

## Witch 27

### Chapter 27 A friendly banter

Every day the weather was getting colder and colder, and every day Roland woke up later and later.

As a member of the ruling class, he certainly had the right to lie longer in bed, until late morning. In particular, every time he slept on his three-velvet cushion blanket bed, he felt like he was falling into soft clouds. Dawdling in this kind of a feeling could help him to boost his mood.

After Roland washed his face and rinsed his mouth he stepped into his office, where Nightingale had already been waiting for him for a long time.

“Well, here is your breakfast. I already ate half of it while it was still hot. But now, it’s cold.” said Nightingale as she pouted and pointed toward the table on which less than half of the bread was left. Looking at this scene, it seemed as if she was the owner of this place and not Roland.

“Did no one teach you to be humble in the presence of a prince?” Roland reached over to take the plates as he sat down at his desk, “I still remember that in the beginning you took etiquette quite seriously.”

He sighed within his heart. He really had not thought that Nightingale would always be around him instead of accompanying Anna. It seemed as if she wasn’t on a mission but taking a stroll in the sun instead. Before, she had always hid her figure. But now, as long as there were no outsiders around she would openly show herself in the office without even wearing her hood.

“Like this?” She jumped off the table and gave a perfect noble bow, “Recently you’ve started to get up late. So, I thought eating your breakfast would help you solve this little problem, Your Highness.” she leaned herself towards Roland, “Anyway, you don’t care, right? I can see that you do not like these tedious rituals. “

Her remark was spot on. Roland silently cursed her. Was there anything she didn’t see?

He sighed, “Take the breakfast with you. After you begin to eat something, you have to finish it. I’ll get another one if I want to eat.”

“As you say, Your Highness!” She gently smiled and went to put the plate at her side.

Roland rolled out a blank parchment, and began to finish the complement design he had drawn partway.

If he wanted to hold Border Town, it wouldn’t be that easy after having a tragic victory in their first fight, so he had to do something. On top of that, his new troops had never seen blood. So Roland was worried that once large losses occurred, his newly trained troops wouldn’t be able to bring up the courage to stand on the walls.

He needed the weapons of his era to gain an absolute advantage over the demonic beasts.

Without a doubt, guns would help.

In fact, this era had all the conditions for guns to appear. Alchemists often created a powder, which was called 'snow powder', and was used for court celebrations. But this snow powder had the wrong recipe to be used as gunpowder, it was slow-burning and its explosion was more exaggerated than the damage it did.

In the next one hundred years, the prototype of guns – usable for war, will probably appear. Such firearms, because of their complicated operation, would require the collaboration of two people to shoot. Under normal circumstances they were only used as a single-shot weapon. But in terms of rate of fire and power, they were still not comparable with those of a well-trained archer.

Roland was certainly not interested in a repeat of history.

With the help of the steam engine and the ability of the witches, he could create guns which had real value.

"I saw the purchasing order on the table when you were asleep", Nightingale swallowed the last piece of bread, and then casually asked, "What do you plan to do with so much ice? It's winter. If you want to drink frozen ale you only need to put it outside the house, so why would you buy extra ice? "

The upper nobility liked to use ice in the summer – they used it together with saltpeter to enjoy cooled milk, fruit juice, or wine. Since now was the time of the cold season, the price for the acquisition of saltpeter was very low.

"To make iced cheese, the current temperature isn't low enough," answered Roland.

Although the woman in front of him wasn't an enemy, he could not tell her everything like he did to Anna. The steam engine was something different, but things like firearms didn't require such a high level of technological understanding. Once spread out, their distribution could no longer be controlled. As long as he didn't know what kind of a person she was, it would be better to keep some things a secret from her. When he thought till here, he said imploringly to Nightingale, "Does the Witch Cooperation Association not only search for the Holy Mountain but also train witches as assassins?"

"No, they just swarm together in order to find the cure to end their pitiful life," Nightingale waved her hand dismissively, "I joined the Witch Cooperation Association, but that was only two years ago."

"In other words, you were working for someone else before?" Her excellent knife throwing skills were a product of years of hard training and good instruction, so Roland could confirm that, "So apart from me, there are also other people who are willing to shelter witches?"

"Shelter?" Nightingale's face became a little strange, "How could... If he had known that I was a witch, he wouldn't even let me through his door. I'm afraid he would have killed me in secret if I had stayed with him after exposing it to him."

"Oh? Can you tell me more?"

Nightingale smiled and shook her head, but this time the smile contained many unknown emotions, "Your Highness, you have to wait until the time is right before I tell you. I know what you are anxious about, but please rest assured. Five years ago I got my freedom, and now I no longer need to work for anyone else. "

His verification test failed, it seemed that his charm points were not high enough, ah... But her answers confirmed at least one of his presumptions – at least five years ago, she was a person who was involved in some shady business. Fortunately, it seemed that teaching and using Nightingale was apparently a coincidence, and her former employer was not like himself, who intended to employ a large number of witches.

Roland did not pursue this point any further as he bent over his drawing to finish it instead.

After some time he was a little bit surprised that the usually talkative Nightingale had now become quiet, and the only sound in the room was that of the fire burning. By the time Roland raised his head to stretch his sore neck, he could not detect any sign of her in the office.

“To walk out without saying anything?,” he muttered, as he folded the parchment in his hands and put it into his personal pocket.

The next days he was busy with drawing the weapons designs or testing the already finished designs.

His intention was to make the famous flintlock firearm. This kind of weapon was already tested through history; the difficulty was to make a gun similar to a harquebus. First the gunpowder had to be inserted and then the lead ball was to be loaded. The firing rate was close to three rounds per minute, so it really didn't require much skill in order to deal with the demonic beasts.

Most of the demonic beasts couldn't climb the walls, so the shooting distance was approximately equal to the height of the walls, which was twelve feet. At this distance, even with a bad aim it should be possible to hit the beasts, and the lead ball would also not lose much of its power. If only the skin of the demonic beasts evolved to be as hard as steel, then they could be easily shot and killed.

The disadvantage laid in the production time of a flintlock. It started with the matchlock; the smith had to slowly hammer it into form from the barrel to the trigger. The entire production of a gun would take about three months, wherein the barrel needed the largest part of it. First it had to be beaten into a thin and cylindrical shape, and then the spiral grooves could be engraved. Although without the right equipment it was quite sophisticated, but it should still be possible for a well-learned blacksmith to make a good barrel.

This was also one of the reason that Roland created the steam engine first.

With the steam engine, he could use a steel drill to bore the drill directly into the solid iron, so with this the production speed could significantly be increased. He didn't need a master blacksmith to do the work, he only needed one table on which he could affix the barrel.