

## Witch 631

### Chapter 631: Promises Then and Now

After hearing the description of the Soul Battlefield from Isabella, Nightingale began getting depressed. "Do you mean that you also don't know how to make His Majesty wake up from the coma?"

She shook her head. "This is unprecedented, and I have no idea how to deal with it... But Zero was absentminded for a while when she was devouring Garcia. At that time, she explained that she had found some interesting things in Garcia's memory and so it took her a long time. Zero has had a more complicated life than anyone else, so if Roland wants to accept these parts of Zero's memories, it may take some more time. But as long as he's alive, he'll wake up naturally."

Nightingale could not be sure whether this was true or not, but she could tell that Isabella did not lie. At least these conjectures were heartfelt thoughts from Isabella.

But Nightingale also knew that the situation was not at all optimistic.

Would the 200 years of memories from the church or His Majesty's memories dominate Roland? Or would Roland get lost in these complicated memories and never wake up?

Even if Roland accepted all of Zero's memories, would he be that Roland Wimbledon, the fourth Prince of Graycastle that he used to be when he woke up... The one I look forward to seeing?

The many thoughts made were almost impossible for Nightingale to control her mind.

Then Nightingale also understood why Wendy had asked Agatha to come with her.

"Let's talk about the church," Agatha said after hesitating for a while, "How much do you know about the Union, the predecessor of the church?"

"I know almost all that Zero has learned." Isabella responded frankly. "Are you still doubtful about the words in the letter? Since Zero took over the pope's role, all of the pure witches that have been approved for the Pivotal Secret Authority can enter the library and read the history of 400 years ago. The records about the Witch Empire and the demons in the letter are true."

"The limited information in the letter isn't valuable to us." Agatha smiled. "The Witch Empire is just history for you, but for me, it's part of my life. I'm a witch in the Union."

Isabella was surprised at this turn and asked, "What, what did you say?"

"I came from Holy City of Taquila more than 400 years ago and witnessed the destruction of it. The demons aren't rare and still occupy most of the lands of Dawn Ridge. There are demon battalions at the end of Misty Forest and Redwater River to the west of the Kingdom of Graycastle. Roland has encountered them before."

Isabella was stunned in place, speechlessly.

"We'll fight with the demons eventually. We all know that the Battle of Divine Will is coming soon. Roland chose to fight this battle now in order to relieve the oppression of the church." Agatha paused and continued to say, "What I want to know is, how did the Union transform into the church?"

"This is..." It was a long time before Isabella became calm again. "As mentioned in the history book, during the escape, a civil war broke out in the Union in the northwest of the Impassable Mountain Range. There were no detailed reasons. We just know that the Union was separated into two groups since that time. One group, the Taquila witches, got into the maze remains of the mountains. The other group, led by the witches of Starfall City, inherited Lady Alice's will to move northward and settled down on Hermes Plateau, which finally became the church."

"A civil war during the escape?" Agatha frowned and said, "This is undoubtedly suicide."

"The writer of that history book also thought so. The Union suffered heavy losses in the civil war. Two Transcendents were lost and totally separated from the migration team of the common people. When the group going north arrived at their destination, most of those common people fled." Isabella sighed. "As for the war of faith later, it was to kill those non-combat witches who didn't belong to Starfall City. Only in this way could the church completely bury the history of the past."

"Is burying the past a reason to hunt witches wantonly? Even to go so far as to create the unconscious God's Punishment Army?" Nightingale said in a cold tone, "You are all crazy."

"Without this civil war, the four kingdoms would have been controlled by the Union from the beginning. The size of the God's Punishment Army would have been far larger," Isabella said peacefully, "Of course, since Roland Wimbledon now has a better way, Holy City of Hermes isn't necessary any longer."

"You have no nostalgia for the church!" said the Nightingale sarcastically.

"As long as the demons can be defeated, I don't care who'll take charge of the continent. That was also the Union's original intention," Isabella closed her eyes and said, "Although Zero was crazy, she had greater faith in fighting against the demons than most people, and that's why I chose to help her."

Hearing this, Nightingale could not help pulling out a dagger.

"If killing her can wake Roland up, I won't stop you." Agatha whispered.

After a long while, Nightingale indignantly put the dagger back into the sheath.

"By the way, one more thing," as soon as the two were ready to leave, Isabella suddenly spoke, "although Zero allowed pure witches to enter the Temple to read the books in the library, she prohibited anyone from visiting the prayer room. Even moving close to it. She told me that it was only by standing there that she could meet God directly."

...

Nightingale smashed the wall vigorously when going out of the captivity room and said, "Damn it! We still can't find a way to awaken His Majesty!"

"We've done what we can, all we can do is to continue to wait," Agatha said with comfort, "anyway, let's report what we've got to everyone first."

"I promise that she'll pay the price!"

"As long as she's alive, she's important for us to tackle Holy City and explore the secrets of the God stone."

Soon, the witches gathered outside the bedroom and began to listen to the intelligence about the pure witches from Agatha. But Nightingale's mind had already drifted away.

She quietly stepped back to the corner, cast the ability of the Mist, and went into Roland's bedroom.

Except for her, there was only Anna left in the quiet room.

Nightingale slowly walked to the bed and saw Anna holding Roland's right hand, whispering something.

Only by holding her breath could Nightingale hear the whispers of Anna.

"Do you remember what I said to you?"

"If you're dead, I'll go to Sleeping Island with those who're willing to follow you and fight against the church to the end."

"But you're still alive."

"You're just sleeping."

"So I'll wait forever."

"As long as you still can breathe, I'll always be there for you. For one day, one year or even my whole life."

"You can sleep soundly."

"I'll take care of you."

Nightingale felt her heart fiercely tightening up. The feeling of heartbroken was even more unbearable than that of being badly hurt. Somehow, she bent over uncontrollably and covered her chest tightly.

A warm river blurred her eyes.

Chapter 632: Out of Deep Sleep

When the light pierced through the darkness and his blur vision adjusted to the light source, the white ceiling was the first thing that Roland saw. It took him several seconds to get rid of his dizziness and he felt increasingly weird as his vision became clearer.

"Where exactly is this?" thought Roland.

He suddenly sat up and noticed that he was actually sleeping in a modern-looking bedroom. He was sleeping in a soft bed with a table lamp and a box of napkins on one side and a maroon-colored wardrobe on the other side. The dazzling sun shone through the blinds and evenly poured on the mat and his arms, making him feel slightly warm.

"Damn! Is this fight not over yet?" Roland's sleepiness completely disappeared in a sudden.

He rolled off the bed and stretched out his hand to summon a gun for self-defense but his hand was still empty after several attempts.

His heart sank.

"Can it be... the rules of the battlefield have changed again?"

"It's too bad. If I have to be unarmed, I would only be beaten up by the pure witch with her skills and speed."

"And, what about the deal of choosing my most impressive scene as the battle ring? I did not have any impression of this d\*mn room!"

Roland quietly walked to the bedroom door and leaned against the door to listen for a moment. He heard an intermittent voice, which seemed that someone was talking outside.

He carefully held onto the door handle and slit the door. It was a more spacious room which was furnished as a living room. The old fan beside the empty couch was rattling and continuously buzzing. There were a tea table and a wall-hanging television with a constantly flashing screen in front of the couch. It was probably where the voice came from.

Except that, no one was in the living room.

Such situation was a little weird.

Roland took a deep breath and slowly walked into the living room.

The red ribbon on the fan cover was dancing along the wind and the gently blowing cool wind refreshed him. He realized that the room was a little stuffy at the moment, and the echoing chirr of the cicadas signified that it was the summer season.

A few magazines were scattered on the couch. Roland picked up one of them and flipped through it. The content was actually extremely childish. They were fashion news, horoscopes, and divination that were only read by immature little girls.

He frowned even more deeply.

This was apparently not his house as he would not buy such magazines at all, be it in the past life or the present life.

The news on the television at this moment attracted Roland's attention.

"Yesterday evening, an unexplainable explosion happened at a local university. A school building was damaged. The pictures of the scene showed that the entire rooftop had collapsed and there were scattered broken glasses everywhere. What actually happened? Now, let's contact the reporter at the scene."

He dropped his jaw as he could hardly believe what he just saw.

"Good afternoon, everyone. I'm standing beside the school building where the explosion occurred." A female reporter appeared on the screen and the background was the building where he battled with Zero! "According to the witnesses, the flame lit up half of the sky with continuous explosions. Fortunately, there were no casualties as not many students stay on campus due to the summer holiday. The entire campus is currently sealed by the police and the students on campus are also transferred to the nearby hostels to be guided by the teachers. However, the cause of the explosion hasn't yet been clarified so far."

"What's your thought about the accident?"

"We can only say that it's very strange. Everyone knows that it's impossible to even install a natural gas pipeline in the teaching building, not to mention the center of the explosion was on the top floor," The female reporter said in one breath, "Some people speculated that it was a plane crash, some thought it was small meteorites or some even say that it could be the alien arrival. Anyway, I'll immediately return with the message once the police have a definite conclusion."

"Thanks." The host nodded. "Then, let's look at the next news. It's a hot summer and the heat is unbearable. Students should enjoy the long-lost holiday life at home instead of participating in the extracurricular classes. The Department of Education has issued a notice to prohibit private tutoring. Please call the hotline if you encounter any of such cases..."

Roland was not able to continue listening as the scene of the collapsing campus had filled his mind. "Wasn't the Battle of Souls a fictional illusion?" "How could it be possible?"

After standing stoned for a while, he quickly ran towards the door of the living room as he had a sudden realization. A hot wave suddenly poured into the house when he opened the security door.

A modern city appeared in front of him!

The high-rise buildings at a distance formed a dense concrete jungle. It was a busy street not far away with endless crossing cars and pedestrians. And, he was standing in the corridor of an apartment building. He turned around and saw a gold plate with number 0825 hanging in the middle of the low-grade door. If he did not misunderstand, it meant Room 25 on the eighth floor.

"Excuse me. Please don't block the corridor, will you?"

Roland was slightly surprised. He turned around and noticed that the neighbor's door was opened before he knew and a middle-aged woman was impatiently staring at him. The woman coldly hummed while walking past Roland after he tilted his body to one side. The strong smell of low-quality perfume flowed into his nose at the same time.

"What the heck, having no work and running around with only singlet and underpants. How can an adult be so shameless?" the woman muttered to herself and her voice just happened to float into Roland's ears. Such technique seemed to come in handy for middle-aged women.

Roland walked back into the house and loudly closed the door.

"Come out! Zero!"

"Don't waste the time hiding!"

"Is this your newly designed trick? Piecing pieces of my memories together?"

"Don't be ridiculous. It's simply an illusion!"

Nothing happened in the room even though Roland shouted for a while.

Roland grabbed a glass cup on the table and smashed it on the wall. The cup was instantly broken into pieces.

"Is this how you defeat me?" He sneered to himself. "Trying to trap me in this consciousness forever? You won't be able to lock me up, Zero!"

He immediately acted without any hesitation.

"How can I get away if this is another illusion of the Battle of Souls?" thought Roland.

Suicide was definitely the last option, and Roland decided to start with a simple one—to create a fall.

He moved a few chairs over and stacked them from big to small ones with the back of the chair against the couch so that he would not be wounded even if he failed.

When it was completed, he stepped onto the constantly rocking chairs and climbed slowly to the top. His head was almost touching the ceiling at the moment, and falling backward was indeed scary.

However, this psychological barrier was nothing to Roland as he had experienced different ways to die by now.

He could hear someone unlocking the door from the outside when he was on top of the rocking chairs.

"Perhaps the real owner of this house has returned?" Roland thought.

The highly-stacked chairs collapsed before he could balance himself.

Roland struggled to turn around during the frantic fall and saw a young girl who was about 11 or 12 years old walking into the room with a backpack. However, he could instantly recognize her from her white long hair and light red eyes.

"Zero!"

And, she was obviously surprised to see Roland at the same time.

"What're you doing?! Uncle!"

The picture became twisted in a sudden as if the world was being reversed. Roland quickly bounced up and gasped for air twice. The familiar room reappeared in his eyes.

The gray stone wall with tiny cracks, thick velvet curtains, and the Magic Stone that was silently glowing...

This is... the city of Neverwinter?

"Plunk."

It was the sound made by the wooden pot dropping on the floor.

Roland followed the sound and found that Anna was blankly standing there. The pot that dropped on the floor was spinning and the spilled hot water had wet a huge area of the map.

And, the girl quickly ran to him.

Chapter 633: [Welcome Back]

After clinging to each other for a very long time.

Roland stroked Anna's face and said in a gentle tone, "You've... become thinner."

Even though there were tears in her eyes, Anna's eyes were still as pure as lake water. Roland could clearly see his shadow in her blue eyes. But Anna looked much thinner. Through her clothes, Roland could feel her slightly raised backbone and see her prominent collarbones. Her face was not as mellow as before.

"I'm so sorry for letting you worry about me." Smelling the fragrance of Anna, Roland felt quiet in his heart again. It was just a blink of an eye but they felt like that they met each other after a few centuries apart.

Anna shook her head and wiped her tears with his collar, saying, "I'm okay, as long as you woke up."

"For how long was I in a coma? Three days or a week?" Roland was not sure about the numbers when seeing that Anna had become so skinny.

"Over a month."

"What?" Roland was astonished.

"To be exact, it was 52 days." Seeing his stunned face, Anna could not help bursting into laughter and said, "It's Fall now. You should notice that those curtains were changed."

"I was unconscious for nearly two months?" Roland disbelievingly moved his arms and secretly curled his toes. But he did not feel any discomfort.

"How did I eat?"

"You didn't eat anything." Anna leaned on his shoulder with her hands tightly holding his clothes, as if she was very afraid that Roland would fall asleep again. "Someone has eaten in your stead."

"Uh... Is that possible?"

"It's the ability of Nightfall of the Bloodfang Association. She planted a Seed of Symbiosis in your body and so she just needed to eat more than usual."

"A witch's ability could be used like this!" Roland thought that it was amazing because this kind of symbiosis did more than just sustain his life. Due to the fact that the muscles in his hands and feet did not shrink, it was able to connect two living bodies together to share one circulatory system.

Roland sighed for a while and looked at a wooden tub on the ground. "Thanks for taking care of me these days."

"Without a doubt, there must be someone who had cleaned his body and changed his clothes in order to keep him clean in the nearly two-month coma. Besides, this process was very complicated and only Anna who was patient and loving could do it day after day," Roland thought.

"Compared with what you've done, I've done nothing," Anna said gently, "You've honored your commitment to the witches. You've defeated the corps of the church. Each witch of the Witch Union would like to show their gratitude to you, even without me, someone would take care of you."

"But I would prefer that you take care of me." Roland stared at her and lowered his head to kiss Anna.

After a long while, they parted with each other reluctantly. With her cheeks blushing, Anna said, "Well, I must tell the other witches. They've waited for this day for a long time."

"We could continue?" Roland said with a smirk.

Anna slanted her head subconsciously and said, "You've just woken up and you should take a good rest..."

"But I feel like I'm full of energy."

"Even so, we can't continue." Anna raised her hands to hammer him a few punches and then turned around to pick up the tub. She walked towards the door reluctantly and said, "I'll be back soon."

"I've had enough sleep, so don't be worried." Roland gave her a smile.

After Anna closed the door and Roland frowned.

"Why have I slept for such a long time? Does this have a relationship with the strange phenomenon in my dream?" Roland thought.

Roland felt a deep sense of unease.

Generally speaking, after people woke up from a dream, they would forget its content quickly, and even completely forget it in less a day. But until now, Roland still clearly remembered what had happened in his dream.

"Was the little teenage girl really Zero?"

"But why did she call me uncle?"

"Besides, she could not disguise the shock in her face."

The more Roland recalled, the more he considered strange.

The city in his dream was absolutely not where he had lived in the past. The school in the TV represented compelling proof of that. The university should be built beside a mountain and was part of a scenic area. Towering buildings were not allowed around the university, but he had seen a gray skyline formed by skyscrapers in the background of the news story that played.

Something was also wrong with the apartment. Those walkways connected side by side, which were the most outdated tube-styled apartments. They were built in the 1970s and 1980s and were ill-adapted to both the busy streets hundreds of meters away and the skyscrapers afar.

Besides, the ink-green anti-theft door and outdated desk fan looked a strange match to the hanging colorful TV. If an owner did not have a special hobby, no one would decorate his own living room like this.

Everything seemed to be real while everything was problematic.

Before disappearing, Zero had hysterically shouted at Roland that she would never let him go. Were her words a curse or a threat to Roland? Did she count on creating such a bad dream to confuse him? After all, it would only be a little bluff if she only made him dream several nightmares.

When Roland was still lost in thought, there were noises behind the door.

A group of witches rushed over to the bedroom and surrounded him. In front of them, Roland felt somewhat embarrassed.

"Ahem... In a word, I'm alright. These days..."

Before Roland finished his words, Lightning jumped onto the bed and hugged his neck.

"Thank God," Wendy put her hands on her chest and said in an excited tone, "You finally woke up."

Lily curled her lip and said, "What a troubling guy. You made us worry for such a long time."

Mystery Moon murmured, "Are you worried about others? This is very rare."

"Compared to witches, commoners are much more fragile." Agatha pulled out a Stone of Measuring, watched it before Roland and continued to say, "En, there isn't any magic reaction, and it seems that you didn't inherit Zero's abilities. What can you remember? How about the memories of the Pope."

Roland felt a little surprised and asked, "Do you know this ability?"

"We've held a pure witch of the church captive. We've heard of it from her."

"Re-really? It seems that I didn't receive her memories."

"Wait a moment. What if he isn't the previous Prince Roland. Maybe he's been dazzled by the memories of over 200 years?" Ashes stood up and asked, "Who can prove that he's Roland, not Zero?"

"Come on, don't make trouble. Can you not?" Andrea rolled her eyes at Ashes and said.

"I'm quite sure that he's His Majesty, Roland." Nightingale's voice came from the other side of the bed, but to Roland's surprise, Nightingale did not appear her usual self.

Then Nana, Scroll, Leaf... Among all the caring voices from the witches, Roland felt warmth all over his body.

The last one was Tilly.

She held Roland's hand and said with a smile on her face.

"Welcome back, my brother!"

Chapter 634: Nothing to Fear

An hour later, Roland finally figured out what happened when he had been in a coma for more than a month.

Undoubtedly the church had been hard hit as nearly all of the soldiers of the God's Punishment Army were killed, and half of the soldiers of the Judgement Army died on the battlefield. Among the more than 2,000 enemies who fled, most of them had taken the Pill of Madness and would corrode due to the magic power sooner or later.

What was worse, the pope disappeared and most of the senior commanders died in battle. After this battle, Holy City of Hermes would never have the chance to invade the border of the Kingdom of Graycastle. It would even have difficulty in surviving the Months of Demons which would come soon.

But the First Army also suffered heavy losses.

That was mainly caused by the sudden assault of the witch, Blackveil. All those soldiers who saw her eyes and did not wear the God's Stone of Retaliation had been affected to some extent. Of the more than 700 casualties, 80% were caused by her.

The fall of Roland had also greatly undermined the morale of the army.

In such circumstances, Iron Axe had to issue an order to withdraw the troop.

Fortunately, at this time, the function of City Hall had been faultless. With concerted efforts all around, it did not encounter any problems. The statement to the public was that His Majesty was wounded in battle and needed to stay in bed. The funeral of the First Army soldiers killed in battle was also held by Iron Axe and Barov.

After listening to the account of the witches, Roland's interest in the captured pure witches was piqued.

"You just said, they don't have much affection for the church?" He turned to Agatha. "And that witch named Isabella is willing to help us fight the demons?"

"Neither Vanilla nor Margie were cultivated by the archbishop. They were just chosen from the cloister to carry out this task. Nightingale has confirmed it." Agatha replied. "It's strange that Isabella seems not to care about whom she serves, as long as they can defeat the demons. She said she got that idea from the last pope."

"What's your opinion on that?"

"I suggest keeping Isabella for the time being."

"But she's a pure witch raised by the church. She's our enemy!" Scroll frowned and said, "If it were not for her, that witch named Zero wouldn't have had the chance to hurt His Majesty at all."

"As far as I know, Wendy was also raised by the church."

"She's different! She's never used her power to hurt anyone."

"Isabella also did not directly hurt any witch. Her ability only works on the God's Stone, while the witches rarely take the initiative to wear the stones." Agatha refuted. "Nightingale confirmed that she did not lie."

"Is that right?" Roland looked to the other side of the bed.

After quite a while, he heard a reluctant reply from there. "Yeah."

"Most important of all is her ability," Agatha continued, "Isabella mentioned any black-hole formed by the God's Stone of Retaliation had a unique tremor, and she could create an opposite tremor so that the stone would lose its function. Perhaps this is the key to figuring out the secret of Supermagic. I even suspect that she's a natural Supermagic. If we can figure out the relationship between the God's Stone and the magic power, the other witches may also be able to do the same."

Hearing that, the crowd could not help gasping in astonishment.

For most of them, the God's Stone of Retaliation was a shackle which they could not throw off. Due to the restraint of the God's Stone, they were subjected to oppression and exile, and they were helpless in the face of capture by the church and the noble.

Roland thoughtfully stroked his chin. "Creating a tremor to cancel out another tremor? This is basically the same characteristics of the wave. Does it mean that magic power also spreads in accordance with the way a wave spreads?"

"In that case, leave her aside," he said after a moment of pondering, "Wait until I see her."

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Obviously, the witches were not the only ones in Neverwinter who were concerned about his safety. In the afternoon, Barov, Iron Axe, Karl and other high officials received the news and came to the castle one after another. Everyone had a relieved look after seeing him, especially City Hall Director Barov, who even sobbed when hugging Roland.

As he just awoke, instead of asking too much about political affairs, he just casually chatted with them in order to placate them. His long period absence due to his coma had panicked the insiders of Neverwinter. Now the most important thing to do was to cheer them up and inform everyone that their king had recovered.

In the evening, a sumptuous feast was held in the castle. Almost all of the officials of City Hall and the First Army were present, the lines of tables full of food were even extended to the yard.

What was more, Roland also ordered that they should send carts of hot oatmeal to the square so that all of the citizens could also participate in this celebration.

After having dinner together, Roland went to his bedroom.

"Nightingale," he said softly.

No one responded.

"Nightingale." He repeated. "I know you're here."

Still no response.

Roland sighed, turned and walked out of two steps. He reached out and felt Nightingale standing there.

He held her up before she prepared to kneel down after appearing out of the Mist.

Well, he seemed to have become stronger.

But that was not important. Roland stared at her fiercely and said before she opened her mouth. "I know you feel guilty. But it's not your fault and I'm safe now. So don't blame yourself anymore. Do you understand?"

"Agatha had reminded me, but I still... Ah, Your, Your Majesty?"

Roland directly hugged her.

This was the first time he brought himself to hug Nightingale.

Roland had originally prepared a lot of words to comfort her, but he changed his mind when he was going to open his mouth.

He knew what she really needed.

Before he was hit by the shadow of Zero, Nightingale pushed him away, regardless of her own safety. The scene where she stood in front of him to protect him was still vivid in his memory. She was prepared to sacrifice herself for him at that moment. So what else should he expect from such a woman?

"Wait for me." Roland whispered. "I'll settle it."

"Settle... what?"

He did not reply, but he knew that Nightingale knew what he meant. Her slightly eager breath was the best proof.

The silence was often an invisible injury.

Since he could not ignore it, he had to take on the responsibility.

Even if it was a path through the thorns.

He felt Nightingale gradually relax in his embrace. After her anxiety was finally relieved, she became determined again.

When someone was vulnerable, a promise would be enough.

Then the expectation was not in vain.

"Ah, I'll wait." She wept.

Her eyes were full of tears, but the sadness disappeared.

The wet and warm tears also filled Roland's heart with determination.

After Nightingale left, he slept soundly that night.

When he opened his eyes, he saw that white ceiling again.

Well... it's this awful dream again.

As he had already known how to get away from the dream, he was quite calm this time.

Rubbing the back of his head which was still aching, he walked out of his bedroom. He saw that white-haired girl carrying the plates out of the kitchen.

"You got up finally." She frowned. "Did you go mad yesterday, uncle?"

Chapter 635: The Apartment of Souls

"Zero?" asked Roland hesitantly.

She rolled her eyes and bent down to lay the plates before sitting cross-legged at the coffee table.

"What're you doing there? Don't you want to have breakfast?"

The little girl had a soft tender voice and a slender figure. She wore a light blue dress and white silk stockings. Her feet were about the size of his palms. She was totally not like that crazy Pure Witch who threatened to kill him.

However, she did not deny the name, which meant that she admitted that she was Zero.

"What should I do? Kill her?"

"Now that she's just a little girl, isn't it impossible for her to tear me into pieces bare-handed like an Extraordinary?"

Roland sneaked into the kitchen and hid a fruit knife which he got from the knife shelf into his belt before he slowly walked toward the coffee table.

There was a fried egg and two fried bread sticks on his plate. Well, he got one more than her.

The fried egg had a golden outer ring and slightly scorched edge, its lightly bulged center revealed a faint orange. It was obviously a perfect fried egg with a soft yolk.

Zero skillfully picked up the fried egg with her chopsticks and devoured it in a few bites before she began to eat the fried bread sticks. "What were you doing yesterday? Had you seen some cockroaches on the ceiling?"

"No... I found it a bit dirty so I wanted to clean it." Roland casually made a reason.

"Really?" She glanced at the ceiling and asked, "Why didn't you clean it with a rag tied on a clothing pole?"

"It didn't work. Anyway, it's clean now," he coughed and asked, "you made the breakfast?"

"Uncle, are you alright?" Zero appeared to be a little worried now, "Since I moved here, isn't it I who has always made the breakfast?"

"Since you moved here? So where did you live before?" Roland opened his mouth but did not ask. Obviously she would suspect his identity if he kept asking.

Zero quickly finished her breakfast. She stretched one of her hands in front of him and said, "Give me some money to buy food."

"What?"

"We are running out of food in the refrigerator. I have to go to the food market to buy some. How can I go without money?"

"A middle school student already knows how to buy food from the food market?" Roland thought while fumbling in his pocket for his wallet but found nothing, "Well..."

"In the second drawer of your bedside table," said Zero with a sigh.

He returned to the bedroom and found a nearly empty wallet, in there were about 300 Yuan and several lottery tickets.

"How much do you need?" Roland returned to the living room.

"20. I can't carry more food anyway."

Since it was not his money, Roland generously gave her a fifty Yuan bill and said, "You can keep some for the next time."

Zero took a surprised glance at him and tucked the bill into her coin purse.

"Your hand..." Roland noticed the two band-aids on her fingers.

"I was hurt when I picked up the broken glass. It's not a big deal. Of course, it would be better if you don't litter." She shrugged and carried her schoolbag before walking to the door, "I'm going to school. I won't come back in the noon, so remember to clean the dishes."

"Wait, isn't it summer vacation now?"

"Of course it's the tutoring center," said Zero, putting on her shoes and poked her head out from the door. "Uncle, if you think your head is still hurting, go to see the doctor. And don't do stupid things anymore."

After half a minute, Roland walked out of Room 0825 and looked down while leaning over the corridor railing.

Soon he saw Zero walk out of the building. Her white hair was particularly eye-catching in the crowd. Strangely, people on the street seemed to be used to it as no one walking by her would cast any curious glance at her. She waited a while until another two blonde-haired girls skipped toward her and they left together through an alley.

"So she has made friends in this world?"

Roland could not help rubbing his forehead and thought, "What an absurd dream!"

"What should I do next? Should I follow her?"

He did not believe that Zero could really create a complete city.

When Roland turned around and wanted to go back to the room, looking for the key, he was suddenly startled by what he saw.

A pretty woman walked toward him.

She had long gray hair, high eyebrows and her nose and lips bore a resemblance to those of Tilly. However, she had a cold and arrogant temperament that kept men at arm's length.

He never met her before, but Prince Roland's memory obviously told him that she was his elder sister, Princess Garcia of the Kingdom of Graycastle.

Garcia Wimbledon!

Roland subconsciously reached for the fruit knife in his belt.

"Step aside. Get out of my way," the woman showed a disgusted expression, "Let me pass."

"You... You don't know me?" He was very surprised.

She sneered and said, "Why should I know you? Because your hair is dyed the same color as mine?"

Roland stared at her, slowly getting out of her way, "You are Garcia, right?"

"So what?" Her expression became gloomy, "Since you know my name, you should know what will happen if I am annoyed. I warn you, you will bring trouble to yourself if you trouble me." She stretched out her right hand and curled her fingers one by one making cracking sounds with her knuckles as if she had prepared to fight.

"She doesn't know me, but why she doesn't feel surprised that I know her name?" Roland found it difficult to understand.

Garcia returned to her room, and the door banged shut behind her. He wandered around along the corridor and took a quick glance when he passed by her room.

The room number was 0827, so she lived next to his neighbor.

Looking at the numerous security doors along the long corridor, he suddenly had a horrible speculation.

"How many households are there in this apartment?"

After all, the corridor was terribly long. Standing in front of Room 27, he could not even see the end of the corridor.

He could not help thinking about it.

He returned to his room as soon as possible, fumbled the key in to the front door and then he locked the door and ran along the corridor toward the further end.

It was not shorter than a 400-meter straight track!

Panting and running to the end of the corridor where it was close to the stairwell, Roland saw the last room number, 0899.

This was simply incredible. Who would design a tube-shaped apartment with nearly a hundred households on one floor? In accordance with the style of the 70s and 80s, a row of more than a dozen households had been considered large-scale.

Roland then climbed up the stairs.

Most of the green paint of the iron staircase handrails had peeled off and he could see the obvious rust and dust. There were numerous small advertisements along the corridor revealing distinctive characteristics of the times. These kind of 'psoriasis' advertisements should have long since disappeared in the big cities.

The top floor was the 22nd floor.

On the security door at the end of the corridor, there was no nameplate or barred window.

He checked one by one until he saw the first number, 2245.

Through his rough calculation, he found that there were 2,124 households in the entire apartment building.

"It's impossible for you to win. I have devoured thousands of soldiers and even an Extraordinary over the years!"

He suddenly recalled what Zero said during the fight for life on the rooftop.

Are all people living here the losers of the Battle of Souls?

Roland was stunned by this speculation.

Now, Zero seemed to have become one of them.

Chapter 636: Illusory Reality

Roland climbed more than a dozen floors all at once. When he relaxed his muscles, he felt the intense soreness in his legs.

There were no elevators in this old building. Even if this was only a dream, Roland still felt fortunate that he did not appear on the top floor.

Undoubtedly, Zero must be the one that created this, but this would not only be the act of Zero. No one would retaliate against Roland by using this kind of method.

Why would she spend so much effort to create such a bizarre dream, just to let me witness her failure? This not only took away her memory as a pure witch but also turned her into a fragile middle schooler.

At that moment, many evil ideas flashed through Roland's mind.

With Zero's current status, she would not be able to fight back no matter what Roland did to her.

Would this count as retaliation?

It could be only said that at this moment, Zero indeed did something which created an irreversible twist of memory. However, the final result was something that was far from what she expected.

If this gigantic tube-shaped apartment was the honest reflection of Zero's memory, this was merely just an apartment.

Far away, there was a multitude of skyscrapers, swarms of cars and pedestrians on the street. Apparently this belonged to Roland's memory, a soul that came from the modern world.

Zero and those she engulfed appeared in this dream as modern people. This testified that her scheme was a failure.

That would be a more reasonable speculation.

"What about myself then?"

Roland was pondering this question as he slowly walked down the stairs.

He did not belong here, or at least, he did not belong to this loser tower. One obvious characteristic was that his memory remained intact, and he knew that this was a dream and that he could leave this place anytime he willed it.

Of course, next he had to make a more convenient falling tool, and then go back to the sofa to hit his head. This time Roland could still feel a slight pain which means that the authenticity of the dream could already compare to reality.

That being the case, which step can be done to a greater degree?

Is it encompassing or is it an empty shell?

...

Roland returned to room 0825 and once again examined the residence.

It had a standard layout of three bedrooms and one living room with no terrace. The three single rooms were Roland's bedroom, Zero's bedroom, and one storage room respectively. There were big objects in the storage room. For example, there was an old bicycle without wheels, a sewing machine, and a rusted iron gate. They would not even be worth any money for recycling.

Next, he walked to Zero's bedroom. There was a sign on the door that said, "No unauthorized entry".

Such a caveat was nothing in Roland's eyes.

He pushed open the door without hesitation. A slight but pleasant scent floated into his nose.

It was a tiny room with all the furniture neatly organized. All the blankets were folded, the desk was neat, and the floor was spotlessly clean.

Roland walked around. An anime dairy on the corner of the desk soon caught his attention.

Has she the habit of keeping a diary?

This would be a great opportunity to learn about Zero's past experiences.

There was no emotional pressure on Roland in regards to taking a peek at a little girl's diary in a dream.

Roland picked up the pink book and found that there was a plastic lock on the side of the diary.

However, that would be not enough to stump Roland.

The plastic lock merely served as emotional comfort for kids. It would not actually prevent someone from peeping at the diary. Roland found two toothpicks, stuck the toothpicks into the keyhole and moved the toothpicks back and forth. He opened the plastic lock after only a few tries.

Roland flipped to the first page. The handwriting on the page seemed immature, but there were rarely any ink dots or whiteouts. Apparently, she was very serious when she wrote the diary.

"February 16th, due to the relocation of school, I've been sent to a house in an unfamiliar city. The house-owner is called Roland, a somewhat untidy uncle. He works at a bar and always sleeps during the day, leaves the house at night, and comes back very late at night. He always has this disgusting smell of alcohol on him." "I don't really want to live here. But my family said that he only asks the minimum rent and provides meals. My family will send me to the countryside if I make another complaint about this house."

"What kind of absurd setting is this?" Roland could not help but seethe. He went to a bar only a few times in his life, not to mention working at a bar. Despite such absurdness, the dream itself was an unreasonable place that often connected numerous unrelated fragments, and no one would notice any difference in the dream.

With that thought, Roland did not feel like fretting over this dream anymore.

"February 27th, school has started. Uncle Roland seems to have lost his job. He looks very depraved. Dinner yesterday was a cup noodle that I bought."

"March 2nd, I've spent all my allowance buying cup noodles recently. This isn't a good sign. The magazine said that at age 12, the body is developing and so there needs to be enough nutrition for growth. I have to talk to uncle. If he beats me up then, I, I'll endure a bit more. I'd rather not go to the countryside."

"March 3rd, he agreed with my suggestion. That's great! Every month he would give me living expenses to buy fresh food. But if I'm not in school, I'll be responsible for making the meals. Who is taking care of whom? I feel like he should give me a salary for this. Never mind, I always do the chores back at home too. I'm used to it."

"June 8th, it has been three months since I arrived in the new city. I've made lots of friends. I have the best grades in my class. Although Uncle Roland is untidy and always seems careless, he's actually not a bad guy. At least he doesn't beat me. The only thing is that he still hasn't found a job yet. Looks like he's giving up soon and that isn't a good sign. We wouldn't be able to survive just depending on the living expense that Uncle Roland's family sends to him. I have to help him."

"June 22nd, umm... It's so difficult to make money. I sold some anime drawings to students in tutoring class and only got 15 yuan. That isn't even enough to buy two days of food. Am I too careless when I speak to uncle? In the end, he's still an adult. I feel like I've been impolite, but I just couldn't control myself. Have I reached my rebellious phase?"

"June 25th, Jesus Christ! I was so frightened today. I saw that Uncle Roland fell from a chair. Good thing that there was a sofa beneath him. Putting the chair that high, was he committing suicide? This was so frustrating. What if he injured himself? That would make him less likely to get a job! Whatever, tomorrow I'll ask him what happened."

Besides the trivial details, Roland spent only half an hour to finish the whole diary. He now understood the reason that Zero had been living with him.

The dream made up backgrounds for everyone that matched with his or her modern identity. This was undoubtedly a very complex structure. He would not be able to accomplish this just by using his brain. No wonder he was in a coma for almost two months after the soul dual.

He put the diary back to the original place. Roland noticed something that made dazed him for a moment.

There was a stack of books next to the desk. It seemed to be that little girl's textbooks.

Roland swallowed and moved all the textbooks to him.

The first textbook was a literature book and the second was a social science textbook. When Roland saw the third textbook, he was out of breath for a moment.

It was an 8th-grade chemistry textbook.

Its content was simple with only a few words. The majority of the book was pictures. From a glance, it almost looked like the book *I Wonder Why*. When Roland flipped to the last page, a folded long page fell out.

Roland flattened the page, a complete periodic table of elements appeared before his eyes.

Chapter 637: Development Plan

...

Waking up from the Dream World, Roland sprang out of his bed. Unable to contain his excitement any longer, he draped his coat over his shoulders and hurried to his office. He took out several blank papers and started to write down the missing parts of the periodic table of elements and "Elementary Chemistry" from his memory.

He also concluded some rules from the previous two trips to the Dream World. First, the time passed at a different pace in that world. This was easy to understand, as even a nap was enough for a long, vivid dream. Roland thought it might be caused by the increased response speed of the brain. In a dream, it just needed to pull all the sensory inputs out from the memory and entered them into a dream instead of uploading and processing information from all five senses.

Take the last trip as an example. He had left the Dream World at 3:00 p.m. by falling from a standing herringbone ladder in his bedroom before Zero had come back. Until that time, he had spent eight hours in that world. However, when he woke up in the real world, it was still midnight and the moon was shining high in the sky.

Second, his brain had been so excited in the vivid dreams that traveling to the Dream World did not mean having a rest. This was a tricky problem, as in this way he would be busy for the whole 24 hours of a day. In the day, he had to handle state affairs in the real world, and at night, he needed to make money to raise the family in the Dream World. He was surprised to find that he himself had become one of the model workers of Neverwinter... and the most hardworking one.

By now, he had not yet tried to sleep in the Dream World. Due to the time differences, he guessed sleeping in it would be more efficient.

Third, the Dream World was different from ordinary dream experiences.

This world was clear, stable and had its own rules. This must have been caused by Zero. She had created this new world about which he knew just a little bit.

He wondered at this world, thinking, "Does it have boundaries? How many fragments does it mix? How much hidden or forgotten information will I discover there?"

He waited out the night until the dawn reached. After having breakfast, he summoned all high officials of City Hall to the reception hall of his castle.

He needed to check on the progress of their works after the whole month, and more importantly, he wanted to work out the development plan for the next development stage for the coming challenge.

Now that the church was no longer a major threat, he had to get ready for the upcoming attacks from demons and put his all into the preparation for the Battle of Divine Will.

Roland set his eyes on the other kingdoms.

Barov wiped his forehead and said, "Uhm... you mean we'll recruit people not only from each domain of Graycastle but also from Everwinter and Wolfheart? Your Majesty, it's a very big project."

Roland said in a deep voice, "The news that the church has suffered a sharp defeat will soon spread all over the continent. After that, Holy City of Hermes can hardly control Everwinter and Wolfheart. Seeing the sign of weakness, those local noble men driven to the church by the wars will turn their backs on it soon. This offers us an exciting opportunity to draw their people to Graycastle with gold royals or even violent measures."

Not being affected by any form of nationalism, people of this era did not care very much about who they worked for, as long as they could bring their families together with them.

Roland continued to explain, "In the next spring, the seaport of Neverwinter will be put into use. All you have to do is to formulate a recruiting plan, rent ships from the Fjords merchants and find places to accommodate the newcomers in the city. I know this will cost City Hall a huge sum of gold royals, but we've got to do this no matter what. All of you know it clearly that the church isn't our ultimate challenge."

As City Hall had lots of related experiences, Roland was confident in this ambitious plan to expand population in a short time.

For example, City Hall had sent emissary delegations to the Southern Territory and the Eastern Region to recruit people for many times before this plan.

As for resettlement work, it also had rich experiences and a whole set of regulations.

City Hall of Neverwinter had already become a reliable and mature administration body.

However, it had no experience in sea transportation. Roland planned to ask Thunder and Margaret's Chamber of Commerce to assist it.

"By the way, in order to lighten your workload, I'll officially hire Miss Edith Kant to work as your adjutant in City Hall." Roland paused a little and continued, "I find no fault with her previous performance in Coldwind Ridge battle and the work in Adviser Department. I believe you'll feel much easier with her help."

Barov said anxiously, "Thank you, Your Majesty, but I can do it on my own..."

Roland interrupted him. "I've decided. Just do what I say."

After that, he turned to look at Scroll, saying, "Education is another focus in the next development stage. How did the training of the secondary teachers go?"

Scroll shook her head and said, "By now, only Ferlin has passed the assessment test. Your Majesty, I'm afraid this method won't work."

"I see." Roland was not surprised by the failure of the plan. As most of the Neverwinter's primary teachers were knights, using the teaching materials written by Scroll, they did not have any trouble teaching the students to read and write.

However, when the Education Ministry wanted to improve the quality of the teachers, it met a problem. The only reason for the knight's reading and writing abilities was that they had had access to education. Being literate did not necessarily mean that they were good at studying.

To become secondary teachers, they need to be qualified in disciplines including math, physics, and chemistry, which were not easy to learn.

Roland thought for a while and made a decision, saying, "Given that, let's pick new secondary teachers from the students. To encourage top students to continue their studies at school, we need to include a scholarship scheme in the budget for the next year."

"Sch-scholarship?" Scroll thought for a moment and continued, "Do you mean the reward system we've adapted in Longsong Stronghold?"

Roland explained, "No, not at all. That reward system was designed to attract more people to the school, but this scholarship scheme only rewards the top students. It aims to attract them to continue studying in the school by offering them money as much as most workers can make."

Generally, when a student completed universal education and got a diploma, he would try to find a job to raise his family as soon as possible instead of furthering his studies at school. To make sure that people who were good at studying would get better trained, he must build a special fiscal fund, namely, a scholarship scheme, to subsidize those people.

Roland continued to explain his plan to Scroll, "First, you can set high standard score to pick out only 20-30 students who'll be paid for with scholarships, and then you work with Ferlin to teach them. Their

learning speed must be much faster than that of those knights. After the training, anyone who passes the assessment is qualified to become a secondary teacher whose starting monthly salary is 50 silver royals, and the ones who fail in the assessment can apply for the other jobs."

When he got the first batch of secondary teachers, he planned to soften the terms of the scholarship scheme and promote the higher level of knowledge and education among the people.

#### Chapter 638: The Temptation of the Periodic Table of Elements

Barov said, "Your Majesty, City Hall has no problem with this program, but... we don't need that many secondary teachers, do we?" Knowing that Edith would soon become an official member of City Hall, Barov looked a little unhappy but still focused on the subject of the discussion. Roland was pleased to see this mature reaction.

The prince ticked off the other jobs those students could do, saying, "they don't have to become secondary teachers. With better education background, they can choose to become researchers and managers in the plants. They should understand the principles behind the machines instead of simply knowing how to operate them. They should know how to train workers, how to maintain or, perhaps, improve equipment. The Ministry of Education must make efforts to turn our people into industrial personnel. Otherwise, it'll be meaningless to have a large population."

"Industrial Personnel?" Scroll repeated Roland's words in a low voice and then asked, "does it refer to the people engaged in industrial production?"

"Almost." Roland confirmed and continued to explain his idea. "the people who have finished universal education can become ordinary workers, namely, junior industrial personnel. By having more of them, we could scale up our industrial production, but industrialization isn't just about scale... City Hall won't be able to take care of everything, so I want to see two to three out of a hundred people get secondary or even higher education level. They can be placed on both production and management positions, so did the secondary teachers. By doing so, we'll see that the plants will become independent organizations who can develop themselves following the instruction of City Hall."

Without education, Neverwinter could not enjoy its population dividend no matter how many people it had. Due to the limited education resources, he could not make secondary and higher education universal right now. To quench his thirst for talents, he decided to use this scholarship scheme to quickly select and foster a batch of capable people for the city. As to the other people, in his plan, as long as they finished primary education and became literate, they would fill ordinary production positions, like a cog in a machine.

"I see," Scroll said.

Roland tapped on the table and added, "There's another thing. Add ideological education to the universal primary education. I'll give you a detailed teaching plan later." He could not help but recall the contents of the textbook of ideological and moral education he had read in Dream World. In this era, strengthening ideological and moral construction was as important as adapting steam engines.

Seeing Scroll nodded, he stood up and glanced at everyone in the hall, saying, "to sum up, this year and the next, City Hall should focus on expanding the population, enhancing education and upgrading industrial production, especially the first two tasks. They'll determine how far we can go. I hope that all of you will do your best before the arrival of more dreadful and powerful enemies!"

"We'll do our best for Your Majesty!"

All the officials stood up and said simultaneously.

"And it's also for yourselves." Roland heaved a sigh of relief and continued. "That's all for today's meeting, and... Kyle Sichi, come to my office."

...

Chief Alchemist followed Roland to the office. As soon as he closed the door, he asked straightforwardly, "Your Majesty, do you have any new idea or new product to make? If not, I hope I can go back to my lab earlier."

Roland could not help but smile, saying, "You're still so impatient. Come on, sit down. I've something important to give you."

After Kyle took a seat with incredulity on his face, Roland slowly picked up his cup to sip some tea and asked, "How are the alchemists from the king's city?"

Chief Alchemist replied with a frown, "I guess they're just fine. I don't talk with them very much, except about the chemical experiments. If you want to know, you can ask them directly."

Roland could tell from Kyle's reaction that alchemists of Alchemist Workshop of the king's city seemed to have formed a little clan of their own. They had brought many students here, which was helpful for the chemical industry production but at the same time put pressure on Kyle and his students.

Keeping this thought to himself, Roland changed a subject. "Now that the two acid liquids and smokeless gunpowder have gone into mass production, I plan to set up an independent department to meet with ever-growing demands for these products." He paused a while and continued. "Do you want to work as Minister of Chemical Industry?"

Kyle answered without any hesitation, "I remember you've mentioned it before, but... I'm sorry, Your Majesty. I just can't give up my experiments in the labs for some trivial management work, so my answer is still the same."

"Do not hurry to refuse me." Roland shrugged. "I know that you don't want to waste your time on this kind of things, as you devote yourself to chemistry and want to explore its mystery... But what if I can directly show you what you want to know? "

"What?" Kyle Sichi was startled.

Roland took something out from his drawer and slowly spread it in front of Kyle. It was a white paper with many squared on it — the periodic table of elements, which he had written last night.

"Th-This is..." The old alchemist's eyes went straight to it. Stretching out his trembling hands, he wanted to snatch it from the king but meanwhile was so afraid to tear it.

"Didn't you say... you forgot the contents in the blanks?"

"I've remembered lots of details recently, including some about the book 'Intermediate Chemistry'. This time it'll be completed." Roland pulled the table back a little so that Kyle could only stare at it.

"Your Majesty, I..." Kyle stopped here and closed his mouth, since he had already got what the king meant.

Roland smiled and said, "That's right. If you become Minister of Chemical Industry, I'll give you this periodic table of elements, complete 'Intermediate Chemistry' and maybe even 'Advanced Chemistry'."

Roland admired the Chief Alchemist's enthusiasm toward chemistry but also knew that limited by this era's conditions, Kyle could hardly know more chemical knowledge than a senior high school student did in modern times. Now that he had complete chemistry textbooks, he decided to show them to Kyle. By doing so, he could enable Kyle to have more time to teach more students and effectively reduce the influence of Alchemist Workshop of the king's city.

He also believed that although Kyle preferred chemical experiments to trivial matters in management, as the former Chief in the Alchemic Workshop of Redwater City, he must have a sound knowledge of management, and basic organization and coordination skills.

"I... get it." Kyle bowed after hesitating for a moment. "I'll serve as your minister."

Somehow, Roland found that compared to imposing his will on the others, he became increasingly fond of this method of offering conditions that could not be denied as a bargaining chip in negotiations. He wondered was this syndrome of a person in power.

No matter what, he believed that it was a win-win option.

He folded the periodic table of elements and handed it to Kyle, saying, "When you've more students, you'll have less trivial things to do by yourself. Here's your bonus paid in advance. Do your best, and your name will be recorded in the history of chemistry."

Chapter 639: Isabella

If not for the shackles on her hands and feet, Isabella would have forgotten that she was a prisoner .

After she had told Roland's witches that the God's Stones of Retaliation embedded in the walls of the cell could not affect her ability, she had been transferred to an ordinary bedroom guarded by some guards. When she had been sent back to the Western Region of Graycastle, she had got a "cell" similar to the previous bedroom. It was not damp or cold and had no dirty water flowing on the ground. In this quite spacious room, she was offered a bed, a bench and a toilet in a cubicle. All the windows of the room were blocked by iron strips, but warm sunshine could still get through them into the room. The conditions here were much better than that of the secret jail of Pivotal Secret Authority.

Having outstanding looks, she had thought that she would get some "normal" treatment of prisoners of war, but nothing had happened. No one had sneaked into her room at night. She had not been humiliated or tortured. The guards at the door never spoke to her except when they delivered meals to her.

The most frequent visitors to her cell were two of Roland's witches. One was said to come from 400 years ago and another one who was blonde always wore a hood. No matter what they had asked, Isabella had answered them honestly. She had even asked them to bring her papers and a quill to write down some recordings of the secret history and demon documents she had read in Pivotal Secret Temple's Library.

The witches had never tortured her either, but she could tell that the blonde witch wanted to give her a hard time. She felt confused seeing her leave with a cold face every time when she finished answering all their questions.

She knew that they would not believe whatever she said, and based on what had happened during each of their visits, she was sure that one of them must be able to detect lies. She guessed that the blonde witch was planning to punish her when she caught her lying, but this thought made her even more confused. She just could not think of a reason for this action, as they could do whatever they want to a prisoner.

She felt increasingly oppressed by worry as the time went by.

She wondered why Roland Wimbledon had never appeared during the past two months.

She could think of only two answers to this question. First, the king had not woken up yet. Second, he never planned to meet her. Neither of these was good news for her. She believed that after she confessed all she knew, she would be put on trial and then executed.

Ready to devote all she had to defeat demons, Isabella had no complaints about her current situation, but waiting to die day after day still stressed her out.

She sighed and walked in chains to her bed. She sat down, picked up her quill and spread a blank paper on her laps, thinking that if she could finish writing down all she remembered quickly, she would be able to come to her end sooner.

At this moment, she heard footsteps outside.

It sounded like more than two people were coming to her cell.

Isabella's heart vibrated.

Her door was pushed open. She put down the quill and turned around. Besides the two witches, here came a gray-haired young man. Based on the previous information she had received, she knew he was Roland Wimbledon, the King of Graycastle.

He woke up?

"Does he come to sentence me?"

Keeping those thoughts to herself, she stood up and slightly bowed to him.

She said with feigned indifference, "I thought you would never come to meet me."

To her great surprise, Roland said calmly, "You're Isabella, right? You're the witch who made my God's Stones of Retaliation lose effect. I didn't mean to postpone this meeting with you. I had an incredible

long dream and just woke up. I fought against Zero in the dream and I defeated her in the end. However, as the winner, I didn't get everything, her knowledge or skills, as she said."

"It's impossible!" Isabella blurted.

Roland asked with great interest, "Why? I guess I can't get what she had, as I'm a man who can never become a witch."

"It's nothing to do with gender." Isabella shook her head. "The trophy a winner will get in Soul Battlefield is memories and lifespan, which can be owned by any human being, and only the creatures who have those two things can step into Soul Battlefield. As for the abilities of witches and magic power, they can't be absorbed by the winner. Otherwise, Zero would have absorbed me."

"What do you mean... There're creatures she can't invade and absorb?"

Isabella explained, "Animals can't get into the Soul Battlefield, as they've no intelligence. Even if they did and win, they can never understand human beings' memories."

"That may also be caused by the difference between species."

"As far as I know, among the thousands of souls she absorbed, there're some demon and some hybrid demonic beast." She sighed and continued. "But it happened before I was born. I've just heard her mention about it when we were chatting."

"Demon and... demonic beast?" Hearing what Isabella said, Roland and his witches could not help but look at each other at a loss for words.

"Why didn't you tell us about this?" The blonde witch shouted this question to Isabella.

"Because this will only increase your anxiety and hardly helps you." Isabella paused and slowed down to explain. "Even Zero herself admitted that the memories of the other species were so crazy that they placed a heavy burden on her. She said she had never tried it again after that."

The king did not seem to be scared. Instead, he smiled and said, "Interesting. By the way, did Zero mention to you what would happen to the losers in Soul Battlefield?"

"They'll disappear from this world as if they never exist."

Roland raised his eyebrow and asked, "Any difference between the losers who give up voluntarily and those who fight to death?"

"All of them will disappear, but..." Isabel continued after a thought. "Zero seemed to have said that the memories she absorbed could be divided into two kinds."

Roland seemed particularly interested in this issue and asked, "What are they?"

"One kind of memories were disorganized with residual consciousness of the losers. They would affect Zero herself. The other kind of memories were completely open to her. She could read them whenever she wanted." She paused for a moment and continued. "She said that it was harder to recall and easier to forget the first kind of memories... She casually mentioned it once. I didn't ask her for more details at

that time, but I'm sure you're an exception. I've never seen anyone like you before, who get no memories at all."

Roland closed his eyes and knitted his eyebrows, he seemed to be thinking about something extremely complicated. He remained speechless for nearly 10 minutes and then heaved a long sigh, saying, "I see."

"What on earth was he thinking?"

Curious as she was, she still kept her mouth shut.

She knew that she should never ask such a question as a prisoner.

Roland said to her, "Now, let's talk about you."

Chapter 640: Dream World Hypotheses

Isabella slightly lowered her head, waiting for her sentence in silence.

Roland sounded calm. "You should thank your own ability, not because it's unique, but because it can't kill anyone. No matter how felonious an act you're involved in, such as assisting Zero in attacking me, you're just an accessory offender. I can spare your life, but you still have to atone for your sin, like the others who violate the law."

Roland's words somehow took a weight off her mind. She was not afraid of death, but not fond of it, either.

"As long as you can defeat demons, I'm willing to do everything for you."

Roland said slowly, "demons are enemies of the mankind. I'll certainly fight against them till death, but my way is different from that of the church. I won't try to win the Battle of Divine Will at the cost of destroying human beings' potential. Given that, you've got to change some of your habits. From now on, you're no longer a Pure Witch of the church. Instead, you're an atoning witch."

Zero, you were wrong. He knew about demons and the Union a long time ago and is even ready to fight the Battle of Divine Will. Indeed, he was a common man whose life and belief would come to the end after decades, but now, he gets your limitless lifespan. Given that, he must be the chosen one of the deities.

At this thought, Isabella knelt down with her shackles. She lowered her head, letting all her long hair spread over the floor, and said, "yes, my lord."

When she stood up again, Roland opened his mouth and said, "here's not the Holy City of Hermes, and you're not a servant to me. You're just an atoning person, but I won't send you to the mines to do hard labor for twenty years. All you have to do is to cooperate with Agatha in her research on the magic power.

Isabella was startled, wondering, "that's all I have to do for him?"

Roland continued to say, "your atoning period is five years. I'll ask Wendy to arrange a new place for you to live and during this period of time, you don't have to wear any shackles, but you only have limited

freedom. That's to say, besides your living place and Agatha's Spellcaster Tower, if you want to go anywhere else, you'll have to act under the Witch Union's surveillance."

"Yes, I see."

"By the way, are you sure that there are no other witches in the Holy City?" asked Roland.

She had answered this question for many times since she had become a prisoner. She thought for a moment and still shook her head, saying, "for this decisive battle, Zero converted all the useless new witches into God's Punishment Warriors and took all the other witches to the battlefield. There're still many girls in cloisters, but awakenings of new witches seldom happen before Months of Demons. Vanilla, Margie and me are probably the only three remaining Pure Witches of the church."

Having heard what she said, Roland said nothing. He turned around and walked toward the door. The blonde witch came up and unlock her shackles.

Seeing herself get free hands again, Isabella could hardly believe what had happened. Is this my sentence? No jail time, no humiliation and no torture. Is he serious?

She suddenly spoke out, "Your Majesty, what about Vanilla and Margie..."

Roland looked back at her and said, "they're better than you. They were just influenced by the distorted ideas of the cloisters' education, far from being crazy. If they can give up those thoughts, they may even join the Witch Union."

Roland and the two witches left. The cell door creaked shut.

"So that's it," Isabella felt completely relieved. She lay on her plank bed in the sunshine coming through the window. Despite the glaring light, she squinted up at the blue sky behind the steel bars.

"What a lovely day," she thought.

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Back in the office, Nightingale expressed her discontent, saying, "her punishment is too light. She almost killed you."

"It's Zero who almost killed me, not her." Roland handed her a piece of dried fish.

She took it with her mouth and mumbled, "she created such a chance for Zero. Otherwise, it was impossible for you to be dragged into Soul Battlefield."

Roland explained patiently, "but you can tell she really wants to fight against demons, can't you? She didn't commit an unforgivable crime, and I'm just alright. That's enough for her punishment. By doing so, we show all the people that we're willing to spend a thousand pieces of gold to buy outstanding talents."

"Spend a thousand gold royals...and what?"

"Uhm... I mean propaganda effects." Roland coughed twice and continued. "Seeing her example, more people will understand that as long as they don't break legal bottom line, they'll still get a chance by

making atonement. After all, our enemy is demons. To increase our odds of winning the Battle of Divine Will, letting her redeem herself by good services is the best choice."

Nightingale twitched her lips and said, "well, I'll watch her for you."

Roland walked to the French window and recalled what Isabella had said.

The memories Zero absorbed could be divided into two kinds. One kind of memories was disorganized with a residual consciousness of the losers. They would affect Zero herself. The other kind of memories were complete and open to her. She could read them whenever she wanted. She said that it was harder to recall and easier to forget the first kind of memories...

Is this the reason why she repeatedly persuaded me to give in during the Battle of Souls?

She suffered no side-effects in absorbing the surrenders who willingly gave her all their memories. That's why she stopped at all the crucial moments.

She wanted me to give up fighting, in order to get my complete memories.

He found that this process seemed similar to the one in which he possessed Prince Roland's body.

As Prince Roland's memories were just like that, complete and always there in his head. He could easily recall the prince's memories anytime he wanted to and put them aside when he did not need them. They were like archived files. He did not have to memorize any detail of them, but even after a year when he opened them again they still remained the same as before.

Given that Prince Roland had been killed by Garcia's assassin and had no willpower to resist his death at that time, he thought he could be considered a loser who gave up in the Battle of Souls.

Now, he was wondering what the strong-willed losers would do?

Based on what Isabella had said, this kind of memories with the residual consciousness of the losers would affect Zero herself, including changing her thoughts, personality, and even beliefs. Absorbing thousands of souls had made her complex, technically, a very different person from who she had been before.

If she had wanted vengeance on him, she would have poured all those crazy memories into his mind.

When that happened, she would end up being shattered, but Roland would not be the same Roland as before.

In this chaotic storm of memories, each unyielding soul's willpower would strive for predominance in his mind. Zero would take this chance to come back again.

However, out of Zero's expectation, he was not a man of this era.

The amount of information a person living in the modern age absorbed in one day was equivalent to that of a person in ancient times did in months or even years. As a man from an era of information explosion, he read and memorized various kinds of information in every waking moment. His mind could keep the useful information and eliminate the meaningless ones by instinct.

As a result, all the memory fragments were swallowed up and reorganized, forming a strange new world, his Dream World.

Unfortunately, he could not ask Zero to confirm this speculation.

She had lost all she had including her memories and turned into an innocent child in Dream World.

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