

## Witch 1371

### Chapter 1371: The Structure of the World

“You really saw the sinkhole in that manner?” Roland stood up in shock.

“My apologies...” Camila Dary was somewhat embarrassed. “My drawing skill is only of this standard.”

The image spread across the work desk was the illustration drawn up by Camilla Dary according to Joan’s memories. Ignoring Scroll and Soraya’s drawing skills, even the apprentices at the art school had standards far above hers—the numerous short lines represented grasslands, the crooked and imperfect circle was the sinkhole, the bulging mounds at the sides were mountains and the wave lines represented seawater. To any outsider, this drawing was nothing special and could not be used for reference at all.

But it was different for Roland.

He had encountered the legendary Bottomless Land in the Dream World.

It was also the ‘final location’ for the Battle of Divine Will and the passageway for the victorious race to upgrade. Although it would ultimately be devoured by tsunamis and volcanoes and the cities built above would still be destroyed, the terrain above would remain unchanged. It was still as flat and bumpy as before with the faintly visible towering continent.

Before personally witnessing it, it had always been a vague legend, since the Northern Region above the Land of Dawn extended over a thousand kilometers and people before the Union never drew a detailed map for it. There were even doubts to its existence.

From the beginning to the end, only Lan had mentioned the location of the Bottomless Land.

But now, Joan had personally experienced it turning into a reality.

“No, this is already enough.” Roland impatiently moved the map of the continent from the bookcase and spread it across the floor. He placed the drawing north east of the continent. “It should roughly be here.”

“What is that exactly?” Camilla couldn’t resist asking, “I don’t think it is a naturally formed sinkhole.”

“Why do you say that?” Roland challenged her statement.

“It clearly doesn’t look like one.” She folded her arms. “How is it possible for the sinkhole to form so perfectly. And there is that strange seabed, and the position of the sky and water; everything looks so strange.”

Roland was silent for a moment. “I think that there never really was what you will call natural.”

“What do you mean?”

“For example, the Misty Forest and plains to the west of Neverwinter were most probably barren land in the past, but some birds and beasts that brought along seeds gradually transformed the land to what it

is today. With sufficient time, this hypothesis is bound to come to fruition. But people after that would assume that this is how the world is fixed to be. Don't you find it strange?"

Camilla frowned. "I don't understand what you're saying."

Roland sighed in his heart. *Right, these principles are too complicated for people of this age, it's normal for them to be unable to comprehend it.*

"I see." Nightingale, who was chewing on dried fish, suddenly clapped her hands. "What you're trying to say is that we are no different from the birds and the beasts, right?"

"Is that considered a mystery?" The Chief Butler rubbed her aching forehead.

"Think about it for a second." Nightingale pointed to the city covered in darkness. "The birds and the beasts migrate with seeds and form the forests and plains; Humans migrate from the North Slope Mountain and built up Neverwinter; to the world, this is basically the same thing. What we deem as natural is a view from our angle, but if we swapped it for a bird, the roofs of our homes are no different than the branches of a tree. If not, why would birds build their nests there as well? Following this reason, the circular hole and reverse seawater current is like the Misty Forest and Neverwinter, all part of the natural world." She paused for a second. "Who knows, maybe even the moon and the stars are formed that way too!"

"This..." Camilla was stunned.

Roland raised his eyebrow in surprise. *Nightingale is clearly a terrible student, but her insights towards particular matters are especially sharp... Is it due to her extroverted character, or is a fool's train of thoughts broader.*

The scene of rocks constantly ramming into one another and ultimately forming into a planet appeared in his mind.

God brought magic power into this world.

From that day on, this world had taken a completely different path from the others.

"Let's answer your first question." He cleared his throat and jolted Camilla from her daze. "The island that Joan was at should be the Bottomless Land and the black hole should be the passageway for a race upgrade. When God combined everything, the path to heaven appeared, but it doesn't mean that the path leads to true absolution or win God's smile. But we need to go there—the Bottomless Land is the place closest to God's Domain, or it is only there can we find a way to absolve ourselves from the Battle of Divine Will."

Camilla Dary's eyes widened, as though she wanted to blurt out, "where did you infer all of these from," but managed to hold herself back.

"As for the continent floating in the sky, I reckon that it is most likely the Sky-sea Realm that the Demons speak of." Roland turned and picked up a pen container, then placed it to the west of the Land of Dawn. "For some reason, the Shadow Islands form a distorted passageway that connects to the Sky-sea Realm; that is why Joan found herself teleporting to the other end of the sea from the Shadow Islands. But in fact, it isn't just her, the connection between the two seas are stable and every once in a while, a great

amount of seawater will be injected into the Sky-sea Realm, then fall back into our world once more, forming the hundred-thousand-foot tall waterfalls that Joan saw.”

Camilla asked in surprise, “Could the reason for the scene Thunder witnessed, where seawater crossed the Seeline, be that water always flows downhill?”

“I am most afraid so.” Roland nodded his head. “The seawater need not have a backflow, because the altitudes of both sides are actually connected. Like the rise and fall of tides is unrelated to the world itself, it merely depends on the frequency and times the passageway opens.”

“You mean to say, there are multiple instances and it isn’t solely happening to the sea around the Shadow Islands?”

“To form a whirlpool at that scale in the ocean, just one passageway is definitely insufficient. As for whether that place has remnants of ancient civilization, we will never know.” Roland felt the jigsaw puzzle in his head fitting perfectly. “As for the stone tower ruins she saw on Shadow Island, I think it should belong to the Sky-sea Realm.”

“What about the door seen in the telescope, what is that about?” Nightingale interrupted.

“Maybe only the creator will know.” Roland shook his head. “But we can make a brazen guess; maybe it is a tower meant for observation. After all, the ruins have been submerged in water for a long period of time, and it is honestly not a good place for observation. So could it be possible that the terrain of the waters around Shadow Island a long time ago wasn’t as low as it is today, or perhaps, the Sky-sea Realm was never that high before? Everything changed in the Battle of Divine Will, the observer and the observed no longer existed and only the magic power sustaining the telescope continues to point towards its initial target and hasn’t changed till today.”

“No offense, but this just too absurd!” Camilla took a deep breath. “Changes in altitude of two continents? Do you know how large of an influence that is to the entire sea?”

“Large enough to kill all land creatures.” Roland recalled the waves taller than mountains. “Maybe that was God’s original intention... Of course, everything is just my conjecture. We can’t treat it as the truth.” He suppressed his distracted thoughts and changed the topic. “One more thing, Joan saw countless of sea monsters launching an attack at the black continent to the northeast of the Land of Dawn. Combining it with all the reports we have now, I guess that should be the demons’ territory.”

He walked over to the map and used a pencil to write down the name mentioned by Valkries.

*Blackstone Region*

## **Chapter 1372: Torturer**

“Is this... how the world looks like?” Camilla suddenly seemed to realize something.

“That’s right, if we roll the floor up, it will be a world map.” Roland placed the pencil down and said looking down at this toes, his mind wandering off. Who knew if it was a coincidence or not, but in history, Christopher Columbus traveled from the Spanish Port of Palos for 70 days and nights and arrived

at the land now called America, thereby rewriting the way we view the world. Joan traveled in a similar fashion, and was the first to discover the general appearance of the world.

Although the two had completely different intentions, their method of discovery were exactly the same—history might not remember Joan’s name, but the Exploration Group had turned into a reality because of her ‘trip around the world’.

But that was whole point of being an explorer.

To Roland, the most important point was undoubtedly to pinpoint the exact location of the Bottomless Land and Sky-sea Realm.

Especially the former.

Joan’s discovery gave him the confirmation that the actualization of the Realm of Mind was not as far out as he had imagined, and it was evidently good news. At the very least, they had a clear parameter and goal in improving the designs for the bombers and ‘Fire of Heaven.’

Although the Sky-sea Realm which was situated above the sky was beyond their reach, it was fortunate that they were fighting against the demons. Even if they set off towards the east, they had to land at the west bank of the Land of Dawn, which was still a great distance away from the Fertile Plains.

“That leaves one final question.” Nightingale grunted. “Who is the woman Joan encountered on the Shadow Island? There wasn’t any traces of human inhabitants there, and if she is someone sent by God, we don’t really have a reason to help her, right?”

Roland kept silent for a long while. “I’m afraid that this is the most troublesome issue.”

“Why is that?” Camilla did not understand.

“Theoretically, regardless of who wins or loses in the Battle of Divine Will, if the ultimate result is still destruction, then God is our enemy.” He spoke with hesitation, “But if the Guardian isn’t expressing any hostility and has a completely different concept on good and evil from us, then... they have never ever really thought anything of us at all. Such a relationship is like how we will tend to an injured bird.”

The two witches looked at each other simultaneously in shock.

But what came next was a bone chilling intent that shot up from the bottom of their feet.

Both of them knew that if a group of birds stole grains, humans would kill them without hesitation. But no one truly treated birds as enemies, and would even save one or two from the claws of a cat. What came after that was irrelevant to good or evil, but the preference of an individual.

The Battle of Divine Will had gone through multiple cycles and no one knew how many races had walked down the path of destruction. But the continuity of these civilizations would not cause God to hesitate. Even if the lady had saved Joan, it was not an action that represented favoritism towards the humans.

“This... is really scary.” Camilla Dary muttered.

“I hope that my theory is wrong.” Roland sighed. “But since we need to stop the Battle of Divine Will, I am afraid we can’t escape facing God.”

*“This is the price.”*

*“Stop your foolish act. You don’t even know what you’re up against!”*

*“—Everything will be reduced to nothingness, and our endeavor’s work over the past thousands of years will be wasted”*

*“You can’t... bear the heavy guilt brought about by such an... horrific atrocity—”*

The words rang out in his ears once again, as though a movie was being played back.

After paying the price, the Battle of Divine Will still continues today, how can it be so easily stopped?

Regardless of reality or the Dream World, this battle was inevitable.

...

At the Sedimentation Bay in the Kingdom of Wolfheart.

All of that was left of the residential area once occupied by demons were in ruins. But after the gradual reinforcements of weapons and personnel from the First Army and the catching of enemies unprepared, the demons were forced to retreat out of the city within a month.

The Red Mist storage towers in the plaza had been bombarded by the Longsong Cannons into smithereens—their original plan of commanding the humans to transporting Blackstones mined from the north over and have the inferior demons that did not require the Red Mist to build more towers in other cities was an intimidating sight. But before the realization of the plan, the Red Mist storage towers that were in progress were destroyed by the cannons.

Following human’s progressive counterattack, the territory occupied and controlled by the demons decreased at a discernible pace, and signs of restoration were seen. Despite the downfall of the city, the dock became busy once again. Although the demons had destroyed the majority of roads and the pier during their retreat, the engineering team rebuilt up temporary roads within a week.

For those who escaped the Red Mist region through great difficulty, it was undoubtedly good news. But not everyone that escaped south thought that way.

“Damn it, the rumors are true.” Looking at the border sentry posts set up by the roads, Negan Murray said spitefully, “Who knew the demons that were meant to deal with Graycastle are so unreliable.”

“They are both monsters; it just depends on which side is more ruthless.” Talos Murray replied indifferently. Half of his face was hidden under the scarf which barely covered the scars extending across his face like subcutaneous worms. “But since they have lost the support of the nobles, the Wimbledon family will soon lose everything. We don’t have to worry about anything.” At this point, he turned and looked at the crowd lined up before him and spoke with a trace of ferocity, “It is enough as long as we deal with that guy...”

“That’s right.” Negan became excited. “Anyone who relies on that fellow from Graycastle is our enemy. We must make them pay.”

“But we have to endure for now.” Talos grasped Negan’s shoulder. “Wait for first light, then think about hunting.”

Although the demons never acknowledged their own failure, it was a known fact that the number of monsters around Neverwinter had decreased. Compared to the ignorant citizens, the nobles had their means of obtaining information about the front lines. Knowing that the demons from hell were incapable of fighting Graycastle, panic started to spread among the nobles.

Compared to the nobles with large and powerful enterprises, as a Knight, Talos did not have much of a burden. He was unwilling to work for these ugly aliens or rely on Graycastle which he had a grudge with. Knowing that there was no way out if he stayed in Everwinter, he felt that it was more sensible to move to a neutral land not under the control of Graycastle.

Of course, anyone could hunt the refugees anywhere. He had plenty of time for revenge, or rather... pleasure. Unknowingly, he grew fond of dictating everything. Listening to the refugees begging for forgiveness, tossing and rolling, and howling in grief left him addicted with power.

Every time he immersed himself in the warm blood, the dulling pain from the scars on his face seemed to fade a little, as though the scars were responding to sacrificial offerings.

Since it was impossible to revive the clan, why not enjoy this pleasure?

Nothing else mattered more to him.

### **Chapter 1373: Smell of Blood**

“What’s your name? Where are you from?”

“Nolan and this is my elder brother, Buenos. We come from Icebound Town.”

Negan Murray answered the guard’s questions smoothly.

Before arriving at Sedimentation Bay, the two had asked around and learned that it was best to tell the truth to the guards of Graycastle to avoid encountering problems upon arriving south. But they never planned to visit Graycastle.

Once through Cage Mountain, they would arrive in Kingdom of Dawn’s territory with a vast hamlet to take refuge in. Relying on their combat experience, the two had no worries for their future.

Thus compared to nobles, disguising as common folk made them less conspicuous.

They had planned this ahead of time, to join as an imperial guard or patrol member for a feudal lord to provide them with a creditable identity in the day, and freedom to do whatever they wanted in the night. So long as they kept watch at the remote path, they were bound to find more refugees.

—Just like what they did in the Kingdom of Everwinter.

“Ah? That’s rather far from Sedimentation Bay.” The inspector made casual conversation while recording the details. “The news of the demons retreating traveled so quickly? There are only a few northern people like you amongst the refugees.”

Negan was slightly startled; the other party was clearly an ordinary person from his appearance and attire. But all the other ordinary citizens Negan encountered were only aware of their own situation and they were never knowledgeable about other events. But not only did the man from Graycastle know about Icebound Town, he was even able to mention the distance to this unknown place!

“Is... that so? I heard it from a merchant friend as well, maybe soon enough, the people coming to Kingdom of Everwinter will increase?”

But his answer also made Negan glad that he had chosen a town not far from the Kingdom of Wolfheart. If he had chosen Snow Reflection Castle situated at the north of Everwinter, it would have garnered suspicion.

“I hope so too.” The inspector turned to Talos Murray. “Right, can your brother lift his scarf that’s covering his face?”

“He was mauled by a beast before, I don’t think it’s convenient to reveal his face...”

“Apologies, but it is the rules. If there are any distinctive features, I have to write it down.”

Negan frowned.

*Damn it, you’re just a watchdog.*

*My brother was once an officially conferred knight!*

If they were in the wilderness, Negan would have sliced the inspector’s tongue out!

“Alright, it’s nothing much,” Talos replied coldly. “But just for a look.” He lifted the scarf, revealing the distorted half of his face. It might have been too horrific as the inspector could not help but take a step back, while everyone around all gasped in shock. But even so, the man from Graycastle continued to complete the record.

“Then... here are your nameplates.” He handed over two metal plates. “They are your only proof of your new identities, please do not lose them. You guys can go ahead to the detainment area and wait.”

*He’s scared.*

Negan took the nameplate and sneered in his heart.

The elder brother’s expression remained indifferent, but in fact, his killing intent had been stirred. The aura honed from his clashes was not something any common folk could endure. In addition to his hideous face, it increased the intimidation severalfold. For the other party to not fall to the ground on his buttocks was considered commendable.

It was a pity they were not somewhere they could cause trouble. There were armed Graycastle guards around. No matter how strong the two of them were, it was impossible for them to avoid the invisible crossbow arrows.

“Let’s go.” Talos covered his face and nodded.

“Yes.” Negan pushed through the crowd and took the lead to enter the port. Soon after, he stopped in his tracks. “Brother, they plan to load everyone up...”

Talos had also noticed the Graycastle guards' arrangements.

Their original seemingly sound plans involved getting past the checkpoint and finding an opportunity to act freely, but it seemed that the Graycastle guards never had the intention of allowing the refugees of dispersing. The path from the sentry post to the detainment area had brightly-colored strips to guide the way, so long as the refugees followed the strips, they would be led to the dock where they would ascend the docked ships.

Although the strips were not restrictive in any way, there were patrolling guards all around. The guards paced back and forth around their stipulated areas. If the two of them were to leave the colored strips and move away from the crowd, the guards would not ignore their actions.

And the greatest difference from their plans was undoubtedly the city itself.

Sedimentation Bay's core region was in complete ruins. There were hardly any intact buildings, much less inhabitants around. This not only prevented them from mixing with the locals, but also made it difficult for them to cover their tracks.

It was completely different from Everwinter!

Both places were clearly occupied by demons before, but regardless of Snow Reflection Castle or any other cities, all their foundations were preserved well. Who would have anticipated that the south had turned into such a state?

"What do we do now?" Negan could not help but reveal a look of worry. Once they boarded the ship, their fates would be up in the air. If they ended up heading for Graycastle, where could they run to?

Staying in their original spot was obviously not a choice. Any refugee would only hope to leave the land of demons. If they did not move forward, they would still look suspicious and gain the attention of the guards.

"You're just too impetuous, that's why you never received the conferment from His Majesty." Talos sighed. "Walk slowly and don't stop. The dock is big, it is impossible for Graycastle personnel to cover the area flawlessly. Look at their numbers and you'll know, there are less than a hundred of them. As long as we watch them carefully, we will definitely find an opportunity to leave."

After hearing his elder brother's words, Negan gradually calmed down.

Talos Murray was usually an extremely cold and cool-headed person no matter how crazy he was when killing someone or basking in pleasure after a victory. Negan believed that so long as he listened to his brother, there were no impossible obstacles.

Half a minute later, Negan discovered an opportunity.

"Brother, look there!" he exclaimed softly.

"... Inconceivable." Talos nodded his head after observing for a moment. "I have to admit that Graycastle is truly a notch above the rest when it comes to unorthodox practices, they can even do that to horse carriages."



At a corner of the dock were 10 four-wheeled vehicles with enormous dimensions that not even ordinary carriages meant to carry goods could compare with. All the food and supplies appeared to be supplied by these carriages, with many porters shuttling between the vehicles and the dock, transporting bags and bags of supplies up the ships.

The number of people there made it relatively chaotic and it was relatively close to the detainment area. It was not difficult for them to move towards the vehicles.

The only thing was, moving to the vehicles did not imply that they had escaped the restricted area controlled by Graycastle—Unless they could dodge the firearms, they would definitely be overtaken and captured by the patrolling guards.

The only way was to steal a carriage and escape.

Although the four-wheeled carriages were large, they were still manually operated and were different from horse carts. The coachman's position seemed to be inside the carriage. In other words, as long as they found an opportunity to hijack the driver, they could guarantee that they would not be discovered.

Negan and Talos looked at each other and confirmed their unanimous idea.

The plan was to make use of the size of the vehicles to cover their tracks, find a carriage which was preparing for departure, and slit the throat of the driver. Everything after that would fall into place naturally.

The two of them immediately took action.

The entire process was more of a daunting experience than having the fear of danger.

Although many porters noticed their movements, the only response from the porters was to remind the brothers the direction of the ship and not question them. The two acted as though they were attracted to the appearance of the large carriages and easily fooled the crowd. After all, everyone was busy transporting supplies and no one was willing to make a fuss.

Once they entered a blindspot, Negan and Talos quickly bent down and ran to the closest vehicle which looked loaded from the outside.

It looked as though their plan to escape was just a step away.

Right at that moment, a question suddenly came out from behind them.

"Who are you guys?"

The hairs on Negan's body immediately stood up.

He immediately turned his head to come face to face with a cloaked girl that had appeared behind them without them realizing it.

The girl cocked her head, the shroud of the cloak covering half of her face.

He reached his hand out to his waist but was secretly stopped by Talos. "Apologies... we are refugees from Icebound Town. We initially thought to look at these shocking creations and didn't think that we would end up here."

“Is that so, refugees...” The girl laughed, showing no intention to leave. “But, why is there such a rich smell of blood on the both of you?”

#### **Chapter 1374: Worthiness of the Strong**

“What did you say?” Negan said, frustrated. “Smell of blood? Do you think you are a dog?”

*What is this person babbling about? He doesn't seem sane in any way. His tone has a hint of provocation and ridicule. No typical person would ever say such things to a stranger that they are meeting for the first time.*

If it was any other day, he would have had the interest to entertain her, but at that moment, their escape from Sedimentation Bay was of utmost priority, and the best way to deal with a fool was to silence her.

Negan increased the strength in his grip and conveyed his thoughts to his older brother.

The latter did not loosen up. “I think... you are mistaken. We are at the docks, killing fishes and drying them isn't a rare occurrence.”

“The difference between the smell of human blood and the smell of fish is like comparing heaven to earth.” The girl remained nonchalant. “If it was just a single smell, you could have explained it away with a wound, but the smell of blood on your bodies is a mixture and difficult to miss. Some of them are old, probably separated by several months, while some are relatively new, afflicted maybe two to three days ago—they are currently emanating out from beneath your clothes without end.”

*Beneath our clothes?*

Negan was startled.

To majority of knights, a portable and sturdy armor was definitely the most precious asset they could have. If meticulously taken care off, the armor could last for a few generations, and that was what the Murrays took pride in. They had given up on their land in Everwinter, but they had never abandoned their armors and weapons.

The two had donned large coats and robes to hide their armor, which was nothing strange during winter. It was only when they killed others for pleasure would they remove the coats and robes— Besides gaining more mobility and flexibility, the action of removing their outer clothes removed any worries of staining their clothes. As for the armor, they only had to wipe clean the metallic surface to restore its bright and clean state, at the same time maintaining the armor with grease.

But this was information no one knew, how did she come to know about it?

Could it be... that she had really relied on her nose to detect the blood?

Unease immediately surged in Negan's heart.

Right at this moment, the force that held down his hand suddenly loosened.

All he saw was a blur as Talos appeared in front of the girl with a charge. His elder brother did not even draw his weapon out. To a trained veteran, fists and joints were sufficient to doom an enemy.

Talos movements could be considered as fast as lightning, only taking a blink to move and unleash his hand. Negan felt that even he would have difficulty reacting against his brother.

In terms of techniques and capabilities, his elder brother was definitely Everwinter's top knight.

Whether or not the other party was an idiot, a lunatic, or an ordinary person with an extraordinary sense of smell, she was already a dead person.

However, the sound of her neck breaking did not sound. Instead, Negan heard two crisp, cracking sounds.

The lady lifted her elbow and deflected the metallic hand which was aimed for her neck, then intercepted Talos' left jab with a single palm—

Negan's eyes almost popped out of his eye sockets!

How is that possible?

Ignoring fighting techniques, just based on the disparity of strength between a male and a female was enough to determine everything. But, it was his first time witnessing his elder brother being intercepted by someone with a single hand!

In that instant, the two exchanged multiple moves, yet Talos was unable to land any fatal strikes on her. After separating, he finally tore off his robes and drew a dagger.

"Brother, together!"

The low growl had a hint of anxiousness.

Negan immediately realized that his elder brother had used the judgment as a Knight and realized that the other party was not someone who could be taken down alone.

"Who are you exactly?" he clenched his teeth and drew out a knife and stooped beside Talos.

"Who I am isn't important. More importantly, the two of you aren't ordinary refugees—So the two of you have to have to explain the reason for lying." The lady spread out her hands, as though indicating she was fine empty-handed. "If you surrender now, maybe you'll suffer less. But murder is a serious crime. According to Graycastle law, once it is confirmed that the blood on your hands comes from innocent people, you will be condemned to death regardless of whatever reasons you give."

*Has she gone... crazy!?*

She looked as though she was advising them, but her words and actions were obviously forcing them to a corner—who in the right mind will ever mention death as the outcome so sincerely at the onset? Anyone who was informed that they were bound to die would definitely not sit idle to be captured. In other words, she was obviously forcing them to take action!

Saying anything more was pointless!

When Talos moved forward and stabbed out with his dagger, Negan followed right on his heels. He came from the side, reducing the girl's ability to dodge and also preventing her from turning and running away.

But the other party showed no intention of escaping.

Aside from that, she did not even attempt screaming for help, but engaged them in combat.

It was only after experiencing her abilities did Negan realize how terrifying she was.

All her attacks were filled with vigorous strength which he had to withstand with all his strength. Even her seemingly light and easy attacks required Negan to hold onto his dagger handle firmly, otherwise the impacts could have easily disarmed him.

It was simply unimaginable how the other person's build could conceal so much strength.

"Stop holding back, she isn't a threat to us!"

Talos' growl jolted Negan back to his senses. That's right, they were equipped with armor, but she was unarmed. There was no need to fight according to conventions. Even if they suffered a punch or two, it was nothing. A battle of attrition was only beneficial to them!

He threw his dagger at the girl, then nimbly extended his arms out as he pounced straight towards her—

This was undoubtedly a suicidal move in a normal battle situation. But the girl was relying on her fists and legs, what could she do?

In what followed, Negan felt an acute pain erupt from his face.

He felt as though his nose had sunken into his skull as his vision instantly blurred with the taste of rust filling up his entire throat.

*What the hell, this hurts...*

*But you're finished!*

He clenched his teeth and endured the pain as he exhausted all the energy in his body to fold his arms. The distance was perfect for daggers or short swords. Being restricted in such a hug was undoubtedly the end! And if she wanted to dodge his hug, she had to break her defensive stance and bound to reveal flaws! Negan believed that his brother would definitely grasp the opportunity!

Sure enough, due to her excessive movements to avoid him, the lady's entire body stooped down and became helpless in stopping Talos's intrusion.

Talos took a step forward and raised his sword. A gray light slashed in an inclined angle towards the girl's head, but the latter raised her head upwards like a snake's tongue.

Even before having the time to exhale, the girl that had stooped down did not scream in pain as anticipated, or fall face first to the ground. Instead, she borrowed the momentum of her actions and kicked twice, sending him and Talos flying!

But what Negan felt was not a kick, but a battering ram slamming into him! A loud bang occurred as he slammed right into the four-wheeled carriage behind him. His armor was unable to offset the impact from both sides, causing the power to transmit into his body and forced him to cough blood.

Upon falling to the ground, the girl stood up firmly once again, the hood removed from her head and revealing her smooth hair... and a pair of furry ears, but the wounds he had expected were absent.

Negan's heart fell to rock bottom.

The strike that he thought landed was a misconception from touching the rim of her hood. The only thing his brother slashed open was the girl's hood!

*And those unusual ears...*

"Ahem... you ugly... monster!" Talos had a hand on his chest as he stood up slowly. "I have a God's Stone of Retaliation, but how are you... unaffected!"

"That's because I haven't used my abilities." The girl touched her hood wistfully. "As for you calling me ugly, it's just your poor appreciation for beauty. No one in Neverwinter will agree with you, I have even received praises from the chief before."

"Really—a load of rubbish!" Negan coughed blood out and spoke, "My brother is a Knight conferred by the Queen of Everwinter, even the Knights from King's City Knightage can't beat him! Do you think you can defeat my brother if not for you relying on your demonic power? Stop dreaming!"

"Is that so? Maybe you haven't realized it yet... the changes in your body." The girl closed her eyes. "May I ask, is the blood on your body from opponents with strength comparable to yours?"

"What... is your point?"

"It's not? Although the two of you are fierce in your techniques, you lack the drive and the determination in surviving a life and death battle." She spoke slowly, "I have seen so many like you. Upon gaining some success, you become unwilling to move forward and only dare to turn back to bully and humiliate the weak to preserve your own position. With the passage of time, this mentality will have soaked deep into your bones and become muscle memory—No matter how many of such victories you have, they will never make you stronger."

"Compared to the opponents I have faced, there are Transcendents wielding power that leads you to despair and Ancient Witches extremely proficient in their respective skills. That is the difference. Maybe the two of you used to have your unique strengths, but now..." She paused, "You're no longer worthy to be amongst the strong."

### **Chapter 1375: One Strike**

We... are the weaklings?

When this thought surfaced, Negan was completely stunned in place. He subconsciously regarded her words as rubbish, but it had in fact, ruthlessly reminded him that even when armed and holding the advantage in terms of numbers, they were unable to defeat her.

They hated Roland Wimbledon, hated the people of Graycastle people, and hated hot weapons even more. It was precisely because of such unreasonable things that allowed even the most common of folks to be able to threaten knights that had trained arduously for decades. All of the common folks should have been crawling at their feet and relying on their protection. That was the convention of the world, the order recognized by society!

If not for the existence of hot weapons, he and his brother would still be invincible warriors before others!

But not only did the girl before them fight them without hot weapons, she did not even use cold weapons—something which they were most confident in, but had lost to. When the inconceivable fact and shaken faith struck together, it left their minds momentarily adrift.

“As expected from a witch, proficient in misleading the public with your lies... relying on strength to win? Don’t make me laugh!” Talos gasped for air twice. “You’ve merely used some sort of unclean power and contaminated my God’s Stone... Cough cough, if the Church of Hermes was still around, would you even dare reveal yourself? Aside from the damned Graycastle King who has destroyed tradition, you witches are the next who belong in Hell!”

“Nonsense!” A masculine voice suddenly interrupted from the front of the carriage. “I’m a member of the Church and ferried dozens of Witches. Not only did they show themselves, but they even praised my driving! Even the past and current leaders of the Church are Witches, and you’re talking to me about tradition? They are the bloody tradition!”

Negan and Talos could not help but looked at each other—

That was clearly the coachman talking!

*There is always a way out.*

*Kidnap the coachman and leave the place first, before coming back in the future to take revenge!*

*As long as one of us somewhat stalls the wolf girl.*

Comparing their strengths, this matter was naturally best left to the stronger elder brother—

But before Negan could speak, Talos suddenly grabbed him, and threw him towards the wolf girl with a roar!

“Broth—” He watched in disbelief as his elder brother turned and ran towards the vehicle, leaving behind his back view that quickly pulled away.

The girl slapped him to the ground ruthlessly, then added a kick as heavy as a battering ram to his head and caused his eyes to black out as he quickly lost consciousness. Just before his stunned and despairing thoughts were cut short abruptly, he faintly heard a mutter from above.

“The person there isn’t someone you guys can handle either...”

Talos quickly covered the distance of over ten steps. Right as he was about to charge into the carriage, a human figure suddenly walked out from behind.

The figure belonged to another girl dressed in a dark gray uniform and was none other than the dressing which Negan and Talos previously observed as the dressing for the coachmen.

It turned out that each large carriage had two coachmen.

*Could this person be a Witch as well?*

Since they were only ordinary people, it made no difference between one or two persons—Or in other words, having one of them to drive the vehicle was sufficient! Compared to the male who shouted, obviously the girl was easier to control.

Talos intended to capture the girl before stabbing the brazen man who dared to refute him to death. He did not even think anything of the steel rod in the female driver's hands.

He pulled off his scarf and roared at his enemy, sprinting while raising the dagger in hand to intimidate the girl and threaten her to submit with the blade at her neck.

But her calm expression surprised Talos. Not a single trace of uncertainty surfaced, as though ignoring his ferocious appearance.

But what shocked him further came next.

The female driver tilted her body slightly as she held the steel rod vertically with both hands. It was clearly the stance for slashing downwards!

*Is she... proficient with sword techniques?*

The moment this thought surfaced, the other party was already in motion with the steel rod swinging down at him—

*Damn it!*

Her huge and open gestures looked as though she was gambling with her life. In the eyes of laymen, it was no different from courting death, but to Talos, her strike contained an oppressive power that could not be stopped. It felt as though the upper end of the steel rod had enlarged by dozens times and completely blocked off every path he could take!

Everything happened too quickly.

Talos was already in the middle of a sprint and could not stop. If he maintained his stance, his dagger might be able to reach her throat, but the steel rod would definitely split his head into two!

It was simply incredulous!

Talos discovered that his body had subconsciously reacted and quickly rotated the blade, raising both hands horizontally across his head in anticipation of the blow that was about to arrive.

“Break!”

The girl's steel rod smashed down firmly onto the middle of the blade.

The immense force surpassed the short and curved blade's limits and forcefully shattered it!

The momentum of the rod was not reduced as it continued to slam down through the sparks and metallic fragments, straight at his face.

*How is this possible...*

Talos only felt a huge boom echoing in his ears. Without even uttering a sound, he fell rigidly onto the floor as his entire body twitched incessantly.

But it was the automatic muscle reflexes of his body, and he had already lost consciousness.

"It's settled?" Joe looked out of the car window.

"Yes, if he had decided to continue with his stab, maybe we would have fought longer." Farrina flung the blood on her hands away. "Once he gets cold feet, one strike is more than enough. Of course, your lure was equally important. Well done."

Joe let out a mischievous laughter. "Don't forget that I was once a noble, one known to be proficient in the art of cursing others—I can assure you that there will not be a single repeat in a hundred sentences."

Farrina raised her head and looked at the person she needed. "He is clearly a noble, yet the two of you are completely different... sometimes I get caught up in the confusion, why are there so much differences between humans. Was that the intention of the Creator?"

"You are... different as well." Joe's line of sight moved away slightly, but he quickly looked back at her. "That is why I'm so attracted to you."

"Joe..."

"Farrina..."

"Ahem, Sorry." Lorgar interrupted their intimate moment. "Is he dead?"

The wolf girl carried the fainted attacker with one hand and walked to the side of the vehicle before throwing him onto the other body.

"Ummm... I think he is still breathing," Farrina replied, "How did you know we were already here?"

Lorgar nodded her head. "I heard your footsteps. As expected of the captain of the Judgment Army, to be able to notice the commotion and intercept the enemy so quickly."

"They already lost their willpower after exchanging blows with you, I merely took advantage of it." Farrina chuckled. "What you said just now was indeed true, if there is an opportunity in the future, may I spar with you?"

Lorgar's ears pricked up. "Of course we can; I can't wish for any better."

"It's not too late to continue this conversation in the future." Joe sighed. "The problem now... What should we do with the two of them?"



“Hand them over to the First Army and let them interrogate them first. Since they are equipped with armor, they are obviously not ordinary refugees.” Lorgar replied matter-of-factly. “As for what to do with them, just let them decide.”

### **Chapter 1376: Witnessing a Miracle**

Everwinter, King’s City.

“My lord... Lord Marwayne...” Someone nudged his arm.

Annoyed, Marwayne opened his eyes. He took some time before he regained his blurred vision’s focus, and the familiar butler’s face appeared before him.

“Why is it you again.” Marwayne hiccupped and expended a great deal of strength to stand up, accidentally knocking over the wine bottles on the short table, one of which fell to the ground and shattered loudly.

The sound jolted him awake.

What came next was a splitting hangover.

Marwayne was up the entire night till the wee hours of four to five in the morning impressing ladies into drinking with him until he knocked out on the couch. Marwayne squinted his eyes and looked upon the soft couch by the side. There were all sorts of beverages and other fluids sprinkled all over the couch, while the fireplace that had lasted through the entire night produced an unpleasant smell. The ladies from the night before had long disappeared, obviously lacking when it came to their ability to serve.

*Hell, how did I end up sleeping here last night?*

“Burn it.” Marwayne wiped away the drool on his face and moved into a more comfortable position, alleviating his headache. “So, my distinguished Butler, what bad news do you have for me today Which knight fled or did men from Graycastle enter Everwinter?”

“I do not dare, my Lord.” The butler immediately bowed his back lower. The initiative to attack the Graycastle teams was his idea, and he did not want to have the lord target redirected at him. “The men from Graycastle are still fighting the demons at the Kingdom of Wolfheart. They will not be able to enter Everwinter in the short term, please do not worry about it—”

“Heh, doesn’t that just mean it’s a matter of time?” Marwayne interrupted him, his alcohol breath assailing his own nose. “There hasn’t been any reinforcements to the demon forces all this while. Even that so-called Sky Lord has disappeared without a trace. Anyone can clearly see that the situation has changed, so what’s the use in consoling me?”

“No, my Lord—”

“Listen!” Marwayne growled. “I know what you want to say: pull yourself together, don’t give up—You saw it for yourself, despite us holding the same weapons, our people were still utterly defeated by Graycastle. What does that say? It means that the disparity isn’t with the lords, but the lowest rung

troops, and their people! They dared to confront firearms head-on, but what about us? We only dared to cover our heads and sneak away like rats!

“How many people are there left in King’s City? Viscount Narnos? No, his territory should now earn him the title of a Count. Duke Remy? Half of his family are in Everwinter, he can’t leave even if he wants to. And the other families... Indeed, they are still considered nobles, but do they not want to leave! No!”

At this point, his tone suddenly reached a crescendo.

“They can’t leave! They are unwilling to abandon their family property amassed through generations and start from nothing! So long as there is a way, they will not resign to their fates! But this will not happen for the knights I’ve recruited. The deed has no binding clauses, they can simply take their deeds and leave and come back after the war. So the only thing I can do is keep my doors closed and urge them to stay by inviting them over!

“This isn’t about living in self-abandonment, much less about escaping, understand?” Marwayne picked up a bottle of wine in passing and poured some into his mouth. “Once I honor the promise, they will immediately disappear! Since our subordinates and people cannot compete with Graycastle, then we can only rely on the demons. As long as they can defeat Roland Wimbleton, the people will once again settle down. When that moment comes, I will supply the deeds again. At that time, the knights will become my biggest help!”

“My Lord... I know that, but I need to inform you, the Sky—”

“Shut up, you know nothing!” Marwayne’s voice went into a slight vibrato. “You think of me as weak, incapable, a drunkard that relishes in alcohol everyday. But the truth is not so, my plans have no flaws, the flaw lies in the demons who were defeated! If they can’t even defeat Graycastle, what can I do by myself? It doesn’t matter that the others leave, but even Fueler, someone I regarded so highly, has left, so what if I become the King of Everwinter? Why not drink more fine wine... After all, there won’t be a chance in the future.

“So from now on, you need not report to me any bad news. It’s sufficient that you know about them. Prepare more fine wine for me tonight, I remember that there are more stored in the underground storehouse beneath King’s City, right? Now... Get out.”

Marwayne buried his face in his hands and laid back down on the soft couch.

“My Lord, what I wanted to say was, his Excellency Sky Lord is currently waiting in the castle’s parlor. He has a new decree for you.” The butler finally found the opportunity to speak and quickly let everything out.

“Wh—what did you say?” Marwayne sat up. “The Sky Lord is here? Why didn’t you say so earlier? Quick, prepare a basin of hot water for me. I will wash up and head over now!”

“There’s no need.” A low voice suddenly came out from the door’s entrance. The two were startled and turned their heads, only to see a tall and blue skinned figure push the doors open and walk in.

It was Hackzord.

He took a look at the mess of empty alcohol bottles everywhere and revealed an unconcealed look of disdain. "And I thought you were being held back by something important. Looks like I've wronged you. Why, do you think that the outcome of this battle has already been determined?"

*Damn it, he heard my rants!* Marwayne immediately knelt on one knee and even thought of giving himself a slap. "No, Your Excellency, I was just—"

"In consideration of your knowledge and experience, I can pardon you this time. But there will not be a second time; otherwise, I will definitely cut your tongue out." Hackzord spoke coldly, "Our enemies did perform past our expectations in the early stages, but that was only then. In fact, their good days have come to an end, not only for the Kingdom of Wolfheart, Kingdom of Dawn or Graycastle. They will all be devoured by the flames of war; that is the fate of resisting us."

"Your Excellency Sky Lord, can I ask... is that true?" Marwayne was skeptical. He had long assumed Everwinter was finished, and was planning to beg a Demon Grand Lord for shelter. But from his words, the outcome of the battle was not too bad, at least not to the point of being irredeemable. Before, the demons thought that Graycastle would not last a single attack as well, so Marwayne did not entirely believe in Hackzord's words.

Hackzord sneered. "Your doubt is pardonable, but when you witness the power of my race, I believe that you will trust the weight of my words." With that said, he extended his hands and opened a bizarre purple light 'door.' "Follow me."

Marwayne gulped, bit the bullet, and entered the portal.

On the other side was yet another hall, and to Marwayne's surprise, he saw many familiar faces. For instance, Narnos and Remy.

Sky Lord had obviously gathered most of the Everwinter nobles.

Before any questions were raised, the demon Grand Lord opened yet another portal.

His intentions were clearly self-evident.

Everyone looked at each other, before forming a long line in front of the portal.

The journey took an entire day.

Marwayne could not remember the number of portals he entered; the scenery around him would occasionally be a cave, or sometimes a mountain ridge. The further they went, the more unease he felt. Although he knew that it only required a thought from the demon to kill him, the forceful transportation to an unknown location made him feel even more afraid.

When nightfall came, the nobles finally arrived at the final location.

The last portal behind them slowly disappeared. That was when Marwayne Parker opened his eyes abruptly!

"This is..."

He saw a miracle!

That's right, even if he used up all the words he could possibly think of, he was unable to accurately describe everything he saw. Aside from calling it a miracle, he could not think of anything else!

The other nobles were not any better. All of them had their mouths wide open, speechless. None of them could even finish a complete sentence.

"Now, you have all witnessed it." Hackzord spoke up indifferently.

### **Chapter 1377: The Converging Crisis**

What the Grand Lord had said was no empty talk; the scene before them was something no human could ever hope to strive for.

Marwayne was completely unable to imagine how Graycastle would deal with the miracle before them. Other than raising their heads to look up, the only other thing they could possibly do was to pray.

*The demons are bound to win this war.*

He no longer had any doubts.

All his frustration and fear from before were swept clean and replaced with an indescribable excitement. Since the demons could win the war, his payback would no longer be imaginary. This contrast could not be in any way compared to a drowning person gaining a new lease of life but a person at the end of the road being welcomed back to the peak!

As for the Knights that had escaped, they were bound to feel remorse for the rest of their lives—No, not only that, they no longer had the right to live to ripe old ages. Marwayne swore that the very first thing he did as King of Everwinter was to take care of the traitors!

Marwayne knelt down emotionally and lowered his head towards Hackzord. "Yes, we have seen it."

The other nobles replicated his actions.

"This is the Deity of Gods that belongs to my race, and also the most direct form of displaying true power," Skylord said with his hands to his back. "Bringing all of you here was not just to dispel your doubts because I have a mission for all of you to complete."

"We await your instructions!" everyone immediately replied.

"It will still take some time for the Deity of Gods to arrive at the Impassable Mountain Range, but the territories that you are all in charge of have signs of losing control. Every single one of the deserters have the possibility of becoming enemies and I do not want the situation to worsen as it is." He swept his gaze across everyone. "From now on, all of you will organize manpower and evacuate everyone here. At the same time, I will mark out a region here in the Deity of Gods for all of you to reside in, until the Battle of Divine Will is over."

"You... want to let the scums ascend to the the miracle?" Narnos asked in surprise.

"Whose fault do you think this is?" Hackzord glanced at him coldly.

The latter immediately closed his mouth.

“It will not take long for the news of the Knights escaping to spread to the lower class. That is when Everwinter’s social order will completely crumble. Rather than allowing Graycastle to take advantage of them, it’s better to control them before the snowball effect comes into play. If any of them challenges you, use a blade or sword to shut them up. That shouldn’t be difficult for you.”

“Of course, of course.” Marwayne was the first to take a stand. “I will do it now.”

The other nobles agreed in succession.

“Be at ease, your territories will not be abandoned, because the battle will not last long.” Hackzord seemed to have noticed their worries. “Aside from that, joining the Deity of Gods implies that you have participated in the war. This will increase your contribution to the war and when the time comes to distribute the human realm, obviously we will not overlook this. Understood?”

Happiness immediately filled the hearts of the nobles. The failure of their sneak attack on the small Graycastle team had undoubtedly failed to satisfy the Grand Lord, but the opportunity to make amends had appeared once more, with the possibility of improving their positions. This immediately stirred up their emotions.

“Yes, of course! We will do our best!”

Hackzord opened a new portal. “It’s good that you understand. I only have two requests, evacuate as quickly as you can, and do not reveal the existence of the Deity of Gods. Now, start moving.”

...

After sending the nobles back, he walked deep into the great rupture.

Hackzord endured great pressure from the majority for allowing the “lowlives” to interact with the Deity of Gods. Not all the Grand Lords were on the same page, and Mask felt that it was blasphemous, but Hackzord managed to pull it off with his status as the Commander of the Western Front.

Skylord gradually realized that the Graycastle warriors were nothing special. They might have been farmers or hunters, but after a few months of training, they joined the army as new recruits with firearms capable of killing their trained counterparts.

In other words, the efficiency of their enemy’s build up soldiers had far surpassed any kind that the Demons had ever faced. Even Mask’s prideful Symbiotic Demons were unable to reach that level of efficiency. It was the reason why Graycastle was raking in people from both Everwinter and Kingdom of Wolfheart frenetically, not because they were a burden or for a long-term plan, but because they were provided practical short-term benefits!

Once order in any noble’s territory collapsed, it meant gifting the enemy a large quantity of soldiers. It was what Hackzord was trying to prevent.

At the same time, their work efficiency was nowhere inferior to the Demons. Hackzord considered killing them as a waste, and decided to move them to the Deity of Gods to serve the Demons. Therefore, this plan could be considered the most rational choice based on the present circumstances.

Of course, the others did not approve of it, but Hackzord couldn't care less.

The Deity of Gods or any so-called holy land were not as important as winning. Hackzord was already betting everything on the Western Front; not only did he promise the King, he had even applied for the Deity of Gods. This just added to the discourse and blame he was already receiving.

Compared to the pressure from his superiors, Sky City caused an even bigger problem for Hackzord.

He walked down the steps of Birth Tower to the lowest level, where another dark figure now laid within the thick and dense Red Mist Pond. The figure sat opposite Nightmare, motionless with both hands holding onto its palms like a statue.

"You haven't given up?" Hackzord frowned in annoyance. "If there were any clues about her in the Realm of Mind, I would have done so a long time ago."

He did not know what kind of bad luck he had received to have every single one of his peers so unreliable.

This person was Silent Disaster, who was sent to the Western Front as reinforcement.

Just like its name, the Silent Disaster was wrapped up tightly in its armor, rarely revealing its true face and hardly ever spoke. No one truly knew what was on its mind. But Silent Disaster was different from the Mask and the other Grand lords; its individual strength was known amongst the Grand Lords, and even Sky Lord himself did not dare criticize it much.

If it was any other person, Sky Lord would have cursed a long time ago.

After all, Sky Lord had waited quite a while for the arrival of the reinforcements, but upon arriving in Sky City, the first thing Silent Disaster did was to run straight to the Red Mist Pond to accompany the Nightmare Lord's body instead of clarifying the situation.

Everyone knew that getting lost in the Realm of Mind indicated a high probability of never returning. One could use the vast ocean, the sun and stars as indicators, but the Realm of Mind had nothing—it was always in chaos with storm-like undercurrents, making the preservation of oneself a challenge. Additionally, one's consciousness would experience continuous erosion.

The Nightmare Lord had been gone for a few months. Even if it did come back, it might not be the 'it' from before.

"It must have discovered some leads and decided to take the risk," Silent Disaster commented, "Since it is related to Valkries, I had to verify it personally."

Silent Disaster obviously did not trust Hackzord, leaving him to massage his forehead helplessly. Although the Nightmare Lord was a unique existence to the other Grand Lords, it was even more special for a few others—Silent Disaster being one of them. Hackzord remembered that Silent Disaster's upgrade ceremony was presided by the Nightmare Lord.

"And you've confirmed it?"

"Almost, but my conclusion is different from yours." Silent Disaster spoke concisely. "I believe that Nightmare Lord isn't completely lost, and is merely trapped somewhere in the Realm of Mind."

“Reason?”

“Intuition.”

*Heh, intuition.* Hackzord silently lampooned, if there was something more unreliable than the Mask’s promise, that would be the Silent Disaster’s intuition. “How does your conclusion bring any help? You’re unable to track down Nightmare Lord and unable to wake it up. In the end, nothing’s changed. Rather than spending more time here, why not think of ways to deal with the humans.”

That male human.” Silent Disaster looked at Hackzord.

“What?”

“I will help you destroy the humans; that is the goal of me being here.” It suddenly stood up from the Red Mist Pond, its helmet flickering with a dangerous red light. “But the male human that appeared in the Legacy Hall must be left to me. I think that the Nightmare Lord’s whereabouts is linked to him.”

### **Chapter 1378: Rewards and Punishments**

Five days later, Farrina and Joe received information from the First Army’s liaison en route.

The Army’s commander-in-chief, Iron Axe, had requested to meet them.

After going all the way to Cage Mountain, they walked into a conference room and discovered there was more than one person inside. The epaulets on their shoulders revealed that they were all high-ranking officials of the First Army.

Joe swallowed his saliva in nervousness.

Farrina remained calm and gave a military salute. “First Transport team, second vehicle convoy member, Farrina, is here to report.”

Iron Axe and the others smiled and returned the salute. None of them had any airs.

This surprised her slightly.

The Hermes Church’s style instilled in her the habit of ignoring the hierarchy disparity, causing her to always handle affairs bluntly. She never expected for the high officials of Graycastle army to do the same, to the point of surpassing the Hermes Church.

The reason for her calmness was her clear conscience, but that did not indicate that she had forgotten she used to be a ‘scapegoat’ for the Judgment Army—it would be nothing strange if she suffered from a cold shoulder.

But no one showed any contempt. Even the Church had never been so friendly towards their non-parishioners.

“What is the reason... for informing me to be present today?” Farrina’s gaze landed on Iron Axe.

“Do you still remember the Everwinter Knights you captured a few days ago back in Sedimentation Bay?” Iron Axe got right to the point. “We have already confirmed their identities, as well as the crimes they have committed.”

Farrina suddenly realized something. “Are they very important to the First Army?”

“Yes and no.” Iron Axe replied, “They are nothing when it comes to the entire war situation. But to the people that have offered their lives for the war, their imprisonment means that criminals will ultimately not escape from punishment. In a sense, this will comfort those who have sacrificed themselves.”

After that, Farrina listened to a story involving blood.

In the beginning, news of the intruder did not capture the attention of the higher-ups since such occurrences of refugees deceiving their way through the barrier were encountered three to four times a day. They were either unimportant nobles or wealthy merchants; their reasons for escaping were either due to crimes or afraid that their assets would be plundered.

According to Lorgar’s report, the two Everwinter Knights belonged to the former, but due to the mixed and rich smell of blood on them, the interrogators investigated even more meticulously.

After a few psychological games and taking separate statements, the younger brother caved in and revealed everything they had done. A few months prior, the two brothers were ordered by their feudal lord to capture refugees, but since the elder brother had a grudge against Graycastle, he turned the capturing into hunting.

If it had been an ordinary murder case, the treatment would have been the death penalty or mining for life. But the matter of “hunting refugees” was too severe that the person-in-charge kept it in mind. In the end, the case was handed over to the Intelligence agency, where Hill Fawkes was tasked to investigate.

The case had two large blind spots. Firstly, the First Army was unsure who had sent the information and only knew that the deceased worked for Black Money. Secondly, the party’s willingness to kill others. Even if murder was involved, the two might not have admitted it. In other words, even if Nightingale was present, it was impossible for them to link the information to the two through interrogations.

The only breakthrough was the smell of blood as mentioned by Wolf Girl.

It was a pity that Lorgar could only verify the diverse variety in the blood. She was unable to accurately pinpoint the timeline of the blood—In the end, her sense of smell was an added advantage due to her mutation. Although she was not affected by God’s Stones, she wasn’t able to surpass the limits of her physiology.

In the end, the final decision was obtaining assistance from the Witch Union, who sent Vanilla and Broken Sword.

With Broken Sword’s augmentation, Vanilla found the same pheromones on Talos Murray’s armor and on the secret letter. Although it was only a droplet, it was undoubtedly considered concrete evidence.

If the two had never met, how could the bloodstains contain the same pheromones?

Thus, the Murray Brothers were definitely the murderers of the messenger.



“Such people exists amongst the ordinary folks...” After listening to Iron Axe’s explanation, Joe could not help but sigh with sorrow.

“Presently, Everwinter is still occupied by the Demons, so we are unable to spread the news of such heroic matters, but history will never forget people like him.” Iron Axe sighed. “The two of you are the main contributors to capturing the murderers, but you are not established under the military. So aside from seeking the two of you out to inform you of the investigation results to give you closure, I wanted to ask what rewards you would wish to receive.”

“But we didn’t even do much.” Farrina replied directly, “Firstly, it was that Witch who sensed their strange behaviors first. I merely heard the commotion and came in at the end.”

Her words incited a burst of well-meaning laughter.

“Relax, His Majesty Roland will never miss out on contributors.” Iron Axe explained, “The Witch Union and the Army are two separate departments, so Miss Lorgar’s rewards are handled by others. In theory, your rewards should be handed out by the Administrative Office. But since the frontline matters are dealt with the locals, we are here to handle the inquiry.”

“I understand...” Farrina hesitated for a moment. “I was once part of the Church’s Judgment Army and was deceived by the shams and lies of the church. But if it is possible, I hope to obtain the chance to redeem myself.”

“Redeem yourself?”

“Yes.” She took a deep breath. “Joining the First Army is the reward I want.”

The room instantly turned quiet. Everyone’s eyes roamed about, as though communicating their opinions.

After a long moment, Iron Axe spoke up. “The enlistment of the First Army was drawn up by His Majesty, I am unable to agree to your request.”

“Is that so...” Farrina’s clenched her fists before loosening them slightly.

“But,” Iron Axe’s words took a turn. “I can include your contributions and request into the report and hand it over to His Majesty to decide, provided that you are willing and determined to do so.”

Farrina lifted her head, revealing the light in her eyes. “Yes, Please!”

Farrina knew that upon joining the Army, her movements and actions would be restricted, the risks of facing the enemy amplified. But that was the route she thirsted for—The more thorny the road, the more she felt she could redeem the sins of her past.

...

After their departure, the other officials left, leaving Iron Axe and Edith in the room.

The Pearl of the Northern Region who was silent the entire team sighed. “That’s why I have to say, the Hermes Church is truly formidable... Since no judgment was meted out, what crimes or mistakes does

she have? Only the pious believers of the Holy City would rather inherit sufferings in exchange for a peace of mind.”

Iron Axe shrugged his shoulders. He was already aware that Edith was shrewd in seeking personal profits; her occasional concessions were always for greater benefits. If the benefits were mutual, she was a flawless partner. But once there was a conflict of interest, it became extremely difficult to anticipate her thoughts. Farrina’s decision to be selfless and offer her devotion was something that would never appear from Edith.

But he held no dislike towards her.

Compared to those slow-witted, egotistical, or greedy profiteers, she was at least able to define her own goals and not make silly mistakes for the lack of foresight on short term gains.

“Then... what’s your opinion on dealing with the two convicts?” Iron Axe turned back to the main topic. Roland’s reply to him mentioned ‘If the crimes committed by the Everwinter knights are verified, you have full authority to decide.’ According to usual practices, the two knights who had over a hundred of lives on their hands only had one route—to be executed by hanging.

“If we hang them, I don’t think His Majesty would had specially exhorted us about it.” Edith revealed a sneer. “And don’t you think that sending them on their way is simply giving them the easy way out?”

“What do you suggest?”

“Since we can’t publicize this, why not send them as gifts to Black Money. After spending so much on them, I’m sure they will be extremely hospitable to the two of them.”

### **Chapter 1379: Special Goods**

Kingdom of Dawn, Thorn Town.

The deserted little town situated at the foot of Cage Mountain had turned into a bustling and lively location.

Aside from being an “Outpost” and headquarters for Cage Mountain, the other reason was that it housed the Aerial Knights Academy frontline training camp.

To meet the enormous expenses of the Aerial Knights, the project team constructed many wide and reinforced concrete roads that connected the main road from north to south which led all the way to the far north in the Kingdom of Dawn. The large import and export of resources naturally attracted the attention of merchants from the Kingdom of Dawn, and having lost their trade routes to Kingdom of Wolfheart and Everwinter, Graycastle became their largest hope of making money. From supplying services that contracted them for the entire project to supplying beverages, there were all kinds of merchants.

The business opportunities brought along human traffic. In just a year, the scale of the town expanded by a few rings, with inns and taverns only seen in major cities establishing all over the place, scattered around and surrounding the town center.

Tilly experienced this change the most by viewing it from the clouds.

Before winter, it was extremely easy to spot the town's silhouette by looking down from the sky above. The duller color belonged to houses of the original natives that had roof tiles that had suffered decades of weathering, coloring them with the colors of mottled brown and gray. They were few in number and maintained the original appearance of Thorn Town, but in the outer rings, the colors turned extremely vibrant.

There were wooden buildings, stone bungalows, and even cement housing among the newer buildings. After the transfer of the calcining technique to the Kingdom of Dawn, some of the nobles and merchants had already accepted it and began attempting to use these new building materials.

The snow from the Months of Demons had weakened the difference between the new and old districts, but the old districts could still be identified by its disorganized arrangements.

Border Town had probably developed in a similar fashion.

After sending Vanilla and Broken Sword, Tilly returned to her daily education. According to her suggestion, the number of 'Fire of Heaven Mark II' had reached close to 40 units. Together with the 20 odd Mark Is, the Aerial Knights had turned into a force to be reckoned with.

In fact, the reason for the First Army's successful counterattack was inseparably linked to the biplanes' protection. Compared to the machine guns, 'Fire of Heavens' were far bigger threats to the Devilbeasts, and without an effective assault, the Artillery Squad was able to take advantage of their firing range to bombard the demon outposts, and withdraw before the demons were able to surround them. As long as no Senior Demons were present, the enemies were incapable of drawing close to the First Army.

During every mission, dozens of Fire of Heavens would cruise along the runway and take off with shortest interval in between, their engines so loud that people living in the adjacent town were able to hear them. The spectacular sight of the planes in flight was indescribable, where even a collective charge of a group of knights could be completely incomparable. People who witnessed this scene for themselves all found themselves seeing Graycastle in a new light.

This scene also became one of Thorn Town's main attraction, and when they heard about it, many nobles from the Kingdom of Dawn thought of personally experiencing the legends of the Aerial Knights. Gradually, the buildings around the training grounds became packed with people whenever taking off and landing practices were held as they watched the steel birds soaring into the horizon with excitement and zest.

Tilly even heard that the buildings with an expansive view started charging fees.

But the development of the Aerial Knight Academy was not without problems. Aside from the output of Fire of Heavens, the problem in the number of pilots produced slowly became apparent.

After all, not only did the conscription require a certain cultural foundation, candidates required the physique suitable for flight. Only after fulfilling these requirements would they undergo the next grooming step. As to the duration it required for them to join the battlefield, that depended entirely on talent. Over the course of time, Tilly had encountered many students who performed to satisfaction

during practice but became flustered in the air. In the end, these students could only join the logistics team.

If not for the “Fire of Heaven Mark II’ being turned into a single pilot plane from the dual pilot system which temporarily alleviated the problem of a shortage of pilots, the Aerial Knights would have been faced with the awkward predicament of having too many unpiloted planes.

Aside from expanding the channels of recruitment and increasing the number of students, Tilly did not know what else to do.

Fortunately, her elder brother also valued the Aerial Knights highly, and more importantly, he did not reject her suggestions. The issue was soon to take a turn for the better with the next batch of students being sent to Thorn Town.

The concentrated flying practice would mark the end when they descended at midday.

As a Transcendent, Tilly did not require the noon break to recover her energy. After temporarily relieving herself of her instructor role, she frequently chose to fly by herself, to validate the new ideas she came up with during the practical lessons while also enjoying the time in the air.

This time, she noticed peculiarities over at the warehouses.

Be it students or ground service, no one scattered, but instead, they assembled at the warehouses, as though attracted to something.

A guard quickly came over and reported the situation.

“Princess Tilly, it seems that Neverwinter has sent a new batch of goods for your confirmation.”

“New goods?” Tilly frowned, having no recollection of such an arrangement. But due to the great distance between the two, such last-minute adjustments by Neverwinter was not strange.

At the warehouses, the crowd split and opened a path for her. Before Tilly could even see the goods, a familiar voice shouted for her.

“Lady Tilly!”

Molly bounced over and pounced into her open arms.

Tilly ruffled the little girl’s head helplessly and discovered that the Magic Servant was the one responsible for delivering the cargo. Swollen like a big and blue balloon, it carefully ‘swallowed’ the cargo on the truck and moved into the warehouse.

*So this was the reason why everyone stopped in their tracks?*

*No... that’s not it...*

When Tilly’s gaze landed on the huge crate, she suddenly realized that the answer was not that simple.

There were a total of three crates, but the cold metallic surfaces were no different from the ones used to ship the ‘Fire of Heavens,’ just larger and even more slender. In addition, both sides had scarlet red cloud marks like a pair of spread-out wings.

The decorations on the boxes looked to be of no significance, but it was because of that that they were particularly unique.

Tilly's heart immediately skipped a beat.

*"By the way, any specific requirement on the color of the aircraft? Then how about red?"*

Roland's words sounded in her ears.

*"Does it make any difference?"*

*"Normally, the party that dominates the sky is in that color."*

The ground crew had efficiently removed the fastened bolts on the first crate. As the sealed boards were gradually removed, the crowd let out gasps.

An unprecedented airframe appeared before everyone.

### **Chapter 1380: Wings of the Phoenix**

It's entire body was smooth from any angle. The contours looked extremely fluent and curved, and the bright and clean paint on its surface was even able to reflect human reflections.

The pilot cabin looked like a bulging bubble, enveloped by polished glass. It was obviously built in consideration for the drafts from high speed flights. Additionally, the cockpit was placed towards the rear, where the back of the bubble was elevated higher than the front. This feature was obviously beneficial from a single glance combined with the smooth body. The low front, high back feature distinctively elevated the pilot's field of view, while the glass cover's smooth and curved finish that was linked to the rudder made the airframe appear clean. Every installation meshed well together.

And the greatest difference of this plane was something that every student could never overlook—the nose of the plane did not have a propeller!

Without a flat engine, the head of the plane converged into the shape of a cone, as though it could cut through the clouds and winds. The majority of the airframe were painted orange-red that resembled a blazing flame, with a few streaks of white lines running from the head to the tail, giving the body a sense of artistic vitality.

Even those ignorant of aviation could sense the beauty and grace of the beast.

The moment Tilly landed her eyes on the new plane, she found herself falling deeply for it.

*But... without propellers, how was a plane to fly?*

This question ran through everyone's mind.

It was only after the other two crates were opened did the answer come to them.

Encapsulated within the second crate were the wings and empennage. From the count, the plane only had a pair of wings unlike the Fire of Heaven's bottom-top wings. Beneath the wings were symmetrical ports, obviously left for some other components.

The last crate contained two engines.

But they were too bulky to be considered just engines.

Compared to the Fire of Heaven, they resembled more of integrated components that could be replaced. After a careful inspection, Tilly noticed the same red color painted over its surface. There were many access hatches at the top, while the hole at the bottom were shockingly installed with black weapons.

After associating the ports on the wings, the appearance of the new plane gradually appeared in her mind.

*The fuselage of the plane no longer assumes a mechanical system and the slender wings situated closer to the bottom of the plane decreases the resistance by a notch. With the two engines installed at the wings, the propulsion force provided to the plane doubles...*

Tilly immediately became impatient, eager to experience the new plane for herself!

“Oh right.” Molly fished out a letter from her pocket. “This came together with His Majesty’s delivery. The envelope indicated clearly that it must be handed and opened by you personally.”

Tilly took the letter and opened it.

“Dearest Sister.”

“This is the present that I have promised, I truly hope that it is to your satisfaction.”

“Detailed introductions and specific parameters have been written in the manual left in the cockpit, but I reckon that you’ll most probably get straight to flying it without carefully reading the manual first.”

“If it was already built up and sent over to you, this letter would had been placed at the back of the plane as well—This is the reason why I sent it over like this to the Kingdom of Dawn. While the workers are assembling it, you have the time to read through the manual.”

“After all, it possesses a completely different structure from the Fire of Heaven. Even though you’re an Extraordinary, there’s no disadvantages to having a comprehensive understanding of the plane.”

*What... Tilly’s lips curled upwards awkwardly. Am I that readable?*

“What did His Majesty say? I want to read it too...” Molly leaned in towards her.

Tilly immediately turned and used her body to block Molly’s view, “Ahem, it’s nothing, you don’t have to see it.”

“What—”

“Want to have a Chaos Drink?”

“Yes!”

“Take it from my office.”

Molly excitedly sprinted away the moment Tilly pointed towards her office.

Tilly heaved a sigh of relief, then returned back to the letter.

“Also, it’s about the name of this plane.”

“I initially had the intention of re-using the name ‘Unicorn,’ but I felt it fell short of the striking red color of as overlord of the sky, so I might as well give it a new name.”

It was a noun Tilly had never encountered before. Without a doubt, it was something Roland came up with.

Tilly attempted reading it out.

“Phoenix...”

“Where I’m from, a Phoenix is a type of divine bird related to fire, which happens to match the color of the plane. But most importantly, legend has it that a Phoenix is immortal, transforming into a golden egg after 4600 days, and taking another 4600 days to hatch out of the egg to obtain new life.”

“That is also what I wish to convey—regardless of what enemies you face, I hope that you can return home, alive and safe.”

“Just like a phoenix.”

“I will bring Ashes back for you, so you need to keep your promise.”

“We’ve agreed on it, right?”

For some reason, Tilly suddenly felt her eyes turn sour and swollen.

She blinked a couple of times, resisted the surging warmth from her heart, and took a deep breath.

“A Phoenix is immortal, huh...” She muttered at a volume only audible to herself, “Not a bad name. I will accept this present, Brother.”

“... Your Highness?” a guard asked in puzzlement.

“It’s nothing.” Tilly waved her hand. “Inform ground service to fix up the Phoenix as quickly as possible. I can’t wait to have a test flight with it.”

...

Three days later, the fully assembled plane left its hangar and slowly slid down the runway.

“Oh? So this is the special aircraft you mentioned? It looks really good.”

Lightning’s voice came out from the Sigil of Listening.

Tilly raised her head. Through the clear glass, she noticed the two Exploration Group members spiraling in the air. As it was the maiden flight for the Phoenix, she had specially called for Lightning and Maggie in any case of an accident.

It had to be said that the plane’s interior design was far more outstanding than its exterior.

The moment Tilly sat in the cockpit, she even had the baffling feeling that the plane was not just a pure fighter plane. For example, her seat was extremely firm but soft to prevent pain and soreness of the lower back for long flights; the various tension bars and buttons were equipped with control feedback for added efficiency; and the customized Sigil of Listening slot, allowed the pilot to easily use the Sigil of Listening to talk with others even in battle.

Compared to the Unicorn, it felt even more of a plane specially designed for her.

“Shall we compete to see who is faster?” Tilly chuckled and replied.

“Forget that, the old Fire of Heaven can not even catch up with Maggie’s petrel form, much less me.” Lightning’s words contained an undisguised smugness. “Am I right?”

“That’s right, it can’t even compare to me!”

“How will we know if we don’t try?” Tilly stepped on the accelerator, causing the rumbling from both engines to amplify. Compared to the gradual build up of speed on the Fire of Heaven, the Phoenix’s body felt so light and graceful, as though it was weightless. The surrounding landscape flew backwards rapidly as she gently pulled the center stick and the plane immediately raised upwards, whistling into the sky.