

Witch 221

Chapter 221 Rescue Plan

Since he had decided on his course of action, the first question he faced was: Should he himself also travel to King's City?

This would be Border Town's first military operation away from the Western Region, and it would also be different than the two defensive wars prior to it. Certainly, they would come across unfamiliar environmental circumstances which could cause complications. Whether they could display their combat ability without a prepared battlefield, was still unknown. All this made it hard for him to feel relief in the event that he didn't go to King's City. On the one hand, he knew that his own military experience was extremely limited, but on the other, his understanding of war could still be regarded as the highest level for this era.

But the moment he left Border Town, the Western Region would become unclaimed land. If the message of this were to reach Longsong Stronghold. It would be a foolish hope to believe that Petrov could prevent all the other noble families from moving, trying to take advantage. As long as people were willing to disclose this information to Timothy, perhaps he would not care if he had to suffer a calamity at the front lines or in his backyard caused by the witches. But if he knew that Roland was near King's City it would be strange if he didn't assemble his army to encircle him. Even if it didn't come to that, even if Timothy let him off, as long as he commanded his soldiers to move from the Northern Region to the Western Region, Roland would be in an equally tight situation.

Generally speaking, compared with suffering a defeat at the frontline, a fire in one's own backyard was several times more severe.

In the end, Roland decided to stay in Border Town.

After all, the First Army's primary task would be to protect the witches, while their second task would be to split the fugitives into small groups and let them onboard the ships. So rather than fearing an encounter with Timothy in King's City, it would be more likely that they would have to face the Church's Army of Judges. But as long as the rescue measures were carried out correctly, and nothing unexpected happened, they won't even need to let loose a single shot.

Of course, this meant that he would have to make sure that the rescue plan was as perfect as possible.

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At noon that day, Roland called Carter, Iron Axe, Bryan and the members of the Witch Union over.

The 4th Prince only had some fuzzy childhood impressions of the land surrounding King's City, but this was a problem which could be easily solved, he asked Soraya to draw a simple map on top of the dining table in the living room. He then began giving Iron Axe and Brian their commands.

"This central square represents King's City and the blue line depicts the canal." Roland said while in thought, "You have two tasks, the first is to protect the witches while they cure the fugitives, and afterward you are to bring them back to Border Town. Your second duty is to prevent the demonic plague from further spreading in King's City. For this, you should be aware that the epidemic is most likely being caused by the Church.

“Wh-What?” Brian was shocked, not daring to believe his ears. Carter raised his brows. While Iron Axe’s expression didn’t change at all, after all, he was a follower of the three Gods, just like the other Sand People were, and because of that he had no worship for the Church or any belief in their claims, which left Roland with a very pleased feeling towards him.

“After the Church’s permanent annexation of the Kingdom of Endless Winter, they immediately started their attack on the Wolfsheart Kingdom. After they’ve conquered the Wolfsheart Kingdom, it is only a matter of time before the Kingdom of Dawn and Graycastle become their next goal. In fact, the whole Battle for the Throne is already by itself worthy of skepticism.”

The Prince went through the details how the Church was helping Timothy in the North, Garcia in the Southwest and himself by supplying them with the pills. “In the light of this information we can see that they aren’t supporting who they think will be the next heir, but instead they are encouraging us to kill each other off. By swallowing their pills, it also becomes improbable that our soldiers will turn into veterans. On the contrary, after taking the pills, their whole body will become weak, and they will die a gruesome death. This time the same can be said about the disease. After the demonic disease has spread all over King’s City, the Church will finally declare that they have the antidote, which ironically won’t be distributed for the benefit of the people.”

“Only the light which shines in the darkest of places is the most dazzling,” Iron Axe opened his mouth.

“That’s right, if you want to be seen as a savior, you have to come to the people at their most painful moment. The stronger experience the contrast, the deeper will be their impression of the Church. As for the innocent who died in the middle of the road, those are merely the sacrifices whose belief was not sincere enough,” Roland stated. “So we will have to save the refugees from the East, but at the same time we also have to try to destroy the Church’s conspiracy.

After taking a deep breath to calm himself down, Brian asked, “How should we do that?”

“You have to hide as much as possible, trying to fulfill your duties in such a way that the other side doesn’t perceive you.” Roland points to a wide area on the outskirts of the canal, south of the pier, “Here, the land should be covered with crops, making it very suitable to hide at. There you should also find a high point, which allows you to establish lookout to scout out the pier. The soldiers responsible for providing support will disguise themselves as caravan guards once more and help the already treated people to get on board. I will write merchant Margaret a letter, asking her to provide me with as many ships as possible, not only the two fleets which are already involved with the transportation.

“Whether it is Longsong Stronghold or Graycastle’s capital, there are only a few big cities’ patrol forces who can cover the surrounding area, most of the time their investigation and warning area depends on how far they can see when staying on the city wall. So, the area south of the pier should be outside of their patrol area, when we then locate our troops at this point, it is unlikely for them to raise the city guard’s attention.”

“How do you want to treat the sick?” Iron Axe asked.

“This task will largely depend on Lily’s replica,” Roland roughly explained to them the young woman’s unusual ability. “Making it unnecessary to walk into the fugitive camp to heal these people. In other

words, since any microorganism can become a replica you only have to collect the river water and let her purify it steadily. Afterward, you only have to give it to those who are sick to drink.”

“Like... that?” He gawked at Roland, totally disbelieving.

“There are two points you have to take note of,” the Prince raised two fingers, “First, you have to ensure that every person on board had drunken the purified water and second, you are absolutely prohibited from boiling the drinking water to clean it. In fact, the dirtier the water, the better it would be. It would contain more microorganism which means that the number of replicas in it will also be more. You might be unable to understand this, but as long as you do what I told you, everything will be okay.”

“What about the patients in King’s City, will we treat them the same way?”

“Almost, but the medicine cannot be delivered by our people, that would be too obvious. This task will fall under Theo’s responsibility,” Roland decided, “As long as they get their money, the street rats’ work efficiency will be very high.”

“Your Royal Highness, those street rats aren’t reliable, as long as it’s profitable, they may stab you in the back at any time.” Carter objected.

“Therefore the second part is only to prevent it as much as possible and isn’t necessary to be completed,” the Prince stood up, “The moment you sense something amiss, the First Army must immediately protect the witches and withdraw. As long as we are able to receive the refugees smoothly, it’s already our victory, regardless of how many people we were able to save in King’s City. Undermining the Church’s plan isn’t possible to achieve by just relying on purified water, as long as we can disprove their claim that ‘Only the Holy Elixir can repel the evil spirits’, their set game has already failed.”

“Finally, I will now declare the people who will travel to King’s City,” he shouted, “Iron Axe!”

“Yes!”

“You will lead 240 soldiers who will be responsible for protecting the witches and controlling the canal, for this eliminating every potential threat. Be sure to bring back the witches and the refugees.”

“I will do as you bid, Your Highness!” Iron Axe stood straight and saluted.

“Brian!”

“Yes!” The young Knights stick out his chest.

“You will lead sixty soldiers disguised as mercenaries, and you will be in charge of the medicine delivery, and make sure that the refugees will maintain order when boarding the ships.”

“As you command, Your Highness!”

“Next are the witches, this time leaving to King’s City by ship will be Nightingale, Echo, Lightning and Wendy.” Roland’s voice slowed down, “Your task will be somewhat unique so that I will explain it in a little while. Now it is only important to note that you always pay attention to your own security, ensuring your safe return.”

“Rest assured, Your Highness,” Nightingale patted her chest, “I will be with them.”

Roland nodded, "In that case, we come to the final point, which is also the most important aspect, after arriving in King's City, the army can stay there for three days at most. After these three days, no matter how the actual situation is, you must return to Border Town." He emphasized every word, "In case the Church plans to destroy the resistance of Graycastle, they certainly won't spread the disease only to King's City, most likely the Western Region will also be one of their goals. So you cannot stay in King's City for longer than these three days, do you understand?"

"Yes, Your Highness!" Iron Axe and Brian answered in unison.

"Very well, then let us carry out this plan."

"Hold on... Your Highness, what will I do?" Carter raised his hand.

"You will lead the rest of the First Army and guard my Border Town." Roland patted his shoulder.

Chapter 222 The long awaited victory!

Fjord, Sea Dragon Bay.

The Church's follower had boarded the wall, shooting crossbow arrows towards the witches, but confronted with Shavi's invisible barrier and Molly's magical servant, their attempts at resistance showed little results. All their arrows would suddenly drop or be swallowed into the servant's belly. Only when the other side embedded their arrows with small pieces of God's Punishment Stones did they become a threat.

But in the end, the amount of God's Punishment Stones were limited, and every witch who was unfortunately enough and got hit would immediately be carried back to get treated. As long as the blood loss was stopped in time, their lives wouldn't be in danger. After two or three rounds of shooting, more than 20 witches already advanced to the edge of the wall. Ashes directly jumped on top of the wall, disposing of those believers who dared to show their heads.

After a few days of pre-war investigation, they knew the weaknesses of the wall like the back of their hand. From high up in the sky, a variety of pigeon cries could be heard. It was Maggie that was signaling that everyone had reached the correct position.

Having gone through several fights had bestowed Lotus with the experience to exhibit her ability without the slightest hesitation, the ground suddenly shook and began to rise. Seeing this, some of the Church's follower rushed forward to try and stop her, but in the end, they were all beheaded by Ashes one after another. It didn't take long for the wall which wasn't embedded with God's Stone of Retaliation to begin to collapse. Followed by an attack of the witches who swarmed into the opened up space, and continuously made use of their ability to assault the believers. In a flash they had killed more than half of those who did not have a God's Stone of Retaliation protecting them. And those who still stood were smoothly and cleaned harvested by Ashes.

This was the first time since the church was built that they suffered a direct assault. Moreover, the opposite side was the Church's sworn enemy. The priest that was stationed there, also knew that the end of the day was coming so he called out to his followers to take the pills and sacrifice themselves for God. Ten of those believers who had turned mad rushed towards Ashes, and used their flesh to try and stop her, while the rest of them threw themselves at Lotus.

Seeing this, Lotus raised an already prepared earthen wall from the ground, temporarily blocking the enemy with it. With the God's Stone of Retaliation being unable to eliminate already completed magical results, they had to first go around the wall, but by that time the place behind the wall was already as empty.

Without any better option, the furious believer turned around, once more besieging Ashes. But at that moment the witches again appeared behind their back and in this way caught them off guard. After half an hour of fighting and suffering repeated losses, the ground was covered with the bodies of the Church's followers, ultimately leaving the Priest left standing.

While trembling he threw the pills into his mouth, but before he even had the time to swallow, Ashes had come over, and cut off his arm.

"Damn you, you evil creature! You Devil cursed monster!" Holding his cut off end of his arm with his other hand full of fear, the Priest roared hysterically.

"Are you scared? Have you ever thought about their feelings when you tortured and killed those innocent?" Ashes stated coldly, "Compared with us witches, scum like you resemble a devil's minion much more, you who does not shrink away from any crime. So, feel at ease when I send you back to hell to report." Ending her speech, her sword fell, cutting his curse and his head off.

"Did we win?" Molly arrived at her side, her voice and face full of disbelief.

"Yes," Ashes sighed in relief. "This was the last church in the Fjord, from here on, there is no longer any stronghold left on the islands, we won! "

Although the Church's power in the Fjord was feeble, with merely one hundred believers within every church and no stationed Army of Judges, this was still the first time that the witches had confronted the Church head-on and managed to win. From fleeing in all direction when they heard the grass rustled in the wind. Until now, where they managed to conquer the church, knocking down the huge monster of the past, even if it was only a negligible part of the Church, it was enough to excite all of the witches.

Just as she had expected, after everyone confirmed the long-awaited victory, they could not help but cheer loudly. In the hearts of all the witches, the Church was like an overbearing mountain, and now, when they had made the first step to climbing this mountain, permit them to see the first trace of the shining light of dawn. From now on, the Fjord had become their real homeland.

"We won!"

"Long live Her Majesty, Tilly!"

"Googoo!"

...

After traveling back to the island by boat, Ashes couldn't wait to return to Tilly's residence, and tell her the news that the witches had thoroughly won. But when she met up with her, the latter only stroked her silk like gray hair behind her ear, revealed a bright smile and said: "Maggie has already informed me, I heard that you all are safe and sound, this is really great."

Indeed, compared to sailing, it is a lot faster to turn into a seabird and fly back. Ashes looked around and took in the surrounding, but she was unable to see the familiar figure, "Maggie?"

"She left immediately after reporting on your victory," Tilly shook her head helplessly.

Hearing this Ashes couldn't help but feel shocked, "She... already returned to the Western Border?"

"Well," Tilly said with a chuckle, "Maybe, she found a very good friend over there. After just a few days, she already couldn't wait any longer and asked if she could return. If it weren't for the fact that we needed her help to beat the Church, I'm afraid that after delivering the letter, she would have turned around and flown straight back on that same day... I'm getting more and more curious about the other side."

For a while, Ashes hesitated, but then she asked: "Should I not have left her there?"

"No, that was excellent," the 5th Princess responded with a firm voice, "It is only because you left Maggie in Border Town, that we could easily get in touch with the other side. Furthermore, I also let her take my reply along and pass it on to Roland Wimbledon," She made a grimace, "Care to guess, what I replied to him?"

"You refused him of course. Crossing the sea to reach this island was already full of risk, how could we then send any witches to the Western Region."

"No, I agreed to his request," Tilly smiled, "Furthermore, I also briefed him about the abilities of the non-combat witches and said in the letter that as long as he can guarantee the safety of the witches, I will consider sending some witches to Border Town. What was it that he said? Oh, that's right. Deepening our friendship by learning and observing together, both of us progressing hand in hand." She paused, "If it becomes necessary, I can even go over to Border Town myself."

"Your Royal Highness!" Ashes could not stop herself from shouting out her former honorific title in shock.

"I know what you are worried about, but right now the biggest enemy of us witches is the Church. What this means is, only by having more allies can we have more power. That we have dealings with the various Islands of the Fjord is because of the beneficial relations it brings, while the Witch Cooperation Association in Border Town can be seen as a natural friend to us. So why don't you show them some goodwill?" Tilly laughed, "Moreover, according to Maggie, it is possible to evolve your ability again by learning knowledge about it. If the witches we send there learn this technique, Sleeping Island would also benefit from it."

"But for you to go in person, in case the other party..."

Tilly reached out with her hand to cut her off, "Rest assured, I did not mean that I will leave immediately. As long as the situation isn't clear, I won't take the risk and go there. And also do not forget that Sylvie can see through all kinds of camouflage, no matter if it is fine make-up or a magical illusion, nothing can escape her eyes. As long as she belongs to the first batch of people we send over to Border Town, she will be able to help me find out the truth behind the 4th Prince. Besides, even if there was any kind of danger, won't you still be at my side?"

Ashes looked for a long time into her eyes, until she finally nodded.

“Of course, we can wait until Maggie returns next month, before we speak about this any further.” Tilly laughed. “Right now we have more important things we need to do.”

“What?” Ashes asked somewhat surprised. Now, after all the strongholds of the Church in the Fjords had been destroyed, it seemed that the rest of their objectives would just be to peacefully continue to develop Sleeping Island... but when she looked at the expression of the other, it didn't look like that was the case.

The 5th Princess pointed to the white silk gloves with the red gem on it, “There aren't only ruins to be found in the kingdoms of the mainland, there are also ancient ruins on the Fjord's Shadow Islands. Most likely the sea folk's magic stones are coming from there. Taking advantage of the destruction of the Church, I want to go and take a look for myself. ”

“Is this about the legend of the Ghost Shadow Red River?” After having to do with the Fjords for some time, Ashes had also heard of this legend, “The remains were hidden in the sea, appearing and disappearing from time to time. Moreover, within the surroundings are many dangerous undercurrents and sea monsters, which makes it impossible for ordinary people to reach it. Since they were discovered for the first time, many explorer, in order to look at this inconceivable marvel, were hit by misfortune and were now buried at the Shadow Islands. You also do not know the certain position of the ruins, so how do you want to enter them?”

“Maybe I do not know where it is, but I know someone who can take us there. In fact, this great explorer is currently on Sleeping Island, and it was also he who first discovered these ruins,” Tilly smiled.

Chapter 223 Premeditation

During these days, Theo stayed in an inn of King's City, anxiously waiting for the reply from Border Town.

A towering inner wall divided King's City into two separate worlds, and the people would be strictly controlled when entering or leaving. No matter if they were aristocrats or wealthy merchants, everyone could only enter after going through a thorough inspection inside of a small room. Once they had any sign of disease, such as fever, flushes, or dark spots, they were not allowed inside. In case they left the inner city, they would have to return in the evening hours at the latest. Otherwise, when the sun went down, the gates would be closed and they would have to spend the night outside.

But this still couldn't stop the spread of demonic plague, yesterday he had heard the rumors that there were also nobles living in the inner city who had become infected. In case the Church had not finally released their first batch of Holy Elixir, Theo believed that the nobles would have soon started to evacuate from King's City.

Six days after sending out the letter, he was finally informed by Margaret's Chamber of Commerce that news had arrived. He hastily rushed to the agreed location a tailor shop, where on arrival he was led into the basement by the clerk, and there he met the the Chamber of Commerce's owner who had been waiting for a long time now.

On entering he saw Margaret sitting at a low table, a pot of ice water was placed in front of her, which continuously emitted bursts of cold air. Theo who was sweating from rushing over, sat himself cross-

legged on the opposite side, only to suddenly feel a surge of cold breeze on his face, which immediately lifted his spirits.

“His Highness asked me to give you this letter,” with this words Margaret handed him a sheepskin envelope, taking a closer look the envelope’s sealing wax seemed to still be intact.

Theo was impatient to open the message, the letter he had taken out gave him a brief account of the operation plan, the news that the Army had set out, as well as the tasks he himself had to complete. After carefully reading through it again, he put the letter into his pocket, looked towards Margaret and asked, “Was there anything else His Highness requested you to do?”

“No, he just asked me to send a messenger informing you about the letter’s arrival. Of course, since it was an express delivery there are some extra charges, I was free so I already wrote it into the account.”

“Keke, all right.” Theo cleared his throat. “His Royal Highness wants all the refugees to be transported to Border Town in the shortest amount of time, so he wants you to supply a lot of ships for an uninterrupted transportation, not only those two fleets.”

“Even if they are already infected?” Margaret asked with great interest, “I do not think he wanted to turn the whole Western Territory into a death zone, so... has His Highness found a way to cure the demonic plague?”

“He did indeed,” he nodded, “In fact, there were already infected people present on the first transport, at the time we send them out the disease had merely not broken out yet, only when they came close to Border Town, was it discovered. They are already on their way back to King’s City, with all crew members on board, safe and sound.”

“His Royal Highness is indeed an incredible man, even the Church wasn’t able to come up with an antidote so quickly,” Margaret exclaimed, “Then, how many days does he intend to use for the boarding of the refugees? A week?”

Theo stretched out three fingers.

“This... impossible!” For a moment, the business woman was stunned, only to repeatedly shake her head soon after, “Even if half of those people died, there will be still be more than 5,000 people. Being able to transport them within three days means that I will need to prepare nearly a hundred ships. Even if the Chamber of Commerce stops all its other shipping transportation, I would just about to meet this number. However, this way the losses I would suffer will be in the thousands of gold royals or more. And the loss I would make by losing because that is uncountable, even if the steam engine was to become free of charge it still wouldn’t be enough. So... I am afraid I have to refuse.”

“If all the people were sitting on the deck, rather than lying in beds in the cabins, the number of individuals a ship could carry would be doubled,” Theo insisted, “Furthermore, as long as we don’t pay attention to their comfort, the two masters which are used for the transportation of ore can also be used to move the people. As long as the top of the hatch is opened, one ship can then load about 200 people at the same time. This kind of vessels, your old friend Hogg should have a lot of it, right?”

“He should definitely have several ships of this type, in Silver City...” Margaret still looked a little hesitant, “Moreover, according to your arithmetic, it should probably be possible to reduce the number of ships needed to 50. But... this really isn’t a good deal.”

Theo also had the same thoughts, allowing dozens of ships to converge on top of the canal, just the scheduling and coordinating would require an enormous amount of energy. Also, all the charter costs would be paid out of their own pocket. After expending such a large amount of effort and taking all that trouble, the ‘harvest’ wouldn’t account for all the work that was needed. This really couldn’t be regarded as a good deal. At this point, he could only put forth the final resort.

At the end of the letter His Highness wrote a short line: If Margaret doesn’t want to help, tell her that Lightning is also coming.

Reading the sentence had made him a little puzzled, is there any particular relationship between the businesswoman and the cute, little blonde girl? Looking at their appearances it doesn’t seem like that ah... but His Royal Highness must have his own reasons when he speaks so certainly of it. Coming to this conclusion, Theo slowly opened his mouth, “There is a reason why there is no alternative than concluding the transportation within three days. What His Highness is doing is the equivalent of going into a tiger’s den to seize its food. If this is dragged out for too long, the Church might be coming to their door and Lightning is also within their ranks, if they discover the existence of a witch, it might become dangerous for her.”

“What did you just say?” Her voice suddenly rose up. “Lightning is coming?”

“His Highness’ letter did indeed say so,” Theo put on his most honest face, “Probably, in order to guide the troops and offer an early warning. After all, we are currently within the domain of the New King.”

“I got it,” Margaret stood up, “When do you need a vessel?”

“They ought to arrive in four days in case they aren’t delayed on the way.”

“I will go to my greatest extent to arrange it,” she went to her desk to the side, took up her pen and began to write, “But I have a condition, you have to tell me the position of His Highness troops. So that in the case that they want to enter the city, I can arrange adequate rooms for them.”

Alright, it seems that this trick is indeed useful, “I think this point shouldn’t be a problem,” Theo was secretly delighted, “In addition, I have one more thing I will need your help with.”

“Speak,” Margaret sighed.

“I need a procession of carts with wine barrels, the more barrels there are, the better. But they mustn’t be filled with ale or wine, but with river or well water.” According to His Highness’ letter, the crucial person to solve the demonic plague is the witch Lily; she can transform ordinary water into a cure for the disease. But there is a dangerous flaw in His Highness plan, if the street rats were allowed to come near the camp and get to know that there were people who could continuously produce the “Holy Elixir,” I bet that on the next day everyone in the city would come to know about it.

“River and well water?” Margaret raised her eyebrows. “Are you sure?”

“Rest assured, His Royal Highness will pay for this.” Theo declared laughingly.

In considerations of confidentiality and security, transporting the water from the troops' camp to King's City could only be done by him personally. In case he would just carry a water bag to cure the fugitives from the Eastern Region of the demonic plague, it would not only be troublesome, but its efficiency would also be very low. Because of this he had to come up with a method which allowed him to bring as much of the purified water through as possible in one round.

Installing a large barrel on a cart was clearly a good choice.

Chapter 224 Launching the Rescue plan

After learning that His Highness' side had a method to cure the demonic plague, Theo's irritable mood finally calmed down.

Once there was something he could busy himself with, the following days seemed to go by a lot faster.

In addition to his visits to the wine estates at the outskirts of King's City, he also planned the route for the convoy, while keeping the topography of the area around the canal's pier and the city gate in mind.

Nowadays, wanting to enter the city had become quite a hassle, using the refugees outside of King's City as the reason, all the major city gates had been sealed. In this way prohibiting any outsider from entering the city, especially after the Church had begun to distribute the Holy Elixir. After the refugees became aware of this, they began to desperately attack the city gates every day. Hoping to be allowed to go to the church for treatment. However, the guards stationed at the wall responded without hesitation and flocked them with crossbow bolts. The result was, that by now many corpses were lying in front of the city gates and rotting under the scorching sun, spreading an unpleasant odor.

The only open gate was a side gate limited to the use of the nobility and the merchants who brought the food. Fortunately, Theo had worked in the patrol for some time and because of that he was known by most of the guards as a native of King's City, allowing him to go through the gate with just a simple greeting.

It was precisely because of this quarantine, that both the inner and outer city lost almost all contact, so even when they had transported the refugees away with great fanfare, the news of it had difficulties spread into the inner city. Not to mention that the upper nobility were anxiously waiting for someone to ship all the refugees from the Eastern Region away. And save them from later having to suppress a rebellion.

Theo roughly understood why His Highness had set out on the same day he had received the letter. All these people outside of the city felt as if they had been abandoned by their King. So, in case the Church sent out some priest to heal them, they would become their most faithful of believers.

But if His Highness could arrive before the Church could grab them, these people would instead be pulled to his side. There was no doubt that after healing them and offering them a new place to stay, they would become His Highness most fanatical of supporters.

On the morning of the fourth day, the returning first fleet arrived at the canal's pier on time. Theo was surprised to discover that His Highness had sent as many as 300 soldiers of the First Army. Who were furthermore all dressed in their standard uniform and armed with revolver rifles. With this powerful

contingent as a safeguard, even if the Church came to know about them, he estimated that they would still be unable to prevent the refugees from leaving.

“Lightning!” Margaret who also waited at the pier immediately shouted when she saw the little girl’s figure, unable to containing herself from going forward and hugging her.

“This is...?” Iron Axe asked.

“The owner of the Grand Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Margaret,” Theo explained, “All the ships we need for the transportation will be provided by her or a partner of her’s, without her we would never be able to implement His Highness plan.”

“So, it was like this,” After understanding the situation Iron Axe nodded to her. “Thank you for your help.”

“I’ll deduct all my expense from His Highness fee,” Margaret merely shrugged. “But when you’re thanking me, you should also thank Lightning.”

Lightning crooked head and asked confused, “Why me?”

“Keke, it’s nothing.” Theo coughed twice. “What are you going to do next?”

“Next we will set up a camp in the south of the dock to control the area, and then in the afternoon we will start the rescue mission.” Iron Axe said, “If the ships could be here by then, that would be for the best.”

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When Brian led his men into the refugee area, he could not help but frown.

Everywhere he looked he saw dying people. Their skin had split open at many places, with black blood continuously flowing out of them and attracting swarms of flies. However, those ill people didn’t even have the strength left to drive the insects off, simply letting these flying insects crawl all over their body and drink of their blood.

Seeing all this, he couldn’t help but think of the Months of Demons, when the people of Border Town were trapped in the slums of Longsong Stronghold. Having to face death by hunger and coldness, but being utterly helpless against it. If all this was really done by the Church, it was a simply unforgivable crime.

“Let’s call the first group,” Brian said. “We depend on you, Miss Echo.”

If they rashly went within the crowd and announced that they were in possession of medicine to cure the ill, it would most likely cause a ruckus. And when a large group of refugees went into the direction of the docks all at once, their small group of dozens of people would simply not be enough to suppress them. Because of this, they had to make sure that the information was always only spread to a select small groups at the same time. Considering this problem, His Highness had decided to specially sent Miss Echo along. With her ability, Echo was able to control the area within which her voice would be heard, or she could also just put her voice next to a person’s ear.

Even though Brian saw how she opened her mouth to speak, he was unable to hear any sound, while the fugitives turned around and looked over.

Soon, a group of them came over, more stumbling than running, "Your honor, is what you said really true? As long as you can cure the disease, I am willing to follow you to the Western Region!"

"Of course it's true. Our ships have stopped at the pier, so gather your family and come with me!"

Other soldiers also stepped forward to help the patients who laid on the ground and were unable to move. Their small group instantly expanded to several hundred people, who walked together in the direction of the pier. Many people who noticed this scene, also began to follow, doing their best to catch up with them.

Back to the pier, soldiers of the First Army had already filled with bags with purified water and placed them on a long table. At the gangway to board the ship stood Iron Axe with a squadron, only letting only two people through at the same time, and ensuring that all the people who wanted to embark had first drunk the curing water.

"Everybody listens, these water bags are filled with medicine that treats the illness, so as long as you drink from it, you will immediately recover." Next, to the long table, they had set up a stage on which stood the one with the highest standing amongst the soldiers, constantly preaching His Highness' manuscript, "What the church has called the 'Demonic Plague caused by witches and could only be dispelled by their Holy Elixir' is a groundless statement, nothing more. They just want to earn more money and also make you kneel to them, thanking them for their graciousness in saving your life. Instead Lord Roland not only brought the medicine, he also doesn't charge you any fees for it! Yes, you don't even have to pay a copper royal for it!"

These words immediately heated up the crowd, but when the first person drunk the purified water, he quickly felt how his body changed. Unable to believe it, he tore open his clothes only to see how the dark spots quickly faded away, "This medicine is indeed effective! I'm healed, I'm healed!"

"Me too, God above, the wounds no longer bleed!"

"God you say, where is it? I only see a group of liars!"

"That's right! This medicine has nothing to do with the Church!"

"Long live His Highness, Roland!"

As more and more people were healed, the witnessing crowd also became more and more excited. If the First Army to hadn't been there to control the order, the water bags placed on the table would have immediately been washed away by the flood of fugitives.

"At the moment, His Highness is busy with developing the Western Region, for this, he requires a lot of manpower to cultivate fields, build houses, build roads... he does not charge you anything for the medicine, and he also doesn't force you to go with us to the West." The soldier responsible for the propaganda continued to shout as loud as possible, "But His Royal Highness promises, that as long as you are willing to follow us to the Western Region and work for him, you will get food, shelter and payment! No matter what your specialty is, you will get a matching job! If you are willing to take the first step into a new life, just step forward and follow the mercenaries on board, they will take you to your

new home! If you are unwilling that is also okay, we will still be here and provide help for the next three days; after that we will leave. During these three days, food will be given out free of charge by the caravan!”

“Is there really a new home and work with salary waiting for us?” Someone asked loudly.

“Of course, that is the condition offered by His Highness!” The soldier nodded in response.

“Please let me on board; I am willing to serve His Royal Highness!”

“Me too!”

“And I!”

“I’m a blacksmith!”

“...”

Brian was very pleased to see that within this group of hundreds of people, no one chose to stay in King’s City and instead they all decided to board the ship to the West. The moment a vessel was full, it would immediately depart and then be replaced by an empty ship. Under Margaret’s command, there wasn’t even the slightest pause between.

Afterward, Brian continued to lead refugees from the camps to the dock, always relying on Echo sound transmission technique to draw in a new batch of Eastern Region refugees. The number of refugees under her control would be between 300 to 400 every time. As he returned with a new team of patients to the pier, he suddenly saw how the First Army stationed in the wheat fields in the south began to move. A team of them rushed out at flying speed into the direction of the northern bank of the canal, while carrying their guns in their hand.

“What happened?” Brian asked into the direction of Iron Axe’s men.

“Scout Miss Lightning said that someone had secretly jumped off the ship and run away,” one of them offered while saluting. “Maybe there’s a rat which had hidden itself between the refugees?”

Chapter 225 The Avengers

In fact, there was more than one of those rats, so once again, Iron Axe stood in front of a man they had captured and looked at him expressionlessly, “You are the third person who’s tried to escape by jumping off the ship, the refugees also told us that you haven’t come from the Eastern Region. So, what will be your important last words, will it be a confession?”

The two people who had previously been caught, after using a dagger to cut off a finger, of both of them immediately confessed their origins and purpose in coming. Of course, their corpses were still thrown into the canal afterwards, since Iron Axe had never been a person who had a soft-heart. His experience of struggling for survival in Iron Sand City was that when dealing with an enemy that was hiding the head and showing the tail, the best response was to cut off one exposed limb after the other. However, what surprised him was that the prisoner with his after being pushed down on his knees and getting his hands tied to his back, still looked very healthy, nothing like those other sick people.

Is it possible that some other faction has sent him here to die?

"I'm not your enemy," were his first words when he opened his mouth, and directly stared into Iron Axe's eyes. "My name is Hill Fawkes, Theo should know my name!"

...

At this time Theo still hadn't left the dock. After being called, he came over to Iron Axe, looked at Hill Fawkes, and said: "This man is one of the people who belong to Black Hammer."

"So, he isn't your man?" Iron Axe confirmed.

"He has nothing to do with me; he is a street rat who only recently joined."

"You deceived Black Hammer and also the Skeleton Fingers," Hill suddenly opened his mouth and shouted, "You are not working for Timothy, but rather the Lord of the Western Territory, His Highness Roland Wimbledon!"

"He knows too much," Theo said as he made a slicing gesture across his neck to Iron Axe. "The best place for this man is the canal."

Hill, to stop his death, proclaimed: "I have heard everything the mercenary announced, I believe we can cooperate! I am willing to work for His Royal Highness Roland!"

"His Highness does not need the allegiance of a street rat," Iron Axe said as he pulled out his sword.

"I am not a street rat, I am... I'm a citizen of King's City! I'm Timothy's enemy!" Hill cried.

"Wait," Theo called Iron Axe to stop and went over to Hill. The latter raised his head and looked fearlessly into the guard's eyes, with eyes which seemed to burn.

So... This was what I saw in his eyes at the first time, but wasn't able to understand at the time, Theo thought. His eyes were full of hatred, and the hatred was so intense that even as he was deliberately trying to conceal it, he could not completely cover his burning anger.

"Tell me what it is you want to do for His Highness."

"It is true that I lived in the northern district of the city and that I occasionally went to the Covert Trumpeter to get a drink, but I didn't lose all my possession because of gambling. Furthermore, my wife also didn't run away with someone else..." Hill gnashed his teeth, "The truth is, it was Timothy who caused her death!"

The story really wasn't that complicated, which allowed Theo to quickly come to understand the sequence of the events.

He and his wife originally were members of the "Dove and Cylinder" an acrobatic troupe, who often performed in King's City's inner city. The acrobatic troupe wasn't that big; they only had seven members, and the atmosphere between them has always been very harmonious. His wife was the only woman in the group, and had also been unanimously pursued by everyone. But in the end, Hill became the victor, finally winning her heart. Afterward, their married life was very sweet, and not much later the both of them had saved enough to buy a house in the inner city. But all this was destroyed by Timothy's witch-hunting operation. Under Langley's leadership, the patrol acted like a bunch of mad dogs,

recklessly capturing those under suspicion, and his wife just happened to be one of those who had been unfortunate enough to be captured.

Hill Fawkes had thought that as long as he paid the ransom money, he could get his wife released, or if that proved impossible at least see her face to face. However, even though the prison warden accepted the ransom, not only did he not release her, he even refused his request to let him enter the jail and see her. He only tried appeasing him by saying that he only had to wait a while until they confirmed that his wife wasn't a witch, and she would naturally be set free afterwards. So when the warden informed him that he should come to the jail to get his wife, he never expected that the situation would take a sharp turn for the worse, leaving him to find the scarred corpse of his wife.

When Hill angrily went to Langley to demand an explanation, the final result was, the prison head and his guards had merely been sentenced to ten lashes, and received a fine of twenty-five silver royals, while he was given three gold royals in compensation. This kind of sentencing was totally unacceptable for Hill; he even went so far as finding the highest person in charge, Sir Weimar also known as "Knight Steelheart", but even this was to no avail. Sir Weimar could only tell him that Langley was Timothy's cronies and that the new members of the patrol were also all his lackeys. Furthermore, the witch hunt was His Majesty personal order, so even Sir Pail, the Minister of Justice could not speak out against it.

Thereupon Hill decided he would make the New King pay, never anticipating that his former partners in the acrobatic troupe would actually support him. However, as a group of acrobats without any form of combat expertise, wealth, or troops under their command, it was almost impossible for them to carry out their vendetta against the King. The only possible way to harm him that Hill could think of was collecting intelligence about Timothy and giving it to his enemies, like the Queen of Clearwater Garcia Wimbledon. For this, they had all joined different groups of street rats, and decided to collect any clues they could find concerning the new King.

This was also the reason why he secretly monitored all of Theo's movements. In case that Timothy wanted to get rid of the refugees, he had to try to stop them as much as possible. But he was too slow before he could take action, the demonic plague had broken out, and Theo suspended the transportation of the refugees. But today, Hill discovered that they had started the operation once again. And in order to investigate, he straightforwardly disguises himself as a refugee and succeeded in mixing in with the crowd. Resulting in the discovery that in truth Theo was actually serving Roland Wimbledon, the 4th Prince of the Kingdom of Graycastle.

Who, without a doubt, as a qualified competitor of the Throne of Graycastle, was also an enemy of Timothy.

Probably in the eyes of Hill, as long as it allows him to kill the new King, he wouldn't even shrink away from working for the Devil.

"Okay, the last question. By mixing into the crowd to make discreet inquiries for news, did it never occur to you that you might infect yourself?" Theo asked with interest, "I never thought that a person with vengeance as his aim would throw his life away that easily."

"I have the antidote," Hill confessed. "It is hidden in a pocket in my undergarments. All my troupe's partners spend most of their family's possessions to buy it for me from the black market."

Theo reached out and searched with his hand, fishing out a finger thick transparent vial, which was filled with a blue liquid. He handed it over to Iron Axe, then said, "That should be the Holy Elixir of the Church. I think His Royal Highness will be interested in something like this."

"This person..." Iron Axe received the vial then asked, "What do you plan with him?"

"Well," Theo touched his chin, if it were the normal times, without the possibility of verifying the authenticity of his words, we could only choose the safest method and directly sent him on his way. However, at this time, there was someone in the camp who could judge whether he was speaking the truth or was lying, "I want to ask Miss Nightingale to verify his words."

...

Later in the evening, Theo returned to the Covert Trumpeter.

Black Hammer's spirit evidently wasn't very high, with the spread of the recent epidemic, his business had dropped so low it was at freezing point. And if that wasn't bad enough already, Silver Ring and Pots had also become infected, which intensified his restlessness by many times.

Hill, as if nothing unusual had happened, sat slightly stiff on the opposite side of Theo.

Theo put on a slight smile then threw out a pouch of gold royals in front of Black Hammer. "There really is no reason for you to be so depressed. I have some good news and I also have a business offer for you."

After counting the coins and putting them away, Black Hammer opened his mouth and said weakly, "Currently we won't take any business. Now that the demonic plague is running amok, who would be foolish enough to go outside? All this money isn't even sufficient to buy the Holy Elixir. Don't you know how much you have to pay to buy even one bottle of medicine from the black market? At least twenty-five gold royals!"

"What a coincidence," Theo laughed. "As it happens, the business I am speaking of has also to do with buying medicine," he paused, "...a special medicine to cope with the demonic plague."

Chapter 226 Inner City operation

"You managed to get hold of the Holy Elixir?" Black Hammer was suddenly back in full spirit.

"Holy Elixir?" Theo retracted his smile and sneered instead, "There is no need to take the Church's drug, there are others medicines that can also cure patients of the demonic plague." Saying this he removed two small bags from his waist and placed them on the table, "Putting the blame on the witches is just the usually trick used to get some benefits, after all, a dead person cannot talk back."

Puzzled Black Hammer picked up one of the bags, and placed it near his ear and shook it, only then did he untie the rope and smell what was inside, "No odour?"

"Just take them to Silver Ring and Pots, afterward you will know that this is the real medicine," Theo said. "They should be somewhere in the tavern."

"Since we discovered their infection, I made them hide in the basement, and I didn't allow them to come out. Nowadays whenever people see someone with black spots, it's quite likely that they will go

out of their way to attack the sick, and because of this, the den of the skeleton fingers won't open its door to let them in." Black Hammer picked up the second bag and announced, "Sir, I'll go now and give it a try."

When he got up and left, Hill was still staring at the table, not saying a word, which made Theo secretly shake his head.

An ordinary person who lives under the constant threat of the demonic plague can never keep so calm when he hears that he can get the medicine to cure the disease. Even if you do not want to seem too excited, at least take a look at it and ask a few words. With his performance, Hill has proven that he doesn't hold the qualification to become a spy.

"Can this medicine really cure the demonic plague?" Little Finger shouted suddenly. "Sir, where did you get this from?"

Even the little girl is better at it than him, Theo thought while taking a sip of his wine, "Without a doubt, after all, it was given to me by my Lord in the Royal Palace, other than him, who else would dare to go against the Church?"

In no time, Black Hammer came back and brought Silver Ring and Pots along, "Oh, my God, this medicine is incredible! Just moments after they drank it, the black spot on their bodies had already begun to disappear."

Seeing Theo, both men immediately went to their knees even though their wounds were still bleeding, and in unison they said, "Sir, Thanks a lot for your medicine, you've saved our lives!"

"First go and bandage your wounds," Theo waved at their injuries. Although the purified water was able to heal the disease, it still could not heal their wounds. Such serious injuries would have to recover like any other injury, and needed at least a week, "Rather than thanking me, you should thank my employer. If you can fulfill this current mission, it is even possible that you can get rid of your identity as street rats."

"Maj... No, I mean, does your employer really want us to sell this medicine?" Black Hammer asked excitedly. Apparently, he had already realized how much revenue they could make by selling these potions.

"That's right; the Church is currently using the medicine to deceive the people, which has made my employer furious with them. If he allows this group of so called fortune tellers who lack any scruple keep going, I'm afraid the whole King's City will have changed into a cathedral soon, rather than Wimbledon's home territory." Theo lowered his voice, "Also, he is unwilling to see such a huge city only be left with only a few citizens, therefore, this medicine absolutely cannot be sold at a price so expensive that it would lead to it becoming unaffordable for most people." He took another two leather bags from his waist and threw them on the table, "These kind of bags, will be sold for at most for ten silver royals."

"T-ten silver royals?" Black Hammer exclaimed, his eyes shot wide open.

"Yes, six belong to my employer, the rest will belong to you," he extended his palm, "And this medicine should be enough to use 5000-6000 people. Therefore you can obtain at least several hundred royals,

even after splitting it up, it is still not a small amount. It should be sufficient for you to spend it for the rest of your life in comfort.

The other side seemed as if they wanted to speak but were unable to find the words. The whole time they stared at the water backs on the table, seemingly thinking about how to obtain even greater benefits.

Within his heart, Theo clearly knew what was going through these street rats' minds.

The potion itself had no processing cost, even if they gave it away for free, it wouldn't have been a problem. However, without a profit to be shared, he could only rely on himself, which would substantially lower the efficiency and would also be much more eye-catching. So, by letting the rats sell the medicine, he could reduce the risk, and ten silver royals was also a price that the majority of the urban citizens would be able to pay. Of course, to be honest, he couldn't trust that they would sell it so cheaply, whether they stole a part of it to sell in the inner city, or transferred it to the black market, they would always make huge profits.

Ultimately, the amount of potion sold to the citizen for a low price would perhaps be less than half of it, but this wasn't the focus of Theo's concern. His task was to undermine the conspiracy of the Church as much as possible so that everyone could understand that the Holy Elixir was not the only antidote able to dispel the evil spirits nor was it such a rare or expensive thing. The result would be that the propaganda of the Church would become publicly questioned, especially by those believers who had gone to great extents to buy such costly medicine, beginning to question themselves about whether god's spokesperson had cheated them or not.

"I know exactly what you're thinking," Theo opened his mouth and began to speak, "You want to hide some of the medicine and secretly sell it for a higher price by selling it to the upper ranks, I can act as if I haven't seen it... but I won't forget," his tone became cold, "My employer really isn't a good-natured person, if you do not want to drown into the moat, it would be the best to show a bit of restraint, after all, only alive can you feel the pleasures of living."

"But what should we do if someone else resells the medicine?" Silver Ring asked.

"That's very easy to be solved; everyone can only buy only one bag and they have to drink it on the spot." After he finished giving his advice, he looked at Black Hammer and asked, "How is it, are you interested in this business?"

"But the Covert Trumpeter may not be able to handle so much medicine, I think ..."

Theo interrupted him immediately. "It's your business to arrange for the people who will sell the medicine and it is also your decision where you will sell it. I'm just the substitute my employer has sent to keep an eye on you."

Black Hammer gnashed his teeth, look at his four subordinates, and when he saw that none of them were raising any objection, he smashed his fist on the table and proclaimed, "This business, I will take it!"

“Well,” Theo nodded, “On sunset, the day after tomorrow, a carriage carrying the medicine will come to the pub’s entryway, so you have time until then to arrange your workforce and also spread the news about the drug release. Do a good job of it; my employer doesn’t want to see any failure.”

The day after tomorrow is the last day of the First Army’s stay. After they leave the city, no matter what the city turns into, it won’t cause a threat for His Royal Highness, Theo thought.

...

After leaving the tavern, it didn’t take long until Hill had caught up to him.

“Won’t you meet up with my companions? They are all eager to take revenge against Timothy.”

“For the time being I’m trusting you because you passed the test,” Theo shook his head and continued. “If you had not been caught today, what would have been your next steps?”

“I would have gone back and told everyone the news, and listened to their opinions about it. I’m not sure if I should continue to keep watch for a while or if I should immediately go to His Highness Roland,” Fawkes replied.

“Oh?” Theo’s interest was piqued, so he asked, “What’s your opinion about it?”

For a moment Hill hesitated, then stated what was on his mind, “I do not think that His Royal Highness is the same as most of the other nobles. Very few of them wouldn’t spare any effort to save the fugitives, and... he also treats the witches equally favorable as everyone else. Supposing the case that Timothy would be the same, it would be unlikely that my wife would’ve...” He became silent for a while, “So I would prefer to serve His Highness directly.”

“If that is the case you should go back and say nothing, act as if you have never been to the pier.”

“Why...” Hill lifted his head in astonishment.

“An outstanding spy should make a habit of concealing their secrets inside of their heart, rather than sharing everything with others, especially at such a critical moment as this.” Theo stated one reason after another, “If you want to work for His Highness, there are still many things you will need to learn.”

Chapter 227 The Whistleblower

In the grand hall of the church, the presiding priest was overlooking the farmer kneeling before his feet.

The farmers originally tall and sturdy stature had now turned into a completely crooked lump, with his hands slightly trembling and his skin showing an abnormal purple color. Not much longer and those patches will condense into dark spots, and eventually spread all over his body. By only getting infected today he can be considered as strong enough.

“I remember you; you are Rocky Hill living in the Eastern District, you frequently come to the church to bring us fresh wheat grain,” the priest said.

“You... recognize me! That’s great, Your Reverence” he kowtowed again and again, “The demonic plague infected my family, I, I need the Holy Elixir, I beseech you.”

“However, what is it that you brought with you to the Church today? The Holy Elixir isn’t something that I can arbitrarily give away,” Ferry stated, not stalling or taking his time. “The exchange it requires has to be given by your heart.”

“I, I in order to buy medicine, I have been cheated by those rats and lost all my money,” Rocky Hill said with a trembling voice, “Please forgive me, for my heart wasn’t sincere, I should have never sought shortcuts by going through the black market. At present I only have one last egg left, please accept it.” With this words, he took one plump egg out of his chest and offered it with his hands extended above his head.

“Pinning your hope on the deceiving and mean people of the black market will naturally be punished, but God will always extend his hand to help a lost lamb back on the right track. Only those who recognize their own faults will be able to go further and further on their pilgrimage.” Ferry took the egg and smiled. “Get up; God forgives you.”

“Re-really?” Rocky Hill didn’t dare believe his ears.

“God’s envoys will never deceive someone.” Ferry beckon waved, and another follower holding a box with potions immediately came over. Ferry picked four bottles and handed them to Rocky Mountain. “If I remember correctly, your family has a total of four people, right?”

“Yes, Your Reverence,” he swallowed his tears, took the Holy Elixir in his hands and then leaned over to kiss the priest’s shoes, “Thank you, thank you, from now on I will dedicate my whole life to the Church and to God!”

This scene also touched all the believers standing at the side, they immediately began to cheering, happily welcoming a new member to their family of believers.

Waiting until the cheers ebbed down a little, Ferry held his hand up indicating that they should become quiet, then said with a clear voice: “Next.”

...

This kind of Holy Elixir distribution continued until dusk.

With the sounding of the King’s City’s bell, Priest Ferry declared the end of the day’s distribution ceremony which would be continued tomorrow morning, leaving the begging crowd behind in the main hall.

Although his body had become somewhat tired, his spirit was still fully burning. Since standing in the grand hall listening to the pleas and prayers of the people, and watching as they couldn’t wait to do everything they could to please him, made it impossible to not feel like a God in his mind.

No, what is commonly known as God is really just the Church itself, Ferry thought. After developing the demonic disease and the corresponding antidote, we can easily decide about other people’s life and death, with this kind of power in our hands, what is the difference between us and God? Sighing with emotion, he was once more assured that giving up the inheritance of his family business and joining the Church had been the right choice.

In the face of such power, no one will be able to stop up. Wealthy businessmen? High-ranking nobles? When facing death, they will all be equally willing to abandon everything in exchange for the opportunity to live.

Returning to the rest area in the back hall, a clergyman hurriedly came up to him and whispered in his ear: "Your Reverence, a street rat came in and reported that he had discovered an important matter."

"Regarding what?"

"Something about the refugees of the Eastern Region, the concrete news he only wants to say when meeting you face to face." The clergyman immediately answered.

According to the Church's instructions given beforehand, Ferry should make full use of the demonic plague and its antidote, and gather as many new followers for Hermes as possible. Therefore, winning over the refugees was also a part of his plan, but compared to the citizens of King's City their importance wasn't as high. He had intended to wait another two or three days, and let half of the homeless refugees die before coming out to treat and cure the rest, which would make them feel as if their King had abandoned them. As a result, within the whole of King's City, 90% of its population would become the Church's followers. With this kind of merit and the previous order for the Battle for the Throne, would perhaps be sufficient to take another step down the road to the rank of Bishop.

At least in regards to rewarding the people for their merits, the Church has always been very fair, never considering someone's blood relationship or former identity. As long as someone showed outstanding performance, they would be promoted.

What kind of severe problem could have arisen within the refugees?

Suppressing his doubts to the bottom of his heart, he quietly said, "Alright, just take him to the secret room, I will join him soon."

"Yes, Your Reverence."

Taking off the ceremony priest robe, Ferry grasped a flexible plate armor out of the closet and put it on, and then covered it over with a loose coat. Afterward, he stepped in front of a silver mirror for a little reorganization before he left for the secret room.

Stepping into the chamber and analyzing the situation, the priest saw that the "informant's" hair was disorderly, and his complexion was sallow and skinny, allowing him to see his bones in his arms. However, what was strange was that on his whole body there was not a trace of the black spots or any other symptoms.

The moment the opposite party saw the priest enter, he immediately went on his knees and announced, "Your Reverence, my name is Needle, and I have important information to tell you."

"You may speak."

"But..." He looked up, drifted with his eyes to the other two people accompanying them in the secret room, indicating that he was hesitant to speak in front of outsiders.

“They don’t matter, they are Priest Shattrath, my right-hand,” Ferry said. “And the other one is Grandma Hera, who is responsible for safeguarding and taking care of this secret room, almost never leaving this place.”

“Then I will speak but regarding the promised...”

“The Holy Elixir is here,” Ferry said, impatiently pulling out the blue vial. “As long as your information is valuable, I will, of course, heal you from the evil spirits.”

“Your Reverence, I assure you that this information is absolutely astonishing,” Needle proclaimed and raised his head. “Some people are continuously transporting the fugitives away, and they have empty ships everywhere on the canal, all this I have personally seen with my own eyes. I fear that within a few days they will be able to bring away all the refugees.”

“They are taking away those patients infected with the black spots?” Ferry frowned. “Are you sure you haven’t misread the situation?”

Previously he had already received the message that a fleet was transporting the refugees of the Eastern Region away, but something like this was quite normal. Those nobles always love it when the territory of another noble is stricken by natural disaster, this time it will allow them to plunder some workers for a very low price. Anyway, now that the demonic disease is running amuck those idiots will naturally be punished by God. However, now... after they know that the plague has infected the people, how can they still shelter the refugees?

“No, they are in possession of a cure for the demonic disease! After those mercenaries gave the patients a bag with some strange water to drink, the dark spots on their body quickly disappeared. Furthermore, they also claimed that they are coming from the Western Region, and as long as the refugees are willing to come along with the fleet, they would receive food, shelter, and remuneration for the work they have done.” Needle’s eyes paused on Ferry’s, “But the most astonishingly is that these people are working together with a witch!”

“What did you just say?”

“What I said is absolutely correct, Your Reverence!” Needle shouted, “I mixed in with the ranks of the fugitives and embarked on a ship. In the beginning, I hadn’t seen anything, but then somebody jumped from the ship, and the mercenaries on shore began to pursue him. Before long I noticed that there was a shadow circling in the sky, but it wasn’t a bird, it was a witch flying in the air. I was so scared that I did not dare to move. I waited until the ship had sailed several kilometers and I couldn’t detect a trace of the witch, before I took the next opportunity and dived into the water to escape. I almost needed a day to come back. “Needle rubbed his hands,” Your Reverence, do you believe now that this information is worth a bottle of Holy Elixir in exchange?”

“Wait a minute, you said that they have a way to cure the demonic plague and that you also have drunk it, in other words, does that mean you were previously sick?” Ferry asked.

“Uh... That’s right, but didn’t you say, as long as I have valuable information to offer, I can...” Needle grinned awkwardly, revealing a mouth of uneven yellow teeth.

So that's the reason, he doesn't want to use it but instead wants to take this bottle of Holy Elixir to the black market to sell it, after pondering for a moment Ferry asked again, "How many people does the other side have? Are you sure they were mercenaries from a caravan?"

"They assuredly were, they have no armor, no horses, and their weapons were a kind of wooden spear. As for their numbers..." Needle went with his hand through his hair, "Not more than a hundred people, at most!"

"To whom did belonged the ships?"

"This... I cannot tell, most of the ships haven't hung any flag, and even in case they had hung one up, I wouldn't be able to recognize them. But the mercenaries personally said that the fleet was leaving for the Western Region... ah... yes, he also mentioned that the recruitment was for the Lord of Border Town." Needle racked his brain to recall his words, "he was currently in the process of reclaiming the land, and thus the Lord needs a large workforce. That's all I can remember."

"Well, this was indeed a crucial news you had to offer," the priest took a deep breath and pulled a bottle of blue liquid from his pocket and threw it towards Needle, "Take it with you, it is yours."

"Th-thank you, Your Reverence!" Flustered the latter caught the bottle, but suddenly his whole body began to tremble, and his eyes became huge. Only seeing a slender dagger sticking out of his neck, sending out a faint coldness, with the old and senile room manager suddenly standing behind him.

Chapter 228 Faceless person

The grannie retrieved her dagger, and let him fall to the ground. She then picked up the medicine bottle, rubbed it on her body to clean it and handed it back to the priest.

"Well done," Ferry nodded, "Now drag him out and dispose his corpse."

"Yes," she answered with a husky voice, dragging the corpse without any effort, much unlike an old woman.

"Your Reverence, do you believe that he was telling the truth?" After the manager had left, Priest Shattrath asked, "That the caravan and the witches are working together, and if I remember correctly wasn't it the 4th Prince, Roland Wimbledon who got assigned to Border Town?"

"Whether it is true or not we will only know after we send someone to examine it," Ferry said with a serious expression. "But I think the possibility that he lied to us isn't likely. As long as we send some eyes on top of the city walls to take a look, we should be able to notice the situation of the refugees. So if he wanted to fabricate a lie in exchange for the Holy Elixir, at least he would have taken one which would have been harder to verify."

"I'll send someone to review the situation right away," the priest bowed.

"Go ahead and investigate the information, promptly come back afterwards and report to me."

Ferry slowly walked to the table, sat down, and started playing with the Elixir in his hands. These refugees had already been in the bag. After all, to control their movements and prevent them from fleeing from the demonic plague by themselves, he had dispatched the street rats from the Dreamland organization, and made them mix in with the refugees. There they should spread the news that the

Church would soon come to save them. As long as they could endure for a few more days not only would they receive God's redemption, there was also the possibility that they would be accepted by the Church, and become a citizen of King's City. As for those rats, they were mostly already infected themselves, and because of this, they wouldn't spare any effort to exchange for the Holy Elixir.

In case the information given by the rat was correct, it meant that this group of people had at least started transport the refugees away since yesterday. Moreover, according to their posture, it doesn't like they would abandon the transportation, which was equivalent to severely hindering his own plans. Even more grave, it appeared that they were working together with a witch since Ferry was convinced that only a witch would be capable of curing the demonic plague.

"Your Reverence, the body has been taken care of." The old woman walked back into the secret room and cautiously closed the door without making any noise, "Also, have some fallen really shown themselves?"

"Most likely," Ferry lowered his voice, "and there are maybe more than one." For a moment he paused, "Furthermore, since no stranger is here, there is no need for you to pretend to be ugly, There is no stranger here, seeing you like this is detestable."

"Yes."

She bent down into a crab stance, followed by her whole body began to issue a crackling and rattling sound as if all the bones in her body began to rub in general. Followed by a rapid grows of her stature, in the blink of an eye her gray hair turned black, and her skin that was full of wrinkles and loose gradually began to tightening again. Becoming stretched taut but flexible once again, as if her body's time had flowed backward. When she finally straighten her body, she had turned into a beautiful and enchanting woman.

"That's much better," Ferry smiled with satisfaction, "If I remember correctly, this fellow... had been hanged at the gate, right?"

"Yes, my Lord," she nodded, "Of the four she is the one you spent the most time with."

"You really... know how to please me," the priest smacked his lips, "But I expect that Shattrath will be back soon, there isn't enough time." He suppressed his desire, "Furthermore, you still have to deal with the fallen ones."

"Give them to me, my Lord," she vowed while bowing. "I won't let any of the fallen go."

A quarter of an hour later, Shattrath returned to the secret room. He first looked at the witch, and then turned to the Ferry to report: "Your Reverence, outside of the western city many shadow are indeed missing. But within the dark I was unable to see it clearly, so I sent some subordinates carrying torches out to circle the area, only to discover that many tents were absolutely empty. However, there was no trace of flames to see from the dock area, so I cannot tell if the caravan is still stationed there, as for the witch..."

"No need to investigate," Ferry interrupted him, "Since the other side dares to transport the fugitives away, the intelligence provided by the rat shouldn't be wrong. This way, we know that their group has at least two witches with them, one that can fly and one who can eliminate the epidemic. Especially the

latter, is a great threat to my plan, so we certainly must stop them. For now, they are still only treating the people outside the city, but if that witch were to come into the city and openly treat those who are infected, our own propaganda, claiming the Holy Elixir as their only solution will have become a joke!”

“What should we do?” the other priest asked, “Should we send out the Army of Judges to arrest the witch?”

Ferry shook his head, “This is King’s City and not the Holy City at Hermes. The Church has only around 20 Judges stationed here, but if we sent them out, who will keep the order tomorrow during the medicine distribution ceremony? Furthermore, their number is just too small, besides punishing them as a warning to others what would we really achieve? Even if they were able to defeat those mercenaries, the witches would most likely have already escaped.” Since we are in King’s City, the Army of Judges which is responsible for maintaining order is merely at the size of dozen of people, otherwise, if it was at the scale of several hundreds of people, I am afraid the King couldn’t sleep at night unless he subjugated us.

“Then... should we inform the Holy City, and ask the Bishop to send reinforcements?”

“By the time the Judges will have arrived, I am afraid the fugitives will already be long gone.” Ferry sneered, “Furthermore, for a group of mercenaries we won’t need the elite army of the Church to deal with them, we will just give this matter to Dreamland to deal with.”

“To the rats?” Shattrath got started.

“At least they are numerous; allowing them to surround the dock in advance and then attack in a swarm all at once. What do you think, without wearing an armor and only being armed with wooden spears, how many rats can they handle?” He asked.

“About two or three people.”

“Therefore they will only be able to deal with around 200 people at maximum, while Dreamland can easily gather a mob of around 1000 people or more. Of course, these brave and aggressive dregs will never be able to attack in formation like the Army of Judges, but for just killing the group of mercenaries, they should be more than sufficient.” Ferry stood up, “Inform Fierce Teeth Tanis, that he has one day to gather his forces, the more, the better, tomorrow night we will attack. Don’t tell him that there are other ways to cure the disease and also do not say that they will have to deal with witches, just tell him to make sure that no one escapes. His payment will be a box of the Holy Elixir, if he wants to shirk away or he senses a lie, tell him, in case he doesn’t help. he won’t any longer get the poppy or sleep fern from me.

“But the witches... what should we do against them? Especially the one who can fly in the sky.”

“She won’t be flying all the time, and the rats won’t be able to end the fight in a short time, with other words... their only role is to attract the attention of the other side,” Ferry said, while walking to the witch, stretching out his hand to gently caress her face. “As long as Faceless sees an opportunity, she will sneak into their camp, completely beyond their notice.”

She only has to touch them once, and she will be able to completely disguise herself or someone else as the previously contacted person. But it is not only their appearance, but it is also even their stature and

voice that she can perfectly imitate. And since the God's Stone of Retaliation cannot remove her ability, she will become an excellent assassin. It was for this reason that she became one of the few remaining and specially trained witches of the Church."

"When the other party realizes that there is no way left for them to win, the camp is bound to turn into chaos, and at that time, Faceless will make sure that no witch will be able to survive." The Priest began to laugh.

Chapter 229 On the eve of the day of return

On the third day, outside of King's City's eastern city gate.

Nightingale was hiding in her world of fog calmly watching the group of shabbily clothed refugees. Under Echo's sound manipulating ability, one wave of refugees after another gathered together and slowly moved with Sir Brian towards the pier.

Nowadays they no longer acted like they had two days ago, where they had to push their way through the refugees to reach the edge of the camp, always only breaking away small chunks at a time. After a significant number of refugees had been brought over the rest of them had also noticed the movement, so as long as a wave of people was pulled away from the edge, the rest would continue to come over. By now, even the guards on King's City's city wall had noticed the what happened at their foot, but from their point of view, they only wished that these stinking refugees would hurry and finally go away from here.

The whole project was currently progressing very smoothly, the number of refugees in the eastern district was already running low, while the people at the North Gate had taken the initiative to move closer to their side. Perhaps by sundown, they could already smoothly sail away with everyone.

At this time everyone seemed to be busy, only Nightingale seemed to be leisurely. Compared to Echo, surrounded by a layer of "mercenaries", who was responsible for drawing in the refugees, and Lily, who was under the heavy protection of the First Army and constantly producing new purifying water, her own guards' work seemed to be redundant.

Only when the "mercenaries" had to carry patients who were too ill to move by themselves, was there a need for her to be vigilant. Just then, Nightingale noticed Echo raising her head to look at the magnificent east gate and softly sigh.

"What happened?" Nightingale asked after going over.

"It's nothing, I'm just somewhat down," Echo expression turned rather sad, "Before I had been sold to King's City, I had to suffer the whole way along the road. Until now, I had always thought the reason that they were so cold to me was because of my identity as a Sandperson, which was something foreign to the people of Graycastle. But now it appears that they are equally ruthless to their own people, which shows me that there is not much difference between them and the people of Iron Sand City".

Recalling that Echo had been bought and sold as a slave, Nightingale didn't know how to answer her. In the end, she patted her on the shoulder and said comfortingly, "But not everyone is like them, there are also many people with good intentions, such as your sisters of the Witch Cooperation Association and also... His Highness."

“Do you want to say... that His Highness can actually end the disputes?” Echo whispered, “Regardless if they live in the huge Kingdoms, the Sandnation, the Fjord, or are just ordinary people and the witches, do you believe that they can all live together freely and in peace, without needing to fight each other?”

“In case it is done by His Highness, I think it will be possible,” Nightingale replied in a cheerful tone, “And it isn’t those strange machines or the amazing guns that give me the feeling, no he himself is... I always feel as if His Royal Highness and we are not the same type of person.”

“Of course he is not like us. He is the Prince of the Kingdom of Graycastle.”

“No, this feeling has nothing to do with his identity or his status,” she shook her head, “I’m unable to say from where exactly this kind of feeling is coming from, it is merely my intuition, nothing more. Maybe people like His Royal Highness, who can come up with so many strange and eccentric theories... even wanting to repeatedly study all of us witches’ abilities until he understands them thoroughly, just have a different train of thoughts than the other people. Anyway, if he was to achieve such an amazing thing, I don’t feel that it would be that strange.”

“You really have confidence in him,” Echo laughed out, immediately reducing the sad expression on her face, “I hope that one day, I will be able to go back to the South and meet with my people.”

Confidence? Regarding some aspects, yes, but regarding some others... she wasn’t so sure. Nightingale could not help but look towards the west, and ask herself what he was doing, now that she wasn’t at his side? Was he busy drawing those strange machines, or was he together with Anna... she forcefully shook her head, trying to disperse such thoughts.

Anyway, at the end of this day, we will depart back to Border Town, Nightingale thought, and when we get back, I can ask him anything I want, and he won’t be able to lie to me.

...

At noon when they returned to the camp to rest, Lightning also slowly came down to land.

During these days, Lightning had the hardest task of all of them, she had to constantly fly patrol under the scorching sun high up in the sky. Especially for concealing her body, Lightning had to wear a special coat with “sky camouflage”, which tightly wrapped itself around her body, and even covered her head. This clothes with their strange name were apparently not designed as beautiful clothes by His Highness. Its surface was coated with a mixed pattern of gray and blue, allowing her to almost integrate with the background as she flew. As long as someone didn’t directly look at her, it would be hard to detect her.

After landing, the first thing the little girl did was to take off the coat, then grab a water pouch to quell her thirst. Nightingale discovered that her clothes were wet from the sweat inside and that her forehead and nose were also covered with sweat, while her windproof glasses had left marks on her white cheeks.

“It had been hard on you,” Nightingale said and crouched down in front of her, beginning to wipe the sweat away.

“Fortunately, these people aren’t endlessly rushing over from the east,” Lightning stick out her tongue, “Or else I would really have passed out from this sun.”

“Will you be able to go home tomorrow?” Lily went dispirited and downcast to Lightning’s side. “I haven’t taken a shower for several days; by now, I feel uncomfortable from head to foot.”

Nightingale could not help but laugh aloud. Obviously, during their time in the Witch Cooperation Association; there had been times where they hadn’t bathed for half a month, and no one had complained about it back then, but now they did it already after a little more than a week. She suddenly had the thought that the development of the bathroom and soap was in truth His Royal Highness “conspiracy,” and after they had all become attached to those strange and useful things of his, it had become difficult for the witches to make a firm resolution to ever leave Border Town.

However, the calm did not last until the end of the shipment project, after lunch, His Highness’ man who was responsible for gathering news in King’s City, Theo, brought back some bad news.

“You mean that... Dreamland is gathering their forces, with the intention of surrounding the pier?” Iron Axed asked with a frown.

“Yes, they ‘might be’ preparing to encircle the pier.” Theo correct him, “The first part was determined to be true, while the latter part instead seems a bit bizarre, so my informants are not sure about it. At present, all other black street organizations have already begun to act, they are preparing themselves in case Dreamland unexpectedly attacks them. However, compared to ‘encircling the pier’ this news can just be seen as deliberately sending out some smoke, I believe that this news was leaked by themselves midway, which could be seen as quite common thing for the rats to do. After all, most members of the black street organization are nothing more than bullies or dregs, making it fundamentally impossible for them to be a tightly-knit group. If my intelligence is correct, then Dreamland must be subjected to another force’s command, otherwise wanting to depart from their own territory would be a very challenging affair for them.”

“They are just a gang of scoundrels,” it seemed Iron Axe wasn’t the least concerned, “If these people scatter in all direction, will it affect your plan of selling the medicine?”

“It shouldn’t,” Theo said, “They are unable to get their hands on the patrol, so it is unlikely that they can hinder me from entering and leaving through the side door. As for after we entered the city, the skeleton fingers will provide a force to protect the transport of the medicine. The only thing I’m worried about is you, because tonight I will have to stay in the city and supervising the sale of the purified water, so I’m afraid that it is impossible for me to see you off tomorrow morning.”

“It won’t matter,” Iron Axe patted his arm reassuringly, “In the future, His Highness will come in person to King’s City, we will see you again then.”

Just like Nightingale had predicted at with the arrival of dusk, the last ship carrying refugees set sail into the direction of Silver City. And the rest of the more than 300 who weren’t willing to leave King’s City, were ordered to disperse by Iron Axe.

Then they all evacuated to the other side of the canal, waiting for the curtain of night to descend.

Chapter 230 Assassination (Part 1)

Before the sun had completely gone down, Faceless quietly swam through the canal, circling the mercenary camp and nearing it from behind.

Her real name was not really Faceless, but rather Aphra a name she liked very much, because it meant 'dust' and had been given to her in the New Holy City by Archbishop Heater. She loved this name, because dust was plain and not flowery. As long as it fell on the ground, one piece wasn't distinguishable from another, just like she wasn't generally.

Only in front of Heather, would Aphra restore her real appearance.

As a member of the arbitration tribunal, she assisted the Archbishop with handling a lot of those fallen, which includes their own witches who had attempted to revolt against the Church, as well as those corrupted secular believers. The reason she had been sent to King's City was to accomplish an essential mission: Transform a devote Presiding Judge into the King of Graycastle. As for capturing those fallen witches, it was just a part time exercise. Furthermore, she also liked to imitate those witches who were sentenced to get tortured, then experience it herself, from start to finish; sharing the pain of the fallen, and experience even more deeply what she had accomplished, in this way she could atone for her own Devil's power.

The camp of the other side was erected very cleverly, it was directly by the shore at an elevation surrounded by open land, making it difficult to observe their whereabouts from a lower level, and the witch in the sky prevented her from coming any closer. Aphra had to lurk in a farm warehouse, and wait until nightfall before she could take action.

When the night enveloped the earth, she surprisingly discovered that the situation has changed.

All of the mercenaries had withdrawn from the pier area, and completely fallen back inside the camp. Those foolish Dreamland rats had went so far as to hold some torches up, while gathering together in one place. It looked as if they wanted to tell the other side "Someone is coming to attack the camp". Even if there wasn't a flying witch, as long as the mercenary group wasn't blind, they could make out with one glance when the other side would be coming.

What bad luck, her heart became gloomy, if the enemy judged that the number of rats were too many, there wouldn't be any chance of winning, so they would certainly just retreat to the east. Although it was a taboo to march during the night, if it meant that they could save their life by escaping and splitting up, this taboo wouldn't matter so much anymore. While the men that belong to Dreamland who should have already encircled the camp, were still at the other side of the pier, and were relying on a few wooden rafts to slowly cross the river. When they had finally set foot on the other side, Aphra was afraid that the other party would have already run away long ago. Making the rats to chase the enemy during the night, would be impossible, but how was she now supposed to find those damned witches?

Aphra hurriedly rushed toward the camp, hoping to merge in with their ranks before they began their retreat.

But after rushing over, she saw an entirely unexpected scene, she discovered that the mercenaries had all assembled themselves nearby.

There were still people patrolling around the camp, and the bonfire burned high, which allowed her to see their silhouettes come and go, showing an orderly picture and not the scene of chaos she had expected.

Did they not choose to retreat?

After a while of careful observation, Aphra confirmed her judgment, at the same time a delighted feeling began to spread through her body. Although she didn't know for what reason the other side decided to stay rather than escape as quickly as they could, but with this decision their ending had become predestined. She drew a dagger from her waist, observed the sentry's actions, and aimed for their weakest position.

Apart from giving her the essential skills to survive in the outside world, Archbishop Heater had also taught her how to fight and kill. While her opponents were not battle-hardened elite mercenaries, which she could see from the arrangements of the sentinels. Taking advantage of the moment the mercenary turned to survey another area, she came in from a low and blind angle and quickly threw herself at him, one hand covering his mouth from behind, and the other masterfully stabbing a knife into his neck.

After quietly killing the mercenary, keeping one hand on top of her enemy she placed the other hand on her own chest, casting her deformation ability. This could be a long or it could be a short process: When she had replaced the King through a substitute, to ensure a long-term effect she had exhausted almost all of the magic in her body and the conversion time had lasted nearly half an hour. But this time, there was no need to try so hard, within the blink of an eye she had turned into the mercenary. Even though the effect would only last for half a day, it would be more than enough time for the assassination.

Before the other patrol had returned, with lightning speed, she pulled down the other's clothes and put them on herself. Afterward, she dragged his body into the wheat fields. However, when faced with the mercenaries' weapon, she became a little confused. The weapon in her hands looked like an iron barrel with a wooden handle that did not have a lance at its tip but rather a swarthy hole.

What is this weapon?

Even after thinking about it for a long time, she was still unable to find the answer, but seeing that the other patrol member was returning, without a better choice Aphra recalled the mercenary's previous appearance and carried it on her shoulder, assuming the appearance as if she was earnestly doing her sentry duty.

Like on so many previous assassinations, when the other guard passed her, he didn't discover anything strange about her.

Aphra wasn't in a hurry to enter the camp to search for the witch's whereabouts, after all, her replacing technique could only imitate the external form, but didn't allow her to read their memories. So, in case she met one of his acquaintances she would easily be exposed. Thus she decided to wait until these troops were in a state of disorder, which would provide her with the liberty of choosing between countless opportunities.

When the moon was hanging high up in the night sky, the Dreamland fools had finally crossed the canal, and were moving closer to the camp. The moment she heard the call of another sentry and saw the patrols and mercenaries withdrawing to the camp, she knew that her chance had come.

Following the crowd into the camp, Aphra was surprised to find out that the other side had far more than only a hundred people. Forming a big circle, they were surrounded by the entire top of the small

slope and where either crouching or standing, holding the strange pole in their hands, and always pointing the pole towards the enemy.

But she had not the time to take a further look, taking advantage of the group's attention being focused elsewhere, she bent over and entered the nearest tent.

Soon, battle cries drifted over from the outside, cut off by a burst of the fierce explosion. Frightening Aphra into a little jump with its intense and almost unceasingly noise.

What the hell was going on? On impulse, she wanted to take a look, but then she regained her control back and calmly waited.

After some time, the camp became busy again, and she heard a lot of footsteps and shouted commands, which probably their attempts to adjust their defense in accordance to the enemy's attack. But slowly Aphra became anxious, what took them so long, why hadn't they attacked the top of the slope yet?!

A while later again, the sounds of explosion gradually thinned out, and when Aphra was no longer able to hear the rats fighting her heart sunk, is... it possible that the Dreamland wastrels were defeated?? Even if the number of mercenaries has been doubled, they were still only 200 – 300 people, surrounded by more than a thousand rats. With this numbers and by attacking from all sides, were they still unable to set foot at the top of the hill?

It seems as if the opportunity was slipping out of her hands.

Making a quick decision, Aphra left the tent, trying to reach the center of the camp. There she would wait for the end of the battle. After all, during the roll call it would be nearly impossible for her to hide from all of their eyes. This really wasn't how she had planned the infiltration, she was neither familiar with the mercenaries staff nor did she know their password, so she had to act quickly.

Bypassing two tents, Aphra slowly poked around the edge, looking at the center of the camp. There she saw four women sitting around a bonfire, they were most probably the witches their intelligence had spoken off. Although the number wasn't right again, from the beginning of this operation, the damned report hadn't been accurate. Furthermore, for her it didn't make a difference if she had to kill two or four witches, anyone who was suspected to be corrupted needed to be tortured. And in case the time was too short for torturing, they at least all had to be killed, even if they weren't really corrupted, sacrifices were always necessary.

After she carefully observed her surrounding and decided upon a safe escape route, Aphra stood up from behind the tent, pretending as if nothing had happened as if she was just moving closer to the fire.

Just when she had reached the middle of the open space, Aphra felt a cold hard object press against her back.

"Don't move," a woman voice sounded. "Who are you?"