

Witch 1451

Chapter 1451: The Secret to Having Good Aim

“Get back now!” Balshan crouched down and roared, “Shure, fire straight ahead!”

“Understood, taking aim—”

“Stop aiming, just fire!” She pulled open the gun bolt and turned towards the monster, momentarily forgetting to tune the Sigil of Resonance.

As the vehicle reversed, the 75mm short barrel eventually spewed flames.

The 300 meters distance between the vehicle and monster was covered in the blink of an eye. The instant Shure opened fire, a pillar of smoke appeared on the bloodied monster.

It looked like a miss, but the trio caught sight of the falling limbs amidst the twirling smoke. Despite the small caliber of the cannon, it was still a cannon and not something a machine gun could compare to. From the dust cloud formed, Balshan roughly estimated more than 10 outlines of blade beasts.

“This monster... is carrying a bunch of blade beasts?” At this time, Bay finally reacted.

“That’s right, I’m afraid that this is the Sky-sea Realm’s Nest Mother mentioned in the manual,” Balshan replied, but there were too many differences as compared to the illustration, as though the one in front of them was a mutated species.

Retreating back to the corner of the street, the other two convoys had noticed the commotion. Before Balshan could speak up, Amy started screaming. “The other tank team is less than two streets west of us, it’ll only take five minutes to meet up with them!”

“No, don’t go, it’s too late!” Balshan screamed at the top of her lungs. “Let the soldiers enter the fortress!”

“You want us to meet the enemy head on here? There’s more than one of them!” The vehicle commander of Convoy 17, Hero, revealed an expression of shock.

“It’s precisely because there are more than one of them, so we can’t retreat!” Despite the severity of the situation, Balshan’s mind was extremely clear. Just the three tanks were definitely insufficient and incapable of stopping more than 10 blade beasts. If they were allowed to charge into the soldiers, the loss would be irrevocable. But they were different, as Isabella had mentioned, the armored weapons they were in were basically capable of offense and defense by design. Even if they were surrounded by the enemy, it did not determine the outcome of the battle.

“Hero, please seal that passageway. Only by doing so can we let loose and fight!”

The latter turned and looked at the corroded and deformed steel doors of the fortress and immediately understood her intent.

“I understand.”

“Amy, follow behind me!”

“Er... Fine, alright.” Although Balshan was not the commanding officer of the team, Amy nodded her head subconsciously.

“Team Leader, you’re really... too cool!” Shure added respectfully.

“You can bootlick me after everyone returns safely.” Balshan grinned.

She knew that doing so wasn’t that great an idea, but was unable to control herself. She didn’t hate Dusk, but there was nothing interesting at all during the period in which she accompanied her at the developing areas. She could not lie to herself, while being chased after by the Church, she had assumed that a quiet life was her goal, but from the looks of it, she was more suited for the smoke and flames on the battlefield.

Maybe this is the reason why I awakened as a Combat Witch?

After the soldiers were safe in the fortress, Convoy 17 revved the engine and reversed towards the doors at full speed—

With a loud bang, the tank inserted itself straight into the wall, forming a blockhouse fixed in place.

By doing so, the invisible assassins of the Sky-sea Realm were no longer able to pass through the steel barrier and attack the relatively weaker soldiers.

At this moment, blade beasts appeared several hundred meters away on the road. Despite being unable to actually see them, Balshan was able to mark out their locations with the magic power lines produced by the Sigil of Resonance.

“Straight ahead at full speed, don’t stop!”

She roared and dived straight into the turret, sealing the entrance to it.

The war machine not only had its cannons and machine guns to kill its enemies, but its massive bulk itself proved to be extremely fatal as long as it maintained a certain speed!

While stepping on the gas pedal, Balshan looked into the side mirror, and suddenly noticed a magic power line that extended into the air!

Wait, those monsters can fly?

That’s not right. She quickly reacted—the enemy had pounced high into the sky over a large distance! She held onto the armrest tightly as her entire body stretched perfectly straight. *Whether or not I live or die depends on the workmanship of the Neverwinter artisans.*

“Bang!”

The enemy smashed heavily onto the top of the vehicle with an impact so massive it formed a small depression on the metal plate, along with a reverberating sound that caused the trio’s eardrums to go numb. Even so, the vehicle merely shook, and did not show even the slightest amount of stop or reduction in speed.

Balshan immediately felt emboldened.

“I’ll take charge of aiming.” She turned the turret while commanding, “You only need to pull the trigger.”

“Then what about me?” Bay asked.

“The goal is that monster, so long as you do not crash into the wall, you’re free to drive however you like!”

Balshan ignored the pouncing enemies knowing that her comrades would deal with them. If the bloody monster was truly a Nest Mother, it was their first priority to eliminate it; otherwise, the number of blade beasts on the ground would only increase.

Amid the rumbling of the Magic Cube Power Unit, the tank braved through the crowd of blade beasts. The coaxial machine gun spewed bullets fervently, causing substantial damage on the blade beasts that did not wield barrier abilities like senior demons. When the damage done was fatal on critical spots, it was enough to cause the target to fall during its pounce. Although they were not dead, the steel caterpillar tracks completed the job.

The blade beasts were only capable of impaling through the tank’s steel plates when their front blades blossomed with blue light, but this move exposed themselves to the scope of the machine guns. Under the circumstances that they were unable to harm one another, Amy had evidently used Balshan as a target, with the majority of Convoy 9’s bullets focused on the sides of the Balshan’s vehicle.

Very quickly, the two tanks tore a path through the enemy, with piles of badly mutilated corpses left all around the tracks. When their vitality ceased, the confusing invisibility stopped functioning, revealing all the weak points located at the bottom part of the blade beasts.

Balshan’s tank was equally as worn out, with the machine gun gone and a few large holes on the large vehicle that allowed black blood to leak inside. The closest the enemy had reached was a stab that was merely a few inches from her, to the point that she was able to feel the burning magic power from the tip of the blade.

But the greatest difference between machine and biological lifeforms was that even with all the bruises, the tank’s performance never dropped. It maintained its full speed across the plaza, while the enemy’s pulverized internal organs served as a lubricant for the wheels.

The Nest Mother might have sensed the situation turn against it as it started to turn and flee. However, the huge body moved in a manner that could be fully described as clumsy.

—They were not in the Swirling Sea after all.

“What is the most crucial factor to having a good aim?” Balshan asked.

“Being close enough,” Shure replied seriously.

“Then you better don’t miss!” Bay shouted loudly as he controlled the tank towards its target as it suddenly thrust into the enemy’s ribs.

The monster unleashed an ear-piercing roar.

From the position of the cannoneer, their entire vision was the target.

Shure pulled the trigger without hesitation.

The 75mm Howitzer unleashed its high explosive shell that penetrated into the monster's body, almost running through the entire body and exploded at the head

Chapter 1452: The Deviating Sky-sea Realm

A minute later, another tank squadron rushed over to the intersection of Convoy 12's and Convoy 9's battlefield.

"Amy, Balshan, are you guys alright?" The leader, Iffy, shouted from afar.

Balshan waved her hand to indicate that she was fine, while Amy shouted back excitedly. "Why are you here? We just got rid of a large fella!"

"Wasn't it because of the loud cannon booms." Iffy finally relaxed after seeing that the two were unharmed. She jumped down the tank and quickly walked over to the monster's body that had experienced having a high explosive shell tear through its body, and asked in shock. "What is this?"

"It should be a Nest Mother, but honestly, I'm not too sure," Balshan muttered.

It could be said that the discharge had been delivered cleanly, not only were the internal organs completely destroyed, even the head had been blasted off. Of course, whether or not the monster had a head was a different question altogether—since according to logic, living creatures would not flee while running backwards.

The magic power within the monster dissipated subsequently, causing it to turn into its meat pulp state the instant the body collapsed. The only thing left standing were the two rows of completely damaged ribs.

"Are you sure this is a Nest Mother?" Iffy fished out her manual and compared them with a frown. "The bone structure seems similar, but it seems smaller, and there aren't many tentacles... Right, have you seen the eyes inside its body?"

The enormous compound eye was the Nest Mother's most prominent feature. According to the manual, it was more or less the same size as the Nest Mother's internal organs and situated right in the center. It was impossible to miss.

Balshan shook her head. "I guessed that she was the Nest Mother, only because it was able to carry many blade beasts. As for everything else, I'm as confused as you are. But..." She paused for a moment. "Ignoring the Nest Mother, all the monsters here differ slightly from all the ones stated in the manual. If you don't believe me, look at that dead blade beasts—"

Iffy then realized that the peculiarities on the blade beast corpses around the Nest Mother. "Are those... wings?"

“That’s right,” Balshan answered. “It looks as light and thin as a cicada’s wings, but much larger in size. Using these wings, they were able to pounce across large distances, that is something unprecedented.”

“I sort of understand why the higher ups wants us to retrieve intact Sky-sea Realm specimens.” Iffy sighed after staring at the corpses for a long time. “Their rate of evolution and variation is too astonishing.”

“That is a question the higher ups have to consider.” Balshan climbed up her tank and gestured to Iffy. “As for us—we just have to destroy them.”

...

The report of the First Army reclaiming the Taquila Ruins quickly arrived at Roland’s office.

In this “city battle”, the demonic beasts were no longer the main enemies. This was the first large-scale appearance of the Sky-sea Realm and the majority of the threat were from the blade beasts.

But compared to the previous time when a single or two blade beasts were enough to thwart the troops’ defense line, the outcome could be said to be completely different.

The newly commissioned armor unit displayed its decisive effectiveness in battle, not only by locking down the enemy’s position but also winning most of the battles. The First Army paid an extremely small price to eliminate most of the Sky-sea Realm’s presence, and gained a stable foothold on the Fertile Plains. Amongst the achievements, Convoys 12 and 9 had eliminated a Nest Mother as well as over ten blade beasts together while coming out unscathed, which completely overhauled how the army perceived battles. Aside from asserting details of the battle, the remaining report were related to applying for an increase in production of the tanks. Even with insufficient witches, the army was willing to allow ordinary officers to take command of the vehicles.

Obviously, they had tasted the benefits of having the heavy armor with all-encompassing offense and defense capabilities.

Roland was not surprised by the outcome—the title of being the king of ground battles was established from the two World Wars, declaring the importance and weight of tanks in battles. If not for that, he would not had transferred a team to specially learn how to pilot the vehicles during the early phase of producing the tractors.

Compared to this matured weapon, Roland was more concerned over the monster corpses being delivered back by trains.

At noon time, Agatha’s phone call came. It was regarding the preliminary verdict on the dissection and analysis of the corpses.

...

Upon entering the Magic Tower’s lower levels, a cold breeze welcomed Roland.

A pile of large ice cubes were arranged in an orderly manner inside the large basement. People unaware would assume that the place was an ice storage, but Roland knew that the ice cubes were frozen Sky-sea Realm corpses transported back from the front lines for the Witch Union to research.

The dissecting area was located in the center of the room, where Agatha removed her gloves and performed the union's hand salute to him.

"You seem happy," Roland tightened his collar and commented.

"Because I'm back to my old job again." Agatha smiled. "To be honest, the ice-cold laboratory still suits me best. Representing Taquila's expeditions, all those political meets and conferences aren't my strengths."

With regards to the best representative of the ancient witches, Pasha was obviously the most suitable, but moving the carrier's large body was mostly inconvenient, thus Agatha was rationally chosen as the second best candidate.

Seeing Roland's desire to express himself but at a loss for words, the Ice Witch took the initiative and waved her hand. "Relax, your Majesty, the Battle of Divine Will takes precedence, I understand that."

He nodded and focused on the pressing issues at hand. "What did you discover?"

"Your Majesty, please take a look here." Agatha condensed an ice blade at her fingertips, and pricked into a large organ. "This was retrieved from the new Nest Mother, I found distinct signs of age in its interior. Likewise, I haven't seen such a thing on any of the blade beasts."

"Signs of age?" Roland frowned. He noticed that there was a clear dark blotch of creases at where the ice blade was.

"That's right. Magic Power is capable of strengthening the magic user's body, something proven on witches and demons, so naturally the Sky-sea Realm will not be an exception. And the most obvious indicator of the physical enhancement is an increased life expectancy," Agatha explained in detail. "I have consulted the reports supplied by the demons, and there are no clear mentions of how long Nest Mothers can survive. On the contrary, it does state that blade beasts and the other beasts do not have long life expectancy. Even though they die fast, the Nest Mothers are able to breed new beasts quickly."

"You mean to say... that the situation here is reversed?" Nightingale spoke up. "Could it be that this Nest Mother is old?"

"If it was a single case, it would be hard to tell. But we received four corpses from the frontlines, and I found similarities in all cases. This cannot be a coincidence," Agatha replied. "And you've come across a Nest Mother yourself and know how big they are. In terms of size, all of these monsters that are less than 10 meters long do not look as though they've hit their prime."

"That's true."

"And regardless of the wings they use to pounce or the increasingly larger scythes, everything is going against their past characteristics." She turned and looked at Roland. "Your Majesty, I do not think that these things are the same as their old counterparts, those that reside freely in the water."

"So your conclusion is?" Roland's expression became solemn.

"I'm afraid that the Nest Mothers are moving their own magic power onto their servants to create even stronger sources of troops." Agatha enunciated each and every word. "It is just that their evolution is

deviating away from the ocean, to the extent that I can say that they are sacrificing the future of their species.”

Roland sighed. “But that means we are in trouble.”

Chapter 1453: Shadow of Blackstone Region

To the north of the Fertile Plains.

Since leaving Neverwinter, Lightning and Maggie had continued their flight for close to ten straight days.

They patrolled across the plains cruising over hundreds of kilometers at an “economic speed,” where their magic power recovered through the night able to sustain a day’s use. The two only dropped to the ground when they needed to camp or hunt.

The current Exploration Group had entered a new phase; although they held the latest maps provided by the Union, the centuries of vicissitudes that constituted desolate paths, dried canals, abandoned cities that were overwhelmed with weed and shrub, made them useless to locate road signs. The only things that guided them directionally were the stars in the sky and the large ridge of the continent in the distance.

And at such a distance, the Sigil of Listening no longer broadcast messages, leaving the bird and the girl alone in the vast lands. The sense of desolation and solitude was a large barrier to adventuring, and without the company of her trusted companion Maggie, Lightning did not know if she could persist for long.

The purpose of the journey was clear—to confirm the location and route of the demons’ new Deity of Gods, as well as “illuminate” the plains beyond Taquila.

Even so, looking for a floating island in the vast lands was not an easy mission. To lessen the exhaustion of the vein, the enemy’s city would not be flying at a high height, and might possibly be clinging close to the ground. This way, the Deity of Gods would resemble any small mountain from a distance, and they had to get up close to verify the target through Red Mist, provided that the weather permitted it.

So as to avoid brushing past the Deity of Gods, Lightning chose to fly in broken paths with the edge being the ridge of the continent.

“Grrr...”

Suddenly, the stomach of the gray eagle flying above grumbled.

“You’re hungry again?” Lightning looked up.

“Owh.” Maggie nodded.

“But you didn’t even move much, how are you hungrier than me so much earlier?”

“Because I’ve been staring at the ground, aooo!” She leaned over and rubbed Lightning on the cheeks.

“The eyes and brains are connected, and according to the book, using the brain is most exhausting, owh!”

Wait a minute, that's not what was written in Theoretical Foundations of Natural Science... The paragraph clearly stated that even while stationary, the brain's energy consumption remains the highest out of all the organs in the body, that doesn't mean that a moving person isn't using their brains.

But the itch on her cheeks prevented Lightning from flying properly, leaving her no choice but to slow down and head towards the ground. From the color of the sky, they were only able to fly for another half hour at most, so stopping earlier to rest was not an issue. Additionally, they had few jerkins left on hand, thus making use of the additional time to restock was not a bad idea.

Of course, the most important thing was her being unable to refuse the adorable Maggie.

"Same rules; you hunt and I'll make the fire. Use the Sigil of Listening for contact in the case of any emergencies, understand?"

"Got it, owh!"

Before her voice trailed off, Maggie was already up in the air in the form of a Devilbeast.

Without a choice, Lightning looked for shelter and prepared dinner. With Roland's technological advancements, flints, fire wool and torches, tools that were needed for adventuring were replaced by compact and intricate products. For example, the windproof matches that was the size of half a palm, the single-use torchlights, as well as the multi-functional knife that every member of the Exploration Group adored...

All of these items could be stored in a pocket, and because of that, the majority of space in her bag were replaced with all sorts of spices and condiments. If they had time, they were even able to produce a full table of dishes. There were times that even Lightning remained unclear whether or not she was better at adventuring or had a talent towards being a gourmet.

It was most probably related to Maggie becoming hungry so often.

What followed proceeded in a systematic structure—Maggie quickly brought a bison back and used her sharp talons to slice it into pieces. Lightning chose the best parts, and either smoked or baked them in mud. The two had repeated the process countless times and their coordination had become smooth and natural. By the time the fire had died out, they were not only full but had restocked their haversack of jerkins. It was as though everything had been reset to the moment before they set off. The only difference was their progress, and maybe their objective for the trip.

Any little bit of a guilty conscience was quickly replaced with food coma.

After laying out the Sigil of Screaming, Lightning burrowed into the sleeping bag with Maggie and quickly fell asleep.

The next morning, when she opened her eyes in reverie, she surprisingly discovered an additional shadow that loomed in the distance.

Lightning rubbed her eyes in confusion—the land was a flat plain the day before and they had verified the surrounding topography, it was impossible for them to have missed out the small hill.

After spending a few good minutes in her drowsy reverie, she held her breath and took a good look again. This time, she was taken aback. Through the thin morning mist, the hilltop was unexpectedly flat,

completely unlike any natural landform. The shocking thing was that it actually became larger in a few short minutes, which meant that the shadow was approaching them.

Lightning knew what the moving “Hill” on the Fertile Plains was.

She shook Maggie up in disbelief. “Peck me once.”

“Coo.” The latter raised her forefingers and poked Lightning on the forehead—

The pain immediately cleared up her mind.

It was no hallucination.

Right at this moment, a gust of wind swept past the two and sent Maggie’s long, white hair fluttering.

Along with the wind came a thin mist.

In that instant, the shadow revealed its true form—on the triangular black mountain form stood a gigantic pyramid structure formed completely of Blackstone; its sheer size and bulk difficult to fathom. If the old Deity of Gods’ center was the demon city, then this pyramid itself was able to hold the entire city on it.

This “form” was most probably the reason for the lack of Red Mist.

One large and one smaller inverted awls made the floating island look extremely oppressive. Compared to the first Deity of Gods that had the resemblance of a mountain range, the new Deity of Gods looked completely unnatural. Be it the structured exterior or the symmetrical form, the entire structure manifested the power of the demons.

Who would have thought that the second Deity of Gods they were looking for had appeared right before them.

Without even packing their sleeping gear, Lightning pulled Maggie and soared into the sky.

After the continuous ascension, the sight behind the demon city gradually revealed itself.

Numerous densely-packed black dots rushed forth on the plains like a turbulent wave, amongst which were countless alternating red lines, forming a cloth that devoured everything in its path with the black dots. Lightning gulped. If the black dots were all demons, their numbers were more than the human population of the Four Kingdoms combined!

It was without a doubt the enemy’s main force in motion!

Chapter 1454: Take Off

The investigation group immediately sent news back to Neverwinter.

“It’s really like the entire nest is out...” After listening to Lightning’s report, Roland sighed. This would undoubtedly be the first direct collision between both races and might even be the last. Regardless of the outcome, it determined the future for both humanity and demons.

“Can we... win?” Lightning asked with hesitation.

She was dirty from head to toe; her hair ends tangled and unruly, with the smell of sour sweat lingering on. Obviously after finding out about the demons, she had rushed back without any rest at all.

“Of course.” Roland acted relaxed and patted her shoulders. “Not only will we win, but we will enjoy a clean and decisive victory.”

It was evident that the demons held the undisputed advantage in terms of numbers, but this also showed just how much pressure the Sky-sea Realm had placed on them. The First Army’s technology had its own advantages, but since they could not afford to fight in a battle of attrition, it would be a Pyrrhic victory if the demons entered the Four Kingdoms.

By the same logic, even if the demons won, it was inevitable that they would suffer a tremendous loss. Roland believed that the best outcome was an internecine one if the demons were not stopped to the west of the Impassable Mountain Range.

Lightning heaved a slight sigh of relief, then suddenly became embarrassed. “Er, do I smell... weird?”

Roland chuckled. “A bit... but it is the smell of adventure, so it’s nothing bad.” He deliberately pinched his nose. “To be honest, I think it isn’t bad.”

The girl’s face flushed red, immediately grabbing Maggie, who was sniffing down her collar, before rushing out of the office with her head lowered. “I-I’m going to take a bath!”

“Coo?” Maggie remained confused.

“Lightning, Maggie.” Just as the two were leaving, Roland called out to them. “It was tough on both of you; have a good rest.”

“Yes...”

Once the door closed, he immediately grabbed the phone and called the Administrative Office. “Notify the cabinet for a meeting, the time to set off is here.”

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Inside the meeting room, the higher-ups of Neverwinter sat in a circle.

Roland pasted Lightning’s hand-drawn map behind him and repeated the exploration group’s findings.

“There are two verifiable points from this information, one being the existence of the new Deity of Gods located less than 300 kilometers away from the ridge of the continent and continuously moving north. The second point is that it is bringing along a large number of demons to the extent that the new floating island is incapable of accommodating all of them; therefore, they are resorting to such an inefficient method of movement.

“I think it isn’t difficult to comprehend the former—to infiltrate Everwinter and the Kingdom of Wolfheart, the demon army not only built an obelisk in the middle of the ridge of the continent, but they have even established a supply line through the Land of Dawn. By flying along the mountain range,

not only does it prevent a deviation in course, but they are also able to ease the burden of Red Mist by using the supply line. It is considered a rather reliable route.

“The latter isn’t clear in the sense of the specific quantity, but since their full strength is out, I expect that the demons capable of battle numbers is around ten million without any exaggeration. According to their current progress, we can expect them to arrive at the edge of the Four Kingdoms in half a month.”

Upon the mention of numbers, Roland noticed the fear shown on many of their faces. But it could not be blamed; after going through two Battle of Divine Wills, humanity had suffered terribly and the survivors did not even reach ten million, not to mention their weakened army. To Barov and the others, the scale of ten million was no different from an astronomical figure.

“This enemy attack is one whereby they have cut off their means of retreat, and also a battle that will determine the fate of humanity. The Eleanor Skycruiser must move out immediately to rush to as close as possible to the Impassable Mountain Range and stop the enemy’s advancement northwards.”

“But... Your Majesty,” Barov said with much difficulty. “The enemy has an astonishing population, while the force the floating island can bring is limited. Is taking the initiative to meet the attack too risky?”

“Holding the ground at Graycastle is what’s most risky!” Edith stood up and gave the old director a glance. “Everybody, do not be intimidated by ten million demons. If they are unable to reach Graycastle, their numbers mean nothing. You will understand just by thinking about it—the Blackstone region had that many demons since the first Battle of Divine Will. The reason for their inability to travel all the way here in the past was because of the Red Mist supply line. So our true target is only one thing—the enemy’s floating city.”

Once her reasoning was out, the atmosphere in the room changed ever so lightly, since no one was willing to admit their fear of the enemy.

“That’s right,” Roland suppressed a laugh and added. “Once they lose their supply of Red Mist, the demons in the Fertile Plains will have difficulty inching forward. Additionally, us setting out now isn’t an indication that we are going into battle, we will be using this time en route to allow the army to have sufficient time to prepare.”

There was an additional point that he did not say—Sky Lord and Silent Disaster who returned to Sky City to bring together the troops.

Since the demon’s movement used the supply line at the Western Front, it was impossible for Hackzord to be unable to know of the new location of King’s City. To the King of the demon race, Hackzord was a complete traitor, so him amassing more strength was the best way for self preservation. The fall of the King’s City would undoubtedly be his best opportunity, and Hackzord would not remain indifferent at that time.

Upon thinking about this, Roland turned to Tilly. “Right, how’s the take off and landing training going for the Aerial Knights?”

“Far easier than I had imagined,” Tilly replied. “There isn’t much difference from landing and taking off on the ground. As long as the weather permits, the students are able to accomplish their tasks with ease. The only trouble is that we previously only had to use the Impassable Mountain Range or the

shoreline for the pilots to roughly determine their location and from there, find the landing site. But from here on out, the enemy and us will be constantly on the move. Adding the lack of direction that the Fertile Plains provides, I'm afraid that there will be difficulty locating our point of departure. Of course, it isn't an unsolvable problem, you only need to supply us with more fuel."

This was also a difficult problem for aircraft carriers in combat—In a battlefield that spanned over a few hundred kilometers, any tiny divergence would accumulate to form a large error. The fortunate thing was that compared to the unvarying ocean, there were bound to be some "reference objects" on dry land that could be used to determine their location—for example, forests, rivers, mountain peaks etc. Roland was able to guess at her plans—if the pilots were unskilled with the maneuvering, they had to train more and fly more. Naturally, they would learn to be more aware of their own locations.

"Relax, they will be able to fly for as long as you want them to," he promised.

In the upcoming battle, the Aerial Knights were without question the main fighting force. It was also because of this aerial force that mankind had the opportunity to attack and stop the demons a thousand miles from home.

Seeing that no one else had any objections, Roland surveyed the hall once more and gave the order.

"With that, I shall announce the commencement of Phase Three of the Heaven Plan. We shall set off on the floating island, and the target is the northern regions of the Fertile Plains!"

Chapter 1455: Pioneer

Two days later, the Eleanor Skycruiser completed its final resupply at a cliff pier, rose to the sky, and flew towards the Land of Dawn hinterland.

A hundred thousand citizens from Neverwinter were present to see it off—the crowds flooded the streets, climbed the roofs, and even ascended the Impassable Mountain Ranges, just to witness this historic moment. The entire western side of the city was filled with people, once again setting a new record for the number of people attending an activity.

And that was just a portion of Neverwinter's population.

There were even more people working at the factories, port, and farmlands, every one of them participating in a way for the expedition.

It was coincidentally the same day when the Border Area and Longsong District's total population broke through the million mark, with more than fifty percent of the source coming from the Kingdom of Wolfheart and Everwinter. Although they were unlike the initial migrants that harbored negative emotions towards Neverwinter, everyone was able to sense the shock from the surge of people, as well as the common consensus that the day was extraordinarily meaningful.

Following the loud booms from the ceremonial cannons, the Eleanor Skycruiser traveled parallel to the mountains and moved towards Longsong Stronghold before turning west. It moved steadily into the distance, and finally disappeared from everyone's sight.

But the elevated atmosphere among the citizens did not stop there.

Graycastle Weekly's tracking reports caused the sales volume to reach an all time high, and everywhere on the streets, the topics discussed lingered around the topic of this attack. Gradually, the day of the departure became widely known as Miracle Day, representing humanity's new beginning of conquering the skies. This was the second event to be hailed as a miracle after the Miracle Building.

However, it was much quieter on the floating island.

After the initial enthusiasm passed, the engineering team dedicated themselves to the tense but orderly work.

It was the same with the Aerial Knights as well, aside from the routine flights conducted by the detection squad, all the students took flight at least once a day to familiarize themselves with the surrounding terrain. The large floating island, the busy runway, and the thick smoke from the furnace area formed a rather distinct and unique scene.

"How does it feel? Are you able to adapt to your new body?"

In the core region of the floating island, Roland stood at the bottom of the mine and looked at Eleanor, who was firmly tied to the God's Stone pillar.

In the past month, not only did the pillar become bigger, the Mother of Soul had even grown more tentacles and dug them into the soil beneath like the roots of a plant. According to her logic, the tentacles were additional perceptive organs for her, providing her better control over the island. In a sense, the island was the body and the tentacles were the nerves.

"Much better compared to before." Eleanor's voice was much lighter and casual as well. *"I can see; I can hear; I can think. How can I be dissatisfied with that? Compared to Elena and the others, I am considered extremely fortunate already."*

"Lady Chief, don't say that," Pasha lowered her main tentacle and replied. *"Everyone knows that if not for your choice to merge, we would never have survived. Furthermore, you didn't know that this day would come. This act of bravery is already enough to—"*

"I'm talking about the outcome and not the process," Eleanor interrupted her. *"I believe that I wasn't the only one who was willing to sacrifice for the Union. My other sisters would as well. I merely was first."*

Seems like she's doing well, Roland thought to himself. He had his worries previously. As a Witch, she had fought against the demons for decades, and he was afraid that she would ultimately turn into a demon herself. But by the looks of it, Eleanor was extremely mature and did not worry about the form of her body at all.

"I know what you're thinking." Eleanor suddenly turned her attention back to him. *"You were afraid that I couldn't get over it and become depressed and reclusive? If I were the only person left in the world, that might have happened. But with basically everyone here and the state of the war far better than how it was four centuries ago, and with so much new knowledge that requires studying, where do I have the time or effort to act like that?"*

"Er... Studying?"

"For the Union to become the rulers of humanity, it does not rely only on abilities. Back then, we were equipped with the most advanced technology and ideas. Similarly for us, calling it three representatives isn't an exaggeration either. Although the Union's glory no longer exists, I still have to rely on studying and learning to keep up with the current generation's progress."

Roland was speechless. The familiar terms used by her were clearly picked up from the God's Punishment Witches. God knew what they were teaching her. "And what have you learned up to now?"

"College level," Eleanor replied. "Almost at the graduation phase."

"Previously, we had Celine, Ling, and the others to guide and teach Lady Eleanor, but now, Lady Eleanor is the one teaching them," Pasha added with a laugh.

Wait, she just woke up less than two months ago and she's already finished with a college curriculum? Roland clicked his tongue. Before, he did not attach importance when Eleanor forced Mask away, and it was only then did he realize that he had underestimated the learning ability of dozens of brains.

"By the way, I made a miniature core apparatus that might help us in the following battles."

With Eleanor's consent, Pasha pulled out a frame the size of a palm and placed it on the "palm." It floated silently and produced a dazzling blue luster at its center, just like gigantic magic power cores.

"What is it capable of?" Roland asked.

"It is able to imitate, to a certain extent, telekinetic powers, and is able to influence foreign objects... For example the rotation of handles and the pressing of triggers, etc. If it is combined with a specific machinery, I can control the machinery using magic power," Eleanor explained. *"Although Mask had taken away all mobility features of this body, he did not seal the use of the magic power completely. It means that when enemies come, I am able to operate weapons and engage in battle myself. The theory involved is somewhat similar to the automatic weapons in the Dream World."*

Roland gaped in shock.

And that wasn't all as she continued, *"In a sense, firing a gun can be considered computational, something that I am proficient in. Compared to an ordinary soldier, I am able to increase the effective hit rate of firearms to ninety percent within their effective maximum range. The shortfall is that I am unable to move nimbly and need to match the firearm with a gun turret, and also have to position my tentacles and the miniature core beforehand. But at the very least, the weapon turrets will become highly effective while defending the island."*

"How many can you control at once?"

"That depends on how many tentacles I have." She paused for a while. *"I'm guessing a few hundred?"*

Upon thinking of the scene whereby a few hundred machine gun turrets, or even cannons, were controlled by Eleanor to fire at the enemy, Roland almost smacked his lips. But this was not the reason for his lament. What he cared about was Eleanor's combination of magic power and machinery. The knowledge of both aspects came from Mask Nassaupelle as well as the Dream World. Not only did she

absorb the knowledge, she had also taken the initiative to combine them! If given additional time, how much change would she bring to the world?

"If this mission hadn't required the use of the floating island, I would never have thought of sending you personally into battle." Roland revealed his thoughts. "What humans are lacking the most at present is guidance in this direction."

"Oh? You're not afraid that my understanding of these things will exceed yours?" It sounded as though Eleanor was giggling.

"Lady Eleanor..." Pasha wanted to stop Eleanor, but she did not know how to phrase her sentence.

"Why should I be afraid?" Roland returned with a question. "It is extremely normal for successors to surpass their predecessors. This signifies continuous progress in a civilization. If humanity's knowledge is limited by me, that is when I will consider our future bleak."

"..." The other party remained silent for a moment before speaking up again. *"You are truly not qualified to be a King. But..."*

"You are definitely worthy of being hailed as a trustworthy leader."

Chapter 1456: A Future with You

After spreading her blanket, Nightingale turned around and blew out the candle flame.

The room immediately darkened.

She found it amusing that after being accustomed to lights and magic stones, she was slightly uncomfortable returning to using candles, despite it being a normal occurrence in the past.

But there was not a choice in this matter, the lack of time prevented the island from having a complete electrical lighting system installed, to the extent that even their resting places were drilled out of a wall by Aphra and the rest. Soraya then added a soft layer and isolated the moisture of the underground chambers and made the place into a bedroom. The furniture within were the most ordinary, with simple wooden tables and cabinets. As for the mattresses, they were laid directly on the floor.

Although Isabella was on the floating island, all the magic stone illuminations were used for the factories rushing to produce goods. It would take her some time to transform God's Stone for the residential areas.

Despite the simplicity of the room, it was not unbearable. Aside from the privacy of having a room per person, there were even standalone toilets. There were even ventilation shafts that provided airflow directly from outside the floating island into the chambers, preventing the rooms from being too stuffy or humid. There was a shared reading area and a warm public bath at the end of the caves as well, enough to satisfy the witches' daily use.

She wasn't that interested in the former, but Nightingale found the latter wonderful.

God knows how Pasha and the others had found the location—the stream that came down from the mountaintop into a cave mountain formed a natural clear spring, and after having the pool extend out the cave's cliff walls, leaning against it provided a perfect view of the scenery outside. After the flight of the island, this location became the best place to overlook the vistas provided by the land.

Every day, Nightingale would soak in the spring water after showering and enjoy the spectacular sight.

Compared to this, the lack of lights in the room was nothing.

Just as Nightingale was about to lay down, she suddenly heard knocks on her.

She was startled, it was already late in the night and the majority of the people were asleep. Who could it be?

“Coming.”

Nightingale responded and relit the candle, while thinking about potential candidates that might be at her door.

The most probable choice was naturally Wendy.

After all, this person in charge of the Witch Union had the precedent of coming to her for idle chats after having had a few drinks.

But the person standing outside completely stunned her.

It was Anna.

Holding onto a small wooden bucket with a towel and toiletries, she asked, “Can you accompany me for a bath?”

Nightingale had taken a bath prior to heading to bed, but knew that the main point was clearly not the bath. “Of course, please give me a moment.”

Nightingale packed her things and followed Anna into the public bath, which was completely vacant and empty aside from the two of them. Occasionally, water droplets splashing onto the stalagmites could be heard, emphasizing the serenity of the night.

After stripping, Nightingale stepped into the pool and immediately felt the warmth envelop her entire body. Unlike Neverwinter, the island's fuel was limited; thus, the public bath employed the use of a boiler that relied on magic power to ensure a steady supply of hot water the entire day.

The two walked through the white mist and slowly arrived at the entrance of the cave. Instantly, the refreshing night breeze swept the heat away as the world before their eyes opened up into a wide panorama. It was no longer edges and corners of the mountain stone, but stars and an endless night sky.

Nightingale gasped slightly.

The feeling was intoxicating.

Anna seemed to be content and heaved a sigh. She then proceeded to stretch.

“Where's Roland?”

“Most probably in the Dream World.”

“Is that so? He’s really busy...”

“That’s right. Everyone claims that I’ve never stopped to take a break, but compared to him, my work is nothing.” Anna chuckled. “He even works through the night.”

“You’re equally as impressive as he is.” Nightingale lowered her body until the water reached her shoulders. “In the past, you were a young lady that knew nothing, but now, you’re able to assume so much responsibility.”

“It’s really nothing much.” Anna revealed a rare embarrassed expression. “I’m only good at these aspects; if not for Barov and Teacher Karl’s help, the Ministry of Engineering would be in a mess.”

Hey hey, you can’t just declare your shortcomings without any hesitation.

Looking at Anna, complicated emotions rose within Nightingale—it was impossible to say that she did not feel indignation; clearly she had come into contact with Roland much earlier than Anna and had more opportunities, but in the end, she was still a tad slower. But regardless of everything, she could not bring herself to hate Anna; her honesty, earnestness and her straightforwardness... The longer one interacted with Anna, the more one could sense her purity. Nightingale had met countless people before, from ordinary citizens to nobility, yet none of them were as dazzling as her.

She had complete respect for her.

After a short silence, Anna changed the topic. “What do you think will be the outcome of this Battle of Divine Will?”

Nightingale realized that this might be the reason for being invited to share a bath.

“I guess... very smoothly?” She gazed up to the stars in the sky. In all honesty, inferring or predicting the outcome of a battle far exceeded her scope of abilities, and she did not know how to answer. But with the battle approaching, saying such things didn’t seem too appropriate. Fortunately, Anna could not see through her lie.

“Oh.” Anna did not echo her thoughts. “I don’t actually think so. Especially when the last objective is the Bottomless Land. Legends state that it is the land of God and I’m afraid that the risks involved with it far exceeds our estimates. For some reason, I feel that Roland might disappear anytime, and the closer we get to the northern extremity, the stronger this uneasiness becomes.”

Nightingale’s heart skipped a beat. Could it be that Anna might had sensed Roland’s waning life expectancy? But that likely had to do with the Realm of Mind, and heading to the Bottomless Land was also a means to resolve the problem. It was not something that was inevitable.

“Maybe you’re just over worried about it.”

“I hope so.” Anna blinked. “Right... Do you remember our agreement?”

“Yes...” Nightingale was taken aback for a moment. “—Eh?”

“I’ve decided to bring it forward. After we defeat the demons, I will talk to him personally.”

“Why? Because of your uneasiness?”

“That’s half the reason,” Anna replied gently. “But more of it is that he needs you too. And I... have never hated you. In the coming war, you’ll have to take care of him.”

“...” Nightingale was momentarily at a loss for words. She muttered after a long time, “Even so, why are you not stopping him from going to the Bottomless Land?”

Anna shook her head with a calm expression. “This was the optimal plan after considering many factors, and regardless of the outcome, he has already made his preparations. How can I stop him? Being afraid and running away will not change anything, so the only thing I can do is to aid him with everything that I can, and witness the future with my own eyes.”

Chapter 1457: The First Battle of the Floating Island!

Upon entering the hinterlands of the Fertile Plains, the time on Eleanor Skycruiser slowed to a crawl; the majority of the people on board knew that they were moving, but were unaware of where they were heading.

Only officials and higher-ups at the command center knew this. They were slowly inching towards the target—the map had clearly been marked out with a curved flight path and the floating island would revise its direction to the east every twelve hours. According to the Exploration Group’s report, Eleanor Skycruiser’s flight path would converge towards the new Deity of Gods in, at the maximum, eighteen days.

But the peace would not last till that day.

On the fourteenth day of journey, the peaceful days were interrupted.

An old Fire of Heaven was the first to discover enemy movements—it belonged to the Aerial Knights’ detection squadron and was one of the few dual seat models still kept in service. The back seat was no longer designed for machine gunners, and was instead equipped with spark-gap transmitter and a wireless transmitter unit. These equipment were installed and modified, giving the Fire of Heaven reconnaissance abilities.

“A Devilbeast is approaching a hundred and fifty kilometers away!”

According to the rules of engagement, they would first use the spark-gap transmitter to relay the information and proceed to use the wireless transmitter unit to repeat the same message; the former to inform the island while the latter was to warn companions nearby.

Due to the extremely good electromagnetic environment, receivers were able to receive and interpret the information quickly.

When the staff room received the slip of paper with the information on it, the atmosphere immediately turned serious before it boiled over.

“Quickly confirm the identity and location of the flight crew!”

“Sound the early warning system and recall the engineers!”

“Hey, this is the General Staff; immediately prepare for battle!”

“Ground service reporting, Aerial platforms 5 and 11 are malfunctioning. Currently engaging in urgent repairs.”

“At this time? Get them to hurry!”

Upon being notified, Roland immediately rushed to the command center. “How’s the situation now?”

“The enemy is still two hours away from us,” Edith held onto a report file and reported. “Direction northeast; more than 30 Devilbeasts sighted, the reconnaissance plane has broken away from the enemy’s pursuit, but they do not seem to be changing their original paths.”

“You mean to say the demons have discovered the existence of the island?” Iron Axe questioned.

“That shouldn’t be the case; otherwise, they wouldn’t have sent such a small force. But the demons must have definitely sensed something and are en route for confirmation.”

“That isn’t strange.” Roland spoke calmly; no matter how small the floating island was, it was still a floating mountain. It was impossible for a target of this size to completely conceal itself, just like how Lightning and Maggie discovered the Deity of Gods. So long as the distance between the two continued to decrease, the enemy would soon discover the other. “Sylvie’s Magic Eye is more focused on observing the sky, so it is normal for any small demon team on the ground to chance onto us.”

The Pearl of the Northern Region nodded. “Verifying the situation is very likely their main goal. As for the number of Devilbeasts, the Aerial Knights are capable of annihilating them.”

“Be it destroying them or letting a few run, it will not influence the outcome.” Roland was already clear on this—it was impossible for the Eleanor Skycruiser to avoid the Devilbeasts at the rate at which it was flying. In a sense, it was inevitable for the floating island to be exposed. “The crux is how do we keep the cost of that happening to the minimum.”

The size force of the Aerial Knights had grown steadily from the beginning. Since the assault at the Impassable Mountain Range, the first generation Fire of Heaven and second generation Fury of Heaven now summed up to more than 200 units, constituting two wings. The problem lay in the fact that the enemy was at full force, and they no longer suffered any restrictions in both military strength and logistics. The air force was bound to suffer from great losses even if they reached parity of scale.

Roland did not count on achieving air dominance in the battle, and only hoped for the protection of the bomber to accomplish its mission—this would undoubtedly require the entire air force, but if the Aerial Knights suffered too large a loss during the early phase, it would implicate the later plans as well.

“You mean to say we should employ ‘Plan B’ when facing the enemy?” Tilly asked as she pricked up her brows.

“That’s right, at the same time, we will be able to examine the witches’ gains.” Roland no longer hesitated. “Get your people into the underground warehouse.”

...

Two hours later, the enemy discovered trails of the floating island.

As what Edith had mentioned, they were purely sent to investigate. But unexpectedly, the Devilbeasts stopped forty to fifty kilometers away. The leader used something similar to a binoculars apparatus and observed for a moment before turning to retreat without any thoughts of probing.

“Seems like the demons have learned a lot from Mask.” The Pearl of the Northern Region smiled.

“Seems like they have learned how to respect their enemies.”

“They will definitely not surrender.” Iron Axe gazed into the sky. “I believe that our coming days will no longer be smooth sailing.”

“Of course.” Edith’s voice contained a coldness comparable to the Northern Region. “And this will be our best opportunity to weaken them!”

...

On the afternoon of the same day, the demons appeared on the horizon.

They looked as though they were unwilling to wait even a day.

But the troops were prepared for battle more than an hour earlier. All sluice gate channels that led outside were sealed, the biplanes employed as scouts had returned and parked in the hangars. The entire surface of the floating island was devoid of life, where even the North Slope Mountain’s revamped bridge was sealed. At the moment, the Eleanor Skycruiser appeared impervious like a huge mountain of stone.

The higher ups had convened in the command center. Using the magic power core to project a visualization of the outside, they were able to observe everything

The first wave of Devilbeasts appeared to contain 200 of them. As they formed a line and charged towards the floating island, it caused the sky to darken a few shades.

“Tsk, so many of them...” Tilly frowned and commented.

Roland nodded. “I’m guessing this is just the vanguard meant to spearhead the attack.” After all, the troops following behind the demon’s King City is the entire force from the Blackstone region. The number of Mad Demons is estimated to be over a million, so the number of Devilbeasts they have would not be any fewer as well.

It was most probably their last day of serenity.

“They may have the numbers, but what can they do to a mountain?” A voice suddenly sounded out within everyone’s mind; the mellow and languid voice was memorable.

It was Eleanor.

Roland laughed.

This was their battle strategy’s most unassailable point—indeed, the humans could do little to a Deity of Gods in response, but at the same time, the demons were unable to do so as well.

“I’ll leave the rest to you.”

“Relax, this is my revenge that have spanned for over four centuries,” Eleanor replied.

In her vision, an invisible net slowly spread out. Any movements made by the Devilbeasts within the net were turned into strings of numbers.

Mathematics is truly interesting...

She imbued magic power into her tentacles before directing it the entire floating island, activating more than a hundred miniature cores that blossomed with blue lights, at the same time activating the machine gun turrets which were connected to them by various machinery.

The machine gun turrets distributed at the edge of the island all turned towards the enemies. The gun barrels extended out of their shooting holes into the sky.

At the instant the Devilbeasts entered her effective shooting range, countless streams of light surged out, while the invisible net transformed into a visible and dazzling screen of light!

Chapter 1458: A Defense Line Held Single-handedly

The 20mm autocannons were the most eye-catching weapons that formed “long whips” with the tracer rounds.

Due to the higher pressure, the tracer rounds formed of Match Men stones grew in light intensity. Adding that the tracer rounds were more compact than ordinary bullets, there were almost no gaps in along the tracer rounds’ flight trajectory.

Devilbeasts struck by the autocannons had no leeway to struggle; being penetrated by a blob of light meant taking multiple bullets. Even if the bullets strayed away from the main body and struck their wings, the power of the bullets tore large holes through them.

Of course, compared to shooting the wings, it was more common for the bullets to land on the swooping Devilbeasts’ torsos. Following bursts of blood, a few rolled and plummeted, while the Mad Demons seated on them were only able to scream in anguish as they awaited their inevitable fates of colliding into the ground.

The demons were not frightened away by the circumstances. Instead, they adopted abrupt drops to increase their speed, dispersing in two directions with the intent of breaking away from the shooting.

This method would have undoubtedly been most effective if it was in normal times. Faced against flying targets, the First Army soldiers would habitually aim the guns to “chase” after the targets. Even the most proficient teams would require a few seconds to adjust their aim.

But this time, they were up against Eleanor.

Almost instantly, the Devilbeasts’ paths and coordinates were calibrated to form new trajectories. This was through countless polynomial equations and calculations that promptly determined the fate of the enemies.

The curtain of light suddenly twisted!

This was the first time the higher-ups who were observing the battle felt a sense of grandeur.

The tracers no longer shot straight and instead drew arcs from the rapid turning of the barrels. The intertwining lines interweaved together and resembled ropes.

Despite looking disordered and messy, every line met their targets accurately. Every single line were exact and positioned right in front of the Devilbeasts' movements.

Those not in the know wouldn't think that the bullets were chasing after the Devilbeasts but that the Devilbeasts were rushing straight into the bullets!

"I think that Lady Eleanor must be extremely happy," Phyllis suddenly commented.

"Why?" Roland asked, perplexed.

"In the battle when Taquila fell, the first to tear apart our defenses was the enemy's Devilbeast force. At that time, they appeared in the air where we had difficulty reaching, allowing them to assault our weak points in our defense. Even though the Holy City's Army rushed about busily, they were unable to ensure that every part of the city walls was safe. Usable crossbow machines and catapults became fewer, and the Siege Beasts eventually broke through," she recalled emotionally. "At that time, Lady Eleanor stood at the wall with blood all over her with no demons around that dared to approach her, but the Holy City behind her was already in flames."

So that's why...

It's the reason for her talking about four centuries of revenge.

No matter how strong an individual was, they would never be able to save the Holy City alone from the hordes of enemies. Upon connecting the dots, the words behind her languid speech had suddenly become more solemn.

This time, Eleanor was once again standing at the forefront of the Battle of Divine Will.

And this time, what stood behind her was the force of the entire human race.

"They are starting to split up!" Morning Light Ferlin suddenly called out.

Through the magic power screen, the Devilbeasts that had sustained injuries suddenly separated at different heights, one charged straight towards the surface of the floating island while another flew at a lower altitude, apparently in attempts to avoid the autocannons. Most probably, the demons had figured out that conventional movements to avoid the bullets were no longer effective and they no longer pinned their hopes on harrying their enemies through the sky, but instead sought to land and seek cover.

But Eleanor's defense was not limited to a single layer.

Next up to join the battle were Mark I heavy machine guns that formed an interior defense line.

Their turrets were smaller, almost half a meter tall. Due to the consideration of having no movements, the barrels were exchanged for longer and water-cooled barrels. All of the rotatable firing platforms

were distributed onto the runways, bridges, and control towers meant to deal with enemies that attempted to 'jump' through the first line of defense.

The Mad Demons that landed finally proceeded with their counterattacks.

They abandoned the Devilbeasts that had fended off against a hail of bullets and threw short spears towards the gun turrets or shot some form of electric light. These triggered explosions at the surface of the floating island!

To Roland's surprise, he discovered that the short spears were no longer simple beast bones, but a compound spear mixed with unknown substances. The spear tip was black and triggered explosions upon contact from the apparent blaze and smoke emitting out.

The Mad Demons that were capable of producing electricity and the Mad Demons encountered by the Witch Cooperation Association were completely different. Not only were they capable of employing their abilities faster, the distance had increased greatly.

Obviously, this batch of Mad Demons was an elite unit.

If they had been up against the First Army soldiers, they might have actually caused actual chaos.

But it was a pity that the turrets were only ice-cold machines.

They showed no fear or hesitation. So long as power was provided, they would never cease firing. Even if one or two sets misfired, they would not affect the other turrets.

Of course, these were not Eleanor's last line of defense as well—two sets of 75mm cannons situated diagonally on the floating island were activated as well, gradually turning towards the enemy locations. The two smaller cannons were more than enough to cover the runway that spanned over a kilometer in diameter.

This is a firearm battle which Pasha and the others mentioned... Eleanor thought to herself.

Although she was unfamiliar with this form of battle, she instantly became hooked onto the feeling upon firing.

Up to this moment, she was the only person fighting against the demons.

But despite her being the only one, the demons were unable to escape from her attention to attack the weaker points of the defense. Even at the bottom of the floating island, she had prepared four sets of 20mm cannons and two Longsong Cannons to fight the enemy.

This was a stronghold that had no blind spots.

Your tricks end here... Eleanor adjusted the aim of the cannons, turning them straight to the center of the field where a demon was suppressed and locked down by waves of bullets. From its striking armor and dressing, it was most probably a higher ascendant.

She controlled the magic power core and pulled onto the firing rope—

...

“Boom!”

“Ssheessshhh...”

Following the loud boom and rumbles, the ceilings in the caves dropped sand and stone.

“Is that the First Army engaging the enemy? Are they alright?” Finkin swept away the dust on his head and looked upwards apprehensively.

“The bombardments can at most destroy the runway, they will not cause any harm to the hangars. Besides, Miss Lotus is around as well, so it’ll be easy to restore the potholes.”

The voice sounded unfamiliar, as though they weren’t pilots from the first class. Good, Finkin, and Hinds turned to look, only to discover that the speaker was the trump card of the newcomers, Manfeld.

“Hi, seniors.” He initiated a salute.

“Hey, your challenger is here,” Finkin nudged Good with his elbow and whispered.

Good rolled his eyes at his comrade and nodded at Manfeld. “I think so too, but we have no idea when we can move out.”

“It’ll be soon.” Manfeld closed his eyes and listened for a moment. “The intervals between the firing of the machine guns are lengthening, which means that the demons are powerless before our offensive. I believe that the higher-ups will be sending out the command for us to counterattack soon.”

“You can hear the machine guns through the rock strata?” Good was shocked.

“If I focus wholeheartedly, yes.” Manfeld nodded.

Finkin mouthed to Hinds “he’s acting cool.”

Right at this moment, the loudspeakers inside the hangar blasted with Princess Tilly’s voice. “All Aerial Knights, board your planes and prepare for battle!”

Chapter 1459: The Complete Form of the Skycruiser

All the higher-ups clearly saw the withering strength of the enemy.

Be it those that landed on the island to attack or those that flew around in search of weak points, the demons were incapable of finding a way in. Under Eleanor’s precise attacks, every minute that they stopped posed a huge risk to them, resulting in extremely high injuries and death counts that were unacceptable for the Devilbeasts.

Soaring in the air meant speed, agility, and zero hindrance from the terrain. The Devilbeasts had ruled the skies for centuries and always held the absolute power on the battlefield. But in the face of the floating island, they probably never expected that more than half of them would fall even before seeing their enemies.

There were even demons that had started to turn tail and retreat... or in other words, escape.

This was the perfect opportunity for the humans.

The core goal of Plan B was to obtain the highest kill count in exchange for the smallest cost, so pursuing the retreating enemies was deemed as the absolute opportunity to build upon the result. This was not a novel idea, but Eleanor Skycruiser was the only thing capable of switching between defense and offense seamlessly.

This was also the Skycruiser's most prominent aspect as compared to other flying platforms.

Under Tilly's command, the command center immediately operated and switched to the corresponding procedures.

"Channel pressures contained, all steam pressures are working as per normal!"

"Hangar doors one and six are about to open, please standby and clear the runway!"

"Ground service reports that they need five more minutes of preparation."

"The first wave of counterattack force is in position!"

With the large longitudinal space, the hangars were designed for multiple take offs. And with the hangars situated at the center, they were allowed to project and scatter from the lower levels. Before being used, the interior runways were protected and blocked off by several heavy and thick doors and could only be opened using steam engines.

Although every runway track had substantially decreased in length and were a third of the runways on the surface, it was sufficient for the light biplanes. In addition, it was not an issue if they did gain sufficient initial velocity, the floating island's ground surface elevation was enough for the heavier planes to raise their noses.

"Are you not taking action personally?" Roland looked at Tilly.

"This is a rare opportunity, I'll have the newcomers take it for practice." The latter laughed and raised the radio to her mouth. "Once the hangars are opened, move out immediately. The goal—to kill off every single one of them!"

...

Although it was not Good's first time moving out via the interior runway, all his previous experiences were practice runs.

He finally understood why Her Highness emphasized on wearing earmuffs.

More than 50 sets of biplanes sealed inside the warehouses revved their engines at the same time, producing rumbles that could only be described as astounding. Even at a distance of two to three meters, the ground servicemen who screamed could not be heard and appeared to be mouthing words.

From the second the order was given, all Aerial Knights communicated with hand gestures and flags.

Good was the first to roll out and enter a flight position.

From the bubbling steam, the steel doors thicker than a grown man opened slowly, extending the runway further out into the distance. The door towards the end had a clear and distinct [01] written on it.

With Princess Tilly's absence, he had become the undisputed leader.

I guess the first plane at Door 06 should be Manfred.

Challenger, huh...

He grinned slightly.

Rachel, can you see this now?

I used to look up at the nobles from a distance, but they are now chasing after me.

Although he didn't express that clearly... putting it that way wasn't too bad either.

The ground service crew before him pushed out a wooden board with large cards that indicated the wind speed, temperature, and the floating island's rate of advancement. Ordinarily, the hangar doors would open against the wind, giving the planes much more rising power. But considering that the hangars might be attacked in wartime, they had to expect the possibility of not using the most optimal runway in battle. At this time, wind speed, and the other parameters became extremely important, and the pilots had to pre-empt, adjust, and prepare for acceleration and the initial drop.

Good gave the ground service crew a thumbs up.

Right at this moment, the last steel door finally opened.

The bright and dazzling sunlight instantly broke apart the shadows at the end, expanding from its initial small crack until it illuminated the entire runway.

Strong winds gushed into the hangars and dispersed the lingering engine smell.

Tailwind at grade five meant it was the perfect opportunity to attack—

The ground service crew raised a green flag and waved down with all of his strength!

"Runway clear, Good is moving out!" Good shouted and jammed the control stick down.

The Fury of Heaven roared and took off towards the light. In the accelerating process, he noticed the ground service crew members lining his sides and they were waving at him.

Upon cutting through the light, a short brilliance of white covered his entire vision, but was quickly replaced with all sorts of things as the vast and limitless world entered his vision. There were no longer any noise blasting into his ears, as though everything had turned silent in an instant. The fresh air that brought about the sweet scent of vegetation made him take a deep breath.

Good took off the earmuffs and flew upwards, ascending above the floating island.

The tracer rounds around directed him towards a certain direction.

He caught sight of the Devilbeasts fleeing around 60 kilometers away, and immediately gave chase without hesitation!

...

Before the magic power projection, Roland couldn't help but clench his fists.

This was what a Skycruiser should be like!

The gigantic mass, the abundance of weapons, and the ability to unload aircraft—just the sight of it was enough to overwhelm everyone with emotions!

One after another, biplanes shot out from the mountain, giving chase and killing all the demons that managed to slip through the cracks. The Aerial Knights that were multiple times faster than Devilbeasts quickly held an overwhelming advantage.

While attacking the Deity of Gods at the Impassable Mountain Range, they had lost over 10 sets of planes just to suppress the Devilbeasts. But this time, aside from the loss of a few unmanned machine gun turrets, the 200 Devilbeasts did not kill or cause any harm to the humans.

"It's now our time to give the enemy a headache." Edith sneered. It was apparent how the demon's use of the Deity of Gods to self destruct and kill off humanity had greatly troubled her. To be able to use a similar object to retaliate made her elated and converse with a lighter tone.

"I reckon that they will use a larger force to retaliate next." Iron Axe spoke up, "Or send out a senior lord-ranked Senior Demon."

Roland quietly recalled the information regarding senior lords. According to Valkries, aside from Silent Disaster that was proficient at offense, there was the other demon hailed as Blood Conqueror. But the latter was one promoted from the Lords of Hell and was more suited for ground combat, since no Devilbeasts were able to bear his size.

On second thought, the demons' King's giving Hackzord command over the Western Front was a fortunate thing for the humans.

"Regardless of what means they employ, we will be able to take them on to the end... But they don't have much time left." Roland looked at the map.

The last 250 kilometers of distance was depicted with a red line. There was only three days left for the Eleanor Skycruiser to arrive at its destination for the final battle.

Chapter 1460: Under the Mask

"This is all because of Hackzord's betrayal! Your Majesty, please permit me to slaughter him!"

Within the Presiding Holy Sea, Blood Conqueror roared in anger. From the blue veins popping out of his forehead and the steam spewing out of his mouth, anyone could tell that he was genuinely furious.

The other senior lords had gloomy expressions as well.

Only Nassaupelle remained expressionless; he even felt a little amused.

Truly a bunch of fools.

He had clearly warned them before. It was a pity that aside from Undeserved, the other senior lords were skeptical about Silent Disaster's and Sky Lord's collusion and attack on him. Even after Mask revealed his memories to the King, all the senior lords merely suppressed their doubts. They likely believed that Mask had somehow crossed them.

Just because he looked like an assembled "monster."

In the end, even before they could hear Hackzord and Serakkas' explanation, the human's "Deity of Gods" appeared.

But wasn't it already too late to pin the blame on the traitors by then?

"The problem is, do you know where they are?" Undeserved remained unfazed by Blood Conqueror's anger. *"Currently, Hackzord might be hiding in any corner within the ridge of the continent, and our citizens of Sky City might have been compelled by him. Without investing a large force into this, we will not be able to find any traces of a senior lord like him. Furthermore..."* He stared at the other party coldly. *"Even if you find Hackzord, don't forget that Serakkas is by his side. At that point, who knows who will be the one getting killed."*

"You—!" If they weren't in the Presiding Holy Sea, Blood Conqueror would have already taken action.

"Your Majesty, I don't understand this..." A fleshy body squirmed and spoke up. *"Did the humans truly find some sort of evidence regarding the Divine Will? Otherwise, with Sky Lord's character, how can he ever side the humans—"*

"With all that they have done, are you still guessing about the reason for their betrayal?" Mask interrupted him. *"Regardless of the reason, Hackzord had plenty of opportunities to report to the King. But what happened? Since leaving the Western Front, heading to the Bottomless Land and colluding with Silent Disaster, he never sought to communicate with King City from the beginning to the end! This is obviously a betrayal that had been in the planning! If I hadn't gained a breakthrough in my abilities, I would had died at Serakkas hands!"*

The other senior lords were dumbstruck.

It was a piece of memory extracted from Mask and could not be faked, while Hackzord's wandering activities had been sighted by scouts in the northern extremity of the Land of Dawn. Regardless of how one looked at it, it was not one of a panicked and hurried decision.

That's right, just like that... Nassaupelle smiled. Memories could not be faked, but parts could be erased and orders shifted. Mask chose to conceal clues of Valkries, and everything he reported to the King were tampered.

Reality proved that he had taken a wise choice. If the other senior lords discovered the reason for the betrayal involved Valkries's whereabouts, the situation would have become more complicated.

In that sense, the obtaining of the human's legacy might be delayed even further.

He did not want to waste anymore time.

“Mask is right, we should focus on the human’s floating island first. They are clearly heading towards King City,” Undeserved said. “The enemy is floating in the air and wield weapons capable of covering all angles. It is not a battle suited for Senior Lords Blood Conqueror or Death Scar. Weighing the options, I am the one most suited to stop them.”

Like Resentful Heart and Death Scar, Undeserved was upgraded from a psychic, but compared to a mind controller who was good at confusion and manipulation abilities, Undeserved leaned towards melee combat. It was apparent from the attire he had—with a basic humanoid form, he was dressed in tight-fitting black leather. There was not a piece on armor on him like a sharp blade that had abandoned the notion of defense.

The only difference between him and a human was the two horns that protruded out of his forehead, but Nassaupelle knew that the appearance was just a facade. Undeserved was capable of manipulating how other lifeforms felt towards him, and it was a mimicry capability stronger than Transformer’s. Mask had once experienced it for himself. While walking next to Undeserved, his consciousness immediately treated him as a rock and he did not even have the slightest sense of his presence.

He is the most plausible candidate... Or rather, the only choice out of helplessness—if I’m excluded , Mask thought to himself. Wars could never end by just an assassination, and the King would not agree to his plea.

“Overruled.” As expected, the King’s first sentence was to reject the suggestion. Nassaupelle was unsure if he had read it wrongly, but he felt that the King’s tone had become even more indifferent. *“Killing the commander will only incite more chaos, and the replacement is more likely to expose themselves. The humans have witches that detect magic power; at the same time, do not forget the large number of anti-magic carriers. Your success rate will only stand at about thirty percent, with an escape chance of less than one percent, it is a meaningless risk.”*

“But the other senior lords—”

“Our race has more than the senior lords to do battle; our higher ascendants shouldn’t be underestimated as well. The floating island owned by the humans utilizes a God’s Stone pillar from the Western Region. It is unlikely that they have a Plan B like our Deity of Gods. In the end, they are still relying on their own strength.”

“Truly wise, Your Majesty!” Mask extended both his hands out and exclaimed, *“In fact, I have studied how the lowlifes conduct their battle—the iron birds might seem difficult to handle, but they are in fact extremely weak! If they dare show themselves in the air above our city, I will definitely teach them a lesson they will never forget!”*

“Even your magic power core instrument was taken by the lowlifes, so how trustworthy are your words?” Death Scar retorted.

“If not for Silent Disaster, how could I ever have lost the authority over the Deity of Gods?” Mask did not even look at him. *“The Western Front’s battle have proven the potential of the Symbiotic Demons. What I have to do is just expand its application. Even though they are unable to fly, they are huge threats to those iron birds.”*

“Permitted. But you cannot overuse the resources at the front lines.” The King gave a brief reply.

“That is only natural.” Mask decided to strike while the iron was hot. *“Aside from that, I have a new concept—If we are able to successfully channel magic power out and release them unmodified, we might be able to obtain a powerful war weapon. It is just that the research requires magic power cores. Am I allowed to test it out?”*

“King’s City has a surplus of cores. You can test this new concept of yours, but do not interfere with the Birth Tower’s operations.”

“Yes, Your Majesty!” Mask lowered his head.

The Presiding Holy Sea gradually disappeared and the majestic King City’s stone tower appeared before him. Compared to the past, this black tower had additional pairs of eyes, as though capable of scrutinizing and observing everything beneath.

That was the King.

In terms of magic power, ten of Masks could not compare to the Tower. In the past, he would never have had such a thought, but now...

Mask slowly rearranged his masks and walked towards the nesting grounds.

... The King is merely a part of the core as well.