

Witch 1411

Chapter 1411: An Unexpected Package

A drizzle poured over the shore of Gemini Bay in the Kingdom of Dawn.

Agatha was unable to ascertain if it was a natural phenomenon induced by the nuclear test or just a coincidence.

The violent explosion above the water surface lifted an extremely magnificent water spout that could be seen even from 15 kilometers away. In contrast to the ash blue background, the water spout appeared to be pure white, as though it did not come from the sea. The water spout gradually surged upwards as though it had become weightless. The entire process lasted for tens of seconds, but it was a sight that transcended common sense for the majority of the spectators.

In the end, the water spout turned into rain that returned to the sea, replaced with a twisted white mist that was even expansive and higher than the water spout. At this point in time, the spectators were able to see the peculiar cloud of smoke.

The sailboats that had gathered at the location of the explosion had disappeared without a trace.

That was when the rain started pouring down.

It had been her biggest regret to miss out on the first nuclear test back on Snow Mountain, and now, she had resolved that regret by attending this trial.

Agatha could not help but recall the words between His Majesty Roland and Phyllis two years ago during winter. I was after the artillery demonstration in Neverwinter.

Exothermic reactions between chemicals were merely the simplest results of an explosion.

He was pursuing the recreation of the Glory of the Sun.

Aside from the ridiculous talk regarding the 'Resplendent Radiation,' His Majesty has always appeared reliable.

But what surprised her this time was that the spectators did not produce any applause.

The nobles invited for the viewing sat blankly in their seats, apparently even forgetting to whisper to each other. Many of them had complicated expressions, so much so that hints of fear had flashed past their eyes. As the representative of Graycastle, Agatha had originally written a passionate speech as requested by Roland, but after seeing the expressions of the spectators, she immediately stood up and vacated her seat.

She was able to guess their thoughts.

There were times when silence revealed everything.

Regardless, King Roland had honored his promise. The nobles from the Kingdom of Dawn who had participated in the meeting had witnessed first hand humankind's capabilities.

The subsequent gathering of data was naturally conducted by the members of the Ministry of Industry who specialized in it.

In less than half an hour, the preliminary verdict was sent to her: the test had attained its expected results.

Agatha wrote "Everything went smoothly without a hitch" on a piece of paper, tied it to the carrier pigeon, and sent it flying.

The carrier pigeon flapped its wings and disappeared into the horizon.

Hopefully, the air operation on the other side went smoothly as well, she thought to herself.

...

Within the walls of the City of Glow, the General Staff sorted out all new information related to the air raid operation.

The outcome of the attack was ideal, the Demons never expected for the humans to launch a new attack right after the loss in the Impassable Mountain Range. Compounded with the Aerial Knight's agile maneuverability in the air, the fleet was able to draw in close to the Deity of Gods before the enemy reacted.

This meant that although the demons had the ability to lift the floating island which spanned tens of kilometers, they did not have the ability to monitor its surrounding completely. Not only did this provide the superiors of the First Army with hope, it gave the Seagull the opportunity to record all the positions of the devilbeasts. Although they were unlike the biplanes that required a large and flat clearing to take off, they had to be reared to be integrated for war. Thus, all the devilbeasts were found to be located at larger Blackstone towers and were undoubtedly important targets.

And the most crucial information was the magic power barrier that protected the Red Mist lake.

Not only did the Aerial Knights discover its existence, they verified that the barrier could be weakened through consecutive bombings. Although the principle was unclear, it held the same traits as the barriers used by Senior Demons, except that it had a wider scope.

The General Staff believed that once they found the connection between the two was established, they would be able to speculate and figure out the necessary firepower required to break the barrier.

Losing four Fire of Heaven planes was considered the smallest price to pay for all the information.

"Manfeld Castein..." Roland placed the report down and sighed emotionally. "He truly deserves an award."

It wasn't difficult to be determined.

The difficulty lies in having both the determination and ability to realize the decision.

His charging into the demon city and diving down to unleash the bomb just by relying on his own understanding and finally leading his comrades to safety could only be attributed to talent which could only be described as extraordinary.

"I will pass on this honorary prize to him." Tilly shrugged her shoulders, then followed on with a murmur, "But why haven't I seen..."

"What?"

"No, nothing. I have other things to do, I'll make a move first." Tilly turned and headed towards the door.

Roland heard a chuckle from behind.

"Eh... did you hear what she said?"

"No." Nightingale smirked. "But I can guess."

"Really? Spit it out."

She raised five fingers.

"That many?" Roland was shocked.

"Who asked her to have the identity of a princess. That's already a discounted price."

"Alright, it's a deal."

Nightingale licked her lips. "That Aerial Knight truly has talent, but your praise for him was over the top. Out of all the Aerial Knights, isn't it obvious who is the most talented and outstanding? You seem to be treating people who have the ability to accomplish things as a norm, but not so much for this matter." At this point, Nightingale paused. "After all, talent isn't something we get to choose, right?"

...

That's right, being capable is sort of a talent as well..

Roland sat by the window in Rose Café and watched blankly at the pedestrians walking along the road.

Although having talent puts someone at a higher starting point, but to completely exhibit that talent requires a large amount of effort. I seem to have overlooked this recently.

"Hey, what're you dazing out for?"

Roland retracted his gaze and saw Valkries holding onto two cups of coffee as she sat opposite him.

"I'm thinking about how to reach the Bottomless Land as soon as possible." He threw out the complicated thoughts in his mind and went through the air raid on the Deity of Gods once. "Is this magic barrier capable of covering the entire region related to the ability of some Senior Demon? Or is it a newly researched technique?"

"If I'm you, I'll stop using the label of demons on us." Valkries retorted, "My race's specific abilities depends on what magic stone we receive, selecting a barrier magic stone just depends on the right compatibility and having a high attainment in using it. It doesn't really relate to our ability of wielding it. For example, I did not merge with such a magic stone. Aside from that, it is impossible for a magic stone to encompass the entire Birth Tower, it should be the result of Mask's research."

“What’s that?”

Valkries drank a mouthful of coffee. “By using a core apparatus to simulate the cyclone structure of the magic stone and amplify its result substantially. This idea came about a long time ago, but there were many restrictions on it. I never imagined that Mask would succeed.”

This means that the barrier on the Deity of Gods and the magic barrier on their bodies are essentially the same. Roland silently noted. At least it proves that the assumption proposed by the General Staff is feasible.

“Is the development of Symbiotic Demons also from Mask?”

“Yes, in some sense, he is very similar to Transformer Heathtalese. He has never utilized any offensive type magic stones.” Valkries nodded. “Considering that the Symbiotic Demons aren’t ideal at dealing with the Sky-sea Realm, it is only logical that the King sent them here.”

After chatting about the situation, Nightmare Lord stood up and left.

After sending her to the door, Roland suddenly voiced out. “Thanks.”

She stopped abruptly.

“Hackzord hasn’t appeared in the two battles. I think that he believes in the content written in the letter. If he was present, I’m afraid that the First Army would have suffered more losses. Just for this, I should be thanking you.”

“Don’t forget that I’m not helping you, but my race.” Valkries turned back and replied. “The best repayment will be the honoring of your promise. I don’t need any gratitude aside from that.”

She left and disappeared into the crowd.

Roland returned to the cafe when his phone suddenly rang.

It was a message mentioning a delivery.

This puzzled him—he had not purchased anything online recently.

Even so, he returned to the apartment and opened the delivery box to retrieve the package sent to him.

The package was half an arm broad and felt weightless, completely inconsistent with the paper box’s size.

After inspecting and verifying that the package was for him, he brought it into his bedroom and opened up the package.

The moment the box was opened, he froze.

Inside the package was a frozen astrolabe.

Chapter 1412: The Third Act

How can this be—an astrolabe?

Roland only snapped back to his senses after quite a while.

Unlike the core of a Fallen Evil, the astrolabe only appeared within magic creatures or Oracles that no ordinary martial artists could contend against.

Roland believed that the Martialist Association could only hope to defeat such an enemy by concentrating its force and plotting a meticulous plan, but they would never hand over the astrolabe willingly. Sending the astrolabe through express delivery was an act that risked the chance of infecting others to which seemed as though it was child's play.

But if it wasn't sent by the Association, who sent this?

Roland checked on the address and telephone number from the sender and discovered that they were fake. The only believable point was the postal address used that indicated it came from the same city. Obviously, the sender wanted to remain anonymous.

The fact was that the actions of the other party wasn't that brilliant. The delivery company did not require their customers' true identities simply to cut costs; otherwise, tracing the delivery would had been easy. But to create a false address in hopes of hide from a trace? It was a near impossible task in modern society, as checking the cameras or asking the employees were typically ways to quickly lock onto the sender.

But Roland was hesitant about using the power of the Association to investigate the sender.

By the looks of it, the other party obviously knew Roland and held some goodwill towards him; otherwise, they would have never sent such a problematic item to the apartment.

Regardless, a person that assisted him in impairing the Erosion was most likely standing on the same side as him. Roland decided to maintain the situation knowing that the other party had no wish to reveal themselves.

Roland mopped his forehead and decided to push the problem for later.

More importantly, he needed to deal with the astrolabe in front of him.

He focused his attention back to the box.

If the astrolabe came from a rift monster, I can directly merge and get rid of it. But if this came from an Oracle, wouldn't that mean...

No, how is that possible. Roland couldn't help but laugh. To be able to kill a rift monster is already an exaggeration, much less an Oracle. Even Fei Yuhan was only able to struggle persistently against one, I shouldn't delude myself into such fantasy.

He placed his hand on the astrolabe.

The astrolabe revived from its static time as blue and white speckles started revolving. The center became brighter and brighter until a resplendent beam of light shot out. At this point, everything occurred very normally, like how he had witnessed the scenes merging.

But in the next second, the world suddenly plunged into darkness. A large amount of consciousness surged into his brain while bringing an unbearable pain!

Roland almost lost his consciousness under the perilous situation. After stabilizing his state of mind with great difficulty and waiting until everything settled down, he opened his eyes and found himself standing in a void. The snowflakes were present like in his previous experiences, but having gone through it three times, his mind was able to filter through the unrelated clamors.

... Fine, it actually comes from an Oracle.

Seems like I have to investigate the person's identity.

Roland puckered his lips and looked around.

It's still using the universe as its background?

Roland was uncertain due to the void's spaciousness and emptiness. Compared to his previous experiences, this trip was obviously darker, as though the stars had been hidden.

After spending some time, Roland finally found a base point from the sparse snowflakes. The dim light resembled a source on the verge of being extinguished and was the size of a needle embedded in the darkness.

Following this point, he found more lights.

Upon seeing this, he became even more uncertain of his location.

The lights were arranged evenly with equal gaps in between, which was unlike a natural celestial body.

"Let me ask you, what is gravity?"

While doing a surveying with widened eyes, a voice that suddenly came out from behind caused all the hair on his back to stand!

He immediately turned around and noticed a gray and blurred shadow that floated erratically, as though it was incorporeal.

The words were not spoken in a language he was well acquainted with, so much that he was unsure if it was even a language. Although he did not understand the reason, he knew that the content was simplified upon being mapped in his mind. It was as though the other party had produced a complex electromagnetic waves that passed through a filter, filtering out the greater part of the message, leaving only the content he was able to comprehend.

"Were you... asking me?" Roland asked carefully.

'Gravity is the force most deserving of reverence in this world.' Another voice in his consciousness gave the answer, and it sounded extremely familiar to him.

Roland rolled his eyes.

First, the sudden question had spooked him, followed by the answer that came from nowhere. Roland thought that he had landed in a memory fragment to which he was participating in and did not realize that he was a mere spectator.

“That’s right, it is a universal force, stable, and the more imposing it is, the stronger it becomes...”

“It dilates time and brings about form from nothingness. That is how life can take root, for civilization to continue its existence.”

The voice gradually filled with cadence, as though it was narrating an eulogy at the top of its voice.

“And the first force recognized by every race is gravity. It is a cradle and a chain. In a civilization’s history of improvement, they struggle to be free of gravity.”

“To flee from the ground and fly in the air, to a distant place, isn’t that so.”

“Now, it will be an obstruction for us once again, our final obstruction.”

‘The risks are unpredictable, I do not suggest implementing the Gateway Plan.’

“Every step forward has its risks, you should know that.”

‘I understand. My suggestion from the beginning hasn’t changed.’

“But you’re still helping me to complete it.” The gray figure flickered twice. “For the plan, I have waited for many millennia, it is time to activate it.”

Wait a minute, what is the Gateway Plan? What does it mean for it to be the final obstruction? Roland felt as though he had missed out on an extremely crucial piece of information. But no matter how he opened his mouth or what he thought, he was unable to inquire further. The parties engaged in the conversations never replied to his shouts.

‘... I understand.’

“Buzz...”

As the conversation ended, the snowflakes increased in quantity.

According to his experience, when the episode reached its end, time would flow faster. But without having any reference, he was unable to make an accurate judgment.

Roland watched as the lights converged towards the center. Instead of an increase in illumination, it quickly became pitch black. The remaining lights flew towards the darkness like moths attracted to a flame without stopping. Roland did not know how many had converged into the darkness, as everything that had occurred felt like an instant and at the same time, endless...

Finally, as though a limit had been breached, a dazzling red light blossomed from the darkness and swept past the entire world in an instant!

It traveled faster than the speed of light, completing its sweep by the time Roland reacted, turning everything back to its original state.

But Roland knew that the world was completely different—a great change had taken place!

The first feedback was the gray shadow that dispersed like a mist under the red light.

Following that were the deaths occurring all around. At every corner of the darkness, death and destruction repeated continuously, Roland was unable to see the scenes with his eyes, but everything was reflected in his mind: The burning cities in the distance, the collapse of a planet's orbit, the fishes that stopped moving in the streams, and the rotting worms in the caves...

Even his body which was floating in the void started deteriorating.

There were no difference between superior and inferior lifeforms.

At this point of time, the snowflakes had occupied his entire vision.

When everything ended, the sight of his bedroom appeared before him again. Roland endured the strong sense of discomfort and shifted his body to the window with clenched teeth. The warm afternoon's sunlight sprinkled over his body, and the sight of the streets brimming with life allowed him to heave a sigh of relief.

At this time, he felt something wet on his cheek.

He used a finger to wipe it, only to discover that it was a tear drop.

Chapter 1413: Beyond the Western Region

Damn it...

Roland took a deep breath and raised his hand to wipe away the tears. *That felt a little way too real.*

But he was knew that he was merely lying to himself by acting relaxed; it was simply to conceal the stirring emotions within. At this point, his hands continued to tremble while his back was covered in cold sweat.

Just a moment ago, he had experienced an awfully dreadful catastrophe. Despite it being an instant in reality, it felt as though he had accompanied the final moments of life and civilization as they faded away. Or in other words, he felt as though he was part of it. From the birds, worms, fishes, beasts, from the inferior lives to the higher lifeforms, the scene of every single entity struggling and the sounds of suffering made him feel as though the entire world was damned.

This tear was for them.

For a time, Roland was unwilling to leave the sunlight that shot in through the window.

The scenery outside remain unchanged, but was somehow particularly moving to him.

Even the sewage pipes by the walls or the advertisements for animal furs were extremely vivid experiences for him.

After staring at the bustling streets for a long time, he calmed himself down through great difficulty.

He was certain of one thing—magic power did not exist at the world's genesis. This guess was raised by Anna in the Second Act, and it had finally been verified.

The Gateway Plan was what led to the appearance of magic power.

But it was without a doubt that it was not the outcome the people from the conversation wanted.

The “gray shadow” looked forward to breaking free from gravity despite the blunt mention of the ‘unpredictable risk’ by the other party.

From the looks of it, magic power was a result that neither had anticipated.

And the catastrophe triggered by magic power was the so-called ‘price’ mentioned by God. In the end, the power was spread far and wide without a short time frame, which the people who spoke could not escape from.

And the world turned into what was right in front of him currently.

Although Roland had understood this, he knew that all that he knew was only the tip of the iceberg.

The most important question was, what exactly was the ‘Gateway Plan,’ and why was the ‘gray shadow’ so fixated on it? How was the Battle of Divine Will related to all to these?

Or were they hoping that others would fill up the gap?

Roland turned his head and looked at the express delivery package for a long time before picking up the phone.

“Hello, Mister Rock, I need the Association to look for a person for me.”

...

Neverwinter, Fertile Plains, Tower Station No. 2.

A train gradually stopped at the transfer bay.

“Buddy, I’ll make a move first.” Without waiting for the carriage to stop, Charms jumped up the platform excitedly.

“Hey, you brat, you can’t expect me to carry this refillable boiler alone—”

“Please, I beg you! Drinks on me, tonight!”

He darted towards the cargo carriage and left Hank’s voice trailing behind.

When his military conscription ended in Taquila, Charms did not become the formidable and handsome officer that he had envisioned himself to be, despite the fact that his family of four—his elder brothers and father—were conferred medals and awards for their sacrifice by His Majesty. The Administrative Office eventually picked him and his father out of the First Army’s lineup and transferred them to become train drivers.

His father did not have any objections towards the change, since the trains still required manning even after the war. Aside from transporting cannons, the powerful machine had a wide range of applications. Although the main army returned to Neverwinter, the vehicles that moved along the Fertile Plains actually increased instead of decreasing. Thus, the Administrative Office had made the decision to transfer them to be train drivers.

In his father's words, every position was to serve the King.

Furthermore, their remuneration was even higher compared to the past.

But Charms was not happy about the change; handling coals daily was not as satisfying as wielding rifles and fighting monsters. Another reason for killing more demons at the frontline was to take revenge for his brother's sacrifice who died defending the camp, but waiting upon the train could not fulfill this purpose.

But what he could not accept the most was the fact that his second brother was unaffected. Not only was he promoted, he was also chosen to be part of the First Army's elite force.

This is a little too unfair.

Charms thought that his following years would be spent unhappily in the desolate plains, but the development surpassed his expectations.

Farms and residential areas emerged to the north of the Impassable Mountain Range in quick succession alongside the increase in the number of train stops, pubs, and shops. Transporting goods was no longer a dreary work, and if they ended early, Charms could spend some time having a few drinks at the pubs. The benefits of being a train driver was that everyone welcomed him, be it the locals or migrants. Everyone was extremely interested and invested in the land once hailed as the 'Cursed lands.' Every session at the pubs ended with excited talks and free drinks.

Of course, there were no difference in the treatment at Neverwinter or other stops. What truly made him feel with anticipation was a person here—

"Everyone, please line up. Those in line will receive their own puppets!"

By the side of the carriage, a girl cupped her mouth and shouted. Even before Charms could approach, she spotted him and waved her hands excitedly. "You're here!"

Seeing the adorable smile, Charms felt that being a train driver was truly great.

"I'm here to help." He pulled up his sleeves.

"Alright, you can take a puppet for yourself as well." The girl smiled and took a doll made out of straw, tiptoed, and hung it over his neck.

"Oh, trying to court favor." Another girl jumped out from amongst the goods and stared at him coldly.

Charms did not retreat from her stare, the two glared at each other for a long time and froze by the side of the carriages.

In the end, it was the girl who interrupted their staring match. "Come one, Balshan, Mister Charms is being warmhearted and kind. Didn't we receive his help when we were lost?"

Upon hearing the episode of them getting lost, the woman's face froze. She turned her head and snorted disdainfully. "I can't be bothered to bicker with you today. Move aside, I need to work."

With that, she picked up two bags of seed and walked towards the plaza without turning back.

“I’m sorry...” The girl bowed in embarrassment. “Balshan is just...”

“It’s alright, I don’t mind.” Charms waved his hands and shrugged the matter off magnanimously, then carried a bag of seed and followed along.

In truth, he had been long looking forward to this day, and had drawn countless scenarios in his head. There was a new play at Neverwinter’s theater and he had booked two tickets and planned to invite the other party out after work.

The two gals were Witches of the Sleeping Spell. Their meeting could even be hailed as dramatic, When the girl boarded the train for the first time to assist in the construction at Station No. 2, they had accidentally missed their stop. At that time, she weeped like a tear-stained beauty while gazing out into the vast plains not knowing what to do. By her side, Balshan was also at a loss. Faced with the unfamiliar people and land, they maintained vigilant and guarded, yet were afraid and frightened like cats who had their tails stepped on.

Helpless, Charms could only stop the train and send them over to the train that was traveling in the other direction. He informed the driver about their destination and eventually got the two to Station No. 2 by nightfall.

He thought that it was an accidental encounter and would never meet them again. Who would have thought that the two Witches were sent to help at the station.

In the course of time, they gradually got familiar with each other, and he finally learned her name—Dusk.

Chapter 1414: Useless person

Dusk was extremely charming.

It was not just her appearance; of course, her facial features were extremely beautiful, which was a common feature of the Witches. It went the same for Balshan, who constantly gave him the cold treatment. It was impossible to use the term ugly to describe them, so much that even her serious face actually... contained some sort of unique and distinct style.

But Charms would never say that out loud.

It would just bring about even more cold and deadly glares.

Dusk was adorable in many other aspects—her smile when she encountered happy things, her cries when she stumbled upon setbacks. She never hid her emotions or thoughts and was as pure as the clear spring in the snow. But she remained steadfast and dedicated in certain fields, for example staying at the station for an entire week and waited for Charms to appear just to thank him.

In short, she was perfect.

Dusk was unlike any of the other ladies he had encountered and was extremely unique. If everyone else was black and white, she would be red-orange, just like her short and curly red hair.

Comparing the two, Balshan was lacking greatly despite the fact that the both of them were Witches.

“Hey, don’t you think that I’m oblivious to what you’re planning.” Upon walking into the plaza, Charms found Balshan waiting by the door. “You should know that we are Witches, right?”

“From the very first day we met,” he retorted.

“So you admit you are harboring the thoughts to fool around?” Balshan raised an eyebrow.

“I do not know why you feel that way, but Dusk is so adorable, I do not have any reason to let anyone else be with her.”

If Dusk was present, Charms would have never dared say such words, but he did not wish to cower from Balshan. He was able to voice out anything—no matter how bold and audacious they were.

Not expecting him to admit his feelings, Balshan was dumbstruck for a moment. “Wh... what adorable, that’s not the point! She is a Witch, and you should know what a Witch cannot do!”

“So what.” Charms stuck his chest out and revealed the ‘war hero’ badge worn on his shirt. “I have an elder brother, so my father wouldn’t mind even if I don’t have any children! And this is a badge personally awarded by His Majesty; it is definitely enough to ensure her future livelihood, so what other doubts do you have?”

Balshan was stunned.

It took her a long while before she retorted, “Hmph, empty words count for nothing, I will keep my eyes on you before I expose you.”

“Whatever.” Charms shrugged. “Right, if you didn’t mention that you were a Witch, I would have forgotten about it. What power do you have? Why do I feel that you are purely using your strength to transport the supplies?”

For some reason, he sensed the other party’s expression worsen after asking the question.

“Are you thinking that I don’t belong here?”

“No... I was just curious.” Charms immediately waved his hands. He realized that his words came across as offensive and sarcastic. *Strange... I’m usually careful with my words; when have I ever become so careless? Even if she is unreasonable, I will never stoop so low and be despicable.*

Just when he thought that she had stopped answering, Balshan whispered, “My ability is to kill.”

Charms took a deep breath. “What?”

Balshan picked up a seed from the ground and placed it in her hand. Soon enough, the seed started withering at a speed visible to the naked eye. Eventually, it shrunk and turned into a brown lump.

“Any lifeforms that I touch rapidly wither like this seed... It doesn’t stop at plants or animals; even stones and metals are affected by my ability, just that the effect is much slower on them, and the magic power exhaustion is far larger. So it is mainly used on enemies.”

Charms took two steps back. “Then why aren’t you fighting against the monsters?”

“The Witch Union doesn’t approve of it. They are responsible for the delegation of work to the Witches, but my ability requires physical contact to be executed. They recognize that the risks are too great and there are very few places for me to execute my ability. In the end, they allowed me to choose what I wanted to do, aside from battle.” Balshan laughed out in self-mockery. “So verbal promises do not guarantee anything... and His Majesty Roland is no exception.”

“You lie!” Charm was unable to accept anyone slandering King Roland in front of him. “His Majesty has never failed to live up to his promises; even the most inconceivable thing to the Neverwinter citizens will definitely be... realized, as long as the King promises it...”

He looked at Balshan’s expression and suddenly felt his confidence wane. “Hold up, you’ve met His Majesty?”

“Yep.” Balshan threw the black lump to the ground. “The Witch Union arranges work according to abilities first before asking for their personal opinions. Then both sides will come to an agreement. Dusk is the perfect example. Those with abilities with no apparent use will be passed to His Majesty to handle personally. According to him, all types of abilities can and will be useful to Graycastle’s development, and that there are no useless abilities,” she paused for a moment, “I belong to the latter.”

Charms found himself in a dilemma and could not think of anything else useful for a purely destructive ability aside from battle, even after racking his brains. His Majesty must have been vexed back then. But Charms felt that it was not King Roland’s fault, and admitting this point was far worse than him not honoring a promise.

“What did His Majesty... say?”

“He said that in fifty to a hundred years, I will be able to add brilliance to visual effects and stage props.” Balshan’s lips curled upwards.

“Uhm... what are they?”

“Who knows. It seems to be related to Magic Movies, I’m not too sure as well. At that time, His Majesty said many things, for example, the extensive use of visual effects, and that it is a must-have in the industry...” Her excitement waned as she walked over to the platform. “A very crafty way of explaining my abilities, right? Even if he was telling the truth, it is a matter that can only occur many years later. But for now, I am truly a useless person...”

So that’s the reason, Charms suddenly realized the crux of the matter.

He finally understood why Dusk had stopped mid sentence before.

While the Witches were in hiding, Balshan was definitely the core of the team capable of fighting their pursuers, but after King Roland’s declaration that Witches no longer had the need to fight at close quarters and experience bloodshed, she instantly became useless. One can only imagine the great disparity between the two.

At that moment, Charms was able to empathize with her. When he found out that he was being transferred from the army. He, too, had felt the world abandoning him. Under that situation, it was extremely normal to have a bad temper.

Looking at the other party's lonesome back, his heart softened.

Originally, he had thought of ways to chase Balshan away and to invite Dusk out alone, but he no longer felt that he was able to do so. If even Dusk was not around, wouldn't Balshan be completely alone?

After coughing twice, Charms reached into his pocket. "Anyway....I have two tickets for the new play tonight."

Balshan turned her head back and waited for his next sentence.

"But I have something on tonight, and doubt I can make it..." He hesitated. "Why don't you enjoy the play with Dusk; it'll definitely be better than wasting the tickets..."

Balshan revealed a look of surprise.

But before she could answer him, the sky suddenly echoed out with crackling sounds.

The two looked up and saw thousands of birds sweeping over their heads. It was Charms' first experience in witnessing a flock of migratory birds that resembled dark clouds which blotted out the sunlight.

He had heard about migratory birds having a fixed period and trajectory of flight, but it was clear that it was not the time of the year for the migratory birds to move. The flock of birds consisted of all sorts of species, and Charms discovered that they looked hurried without the usual gracefulness while soaring with their wings spread open.

"What's going on with them?" Charms raised an eyebrow. "Are they migrating en masse?"

"Hush!" Balshan placed a finger to her mouth. "Do you hear that sound?"

"I only hear their wings flapping; what other sounds are there?"

"No, the sound is even more distant" Her expression became serious.

Charms stopped his breathing and focused. This time, he heard a faint hum. It was low and turbid and sounded like a whistle mixed with the flapping of the birds.

His eyes widened.

That is... the warning alarm from the north!

Chapter 1415: The Unexpected Attackers

At this time, the other workers sensed the strange situation and stopped in their tracks as they observed the flock of birds and discussed the situation amongst themselves.

But Charms sensed the severity of the situation.

It was not the alarm used by the city, but the pre-warning system used by the First Army. It indicated that the enemy was already close to the frontline and a battle could ensue at any moment... In other

words, in the time that it took for the alarm reach them, the First Army might already have begun clashing with the enemy.

Did the demons regroup and stage a counterattack?

That was too inconceivable!

He had followed his father and fought from the Misty Forest to Tower Station No. 10 and knew of the basic situation in the north.

The reason for the First Army's decision to rebuild the Taquila Ruins was to take precaution against this. The tall watchtower standing on the vast and empty plains was sufficient to observe distances beyond ten kilometers. Without first mentioning the time required for the Red Mist tower to be built, the distance between the Taquila Ruins and the Holy City ruins was 300 to 400 kilometers apart. How was it possible that the enemy had appeared so close to the new King's City without any warning?

But it was no longer the time to think about the possibilities.

The sentry post responsible for developing Station No. 2 only had a hundred odd garrisoned troops—the majority of them new recruits. If they truly encountered an ambush, would they be able to beat the demons and ensure the safety of the area?

Charms had no idea.

Balshan suddenly ran towards the station.

"Hey, where are you going?"

"Dusk is still at the station, I'm going to pick her up!"

Her reply reminded him—according to evacuation regulations, people who heard the alarm had to evacuate to the nearest refuge, but the unloading bay was situated at the outskirts of the area development. The people at the bay would require a considerable amount of time to run to the nearest residential area, let alone turn back. Rather than take Dusk to the refuge area, they might as well take the train and leave.

"Everyone look!" Charms pulled the badge off his shirt and raised it in the air. "I am Soldier Charms from the First Army. Station No. 2 development is under attack. Everyone, put your things down and follow me. As the shelter is too far away, we are taking the train to flee from danger!" He then muttered under his breath, "An ex-soldier."

But no one heard his last whisper. The instant the term "First Army" was announced, the workers treated him as their leader. All of those who were already running stopped and converged around him.

This surprised Charms, and at the same time, it increased the pressure on him.

When he was in the First Army, he was just an observer in The Blackriver, a soldier and subordinate under his father. He never had any experience in leading others. The sudden transition to being responsible for a crowd made him nervous. But since he had already said those words, he had no choice but to persist on.

"This way!" Charms led a group of workers and sprinted by the side of the train and coincidentally bumped into Hank.

"Br-brat, what's going on? I was just trying to find a corner to relieve myself..."

"Don't bother about that for now." Charms grabbed his shoulders. "Have you added coal and water? How's the pressure in the boiler?"

The latter nodded his head frantically. "Everything is running in order and we can move at anytime..."

"Very good!" he shouted, "Quickly turn the direction of the train. We are heading towards Station No. 1. Remember to sound the horn before driving off, got it!? Also, prepare a gun and keep it at close!"

"What... about you?"

"I'll settle the others first, then I will meet you at the front of the train."

In less than a minute, the train spewed out smoke and gradually drove out of Station No. 2.

During this period of time, many more workers noticed the commotion and quickly boarded the carriages, including the civilian army who were meant to watch over the goods. Although there were only about a dozen of them, they were equipped with flintlocks, allowing Charms to ease up a little.

Although he badly wanted to be with Dusk, he knew that it was of utmost importance to send everyone to safety. Once he knew that she was safe, he quickly returned to the front of the train.

Right at that moment, Charms caught sight of the enemy.

It was a group of demonic beasts!

"Oh god, wasn't it said that they only appeared during the Months of Demons?" Hank leaned against the window and muttered.

"No one knows what's happening in this godforsaken land." Charms retrieved his rifle from his locker and climbed up to the roof of the train adeptly. With the train moving backwards and him standing on its tail, he was able to clearly witness everything happening behind. A mix of ordinary and large demonic beasts charged fanatically, pushing and shoving each other. Their speed of attack was faster than he had imagined as they charged into the unloading bay area soon after the departure of the train.

If everyone had ran with their legs, no one would have escaped the violent monsters.

He had made the right decision.

That thought allowed him to heave a sigh of relief.

But his suspicions still remained.

Demonic beasts were monsters that were easily defeated many years ago by the flintlocks and cement walls and were unable to step into Neverwinter. With the current First Army being far stronger than what they were in the past, how was it possible that the demonic beasts had got past them?

As gunshots occurred, it intensified his confusion. He noticed that the gunfire was aimed towards demonic beasts that had appeared from the north. Following the Van'er rifles shooting them down, only

trails of black blood was left in its wake. The problem was that the demonic beasts did not appear to have experienced much change. Their form of attack remained the same as wild beasts, with sharp teeth and claws. Their threat was far lower to that of spear-wielding Mad Demons. This confused Charms. How did such an enemy quietly overrun Taquila's forces?

"Bang!"

Following a loud boom, the train suddenly slowed down, as though it had collided into something.

Charms was almost thrown off the train. He turned in anger but was instantly doused in shock! Unknowingly, a bizarre monster had appeared by the side of the train. Half of its body was connected to the carriage, obviously having been run into. Its blue blood sprayed all over the place, dyeing half of the carriage exterior. The monster had many appendages and outer shell that resembled reptiles, with a scythe-like sharp blade protruding out from its head that testified its position at the top of the food chain.

The odd thing was, he did not discover any of such monsters while at the front of the train. Where did it come from?

But Charms did not have the time to think about that.

Because he discovered that the tracks in the distance had been split into two!

"Hank, hit the brakes!" He screamed while squeezing among the crowd in the train while using his fastest speed to grab onto any handrail. Although his companion was at a loss, he obeyed the instructions immediately. The sharp screech of the brakes resounded through the entire train as a pungent burnt smell pervaded the air.

But it was too late. The train ran over the broken railway and the heavy carriages instantly caused the wheels to sink into the rubble and went off track. The connected train carriages which had lost the restraints of their tracks collided into each other, ultimately flipping and overturning in tremors.

Chapter 1416: Trapped In A Dangerous Situation

Charms felt the world spin as his ears filled with the sound of metal twisting, the whistling of steam, and Hank's screams entered his ears.

The moment felt arduously long, and when the carriage finally stopped, he found his body lying on a window pane.

The fortunate thing was that his four limbs were still working. He flipped over, lifted his head, and climbed up without any hindrance, which meant that he was basically fine. It was the best news after experiencing a derailment incident, albeit a temporary one.

"Hey, pal, are you ok?" He endured the smoke and steam while groping his way blindly to Hank.

"Uhm... I should be fine." Hank groaned. "Heavens, what happened?"

“The demonic beasts broke the rail; we need to leave quickly.” Charms patted Hank on the shoulder. “I don’t know what city you’re from, but remember this. Heavens will not protect you in Neverwinter, the only ones capable of protecting you is the King and this flintlock. Now follow me.”

Charms climbed out of the window above him and saw the completely derailed and overturned train, the carriages laid on the ground in disorder, forming a crooked line. But due to the reduction in speed before going off the rails, the carriages were not badly damaged and maintained their original shapes. Many more survivors took the initiative to open the doors and windows as they attempted to climb out through the holes.

Right at that moment, Charms heard a clear gunshot.

His heart thumped as he turned to Hank and shouted, “Listen, you’re going to help everyone get out of this situation safely, then bring all of them to run west!”

Without the train, it was too risky to attempt running towards Station No. 1. But they were able to see the outline of the Misty Forest—so long as they ran in and call for Ms. Leaf, Charms felt that the people had a higher chance of escaping the pursuit of the demonic beasts.

“I-I got it...”

Upon seeing his nod, Charms sprinted above the carriages.

He had to find Dusk.

When he arrived at the last carriage, Charms discovered a few militiamen fighting against a few wolf-type monsters. Although the militia had managed to kill a few of them, they continued their attempts to climb up the carriages relentlessly.

He undid the safety and fired at the wolves from a distance of less than ten meters. Although it was his first time pulling the trigger against the enemy, he quickly found the feelings he had during training, and quickly took care off the rest in no time.

Even before he could catch a breath and ask about the witches, the ground started trembling! The empty bullet shells slid down the carriage and produced clanking sounds.

At the peak of the tremors, a gigantic worm suddenly erupted out of the ground and opened its bloodied mouth before them!

“Holy shit, what is that thing?” The militiamen cried out in alarm as they pulled on their triggers, instantly producing blood splatters across the body of the monstrous worm. But compared to its size, the wounds inflicted by the bullets were negligible.

The epidermis of the worm started to swell, so much that Charms was able to see the throbbing green arteries beneath the surface. After releasing a disgusting sound of squirming, demonic beasts covered in mucus were spat out.

Charms nearly couldn’t believe his eyes. *There are actually such weird monsters among the demonic beasts?*

But he did not have the luxury of remaining in shock; the new demonic beasts that had appeared were combined hybrids. Charms noticed that if they were allowed to separate, the humans were bound to fall.

“Open fire, open fire!” He fired at the enemies while shouting to the others.

His words awoken the militiamen who immediately used the train carriage as cover while unleashing their bullets at the horde of demonic beasts.

In a split second, the crowd of demonic beasts were riddled with bullets, but the gigantic worm did not shrink even after spitting out the demonic beasts. Instead, they continued swelling until a pair of sharp tusks stabbed out from the inside, lacerating the worm’s large mouth as the final hybrid tore out amid blood!

The moment Charms laid his eyes on the thing, his heart almost froze.

It was the monster he had heard about from his father—the thick tusks, four legs and two pairs of arms indicated that it was the rumored ‘Fearful Beast of Hell,’ the most difficult hybrid faced by humans. It had only appeared a few times before, but it was known that ordinary firearms were incapable of stopping it!

After ripping apart the worm’s mouth, the Fearful Beast of hell raised its sharp blades and charged towards the carriage!

Charms subconsciously jumped to the ground. Almost at the same time, the enemy collided onto the carriage with an impact that actually caused the heavy carriage to slide. Two unfortunate militiamen who were unable to avoid in time were flung to the ground and crushed beneath the sliding carriage, instantly turning into indistinct mush even before they could scream in pain.

The fearful beast’s tusks got stuck within the metal exterior and gave the humans the opportunity to fire. But aside from making the former even more irritable, the bullets were useless.

Suddenly, a slender figure rushed into the battlefield. She was clearly a human girl, causing everyone to raise their muzzles.

“It’s dangerous, get away!”

Charms immediately recognized the other party and blurted out immediately, “Balshan!”

Balshan ignored their warnings and performed a leap and rolled directly to the belly of the monster. This stunned Charms for any slight mistake would result her in being trampled by the monster.

Balshan seemed to be aware of it; she followed along the monster’s struggling feet and extended her hand to grab the other party. The thick fur quickly decayed at a speed visible to the naked eye, causing the Fearful Beast of Hell to unleash a terrorizing wail!

As though having received a command, the other demonic beasts dropped everything they were doing and rushed towards the gigantic monster, targeting the witch beneath it. The situation immediately became critical—if either the wolf monsters or avian monsters got close to Balshan, she was bound to be powerless towards them. Furthermore, the close proximity prevented the humans from firing their weapons due to the high risk of stray bullets finding their way to her, plunging everyone into a dilemma.

Damn it, I have no other choice!

Charms gritted his teeth and unleashed a roar as he charged out from behind the carriage, running straight towards the struggling Fearful Beast of Hell.

The situation took a strange turn. The humans that were running away from the Fearful Beast of Hell had turned into a situation of who could reach it first.

A bear-type demonic beast lunged towards him with its mouth wide opened. Without attempting to dodge, he drew his rifle and shot—

“Get lost!”

The instant the gun was fired, the muzzle found its way to the target’s head.

After the loud bang, the bear monster’s head was instantly blown into pieces. Without even looking, Charms continued to sprint towards the Fearful Beast of Hell!

To lower the probability of hurting her by accident, I have no other choice except to close in!

“Ah—”

A mutated eagle and boar monster arrived by the monster’s side. They braved the risks of being trampled by their peer and opened their mouths at Balshan in attempts to corner her. But Balshan knew who was the real threat and remained fixed on the Fearful Beast of Hell at the expense of exposing herself to the two demonic beasts.

By this time, the area of decay had spread even further while Charms had found his way to Balshan and engaged in close combat with the beasts. The high capacity Van’er rifle showed its advantage at this point—the requirement of not needing to manually reload. Charms was able to take out all the demonic beasts regardless of how thick their hide were, with their exposed heads right in front of him as they attempted to bite at Balshan. Of course, he was bitten a couple of times while protecting Balshan, at times even using his own body to block the enemies’ attacks.

The Fearful Beast of Hell finally pulled its long tusks but barely had any strength left. The decay had spread across its entire body, causing the initially thick and practically invulnerable fur to become as thin as tissue and no longer capable of supporting the weight of its internal organs.

It staggered for two steps and dropped to the side, its internal organs and intestines gushed out of the very first decay spot, at the same time releasing a pungent and rotten smell.

Charms noticed that the internal organs looked like they had been soaked in the sewages for months and had long turned white.

Upon seeing the death of the Fearful Beast of Hell, the other demonic beasts scattered.

Charms endured the pain from every part of his body as he caught Balshan, who had lost her footing and collapsed, into an embrace.

At that moment, the Witch was in a state too horrible to endure. Wounds covered her entire body, while her legs that had been bitten by the demonic beasts had turned into mangled blood and flesh with bones protruding out from all angles.

Chapter 1417: Not Too Bad

“Why are you here?” Charms carried Balshan up and hobbled towards the train. “Where’s Dusk?”

“She’s with the rest... moving towards the Misty Forest.” Balshan forced a smile. “As for me... if I didn’t come to help, I’m afraid that all of you would have died here. So... are you still going to blame me?”

“Um, I just—”

“You think I’m not suited to appear on the battlefield?” Her speech was weak but filled with disdain.

“Don’t forget, I’m a combat witch, cough... when you were still playing with mud, I was already fighting for my life.”

You’re already hurt to this extent but you still won’t forgo the chance of reprimanding me. You’re truly not adorable at all.

But having heard that Dusk had left safely, Charms suddenly felt more at ease.

I guess Hank did a good job.

Just then, squirming sounds came out from behind them again.

Charms turned back, only to see the bloodstained worm swelling up once again.

“What the hell, is there no end to this...”

He moved over to the carriage and placed Balshan down.

“Right, take the time while you still have to run.” Balshan heaved for breath. “Your cowardly companions have all fled. You still have the chance to make it if you leave me here— Hey!” Her expression suddenly changed. “What are you doing?”

Charms sat down and drew ammunition out of his bag and started reloading his weapon. “Isn’t it obvious, I can’t run away from the demonic beasts while carrying you.”

“Then leave me here and go, run by yourself!”

“Is that what you did in the past? In the First Army, King Roland taught us that we will always be fighting for the ordinary people. I am unable to leave you, an ordinary citizen, behind so that you can stall for time while I escape alone.”

Balshan was startled. She had never expected to find a day where she would be treated as an ordinary person.

Charms arranged all the magazines in front of him and leaned against his rifle. “Besides... the longer I stall the enemies, the safer Dusk will be. So you better not grumble.”

He never blamed the militiamen. They were never part of the true military and their responsibilities were mainly to prevent thieves and burglars at the train station. Ordering such people to fight against demonic beasts could only be considered unfair, and Charms felt that it was already a successful operation for them to have survived for so long.

“You...” Balshan seemed like she wanted to say a few words, but eventually kept them to herself.

“They’re coming.” Charms took aim at the newly produced demonic beasts and pulled the trigger—

The gunshots sounded much thinner on the plains as compared to before. The thin thread of smoke came out from the muzzle that had pointed straight at the largest threat, while the other smaller demonic beasts were left to the men around him to handle. Neither of them exchanged any communications, yet the unusual tacit understanding between them was formed. The trust he laid within them and theirs in him made him feel as though he was fighting a war alongside the First Army.

He felt as though the resistance had gone on for a long time, yet at the same time as short as an instant. Due to his blood loss, his vision gradually blurred and his motor skills slowed. Despite being even more heavily injured, Balshan did not fall. She wrapped cloth around a hand as bait and used the other hand as a lethal weapon. For the wolf and other small demonic beasts, a single touch was enough to severely injure them, if not lead to their deaths.

Charms was surprised when he found no trace of despair on her face. Her expression was not one of a severely injured person. She remained high in focus and her firm movements and bloodstained brows made Charms think about how different she was. It also made him realize that this was what a Combat Witch looked like.

She had once lost everything, but in that moment, she had once again regained her true self.

When the new monster bore its way out of the worm, the two knew that it was the end for them.

“A pity about those tickets...” Balshan moved back to his side with a smile that effused some mockery. “But for you to die here... at the very least I can be at ease knowing that Dusk will not be cheated by you...”

You... you’re really not adorable at all.

Charms snorted. “Right, I bet you’re even more regretful, to have to be by my side at your last few moments—”

“No...” She interrupted him. “Actually, I think—”

“Woooooo—”

An intense steam whistle masked her words as regiments of flames exploded around the large worm while the rocks and dust prevented the demonic beasts from temporarily moving.

Charms suddenly jolted with energy. He propped his body up and looked towards the direction of the whistle.

A row of black armored vehicles transporting batteries of artillery had appeared, and they were firing endlessly.

They were none other than the Blackrivers which played an outstanding role in the Fertile Plains in the Northern Expedition!

He shook Balshan excitedly. "Do you see that! They are Blackrivers—our reinforcements have arrived!"

But the latter did not react.

"Hey..." Charms turned his head, only to see that her eyes were closed as she slid down to the ground.

"Hey, wake up. HEY, WAKE UP!" Despite him shaking her, Balshan did not open her eyes.

...

It was two days later when they met again.

"This is her room, do you need me to bring you in?" Chief Butler Camilla from the Sleeping Spell asked.

"No, thank you so much. I can do so myself." Charms immediately bowed to the other party. It was his first visit to the Witches' residence. It was a location that no one was permitted to enter except for those that had received invitations from the residents. He had only tried his luck, but did not expect them to agree to it so readily.

"Please take note of the time." Camilla nodded and left.

Charms let out a long sigh of relief.

Upon thinking about the situation two days ago, he felt extremely embarrassed. Up until now, the medical personnel's tirade still lingered in his ears.

"She's still breathing, if you continue to shake her, she might really die! Seriously, you're obviously someone who has been through battle, yet you're unaware that someone will be prone to fainting after they relax having persisted all the way to the end. Are the rail track soldiers not taught emergency aid? You only know how to make a big fuss out of this. Why? Is she an extremely important person to you?"

Charms shook his head and threw the thoughts to the back of his mind.

In fact, there was not an actual need for him to visit her so anxiously after knowing that she was still alive. After all, it was difficult to make out who was truly visiting who. Charms was completely wrapped up in bandages that even slight motions resulted in pain for him and he appeared pathetic. Despite that, he felt that if he did not see her personally, his heart would never settle down.

Upon thinking about that, he extended his hand and knocked on the door.

"Coming."

The door swung open and Dusk appeared in his vision.

"It's really you." She revealed a happy smile. "When Miss Camilla mentioned that we were having a visitor, I already guessed it was you. Thank you for saving Balshan!"

"Hey, I think you have it all wrong. Clearly it was me who saved him." The familiar voice came out from within the room.

Charms walked into the room and met Balshan seated against the bed frame. Sunlight from the window illuminated half of her face and her short brown hair—Surprisingly, despite being severely injured, she looked more spirited than him.

Of course, she was equally wrapped up in bandages; even her head was no exception.

“There’s nothing strange about it.” As though sensing his doubts, Balshan shrugged. “A Witch’s body is stronger in every aspect than an ordinary human, so my recovery is naturally faster than yours. So...” She paused for a moment. “Don’t you think that you will have the opportunity to be alone with Dusk?”

The well wishes in him instantly vanished into thin air. Charms rolled his eyes but knew that she was not someone that required his concern.

“Since that’s the case, I’ll be going.”

“Hey, you’re leaving just like that?” Dusk was bewildered.

“Of course, standing isn’t good for my recovery, especially since my body is weaker in all aspects compared to her.” Charms looked at Balshan in provocation. “I have to recover fast so that I can quickly date you in front of her... for a play.”

“A date? With me?” Dusk smiled. “Okay.”

Wait a minute, she agreed so quickly?

“In your dreams!” Balshan snorted. “I will definitely recover faster than you!”

“Let’s just see.”

“We shall see then!”

The two glared at each other like every beginning to their quarrels. Dusk stood by the side and laughed, seemingly happy about their survival.

When Charms walked out the door, he suddenly recalled her words that were overwhelmed by the steam whistle. “Hey, what did you say before you fainted?”

“Nothing.” Balshan replied casually, “I wasn’t conscious by the time the train arrived. I think you might have made a mistake.”

“Alright.” Charms rubbed his temples and closed the door.

“What was he talking about?” Dusk asked.

“He was merely spouting nonsense.” Balshan smiled and turned her face back to the sunlight.

—That’s not too bad as well

Chapter 1418: The Fused King

Deep within the Impassable Mountain Range, at the mountainous area of Hermes.

The gigantic shadow cast by the Deity of Gods had touched upon the edge of the plateau, with Red Mist pouring down the mountains and connecting the east to west, turning the mountain range into a magnificent red line. With this supply line, the army from the ridge of the continent could pour straight into the Four Kingdoms endlessly without suffering any restriction.

Everything was within Mask's calculations—

Although the humans never ceased in their attacks, they failed in stopping the Deity of Gods from moving forward. The following battles became a war of attrition; the demons held the advantage in numbers. Furthermore, with his technology made their numbers even more massive. Even Inferior Demons which were useless in the past were strengthened to become war weapons. The disparity between the two races widened.

The humans indeed possessed unconventional techniques, but that did not remove the disadvantage that was fundamental to their race—the former required more than ten years to reach maturity from birth, while Inferior Demons only required a short time span of two years, and there was no need for them to go through the trouble of choosing a spouse to mate. As the injuries and deaths accumulated, humanity would eventually crumble.

That's right, the development did not deviate from his expectations—except for one.

"I want to know what exactly happened?" He stood in the observatory at the bottom of the Deity of Gods and roared at his subordinates.

All of them glanced at each other and lowered their heads. No one dared to utter a word.

Nassaupelle was not one to ask rhetorical questions because they were merely means to vent emotions and a waste of time. Only inferior beings like Blood Conqueror or Resentful Heart were fond of doing so. One only needed to see to know what happened—a large number of demonic beasts suddenly appeared on the Hermes Plateau and fought against the Symbiotic Demons. But some of the Symbiotic Demons that were meant to spread throughout the Four Kingdoms and slowly exhaust humanity were stopped by demonic beasts!

They converged in from various choke points around the plateau and into the abandoned cities. The mountain pass that might had been a fort used by the humans to repel the demonic beasts in the past, but it was under the control of the demons as well.

If that was all, it would have been fine.

Nassaupelle saw the Sky-sea Realm 'Nest' amongst the demonic beasts.

This was the reason for his loss of composure.

Unlike the humans, the demon race was aware of the demonic beasts, a branch of the Sky-sea Realm monsters, similar to that of the Inferior Demons of the demon race. At every Months of Demons when magic power becomes abundant, the 'Nest' unleashed a large amount of spores that scattered through the ocean and wind, infecting ordinary wild beasts and transforming them into various grotesque monsters that underwent mutation and bloodfests.

These demonic beasts were weak in terms of combat ability and were of no threat to the race. Even the Sky-sea Realm treated them as 'harvest fields' to collect desirable traits and never saw the demonic beasts as their main fighting force. From another point of view, the Sky-sea Realm also had little control over the continent and, aside from inconveniencing the demons through such methods, it was difficult for them to dabble with matters in the continent.

But the 'Nest' was different.

It was a middle-tier being from the Sky-sea Realm and was a target the race would not easily abandon. Furthermore, the 'Nest' was extremely difficult to fight against in the sea but extremely clumsy on land. It was strange for the 'Nest' to have been sighted on the Fertile Plains.

Over the past 800 years, the demon race had gradually swallowed more than half the Land of Dawn and relied on the geographical terrain of having the ocean to one side as a form of natural barrier to prevent the Sky-sea Realm from attacking from the rear. The convergence of so many demonic beasts in the inner parts of the continent was understandable, but the appearance of a 'Nest' completely overturned the situation.

Either the some idiot had neglected his duty and allowed the Sky-sea Realm to infiltrate, or something bad must have happened in their rear!

The majority of his subordinates thought that way, but did not dare say a word.

After the sudden loss of contact with the King, an exceedingly sense of unease had taken root in Nassaupelle's heart.

"Lord Mask." A higher ascendant suddenly walked into the observatory. "The Birth Tower sends a message. The King has summoned you!"

"What?" Nassaupelle turned abruptly. "Are you sure its the King?"

The other party was startled by the question. "From the undulation of the Realm of Mind, it comes from the Presiding Holy Sea... My lord, could there be a problem?"

"No, I'll go right now," Nassaupelle reined in his emotions and replied indifferently. Silent Disaster and him both agreed that it was inappropriate to divulge the matter of having lost communication with the Blackstone region in order to prevent a drop in morale.

At the end of the day, it was still the 'Nest' that broke his tempo.

After reaching the top of the spire, Mask focused and responded to the powerful undulations.

This is truly from the Presiding Holy Sea... Just that, it's slightly different from before. It was a pity that with Nassaupelle's standards, he was unable to pinpoint the specific difference.

"It is an honor to be summoned by you, my respected King! What exactly happened before?" Nassaupelle immediately went into his customary grumbles. "In the days without your guidance, your humble servant remained anxious and uneasy. The Sky Lord's whereabouts are currently unknown, but fortunately, the Symbiotic Demons have performed well at the Western Front..."

“Enough.” The King immediately interrupted him. *“I know you have much to say, but that is not important. We have lost Blackstone.”*

Nassaupelle immediately forgot about flaunting his accomplishments and remained stunned for a while before repeating in disbelief. *“Blackstone... has been lost?”*

“Although we have not been invaded completely by the Sky-sea Realm, it was only a matter of time. Our enemy has become completely different from before and this resulted in the complete destruction of our already weak perimeter. Resentful Heart died in battle.” The King remained indifferent, as though speaking about the fate of the race had nothing to do with him. *“I have already given the orders to abandon Blackstone region and to retreat to the Land of Dawn.”*

“I beg Your Majesty to reconsider!” Nassaupelle replied anxiously, The King was talking about a migration of a population numbering over a hundred million. Excluding the Inferior Demons, there were still at least tens of millions. Their predicament of having insufficient Red Mist was already a problem, so how many of them could survive the trip to the Land of Dawn? Not even ten percent! And with the Sky-sea Realm attacking the Land of Dawn, they could only gain a footing by hiding deep within the continent, but how many strongholds could they have in the Fertile Plains for the race? If they had the ability, they would never have tried to occupy Taquila!

“Sacrifice is inevitable, but it is the only viable solution now,” The King answered. *“The Red Mist will not be a problem. Upon retreat, the old Birth Tower can be transferred—this has been tested at the ridge of the continent, and Starfall City, Arrieta, Taquila, Hermes... all of these God’s Stone mines in human lands can be used for breeding.”*

“But the simultaneous movement of so many Birth Towers, even with the power of the entire race behind it—” Nassaupelle paused for a second. *“Could it be, that you—”*

“That is right, I have merged with a magic core and transformed the City into a new Deity of Gods.”

Mask felt a cold shiver travel down his back—the merger with a dead object signified the King’s permanent fixture on the Birth Tower like an ‘overseer’... The King’s cold logic showed no mercy to himself, and this injected fear into Nassaupelle’s heart.

The loss of communication must be because of his transformation.

But it was just as he had said, all the logistical issues could be easily solved. With the power of the Deity of Gods, moving a few Birth Towers within it was was feasible, it also replaced the need for a stronghold to release Red Mist and reduce the wear and tear from the migration.

The last problem remained in the humans.

The moment he had that thought, he gained the King’s confirmation.

“The race no longer has the time to waste on the humans. We need to obtain their legacy shard as quickly as possible to have a chance at fighting the current Sky-sea Realm.”

By sparing no expense, there was only one way to destroy the humans in the shortest possible time.

“I order you to transit into phase two of the migration,” the King announced.

Nassaupelle immediately felt excited.

In truth, phase two had been his idea. He had never thought that it would come into fruition.

It definitely led to earth-shattering destruction!

“As you wish, my King!”

Chapter 1419: Dual Identity

A grand procession occurred in the City of Glow.

Under the watchful eyes of the citizens, the Church procession slowly passed through the city gates carrying a series of flags. Walking right in front were the City Knights that had not appeared for a long time, but everyone was fixated on the lady dressed in a luxurious gown with a crown on her head.

She was the rumored newly appointed Pope, and the key figure that defeated the rebels and led Hermes back to its right track.

Despite the Church’s vague stance towards the invasion of the Kingdom of Wolfheart and Everwinter, they denied having a certain influence over the City of Glow. In addition, the parading squadron were frequently seen at the frontlines of the battlefield, providing emergency relief to the refugees and at the same time boosting the morale in the fight against evil, earning countless gratitude and appreciation. The news slowly passed on through various channels back to the City of Glow, causing the citizens to be extremely curious about the new Pope.

After all, the old Church was an aloof existence, one in which even the King had to obtain permission for a visit. A Pope willing to risk her life by putting herself in danger and her care for every citizen was rarely seen. And every time the lady nodded and smiled towards the crowd, it would incite a series of excited shouts. Aside from her identity, her outstanding appearance was another reason for the hurrah.

Eventually, the procession arrived before the inner city walls.

The Pope dismounted the horse and took slow steps up the flight of steps. Waiting by the entrance was the King of Graycastle, Roland Wimbledon.

The two extended their hands and performed a brief grasp. Although it was the first for the overwhelming majority of spectators to witness the strange and new etiquette, they were able to tell the equality between the Pope and King. This confirmed the rumors that the new Pope was supported by Graycastle, and that both parties had rebuilt the relationship between them.

Both walked alongside each other under the intense applause from the crowd.

“My apologies for my impudence, Your Majesty.”

After the doors closed, the lady bowed down and was about to genuflect when Roland stopped her.

“No, I think it’s good. Besides, you’re no longer the Pure Witch of the past and the Witch Union doesn’t require so many complicated formalities. Could it be that you’ve been in the Holy City for too long and have forgotten this point?”

The lady was Isabella, the one who had been delegated to Hermes and assumed control over the Holy City as a representative of the Church. She was responsible for settling the orphans and nuns, as well as prevent the Pill of Madness from spreading.

“Of course... not.” Upon finishing her sentence, Isabella was instantly stunned after processing his words. She raised her head in surprise. “Your Majesty, you just said...”

“That’s right, Wendy previously suggested to admit you as a member of the Witch Union, and I agreed.” Roland nodded. “Although your punishment was five years, you performed well. Treat this as a reward.”

Isabella only responded after blanking out for a while. “But Your Majesty, I...”

“Upon joining the Union, you will receive a fixed number of Chaos Drinks a month.”

“Uh—” The latter wanted to reply with a ‘but,’ which got stuck at her throat.

“I know what you want to say, really...” Roland sighed. “Pure Witches like you enjoy persisting in the strangest of things, or should I say, torture yourselves. But atonement isn’t just about chains and leg-irons. If I have to prepare these things for you constantly, I will be in for a headache as well. So at such a time, just be like the others and thank Wendy.”

“Yes...” Isabella bit her lips and lowered her head. ‘I understand.’

“I know that you have lived amid responsibility and orders in the past, but it doesn’t matter now. There will come a day when you will get used to your new life.” Roland changed the topic, “This meeting is a rare publicity opportunity and it should have been made grander, but I did not want to waste time on the ceremony and the celebration feast. You should be aware of the demonic beast attack on Neverwinter.”

“Yes.” Upon coming down to proper matters, Isabella’s expression became serious. “Did you call for my presence to understand more about the demonic beasts?”

“That’s right, since Hermes has been the main power resisting the demonic beasts for the past hundred years, I think the Church must have accumulated quite an amount of relevant information.”

Isabella answered without hesitation, “I will tell you everything I know.”

When Roland learned that Neverwinter suffered from a sudden demonic beast attack four days ago, he originally didn’t care too much about it. Back then, humanity had already gained the strength to defeat the demonic beasts, so there was no need for worries with the present army. Although it was somewhat unusual for a large number of demonic beasts to appear outside of the Months of Demons, the First Army had gone through many battles against the demons in the region. That was the reason for his negligence on the information.

He never expected that the situation had spiraled out of his expectations.

On that same evening, he received multiple telegrams from the North Slope Mountain that the situation had developed rapidly after an abrupt turn. Many demonic beasts had crossed Taquila’s front line and attacked the developing grounds where stationed troops engaged in resistance but failed to stop the enemy. If not for the timely reinforcements of the armored vehicles, the loss would have been far heavier.

In the reports were mentions of a monster that seemed like a ghost; it moved extremely quickly and silently, almost invisible to the naked eye and would only produce an outline from the bloodstains of its victims.

This made Roland realize that he had gravely underestimated the power of the demonic beasts.

...

After Isabella's recount, Roland realized his conjecture had been verified. Compared to Hermes' Holy City, the Months of Demons at Graycastle was merely a tributary to a bigger sea. The types of demonic beasts far surpassed that of the demons, some hybrids were almost indistinguishable from their original forms as beasts.

For example, the savage demonic beasts with extremely long bodies which were capable of digging and scaling walls, or the bird-bodied demonic beasts with goat horns that posed the largest threat to ordinary humans with their cold howls. These were creatures that the Western Region had never encountered. At the same time, he had a notion towards the attack that came without a warning. The horde of demonic beasts that appeared behind the developing area was most probably due to the savage demonic beasts.

But these were unable to explain the grim situation in Neverwinter. Although Neverwinter did not have a large city wall like the Holy City, the First Army were all experienced soldiers with weapons sufficient to bridge any shortfalls. Perhaps the humans were plunged into chaos at the beginning, but with the contingency plan set into motion, Roland believed that the army could stabilize the situation.

Aside from that, he discovered that Isabella never once mentioned the monsters that moved like a ghost. And this aroused his suspicions. Was this a brand new enemy or were the reports a mistake due to confusion?

At this moment in time, a chamberlain brought in a paper parcel.

"Your Majesty, Neverwinter sent a new letter."

"It isn't a telegram?" Roland was surprised.

"Yes, it was delivered by air."

"Open it."

Inside the package was a paper parchment. Roland unfolded it across the table and realized it was a portraiture of the attacker. Obviously, it was drawn by Soraya. Compared to a written report, the latter's information was undoubtedly far more precise.

Seems like even without fighting capabilities, they are striving to defend their home.

Quickly, a monster's corpse captured Roland's attention.

It looked to have been smashed by a train—half of its body was plastered on the metal surface, but the remainder of its body was not one that Roland could link to any of the demonic beasts Isabella had described.

“Have you seen such a hybrid in Hermes before?” He pulled the piece of paper and placed it in front of Isabella.

She looked at it carefully and shook her head.

Behind Roland, Nightingale suddenly let out a cry of surprise.

Chapter 1420: A New Extraordinary

“What is it? Is there a problem?” Roland turned his head.

“It looks somewhat similar to the thing that I’ve killed before.” Nightingale spread her hands out. “But the one I killed was much smaller and did not have such a ridiculous figure...”

“Wait a minute, you’re talking about your investigation at Great Snow Mountain?”

Nightingale nodded her head. “An earlier case was when searching for the Ice Witch. Based on its ability to turn invisible, it explains why the humans treated it as a ghost.”

“Are you able to pinpoint the differences between this and the monster you’ve killed in more detail?” Roland asked.

“Erm... let me think about it. It was a few years ago.” Nightingale took the drawing. “The one that I met was, at most, half the height of the monster in the drawing. Its front claws were also in the form of scythes, but much smaller; the belly was only used for climbing, unlike this, which has so many claws. For the head... Right, the demonic beast that I fought did not have such an obvious mouth and razor sharp teeth. The drawing depicts it more like a predator. If not for its front claws and ability to turn invisible, I would not have linked the two together. At that time, I figured that they were one of those hybrid demonic beasts.”

Roland’s expression turned solemn. “But in the end, we discovered that they belong to the Sky-sea Realm.”

If we were to say that the demonic beasts posed a certain level of threat, the Sky-sea Realm was on a whole other level. As a participant of the Battle of Divine Will, they were capable of suppressing the demons from an unknown location, so they couldn’t be underestimated. For them to appear in the Western Region was definitely not good news.

But the northern part of the Fertile Plains had been occupied by the demons after the Battle of Divine Will, so how did the Sky-sea Realm infiltrate into the belly of the continent?

Could it be...

A horrific and exaggerated thought vaguely appeared in his head.

“Right, talking about the demonic beasts... The First Army encountered them in the snow mountain remains.” Nightingale frowned. “You can call it a coincidence or luck, but are the demonic beasts and Sky-sea Realm in cahoots?”

Roland and Isabella turned and looked at Nightingale at the same time.

The latter immediately covered her mouth." I was just making a passing remark, you don't have to take it too seriously."

"In all, I'm afraid that this problem is even thornier than what I had anticipated." Roland gently rapped on the table. Regardless, Neverwinter is the core of the human industry, and nothing should ever happen there. If the attack is related to the Sky-sea Realm, it'll be difficult to get through it even with the most prudent countermeasures. "Isabella, the information you've provided is very useful... Go and have a rest first; I will have a member of the General Staff contact you soon."

However, Isabella remained in her spot. "Your Majesty, I have a matter to inform you."

"What is it? Tell me."

"While I was here in Hermes, I continued to experiment with God's Stones." She retrieved a draft paper from her clothes and placed it on the table. "Do you remember Agatha's conclusion the last time? That they are obstructed and unusable not by dense magic power but by other factors. I performed repeated experiments here and discovered a factor that might possibly be related to frequency."

"Frequency?" Roland exclaimed.

"I referenced it to the Natural Science Theoretical Foundation that you compiled, and maybe what I said isn't too accurate, but I can't think of a better description." Isabella then described her discovery succinctly. "In fact... after learning about this, my magic power actually condensed."

Nightingale blinked in surprise and observed Isabella for a moment before blurting out, it's true... I didn't notice that."

Roland laughed. "That means that the Witch Union has a new Extraordinary? Congratulations on the breakthrough."

Isabella shook her head. "Everything was possible because you gave me a chance."

"But persisting in the research was your choice." He insisted. "Did you feel anything new after having your magic power evolve?"

Isabella extended her palm out, revealing a ring donned on her middle finger. The gem in the middle gradually lit up.

Any other person would be surprised and interested in what seemed to be a magic stone capable of releasing light, but Roland only had suspicions towards it. There was something different about it

"This stone... isn't from the demons!" Nightingale exclaimed.

Roland immediately realized what was happening. Magic stones were the source of power for the demons, and their appearance was never a factor; thus, the majority of them were oval. But this stone had distinct cuts on them like precious stone polished to a polyhedron, something only humans would do.

But humans did not wield the ability to create magic stones so far, and all of them came as spoils of war or were excavated from ruins. Cutting and polishing affected the composition of a magic stone and, in other words, they had to be cut before the transformation.

“This was my first experiment after evolving.” Isabella became slightly wistful. “It was originally a God’s Locket of Retribution used by the Church that are no longer used to restrain any Witch.”

Roland turned agape in surprise. “You turned a God’s Stone into glowing magic stone?”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” Isabella nodded her head. “If for example, my past ability was to completely repel the waves emitted from a God Stone, I am now able to weaken a specific frequency, and the result is this magic stone. But at present, only a few magic stones are affected in this manner, it might be related to my insufficient understanding of the subject.”

Roland took about a half hour with questions and experiment manuscripts to grasp Isabella’s point. To put it simply, Isabella had established a link between her ability and her knowledge and grasp over God Stones. To her, the undulating waves from the stones were extremely powerful to the extent of her being unable to grasp their fluctuations, only to resemble a deathly still field at one glance. Upon locating the waves, all other fluctuations were no longer able to present themselves, that was the reason for the God’s Stone ability to isolate powers.

But regardless of it being ‘waves’ or ‘frequency’, they were both described as conversion of energy. Isabella had faintly grasped the difference between the two, yet was unable to accurately express herself due to her limited knowledge. After all, waves spoke for themselves and were a relatively simple term to understand, but not magic power. She was only able to describe it with relatively similar terms from her vocabulary.

This caused Rolan to recall that Lan had said something similar before.

If the knowledge gap between two involved parties were too big, even descriptions would be difficult, much less comprehension.

But Isabella’s newly developed ability proved that Magic Stones were not proprietary products of the demons.

If magic power could one day be hailed as a new branch of education, her tests and experiments would most probably be the starting point.

“No one can help you on this path, but it is because of that, that it is worth the try.” Roland encouraged.

“I will do my best,” Isabella replied. “One more thing. I discovered a fascinating phenomenon. Agatha’s guess might not be wrong. God’s stones might actually be living things.”