

## Witch 1401

### Chapter 1401: The Bottomless Land

*Sure enough... it was just a farce.*

Hackzord floated in midair and surveyed the north sea.

For a few days, Hackzord followed the Land of Dawn's coastline and searched for hundreds of kilometers, including both ends of the continent's ridge and the mountains that accompanied them.

As the letter did not mention much, he searched every nook and cranny, every possible place that he could venture into for the sake of not missing out on the fabled Bottomless Land. He only stopped when he reached the sea of clouds that was linked to the Blackstone region. But even so, he could not locate the isolated "Afterlife Island" mentioned in the letter.

It was impossible, the sea had no obstructions. In the air, everything within a thousand miles could be seen at a glance. If there was truly a peculiar island, anyone in the race would have noticed it when advancing from the Blackstone region to the Land of Dawn. It was impossible for the island to remain hidden for him to discover.

Hackzord clenched his fists in anger.

*Damned humans, how dare you swindle me, the Sky Lord! What is even more unforgivable is the fact that they used Valkries' name!*

*It is impossible for the Nightmare Lord to betray the race, only the humans are capable of doing this, and it is most probable that they had extracted her memories. Even though it's unknown when the Witches wielded such power, it is obvious as to what has happened to Valkries.*

A burst of rage surged up from his chest.

He suddenly opened the Distortion Door and took a step onto the ocean—

"What Bottomless Land, what about the Realm of Mind being here, everything was bullshit!"

Hackzord roared while staring at the boundless ocean, as though venting the built up resentment in his heart.

"How can the land belonging to deities appear at such a mediocre place, I should have realized it a long time ago!"

"Wouldn't it be fine if I had activated the Deity of Gods to wipe out all the humans... Why did I bother taking the risk to infiltrate the Realm of Mind!? But now, I, a Senior Lord, have become bait at the whims of the humans, and they have even caused me to be suspected by the King. I am truly foolish!"

"This ploy, I will definitely—!"

Sky Lord suddenly paused mid roar as he was startled.

Just a moment ago, he was standing on the clear and reflective ocean surface, but now, it had turned hazy and unclear. A vast expanse of white mist had unknowingly appeared around him, and his vision dropped to only within tens of feet.

*Did I enter the mist?*

*No... even if this is cloud of mist, I should have sensed it before.*

Hackzord retraced his steps and the ocean became clear once again. He turned his head, only to see the tranquil ocean in its entirety.

The rage within him disappeared without a trace.

Instead, a cold chill replaced the emotions in his heart.

*This isn't far from Land of Dawn or Blackstone region, but no one actually noticed this strange phenomenon over the past several hundred years?*

After a slight hesitation, he activated his ability and entered the unique region.

But this time, he acted far more cautiously.

After crossing through, the dense and moist mist enveloped him.

Hackzord lowered his altitude and advanced slowly. At the same time, he raised his vigilance to its highest. Not long later, a vague figure appeared before him.

It was an island, and from its silhouette, it wasn't small.

He flew to the edge of the island and landed on actual grass.

*Is this... the place that Valkries mentioned?*

Hackzord surveyed his surroundings, but failed to see anything aside from the mist.

He considered his situation and decided to investigate the island on foot. He had just swapped out for a new tank of Red Mist earlier before. The sea of clouds had the demons' supply line, while the link between the Land of Dawn and Blackstone region had two sentry points. With his ability, the probability of an accident was extremely low.

After a few hundred steps, the scenery before him gradually changed. Stone tablets appeared amongst the grass, and the further he walked, the more there were, They were clearly man-made structures, which meant that the island was not an unmanned and restricted area. Hackzord inspected a few stone tablets alone and realized that the inscriptions on them were unfamiliar to any language he knew.

"Hello." He suddenly heard a voice.

All the hair on Hackzord's body stood up at once! He activated a Distortion Door without thinking and shot into the air, prepared to make a counterattack.

But the owner of the voice did not attack him from behind.

The person was actually a fellow demon.

From her appearance, she was at the very least a higher ascendant. All the Primal Demon and Junior Demon's crudeness were completely wiped from her body and the degree of evolution on her body was extremely high. Even her fingers and hair were clearly distinguished. She was dressed in light and white cotton robes and walked barefooted with both hands behind her back. Her manner of speech and looks appeared to be rather amiable and completely lacked the imposing grandeur of a demon of high standing.

"I am the Senior Sky Lord, who are you? When did you arrive on this island?" Maintaining his distance, Hackzord questioned her. "This place provides Red Mist as well?"

"I merely hold the name of Guardian." She lowered her head and chuckled. "As to how long I have been here, it has already been so long that I don't remember."

"Guardian?" Hackzord jogged his memories but did not find a higher ascendant with the name. As to forgetting as a result of the prolonged period of time, it was complete nonsense to Hackzord. In the First Battle of Divine Will, the demons had not even stepped into the Land of Dawn's northern region, how was it possible for a single being to survive on an isolated island for so long?

"That's right, so I'm not one of your kind. The one who decides my appearance isn't me, but you." Guardian spoke gently, "I know it is difficult to understand, but the truth is so."

*If she isn't one of us, she might be an enemy.* Another thing Hackzord noted was that the other party didn't wear any helmet or any traces of a breathing apparatus, verifying her statement.

Sky Lord's vigilance increased.

"Is this the Bottomless Land? Where is the Realm of Mind?"

Guardian shook her head. "This is just a bridge that can only be opened with a key."

"What key?"

Guardian paused for a moment, as though thinking of the answer. "... In the words your kind uses, it is a complete 'legacy.'"

*When the legacy shard forms one integral whole, the path of the Origin of Magic would appear. That's the same revelation as what the race has always passed down!* Hackzord's emotions stirred. He had noticed that Guardian spoke in riddles and had to create different names to differentiate himself. It felt no different from talking to Mask.

*Be it a bridge or a path, they are practically the same thing!* Hackzord felt his brain whirling like never before. "Can you take me to see... the bridge?"

Guardian hesitated for a moment, then turned to look north. "I can do that, but we have to be fast; there isn't much time..."

After following him for a minute, a giant pit appeared before Hackzord.

"This... is the bridge?" He was dumbstruck.

“Yes, but not everyone can use the bridge. You do not have the key, that is why you are unable to see its existence.”

*What bridge or path, even the race’s revered words are nowhere better than his—*

*This is clearly a sinkhole!*

But upon recalling the rumors of the Bottomless Land, he felt that it was rather fitting.

*So the Realm of Mind is at the bottom of this pit?*

Hackzord did not have the interest of jumping in to investigate. The name spoke for itself, it was bottomless. Who knew if he could still fly out after jumping in.

But this didn’t mean he was done verifying the matter.

He retrieved a five-colored magic stone.

According to the underground civilization’s research, the five-colored magic stone was capable of reflecting an Awakened’s magic power and its link to the Origin; if the Bottomless Land was indeed the land where all living things came to be and cease to be, it was impossible to be completely still.

Hackzord held his breath and raised the magic stone to his eye.

After that, he witnessed the most dazzling light pillar in his entire life!

No... More accurately speaking, there were countless beams!

They came from all directions and ultimately converged in front of him, looking like a ‘tree of light’ that seemed to blot out the skies. The well-proportioned and perfectly scattered lights spreading across the entire world formed the treetop and branches, while the converged and straight light pillar that shot straight into the Bottomless Land represented the trunk. Due to its excessive brightness, the lights looked as though they were infinitely white and it was impossible to look straight at them!

Even though Hackzord did not have the slightest idea of what the light pillar was, he felt heartfelt shock arising from the bottom of his heart.

The scene before him had completely exceeded his imaginations!

## **Chapter 1402: Cradle**

*Everything in the letter is true!*

*Valkries was right—*

*At bottom of the sinkhole is the Origin of Magic which the demons have been seeking!*

A burst of complicated emotions surged through Hackzord’s consciousness, leaving him somewhat at a loss.

If some of the matters written in the letter was real, that naturally meant that some of the things were fake.

For example, the upgrade of a race.

During the apocalypse, The Origin of Magic remained aloof and distant. It was a territory that belonged to God, and regardless of how one looked at it, the Origin of Magic hinted that it was one with the Bloody Moon. Races incapable of acquiring all the legacies had no qualifications to touch upon God's Territory. To the race, the sky was a sacred and holy presence, and thus the name 'Deity of Gods' was given to the floating city.

But now, the Origin of Magic wasn't that extraordinary. It was situated on an island capable of concealing itself and was at the same height as all the others races, even to the point of being slightly lower.

At the same time, coming to this place did not bring about any additional benefits. Hackzord was unable to sense a surge in magic power or any qualitative changes to his own body. If one did not have the five-colored magic stone, the Origin of Magic would be an ordinary ravine, completely unworthy of the descriptions of being holy and powerful.

*What about the so-called upgrade given to the race that enters the sinkhole?*

*Even if it were a farce, it should have at least pretended to be like one?*

*If everything is as what Valkries says, then wouldn't over a thousand years of hard work that the race put in become a topic of ridicule...*

"... Sky Lord?"

The Guardian's voice broke his train of thoughts.

*That's right, there is a self-proclaimed guardian that has been here for many years, and she is able to disguise herself as a high rank demon. From the looks of it, she definitely knows something about the Battle of Divine Will!*

If the battle over the legacies was just an endless cycle, she might very well have witnessed many races obtaining the 'legacy keys.'

Or maybe even more... After all, all the rumors and revelations regarding the Divine Will started from here.

But Hackzord was not counting on the other party to be honest.

He chose to be pre-emptive.

Two Distortion Doors flashed past Guardian's body in succession, severing her arms at the shoulders, followed by her legs!

Before the latter could even react, she had lost all four limbs. Her stunned expression froze in puzzlement as she dropped helplessly to the ground.

Hackzord had used the five-colored magic stone stealthily on the Guardian and learned that there was no distinct light pillar above her head, indicating that her magic power was underwhelming. He believed that as long as her limbs were severed, the Guardian would not pose a threat to him.

Even so, the Skylord remained in the air to observe the Guardian. After being assured that the other party was only able to moan in pain, he returned to the ground and grabbed the Guardian. At this moment, the Guardian's white cotton clothes were dyed in blue blood and no longer as soft and graceful as before.

"It's best for you to answer my questions. This way, I can still save your life." Hackzord threatened. "What is the ultimate end to being upgraded? Does God truly exist? Why did he fabricate this entire lie? My patience is limited, tell me everything you know!"

Unexpectedly, the Guardian did not reveal any emotions of hatred or fear. Instead, she sighed and asked, "Why... do you have to do this?"

"All the legacies hidden underground were left by the various competitors of the previous Battles of Divine Will, right? My race is currently treading in their wake and will eventually be destroyed as well, and you're asking me why? Just like how fighting beasts will tussle and die, isn't this world just another existence to please this so called God!"

After his furious roars, Hackzord was suddenly dumbstruck.

There was grief in the Guardian's eyes that stared back at him.

"I see... You're not one who has lost you way but one that came prepared. It is a pity that compared to fading away not knowing anything, there are times when knowing the answer will lead to further despair. Especially when you are helpless to change anything. This world is indeed lacking in many areas, but for all of you, it's already the best cradle you can ever have."

"Cra... die?" Sky Lord never thought that he would hear such a term from the other party.

The Guardian's breathing got weaker; she lifted her bloodstained shoulders as though trying to touch Hackzord's face. "All of you are God's children, how will he treat all of you... as stage props to please himself? Now... it is time to leave, go... before obtaining the key, never, ever return to this island."

"You haven't answered my questions!"

Halfway through his words, Guardian's figure suddenly turned faint, as though having no energy to sustain her appearance. In a short span of time, Guardian disappeared without a trace, along with the tablets that were strewn around. Very quickly, his surroundings was left with the lush vegetation and an endless sinkhole, as though everything that had happened was just a hallucination.

But the remnants of blood on Hackzord's hands informed him that the female-looking "higher ascendant" existed.

What puzzled him was the fact that the other party had appeared in a disguise, but after her disappearance, she made disappointment and frustration rise in his heart.

Hackzord shook his head and threw the confused and distracting thoughts to the bottom of his heart.

At the very least, he was certain that Valkries was still alive, and that she might even be closer to the truth behind the Battle of Divine Will than anyone else.

The next thing to do was to find a stable channel to communicate with Nightmare Lord.

He had too many questions for her.

Hackzord stood up and was prepared to leave when an intense and penetrating pain suddenly tore through his chest!

*What... happened exactly?*

He lowered his head and noticed a protrusion in his armor as a sharp bone claw slowly emerged from within.

It was—the ‘blade’ from the Sky-sea Realm.

They remained practically transparent while in motion and possessed extremely powerful concealment abilities. Only by relying on one’s magic power perception could their existence be sensed.

*Damn it... did the Sky-sea Realm infiltrate this island while I my mind was wandering?*

Hackzord felt his strength drain rapidly. *I was careless...* He had placed all of his attention on the Guardian, and compounded by the latter’s unexpected reply that caused him to lose his wariness, he had become so distracted to the point that he was unable to sense the enemies concealed in the mist. But what he was unable to understand was that in the past, the enemies were never able to break the barriers summoned by higher ascendants, much less penetrating their armors.

‘Blade’ was just a claw that belonged to the Nest Eye used for hunting. Aside from their ability to conceal themselves, when were they ever a threat to a Senior Lord?

The wound from the stab quickly erupted into a hot and burning sensation. Aside from its sharpness, the claw was obviously laced with some sort of poison.

Hackzord slowly turned to look, only to come face to face with a gigantic monster standing behind him. Aside from the familiar curve-shaped bone claw and abdomen used to constrict its prey, the monster before him looked completely different from the ‘blades’ he had encountered in the past.

And further into the mist, many more similar black figures crawled slowly in his direction.

*So when Guardian said that there wasn’t much time left, she was referring to this...*

Hackzord’s vision blurred, and it was at this moment when the blade that had bored through his body opened its large mouth and bit down towards him—

On the other side, Silent Disaster opened his eyes.

### **Chapter 1403: A New Battlefield**

After awakening his consciousness, bursts of pain surged through his entire body.

But it was something that Silent Disaster was used to—to fight against tides of enemies on the battlefield only to awaken in the Red Mist Pond again, that was his life. Every single time, it pushed him to his limits and allowed him to become stronger, and so the pain was a little price to pay.

But this time, it was different...

He woke up in a daze and flipped his body upside in the Red Mist as he tried to recall the response he had at that moment.

*Was it an illusion?*

Right at that moment, a ripple appeared in the Realm of Mind.

If he hadn't been in the Birth Tower by chance and was in a half-awake and half-dream state of recovery, it would had been difficult to sense the faint fluctuation.

The occurrence of the ripple was rare, the last one to have induced it was the genius of the race, Ursrook.

That meant... the fall of a Senior Lord.

*What exactly happened in the north?*

*Was it a mistaken illusion, or was the ripple a pure coincidence?*

*No, I need to verify this with Nassaupelle. In passing, I'll also ask how long I have been asleep, as well as the situation on the Western Front.*

Silent Disaster endured the pain and slowly crawled out of the Red Mist Pond, particularly slowing his steps when passing Valkries' body—Although Sky Lord believed that the Nightmare Lord's body was equally safe in Sky City, Silent Disaster insisted on bringing her on board the Deity of Gods. Although there was indeed considerations for her safety, it was more for another reason.

Since by doing so, as long as he was not in battle, he would always have her by his side.

"Don't you worry, I will bring you his head," Silent Disaster murmured.

He had engraved the appearance of the human male that appeared in the God's Domain.

The man was undoubtedly the culprit that brought about Nightmare Lord predicament of being lost in the Realm of Mind.

Silent Disaster believed that only by beheading the person personally would it bring Valkries true peace.

...

In the experimental field, Silent Disaster found Mask, Nassaupelle.

"Your recovery was rather fast." The other party clicked his tongue and commented, "Such a recovery speed is rarely seen even in a Senior Lord... I am truly curious of what sort of monster would manifest if you merged with a Symbiotic Demon."

"..." Silent Disaster did not entertain the nonsense. "How long have I been in the Red Mist Pond?"

"It hasn't even been a week. Currently the Deity of Gods has entered the Kingdom of Dawn's land, but you missed out on the lowlifes panic and hysteria below. I merely shot a few of the living spears and their cities collapsed." Nassaupelle cackled a sinister laughter. "Flames, trampling, screams, panic... that is how the lowlifes should act!"



“Has Hackzord been in contact with you?”

“Didn’t he say that he wanted to check on the sea of clouds personally, and reinforce the transit efficiency at the ridge? I wouldn’t believe that he will ever initiate reporting to me.” Mask shook his tall head. “To be honest, that should be his responsibility. The role as the Commander of the Western Front doesn’t fit him at all. The King just doesn’t want to see the strength at the main battlefield get affected and gave Sky Lord the responsibility here. In the end, isn’t it me, Nassaupelle, to be the one to clear up this mess?”

Silent Disaster’s heart plunged.

He had been in the Red Mist Pond for about a week, and with the time spent fighting the humans, it would have been more than two weeks. Even with the distance between their location and the ridge, the total duration was enough for Hackzord to shuttle back and forth two or three times.

Silent Disaster knew that the Sky Lord’s fighting capabilities was not exceptional. With the noticeable increase of Demonic Beasts sighted by sentries above the ocean over the recent half year, and the link of the two continents where the Sky-sea Realm was capable of using to attack from the rear, it was possible for something to have happened.

“Follow me to the Birth Tower.” Silent Disaster no longer hesitated. “I want to see the King.”

With his condition, he required the support of the controller of the Deity of Gods to be able to connect to the King’s consciousness.

At that moment, Nassaupelle sensed something amiss. “Did something happen?”

“A ripple appeared in the Realm of Mind,” Silent Disaster replied bluntly.

“Uh... you should know I’m not good at such vague and uncertain things.”

“That is why we need to contact the King. If it was not an illusion, the King will definitely know more about the ripple than me,” Silent Disaster replied.

At the top of the Birth Tower, Nassaupelle placed his palm over the central hub and gathered magic power. Every Senior Lord had a different innate skill. Valkries was well known to be able to infiltrate into the deepest layer of the Realm of Mind, or Mask that was seemingly blind and slow with the Realm of Mind, only capable of establishing a connection with the Realm of Mind with the help of the Birth Tower.

Silent Disaster waited patiently for a long while, but did not receive a reply from the other party.

“What’s going on?” He frowned. “Is it not done?”

If not for the worries in his heart, he would never have asked so many questions in succession.

Nassaupelle turned his head and replied in surprise, “There’s nothing...”

“Nothing?”

“The Presiding Holy Seat—I can’t sense the King at all.”

Silent Disaster was stunned.

The King was the backbone of the race and the Holy Seat was equivalent to a lighthouse in the boundless ocean. The disappearance of its signal meant that the demons had temporarily lost their ability to contact the Blackstone region.

Of course, it was impossible for the King to perish; otherwise, the intense ripple from his death would be enough for all demons to sense it.

The only question was, what exactly happened to cause the King to shut off the consciousness realm?

Before the Holy Seat reappeared, they would be kept in the dark.

...

Kingdom of Dawn, City of Glow Castle.

“That is the Deity of Gods...” Roland stood atop the castle and looked in the direction of the slowly-moving shadow.

Despite being mentally prepared for it, he was shaken upon laying his eyes on it for the first time.

It was not a special effect from the movies, but an object that existed in reality—a floating island capable of accommodating Neverwinter and Longsong, completely abiding by the saying ‘big is better.’ The mere sight of the island was enough to cause one’s state of mind to be affected. If the black strata had steel frames and steam pipes, it would be the ideal creation.

No wonder the upper echelons of the demons were so confident in it.

Nightingale came to him and leaned in with a cautious expression written over her face.

“Relax.” Roland spoke in resignation, “We are only observing from a distance, we won’t meet with any danger.”

“An unknown territory by itself signifies hazard.” Nightingale said sourly, “I can investigate all the strangers entering and leaving Neverwinter, but I can’t check on all the nobles in the Kingdom of Dawn. Why must you come to the front lines?”

“Because the situation has developed to a point where I am unable to stay in the safe Western Region.” Roland shook his head. The First Army’s first defeat, the Deity of Gods’ sudden route change towards the Hermes Plateau, and the panic caused from the plague in the neighboring countries—all of these consecutive bad news resolved his decision. Be it inspiring the troops or stabilizing the confidence in their allies, both required his presence. In any era or civilization, this action was the most direct and effective morale booster.

He turned his gaze to Horford Quinn, “All of your ministers should have arrived by now, right?”

“They are all waiting in the conference hall.”

“Very good, let us have a good talk... about what we should do next.”

“As you wish, Your Majesty.” The master of the Kingdom of Dawn placed his hand across his chest and replied calmly.

#### **Chapter 1404: Undetected Capabilities**

The conference room in the castle of the Kingdom of Dawn was much larger than Neverwinter’s and was able to accommodate a hundred people without causing a sense of overcrowdedness.

The room was partitioned by a long table in the middle and divided the participants into two distinct factions, Roland in the lead on one side with the higher-ups of Graycastle, the other were the nobles of the Kingdom of Dawn and the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce. Compared to the calm expressions the former had while quietly waiting for the meeting to begin, the latter was obviously restless. Countless had worried expressions, occasionally whispering into each other’s ears and their private conversations never came to a halt.

Obviously, the appearance of the Deity of Gods had impacted them greatly.

If they did not stop the fear from spreading, order in the neighboring countries had the probability of collapsing at any moment.

Roland knew that he needed to stabilize the confidence in his allies before that happened.

According to reports from the Administrative Office, after Horford took over as the new King of Dawn, trade between both parties reached a new high. Twenty percent of the imports of iron, copper, aluminum, and other raw materials and products came from them. As for leather, cloth, cured meat, milk and other day-to-day supplies, the Kingdom of Dawn supplied half of what Neverwinter imported.

Although Roland had worked hard for the trade deal to come to fruition, without the support from the Kingdom of Dawn, it would have been impossible to sustain Neverwinter’s sudden spike of population in terms of living standards.

Based on this, Roland could not give up on the Kingdom of Dawn that easily.

Besides, there was also the impeccable performance of the Quinn family during the formation of the alliance. Roland did not know if Horford had a successor, but the future was unlikely to have a second Andrea Quinn who could link both parties so perfectly.

He quietly sized up every noble on his left until their private conversations ceased. He proceeded to speak, “Since the start of the battle, I have frequently heard of your contributions in the reports, so I wish to say, thank you for all of your hard work.”

Everyone on the other side of the table revealed surprised expressions.

But Roland was not lying.

It would have been impossible by the efforts of the First Army alone to have the north-south path up and running so quickly. The path was extremely vital for the carts and porters to move speedily. It was a common practice for nobles to go out in full force and were used to plundering to provide for payment;

thus, very few knew of the significance of the logistics and the contributions they had made towards the war efforts.

“I am sure that everyone understands the situation with regards to the Battle of Divine Will. Just as I have repeatedly stressed, defeat will lead to complete annihilation. There is no possibility of surrendering, so aside from resisting, we have no other path to take.”

“I have been preparing for this battle ever since four to five years ago. But humankind does not rest solely in Graycastle, it requires every single human to participate for us to win this war of destiny. I am very glad to see that all of you have become a part of the resistance.”

Roland nodded at Barov who flipped open a thick notebook and started to read aloud.

It was the logistic records for the First Army, as well as the contributions made by the Kingdom of Dawn.

Roland had no plans on using words to persuade the nobles—all the talk about defending their homes and the pretext of committing themselves for the sake of humankind would not produce any effect on them.

The most direct method was still through interests and pressure.

And the more detailed and accurate the narration, the more persuasive it would be.

He needed the nobles to know that even without them being at the front lines, they were capable of contributing heavily to the war. Secondly, these achievements were recorded down in black and white, which could be exchanged for their corresponding repayment after the war. Lastly, all the traitors or those who remained passive in the war would suffer from the most severe of punishments. At this crucial juncture, Roland no longer had the energy to allow them to do as they pleased.

Horford nodded his head subtly from the side.

He knew that the King of Graycastle had grasped the main point right from the beginning with clear-cut entrance and the detailed content. This scheme had roped in the nobles that were never part of the military into this matter that was destined to go down in history, a significant matter that would be passed down for a millennium. Most importantly, it would undoubtedly increase their sense of participation. Being recognized and going down in history was a pursuit the nobles chased after as well. Besides, with how Roland had explained that risk and return were interrelated, they understood that they would not be abandoned or mistreated.

But assigning rewards had always been a difficult topic for the top brass.

A few vassal families had suggested to him multiple times that there was no need to accomplish Roland Wimbledon's instructions to such degree and behave more like the King of Dawn. His reply was always to laugh it off.

The King of Graycastle that developed the artillery, biplanes, and steel steamships deserved the respect, but those were not the entirely the reason why Horford viewed him with such great respect. The true reason for his decisive loyalty and devotion was the benefits his family had obtained. In the trade between both kingdoms, the other party did not rely on their strength or his relationship with Horford's daughter, Andrea, to gain the upper hand. Instead, Roland insisted on paying for everything, and at

times, even gave part of the profits to every participant involved, allowing everyone to benefit. This was far more important than strength.

Andrea likely saw this point as well before making a suggestion.

Compared to his son Hawn, the difference was too great.

“Your Majesty, the premise of your suggestions is that humans gain the ultimate victory.” After Barov’s narration, someone stood up and asked, “But the question lies in whether Graycastle can truly defeat the demons? I heard that...” He hesitated for a moment, “That your army seemed to have lost at the Kingdom of Wolfheart.”

“That’s right... we all know the strength of the First Army,” another worried participant echoed. “But the floating island is truly too powerful... once it comes down on us, I’m afraid we won’t even have the time to escape, right?”

Roland raised his teacup and slowly sipped the black tea. He knew that the outcome of the battle at the Impassable Mountain Ranges would be circulated soon enough since many who had participated in the search and rescue missions were the locals of Kingdom of Wolfheart that were familiar with the terrain. In the battle, they had lost contact with over a thousand people. Not only did the artillery squad lose their members, even the reserve force responsible to receive them suffered heavy losses.

The few days spent in aerial battle caused the Aerial Knights to lose 40 planes, half shot down by the enemy, the other half due to unexpected machine malfunctions. Due to this, Tilly had no choice but to postpone the operation.

But every cloud has a silver lining. Although the Seagull was hit, Wendy and Shavi were both proficient in controlling the situation. With Lightning and Maggie defending them in the distance, they were able to force land the plane and rescue all the Witches inside.

When Roland first read the report, he felt his heart at his throat. In terms of the loss of troops, it was the largest out of all the military campaigns they had faced. But he agreed with how the General Staff had acted—Valkries was only clear on the principle behind the Deity of Gods and did not know the details regarding the Symbiotic Demons onboard. If they had not come to blows with the floating island, they would forever be kept in the dark about the enemy.

“The loss was because of our inadequate knowledge of the floating island.” Roland told the truth. “It looks to be huge and imposing and even invulnerable, but the truth is that it isn’t so. Edith, explain it to them.”

“Yes.” The Pearl of the Northern Region pinned a detailed draft of the Deity of Gods on the wall and jumped right into a detailed explanation. “According to the observations done by the First Army, it is more or less circular in shape with a diameter of 50 to 60 kilometers, comparable to the Impassable Mountain Range. The upper portion and the spine are able to unleash gigantic stone spears, capable of firing at least 15 kilometers. This was the crucial weapon that caught the First Army unprepared, but this also means that so long as the distance is not breached, it is just a floating island in the sky. We can use this to design a plan, to suppress the enemy...”

Fear always comes from the unknown.

Humans would fear emotive experiences or poor descriptions, but were never afraid of a bunch of numbers. Rather than taking great pains to cover their failure, or use grand empty words to deceive the crowd, why not publicize the information which the First Army had obtained at great costs and put an end to the fear from a rational point of view.

“... And the aforementioned information is all the details we have on the demons’ floating island.” Edith placed her hand across her chest towards Roland.

Roland turned his gaze to the noble that had raised the question. “Let me add one more point; avoiding the stone spear’s attacking radius is only a temporary measure. The ultimate goal for the army is to completely destroy the stronghold floating in the sky.”

One of the nobles gulped a mouthful of saliva. “But that is an inverted mountain...”

“It isn’t as if humans do not have the ability to do so, it is just that you haven’t been aware of it. Just like before the airplanes were created, no one believed that they would ever fly in the blue sky like birds...” Roland laughed. “For this, let me give you all a first-hand experience.”

### **Chapter 1405: Plan II: From the Sky**

The nobles who were able to enter the Castle’s conference room were basically the supporters of the three families in the City of Glow, many of whom participated in the construction of the road connecting the north and the south and struck it rich from the introduction of the steam engines and production of calcined cement. A majority of them had been to Thorn Town and witnessed the Aerial Knight’s training first hand. After hearing how confident the King of Graycastle was, the worries on their faces finally lessened.

Regardless, the open and frank meeting that discussed numbers and information was a rare experience for the nobles of the Kingdom of Dawn. Compared to false and empty assurance, the precise discourse was even more convincing.

“Then... what do we need to do?” someone asked.

“Maintain the current situation.” Roland answered straightforwardly, “A stable Kingdom of Dawn will be the greatest help to the war efforts.”

“But panic has begun spreading. If we were to adopt any enforcement measures, I am afraid that it might instead backfire with regards to the refugees...”

“That is because the demons are making use of the Red Mist to infiltrate the borders, but this situation will no longer worsen.” Roland consoled, “Graycastle will do its utmost to assist all of you in stabilizing the situation.”

“King’s City will relieve the tax from territories that have received threats from the demons, and also provide assistance according to the circumstances.” Horford stepped in. “Everyone, this is a war that concerns all mankind, no one can avoid it. I, Horford Quinn, solemnly vow on my ancestors’ name, that regardless of the outcome, I will not take even a step out of the City of Glow! If the Kingdom of Dawn is destroyed by the demons, then this shall be my grave!”

...

After gaining their guarantees, the somewhat appeased nobles left the room, and the meeting quickly moved into its second phase.

Aside from the King of the Dawn, the remaining people were the higher-ups of Graycastle.

“Your Majesty, with regards to the strike force from before, I am willing to shoulder all responsibility—” Iron Axe and Edith stood up at the same time, only to look at each other in surprise.

“No one could have anticipated what offensive methods the Deity of Gods have.” Roland shook his head. “Don’t tell me that you had never considered the possibility of the reserve force suffering an attack, to the point of being destroyed when you guys formulated the plan.”

“...” The two could only remain silent.

It was a conventional tactic to send a small team to execute the investigation with the main force stationary, but to believe oneself infallible and think that any loss would only be limited to the small scouting team was a foolish mindset. He believed that the General Staff would never have made such a low level mistake.

“In other words, at the moment you chose to implement the plan, you have tacitly agreed the significance of investigation far outweighed the risks involving the two teams. Otherwise, the plan would have never been implemented. Relax, I will never use casualties to determine your successes and failures, even if it truly was the First Army’s largest loss.”

“Your Majesty...”

“But don’t forget.” At this point, Roland retracted his carefree expression and his tone of speech became serious. “All the soldiers have their own families as well; never treat their sacrifice as mere numbers on paper. I hope that the General Staff will remember this every time it comes to an agreement to execute a plan.”

“Yes, Your Majesty,” Iron Axe and Edith answered in unison.

“Then, let’s hear your thoughts on the matters after the battle.”

“Yes.” The Pearl of the Northern Region switched out a new map. “After our analysis, the General Staff believes that there are two possible locations for the floating island after its last turn, the border of Cage Mountain or the Hermes Plateau. The former location will ensure the capture of the Kingdom of Wolfheart and threaten the Kingdom of Dawn at the same time; the latter will ensure the spread of the Red Mist to the four kingdoms, and the Impassable Mountain Range will form a connecting path to the ridge of the continent. But with the floating island passing the Kingdom of Dawn’s borders and according to its current trajectory, Hermes Plateau is the most probable location.”

Roland nodded. “How’s the evacuation situation like over there?”

“Very smooth.” Agatha replied, “Isabella is already hailed as the leader of the Church. Their taking charge is far more effective than typical citizens. It is estimated that they will all evacuate out to the new city in two or three days.”

“That’s great.”

“Before the ‘Glory of the Sun’ is completed, we are unable to stop the advancement of the floating island.” Edith carried on. “Once it occupies Hermes Plateau, the Red Mist will most probably pervade through Silver City, and the Kingdom of Dawn will most probably be engulfed. If we lose the support of the Witches, we will definitely be placed in a passive position.”

*We have reached this point after all.*

Roland sighed inwardly, since the erection of the obelisk in Taquila’s Holy City would pose a large threat to the entire human kingdom, not to mention it being inserted right in their faces.

The largest difference would be that the erection of the obelisk in Taquila would bring direct harm to Neverwinter, while the erection of the obelisk on the Hermes Plateau would only cover Silver City. Once the Red Mist infiltrated their only industrial zone, the consequences would be too horrible to even consider. Graycastle’s strength was increasing at a rapid rate and was inevitably linked to the Witches. In Neverwinter, the Sleeping Spell had already integrated into the various parts of the city’s development, such as clearing away the parasites on the ships, alleviating the worker’s fatigue, assisting in precision works, and the planting of coral reefs to expand the shallow areas, etc... Although the steelmaking and other core industries did not require Witches, the substantial reduction of efficiency would become unavoidable.

Fortunately, be it the steam engines, internal combustion engines or Magic Cube Power Unit sources, they could all work in the Red Mist, which was humanity’s biggest trump card against the enemy.

“It seems like before we destroy the Deity of Gods, we will be fighting against the enemy in the Red Mist for a period of time.” His gaze swept through the entire crowd. “Aside from me being here today, I bring some good news. The ‘Glory of the Sun’ has completed its finalized design, and another round of tests will be set in motion soon. If we are successful, the floating island will not live to see the Red Mist devour the Kingdom of Dawn!”

Everyone’s face lit up.

“Really?”

That’s great!”

Roland revealed a smile as well. “So, the agenda of how the decisive strike will be accomplished can now be brought forward.”

...

After an entire afternoon of discussion, the rough plan was essentially determined.

Due to the Deity of Gods’ uniqueness, the First Army did not have too many choices. Either they buried a detonator in advance to destroy the floating island’s core from the bottom, or to have it dropped from above and destroy the obelisk in one shot. Aside from that, the other proposed methods were all limited in terms of causing actual damage to the Deity of Gods.

The former’s advantage was its simple implementation without the requirement of a bomber, but its effect could not be guaranteed— Hermes Plateau was large and broad, no one knew where the Deity of



Gods would eventually stop. If the location deviated by even a slight margin, the explosion's effects would be greatly reduced.

Furthermore, whether the Glory of the Sun could turn the Red Mist waterfall into a high-temperature fiery column was still a question. The further the floating island was to the ground, the more uncertain the results. Additionally, in consideration of the limited amounts of refined uranium Lucia had produced, this plan was ultimately overruled.

The air drop plan posed two difficulties in terms of technique and implementation. But as long as the two conditions were met, the bomb would definitely explode at a location close to the Red Mist Lake, which would ensure the maximum result.

"In that case, we will draw up a plan based on this conclusion." Roland slammed his hand down on the table. "Aside from that, we will conduct the air drop dummy runs and the bomb test at the same time. We will get payback for what the demons did to us!"

"As you command, Your Majesty!" everyone bowed and answered in unison.

#### **Chapter 1406: A Night in the Kingdom of Dawn**

To most people, it was a rare night of respite and relaxation.

Even though the Demon's floating island was steadily moving towards Hermes, the King of Dawn could not see this scene. Being a distance from the front line gave everyone a brief sense of tranquility, especially when they were to head to the battlefield the next day. As the soldiers had to separate to carry out their various missions, the serenity became even more precious.

When Andrea walked into the family courtyard, Horford was already there waiting for her.

"Welcome home, daughter."

"Yeah..." Andrea nodded slightly. This was her first return home after a year of separation, not as an intruder but through the main path with servants lined along the path to welcome her. In all honesty, she had hoped to spend more time by Tilly's side, but after receiving an invitation letter by her father emotions stirred within her. In the end, she chose to accept it.

*He obviously could have told me directly after the meeting.*

*Maybe... he was afraid of being rejected.*

But if it truly came to a face to face request, she would be at a loss as to what to say as well.

The difference between her current and previous visit meeting was that she had a task on hand the previous time, but this time, it was a strange reunion.

"You... wanted to talk to me about something?" Andrea while walking on the path.

"Lots of things. For example, what you've experienced at the front lines, your companions, and about Mister Roland Wimbledon..."

“He is just an idiot, there’s nothing to talk about—” Andrea casually spoke, then realized her words were inappropriate, “Uhm, what I mean to say was...”

“I can see that he is a tolerant lord.” Horford laughed. “Relax, I know that you might need some time getting used to this. I was afraid that it would be extremely unbearable for you if it was just the two of us, so I made some special arrangements.”

“Arrangements?”

“You’ll know once you step in.” He stopped by the entrance of the main hall.

Andrea pushed open the doors. Before she was able to take a good look in the house, a figure pounced onto her—

“I’ve missed you, Lady Quinn!”

*I see...*

She opened her arms with a laugh as she hugged the other party.

The person who had pounced onto her was none other than Belinda Luoxi.

Other than her, there were two others seated by the table—Otto Luoxi and Oro Tokat. The two appeared rather emotional, with Otto looking as though he was at a loss.

The scene made Andrea feel as though she was back to more than a decade ago, the days before she awakened as a Witch.

Belinda’s endless chatter and Orro’s enthusiasm quickly dissolved the original stiffness, and her father who was rarely sat with the younger generation, was actually seated together with them.

*Just to say a few words to me, he truly gave it a lot of thought...* Andrea suddenly realized the little bit of resentment at the bottom of her heart had almost disappeared.

“Oh right, when the war is over, let’s all go to Neverwinter. That way, we can meet more regularly.” Belinda winked at her.

Andrea raised her brow in surprise. “You mean...”

“Of course it’s the three of us!”

“Yes, yes!” Oro nodded vigorously.

“Wait a minute... Aren’t Otto and Oro the successors to their families? Will the two old dukes from your families agree to you leaving home for an extended period of time?” Andrea looked suspiciously at Otto. *Could he be the one pulling the strings in secret? That’s rather irresponsible.*

“No... It’s not what you think.” Otto immediately waved his hands and stammered, “Although I wish for that, but that, is just one factor... In short...”

“Let me explain.” Belinda patted her brother’s shoulder as she took pity on him, then turned to Andrea. “You’re rarely in Dawn, so you wouldn’t be updated with the local current affairs. There is a rumor

spreading amongst the nobles in the city, especially in the City of Glow, that if a family is completely ignorant about natural science, they are bound to decline.”

“Natural science? You mean...”

“That’s right.” Belinda smiled and nodded, “It all started from the Natural Science Theoretical Foundation published by Neverwinter, which has now been divided into many different and specialized subjects. Some call it a new field of education, some believe that alchemy and astrology are just a part of it. But regardless of that, it is a trend that has hit the nobles hard. As long as we are talking about any natural science books that come from Neverwinter, they will all be purchased at high prices.”

“Father was influenced by it as well, so when we suggested our idea, he did not overreact. After all, being taught by professionals is far better than self-learning. Furthermore, many families are ahead on this and father doesn’t want the Luoxi family to fall behind. So this isn’t considered being irresponsible! Father even said that he can hold the position for another few years.”

“They are just excited about the planes and steel ships.” Oro shrugged. “But of course, I approve this notion with both hands up, since they’re letting me travel.”

“That’s what... I wanted to say.” Otto heaved a sigh of relief. “Furthermore, we plan to organize a study group.”

“What’s that?” Andrea asked curiously.

“The content in natural science is too heavy, just the three of us isn’t enough to grasp everything.” Belinda extended her hands out. “So we were thinking of choosing a few merchants and citizens with good aptitudes and give them an opportunity to access natural science. If they perform well, we will incorporate them into our families, killing multiple birds with one stone. What do you think?”

Andrea was at a loss for words.

She suddenly realized that change was occurring to everyone, be it her father or others.

The people in the Kingdom of Dawn used to see Graycastle as a sinister kingdom that protected the Witches who were known to be a taboo and abolished power and authority of the nobles. The upper class would never view Graycastle as a goal to imitate, and to even assimilate commoners into the family was violating tradition. But now, the once completely stark boundaries had blurred.

She could not help but turn to look at her father, Horford Quinn.

There was no doubt that he was involved in guiding the entire kingdom.

He was truly making up for his past mistakes and working extremely hard.

Although the past could never be rewritten, changes in the future could, at the very least, prevent the repeat of mistakes.

*Is this what you’re trying to convey, Father?*

...

Over the following days, Graycastle and the Kingdom of Dawn carried out a joint operation.

The nobles set up over a hundred receiving points at the northwest portion of a major road, with tents and rations for the panic-stricken refugees. Under the protection of the God's Punishment Witches, the First Army's doctors began treating the sick and injured. Gentle and moving songs were frequently heard at areas that were most populated. Even the most irritable and restless would find themselves calming down from listening to the voice.

Under the guidance of the new Pope Isabella, patrols were established to pacify those driven away from their homes. After going through all kinds of crises, the people of the church possessed some influence. To them, the only one aside from Graycastle capable of fighting against the demons was the Church.

The crisis of panic was ultimately resolved and controlled before it reached an irreversible state of destruction under the hard work put in from all sides. Although the refugees were unable to return to their own homes for a period of time, the places unaffected were stabilized.

At this moment, the First Army was also ready to rehearse for the air drop.

### **Chapter 1407: Setting Out**

Early in the morning, the first ray of dawn appeared across the blurry horizon.

A majority of the people remained in slumber at this moment, but the ground crew and garrison soldiers in the new airport established on the outskirts of City of Glow was already bustling about. They faced the cold spring winds and busied themselves along both sides of the runway. The inner linings of their clothes were already soaked from their perspiration.

Planes after planes were towed out of their warehouses to the end of the runway. The final inspections, loading, and refilling entered in its final phase.

Inside the barracks by the side of the airport, Tilly gathered all the Aerial Knights that had gone through actual combat experience.

After numerous rounds of mass recruitment and with veterans guiding the rookies, the number of pilots able to take to the battlefield had exceeded a hundred. Furthermore, there were students more than two times those numbers who were undergoing extremely intense and harsh training. The 'new troops' which were distinct from the ground troops had already taken shape.

Although many planes were lost in the skirmish at the Impassable Mountain Range, the number of pilots who survived was high. Compared to the ground troops that had difficulty escaping the clutches of the demons and had to engage in bloody battles the moment they encountered them, the Fire of Heavens were capable of gliding out of the battlefield despite losing their combat capabilities.

Regardless whether they were struck by enemies or had some machine malfunction, as long as they were fortunate enough, the experienced pilots were able to sustain flight until they found suitable landing sites.

Of course, their survivability was also because of the fact that the biplanes were not fast but had good buoyancy and the demons' incapability of landing deadly hits with the stone steles.

These factors were the reasons for the increased maturity of the troops in their entirety.

“All of you should be clear on the details regarding this mission.” Tilly crossed her arms and walked slowly in front of the troops. Like the combatants who were about to go into battle, she was equipped in thick and windproof combat clothes. Her gray and long hair was coiled behind her head matched with a blue hairband, making her appear ready and energetic. “Exactly like the past few simulation trainings in the past few days, we will infiltrate and break into the enemy’s defensive line and drop the bomb into the innermost region of the floating stronghold.”

“But this time, you will not be flying in City of Glow’s air space, but above the enemy stronghold. The ones intercepting you will no longer be students of the school, but Senior Demons and Devilbeasts.”

“Your Highness!” One of the pilots suddenly raised his hand.

“Yes?”

“Isn’t that much simpler for us?”

The one who spoke was Good, and his question incited laughter.

Tilly smiled; she did not oppose to such ‘arrogant’ words. On the contrary, such words were morale boosters capable of easing the tension right before battle.

Additionally, Good had already the achievement of killing 12 Devilbeasts alone. The words that came out from his mouth were not empty words of arrogance.

“It might seem so at first glance, but the Senior Demons on the Devilbeasts are not enemies you can ever belittle, I hope that you will return safely to prove this point.” Tilly then changed the topic. “Aside from that, I need to emphasize that the surface of the floating island is extremely expansive, so infiltrating the core region means that your surroundings will be their territory. One can imagine a forced landing there. As much as possible, I want everyone to avoid suffering any accidents. I want all of you to throw the idea of risking yourselves at the cost of an enemy’s attack for an opportunity to kill them to the back of your heads, understand!?”

“Yes, Your Highness!”

“Very good, we will move on to the formation arrangements. Those designated to ‘Fury of Heaven’ will assume the task of dropping the explosive charges.”

When those words were spoken, all the Aerial Knights immediately pricked up their ears and focused.

Fury of Heaven planes were the first batch of improved Fire of Heaven planes. Their bodies were even more compact and the cockpit had an additional round glass lid. Not only was Fury of Heaven more aesthetically pleasing, it received many capability upgrades. The most crucial change modification was the new star-shaped engine and external weapons system. The former was an inferior version of the Phoenix’s engine with a lower power output and without supercharge capabilities yet satisfying the assembly line output standards. The latter included the autocannons and aerial bombs, and could be customized based on the mission.

The first 10 Fury of Heaven planes from the factory were transported over by sea and were core to the air raid exercises. Those chosen to fly the new planes were undoubtedly the pilots recognized as outstanding candidates by the Princess.

Tilly intentionally paused for a moment, then pulled out a name list. "According to the plan, the 10 planes will be split into two teams with corresponding flight teams for escort, the first team Captain will be—Good."

"As you command!"

Everyone turned and cast envious gazes at him. As the Aerial Knight with the best combat record, there was no dispute to him being selected.

"Second team Captain—Manfeld."

The latter was stunned and took a while to recover. "Your Highness, you selected me?"

"Is there a second Manfeld here?" Tilly frowned.

"Yes, yes! As you command!"

Manfeld cried out in joy.

The nomination led to a flurry of whispers. Compared to the majority of the veteran Aerial Knights, he was a newcomer and the entries in his combat record could be counted with one hand. At the Impassable Mountain Range, his performance was only average, with him only taking down one demon. Although he performed well in practice, it was unexpected for him to be chosen as Captain.

But Tilly knew the immense talent and aptitude the newcomer had. It not only displayed in his piloting skills but his performance in intense battles. In terms of flight techniques, Tilly ranked him as top 10 within the Aerial Knights. But he greatly surpassed his peers in terms of his battle sense.

During the aerial battle, only Tilly noticed Manfeld's plane remaining at the formation's weakest position and drove away the hostile forces which attempted to attack from those spots, giving her Phoenix complete mobility to move about. Be it protecting his comrades going into offense or dispelling danger for them, Manfeld always appeared at the most needed locations.

This was definitely not an easy feat; aerial battles were mostly about rapid and substantial changes. The majority of pilots were only able to focus on their wingman and themselves, which was the aerial units required further subdivisions. The ability to examine the entire battlefield as a whole while being involved and seizing the effective incisions, his acute sense and scope far surpassed his flying ability.

Compared to Good who stood out for his individual skill, Manfeld's advantage and superiority appeared on the team level; thus, it was even possible that even he did not realize where his true talent lay.

After the battle, Tilly immediately looked up his detailed records. A knight lineage might have explained his attainments, but something worth musing was that a knight with such capabilities was unable to save his declining family. Manfeld's physique and strength limited his ability in close combat. If placed in a one-on-one battle, she believed that Carter could take him down with one hand.

But the physical strength of a pilot was not a factor for the rumbling engine and autocannons. By relying on the strength of the biplanes, the vast sky was obviously the perfect battleground for him to display his abilities.

Tilly did not explain her choice and believed that after going through a few more battles, Manfred and the others would naturally notice his advantage.

After disseminating the list of the two teams, she looked up towards the sun and issued the command to move out.

Directed by the signal flags, Phoenix was the first to glide across the runway and soar into the sky. The golden sunlight reflected against the metal wings and emitted a dazzling halo.

Following behind her was the Seagull. After the fall and crash of the first biplane, Anna produced a second quickly. In her perspective, it did not take her much time to do something she was so familiar with.

Finally, 40 Fire of Heaven planes and 10 Fury of Heaven planes with autocannons suspended on their wings formed a large fleet that swept over the City of Glow before disappearing into the western clouds.

### **Chapter 1408: Different People**

At the same time, Roland stood atop the castle walls and watched the fleet until they disappeared into the distance.

“Aren’t we being a little too hasty?” Nightingale expressed her worry, “The new biplanes only arrived yesterday, and they didn’t even complete any formal training regarding the dropping of bombs.”

Having been by Roland’s side for so long, she had a clear understanding towards the First Army’s combat processes. Every newly announced plans absolutely required drills and dummy runs. The General Staff would first undergo war room planning and verify its feasibility before moving onto the actual drill practice. Although the operation was to prepare for the Glory of the Sun, it was itself a standalone battle. According to usual practices, participants had to first study and practice with the corresponding task until they were confident of success before executing the mission.

“Yes, but time waits for no man.” Roland nodded. “Currently, all our reports indicate that Hackzord did not appear in any battle... In other words, the letter worked. The problem is that the Sky Lord is naturally mistrustful and paranoid; no one knows how long the letter will work to keep him away, so the faster the air strike occurs, the better.”

On a fundamental level, the operation was like the assault force—to probe the enemy. How would they react to an air strike? Did the Deity of Gods have any corresponding defensive measures? All of these were questions that they needed answers to before the decisive battle.

“Then... will it be fine without any training?”

“Relax.” Roland smiled. “Tilly already has a plan.”

Dropping a bomb was a technical skill that required perfect coordination between the pilot and plane’s equipment where even just ten to fifteen days of practice would produce little results. Now that they were in a rush for time, the first batch of Fury of Heavens did not come installed with sighting equipment, so it was impossible to practice even if they wanted to.

The plan proposed by Tilly made Hill assume central command—as long as the speed and altitude of the planes were defined, the drop point could be calculated; thus, the entire process became extremely simple. There was no need for the pilot to observe the ground; he was only required to release the trigger upon receiving command.

This method was somewhat similar to the early warning aircraft systems employed and developed in later generations, where the capabilities of tracking, positioning and, pursuit of the desired target were outsourced to a third party. When the data to open fire was transmitted to the aircraft, the latter would unleash fire and complete the final step for the offense.

The Seagull was precisely the early warning aircraft system to be in control of the overall situation.

“So that’s how it is.” After Roland’s explanation, Nightingale revealed a look of enlightenment. “As expected of Princess Tilly...”

“Oh?” Roland raised a brow. “And I thought that you would be sighing with regret for being the only person to not understand what it means.”

“Well of course, that might have been possible if it were the past.” She rolled her eyes. “But with Anna around, even people who have immense amount of knowledge would believe that they know nothing. I’ve long gotten used to it.”

Roland was dumbstruck by her reply. There was nothing glorious about it, yet Nightingale was able to answer with such confidence. But her frank reply made him surprised as well.

“And I’ve understood something over the past few years...” Nightingale shrugged her shoulders.

“What’s that?”

“See, you’re not a know-it-all, right?” She turned toward the gentle rays of the morning sun, her fringe reflecting the golden light. “But since you asked, I will reluctantly explain it to you—every single person has their respective strengths; there isn’t a need to blindly imitate someone else and one should focus on their own strengths. Or could it be that you only like... people who are extremely knowledgeable?”

“...” Roland was momentarily left speechless.

But it was a question that did not require his answer.

Nightingale’s expression revealed that she understood him clearly.

“That’s all there is to it. So remember to place more Chaos Drinks inside the cabinet.” Nightingale shook her fingers and turned to walk down the castle. “When everyone returns in triumph, I have to gather them to have a good celebration.”

Roland stared at her departing figure for a long time before coming to his senses. *We aren’t even in Neverwinter, where am I supposed to obtain Chaos Drinks... and that sentence of focusing on one’s strengths, wasn’t it just a pretext for her to enjoy life openly!*

He shook his head, not knowing whether to laugh or cry and followed along.

...



“This is Seagull, Your Highness. You have entered the floating island’s alert radius.” Early in morning at 8:35, Sylvie used the Sigil of Listening and issued her first warning. “In less than a minute, the fleet will be within the attacking radius of the steles.”

“Copy.” Tilly sneered. “I see them.”

Tilly never thought of hiding herself from the demons right from the beginning, she knew that the Deity of Gods had Eye Demons as sentries—the moment Sylvie saw them, they immediately noticed her. If the Seagull revealed its importance, it would be unfavorable to the plan. So she chose to go all in and attract as much attention of the enemy onto the fleet of fighter planes.

Right after Sylvie’s first warning, the enemies reacted.

Many black dots rose into the air from the island and went into formation before flying towards them.

*Hmph, they are rather cautious.* Tilly activated the wireless transmitter emotionlessly and tuned to all frequencies. “Attention, the demons have revealed themselves. Everyone, focus and prepare for battle! Team One, Team Two, move according to plan!”

“Understood,” Good and Manfred replied at the same time.

The Aerial Knights had an extremely simple formation. 50 biplanes were divided into two waves. The team tasked with the bombardment flew above the clouds in order to cut down the detection time of the enemies. Aside from the Fury of Heaven team and the five planes to protect the Seagull, the remaining 35 Fire of Heaven planes assumed the role of scattering the Demon’s defense.

The main fighter planes quickly closed into the 10 kilometer radius of the stronghold. At this distance, the black rocks on the floating island that resembled scales and the central city were visible with the naked eye. But at this moment, the steles that surrounded the stronghold didn’t rise as though non-existent.

To their expectations, the black steles were not meant to fight against the Aerial Knights.

“This is Phoenix. Has anyone located the Senior Lord that ambushed the ground force previously?” Tilly asked.

“...” Sylvie searched for a moment. “Not yet.”

*Seems like luck is on our side today.* Tilly looked back at the sun which was slowly rising above the horizon, the blinding light had perfectly covered the Aerial Knight’s direction of offense.

“The weather is good; a perfect day for their eternal rest.”

She suddenly accelerated. With the resounding roar from the engine, her plane flew upwards and was the first to shoot towards the enemy—

...

“Princess Tilly has engaged the enemy.” Sylvie reported with a solemn expression. From the looks of the situation, the Aerial Knights were at a clear disadvantage in terms of numbers. As they had taken the

initiative to attack the demons' main nest, the mobilization of the Devilbeasts were much faster than the previous time. "The enemy count is still increasing, if this goes on... they will get surrounded."

As though having sensed her worry, Wendy reassured her, "Relax, although there are more demons, the Aerial Knights do not need to shoot every single one of them down. They only need to delay them for ten minutes. Those devilbeasts cannot compete in terms of speed, it'll be better if you focus on the main objective."

*That's right... the earlier we drop the bombs, the earlier they are able to retreat. Worrying for both ends will only make me lose sight of my objective.* Sylvie bit her lips and focused her attention to the center of the main island.

Through the layers of Red Mist, a grand square and sharp monument suddenly entered her vision.

Although she was observing from a high and distant altitude, she was able to sense the immensity of the building—the building standing at a height of several hundred meters resembled a pillar rising from the deepest pit into the heavens. It felt as though all the human buildings that she had encountered had lost their luster in the presence of this construct.

#### **Chapter 1409: Bomb (I)**

Sylvie came to a realization that the structure before her was the mission's main target.

The scene of the center of the floating island was completely different from what Roland had illustrated. The demon city was built around the tall and pointed obelisk with a deep pit that separated the two. Countless inferior demons adhered themselves along the walls of the pit like worms living parasitically on the surface of a tree. On closer look, one would discover that they were excavating the walls endlessly and enlarging the size of the pit.

Most of the Red Mist was deposited here and formed a red lake. The towers close to the walls of the pit would eventually fall into the lake and become part of the large pit.

It was rumored that the obelisk wasn't that large in the beginning, but would grow continuously like a living animal while the accumulated Red Mist would expand. From these two points, one could roughly gauge the age of a demon city.

The city before Sylvie was obviously ancient.

Compared to the target, the biplanes could only be described as insignificant. Ignoring the bombs carried by the planes, even if the planes were to charge into the Red Mist, it was hard to imagine how that would ignite the Red Mist lake.

Suddenly, Sylvie let out a soft exclamation.

"What's wrong?" the sharp and attentive Wendy immediately asked in concern.

"I found a very strange... demon."

A demon standing at the top of the obelisk attracted her attention. According to how the demons worshiped the sky, any demon able to ascend the obelisk was no doubt an important figure. And in her eyes, the appearance of this particular demon revealed that it was no run-of-the-mill demon. It had a cloak wide enough to cover three to four humans with all sorts of ornaments hanging all over. When she got closer, she discovered that this demon had bone knives, metal armors, and even a few screws.

The enemy's head was also extremely unique. It was shaped like a pillar with all sorts of mask hung all over. The strange sight caused her hair to stand.

"Does it have very strong magic power undulations?"

"No... it isn't strong at all." This was what Sylvie was confused about. From its exterior appearance, it was at least a Senior Demon, but it showed no signs of moving upon its appearance. It did not even have any intention of gathering magic power to unleash anything, the only thing it did was to stare in the direction of the Aerial Knights without any intention of participating in any battle.

But since it did not pose any threat to everyone, Sylvie did not concern herself with it. She refocused her attention back to judging the most suitable drop zones for the two Fury of Heaven planes which were responsible for dropping the bombs since they were already reaching the edge of the city.

Two minutes later, she issued the first command through the transmitter.

"Team 1, you may drop the package."

"Roger that. Good out."

Even though it was a clear day, the clouds above the Impassable Mountain Range floated at a reasonable height. With the floating island moving at a constant altitude, the Fury of Heaven planes that flew over the clouds were not detected by any enemy.

Five biplanes formed a line and dropped the bombs weighing a 150 kilograms from the belly of their planes at a stable speed.

The instant the heavy bombs were released from the plane, Good felt the entire plane lift up as though its entire body had turned somewhat lighter.

The regretful thing was that he was unable to witness the outcome of the battle.

But Sylvie saw it extremely clearly.

Due to gravity, the five bombs quickly turned their heads towards the ground and used the inertia from the planes to follow a parabolic arc towards the city center. By the last 500 meters, they were almost perpendicular to the ground.

The demons also noticed the 'uninvited guests' from above.

Another devilbeast soared into the air and flew towards the clouds—but the movements of the devilbeasts paled in comparison to the descending bombs.

The five shadows dropped into the city in succession and exploded into a blazing fireball, producing smoke, dust, and rubble that flew over 10 meters high. The power and impact far exceeded that of a

152mm Howitzer! Although Sylvie was unable to hear the explosion, she was able to clearly sense the tremendous effects from the tremors caused by the violent explosions and the blast wave that radiated in every direction.

At the same time, the heatwave produced a few 'cavities' in the Red Mist like the formation of air-bubbles in fluffy bread.

From a bird's eye view, the diffusing grayish-black smoke pillar was extremely striking within the Red Mist. Perhaps the City rarely suffered from attacks for centuries in the past, but in less than half a month, since its invasion into the Impassable Mountain Range, its core area had been visited by the humans twice.

Yet, Sylvie's heart sank.

The drops were more accurate than the Longsong Cannons and had successfully fallen into the city center, albeit spanning a large area. However, due to the wind's influence, only two bombs struck the Red Mist Lake. Furthermore, they did not come into contact with the 'lake's surface' and exploded in midair.

The instant the fireball appeared, she witnessed a rippling blue light wave—exactly like the barrier that appears on Senior Demons!

"What happened?" Wendy noticed her peculiar expression.

"The obelisk's surroundings... is protected by a magic power barrier," Sylvie muttered. "The bombs failed to be effective..."

"Hey, hey." Shavi turned her head back in disbelief. "You mean that the demons expanded their barriers to the size of a city? How is that possible?"

She knew it was simply inconceivable. The effect of an ability was linked to the overall amount of magic power. For the barrier to encompass such a large area, it was impossible even for all the Witches combined. But the truth laid right in front of them, preventing her from shying away from the truth.

*That's right... that Senior Demon at the top of the obelisk!*

The instant she recalled the peculiar demon, Sylvie turned to look at him. This glance instantly caused all the hairs on her body to stand as an indescribable feeling surged from her heart—

The latter had unknowingly extended all of his dry and long arms to remove the masks from his head, revealing an extremely grotesque appearance. There were more than 10 stacked heads—a mix of demons, humans, and god knows what other creatures—that looked up to the sky. One of the faces was a female face that appeared extremely jarring. Every single face revealed different smiles, and it could be said to be the most disturbing scene that anyone could witness.

Sylvie could no longer endure the sight. She stooped down and let out a burst of vomiting sounds as she abruptly stopped her ability.

Wendy immediately picked up the communication device. "This is Seagull. Team 2, dump the bombs immediately and return."

“Copy that, was Team 1 successful?”

“No... there is a magic powered barrier around the obelisk, preventing the bombs from entering the deep hole.”

“Barrier?” The other side remained silent for a moment. “Got it. But I want to try again.”

“But there has been an accident here, Sylvie is temporarily unable to provide guidance, and the Devilbeasts are already nearing the clouds!”

“Relax, Team 1 will cover us.”

Wendy connected to Tilly and reported the situation. Surprisingly, the latter remained indifferent. “It doesn’t matter; let Team 2 try it out. We haven’t reached the point of retreat yet.”

### **Chapter 1410: Bomb (II)**

At the same time, Good received incoming communications from the Captain of Team 2. “This is Manfeld. Senior Good, I want to charge out of the clouds, I hope that you can help me!”

“Out of the clouds, are you crazy? We are in the enemy’s headquarters!” Before Good could reply, Finkin roared into the communication device, “And you heard it too, there is a barrier protecting the mist, what can you do? Newcomer, the battlefield isn’t a place for you to joke around!”

As the most advanced and improved biplanes, all the Fury of Heaven planes were equipped with transmitter-receivers, which was the reason why they dared to travel through the clouds without Tilly’s commands.

But Good did not object immediately. Compared to their levels of seniority in the academy, he was even more curious about the other party’s plan. “I heard your request, Manfeld. But even if gain sight of the target, you should know that without Ms. Sylvie’s calibration, the probability of you landing a fatal strike is extremely slim.”

Good had noticed the extraordinary gift the newcomer possessed during training. It was rumored that Manfeld was a down and out knight who came to Graycastle after being unable to integrate into the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Many Aerial Knights that came from ordinary backgrounds acted like his seniors mainly to vent their resentment and unhappiness of being bullied by nobles in the past.

In all honesty, Good did not have any favorable impressions towards the knights from the Kingdom of Wolfheart. They looked flamboyant, domineering, and were insufferably arrogant. But when they truly met strong enemies, they ran faster than anyone else. Good had witnessed countless disgraceful situations when the Hermes Church annexed the Kingdom of Wolfheart.

But it was Good’s first encounter with a knight who took the initiative to seek permission to do battle; thus, he wanted to know if the other party was intentionally trying to perform in front of Her Highness, or was he truly someone that stood out from the masses.

“Senior, do you remember the method of using the plane’s body to control the trajectory of the bullets?” Manfeld asked, “I think it should work with the bombs as well!”

The moment he finished his sentence, Good felt the buzzing sounds around him turn softer, as though his surrounding had become more spacious.

“That brat has already flown out of the clouds!” Finkin shouted, “What should we do?”

*Using the plane’s body to control the drop, hmm...* Good quickly realized the similarities in both techniques. He coughed twice. “We can’t leave Team 2 behind; Her Highness Tilly is still watching us from the side!”

“... Hahaha, that’s right!” Finkin paused for a moment, then changed his tone into one of righteousness. “Protecting comrades is what I’m proficient in, all of you go ahead without worries. Leave the devilbeasts to Team 1, Yeehaw—!”

*You’re truly easy to read.*

Good sighed, then pushed his control stick forward.

The two teams flew out of the clouds from different positions and dove downwards, drawing two paths in the sky and at the same time going against the devilbeasts. Although the Fury of Heavens were fewer in numbers compared to the latter, they pressed forward imposingly.

One team flew in an arc and collided with the devilbeasts while the other team flew straight for the obelisk. At such close distances, they were able to recognize the target even without Sylvie’s guidance.

Midway, a portion of the demons attempted to intercept the five Fury of Heaven planes, but the disparity in speed was plainly visible at that moment. The devilbeasts stabilized their altitude only to have the biplanes brushed past them. The Fury of Heaven planes that carried the 150 kilogram bombs were not afraid of being caught up by the devilbeasts.

After adjusting his direction, Manfred dropped the bombs.

His comrades following behind closely imitated his actions.

The bombs maintained a similar speed and direction to that of the planes. After flying past the defense towers and buildings, they flew towards the lake. Compared to the first bomb drop, these five bombs were concentrated in one location. Aside from the first bomb being stopped by the obelisk, the remaining four exploded directly above the Red Mist Lake.

The successive explosions caused the entire city to tremble. Under the soaring flames, blue ripples flickered repeatedly, preventing any of the blast to affect the Red Mist Lake from start to end. But everyone noticed the barrier was no longer as radiant as it was in the beginning.

“Well done, Newcomer.” Finkin whistled.

Good performed an abrupt turn and broke away from the devilbeast’s pursuit. He then switched to the all-frequency channel. “Your Highness Tilly, Team 1 and Team 2 have accomplished the dropping of the bombs. Requesting permission to return!”

“Understood, permission granted.”

The Phoenix shot out a red flare, to which the fleet responded by disengaging the demons and soared higher into the sky. Relying on the dazzling sunlight, they disappeared into the blue sky.

...

Mask released a contented gasp.

The humans had surpassed his expectations time and time again.

The separation of combat units, the feint by the main attacking force and immediate retreat after delivering the strike without any delay... It was a mere two to three minutes of time from the time it took the defensive troops to ascend, intercept, and to the end of battle. The nimble battle plan had undoubtedly maximized the strengths of the war machines even under the many restrictions.

*It's no wonder Ursrook had such restraining fear towards the humans, seems like I have indeed wronged him.*

But even the genius of the race only saw the threat the humans posed, and did not even perceive the essence of this mystery. *On the other hand, if even the clumsy and slow humans were capable of flying in the sky with the help of those iron birds, wouldn't it be even more astonishing if used by us? When that happens, the Sky-sea Realm will no longer be a tough enemy, and our race will be the ultimate victor!*

*If Ursrook had used this logic to convince everyone back then, who knows if I might had stood by him.*

*What a pity.*

"What was that tremor?" Donned in armor, Silent Disaster opened the doors to the top of the obelisk and walked in. "Did the Deity of Gods encounter an enemy attack?"

"That's right, but you came late and missed the exciting battle." Nassaupelle glanced at him. "Are you thinking of going to battle dressed like that? You shouldn't force yourself."

"You have no need to concern yourself over this." Silent Disaster retorted, "Where is the enemy?"

Nassaupelle pointed to the sky. "They have most likely discovered the clear difference between their iron birds and the Bogle Beasts. What an irony... In the Second Battle of Divine Will, the Bogle Beasts were the biggest asset we had to prevail over our enemies."

Silent Disaster stared at the sky with a nasty expression and did not utter a word.

"Relax." Nassaupelle donned his masks once again. "After my observations, I have already thought of a countermeasure. Compared to the Bogle Beasts, their movements and trajectories are too obvious. By the way, since you yearn for battle, why not help me with something?"

"..."

"Don't be so serious, I am not mocking you." Mask spread out his numerous arms. "There were a few iron birds that dropped to the southeast of the city. If the worms are still alive, capture them and bring them over. I think it shouldn't be difficult for you."

"You want them alive?" Silent Disaster asked coldly.

“Of course.” Nassaupelle smiled. “Only fresh brains are worth transplanting. Additionally, they have just gone through an intense battle and their aerial battle is the clearest, perfect for me to validate my countermeasure—This is my first time taking the brains of those ordinary lowlifes. I wonder which lucky human will earn the special glory?”

Silent Disaster walked away in disgust, and turned his head towards the Birth Tower.

Nassaupelle turned away indifferently. He knew that no matter how much the other party disliked his methods, Silent Disaster would put in his all for the race.

Mask looked into the direction where the human territory laid and gradually extended a hand forward. From his angle, he only required a hand to grasp the entire continent into his palm. *In a few more days, the Deity of Gods will enter the Hermes Plateau, and the Symbiotic Demons in the experimental station have already accumulated enough power. The King shall see that I alone am enough to support an entire army, Blood Conqueror and Silent Disaster are merely to provide contrast.*

Suddenly, a light flickered in the distance.

It came and disappeared in an instant. Although it was extremely small, it was bright to the point of being glaring like the reflection of the sun on the ocean surface, or like a beam of light reflected from a reflective surface.

*Was that just an illusion...*

Nassaupelle was stunned by the sudden incident. By the time he turned his attention to the direction of the Swirling Sea, the tiny point of light had disappeared.