

“There’s no need for ‘Her Excellency’...” Scroll chuckled and shook her head.

“That won’t do,” Phyllis said seriously. “Back in the days of The Union, you would be a possible candidate for one of the Three Chiefs, I’m already being very disrespectful...”

“You said it yourself, that was back in the days of The Union,” Scroll interrupted, “In the Witch Union, we are all sisters. Besides, I prefer being called more casually.”

“Okay okay, let’s put these things aside for the moment,” Anna interrupted. “Since Roland is here, let’s talk about Scroll’s ability.”

“I thought you went to the North Slope lab ages ago.” Roland flashed her a smile.

Anna blinked slyly. “That was what I originally planned, but Scroll’s unique ability caused me to change my plans last minute.”

“Unique?”

“Yes.” Anna then emphasized every word as she spoke, “She saw the Dream World.”

...

After hearing Scroll’s recount of her experience, Roland gaped at her in shock.

“Then how did you come back in the end?”

“When I saw those magnificent city buildings, I suddenly thought of your descriptions of the Dream World and calmed down quite a bit,” Scroll said slowly. “Then, I returned to the small room that I first appeared in and tried to focus my mind and imagine myself leaving the enclosed room. When I opened my eyes again, I found that I had indeed returned to your office in Graycastle.”

“Ah... How envious!”

“Was it really the Dream World?”

“I want to see it too!”

The girls around them had given up on suppressing their excitement long ago, so they began jabbering again as soon as Scroll finished speaking.

“Hmm... I thought that I wouldn’t be able to create such a grand world with my powers,” Scroll said with a smile. “As for whether it is the same Dream World as yours, Your Majesty may be able find out the next time you sleep.”

“No... I’m afraid that this might have nothing to do with power.” Roland muttered.

“Nothing to do with power?” Phyllis asked, astonished. “But Her Excellency Scroll’s magic had certainly become condensed...”

“Evolving is only a prerequisite.” The Nightmare Lord Valkries’ words sounded in his mind once more.

*Once a person’s knowledge of magic reaches a certain level, they will leave a mark behind in the Realm of Mind and may even carve out their own territory.*

This also happened to be consistent with what Lan said. “Scroll, can you enter that sealed room again?”

“But you’re not asleep...” Scroll started.

“It’s okay, just do as I say.” Roland thought for a moment. “If it works, try to open that iron door again, but no matter what you see, don’t step out of the room, don’t even reach your hand out and touch anything, understand?”

“... I understand.” Scroll took a deep breath, sat behind the desk and closed her eyes.

“Could it be that you think that she is—” Phyllis seemed to have noticed what his aim was. She was also there when he met Valkries.

“It’s very likely.” Roland nodded.

About a quarter of an hour later, Scroll opened her eyes with a shocked expression. “Your Majesty, the place outside the door has changed into an empty red void!”



As he expected! He had now gained a basic understanding of the whole situation. “That is the Realm of the Mind, also the true appearance of the Origin of Magic. As for the first room that you saw, that is your personal, one of a kind territory in the Realm of the Mind.”

“Huh?” Mystery Moon said confusedly, “But didn’t you say that the Realm of Mind was the Bloody Moon in the sky?”

“They are just the same thing expressed in different ways. In reality, the Realm of Mind is in the Bottomless Land to the north of the continent.” Roland briefly told them about how a grand demon lord broke into Dream World but then got trapped and discovered by him. He only omitted the news about Lan. “Scroll’s territory doesn’t need to rely on the Dream World in order to exist, it was just coincidentally inside the range of the light beam ‘key’ and so was connected with the Dream World.”

“Wow...” A surprised exclamation rippled through the crowd.

“I want to carve out a territory too!” Mystery Moon exclaimed with clenched fists.

“You wish, didn’t you hear His Majesty? Apart from your own knowledge, this also depends on your strength.” Lily glanced at her from the side of her eyes. “In other words, even if you read all the books His Majesty wrote, the success still depends on your face. I think it will be... very difficult.”

“Traitor!”

Roland looked at Scroll and urged her, “Even though you can interact with the Realm of Mind, in the future, try your best to open it within the range of the light beam key to bond your territory with the Dream World. That place... is filled with a myriad of dangers. If it’s in the Dream World, at least the God’s Punishment Witches and I can protect you.”

Like the god that was full of hostility and the oracle who brought about erosion—even though Scroll had evolved into a Transcendent, she still had zero battle prowess. She would certainly be in grave danger if she encountered an enemy.

“Okay...” Scroll was momentarily confused, and then revealed a soft expression. She lowered her head and gave a bow. “I understand.”

“Then now, we should give this unique new ability a good test,” Roland said with a smile.

## **Chapter 1326: Request**

It didn’t actually take too much time to test the changes in Scroll’s ability after she upgraded.

In fact, she and Anna had already discussed almost everything before Roland arrived—the answers that appeared after the equations weren’t her imagination; however, it also wasn’t obtained via calculations, but through a search through her memories.

Because there were large amounts of repeated calculations in data that Scroll had once memorized, the answers emerged in Scroll’s mind immediately when she coincidentally came across them once more. Especially for those complex functions, if every little small expression among them had been

memorized, then the combined expression after shuffling combinations could also be quickly solved, even if she didn't actually understand the equations and their specific meanings.

Compared to searching test papers and archives, the work involved in doing this was much heavier. It wasn't that she couldn't to it in the past, it was just that now she could do it subconsciously. Undeniably her main ability had evolved substantially.

However, no answers would appear for the problems that she had not memorized or only partially memorized.

Thus, in order to calculate the reliability of newly designed prototypes they still needed to rely on the Design Institute and the central carrier.

Except now, after the information had all been read by Scroll, the workload would be decreased significantly.

The main focus of the testing would be on the "Archives" in the Realm of Mind—although it was currently only a simple small room.

The trading of objects between the two worlds was the first that had to be affirmed.

After all, as a Transcendent, the way that Scroll entered the Dream World was fundamentally different to the God's Punishment Witches and the Nightmare Lord. The God's Punishment Witches had to rely on the light beam to reach the Dream World and the Nightmare Lord trespassed by herself, causing even her body to change. Scroll's method, however, was more like a link, like driving a small car into a parking lot, both her body and mind maintained a high completeness.

If it was possible to take the goods inside the car park away with her, then it would have huge significance!

But reality proved that there was no free lunch in the world. Scroll could "bring in" portable things on her person into the domain, but was unable to bring the things in her domain and in the Dream World back to reality. Not even a single pebble.

Also, 'bringing in' wasn't a completely accurate way to phrase it. Because the objects tested didn't actually vanish and still remained gripped in her hand.

"I'm sorry... Your Majesty." After numerous tests, Scroll stared at her empty hands and said dispiritedly, "It seems like my abilities are still lacking."

"No, this is actually within my expectations, there's no need for you to be bothered." Roland exchanged glances with Anna, having already formed a conclusion in his heart. The Archives was most likely the same as the Dream World—they both had some amount of power to distort reality. As long as it was within Scroll's range of comprehension, a copy could be made out of the original and it would appear at first glance as if something from the outside had been brought into the Realm of the Mind. However, bringing something back was impossible.

This made Roland secretly relieved.

After all, Scroll was not the only person who could carve out a domain in the Realm of Mind. From the intel acquired from Valkries, the King of the demon clan not only had the 'Presiding Holy See', he also

had a phenomenally powerful control of over domains. When he was in a domain, he was almost no different from god.

If goods could move between the two worlds at someone's convenience, then the Battle of Divine Will would become filled with more dangers and uncertainty.

Next, they tested the capacity of Scroll's domain.

Since he talked with Lan, he had guessed that the Dream World was one among the many domains in the Realm of Mind, it was just that it was abnormally huge. Although he wasn't able to be like the demon King and do as he wished in the Dream World, there was likely still some universal commonalities between the domains, like admitting other consciousnesses.

After upgrading, Scroll's light beam key grew to around one meter. Although it was still below the requirements for the Chosen One, as a witch, she was already ranked fourth in Neverwinter, behind Roland, Leaf and Evelyn.

The range of her light beam could hold four God's Punishment Witches standing shoulder to shoulder.

If these ancient witches could enter the Dream World because their light beams were just covered by the Dream World's light beam, could they enter the Archives through the same way?

The results of the test filled Roland with excitement.

Even while awake, Phyllis was able to once again regain her appearance from four centuries ago through Scroll's domain.

This undeniably proved his hypothesis.

The the vague outline of the Realm of Mind gradually came to focus in his mind.

The only thing was that the number of people who could enter didn't seem to be directly proportional to the range of the light beam. Even if the four God's Punishment Witches stuck close beside Scroll and fell asleep, only one could reach the Archives.

Of course, it was already enough that one person could enter.

The last important matter was locating the location of the Archives, in particularly it's orientation inside the Dream World—if the skyscrapers that Scroll saw was a scene inside the Dream World, then she would definitely be able to meet with Roland inside the Realm of Mind.

Just when they were about to initiate the test, Anna called for Scroll to halt.

"Your Highness?"

"Ever since I met Roland, I've never been jealous of anyone, because I thought that just that meeting was the best gift in my life," she said slowly. "Even when I knew the God's Punishment Witches could enter the Dream World—they had suffered so much hardships—so, to them the Dream world was more like a sort of compensation. But... right now I'm really kind of envious of you."

She didn't try to conceal her words from the other witches but declared gracefully in front of everyone, causing a small uproar in the group.

“Wow... why does my face feel a little hot?” Mystery Moon hastily covered her face with her hands, but intentionally left a gap between her fingers.

“Silence, don’t interrupt!” Lily glared at her.

“Anna...” Roland couldn’t help but begin.

Anna gave him a small smile and then looked at Scroll. “So I have a small request.”

“Please say, Your Highness, as long as it is something I can do,” Scroll said gently.

“In the past when he talked about the Dream World with me, there were only descriptions and no images. Can you be my eyes and take a picture of the apartment that he lives in, the places he often goes to and the scenery over there for me to see?” Anna said seriously. “If you can record the pictures in the Book of Magic, I’ll probably be able to see it too right?”

“Of course you can, leave it to me.”

“Woow—” Mystery Moon immediately cried, “I want to see it too! It would be best if you take pictures of the entire city!”

“You shut up!”

But even before Lily could grab her, the other witches followed noisily, “Can you take a picture of the legendary plane that can carry over a hundred people?”

“I want to see what a plaza that can hold ten of thousands of people at a time is like!”

“And me, and me—”

Watching her sisters surrounding Scroll and Anna in a tight crowd, Lily stamped her foot and also rushed forward.

Inside the Mist, Nightingale sighed softly.

This was probably the reason why Anna was ahead of her, right?

She couldn’t help but reveal a bitter smile.

Even though she had believed that her feelings were no less stronger than Anna’s, only Anna could shamelessly say such words under the gazes of everyone.

Her courage was as dazzling as gemstone.

After memorizing everybody’s requests one by one, Scroll could finally lie down in the couch in the office.

Roland leaned over the mahogany desk, planning to fall asleep like he did during his afternoon break.

Apart from the two, Phyllis, Ling and Faldi prepared themselves.

Roland swept his gaze over everyone and finally rested it on Anna. Anna softly nodded her head at him.

“Now, let’s begin the tenth test!”

## Chapter 1327: Scroll's New Clothes

With everyone's gaze on her, Scroll took fifteen minutes longer than earlier to calm her mind and catch hold of that hazy fluctuation of magic in her mind.

When she opened her eyes once more, she was already inside the cramped Archives.

Then, Phyllis materialized by her side in the appearance of a young witch. Centuries of time had not left any mark on her body and even though Phyllis had lived far longer than Scroll, Scroll seemed to be Phyllis' elder instead at that moment.

"What should we do next?" Scroll asked.

"Leave it to me." Phyllis revealed a confident smile, opened the iron door and walked out of the room.

Scroll hastily hurried after her.

The raucous, bustling, and magnificent city once more appeared before her eyes.

Phyllis glanced around her and very quickly locked her eyes on a young man walking in their direction. She grabbed Scroll's hand, directly strode over, and blocked the young man's way.

"Hello."

Hearing her greeting, the man stopped, moved his gaze from a small box in his hand, and raised his head in confusion. When their gazes met, the man's expression turned into shock. "Er... Um, can I help you?"

"Sorry, I've lost my phone and can't contact my friend, can you—"

"I get it, is a hundred dollars enough?" The man quickly fished out his wallet from his coat's pocket and proffered a red bill before her. At the same time there was a hint of pity in his voice, "I don't mind being scammed, but looking at your outfit, whoever put you up to this made quite an effort."

Phyllis's smile froze. "No, I just want to borrow your phone to make a call."

The man stood there for a moment before he realized that he had committed a faux pas. Embarrassed, he handed over the small box in his hand whilst profusely apologizing to the duo.

Phyllis shrugged and dialed a number.

At this point Scroll didn't know what to say as she still had no idea what was happening. She could only pretend to be calm and stand in her spot despite panicking inside. This place was too different to the world that she was familiar with, the alienness of everything was like a suffocating wall pressing against her. Several people around them had already noticed them and unreservedly ogled them, some with malicious intent among them. It brought back memories of how her sisters had been exposed in public during the era of the Witch Cooperation Association.

"Don't worry, the only thing they can do is watch." Phyllis seemed to have noticed Scroll's uneasiness and turned her head to the side to reassure her. "All you have to do is glare at them back and they'll recoil faster than anyone else."

At this moment, the small box beeped.

“Hello, is this Phyllis?”

It was His Majesty Roland’s voice.

Scroll relaxed instantly.

This place was the Dream World after all, and His Majesty wasn’t far from them.

The sense of unfamiliarity was still there but it was no longer stifling. Even the obvious stares upon them no longer brought her any embarrassment or discomfort.

Scroll inhaled deeply and stared back at the onlookers. Just as Phyllis said, they all immediately avoided her gaze and furtively looked in other directions.

The flow of people on the streets seemed to begin to move again.

“Yes it’s me, Miss Scroll is right by my side. The address is... Yes, that’s what it says on the map. It’s only two kilometers from your apartment’s estate? That’s great. Yes, I’ll wait for you here, Your M—Brother.” Phyllis ended the phone call and threw the small box back at the young man. “Thanks.”

“No—No problem.” He faltered for a long time and then hesitantly asked, “Um, can I add you as a friend?”

Phyllis casually responded with a string of numbers.

The man recorded it down as if he had been given a treasure. With his face shining with delight, he bade farewell to the two and left.

“The small box that you borrowed just then, could that be the wireless telephone that can communicate over thousands of kilometers that His Majesty often misses?” Scroll asked.

“Yes, the technology in this world is already at the stage where everybody has a wireless telephone. Not only can you talk to others on it, you can also know your location and search up information—it’s almost impossible to do without it now,” Phyllis explained. “It’s also because of this that as long as you remember their phone number, you can contact another person at any time. If you encounter a person you don’t want to talk to, just reject them directly or give them a random phone number.”

“So that’s how it is.” Scroll said in revelation. It was no wonder His Majesty said that if they were both in the Dream world, they would be able to reunite very quickly.

“But you have adjusted a lot quicker than I thought, as expected of a Witch Union mentor,” Phyllis said with a smile.

Scroll lightly shook her head but didn’t reply.

She knew where her courage came from.

Even though he was already clearly a king, he had not improved at all—for a king to say that they would protect their subordinate, this was probably only something His Majesty Roland would do. Really, just how long will he take to become a proper king?

Seriously, what was she doing? Ever since the Witch Cooperation Association received protection, she should have been standing in front, guarding the King, but up until now, she was still accepting the King's protection, this was hardly a qualified performance of her.

But... if everyone was like this, it didn't seem too bad.

*Since it's like this, then let's just maintain the status quo a little while longer.*

"Hey hey, look at the two over there."

"That's a medieval robe, are they cosplaying?"

"Speaking of which, they're really quite pretty!"

"They're on the level of celebrities..."

Now and then whispers would come from around them, but Scroll no longer felt any uneasiness.

About ten minutes later, a smooth, round vehicle stopped in front of them.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting." His Majesty poked his head out from the window of the driver's seat.

"Get on." Phyllis opened the car door and pulled Scroll into the car with her.

Afterwards they drove off under the disbelieving gazes of onlookers and disappeared into the traffic on the main road.

"Our luck is really pretty good." Ling, who was sitting in the passenger's seat turned her head around. "If Your Excellency's territory's link with the Dream World is only two blocks away from the apartment, then Faldi's flying insects will be able to subject that region under 24 hour surveillance."

Faldi nodded. "That place had already been cleaned out once, there are currently no new traces of Fallen Evil activity, safety can probably be assured."

"That's good then." Roland laughed. "Then as the first witch to enter the Dream World with her own power, Scroll, how do you feel?"

"So this is what a car is like in the Dream World?" Scroll felt the seat behind her and knocked the car window a few times. "The seat is softer than a couch. It's so fast and drives so silently, this is hundreds of times better than steam-powered trucks... if only we could create such advanced transportation tools."

For some reason, she suddenly felt that Roland's smile had frozen a little and the other three God's Punishment Witches had pursed their lips together, as if suppressing something.

"Um... did I say something wrong?"

"No, ahem... that day will surely come," Roland said, clearing his throat.

"Oh yeah, Your Majesty, where are we going now?" Scroll said, observing the changing scenery outside, "Weren't we going to perform a test on the Realm of Mind?"

“We can talk about that later. Haven’t you noticed? The clothes you two are wearing are attracting too much attention,” Roland said without turning his head. “Phyllis’s clothes are in the car and she can change later, but we currently don’t have any clothes that suit you. So the most important job right now is definitely to get you a new set of clothes!”

### **Chapter 1328: The Human Legacy**

“Your Excellency Scroll, have you finished changing?” Ling asked outside the changing room. “Don’t hesitate to ask if you need help.”

“No, no need, I’m... almost done.” The slightly panicked voice of Scroll came from behind the curtain.

Roland raised his eyebrows involuntarily—this was his first time seeing Scroll nervous. Usually she was extraordinarily calm and imperturbable and no matter what happened she always maintained a cool head. In fact, this trait of hers added to Roland’s anticipation at seeing Scroll’s appearance after she changed into her new outfit.

*Whoosh—*

The curtain pulled open and Scroll cautiously stepped out of the changing room.

“Is this... okay?”

Roland’s eyes lit up.

Scroll was dressed in a tight-fitted royal blue high neck sweater, beautifully emphasizing the figure of her upper body. Draped over it was a red and black long coat, the flaps of the coat began from underneath her shoulders and reached her calves, giving off a formal evening gown vibe. The coat parted at her chest and ended as an inverted V at her waist, teasing the lines of her full bosom and flat abdomen. It created an indescribable sense of beauty.

Overall, deep and dark tones encompassed the theme of her clothes, and did not give off any sense of frivolity at all; instead, it seemed regal and solemn. Adding on Scroll’s black-framed glasses and the black plaits that reached her waist, her mature and intellectual beauty was even further accentuated.

“So beautiful,” Phyllis exclaimed. “You’re stunning even among the witches.”

“I told you I made the right choice!” Ling’s declared smugly.

“But... isn’t it too revealing?”

Scroll subconsciously covered her chest with her hands.

“Not at all, aren’t you wrapped up pretty tightly?” Faldi laughed. “You were fine with the dress during the evening party; this modified winter outfit is nothing compared to that.”

“Also everybody wears clothes like this in the Dream World, right Your Majesty?” Ling added.

Roland smiled and shook his head. Even though she had undergarments and the sweater, it was understandable that she would be quite unused to a coat that was split at both the top and bottom in



comparison to the long robe she usually wore. “What’s important isn’t what other people wear, but what Scroll thinks of it.” He paused and looked at Scroll. “Do you think you like this outfit?”

Scroll looked at herself in the mirror—it was a get-up that she had never seen before, however even though there were huge distinctions between the two worlds, beauty was something that traversed boundaries and resounded with everyone. She couldn’t help but concede that she liked her current outfit.

“Yes... Your Majesty,” she replied softly.

“Then that should do.” Roland called for the salesperson, “I want this entire set.”

“You have excellent taste sir. This is the newest style this winter, and it looks absolutely perfect on this lady over here!” The salesperson took out a calculator and pressed a few buttons. “That’s twenty-four thousand yuan, please make payment over here!”

“Eh—” Roland stopped breathing for a moment. That was almost a third of a price of a minivan! But his grand promise had already been made so it was too late to go back on his word. He looked to his side at Ling. “How on earth did you choose those clothes?”

“I selected the ones with the biggest numbers on the tags!” Ling stuck out her tongue. “My classmates at school said that price never lies.”

Roland couldn’t help but place his hand to his forehead.

“Your Majesty, are these clothes... really expensive?” Scroll went closer to him and murmured in a low voice, “Let’s just forget it then...”

“I’m the creator of this Dream World; how could money be a problem to me? Piece of cake.” He pretended like it didn’t bother him at all and bought the clothes. “Next, we’ll have dinner on the second floor of the shopping mall!”

“As you command!”

The three witches cried cheerfully in unison.

“Your Majesty... what about the test?”

“Relax.” Roland waved his hand, “Time flows faster here, so not much time will be delayed in reality. Moreover it’s your first time in the Dream World, you should enjoy it to your fullest before you do anything else, tell me whatever you want to eat!”

He had already pulled out the big guns with the clothes, so no matter how much they ate, their expenditure couldn’t get much worse. He thought he might as well make everyone happy.

Scroll looked at the four thrilled people, feeling both resigned and amused. She shook her head. “I understand.”

...

Everybody’s stomachs were bulging when they walked out of the bustling shopping mall.

Under Roland's lead, the line of people had basically swept through every single restaurant and food stall in the mall, ordering anything that looked good: from piping hot crab roe buns to ice cream mixed with nuts. To Scroll, everything they ate was mouth-watering and delectable. Although some of them could be found in Neverwinter as well, compared to here, the gap was as wide as His Majesty's car and the steam-powered truck.

No matter how much she tried to restrain herself, the only thing she could maintain was a graceful appearance while she ate.

"A world like this is... so wonderful..." While leisurely strolling across the wide streets, Scroll sighed while gazing out at the deep night sky. Although the stars were obscured, the city lights were nevertheless ablaze with all their glory. Rows of street lights illuminated the path and snowflakes danced in midst of the gentle light, like pixies embellishing the curtain of the night. "It's like a dream... The city is dazzling and gorgeous, the faces of all the passers-by are glowing with happiness... Will we be able to make reality like this one day?"

"Of course, as long as we gain enough knowledge," Roland said with his hands clasped behind his back as he walked. "This is the biggest difference between the two worlds. Through knowledge, Border Town was able to become Neverwinter. One day, Neverwinter can also become the Dream World. And the key to beginning this journey is right before you now."

"Right... before me?" Scroll was stunned.

"Yes." Roland raised the corner of his mouth. Shopping was not the only reason he had brought Scroll here. After they crossed the road, they stood in front of a beautiful building. Before the huge entrance hung a golden plaque with the large words, "City Library" on it.

Upon entering the library, Scroll couldn't help but gasp.

The vast hall was just as large as the central square in Neverwinter. The roof above them was over ten meters high and looked like a transparent patio. Around them, automatic escalators carried people up and down, and five stories of corridors spiraled up the hall in layers upon layers. Innumerable book shelves were lined up in rows and every shelf was filled with books.

All the books in Graycastle... no, even all the books in the Four Kingdoms added together would not compare to the number of books here.

Scroll subconsciously put her hand to her chest, clearly realizing why His Majesty had brought her here.

"This is the place that you will come often in the future." Roland smiled. "Bring the key to our world for me."

She inhaled deeply, bowed her head at Roland and solemnly promised, "Your Majesty, I will definitely not let you down."

This was destined to be a time-consuming job, and it would be difficult to see any immediate effects in a short amount of time.

But all changes came from small steps like this.

Knowledge was like fertilizer.

As long as it was scattered, it could propel humans to grow.

In the past Roland had always been pushing this project forward. Sending Ling and the others to school was also for this goal, and Scroll's upgrade would unquestionably dramatically accelerate this progress.

There's a saying that goes : *"It takes ten years to grow a tree and a hundred years to bring up a generation of good men"*.

Roland was certain that one hundred years later, the real world would experience tremendous changes.

It didn't matter if it was people without magic power or witches with magic power.

At that time, they would all use their own two hands to craft a brand new 'Dream World'.

### **Chapter 1329: The Grand War Begins**

Late at night, Roland drove everybody back to Six Li Pavilion, the estate where Scroll first arrived in the Dream World.

Like the estate of apartments, Six Li Pavilion was an old street that had gone through the ages. However, compared to the former, the Six Li Pavilion was more commercially-inclined. There were several convenience stores, bars for barflies, mass retail KTV and internet cafes; all of them were small stores and the majority of their customers were nearby office workers and students.

Although the environment seemed a little dirty and messy, it was perfect for Scroll to mask her identity.

The passageway of the link was on the sidewalk. From the outside, it looked no different from an ordinary iron door. As for whether that door had originally been there or appeared after Scroll entered the Dream World, Roland was still unsure. But the location was clearly of utmost importance; he was already wondering if he ought to take advantage of the Association's relationship with the Clover Group and buy both of the neighboring stores.

After all, Scroll could only bring one God's Punishment Witch with her into her domain; if they were marked by multiple Fallen Evils they would be in a certain amount of danger. As she was an important person responsible for the passing down of knowledge, they couldn't afford to take any risks. If he could station ten plus God's Punishment Witches in the area around the link, it would increase her safety substantially.

While there were fewer people than usual around, Roland performed the final test, which tested the interactions between the two Realm of Mind domains.

When the Dream World stopped operating, Scroll would be ejected out of the Dream World and returned back to her tiny Archives no matter where Scroll was.

This was also the biggest difference between her and the God's Punishment Witches.

Although the God's Punishment Witches' consciousness returned to their bodies, their location in the Dream World would be the same as they were when they left. This was also the reason why Roland told

them to mainly enter and leave in the Rose Café or the warehouse as much as possible—otherwise when one of them experienced a change, it could result in scenes of a person vanishing into thin air.

Scroll's situation was clearly more serious.

At least in emergency situations, God's Punishment Witches could maintain a 'seamless link' by entering and leaving at the same time as Roland. Scroll, on the other hand, was unable to do so. This meant that every time she entered the Dream World, she had to start in the Archives, and when she left, she would also end at the Archives.

But this wasn't something that would be too difficult to solve, considering that all he had to do was teach Scroll how to use a phone to ascertain that both of them were in the correct location before waking up. They also had the twenty-four hour surveillance by Faldi's magical flying insects of Scroll's district.

It worked the other way round too.

If Scroll left her territory in the Realm of Mind, the God's Punishment Witches and Roland, who were inside her realm, would also be automatically ejected. Scroll would return to her body in reality and Roland and the God's Punishment Witches would appear outside the iron door. The experience was very uncomfortable, akin to that of having ridden a roller coaster.

The final thing he discovered was completely outside of Roland's expectations.

After Scroll left the Realm of Mind, the iron door was still there, but behind the door was not a wall or the narrow gray room, but a red void.

That was a sign of erosion.

According to Garcia, erosion fissures were not something one would normally see anywhere. The locations where they existed were usually guarded closely by professional members of the Association. In other words, this eroded part must have come from the Archives.

As expected, the way the two territories interacted with each other in the Realm of Mind was not simply that one included the other, they were all a part of the Realm of Mind, and used energy from the Origin of Magic; this was probably the most appropriate interpretation. This also fell in line with what Lan said—As long as he got the Dream World to swallow more cores, he would have a higher chance of invading god's territory.

Following this, another question emerged.

If he let the territories of other high-ranking demons enter the range of his key's light beam, then what changes would the Dream World experience?

Would they be able to appear in this city like Scroll?

...

The next day, Roland received the most recent news from the front line.

There were two letters inside the envelope. One was from Wendy, it gave a simple description of the recent situation of the witches in the first part of the letter and then made an important mention of Nana Pine in the latter part.

The little girl who had followed the Witch Union until now had finally reached her Day of Adulthood.

Like Lucia, Mystery Moon and the others, her magic also condensed on her Day of Adulthood. According to the categorization of the Union, she was a true high-level witch.

There wasn't any explanation on the specific ability in the letter. Perhaps it was because they were all too busy, or Nana's ability was so precious that they couldn't allow it to be wasted in testing... But Roland didn't mind not knowing for a while; to him, the most important thing was that Nana could overcome this hurdle safely.

The second letter was much thicker.

Among them there was a report from the First Army, and a plan that the General Staff advisers handed in—this was also a huge disadvantage in their current messaging system. In order to save transportation resources, the front line would usually wait until the things they needed to report accumulated to a certain amount, and then sent to Neverwinter. As a result, even though it was the same letter, some content would differ in time for several days or even half a month.

When he flipped to the last page, Roland's brow suddenly furrowed.

"Did something happen?" Nightingale who was guarding at his side asked.

"The demons launched a full-scale attack on the First Army—" he said gravely, "it happened last week!"

...

Gust Castle, Kingdom of Wolfheart.

The shrill emergency siren rang once more over the city's sky.

This was already the third time since dawn broke today.

"The damned monsters, don't they ever get tired?" Jodel viciously spat on the ground and dug out a paper bag from the fold of his clothes near his chest. After shaking it for ages, nothing fell out.

"Here." A hand suddenly reached out from beside him. "You're looking for this, right?"

Jodel turned to the side and saw that the speaker was Farry. In her hand was a white, round medicinal pill.

"You... don't need this?" He hesitantly picked up the pill.

"I'm not as weak as you. It's just not having sleep for a day or two," Farry replied expressionlessly. "Also I hate these things, who knows what they're made of! I urge you to try to eat less of it."

"You might be right." Jodel gave a long sigh and threw the pill into his mouth. "But at least, it can keep me alive temporarily."

As the drug melted above his tongue, an incredibly bitter taste very quickly impregnated his oral cavity. At the same time, the piercing cold of the air and the dizzying exhaustion seemed to vanish, even his stiff fingers and limbs became flexible and agile again. He felt himself turn back into the former sharp hunter he once was, and not an exhausted prey waiting to be slaughtered.

This is the feeling—

Jodel raised his long-barreled gun and mounted it firmly on the firing point.

Half a month ago, these pills were delivered into every soldier's hands as basic goods, its official name was 'Delaying Agent' but everybody liked to call it the Unfallable Pill. Swallowing one could block out all the pain in one's body, only after numerous hours would the pain rear its head again.

Although at the start, there were some people from the Sand Nation that were extremely against these drugs, and even connected them to the fabled Pills of Madness. But protests like this very quickly disappeared from the scene. The reason was that the First Army didn't force them to use these Delaying Agents and actually made warning labels on the packaging cautioning users of the side-effects, saying that it was not to be used repetitively—such ways were polar opposite to the rumors that Jodel heard about the third princess.

Also, apart from the Sand Nation people, the northerners had also received the Delaying Agent, and even the military officers were no exception. This averted the majority of people's suspicions. There were even some people who said that the drug could have been made sweet and tasty, but in order to prevent people to eat it like a snack, they added the astringent bitterness.

And after the demons launched their relentless attack, this white pill instantly won the trust of all the soldiers—against the attacks of the enemy that lasted all day, Jodel could not imagine how he could hold up for tens of hours in this high-intensity battle with virtually no rest without the pills.

As a veteran hunter, he naturally understood how large the difference was between throwing himself into battle in excellent condition and carrying exhaustion into battles that came one after the other.

As long as he didn't die as soon as he swallowed the drug, he could accept any side effect no matter how serious they were.

### **Chapter 1330: Battle of Wills**

People like Farry who spurned the Unfallable Pill were a rarity.

But seeing that he looked decently spirited, Jodel didn't think any deeper into it—fretting about his own survival was hard enough on this battlefield, let alone others.

Eight days had passed since the trumpets of war began.

Eight days ago, their line of defense had still been outside of Gust Castle. The combination of machine gun and cannon fire made it difficult for the demons to progress any further. However, with the passing of time, traces of the enemy began appearing all over their formation. Giant Skeletons started breaking in between Gust Castle and Metalstone Ridge, turning the weakly defended region into a Red Mist region. Although the Aerial Knights attempted to stop them, it was to little effect.

When the demons relied on these 'Fortress-like Monstrous Beasts' and launched a pincer attack from the two flanks, the fire of the cannons was scattered. In order for the troops to avoid being surrounded, they retreated backwards to their subsequent formation while returning fire.

These events repeated once more.

The incessant attacks by the enemy caused everybody to feel an enormous pressure, their break times shrank from normal rotations to four or five hours, although the rear received a few reinforcements, the difference in numbers was so large that it was plain to the eye. There were at most two thousand soldiers fighting at the front line, while the assaults that the demons launched on them basically all consisted of over twenty thousand. What's more, the Devilbeasts could go around the defense line and directly charge in the direction of Cage Mountain. Although it was impossible to understand the situation back there, clearly they were not in a good position.

Three days ago, the front line troops received a command for the entire army to retreat into the city.

At the same time, the demon's attack from the west side suddenly became a lot stronger, this was undeniably a signal: suggesting that it was likely that Metalstone Ridge, which was on the west side of the First Army, had already fallen, and they were next.

The next day, the enemy broke past their line of artillery for the first time, and engaged in close range battle with the soldiers.

At this point, this war had become entirely a battle of wills.

Jodel looked at the dilapidated short wall hundred of meters in the distance. The ravaged outer city wall of Gust Castle was now filled with holes, and its surface was filled with hanging demon corpses. The blood that poured out of the corpses dyed the wall in a layer of eerie and ghostly blue.

The strip from the defense line to the short wall was more like a purgatory. The corpses of soldiers and Mad Demons were splayed all over the place and mixed together, with half of them buried underneath the snow and the other frozen in the icy wind, like naturally formed ice sculptures. As the enemy's attack was unrelenting, they didn't even have enough time to take back bodies of the ones fallen in battle.

The two sides of the long street were filled with bone spears and stone needles stuck to the ground like barbs grown from the earth—because not everyone could hide within the sturdy fortifications, it would be like a lottery for the soldiers hiding in civilian houses and trenches every time the stone needles rained from the sky. One of them had penetrated the wall of the house and fallen less than one meter away from him. If it had been slightly closer, he would have already begun serving the Three Gods.

"Pui!" Jodel shook his head, and flung those inauspicious thoughts out from his mind. When his clan was in danger, no matter how much he prayed to the Three Gods, he never got any response. It was natural that he was not protected by the Three Gods this time.

Even though he might ultimately die in this city far from home, he definitely wanted to make his enemies pay a hefty price before then.

The chief had sworn that he would definitely not maltreat any clan who fought for the fate of humankind.

That was the reason why he came here!

“They’re here!” Farry warned.

No sounds of cannon fire... Yesterday night, the artillery had become completely silent. Some say that they had suffered a sneak attack by Devilbeasts, there were also some who claimed that the artillery soldiers had been transferred somewhere else. No matter what it was, right now they could only rely on themselves to hold off the enemy.

Finally, the figures of the demons appeared above the wall!

The machine gun squad was still the first to begin fire—Apart from the Longsong Cannon, the loud and continuous noise of machine guns had become the most wonderful and moving sounds in the soldiers’ hearts. The flying bullets caused the snow around the wall to spray in all directions, and the first demon to leap over the wall was instantly hit and fallen. The demons that followed closely from behind also had their skulls flung back by the rain of bullets.

Gun fire also sounded from the east and west sides of the city. This was clearly another intense siege. Jodel didn’t concern himself with the demons who charged towards the line of artillery head-on but focused his attention on the alley a hundred meters away. After three days of battling to defend the city, he realized something: The most dangerous area was usually not where all their artillery was focused at, but the streets and alleys that seemed quiet.

At this moment the First Army had already long lost their line of defense. The troops had been organized into small units and were scattered disorderly around the blockhouses.

Their most important job was to stop the demons from sneaking near their permanent fortifications, as for the enemies hundreds of meters away, it would be difficult to aim fatal shots even if he wanted to kill them.

Suddenly, six Mad Demons appeared above the roof of a two-story mud building. They seemed to plan on using the building to circle around the areas where the gun fire was most concentrated, and this action made them completely exposed before Jodel’s gunpoint.

He held his breath, aimed at the demon moving at the end, and squeezed the trigger.

The target fell on the sound of fire.

Farry and his two other companions joined in the firing. The weak wooden roof was unable to withstand the drastic movements of the Mad Demons and their slow climbing caused them to become the most eye-catching target-boards.

“Four o’ clock, there’s a large number of demons at four o’ clock!” Before they could finish off what was left of the remnant demons, Sand National from behind them hollered, “They’re coming in this direction!”

“Leave this place to me!” Farry yelled, “You guys go and deal with the ones on the other side!”

Jodel immediately turned his gunpoint and ran to the front of another window—If the team were to single out whose aim was the best among his team mates, it would be unquestionably Farry. If he said he could finish off the remaining demons, then it would definitely not be a problem.



But when he saw a swarm of over a hundred demons charge toward his hiding spot, Jodel's heart sunk.

"Damn, were those bastards from before scouting?" someone gasped in realization.

"I'm afraid so." He immediately came to a conclusion. "Everybody, don't save up your ammunition anymore, after we take out this wave of demons move towards six o' clock!"

Concentrated sounds of gunfire erupted from the window, among them were the newly issued automatic weapons—compared to the roar of Mark I, the new weapon which was called the general-purpose machine gun sounded more crisp, but was not below the monstrous weapon in terms of firing speed. Its only shortcoming was that its magazine only contained thirty rounds of ammunition causing it to be inferior to the Mark I in terms of suppressive ability.

But clearly the enemy had not expected such powerful firepower would come from the top of the roof of a tiny belfry. Under the heavy, head-on assault of the general-purpose machine guns and rocket projectiles, the hundred or so demons instantly halved in number, the remaining enemies all raised their bone spears.

"Be careful, they're throwing spears!" Jodel hollered as he pushed his body to the floor.

Dozens of bone spears shot like arrows to the top of the belfry.

"Dong—!"

The bell hummed intermittently as it was stricken by the spears.

If they were on the ground, it would have been difficult to escape this attack, but the difference in the height of their positions formed a natural cover, even if the bone spears that were thrown from a low to high ground filled the windows, it would be difficult for them to fatally shoot down a soldier. The sounds of gunfire paused for a moment and then began again. The remaining Mad Demons were pushed into a predicament where they could neither progress or retreat.

It was almost certain that they would be able to finish off this enemy squad.

Jodel involuntarily released a sigh. He was felt a hint of pity, he had heard the costs of producing general-purpose machine guns were not cheap, and were first given to the Aerial Knights to use. If everyone in the front line arm had hold of one, the demons would be no match for them even if they didn't rely on the bunkers.

At this moment, Farry suddenly screamed, "Crap, get out of here!"

He froze and subconsciously twisted his head around to look.

In the distance, a hole appeared in the city wall. An enormous Spider Demon passed through the body of the wall, crouched down, and opened the thick shell on its back where a pitch black stone pillar seemed to emit light.

*Wait, could it be aiming at them?*

Jodel raised his head, the bronze bell that hung from the beam of the roof was still vibrating.

*Hell, it was the bell hums from before!*

He raised his gun and ran towards the stairs.

At the same time a soft sound came from the distance.

“Boom—”

Before he even ran down one flight of stairs, a black stone pillar that was thicker than a person flew in a high parabolic trajectory and then directly struck the midsection of the belfry.

Following a thunderous roar, the entire belfry collapsed!