

## Witch 161

### Chapter 161 Alchemy and Chemistry

The principle behind a DC Generator and its structure was very simple. During his childhood, Roland had once taken apart more than a dozen four-wheel drive motors. From the ordinary stock motors, to the legendary golden panther, and also the build it yourself type hand rotators made out of copper wire. These motors were all considered to be regular DC motors.

There was no difference in the structure of DC Generators and DC Motors, at their essence, they were all the same thing, their function was interchangeable. As long as there was another machine to help the rotator of the DC Motor rotate, and causing the wire to continuously cut through the magnetic induction line, it could continue to generate and induce an electrical current without end.

With the help of Anna and Mystery Moon, Roland needed only half a day to finish assembling a simple DC motor. All the parts of the stator were made out of wood and then given to Mystery Moon for her to magnetism them. The rotor was made of a wooden log with commutators embedded at the tip of both ends. The rotor would be connected by a shaft to the steam engine through a hole in the center. This structure was very convenient to produce, but at the same time it also ensured that the commutators would be isolated from each other.

As for the new steam engine, Roland and Mystery Moon just stood to the side and looked on as Anna performed her incredible processing techniques. If they needed to make larger parts, she would spread out her black fire, wrap it like a cover around a bunch of ingots and let them melt within the cover. She would then mold the iron into the required sizes. Afterward, she only needed to cut out the right form.

On the next day, when Roland was ready to go to the calcining room in his backyard to test out the generator's effectivity, the guards also brought him some very pleasant news. The Chief Instructor of Silver City's Alchemy Workshop had come to Border Town, and also, there was more than one other person that had come with him.

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Kyle Sichi acted in a very decisive manner, in the afternoon, on that very same day he took his family and more than a dozen disciples with him and boarded on the next merchant ship heading towards Border Town. Unfortunately, Chavez had ended up hesitating for a long time, but in the end, decided to reject Kyle's invitation.

Kyle hadn't disclosed the contents of the letter to any of the other alchemists since the more people who knew about it, the later the departing time would have to be scheduled. Kyle worried that it wouldn't take very long before the news about his success in reproducing Crystal Glass would reach the Duke's ear, and if by then he still wanted to go out, now after becoming known to have the ability to create high-profit luxury products, the Duke certainly want to keep him firmly under his control.

He had written down the formula for crystal glass and its firing method on paper, then stored it in the formula cupboard of the refining room. This would in turn also give the Duke the opportunity to heavily invest in the production of crystal glass and in so doing also invest in the Alchemy Workshop indirectly. But comparing it with learning about the truth of alchemy, whether it was the recipe of crystal glass or the Alchemy Workshop in general, they both wouldn't even be worth mentioning.

Five days later, Kyle finally had the opportunity to see the author of the letter, Roland Wimbledon.

Right now they were in the castle's reception hall, and Kyle had just finished giving his greeting, but even before he had placed his butt on the chair, he couldn't stop himself any longer from speaking out. "Your Highness, I would like to have a friendly conversation with your alchemist."

"My alchemist?" Hearing his question the Prince just grinned "Before you came to Border Town, we had no alchemist here, but from now on you are my alchemist."

"You mean ... those alchemical formulas, were written by you?" Kyle suddenly thought of another possibility, my counterpart is a prince, who has received all his knowledge from private teachers and other mentors. So, if he knows about these formulas, doesn't this mean that King's City Alchemy Workshop had already known about the essence of alchemy for a long time? And we, in our delusion thought we were finally getting ahead of them, now that seems to be just utterly ridiculous.

"Not exactly," Roland said. "These formulas came from an ancient book which were written more than four hundred years ago and were recently discovered by me. It seems that hundreds of years ago they called alchemy 'chemistry'."

"What..." When Kyle heard that the formulas didn't come from King's City's Alchemy Workshop, his heart suddenly felt a lot better. But the Prince's answer still surprised him. An alchemy book that was more than 400 years old? One had to know that even the King's City's Alchemic Workshop only had a history of less than 200 years, could it be that the later generation will also look at our inventions?

"Yes, in the book, those scholars had formulated a hypothesis, which they called, "The Theory of the immortality of matter." It states that matter which is the source of all things in the world will neither disappear nor will it increase. It will only transfer from one form to another. But in the end, they are all a piece of the same cake," Roland pointed to a cake placed on a nearby table, "If you eat that, it will enter your stomach, from there some of the parts of which it's formed will be absorbed by you, becoming a part of your body, while the rest of it will be excreted. So, if you now would take the integrated parts and the expelled parts and compare them with the former cake, the quality of the matter should still be the same."

"Hold on... Your Royal Highness," Kyle expressed his thoughts, "If I take a piece of wood, cut it and burn it to ashes, no matter how much it previously weighed, the weight of the ashes after the fire will be lighter than that of the former piece of wood. If the matter didn't disappear, then where did it go?"

"These problems are also explained in the books," Roland said laughingly. "The missing matter was turned into gas and water, and the water was heated up so much that it turned into gas as well and evaporated. So, in the end, you can only see the residue from what was left behind."

"Gas?" Kyle got an unexplainable feeling in his heart, "Do you want to say that the air also has a weight?"

"Of course, the air also has mass." The Prince nodded in confirmation, "It is also very easy to verify this point, just put a pile of sawdust into a bottle, then cover the bottle and place it on a scale. Afterward, you set the sawdust in the bottle on fire and weights it again. you will eventually discover, that the weight of the bottle hasn't changed. This is because the gas had no way out and still remains inside the bottle."

“This... was this also written in the ancient books?” Kyle eagerly asked, “Could you let me see that book?”

“You can, if you accept a few of my conditions first,” Roland gave him a piece of paper.

“You only have to name them.”

“First of, if you want to work for me, your salary will be calculated according to the regular payment of Silver City’s Alchemy Workshop. Secondly, once you accept this job, you must comply with the confidentiality regulations. That means, everything you learn has to remain a secret to other alchemists. Thirdly, if you agree to the terms, you have to sign this contract.

“The deal lasts for a period of five years and when the five years are over, you are free to go on to choose your own fate. Furthermore, your alchemy discoveries won’t be placed under the confidentiality restrictions any longer. You will be free to show your discoveries to your colleagues at the Alchemy Workshop. If you accept these three conditions, according to the contract, Border Town will provide you with free housing and a chemical laboratory. And lastly, I will lend you the book title “Elementary Chemistry” to study, and if there is something that you don’t understand, you can always come and ask me.”

These doesn’t seem to be very harsh conditions, Kyle thought, although those words such as confidential regulations, chemical laboratory and so on are really hard to pronounce, I think I was able to grasp the general meaning, also, a five-year contract also isn’t that long. Kyle had previously thought that the Price would make it a requirement that he would have to stay in Border Town forever.

And... even if he had demanded harsher conditions, Kyle would still have wanted to see the book with his own eyes, the book on which was recorded the essence of alchemy.

After he had thought it through, Kyle got up from his seat and bent his waist: “I’m willing to serve you, Your Royal Highness.”

“Excellent, now we have a deal,” the Prince did not seem to care about the etiquette, “Your workplace will be directly beside the Chishui River. After signing the contract, I will take you with me and have you familiarize yourself with the laboratory I will introducing you to the usage of the glassware and informing you about the workplace’s rules.”

Hearing all this, Kyle felt that there was something wrong with this situation, how can it be that the Prince is so skilled in alchemy, making people think that he is always keeping another card up in his sleeve? Shouldn’t he be just some ordinary noble that found an ancient book and simply brushed up against alchemy?

However, these were all only minor details, he suppressed his doubts and asked, “Does Your Highness need me to refine something for you?”

“I do, I need a highly-concentrated acid. The higher the concentration, the better.” The Prince replied.

Chapter 162 Firearm Practice

“Liar.” When Roland had finished his appointment with the alchemist, he returned to his office. Nightingale asked, “What kind of four-hundred and fifty year-old ancient ‘Elementary Chemistry’ book

are you talking about? Isn't it just one of the books that contain some of your memories? Sooner or later, everything in it will be taught to the citizens anyway, right?"

"It was only a white lie." During Margaret's visit, she had presented a package of black tea to Roland. He could now finally do away with drinking water or ale every day.

"How could a prince who has lived his whole life in the palace know alchemy so well while having only had access to the teachings of the King's Alchemist? But, if I were to rather give him a book so that he could study it himself, it would be more likely that he would accept the knowledge compared to if I were the one who was teaching him. After all, the one thing that humans trust the most will always be themselves."

"Oh?" Nightingale became curious, she leaned her upper body closer to Roland and stopped herself directly in front of his face, "Then who was the one who taught you?"

"Uhh..." Roland opened his mouth, but Nightingale laid her finger on it, "If you do not want to give me an answer, just don't say anything. I don't want to hear a lie come from you."

When Roland blinked with his eyes, Nightingale had taken back her hand.

"We have to make use of the fact that the duel is still five days away," Roland took this opportunity to change the subject, "we have to get Carter and allow him to get familiar with the new weapon."

"But a short while ago, didn't you complain that the ammunition problem still wasn't resolved yet?"

"The problem only affects the actual use of colloxylin. If we only want to take care of the competition, it should still be possible for us to fire the gun. After all, during the duel we won't have to consider the transportation or the reloading, since ten rounds of ammunition should be enough to draw a result," Roland explained.

Of course, the lack of celloidin would lead to a decrease in the rate of fire, which could also play an important part in the duel, but in the end it would all end up in the hands of Carter and his God like face.

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To the west of the City Wall.

After accepting his new assignment given to him by Roland, Carter arrived at the explosives testing area once more.

"I'm supposed to be fighting against a witch?" Carter had been startled when he heard about the duel.

"Can I wear a God's Stone of Retaliation?"

"Certainly," Roland smiled. "But unfortunately, you will be facing off against a unique type of witch who won't be affected by it, her method of fighting is also similar to that of a knight- she will even be using a greatsword."

"You mean to tell me, she's a witch that is a master at melee fighting?" Carter glanced at Nightingale who was standing beside Roland.

“More or less. But because her ability is of the self-strengthening type, regardless of whether it is her strength or her speed, they will all be far beyond that of an ordinary human.” Roland continued.

“You have to be mentally prepared. Her control over her body and her power is several times greater than that of that death-row criminal after he took those pills.”

“Several times greater... Your Royal Highness, do you know what this means?” Carter was shocked.

“I will most probably be unable to keep up with her reaction speed, even if I’m carefully observing her movements. If she is as powerful as you say she is, I am afraid I won’t be able to beat her.”

“Theoretically speaking, your chance of winning is actually zero,” the Prince confirmed, but he then handed him a strange firearm, “but by using this weapon, your chances of winning should increase dramatically.”

“This is... the new gun?” Carter grabbed the weapon with both hands. Because the trigger and the barrel parts were very similar to that of a flintlock, the knight was also able to determine that it should belong to the same type of weapon. Even though its size wasn’t as big as the former, after he held it in his hand it was still heavier than the former flintlock. Particularly noteworthy to him was that, with the exception of the handle, which was made out of wood, all the rest of the weapon was made out of metal. With its smooth lines and its sharp corners, as well as its light white metallic luster, the weapon was a thing of unspeakable beauty.

It was the first time he saw such a weapon, and he immediately fell in love with it.

“It is called a revolver,” Roland pulled out another weapon with the same shape, and let the beehive-like-wheel pop out to its left, “Now let me instruct you on how to use it.”

Carter soon found out that its operation was simpler than that of the flintlock gun. The projectile and gunpowder had already been integrated into one unit, and as long as the cylinder was loaded it would be ready to fire. There were five holes in the cylinder, which meant that each cylinder could be filled with up to five rounds of ammunition. This was probably also the reason why it was classed as a revolver.

There was a hole where the revolver’s hammer met the cylinder, if the hammer hit the hole, a spark would be created and a loud friction sound would then be heard. Maybe there is flint hidden inside it, he thought. But this bullet’s design really is much too incredible, this light-yellow shell is made out of a thin copper plate, and the body appears to be perfectly round but also totally smooth at the same time. I can’t even see any cracks or gaps in the outer shell. The bullet’s front is slender while its rear is as thick as my index finger. It fits very accurately into the holes in the cylinder. How were they able to produce this?

“The ammunition still isn’t finished yet, so you have to always pay attention to the opening at the bottom of the bullet,” Roland performed a shooting motion, “like me, you have to always keep pointing the muzzle downwards. Don’t let the powder leak out from the opening. After each shot, you have to clean up the revolver’s bullet nest, or else the scattered gunpowder will start to accumulate inside the hole.”

“Unfinished goods?”

“Yeah,” the Prince shrugged, “There is an important part that still needs to be resolved, but if everything goes well, we can finish it before the start of the duel. The hole at the bottom will then be sealed so that you will no longer need to worry about losing gunpowder.”

When the bottom becomes sealed, how will be the gunpowder inside the bullet be ignited? Carter thought this, but soon decided not to think any further about this seemingly impossible problem. After all, he was not as knowledgeable as His Royal Highness, who knew so much.

That’s right, he is erudite and multi-talented. At present, Carter already admired the 4th Prince and prostrated himself in admiration. No matter if it were a master alchemist or an astrologer who held a high position at court, none of them had invented as many strange things in addition, all of Roland’s products had a great value. His inventions were unlike Snow powder, which was the kind of invention that could only be used as a toy for the nobility.

The steam engine invented by His Royal Highness was currently being used for mining and pumping operations, and his guns and cannons helped repel the demonic beast and also the Duke’s coalition. Now, Carter was already convinced that as long as he had enough time, the throne of the Kingdom of Graycastle would definitely end up in the hands of Roland Wimbledon – the great Lord of Border Town.

The distance to the target was ten meters, but apart from the issue with the distance, there was also the problem that the human- mark was only the size of one’s hand. Carter took on a shooting stance in accordance with the teachings of His Highness. He then held the gun in both hands, leaned his body slightly forwards, aligned the barrel in line with the center of the target, and then pulled the trigger.

Sparks and gas were ejected from both sides of the wheel, and a loud noise hurt his ears. It felt like someone had shoved him backward, and his arms were also unconsciously pushed upwards. When the smoke finally cleared, the target still seemed to be intact.

“Go on,” said Roland.

Carter took a deep breath, and then fired the remaining four bullets. However, the result was still the same, no bullet had hit the target.

“This...” Carter was shaken, but when he looked to His Royal Highness, he discovered that the latter didn’t seem to care.

“With its shorter barrel, the pistol’s accuracy and range aren’t as good as the rifle’s, so it’s entirely reasonable for you to miss. Plus, the bullet’s diameter is close to twelve millimeters. With the diameter to be nearly twelve millimeters, the recoil also has to be much larger than from the flintlock.” The Prince began to explain, but Carter couldn’t understand what he wanted to say to him. “All in all, you only have to follow my instructions and keep on practice a lot. If one day, before the duel, you are able to hit the target with all the five bullets, you will really a chance to win. Oh, and that’s right... don’t forget to collect the bullet casings, they can be reloaded and used more than once.”

Chapter 163 Maggie the Witch

Ashes sat at the top of the castle, waiting for the arrival of the day of the competition.

During the past few days, her attempts at persuading the other witches had not shown any progress. The stubbornness of the witches had greatly exceeded her expectations, whether it was the older

women like Scrolls or the minors such as like Lily. They all refused her invitation. The only difference between them was their manner and reason in rejecting her.

Some chose to stay because of Roland, while others didn't want to leave the Witch Cooperation Association, but in the end the ten witches had all gathered together into turned into one unbreakable piece of iron. As for Anna and Nana, both of whom had originally come from Border Town, Ashes wasn't in the mood to even try to lure them away. In particular, when Ashes stood in front of the Anna, the magic she could feel coming from her was completely different to anything else she had ever felt before. Her magic felt like it was as hard as steel, but at the same time it also had a smooth and dense feeling to it. It felt as if she was separated from Ashes by a wall of iron.

Among the many witches that Tilly had been able to gather, none of them had ever given her that feeling. After inquiring the other witches on this topic, she learned that Anna's way of controlling her flame was actually quite unique. However, how could it be, that even though her flame was invisible, it still felt as if there was a real barrier present? Ashes simply couldn't understand this.

As for Border Town, in comparison to the other towns and villages that Ashes had seen before, it was quite different. If she were to put it into words, Ashes would have to say that felt as if the town was full of vitality, and that the people here all seemed to be holding on to a purpose for each and every day.

From her position high up on top of the castle, she had a perfect panoramic view over the whole town. It seemed that at this moment, the most intense flow of people was in the area for the new houses. They had separated a square site as the new district, and within that area, every house looked similar to the next.

There was an endless stream of carriages continually bringing in new batches of bricks from the North of the town while the masons were starting to dig out the foundations for a dozen new similarly shaped houses. Soon after, they could start to raise the walls, which was all done surprisingly quickly. Within a day, the walls had already reached around the height of a child.

Looking into the Northeastern direction, she could see smoke constantly rising up into the sky. The smoke wasn't caused by a mountain fire, but rather was the workings of the brick kilns. In particularly, there were several thick brick towers that had been erected, all of which at first glance, like a forest of colossal red tree trunks from the distance.

Looking in the direction of the river, she could see some of the several sailboats that were arriving at Border Town every day since she had been here. Most of these sailboats came from Longsong Stronghold and were all loaded with so many items that the unloaded goods would almost fill up the entire shipyard.

A group of guards were always patrolling around the yard while keeping those strange wooden pikes in their hands. Unlike the guards from some of the other cities' garrisons, they weren't walking around languidly for a short time before disappearing to find a place to hide and take a nap. No, they always marched in a straight line, moving between the terminal and the yard, and sometimes would even take the initiative to come forward and help to unload the ships, all of which Ashes had no memory of ever witnessing such a scene ever before.

What kind of spell had Roland Wimbledon used that had given these people so much enthusiasm for constructing this new town in such a barren and desolated land?

Just at that moment, from overheard, Ashes heard a burst of gugu sounds from a flock of birds. She raised her head and saw how a large fat pigeon dropped down from the sky and landed on her shoulder.

“Finally, I have found you,” said the dove beside her cheek.

“Has Tilly sent you?” Ashes pulled some wheat corns from her pocket and threw them on the roof.

The Pigeon began to flap her wings in anger, which was probably supposed to mean something like, “I’m not a bird, gurr!”

“After you turn back into a human we can speak again.”

“Okay. goo,” when the voice faded, the pigeon’s feathers suddenly expanded, and released a white light from the gaps between its feathers. Its head moved up, followed by the rapid expansion of its body. Simultaneously, its feathers began to shrink and were turned into a bundle of long white hair.

No matter how many times she saw this happen, Ashes would always be amazed. Maggie’s ability as a witch, which allowed her to change into a variety of birds, besides the problem that she was quite fat in her bird form, was wonderful and charming ability. She would even sometimes long to have Maggie’s ability, rather than being an extraordinary who didn’t have to be afraid of the power of God’s Stone of Retaliation. She was much more eager to have the ability to travel from one place to another. With this ability, as long as she wanted to see Tilly, she could immediately go to her, no matter where Tilly was at the time.

“Even with the trace I could follow, it still wasn’t that easy to locate your position, ah,” Maggie’s entire body trembled as if she was drying her feathers, “The distance was so far that my magical stone statue couldn’t even sense the magical fluctuation coming from your mark. Fortunately, Shadow could still tell me your approximate whereabouts. When I flew over the Fallen Dragon Ridge, the magical stone finally showed some reaction.”

In addition to her bunch of amazing white hair, the most eye-catching part of her was her short stature. She was obviously an adult, but until you reached her waist, she still had the exact same appearance as a young girl. If she untied her white hair, it could almost cover her entire body.

“Has Tilly safely arrived in the Fjords?” Ashes sat down and patted at the tiles beside her. The other side, just like a bird, obediently came over.

“She took the Empress of the Sea and had a safe travel, but during the second trip a strong Northwind came up and pushed the ship against the shore, fortunately no witch was killed. The third and fourth ships are still at sea; the moment I heard of your travel I came over to find you.”

“That’s good.” Ashes could finally feel some relief, although she felt disgusted when she saw the Prince’s face, one thing he had said wasn’t wrong. He was right that the voyage from the Kingdom of Graycastle to the Fjords would be filled with danger. The weather on the sea could change far more rapidly than here on land, and at the same time, it could also be much more violent than on land. What was an entirely blue sky of pleasant winds just moments before could turn into a storm within the blink of an eye. Fighting against the overwhelming waves, her extraordinary power appeared to be negligible.



“You both say the same thing,” Maggie continued, “Shadow stated that you did not come back together with them because you wanted to recruit some new witches from Border Town. Rather than asking for more details, Lady Tilly just said ‘That’s good.’ ” She paused and took a look at her surroundings, “The new companions, where are they?”

“They do not want to leave,” Ashes sighed in regret and began to repeat her story. “Compared to me, they seem to believe in the Lord of Border Town, who is Tilly’s brother.”

“Lady Tilly was willing to accept us, and now even her brother is also prepared to take us in... ah, to me this doesn’t seem to be bad, gurr,” she leaned over, “That being the case, shouldn’t you already be on your way, on the road to the Fjords? Without your help, Lady Tilly cannot start the cleansing program.”

Ashes shook her head, “I still have to wait, I will leave immediately after the duel has finished.”

“But, you just said, even if you win, the other side still wouldn’t take the initiative to accept your offer.” Maggie muttered, “So why do you have to complete this test?”

“If there is a chance, I still want to try,” Ashes answer came quietly. “The cleansing program has no immediate effect, but if I’m able to bring a witch with me, Tilly’s strength will definitely increase.”

“Well,” Maggie nodded, “In that case. I will be staying here and wait for you so that we can both go back together, but there is still one thing you have to take note of. When I flew over the Fallen Dragon Ridge, I saw a group of riders flying the banner of the Church. They were about 10 strong.”

“That’s isn’t a very large number... If they are raising their flag, that must mean they belong to the Army of Judges,” Ashes said in a cold voice, “Except for Border Town, I don’t think there is any other place near here that the Church would want to send their envoys. Their noses are as sensitive as a dog’s.”

“All is well and good, we will keep this information to ourselves until I finish neatly defeating their knight. Afterward, I will tell him the news that the Church is approaching. Roland Wimbledon should finally realize what a terrible mistake he had made. How awesome would that be.”

#### Chapter 164 Highly Concentrated Acid

Kyle Sichi had hardly gotten any sleep these past few days, he had soon discovered that coming to Border Town had been the wisest choice in his life.

He had spent two full days and one night reading the complete book on “Primary Chemistry”, and now that he had started to read it once more. Even though he had only slept for two or three hours, it was more than enough for him to be full of energy. Now, as he returned back to the first page, he started to read the ancient book carefully once more.

Matter is made up of tiny particles! The changes of matter are from the decomposition and the recombination of those aforementioned particles! During the entire reaction process, the total amount of matter will always remain constant the entire time!

For goodness sake. What kind of person could write such a book? Unexpectedly there are people some people who could see the world in such details that they could narrate it so clearly. More than once did he suspect that the contents of the book were actually all a fabrication, but after he did some alchemy tests according to the example given, the results were all fully in line with what was written in the book!

Moreover, not only did this work during the experiments, no, he had also frequently seen some example of this working in reality, all of which showed that what was written in the book was correct.

There were things such as "Oxygen"

This gas is one of the main components of air, people were not breathing air to live, but rather the oxygen that came with it. A flame also required oxygen, to be able to burn, the combustion was essentially a kind of oxidation reaction. The more oxygen the fire was supplied with, the more intense the combustion would be.

These words reminded him of the kilns they used in Silver City to burn glass. Two people had to constantly work on the blister bag in order to allow the furnace temperature to reach the level at which the gravel would start to melt. Since it was all made out of matter, this was also possible through alchemy... no, it was simply a chemical reaction drawn out from pure oxygen. If it were possible to supply the furnace with pure oxygen, couldn't the blast equipment also be left out?

And the most surprising part he had read in the book was that water was actually composed of two hydrogen particles and one oxygen particle. Which was probably also the reason why all creatures had to drink water. However, hydrogen seemed to be a gas, but when combined with oxygen which was also another type of gas, it became a liquid, how could this be possible?

Kyle discovered that he still had many questions left unanswered and also many things to consider, but there was no doubt that with this new knowledge he had already left the other alchemist far behind. While they were still searching for formulas in their world filled with chaos and a fog of obscurity, he instead had a flat and straight road directly before his eyes.

Whatever, I can leave this for later. Now, it is time to do some proper business. He finally closed the book, filled with reluctance. Looking out of the window he saw that at this point the horizon had already began to turn white, which meant that it was time for him to go to work.

Kyle blew out the candle, and when he approached the bedroom, he saw that both his wife and daughter were still busy sleeping. Afterward, he stepped out of the house and closed the door quietly behind him.

The house His Royal Highness had assigned to him laid in a district west of the castle. Comparing the new house with his former house in Silver City there were a lot of differences. The walls were now made out of brick instead of the quickly molding wood he had seen in Silver City. Furthermore, the house was also many times more comfortable and the kitchen utensils and furniture were all stocked with everything that they needed.

Although he hadn't spoken about it out loud, deep down he was much more satisfied with this new life. His disciples lived in another district, two blocks away from him. Their house was much smaller, and they didn't have a room for themselves. Their house was a bit like an inn, where a bedroom had to be shared with four people.

When he came to his laboratory at the Shishui River, he saw that his disciples have already been busy. They had all been carefully selected by Kyle. They had worked in the Alchemy Workshop almost from their childhood onwards, learning how to clean and sort the materials. By now all of them had already

reached an age between twenty and thirty years old. Seeing that all the laboratory utensils and shiny glass containers were clean, Kyle nodded in satisfaction.

“Good morning, Chief Instructor,” seeing him enter, all the disciplines bowed and greeted him.

“Let’s start.” Kyle took a pair of gloves from one of the cupboards, full of enthusiasm. These gloves were extremely slim and elastic. They were most probably made out of animal intestines.

When he had worked in the Alchemy Workshop before this, they never had any provisions such as these, but the Prince had repeatedly stressed how dangerous it was to work and experiment with the chemicals. So, all the operating rules had to be strictly followed, such as when working with corrosive materials, they had to wear gloves the whole time and keep all of the windows open.

Another difference between his previous work in the workshop and now was that he now had a clear task assigned to him. He had to make acid for His Royal Highness.

The double stone acid method had already been used by his disciplines many times before, so Kyle only had to visit them from time to time and no longer needed to guide them through each and every step of the way.

The two acids that they had to produce were described in detail in the book “Primary Chemistry”, one was called sulfuric acid, and the other was called nitric acid.

During his time in the Alchemy Workshop they had used different names for them, the former had been known as green vitriol acid and the latter as niter acid. Even though they had used different names for it, the preparation method was basically still the same, through the dry distillation of green vitriol and saltpeter, they could get acid vapor and then by condensing them together, they were able to collect the needed acid liquid.

Green vitriol was usually mined together with sulfur, while there were special nitrate fields to satisfy the great demand of the big cities, so they were both a commonly found raw material.

But His Highness stressed the point that the two acid concentrations had to be as high as possible, so he had deliberately decided to explain the purification method to Kyle.

For example, the collected sulfuric acid could be heated up again, so that the remaining water evaporated until finally a concentration of up to 98% concentrated sulfuric acid could be reached.

However, nitric acid was a lot of more trouble. According to His Royal Highness, nitric acid itself wasn’t stable, it was actually pretty volatile. Because of this, using the usual method they could achieve a high concentration only to a certain extent, and if it then came in contact with light it would quickly break down again. So, they had to dilute the nitric acid with the concentrated sulfuric acid, only then could it be heated. The concentrated sulfuric acid would absorb water, while the nitric acid would evaporate.

Regarding the problem with the light, the nitric acid had to be stored in a brown glass bottle. To make all of this possible, His Royal Highness had already specially prepared a thermometer for him.

When Kyle saw it for the first time, he thought that it was very intricate. It was a hollow glass pipe filled with mercury, both ends of the tube were sealed so that they didn’t have to worry about any mercury leakage while using it. Around the tube there were several lines drawn one above the other. When the

temperature rose or fell, the mercury would follow, until it reached a constant position and the temperature could then be read.

Today, the laboratory had produced three bottles of concentrated sulfuric acid and a bottle of concentrated nitric acid. At this concentration, he found that sulfuric acid wasn't flowing as smooth as water anymore. Rather, it was flowing like a sticky oil. And the nitric acid was no longer colorless and transparent with its high concentration, it had now turned into a light yellow liquid, and when the glass cap was opened, it would emit bursts of white smoke.

"Head Instructor, will we have to produce these two acids every day?" One of his disciples, a man named Amon asked.

"We have to do it until His Highness gives us a new task." For a moment, Kyle paused, "Why, are you worried that you won't have any time to discover your own alchemic formula?"

Amon nodded.

Seeing him so earnest, Kyle had to laugh, "I forgot to tell you that later the title of Alchemist Instructor will soon become unnecessary, so you don't have to search for a new formula to become an alchemist."

"No..." Amon was totally stunned, "Don't need it?" The other disciplines had overheard his words and were now slowing down with the work at hand, and instead closely following along with their teacher's words.

"That's right, the future alchemist doesn't have to fumble with new formulas, instead they will need to have good memory and the ability of deduction," Kyle clapped with his hands, which was the sign for the others to gather to his side.

"His Highness has given me a book titled, "Primary Chemistry". This is also the reason why I've come to Border Town, if you thoroughly study through it, most of the world's formulas, can be inferred by using the book's contents.

"Can be inferred?" The disciples issued weak shouts.

"Yes, After I have read through it in detail, I will start to teach it to you," Kyle announced, "as for the way of promotion, His Highness has already explained this to me. In the future, you will have to pass a test that he had personally prepared to get the title of Chemist. Believe me, it won't take long before the honorary title of Chemist will be considered of a much higher rank than that of an Alchemist. And using the knowledge you have learned, even the Alchemist of the King's City's Alchemy Workshop wouldn't be able to catch up to you."

Chapter 165 Chase

Lightning traveled back and forth between Border Town and the southern hills, while the parchments in her hands were slowly becoming all the more complete.

This was her newly received task, together with Soraya, she had to draw a map of the Western Border.

Flying together with Soraya, her flying height was significantly reduced, making it awfully difficult to fly over the forest. So she would first paint a rough outline of the topography, and later with Soraya, they

would draw a more exact picture. By using her magic pen, the map would look like a view from up in the air, every detail seemingly totally lifelike.

After a parchment was filled, Lightning would then turn around, and fly back to Border Town. Today, after a few months of training, her flying speed had only become faster and faster. According to the calculation method taught by Prince Roland, her full-speed flight had almost reached close to one hundred and twenty kilometers per hour. At this speed, the incoming strong wind made it nearly impossible for her to open her eyes.

Because of this problem, Lightning thought that she had already reached her limit, but the day before yesterday, His Royal Highness had given her a gift. A headband made out of leather, with two copper rings wrapped into it. Embedded inside those copper rings was a pure and transparent glass, allowing her, for as long as she wore the headband, to be immune to the incoming wind.

His Royal Highness had said that this headband is called 'windproof glasses', and that it was actually quite easy to manufacture, by melting some glassware. He had also said, that with her wearing the headband she would look even more like a small Ezreal.

Lightning didn't know who this Ezreal person was, but she realized that even though the headband was only made out of cowhide, copper rings, and glass lenses, it had still needed a lot of effort to put something like this together. The complete piece of leather had a double layered structure to it so that it could wrap itself tightly around the inset copper rings. And also, to keep her from worrying that the leather band would scratch her skin, the headband had something similar to the buckle of a belt on it, with which she could adjust its size. Looking at it, it didn't give her the impression of something that had been just casually made.

She immediately fell in love with this gift, almost to the extent that she wanted to wear it even when she was sleeping. Now, she only had to pull down the glasses, and she could keep on flying faster and faster, no longer needing to take into account the impact from the whistling wind.

It wouldn't take very long before Lightning would reach the town, she had planned to immediately head back to the castle and hand over the new map to Soraya, but at that very moment a pale figure suddenly swept past the corner of her eye.

Looking sideways, Lightning saw a pigeon with its wings extended gliding in the direction of Longsong Stronghold. Pigeons weren't very rare birds, but this one was quite different, it was really too big to be like normal pigeon, just the wings alone would be enough to satisfy her stomach for the length of a whole day.

Lightning had to swallow down her saliva, she remembered the time when she had still lived on the island and caught some flying fish by hand later roasting them over the fire.

Now, living under the roof of His Highness, although the food was very rich, having to eat bread with butter and mushroom soup for months on end, the food had started to become somewhat tasteless to her, so if she could catch a pigeon for roasting...

Reaching out to the pack of salt and pepper fastened to her waist, her decision was made.

Turning around, Lightning flew straight toward the pigeon, and the pigeon quickly noticed the approach of the uninvited guest. It immediately folded its wings, diving downward and seemingly wanting to drill into the woods, to rid itself of this menacing hunter.

Seeing this scene unfolding in front of her, Lightning was shocked, she would never have thought a pigeon could be this smart. A few seconds later, a broad grin spread across her face, and with a sudden turn, she followed the pigeon as it dove downwards. Since the Months of Demons had already ended, the little girl had become confident that nothing could escape from beneath her gaze.

For a moment, the pigeon still skimmed over the treetops, but a moment later it lowered its altitude even further, entering the forest and flying extremely close to the ground. But the distance between itself and its hunter only became shorter and shorter, no matter how fast it beat its wings, it couldn't throw off Lightning's pursuit.

The dense forest receded, and the sun would occasionally shine through the branches, becoming alternatives patches of light and shade. Until they finally flew through an open area, and their surrounding suddenly became open and bright. Grabbing hold of this opportunity, Lightning brought her speed up to maximum, instantly hugging the pigeon from behind and tumbling to the ground.

The pigeon struggled heavily, trying to break free from its shackles. Lightning had already pulled out the knife from her waist, ready to finish off the game, but at this last moment, the dove opened its beak, "Don't, goo! Help me, goo!"

The little girl's shock was so heavy, that she almost tossed her knife away. But she quickly regained her rationality, and asked, "You, are you a witch?"

As an answer, the pigeon nodded.

"And I thought I could finally taste another type of flavor," Lightning sighed in regret, putting her knife away. "My name is Lightning, what is your name?"

The other expanded into a ball, and then turned into its human form, "Maggie, you actually wanted to eat a bird!" the woman complained.

"I have already eaten a lot of them from before." Lightning just shrugged her shoulder in response instead. She reached out her hand to pull Maggie up. All of a sudden, a bead rolled out from within Maggie's bosom, bouncing on to the ground twice, only to fall into a small pit. When Lightning quickly went over to pick up the bead, wanting to hand it back to Maggie, but found that the glass-like red bead with some strange letters engraved on it, seeming very familiar to her.

After frowning for a moment, she grasped a string around her neck, and slowly pulled a dark red pendant from her chest. Placing both of them into her hands to compare them, she discovered that the pattern on them was exactly the same.

"What?" Shocking Maggie who was looking over her shoulder from the back. "Why do you have a trace?"

"A trace ... What's that?"

“You don’t know what it is? This thing can respond to a magic stone, allowing the holder of the stone to locate your position.” Maggie suddenly stopped, “No, why should I even tell this to you? Just now, you wanted to eat me!”

“Do you have such a magic stone?”

“There are,” Maggie nodded her head.

“So, can you find my position?” Lightning asked curiously.

“No, it must match the magic stone to be able to locate the corresponding mark.” She replied very agilely this time, “and only us witches can use this. If you don’t know this already, how were you even able to get one?”

“It was my dad who gave it to me,” Lightning returned the bead to Maggie. “What about you?”

“I won’t tell you,” Maggie answered grudgingly, but then she stared curiously at the other girl. “You belong to the Witch Cooperation Association, and Ashes said, that you do not want to leave Border Town.”

“You belong to her side?” Lightning curled up her lips in disdain, “And I thought you were a new witch who was attracted by the rumor. Us witches here have a good life, why should we leave?”

“Because of the danger ah, the church may come here at any time, bringing their Army over with them.”

“An explorer will never shrink away from something because it is too dangerous,” When Lightning spoke out aloud, her face turned slightly red, well... the Stone Tower doesn’t count. It is only a matter of time before I visit the ruin again, and by then I must be the first to enter the basement.

“Furthermore, His Highness Roland Wimbledon has a lot of incredible invention, as long as you have seen them once, you will immediately become attracted to them. One can turn a fist-sized ball into a weapon, and when someone is hit by it, they are torn into pieces.”

“Really? Can you take me to see them?” Maggy exclaimed in admiration.

“That won’t do, unless you join the Witch Alliance, and become one of us.”

“But I have to go back with Ashes...” Maggie hesitated.

“Then you can come back later, ah,” Lightning continued her coaxing. “Here you can have a lot of fun. We have machines which move on their own using heated water, there are also weapons which are able to attack over a distance of a thousand meter, uh... are you asking yourself how far a thousand meters is? All in all, it is very far, if you look at people from one kilometer away, they will seem to be about the size of a tree branch.”

Making many gestures with her hands and feet, “and there are even many more possibilities to go play within the Concealing Forest. Things like poking honeycombs, gathering so many mushrooms that you couldn’t even count all of it, and hunting birds and the wild boars are all so very interesting. Peeling off their fur and roasting them over the campfire. You only have to sprinkle a little salt and pepper on them, and you can relish and eat as much tasty meat as you would ever want.”

“Really?” Maggie couldn’t help but start licking her lips.

“Why should I lie to you,” Lightning hooked her arm around Maggie’s shoulder, “On the other hand, we might even go hunt a bird and roast it, right now!”

Chapter 166 On the eve of the decisive battle

On the fifth day after their agreement, Roland had finally readied all the raw material he needed for the production of the celloidin.

He had made some serious mistakes in the beginning with the electrolysis of the salt water, he wanted to take advantage of the left-over copper strips from Anna’s bullet production and use them as electrodes, but the final result was that the electrodes had dissolved in the water, giving birth to the possibility of forming chlorine during the electrolysis. With this the whole basin of saltwater was wasted.

The electrolyte was generally saturated salt water, but the problem was that the salt in this era was not as cheap as the price of cabbage. Therefore, when the water was drained and Roland detected that the copper ions had mixed into the brine, turning it also into waste. Roland felt as if he was throwing away gold royals instead of just salt. In the end, he was able to solve this problem by replacing the electrodes with carbon.

By adding caustic soda to the boiling water to dislodge the oil, he obtained an absorbent cotton gauze. He then later brought over the leftover caustic soda back to the chemistry lab.

The esterification of the celloidin was the most important step in the production process, but he didn’t exactly know how he could achieve this. Roland only knew that he would have to soak the gauze in the mixed acid and when the nitrification process was complete, he could then take it out.

Whether it was the solution ratio or the duration of the reaction, he didn’t know anything about this. So with this in mind, Roland ordered Kyle to form groups and run some experiments. Using hourglasses to observe the time, the pieces of cotton gauze were repeatedly dipped into the mixed acid and rinsed with water. At the last step they were soaked in a sodium hydroxide solution to remove the excess liquid acid. Afterward, the still wet products were then shipped back to the castle, where they got air-dried by Wendy.

The result was that the best esterification process would be achieved by using the highly concentrated fuming acid, and with it, most of the trial product could also be quickly ignited. In the end to achieve the best effect with the gun-cotton would be to use the technique of first soaking it in sulfuric acid and after that in the nitric acid.

When the rough formula was finally calculated, the laboratory would then start with the mass production and immediately after the soaking and washing process was completed would it be brought away by the First Army. In the end, even the Chief Instructor did not know what exactly it was that they had actually produced.

The dry gauze was cut into tiny fingernail sized pieces by the maidservants and afterward were stored in separate boxes, they were then sent to the North Slope Mountain, there in the backyard they would complete the final loading phase.



In the absence of machines, the process could only be done by using basic manpower. A bunch of guards would have to sit down, dip the gun-cotton in the adhesive and gently push it into the bottom of each cartridge, this way sealing the ignition hole. They then carefully poured in the gunpowder with a funnel, compacting it as far as possible and making sure that each cartridge received an equal share of the propellant.

The final step was to place the warhead on top of the cartridge. The warheads and cartridges were made by Anna who had to ensure that they would fit together so perfectly, that only a few gentle taps with a hammer were required to seal them.

The efficiency of production was very low, in one day they weren't even able to produce more than 100 bullets. Then on the sixth day, Carter could finally start using the new weapon. Since the Chief Knights body fulfilled every qualification that was required to be an excellent marksman, his hit rate had been greatly improved after repeated practice over the last few days. Compared to the performance he had shown right after Roland introducing the weapon to him, it was like the difference between heaven and earth.

After fixing the problems with the ammunition, Carter no longer had to use his previous strange shooting posture, with him always having to point the gun downwards. Now, as long as the sealing collodion didn't break, the gun chamber could easily be kept clean. And since it was several times more flammable than the black powder, the fast firing rate was also guaranteed.

Taking advantage of the last day of time they had left, Roland allowed Carter to train his rapid gun drawing and even dual-pistol shooting skills. The recoil of the 12mm pistols was so strong, that it quickly became difficult to guarantee that the second shot would score while holding the gun only with one hand. But in Roland's plan, Carter would first hold back, letting Ashes draw in close and then start with his surprise attack.

Taking into account that Carter would carry two guns during the duel, if the fight ever turned to close combat, with ten bullets his success should be guaranteed. If the opponent closed in too quickly, Carter could quickly pull out his second gun. And taking into account that Ashes' weapon offered a certain degree of defense, Roland deliberately chose the not easily deformed steel bullets, increasing its penetration ability instead of using bullets with a high lethality.

With the limits of the current era's smelting technology, Ashes great sword was in all likelihood made out of pig iron to exaggerate its form without bringing any actual quality improvements. On the contrary, such bulky iron weapons were not actually fully forged, which led to the problem that the internal stress distribution would become uneven, and with this, they could only be called a good shield. From Roland's point of view, her weapon could be classified at best, to be of common quality. So as long as their luck wasn't awful tomorrow, the possibility of being hit by ricocheting bullets was very low.

If Ashes wanted to beat Carter, she would first have to close the distance, which was a cold weapons inherent disadvantage against hot weapons. As long as her eyesight wasn't exaggerated to such a large degree that she could even track the ballistic curves, allowing her to instantly dodge the bullets, the starting distance should actually be an insurmountable gap.

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Maggie flew back to Ashes room only after the sky had already started to turn dark.

“Why are you coming back so late these past few days?” Ashes asked after closing the window.

“Lightning took me with her to catch some birds,” When Maggie had changed back to her human form, she took a roasted bird leg out of her pocket, immediately filling the room with an overflowing aroma, “I deliberately left a piece for you.”

“I’ve eaten,” Ashes shook her head. “Is Lightning one of the witches in the Witch Cooperation Association?”

“Gooo,” Maggie nodded frantically, “her ability is similar to mine, like me she can also soar in the skies, but her ability is much more easier to use than mine.” After pausing for a moment, she then asked, “Sister Ashes, do you insist on beating them? I feel... that they aren’t actually ever going to go with you, and they live here quite well. “

Ashes was startled by this unexpected question and didn’t answer.

“Because, even I want to stay here now, goo,” Maggie sat down on the bed and self-servingly said, “The bed is soft, and the food we get is also sumptuous. I noted that when it was time for lunch, the Lord specifically placed the table in the backyard so that he could dine together with the witches after their practice. Everyone was talking and laughing, and he occasionally also gives a few words, he looks completely different than those aristocrats that hate us. This afternoon Lightning had taken me with her to play Gwent, it is a game playable for two and they even gave me two decks, Ashes sister, do you want to play together with me? I will teach you.”

“No...” Ashes shook her head and took a deep breath. She was aware of the changes taking place during the past few days, but right now, she suddenly realized that her thoughts seem to have been caught up in a misunderstanding.

These days, the majority of witches were living in fear, living without any purpose, their only pursuit was to live a comfortable and stable life. The same could be said about Maggie before she had been accepted by Tilly. She had lived within the reeds of a thatched house in the slums of King’s City, just like a real bird, she had spent her nights within the slits of the roof beams. Even after Tilly had decided to cross the seas eastwards, Maggie was still running around, contacting those other witches living in hiding, without even stopping once in the last six months. Most probably she was experiencing a life of peace and quiet for the first time ever.

Wasn’t it exactly the same for me? After I have met Tilly, I suddenly lived a life I had never dared to dream of. But now, after being accustomed to a relatively quiet life in the palace, I ignored the attraction of what it means to finally call a place my home again, in the eyes of those others witches, this is something they have never had before. It is only logical that they want to keep on staying here, wanting to protect their territory and all the feelings it contains, for me it is probably also the reason that I want to protect Tilly in the first place...

If Roland Wimbledon really does what he has said he would, with him being able to resist the God’s Punishment Army, there is no doubt that living in Border Town will be a better choice than traveling to the Fjords and establishing a Kingdom of Witches in that strange land. It seems to be just the place that our hearts are yearning for, but in the end, how much they will have to suffer no one can really predict.

However, if he is unable to resist the church, will the other witches leave?

Ashes mood suddenly cooled down.

Changing the perspective of her thoughts, if Tilly is unable to gain a foothold in the Fjords, I am afraid I will choose to stand beside her, guarding her until the last moment. As the person who I decided to be leading me towards my destiny, I won't leave her in before reaching it.

"Living here you will always be under the threat of the Church, and if they are unable to stop the God's Punishment Army, it is only a matter of time before Border Town will be destroyed."

Indeed, the test was no longer necessary... but Ashes still decided to go through with it. In order to wake them up and prove her point.

"And if they can stop them?" Maggie muttered.

"I hope so too, so I will help them to verify this point." Ashes voice became gradually smaller.

Finally closing her eyes, she was now ready to go all out.

## Chapter 167 Victory

They chose to hold the competition at the foot of the western City wall.

As for the spectators, in addition to Roland, there were also Iron Axe, Sir Pine, Brian and all the members of the Witch Alliance.

Plus, a fat pigeon who was squatting on the floor and looking upwards.

In order to avoid an incident where other people were accidentally hit by bullets, everyone who wanted to follow the test had to board and sit on the wall. Furthermore, the two fighters, the Chief Knight Carter Landis and the extraordinary witch Ashes would both be fighting close to the wall.

Carter's attire was no longer like the heavy knight armor he wore in the past, rather he now wore leather clothes which were easy to move in. He even had a custom-made holsters at his waist, giving him the opportunity to insert a revolver on both the left and right sides separately.

In addition there was also a knife fitted horizontal on his back, which could be used in the case of an emergency. But Roland knew, if Carter had to fall back to using the knife during the fight with an extraordinary, it would be better to just throw in the towel.

Ashes was still wearing the same dress as usual, a black robe covered her whole body while her black hair was tied into a ponytail, which was falling naturally down behind her. Seemingly completely ignoring that this would create an extra weakness for herself. The only difference with now was, that the clothes wrapped around her great sword had been uncovered, showing her dark brown blade, which reflected almost no light.

It was exactly like Roland had expected, the sword surface was totally uneven, completely unlike a well-forged weapon's. And because of the lack of maintenance she had provided to her weapon, the weapon had already begun to rust at the places where pieces had been cut out of it.

When the two stepped on to the stage, Carter constantly adjusted their position, until they had a distance of around 15 meters between each other. At this distance, during his training he would have a more than 80% firing accuracy. Taking the two pistols out of his holsters, Carter checked for the last time whether there were any issues with the bullets or the barrel.

Roland had Echo mimic and amplify his voice, "The rules of the duel are very simple:

-You are not allowed to move before the starting signal!

-You can always throw in the towel!

– As long as one of you do not receive an instant-kill, Nana's healing ability will be able to soon restored you to your original state!

Are there any questions left?"

After waiting for a moment and seeing that neither of them had anything to say, Roland went on and said, "When the bell rings, the duel will begin!"

Ashes silently sized up her opponent. As an extraordinary, most of the time, she just listened to her instincts when fighting. Furthermore, Tilly had also made it possible for her to take lessons from the best fencing masters in the palace, but she had always felt that these skills had only helped her in a minimal way.

Her opponent this time was the Prince's Chief Knight, but contrary to his rank, he didn't bear the common sword and shield, or spear equipment, he wasn't even dressed in his usual armor. The weapons in his hands looked very strange, but according to its shape, it obviously couldn't be regarded as a dagger or any other weapon related to the close fighting category. That meant that there was only one possibility left, it had to be similar to hand crossbows, which was a long-range striking weapon.

Against an extraordinary, crossbows were no threat at all, at least this was what she had learned on her own during a lot of fights. As long as it was a hand crossbows, she could even catch the flying arrows empty-handed. But when she looked at the Prince's confident expression, she knew that the weapons in her opponent's hands were more than likely not as simple a thing as an ordinary crossbow.

Her instincts told her, that she should close in to the knight as soon as possible, rather than waiting for the other side to release his external attack. Because of this plan, before the duel even started, Ashes thrust her sword into the ground, taking a pose that gave off no threat, but this was actually the most effective way for her to deal with an opponent using a crossbow.

At this moment, the crisp sound of a bell ringing could be heard coming from the direction of the wall.

Almost at the same time, Ashes firmly grasped the sword handle, putting all of her power into moving it forward. Throwing soil, grass, and even gravel into the sky with the wide side of her blade, letting it splash in the direction of the knight and forming a wall of sand between them.

The Chief Knight's reaction was also very fast, releasing a burst of flame from the arms in his hands, accompanied by a huge roar. But Ashes didn't see any arrows flying out of them, which means that he had either forgotten to install them or that they were coming too fast for her to see. Compared with the

first option that would be considered an idiot mistake, Ashes thought that the latter option was much more likely.

Under the cover of the sand screen, Ashes started her sprint. Within the blink of an eye, the distance between the two of them was narrowed to half while the sand screen had still not yet completely landed on the ground. Most people would subconsciously try to avoid being covered by the flying dirt, so as long as she could interrupt the other side from continuing to shoot, Ashes has most likely already won.

But Carter did not move from his position, he completely disregarded the sand hitting his face, squinting his eyes together while constantly following the movement of the extraordinary with his weapons, once again pulling the triggers of his weapons and sending out another burst of flames and a roar. On a conditional reflex Ashes stepped to the side, but until now she had still not seen any arrows or any other projectiles coming at her, while the knight also didn't show any movement of pulling any strings or having to prepare the next arrow.

This new weapon could probably be launched continuously, but since the first two consecutive shot have missed, the outcome has already been decided!

Closing the last ten steps in the blink of an eye, she had already appeared in front of the knight, holding her sword vertical, pressing her feet against the ground preparing to directly smash into the knight. Normally being hit by such an impact, her opponent would not die instantly, but it should still be enough to cause him to faint. Even if he were able to hold on with his strong battle will, the crushed bones in his chest would still make him completely lose the ability to fight.

In last breath before the moment of impact, Ashes could hear, for the third time, the bursting sound coming from the other side. Then a moment later, she felt as her sword was hit, followed by a crisp breaking sound and her right abdomen then suddenly becoming numb, it felt as if it had been severely grabbed by someone.

Almost at the same time, her whole body smashed into Carter's chest, directly sending him into the air, making him draw an arc and then sliding over the ground.

Until now, she had such a strong battle-will that she was able to totally disregard her waist injury. But just then, as if she had gotten a hit to her head, a strong sense of dizziness suddenly came over her mind. She staggered two steps forward, nearly falling to the ground as if her extraordinary magic had directly poured out of her body like water from a broken flask, causing her limbs to become unbearable heavy.

Ashes had to use her sword to hold up her body, and the previous numb wound then started to turn into a searing pain, it felt as if a part of her waist was now missing. Looking down she could even see her own viscera spilling out. Biting her tongue, she kept herself from falling.

...

In Roland's eyes, the whole process of the duel didn't last much longer than four or five seconds. He saw how the extraordinary witch threw dirt towards Carter, while he started to launch his own assault. During the middle, Ashes once changed her direction but by then she had already severely collided with

the Knight's body. But within this short moment of time, Carter was still able to shoot three rounds of bullets, which was beyond what Roland had thought would be possible.

Having to face the unusual fast approaching Ashes, I'm afraid even if I only had to follow the opponents movements closely, it would already have been awfully difficult for me to achieve, but he could not only follow her and aim but he was even able to shoot at her three times, fully proving that the title of Chief Knight wasn't for show. The fact that the first two rounds had missed was totally normal, in fact, if Ashes had continued to use her speed and changed her direction, I'm afraid Carter shots would have never hit her.

The key part was in the third round, in the final five or six meters. During that part, Ashes was holding her great sword in front of her chest as a shield and had gone in a straight line for the impact.

If it was a crossbow or even heavy crossbow, even if they hit against her sword, they wouldn't have caused any impact to an extraordinary. But the 12mm caliber ammunition together with the steel warheads at that distance would show an unparalleled power.

Roland then saw black fragments splattering into the air, soon followed by blood and gore. When Ashes finally stood firmly again, the Prince discovered that a large part of her waist was now gone, giving the impression as if there was a beast that had chewed out a large chunk of meat out of her. Her guts had also fallen out of her wound, and were hanging down the side of her body.

Looking at her sword he saw that the lower part of the great sword now had a bowl-shaped gap in it. Probably caused by when the bullet had gone through her sword, the unstable warhead and the broken-out pieces of her sword had hit into her waist, causing her such an immense wound.

Even while seriously injured, she had still not fainted. Only by purely relying on her extraordinary power could she still stand upright on the battlefield, showing off her terrible physical power. If it were the lead balls from before or only the bullet, I am afraid she could have just ignored them. Maggie was the first one who arrived at Ashes side. With a face full of anxiety, she tried to hold her friend up, but unfortunately, her figure was so short, that she could only grab Ashes around her legs.

Nana was also already rushing in the direction of Carter to treat him, while Roland instead quickly moved in front of Ashes.

Seeing him appear, it seems she had only waited for this moment.

"I won..." Finishing what she wanted to say, she didn't even wait for Roland's reaction, she instead fell straight against his shoulders.

Chapter 168 Recall

"Scram! Dirty beggar!"

Someone pushed hard against her, but she did not move a bit. Instead, it was the assaulter who was the one to stagger two steps back.

The man's arrogant expression disappeared from his face and instead instantly turned into one of shock. A moment later he abruptly turned around and left with his tail between his legs.

During this whole time, she remained unaffected and kept on moving through the crowd. When they saw the worn-out woman, most of the people stepped out of her way while frowning. In this way, she was able to slowly move further in the direction of Grayastle's inner city gate.

Although there were traditionally no walls separating the inner city, the people had erected a symbolic gate made out of wood and garlands to better control the sea of people.

On both sides of the gate stood two neatly arranged rows of armor-wearing warriors, all of whom had an exquisite armor that was dazzlingly reflecting the shimmering sunlight. With their spread-out eagle wings on their shoulders it gave off the impression that they desired to fly off into the sky. The iris flower decoration hanging over their chests together with their heroic and handsome faces had gathered their own group of rich housewives that were shouting and quarreling over them.

The warriors were all wearing red capes that fell down to the ground. They seemed to be a red wall if you were to look at them from behind. It was these handsome and mighty warriors who were responsible for dividing the crowd, forming a wide and vacant road which was only usable by the more influential families.

Many banners were flying in the wind alongside the road, and a lot of the strip-shaped golden-colored flags were hanging from the flagpoles, giving off a quite, solemn and respectful presence. The banners were embroidered with many different designs, but most of them were covered by the tower and the pike. She knew that this pattern represented the Royal Family of the Kingdom of Graycastle, who was also the organizer of today's ceremony.

Today they held the royal ceremony to celebrate the day of adulthood of the 5th Princess, Tilly Wimbledon.

Since it was made public one week ago, this matter had already created a great public buzz, so much that everyone in the city already knew about it. In addition to the local aristocracy of the Kingdom of Graycastle, the envoys from the other kingdoms had also come. They were all carrying plenty of gifts and marriage proposals in the hope of earning the favor of 5th Princess.

Even the Church had sent an Archbishop to preside over the ceremony. The ceremony would be held at the city center of the Square of Dawn. At that time, the royal family would start to give away meat porridge and thick soup, which was also the reason why the event had attracted so many people.

However, she hadn't come for the food.

Her goal was the Archbishop.

If she was able to kill an Archbishop under the watchful eyes of the King. It would make it impossible for the Church to cover up the incident, ending up in a great loss of face for them. Tasting such a sweet flavor of revenge made her feel endlessly excited. Touching her chest, she reassured herself that the snatched knife was still there. Although the knife was of poor quality, it would be enough to kill a mortal.

At this moment, the crowd suddenly released a burst of overwhelming cheers, interrupting her from her thoughts. Looking in the direction of the Inner City, she discovered that the rows of the Knights from the Kingdom of Graycastle had begun to slowly march forward. The Knight in the front was the dressed in

the shiniest armor, like a flickering flame his gold-embroidered red cloak fluttered behind him as he walked.

The Knights were followed by a carriage which was being dragged by four fine horses that moved side by side. The Royal Family's emblem was carved into the wall of the carriage and its wheels and frames were plated in gold. On the roof of the carriage there floated a scarlet burgee, while a gold-embroidered silken fabric was hanging over each corner of the carriage. At first glance, the whole carriage looked like a flowing golden ocean.

Mixing herself in with the crowd of people who were following along the carriage, she was also able to set foot on the Plaza of Dawn. The inner area of the plaza was isolated by a row of guards, only allowing the aristocracy to get a close look at the ceremony taking place. She estimated that she would have to stop here for now. But, as soon as the Archbishop stepped into the plaza, she would immediately dart over, needing only a few breaths of time to reach him, leaving it impossible for him to escape from her grasp.

One young person after another jumped out of the royal carriage and slowly moved onto the central stage. They were most probably Wimbledon III's five children.

Within these people, she also detected the 5th Princess Tilly Wimbledon.

There was no doubt that the 5th Princess was the protagonist of the day. Her eyes were full of intelligence and clear like two gems; her light makeup together with her long braided gray hair gave her a refreshing and simple impression; standing within that group of brothers and sisters she looked outstanding; the pattern embroidered on her dress wasn't complicated at all, and it was perfectly matched together with her temperament. But what was most incredible was that she had actually looked all over the rows of people, even directly into her eyes, smiling and nodding slightly, as if the Princess was greeting her personally.

This definitely hadn't been an illusion. In that short moment, an incomparable feeling of closeness was born inside of her, like they were friends who had known each other for years, warm and sweet. It wasn't born from any blood relation or by being of similar social status, but rather it came from... the resonance of their magic.

She unconsciously released the strong grip on the handle of her knife, and instead began to quietly watch as the woman that was walking on the stage. Not long after the ceremony, she was found by two guards who had been tasked with escorting her to the palace.

As long as she herself didn't want to follow them, the guards would have never been able to stop her. But she did not ask anything from them, she just simply began to follow the two further into the inner city, until they finally reached the magnificent palace that stood at the end of the road.

Within a secret room of the palace, she met with the 5th Princess for the first time.

"...So it was like this."

"It's an unfortunate story, and afterward you've eventually come to live within the Kingdom of Graycastle."



“Do not worry. In the future, you will not have to wander around any longer. From now on you’ll be staying with me.”

“I will give you a good makeup and make sure that they will not be able to recognize your face.”

“I have heard that the monastery was destroyed by a fire and that all the children have gone missing. Only ruins and ashes are left of the buildings.”

“Do you have a name from before that time?”

“In that case, from now on your name will be Ashes.”

...

When Ashes opened her eyes, the first thing that caught her eye was Maggie’s face.

The other side blinked a few times and then she came up and embraced Ashes, “You finally woke up goo!”

Ashes tried to move her lower fingers, only to discover that she wasn’t hit by the weakness or numbness that she had expected. Furthermore, she also felt that there was no pain coming from her waist.

“How long have I been asleep?”

“One afternoon,” Maggie said, “Nana said that your medical treatment was already completed and you could wake up at anytime. But when you wake up your body will feel very tired and you will first have to rest for a while. However, when you wake up for the second time you should feel much better and all of your energy should already have recovered.”

Ashes began to pat Maggie’s head and slowly sat up on the bed and opened her clothes to examine herself. Only to discover that her abdomen was now completely intact. The huge wound was gone as if it only had been a nightmare, and now after she had woken up, it had disappeared into nothingness.

“She is ... how did she heal me?”

“I think that you would prefer not to know about it,” Maggie begun, but when she saw the determination in Ashes’ eyes she decided to continue, “They put the scattered... goo, parts of your body back into their places, and then filled the stomach wound back up. When everything was back in its place, Nana began to release her magic, restoring your stomach back to its original state. The more parts they collected, the faster she could heal you, and if something was completely absent, she would be unable to grow it back again.”

Ashes felt goosebumps all over her body, “All of the dirt and grass my body parts was stained with, were they also...”

“When Nana was healing you, all the dirt was discharged out of your body. It seems that her ability can distinguish between what is useful and what is harmful.”

Hearing this, she felt relieved and tried to stand up from her bed, testing how much power her body had recovered by now. The result was that it was completely opposite to what Nana had previously said.

After waking up, she couldn't feel any traces of weakness from her body. Instead, it felt as if she now possessed even more power than she'd had in the past.

After putting on her black robe, Ashes took a look at the sky outside of the window and then started walking toward the door.

"Where are you going?" Maggie asked, confused.

"I'm going to see His Royal Highness," Ashes answered without looking back.

#### Chapter 169 Farewell

Entering his office, she met once again with Roland Wimbledon. At this moment, he was still busy writing, probably dealing with government affairs. The sun was already going down behind the western mountains, infecting the sky with a touch of gold. The last of the sun's light was still shining through the windows, throwing long shadows across the table.

Waiting until the Prince put down his quill, Ashes declared: "I won."

"Indeed, you won." The other simply acknowledge it with a nod.

That Roland would yield in such a frank and straightforward manner came for her unexpected. She had thought that he would still try to quibble about it, never believing that he would recognize the result so easily.

"But I admit that you have the power to fight against the God's Punishment Army," Ashes continued, "The God's Punishment Army isn't impervious to sword and spear, their body strength is similar to mine, but they have lost their consciousness and ability to think. Which is also the reason why I can simultaneously cope with three of them at once.

"If during the previous test the Knight's opponent had been a member of the God's Punishment Army, I think that they would have just simply rushed forward. Because of this, the God's Punishment Army cannot be sent out like the Army of Judges can. If my guess isn't wrong, the Church has to always send someone who will lead them during the fight."

"Thank you," Roland smiled. "This information is very important."

"What was the new weapon your knight was using?"

"A firearm," Roland explained, "In the future, all of my soldiers will be equipped with this kind of weapon. Even an untrained farmer, as long as they have a gun, will be able to defeat even a well-trained Judge."

For a moment, Ashes hesitated but then she still asked, "Can you give one of those firearms to me?"

"Unless you join the Witch Alliance that will be impossible," Roland said determined, "after all, at present this weapon is still very rare."

Having already expected his refusal, she let go of her anger. "I have to meet up with Tilly as soon as possible, so early tomorrow morning I will be leaving Border Town. If you aren't able to push the church back, you can always move to the Fjord, asking for asylum."

Roland nodded, "You too, do not forget to tell my dear sister the news, that at the western border of the Kingdom of Graycastle there is a place which shelters witches.

"..." For a moment Ashes fell silent, "I will consider it."

As she prepared to leave the office, but the Prince stopped her unexpected, "Wait, I have a gift for you. It is behind the door."

A gift?

She stared blankly into the air, but when she came back to herself she turned around and saw that there was huge sword placed beside the door and because it had been previously blocked by the open door she hadn't noticed it when she had entered the office.

"Your sword cannot be used any longer, so I let Anna create a new one for you. This sword, however, isn't made out of poor quality pig iron, no this is made out of pure steel."

Indeed, its whole body surface was evenly smoothed, in the light of the sunset, it held an orange-red metallic luster. Stepping forward, she gently stroked the sword, discovering that the blade's thickness was very uniform. Showing traces that it had gone through a tempering process, there was no doubt that this was a weapon of excellent quality. The only thing which still puzzled Ashes, was its strange shape. Compared with the usual double-edged sword blade system, it only had one blade, while the other edge was about as wide as her little finger. Furthermore, it didn't possess a tip, instead its end was trapezoidal.

But the most peculiar part of the sword was that within the first quarter of the sword, strange runes had been carved into it. In addition, there was also a half-moon painted at the blunt edge of the sword. The moon was painted in gold, and was thus very eye-catching.

Although she didn't want show how much she loved it, she still could not stop herself from impulsively reaching out and picking it up.

"Why does it look so strange...?"

"Because it's not a normal weapon," Roland laughed, "it's called 'Ashbringer', and it's of the legendary rank compared to your previous greatsword of the white rank."

"..." Ashes decided that she didn't really need to know what those inexplicable words which had come out of his mouth were supposed to mean, "In that case, I will accept the gift from you and in return, I will also give you something back."

"Oh? What would that be?" The Prince's curiosity was picked.

But Ashes however, didn't answer, instead, she straight went out of the room.

\*

On next morning, when Roland opened the door to his office, he once more saw Nightingale sitting at his desk and nibbling on a dry fish.

"They're gone."

“Have both of them left?”

“Yes,” Nightingale answered lazily, “They left the moment it was bright enough for them to see the road, Wendy was also there to send them off on their journey.”

Roland couldn't stop himself from being deeply moved, after all, Wendy was concerned for every sister, not to mention the witches who had helped her escape from the monastery. Because, of this, he had thought Wendy would follow Ashes when she left, never imagining that she would be the first to refused the other party's invitation.

With this, the Witch Alliance still had all twelve of their members, which left Roland with the feeling as if his whole body was filled with energy.

“Do you think they're going to spread the news about another safe haven to the other witches on the other side of the sea?”

“Maybe, maybe not,” Nightingale said ominously while leaning back in his chair. “But when they meet a problem they cannot solve themselves, they will definitely think of Border Town.”

Closing his eyes, Roland went through the memories of the former 4th Prince in his mind.

Tilly and he had never been very close, or it could be better said that she had always maintained a certain distance from everyone, even her father, Wimbledon III was no exception to this. In addition to her good looks, she had also shown an outstanding sense of wisdom through her childhood, Roland's mind did not have any more information about her.

When had the 5th Princess started to secretly harbor witches, or when had she begun to develop her plans regarding the trip to the Fjords, Roland didn't know anything about this. But this also didn't matter as much, for now, she could be regarded as a natural ally in the fight against the Church. After all, with both of them resisting the Church they also shared a common goal for now.

As for dispatching Theo and letting him spread the news about the safe haven for witches, this also can't really be called a futile endeavour either. In the end, the awakening to a witch is still a random event, so it is impossible that Tilly will be able to take in all of the witches. Especially now after her organization is also busy withdrawing, the other new witches will be all the more urgent to find another shelter.

Now that I have gotten the news about the existence of the God's Punishment Army, the next task I will have at hand is to expand the production scales of those two acids.

More efficient gunpowders or explosives cannot be done without using nitric acid and sulfuric acid. When all the members of the First Army have replaced their old weapon with a runner rifle, by using the rifled barrel and also the new bullet there will be a large improvement in the firing accuracy. Therefore, training was of utmost importance. In a time without fire curtains, an experienced veteran with exquisite shooting skills was worth ten rookies randomly spraying bullets around. But during this time the bullet consumption will also increase by a staggering amount.

Furthermore, there was still the problem of the black powder which remained in the barrel after firing a bullet, causing the rifle to clog and also reducing the barrel's expected lifetime. Only by using smokeless gun powder can this problem be solved.

In fact, earlier versions of smokeless gunpowder were in fact made out of nitrocellulose, while the later stages of it was made out of a mixture of nitrocellulose and something else. The at present used the sealing method of nitric acid soaked gun-cotton was quite inadequate, not to mention the amount of gun-cotton he would end up needing.

After all, the laboratory production will only be enough for small-scale production, if I want to meet the needs of a whole army, an industrial scale laboratory will also be needed. Unfortunately, the chemical industry is a complete stranger to me, so, for now, I'm unable to think of any usable solutions.

In addition, the education progress cannot be slowed down. It isn't just important to spread elementary cultural knowledge, no, the ideological transformation also has to be implemented as soon as possible. The original citizen of Border Town have already experienced the ordeal of the Months of Demons, with the propaganda spread by the First Army, they accept the witches to a much higher degree now, but within the outsiders coming in, the indoctrination of the Church will still be present. And right now the foreign population is busy rapidly rising, especially the serfs, they are all still living in their wooden sheds near the Shishui River, claiming it to be the town's "outer city". But once they are promoted to free people, they will gradually move into the city, and if I only then start to correct their beliefs it will already be too late.

So I have to come up with a method with which I can silently start to transform their beliefs, but also something which will be broadly accepted by them.

...

After being lost in thought for a long while, he opened his eyes, only to discover that Nightingale was busy observing him very closely. Their four eyes met for a short moment, but then, she subconsciously turned her head away.

"Ah, yes, there was something I forgot to tell you," Nightingale began while looking out of the window, as if nothing had happened. "Wendy told me to pass something on to you."

"What was it?" Asked Roland.

"She said, 'Thank you.'"

#### Chapter 170 The Gift of Revenge (Part 1)

The sun slowly sank fell behind the mountains, allowing the night to descend over the Western Territory.

Not far from the road, the emissary group had discovered a piece of open land where they had decided to set up their tents.

Not a very long time later, a bonfire was burning in the center of their camp finally allowing the warriors to take off their armor and stretch out their tired bodies. Sitting leisurely around the fire, they waited for the porridge to start to boil.

Carrying a pot of hot water, Alicia stepped into one of the tents, "Priestess, I brought some hot water with me, please use this to wash your face."

“Thank you.” Mira smiled and nodded in thanks, then dipped her towel into the water. “Tomorrow we will finally reach Border Town, we can then put an end to this exhausting journey.”

“The journey was nothing when compared to a fight against a demonic beast,” Alicia replied. “Contrary to what I had expected it was your horsemanship that made me have a whole new level of respect for you. I had never thought that a Priestess would be so well accustomed to traveling.”

“Haha, that’s only normal. After all, I wasn’t born as a Priestess. Before my life in the Church I was a peddler, so riding quickly is a common thing for me.” Mira answered while she wiped her face clean from the day’s dust and sweat. When she was done, she handed the pot back to the warrior, “Here, you should also wash your face. Maybe it will help you feel better?”

“What?” Alicia became startled by the Priestess’ unexpected words.

“This is still about the matter of the God’s Punishment Army, ah,” the Priestess shook her head while still smiling, “your mood is clearly visible on your face and is still clearly affected by Abrams’ words.”

“...” Even though she took the pot, she didn’t give her an answer.

“We, ah, during your lifetime you will encounter many difficulties and challenges, if you aren’t able to get past these thresholds, not only the church, but the whole world suffer as a result. In order to hold back those terrible enemies, sometimes sacrifice is also necessary.” Mira began to lecture, “It’s a difficult choice, but never forget the church’s motto.”

“Choose the lesser of two evils” Alicia whispered.

Above all, joining the God’s Punishment Army was entirely voluntary, and when Abrams’s brother had decided to become a member of the God’s Punishment Army, he was well informed about what this would mean for him. Being prepared to sacrifice oneself for the Church, this was one of the most noble of ideals, and for this sacrifice, his name would be forever engraved on the monument of glory, being spread together with the glory of the Church.

“Thank you for your guidance,” Alicia said as she raised her right hand up to her heart “I feel much better now.”

What the Priestess had said was right, in order to spread its glory, they devoted all of their energy to God. Regardless of the outcome, the members of the God’s Punishment Army were at least following in their own beliefs. Coming to this conclusion, Alicia felt how a weight had been lifted from her chest.

“We should go out and get something to eat, until now they should have had enough time to get it done,” Mira laughingly said. “Really, we have eaten so much porridge lately, that our tongues can’t even taste the its flavor anymore.”

“Fortunately, today will be the last day,” Alice couldn’t stop herself from starting to laugh, “Tomorrow we should be able to enjoy the Lord’s personal hospitality and also receive a sumptuous meal.”

After eating their tasteless dinner, the presiding judge elected to be tonight’s night watch, and the lucky warriors who weren’t elected immediately entered their tents, trying to get an early sleep. Alicia was no exception to this, together with the Priestess she also returned to their tent, putting out the lamp then covering themselves with their blankets.

She didn't know for how long she had been sleeping, but within a dizzy moment, she suddenly heard a slightly muffled sound, it was as if a big object had been thrown onto the ground. Not much later the sound could be heard again.

This time, she had heard something clashing against an armor, it wasn't obvious, but by no means was it just an illusion she might be having.

She abruptly opened her eyes wide.

Standing up, Alicia quickly grabbed her two-handed sword which laid beside her, slowly going to the side of the tent, preparing to sit in a corner and wait-and-see, but at this exact moment the roar of the presiding judge could be heard, "We're under attack!" With this roar, which instantly broke the quiet of the night, the camp immediately started to boil.

Then the sound of another loud clash could be heard!

And with it, the loud voice of the presiding judge also came to an abrupt end.

No longer hesitating, Alicia rolled out of the tent, seeing how the presiding judge's sword was split in half, no... it wasn't only his sword, even the Judge himself had been split in half, sending all of his blood into the sky. Within the shine of the campfire, Alicia could see his body powerlessly fall to his knees, slowly splitting into two and falling to the foot of a woman.

It looked like this woman who was holding a strange sword in her hands, was the attacker. She had shrouded her body in a black robe and her face had also been covered by a hood. Within the shadows of her hood, the only thing Alicia could make out were her two sparkling golden eyes.

Two other Judges rushed forward in an attempt to stop this woman, but in front of her terrifying weapon any thought of resistance was considered futile. The enemy was not only able to easily behead one warrior, she even split his sword into two as well. She could first hear the loud sound of two swords clashing, and then sparks and debris began to scatter everywhere, soon followed with the sound of a sword cutting into the flesh and it then crushing bones. Hearing this cacophony of nightmare like sounds, her blood almost solidified.

"Witch!" Someone exclaimed.

The enemy was only one person... alone on her own, she dared to attack the camp of the Army of Judges, with the exception of the power of a fallen one, no one else would have been able to do this!

"Take the Priestess and flee" Alicia suddenly heard a steady voice coming from behind her.

Turning around she saw that the speaker was actually Abrams.

"You actually want me to flee and leave my companions behind?" Alicia couldn't believe what she had just heard.

"Or else the death of the others will have been meaningless, it seems you simply don't understand this!" Abrams growled, "The other side isn't affected by our God's Stone of Retaliation, and that is only the case if they are an extraordinary. So, I will try to stop her, while it is your task to bring the Priestess back in the direction of Longsong Stronghold! Remember to always use the road, so that in case you met a caravan you can immediately call for help!" Then grasping his sword he rushed towards the enemy.

An extraordinary, sucking in a mouthful of cold air, according to legends, only the members of the God's Punishment Army are strong enough to fight against them. Everyone who encounters an extraordinary witch has to immediately seek help from the local church. Alicia knew that Abram was right, staying here would only turn their sacrifices into a vain act.

Seeing that they had already lost five members, the remaining Judges changed their strategy. They used the tents and the terrain to start a catching game, trying to win as much time as the possibly could. But Alicia knew that the strength and speed of the witch were much better than that of her companions, so it was only a matter of time before they all died.

Biting the bullet, she rushed into the tent, immediately grasping the Priestess who was still trying to get into her shoes and began to pull her in the direction of the horses.

"What happened?" Maggie asked in confusion.

"The camp was attacked by an extraordinary! I must bring you away!" She shouted back, "Please hurry!"

However, with no possibility of seeing the road clearly enough during the night, it became quite a difficult task. If they ran too fast, they could easily trip into a roadside bump, injuring their legs in the process, but if they were too slow, it would be way too easy for the witch to catch up with them.

Alicia decided to let the horses run down the road, while the Priestess and herself would enter into the woods, which grew along the road. Making it quite hard for the enemy to find them without the help of fire.

Leaving the sound of the colliding weapons behind her, she pulled the Priestess by hand, only relying on the dim moonlight to identify the surrounding environment. Always moving away from the road, and further in the direction of the center of the woods. Increasing the possibility for them to meet with wild animals like vipers, but this would still be better than confronting the witch directly.

When the two stumbled across the foot of the Impassable Mountain Range, Alicia finally felt a little relieved, it seemed the witch had given up on her pursuit. With the exception of some bird cries, the surroundings were now completely silent.

"What are we going to do now?" Mira asked.

Even knowing what could happen it seemed that she wasn't very scared. Seeing how calm the priestess was, Alicia's heart was full of admiration, "Priestess, we should look for a place to rest, and stay there to rest for the night. At dawn, we will then return back to Longsong Stronghold and seek support from there."

"Shouldn't we go into the direction of Border Town? From here, we will at most need a day and a night to reach the stronghold."

"No," said Alicia, shaking her head. "Meeting an extraordinary here is too coincidental. I suspect that the Lord has already associated himself with the witches, and with this, it is too dangerous for us to go to the town."

"What you say makes sense" But then the Priestess' eyes became large and she looked straight behind Alicia.



Seeing her reaction, Alicia's heart sank. And indeed, when she turned around, she saw the witch dressed in her black robe slowly stepping out of the dark shadows, her eyes were sparkling like stars, and an owl was hovering over her shoulders.