

Witch 22

Chapter 22 Declaration

The next day the rain finally stopped, and Border Town became lively once again. Many villagers gathered on the square, talking while awaiting the 4th prince's speech.

The day before, Roland had posted a notice regarding this presentation on the bulletin board. Anyone who came to the square and listened to his speech would receive a bowl of wheat porridge and half a loaf of bread. For the townspeople, this was equivalent to a free lunch, thus there were much more people here to watch than the time when the witch was hanged.

When it was close to noon, Roland ascended onto a previously prepared stage.

Faced with the dense mass of people before him, he would be lying if he said he wasn't nervous. Most of the time in his former life he only dealt with computer monitors, even if he attended a meeting he was always sitting in the audience to applaud, so facing such a kind of battle was a first.

But he had to step on stage, if he wanted most of the people to stay in Border Town, they would need a greater defense, and without motivation they would all leave.

Roland waved with his arm, and everyone quieted down.

He had practiced this scene many times, but when he stepped on the stage, his mouth was still a little dry, "People of my territory, good afternoon. I'm the 4th Prince of Graycastle, Roland Wimbledon. At this moment we gather together, because there is an important message I have to tell you!"

"Four days ago the ambassador of Longsong Stronghold arrived, his mission was to receive the mined ore. We all know that a month ago, we suffered from a disastrous accident, the collapse of the mine in the Northern Mountain Slope. Even today, the mining area isn't fully restored so we can't produce as much as we used to? The result of the accident was that we only output the equivalent of two months in the last quarter."

"I explained the situation to the messenger, since I hoped he would loan us three months' worth of food, and we would pay the missing ore at the end of winter, but he refused! There was no room for negotiation, he refused to set aside any more food – just like they did two years ago."

The crowd burst in alarm, clearly everyone's suffering from two years ago was still remembered.

"This time it will be even worse. The Longsong Stronghold astrologer told me that this time the Months of the Demons will be even longer, most likely lasting more than four months. That means, this time all of us will face two months of a food gap. Two years ago, we lost 20% of the population. Someone lost a brother, someone lost a child, but this time, how much will we lose?"

"No! Your Highness, you have to save us!" Someone shouted from underneath, then more people shouted, "Your Highness, I beg you to help us!"

It seemed that planting some people in the crowd, who would speak in his interest was the right choice. Roland raised his hand again, suppressing the voices of the people, "Of course, I will not leave my entrusted people, I will never do that! You may not know, but Longsong Stronghold annually ships wheat and bread to us, and they carried away the ore we mine, but it isn't equivalent to the normal

market price. According to the market price, two months of ore should be enough for half a year of food! I have sold the ore to Willow Town, their cargo ship full of food will soon arrive at Border Town. In addition to bread, there will be cheese, honey and meat! For a whole winter, everyone can eat one's fill!

The square burst into cheers.

"However, this is equivalent to breaking off relations with Longsong Stronghold, so they will not accept any person during the winter. As a result, this winter, we will all have to stay in Border Town. Most people have been at the west border of our town, there we are currently establishing a strong wall. I know many people are anxious of the invasion from the demonic beasts, but we can block them. I want to tell you, that the demonic beasts are not much more powerful than normal forest beasts. Although they have rough skin and thick meat, they cannot climb walls and they also cannot eat stones. They have a thick skin but they are just a group of easy to aim at targets!"

"Tell me, my beloved people, are you willing to hide in Longsong Stronghold, living in shacks and starving to a useless death? Or under my leadership will you protect your loved ones and children, guarding Border Town until the last minute? I promise, everyone who stays until the end of the Months of the Demons and protects the other townspeople on the city wall will get a reward of 25 silver royals. If someone sacrifices himself while defending the town, his family will receive a compensation of five gold royals!"

"Your Highness, we want to fight with you!" Under the guidance of his own people placed in the crowd, more and more people swore to wage war. Seeing the atmosphere surge up, Roland timely ordered to issue lunch. He did not expect that everyone would stay in Border Town. As long as half of the people were willing to stay, he would have a chance to obstruct the demonic beasts from moving forward.

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While Petrov was bringing back the message to the six noble families only to be met with laughter, he naturally did not know that the 4th Prince was inciting the townspeople.

"You said that the incompetent prince actually wants to throw off the demonic beasts alone? Daring to build walls before winter, I don't know, should I praise him for his courage or mock him for overestimating himself?"

"His Royal Highness' lack of courage is a known fact, when did the 4th prince find his guts? He is just stupid, and nothing more!"

"Yes, he did not even have a stonemason, he is only leaning on piling up unpolished stones and pasting wet mud between it, I'm afraid this piled up stone wall will collapse immediately."

"Anyway, it's a good thing. If he flees to Longsong Stronghold, we will be at the mercy of nature. But if he dies in the border town... we can soon end this farce."

After he had meditated about the problem, the duke suddenly spoke, "Petrov, what do you think?"

Petrov was startled, he did not think that the duke of Longsong Stronghold would ask for his opinion, "Well, I originally wanted to maintain a monopoly, as long as we could get the ore for thirty percent below the market price, it would still be a deal worthy for us, but..." His mind calculated some ideas,"

but His Highness does not intend to sell all the ore to Longsong Stronghold, he is even selling the ore for a 50% lower than the market price, which means, he has plans to make a substantial increase in the ore production next year. As long as they are able to increase the production to the double of the former years, we may earn more than ever before. But he also intends to sell their own production of iron, iron production is hot in demand, and resale would also be very easy. But... these are not the important points. ”

“Oh? What is important?”

“If he can hold Border Town, it would also be very good news for us. We wouldn’t have to focus on dealing with demonic beasts every year, which can save us a huge amount of expenditure. A second advantage would be that the vast amount land between the stronghold and the Border Town will be open for all of us. Whether it be cultivating the land or using it to settle new people, both choices would be good. This could greatly ease the current status of the overcrowded stronghold population.” Petrov recited his ideas one by one, “And the 4th prince will not always stay in Border Town. The fight for the throne will only last for five years, after five years we would get a more prosperous Border Town, and then we could include Border Town into the stronghold. Then the territory of the stronghold would become the third largest territory of the whole kingdom. So my advice is...” He glanced at the Duke, and said carefully, “The stronghold should send staff to help His Highness, and we should collaborate in the defense of Border Town.”

“That’s right,” said the duke, “but those are the thoughts of a merchant, only interested in gains and losses.”

When he came to this point, he straightened his body, his eyes slowly swept to each of the participants and his tone became awe-inspiring, “However, I didn’t get my status of today by weighing all the benefits with the losses. Why do I have to do business with a person who is out of my control? Some rules must be obeyed, and if they are broken the trespasser must be punished. Whether Border Town is prosperous or broken is not important, what is important is that no one should ever think about taking the control away from me – even if he is a prince, he is no exception. ”