

## Witch 25

### Chapter 25 Militia

“These are the people you selected?” when Roland looked at the group of civilians dressed in shabby clothes, all his courage flew away immediately.

“Your Highness, these are the people who fulfilled your requirements,” said Carter. He began to count them with his fingers, “male, no criminal records, between 18 – 40 years of age, no disabilities... I carefully inspected all of them.”

Well, he knew he shouldn't have expected too much. After all, this world's productivity was much too low. Having enough to eat was already a difficult task, so wearing shabby clothes was just normal. As a prince he had ignored such things. Just leaving his castle he could see many people who only wore clothes that did not cover the whole body, begging for something to eat. In fact, in the capital of the Kingdom of Graycastle there existed a job as a corpse carrier – the only thing they would do was to collect the people who starved to death and then burn their bodies every day.

So what was the general fighting power in this world? Roland closed his eyes and reviewed his plan carefully again, ‘Ah... probably a little stronger than a high-level street fighter’. Generally, when the Lords decided to wage war (or more precisely fight – Roland thought naming their little fights as war would be overstating it), they would summon all the aristocracy placed under their jurisdiction in their territory. A Lord would always split his territory into many smaller territories and select lower ranks of nobility to govern them, like a Duke would select Earls, the Earls would select Viscounts, and they again would select Barons, and so on.

These nobles usually had a group of knights and mercenaries as their personal army. They were the main force in combats, equipped with a complete suit of armor and sophisticated weapons. At the same time, they would recruit civilians and farmers who worked on their territory to help out during combat – in fact, they were used to deliver food supplies to the troops and when needed they would even fill up the holes in the front lines as cannon fodder. The most people who died on the battlefield were the people used as cannon fodder. Fighting between nobles would rarely result in someone's death; they generally would be caught and later exchanged for ransom.

Roland did not expect help from the several other nobles in Border Town to fight against the demonic beasts. In fact, they had no relationship with Border Town. Most of the local Barons were living in Longsong Stronghold. The stronghold was also under the jurisdiction of the regional aristocracy.

An all-civilian force was in this day and age a very imaginative thing. After all, they were stupid and ignorant, failed to understand strategies, nor could they understand the commanding structure, and they also hadn't received professional combat training. How could they compare to a knight who was trained in the art of the sword from when he was ten years old?

Carter who stood near Roland whispered some advice to him, “Your Highness, this project is not feasible. You look at them and tell me, which of them can hold and balance a sword? I'm afraid that when they encounter the demonic beasts, many of them will desert us, and at that time it will affect the stability of our defense. I suggest that we hire professional mercenaries from Willow Town or elsewhere to guard the walls and let these people do their normal chores. “

“No, I’ll use them,” Roland refused Carter’s suggestion. He didn’t have a good opinion of the mercenaries who worked for money and did not love the land, and besides, he didn’t form his army to only deal with the demonic beasts – throughout history it was seen that only a force whose member came from their own civilities would be strong and full of vitality. Whether it was the feudal forces, the forces from the not-very-distant past or modern army troops, there were countless examples which verified this rule.

“Well, you have the final say,” said Carter while shrugging with his shoulders. “Then I will start to train them from tomorrow onwards? Although I don’t know how useful that will be...”

“With a sword? No, you will first take them all for long distance running.” Roland suddenly thought of the fact that his chief knight never had experienced these kinds of training exercises. Without any better options he had to change his plan, “Try to find the hunter from last time and bring him to me. You both will be the first to look at how I will handle the training.”

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Today’s experience may be even more inconceivable than what happened in the last two decades combined.

He actually saw His Highness, The 4th Prince Roland Wimbledon from close range. He passed directly by himself and even smiled to him. My God, was the prince drunk?!

Three days ago, when he heard the speech of the 4th Prince on the square, he knew that this winter would be different from the past. This time, they would not go to Longsong Stronghold, instead, they would spend the long winter here. The truth was that he didn’t understand most of the reasons mentioned by the prince, but he supported from the bottom of his heart the result of this decision. His own brother died two years ago in the slums of Longsong Stronghold after a whole month without any food supply. They could only rely on the hard-earned coppers he got from unloading goods at the docks. With them, he was able to buy some black bread and share it with his brother. But the winter was too cold. The wind would blow through the many holes in their slum shack. Without enough to eat and with no possibility to maintain their body temperature they couldn’t survive. When his brother got sick, he fell into a coma and never woke up again.

Here in Border Town, he at least had a house built out of soil brick. There was no fear of the falling temperature or the many days with snow fall. He also saw many ships filled with wheat docking at the pier, and then the wheat was moved in batches into the castle. Therefore, when he heard that the 4th prince was recruiting a militia force, he directly registered himself.

Of course, he had to give up his job as a gravel producer. But the temptation was too big, after all, they would get a monthly salary of 10 silver royals. This was comparable to a skilled mud artisan! He was no longer a young boy. He was only waiting until the spring of next year to marry his future wife Sheryl, a tavern maid. Now he had no problem to save some money.

As for the requirements and the future tasks of the militia shown on the notice, he did not pay any attention to them. Anyway, it was to carry the burden of protecting the civilians on behalf of the lord. They had to patrol along the city wall and keep the beasts from climbing up the wall, and withstand the crazy attacks of the demonic beasts.

He had to go through a very strict screening process. Alone, the sight of some knights was enough to make people feel afraid. Fortunately, he had a sturdy physique and got through the review, but many scrawny guys were carried away by the knights. In the end, only 100 men were recruited.

But he had never expected that the person who would train them would be His Royal Highness the Prince himself!

For their training, they were brought to a grass field west of Border Town. In the background the city wall was being built, and in front of them was an unceasingly and continuously extending forest.

The prince ordered everyone to line up, and then he went to the site to rest. Just a few days ago they had heavy rain, so the ground was still damp and muddy. The water infiltrated his shoes along the seam at the soles, which made his whole body feel uncomfortable. The stance they were ordered to take was not a normal one. Their hands needed to be aligned vertically, attached to the sides of their thighs, while their backs were required to be perfectly straight.

Only a quarter of an hour later they already felt terribly fatigued. This was even harder than breaking stone with a hammer. But he gritted his teeth and tried to hold on. After all, His Royal Highness had said before that those who moved would get no egg for lunch. God, it had been so long since he had eaten an egg. Apparently, all the people around him felt the same way. Although they staggered, most of them still endured.

When the prince declared it was time to rest, he found out that his back was already drenched in sweat and the whole standing time wasn't even long, at most it was two-quarters of an hour. Those who couldn't persevere till the final moment were annoyed. It seemed as if they could see the eggs rolling away from them.

He just didn't understand. Why did they have to practice this strange stance? Only standing was enough to get several bags of food?

If it wasn't for his Royal Highness training them, he would have already stood up and begun to argue noisily.

Unexpectedly, after a short break, the second command His Highness gave was even more eccentric. He asked all the people to continue standing in a line. This time, as long as all of them persevered till the end, they would all get another egg added for lunch. As long as there was a person who gave up, everyone would lose the opportunity to get an additional egg.

He heard many people beside him swallowing their saliva.

Hell, was this a popular game in the ranks of the nobility? Leading them all around with a carrot on a stick? Damn it, he was not a stupid donkey!

... But in the case that everyone was able to do it, wouldn't there be two eggs to eat?

This was simply the devil's temptation! Wiping his overflowing saliva away, he decided to fight for the two eggs!

TN:

One egg to rule them all,

One egg to train them,

One egg to bring them all,

And in the world of tomorrow bind them.