

Witch 691

Chapter 691: The Path into the City

Her words surprised No. 76 a little.

It seemed that they were examined checked by more than one person.

However, 400 years of training had taught her how to hide emotions, not to mention that her body could be separated from her consciousness as she wished. A sudden interrogation was not enough to make her panic.

No. 76 pretended to be astonished and then reluctantly took a ring out of her robe. She hesitated for a long time before saying, "It was... stolen from Black Money."

At the same time, she gave a higher rating of the Witch Union in her heart. Originally, she had thought that they were too casual in welcoming newcomers, but it did not seem to be the case. They had sent a witch to detect the lies and another one with the ability of Clairvoyance. They could not be more cautious.

"Black Money?" The witch with green and long hair picked up the ring in her hand and looked it over for a moment. "This ... seems to be a Magic Stone, but it's a little different."

No. 76 frowned at her words in her heart. "They actually know the existence of Magic Stone? Then it's troublesome now. Although it's activated in a different way from the ordinary Magic Stone, they'll figure it out sooner or later. I have to distract them from it. After all, I don't have a second stone."

"Black money is the underground exhibition where I've ever worked... There were often auctions of things from ancient ruins. The boss often said that those things had unbelievable power and the more exotic, the more popular. In addition, they occasionally had auction... auction..."

"What?" Wendy asked.

"Auction of witches," whispered No. 76.

Hearing these words, the four witches showed unmasked anger on their faces, and their concern over the ring became a bit less. Obviously selling witches as slaves was abhorrent to them, which also illustrated indirectly that the Witch Union in Graycastle would never agree with the idea of the Starfall City.

"No. 76 didn't lie. I was almost sold to the nobles by the Black Money," Amy echoed. "Fortunately, Mr. Ambassador saved me."

"They're bound to be punished sooner or later," said the blonde witch coldly.

"That ring..." No. 76 pretended to be timid.

"Although Miss Agatha will be very interested in this thing, let's wait until you are familiar with Neverwinter," the green-haired Witch said, shrugging. She did not keep the ring; instead, she put it back on her hand.

No. 76 was slightly surprised for a moment. "Agatha? The name sounds quite familiar. It seems that I have heard of it somewhere."

"I promise you'll no longer encounter such a thing," Wendy comforted them. "No one will dare to attack you in Neverwinter. His Majesty, King Roland, believes that the era where witches and mortals live together will soon come. By that time, not only in the Western Region of Graycastle but also in the whole kingdom, no one will regard us as the Devil's minions."

"Will there be such a day?" said Broken Sword rather in disbelief.

"Of course, that is why we built the Witch Union," Wendy laughed. "Anyway, let me take you to rest."

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No. 76 was slowly moved onto a stretcher and carried out of the cabin by the sailors. The moment she left the sailing ship, she finally saw the whole picture of the pier. Heavy snow flying in the air did not stop people working busily at the pier. Dozens of people lined up along the pier sweeping the snow on the ground. Farther out were the weird freighters unloading goods. Just as Amy said, without towering masts and sails, yet they were able to navigate in the river.

"Those boats seem to have no puddles..."

"And are they made of stones?"

The witches lowered their voices and discussed with each other. She clearly saw on Wendy's face a proud smile, which still gave off warmth even in the heavy snow.

However, No. 76 was surprised by much more things.

As they entered the city, the sight of Neverwinter slowly appeared in front of her.

This new king's city bore little resemblance to the cities of common people she had ever seen or the Holy City of the Union. Its broad, solid streets stood straight like black vertical lines. The falling snowflakes had no effect on road access, as the snow was orderly piled on both sides of the road, which looked like small white hills.

The trees were neatly planted to beautify the scene, and their bald trunks were decorated with colorful ribbons. It was conceivable that there should be green trees in midsummer season, branches crisscrossing one another overhead to form a natural awning.

Blocks of square-framed brick houses stood side by side with almost the same size. Except that, No. 76 did not see any bungalows or shabby thatched cottages.

It was already the Months of Demons, yet many people still walked in the heavy snow. Quite a few of them that were passing by would stop and greet the dark-haired witch with a nodding. Their expressions were sincere and enthusiastic, so they were obviously not compelled to do so.

This was what she cared most about.

For the first time, she was witnessing witches and common people getting along harmoniously with each other. Although she heard of a non-interference period between the witches and common people

during the first Battle of Divine Will, it was, after all, 800 or 900 years ago. And in this city, it seemed that they had taken a step further, as they were not separated but instead were living harmoniously together.

"His Majesty, King Roland, believes that the era when witches and mortals live together will soon come." She suddenly recalled Wendy's words.

It was not a joke. In Neverwinter, they were on the threshold of it.

During a-month-long voyage, she had had some knowledge of Prince Roland of Graycastle. He became a much-anticipated king from an obscure lord of Border Town. Besides the low-level battles with common people, he also defeated the church with numerous soldiers of the God's Punishment Army, which might prove his strength. Was it related to the view in front of her?

If it were not for pretending to be wounded, No. 76 would almost sit up to have a close look at the city.

According to Pasha, they were bound to deal with the common people sooner or later. To defeat the demons, they had to temporarily conceal the past of the Union. After all, the strong enemy was approaching while they could not easily leave the maze ruins, therefore it would be not easy to solve the tricky problems left by the Starfall City. As long as the witches could survive, they would be able to reproduce the glory of Taquila one day. At this point, both Lady Alice and Lady Natalyae hold the same view.

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After arriving at the Foreign Affairs building, No. 76 and Hero were lifted back to bed and the other three witches, sitting by the fire, excitedly talked about what they saw and heard along the way. There was no doubt that in a short time, Neverwinter had left a deep impression on them.

Before long, Wendy walked into the room with a little girl.

"This is Nana. She's able to heal wounds, no matter new or old."

"Even broken legs?" Amy could not wait to go to the bed and opened the blanket which covered Hero.

The little girl reached out her hands for a try and slowly shook her head, "No. Unless you still have her broken legs. If the whole legs were lost, I can only join them with other legs, but I can't make her legs grow again."

"You mean, we have to find two new legs for her?"

"Well, it's best to be newly cut," Nana replied earnestly. Childish as her voice was, it made all the witches invariably shuddered.

Chapter 692: A New Hope

"Nana!" Wendy said giving her a reproving look.

"I'm not kidding. Besides joining the amputated limbs, His Majesty also told me to do a lot of experiments, like exchanging the wings of roosters and grey eagles to see if the rooster could fly. And

exchanging the limbs of frogs and mice, the bodies of cows and lambs..." the little girl said, counting on her fingers.

The four witches all gasped out upon these words.

No. 76 was full of interest in her words, however. "Fully studying the mysteries of an ability, rather than fearing and avoiding it. This was apparently the style of the Quest Society members. No wonder this king is willing to accept the witches. Judging from this point, at least he isn't stubborn and conservative."

"What happened then?" She could not help asking.

"Most of the experiments failed at first, but since His Majesty told Lily to join the trial, the success rate has been raised a lot. It's a pity that the limbs basically lost their functions after I joined them, so I have to exchange them back again," Nana paused for a moment and continued to say, "ah... I forgot to mention, these are Heterogeneous connections. If I exchange the limbs of the same species, there will be nearly no difference after treatment. So if you have two legs... em..."

"Ahem, please don't mind her," Wendy covered the little girl's mouth and said, "About the legs, we'll find a solution. It may take some time, but Hero will stand up one day. You can rest assured."

Everyone looked at each other, not knowing how to respond for a moment.

"Anyway, let's treat your friend's wound first," Wendy patted Nana's head embarrassed and said, "hurry up."

No. 76 pretended to be expectant and scared, looking at the girl coming to her and pressing her hands on her broken legs.

The ring on her chest became hot again.

She suddenly realized that she had a troublesome problem.

"What expression should I wear when I'm treated?"

No. 76 did not know how it felt when the crushed bones and joints were being healed by magic power. "Is it painful or soothing? Or should I feel nothing? Should I cry out aloud or bite my teeth to moan?"

She was still thinking of how to respond, when the little girl had already withdrawn her hands and said, "Your legs are fine now. Next, I'll heal your arms."

She tried to lift the broken legs and found that she was able to move them now.

In a moment, the twisted elbows also returned to normal state.

"Your mental condition is really good," said Nana with a curious look at her. "Most people will fall asleep once they have been healed, and you're the first one even without a yawn."

The heart of No. 76 suddenly sank. She pretended to be terrified and replied, "I, I just..."

"However, sleeping is only a natural reaction of the body, and immediate waking up won't have any damage. Don't worry." The little girl interrupted, "If you haven't moved for a long time, you'll feel awkward in the first days. You'll soon get used to it."

"Is that... Is that true? Thank... thank you."

Fortunately, the blonde witch who had checked their identity was not present. No. 76 secretly glanced at Wendy and found that she was talking with Hero rather than paying attention to her. She was slightly relieved.

"Are you really healed?" Amy asked with concern.

No. 76 lifted her originally broken right hand and waved to her, "Ah, it has been cured. Miss Nana has a really incredible ability..."

Seeing that, the worries in the eyes of other witches gradually faded away. Amy bit her teeth and made up her mind. She walked to Wendy pulled her sleeve and said, "Please use my legs to cure Hero."

"What?" Wendy was obviously shocked.

"My ability is self-recovery, so my legs may grow back if I cut them."

"No, Amy, don't..." Hero hurriedly said. "You've only suffered minor injuries. What if they can't grow?"

"I'm willing to give it a try," She insisted.

"Annie, stop her!"

"Amy, don't say that. Even if you make Hero stand up, she'll feel sad for a long time."

"But..."

"Well, stop arguing," Nana suddenly said. "There may be another way to cure her legs."

Everyone looked straight to her.

"I'm 16 years old now. In two years, I'll enter my adulthood and then my ability will be greatly enhanced. Maybe at that time, I'll be able to directly make the broken limbs regenerate," She pursed her lips and said, "another possibility is ability evolution. If I also possess an ability evolution like Sister Anna and Sister Leaf did, maybe I can even make you have two more legs."

"Ability evolution? What's it?" Amy asked, staring in shock.

"That means the magic power in your body will cohere and transform into a whole new look. Haven't you ever seen it?" said Nana proudly. "Anyway, it's very amazing. As long as you study hard, you also have the opportunity to evolve new abilities."

Listening to the excited narration of the little girl, No. 76 felt her heart became tumultuous.

If she was not mistaken, the evolution that Nana mentioned was the High Awakening.

But she also felt like listening to a fairy tale... "Are there actually several Senior Witches in the Witch Union, who appeared only in the last two years?"

"How could this be possible?"

Senior Witches were not like the wheat in the field, which you could harvest as long as you planted the seeds. Every promoted Awakened was a precious treasure of the Union, and it required talent, diligence

and luck to be promoted. Even before she was transformed to be a God's Punishment Warrior, she was just an ordinary combat witch.

"Why did Nana think most witches will certainly evolve?"

"As long as you study hard, you also have the opportunity to evolve new abilities.' What a nonsense! If you are more experienced and knowledgeable, you can indeed enhance your possibility of enlightenment, but just a tiny bit. If it were really so easy, the Union would not have experienced the problem where no witch had been promoted in nearly a hundred years and thus becoming short handed in the late period of the Battle of Divine Will."

"But... in front of a group of wild witches who have never heard of High Awakening, is it necessary for Nana to lie?"

If it was not for pretending to be a "common person", she would have asked the little girl more questions to find out the truth.

"What could be sure is there are indeed some Senior Witches in the Witch Union; otherwise, Nana could not clearly explain the High Awakening. But the number of Senior Witches should be exaggerated by her. Or maybe the high ranks of the union are very powerful and have little contact with the new witches. So this little girl who has just awakened mistook them as promoted persons."

With this in mind, No. 76 felt so heartened.

Maybe she really had the opportunity to find the Chosen One in Neverwinter?

Chapter 693: The Ideal Place

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Dinner was served by a servant.

Before the servant opened the covers, Annie had already smelled the mouthwatering aroma. In the iron box, there was a pile of thick bread which was baked golden. Just one glimpse, and she knew that the bread was made up of fine wheat flour that had been kneaded and fermented after being peeled. Besides, there was also a small packet of butter and a pot of meat broth, which was enough for five people to enjoy.

"The spoons and plates are all in the wooden cupboard. Tomorrow morning, breakfast will also be served, so you don't need to keep leftovers," the servant said, "Before getting a Resident Identity Card (ID), you can't leave the Foreign Affairs Building at your will. Additionally, you aren't allowed to go to the basement. If you want to practice your abilities, the rooftop is available. There's a service room on the first floor, where I sleep. If you need anything, you're free to come to me. Unlike hotels, all services here are free."

The five people were all in a daze and did not even regain their senses after the servant bowed and left.

"Is this the hospitality of the great nobles? It's exactly the same as the play," Amy was the first to sigh and said, "except for some of the lines that needed to be changed."

"Such as?" Broken Sword and Hero asked curiously.

"Like Your Honorable Excellency, it's my pleasure to serve you... that's how it usually starts."

"We aren't the noble, so of course he didn't talk to us like that." No.76 smiled gently. "Anyway, let's eat first. I'm starving."

"You made a good point." They all swallowed their saliva in agreement.

This was not good. Was the ruler of the Kingdom of Graycastle using delicious food to seduce them? Amy began to feel concerned. It looked like the king was trying to rope them in, but the leader of the Witch Union did not even ask them about their abilities. Their behaviors were so inconsistent that she could not figure out their real intention. Since she was not alone and there were four other people, she had to be more cautious and not commit mistakes that she had made before.

Undoubtedly, the safest way was to stay away from the Western Region. The church had been defeated, so their greatest enemy was gone. What they needed most was to find a village or a small town closer to bigger cities so that they could live there with hidden identities, just like what they had done in the Kingdom of Dawn.

However, this method would not work now.

She could not help but sigh when she saw No.76 stumbling beside the table. Anyway, Witch Union was capable of healing the wounded and the prospect they had described was inviting. Now that there was a ray of hope that Hero could stand up again, she could not simply take them away.

Well, I'd better eat.

When Annie put a piece of bread with butter into her mouth, her mouth was instantly filled with a glutinous soft sweetness which she had never tasted before. The bread was very delicate without any gravel and it melted in her mouth the minute she bit into it. She did not even need to chew and the bread flowed easily into her throat.

Damn it! They could easily be seduced by the delicious food.

Although she was thinking like this, she could not stop her hand from grabbing another piece of bread.

Almost each one in the room was busy eating the bread and no one was talking.

They let out a deep breath when only crumbs were left in the iron box.

"Will we still be able to eat such food in the future?" Broken Sword licked all her fingers reluctantly.

"I'm afraid... that's unlikely." Amy held the pot and poured the aromatic broth, dividing it equally into five bowls. There were some scallion and oil circles on the surface, which made it more delicious. "Only the upper nobles can afford to eat such bread and even my father only used to eat coarse bread."

"It's good enough to eat coarse bread. I remember that we always stayed hungry when we first arrived in the Kingdom of Dawn." Hero blew the hot steam and eagerly took a big sip, and then she exhaled the heat. When she murmured, there was a long-awaited satisfaction in her tone.

"Lady Wendy has said that we can enjoy many benefits after we join Witch Union... do these benefits include delicious food?"

"She had also said that she would show us around Neverwinter and Witch Union before she left. We can ask her then."

"I hope that the food would be included in these benefits."

Witnessing that the other four witches were discussing the treatment which might be given by Witch Union, Annie had a faint prediction that they would stay in the city for a very long time.

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After a shower, they went to bed early—the apartment consisted of one living room and four bedrooms. After a short discussion, they decided how to allocate the four bedrooms. As the strongest witch among them, Annie would certainly choose to sleep together with Hero who could not stand up.

The bed was very soft and there was no mildew at all. It was obvious cleaning was often done here. There were only a few small flames in the fireplace and the shaking and dim light reflected the furniture on the white stone walls. The dark shadows were slightly shaking as if they were dancing to the chilling wind outside the window.

She put Hero under the bedding and blew out the candles.

Annie cast her ability to make the bed warm through her heated hands. Hero clung to her bosom and gently asked, "It's been almost a year since we left the Kingdom of Wolfheart?"

"Yeah... it's been one year and two months if we count the days since we set foot on the border of the Kingdom of Dawn." Annie nodded.

"How long has it been since we left our hometown?"

This question made her silent. In fact, Annie had forgotten the exact date when she left her hometown and she only remembered that it was a remote village to the northwest of the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Since her identity as a witch was exposed, she had to continuously escape toward the east and traveled almost half of the entire Kingdom of Wolfheart. She only settled down in the suburbs of the king's city after Bloodfang Association betrayed her.

It was the same for Broken Sword and Hero.

They were forced to leave their homes and escape due to different reasons. They suffered a lot on the road and only when they met Annie in Wolfheart, did they all escape together as a group.

"It has been almost five years since I left my hometown," Hero said in a lowered tone, "In the five years, I've never settled down in order to avoid being captured by the church. I thought that I needn't run away anymore in the king's city but to my surprise, I still have to escape, even if I've lost my legs."

Annie could not help hugging her even more tightly.

"Lady Wendy has said that this is the home of the witches. Can we really settle down here?" Hero's voice was on and off, like the faint sound of winds outside the windows. It sounded like she was asking Annie, and yet it also sounded like she was murmuring. "I don't want to escape any longer."

Annie's eyes started to well up. "Don't worry. We'll have a house of our own and you'll regain the use of your legs. You can go anywhere you want to for leisure instead of running away."

"Really?" Hero paused for a long time and asked, "If only I were born in the Kingdom of Graycastle." In the end, Annie could not even hear her voice.

When Annie opened her mouth and was about to say something, she heard even breathing sounds.

The girl in her bosom had fallen asleep.

Chapter 694: "Beams of Light"

After Roland fell asleep, Nightingale entered the Mist and quietly left the castle.

Her destination was the Foreign Affairs Building.

Even at night when the land was cloaked in darkness, in the misty world, she could still see everything clearly in black and white. Taking advantage of distorted outlines, she could jump several meters in one leap. With merely a few steps, she passed through the courtyard wall around the building.

Roland had called this way of moving 'Flash'. He described it as a masterstroke to move with super speed, which required no buffering time. She liked the name 'Flash' the first time she heard it. Just as it implied, such a movement was as quick as a flash of lightning and as quiet as a shadow. She could come out and disappear anywhere in a sudden, making it hard for anyone to predict her movements.

She liked such a description but did not quite understand what the buffering time meant.

But she did not mind it, as she had already got used to this old talking habit of his. It was not a rare thing for her to hear some strange words from him.

After getting out of the Castle District, Nightingale did not follow the ramp that she often took to descend the hill, but directly leaped high above the hillside and walked in the air. She followed the lines that appeared in the air, and after several strides, she landed straight on the top floor of the Foreign Affairs Building.

The building was located in the area between the Castle District and uptown, a four-story structure as high as the upland where the castle stood. It was the second concrete building after the Witch House.

Initially, it had been built to detain some important prisoners, such as the family of Duke Ryan, who had been kept in the dungeon. As far as Nightingale could see, Roland treated them with much more respect than what they deserved. Although they were given the titles of prisoners, this new place was much better than the previous dungeon, and they were also offered the chance to walk outside to relieve themselves.

Maybe His Majesty thought he would not have many enemies to detain here, so he used the rooms overground as the first place to temporarily accommodate the new-come honored guests, such as the alchemists of the Alchemist Association of the King's City, the sages of the Astrology Association, as well as sea traders from the Fjords, who had lived here for some time.

Since most of the rooms in the Foreign Affairs Building were unoccupied and the location was quite far from the central heating system, it was merely supplied with tap water. As the residents in the building had different backgrounds, His Majesty had deployed some of his guards here in order to show his respect for the guests, as well as keep an eye on them.

Nightingale, of course, would not take the corridor in case of alarming the guards. She passed directly through the walls of the top floor, heading for the bedrooms where the witches from Wolfheart lived.

She did not find anything strange about the witches in the afternoon examination. The Magic Cyclones they showed were very stable, and their capacities were quite ordinary, which meant that they belonged to the most common type of witches. In the inquiry, she knew that they basically told no lie except for some vague, subtle answers they offered about their past. With her derivative skill, she captured those details, but she thought that this kind of concealment was reasonable. These witches were tortured, hunted, and even treated in ways they were simply unable to speak of. All they had suffered had become shadows in their hearts, which they were unwilling to talk about.

If they were the only ones coming to Neverwinter, she probably would accept them as new sisters at once.

But they came with the ordinary woman called No. 76, and she was the one arousing Nightingale's suspicion.

She had no magic glow or different demeanor, but Nightingale could still sense something strange about her. When she recalled afterward, she realized that it was the woman's attitude in answering all her questions that bothered her. She had hidden nothing from her, which was really weird.

Nightingale had seen that many people tell everything they knew when they were dying. Yet, this woman who had once served as a maid for the underground Chamber of Commerce, told the truth about herself to a stranger she met for the first time. This was indeed a rare attitude.

But Nightingale could not judge whether the woman was using a fake identity or not based on what she knew now.

After all, No. 76 did not lie.

That meant that by now, what she said about her past and background was authentic. In addition, the testimonies of Yoriko, Amy, and Annie could corroborate that. She indeed was a guide who had served the exhibition 'Black Money' and been bought by Yoriko because of getting involved in the witch auction.

That's why Nightingale decided to visit No. 76 at night and watch her behavior in the Mist.

If No. 76 harbored any malicious intentions, this would be the easiest moment for her to show some flaws.

She went through the bedrooms one by one, and soon she found the room where her target was.

Most of the witches had fallen asleep, but No. 76's room was still lit up. She was sitting on the bed, playing with a ring in her hand by the candlelight, eyes full of joy and intoxication.

"Is it because of the fair gemstone on the ring?" Nightingale wondered.

She walked close to the bed, quietly watching No. 76.

But she saw nothing suspicious about her behavior, all she did was play with the ring, like a lucky woman who was too excited about harboring a treasure to sleep.

The ring was glittering with a faint magic glow, but it was not a rare thing for a guide in the exhibition, which often auctioned relics of unknown origin, to have such a Magic Stone.

One hour later, she was tired and sleepy, drowsily dropping her arms and closing her eyes. At this moment, Nightingale gently sighed.

She thought, "It seems that I'm over-scrupulous."

After giving No. 76 one last glance, Nightingale reached out her hand to extinguish the candle and turned to pass through the wall, entering the howling snowstorm.

The heat of colorful Magic Stone subsided, showing that the one who used magic power had left the bedroom.

No. 76 slightly let out a sigh of relief.

Even if they had gained infinite life by the way of Soul Transfer, it did not mean that they could stay awake overnight. When she disconnected her soul from her body, she could rest far more efficiently than taking an ordinary sleep. In this way, it would only take her two or four hours to rest every day to fully recover herself.

Given that, she went to bed much later than the witches.

But she had never expected something incredible to happen because of this habit.

No. 76 opened her eyes, looking at the empty bedside where the visitor had stood. Through the magic stone on the ring, she had seen a bright beam of orange light there just now. It had been as thick as an adult's trunk, directly rising up to the ceiling. No. 76 had been surprised to find that this 'Key' had surpassed the remaining Senior Witch of Taquila, Pasha, and was on par with that of the Three Chiefs of the Union. Although she had not been able to see the visitor, she knew that her ability must be very complicated, rather than a simple invisibility skill.

She wondered if the visitor was Anna or Leaf mentioned by Nana.

Judging from the light, she knew that there was still a certain gap between the visitor and the Chosen One, but that strong beam of orange light was enough to thrill her.

It was very simple to activate the colorful magic stone ring. As long as someone nearby was performing some magic, the Magic Stone on the ring would absorb a small part of the surging magic power and

indicate the complexity of the magic skill through the beam of light she could observe through Magic Stone. The thicker and stronger the beam was, the more complicated the 'Key' was.

No. 76 became increasingly excited as she thought of it. She simply walked out of the room and went to the top of the building.

The snowstorm was blowing against her face, but she was not able to feel cold at all. This lack of feelings usually made her sick, but now as her heart was filled with excitement, she felt vigorous standing in the wind and chasing the last glimmer of light.

She raised the ring and pointed it at the castle, according to Wendy, that's where the witches lived. Now that the first Senior Witch had appeared, would the Witch Union give her more surprises?

She was looking forward to it.

However, something abnormal happened in a sudden.

The ring in her hand started to shake, as if it was resonating with something.

Through the Magic Stone, she saw a beam of light she had never seen before. It was almost like a wide high wall, filling half of the sky.

Chapter 695: The Encounter

"How, How could this be possible?"

No. 76 felt as though a bomb was exploding in her heart, and stood petrified on the spot.

Since she knew that the colorful Magic Stone was only able to respond to the fluctuation of magic power within a limited range, which, in theory, was around 100 steps, she had just casually raised the ring and not expected to see anything in the castle at this distance. She wondered how this happened?

She took a deep breath, then blinked, and again put the ring before her eye.

The beam was still there, what she saw was not an illusion but a solid sight.

A surge of indescribable excitement rose in her mind, making it impossible for her to stay calm now. She got in touch with her people through thoughts.

"Pasha, what kind of people are eligible to be called the Chosen One?"

"Have you seen the edge of the ring? The one whose beam of light can fill the entire field of vision will be the Chosen One we're looking for."

"This is too dramatic. Even Lady Eleanor's beam of light is only capable of covering half of the ring's view."

"Hence that person must have more potential than the Three Chiefs of the Union combined. I admit that the requirement is hard to meet, but we have no choice other than this. Remember, the Key neither represents the strength of the magic power nor equates to fighting capacity. That's why you have to make sure to check every witch."

"The edge? Fill the vfield ision?" Number 76 repeated it in her heart.

"No... Pasha, the miracle I'm seeing now is far more than that." Even seeing through the ring which had been put closest to her eye, No. 76 could not see the entire beam. The width of the beam extended beyond her sight so that only by moving the ring horizontally she was able to see the vast panorama of the huge light wall.

"Deities finally smile at human beings."

"Lady Natalia, you're right."

"I've found the Chosen One here."

When Roland entered the bathroom, yawning, he saw that Zero was washing up before the sink.

"Mm... Where's the toothpaste?"

"Here." The little girl slightly stood aside and handed him a tube of toothpaste that had almost run out.

"Thanks." Roland took a glass of water and stuffed the wet toothbrush into his mouth. Looking at himself and Zero, a tall person and a short person, in the mirror, crowding before the narrow sink and making synchronous elbow movements to brush their teeth, he suddenly felt that this scene was hilarious.

Zero spat out the foam in her mouth and shot Roland a glance. "What're you sneering at?"

"You're such a shorty." Roland returned with his nasal voice.

Then he felt a kick in his calf.

"Remember to shave, or you'll look old," she said as she swept back her white hair and began to tie a ponytail, "Don't shame me today."

"It was only a parents' meeting." He sighed and rinsed his toothbrush clean. "I'm not your true family. There's no need for an agent to be so formal."

Given that his wardrobe was filled with cheap clothes, he would be thankful to find something that would make him look virtuous, not to mention a formal suit.

"By the way, I think you look better with hair hanging down," Roland smacked and said, "but if you insist, I suggest the twin tail that'll suit you more."

"None of your business!" Zero retorted.

Then he was pushed out of the bathroom.

"It seems that her temper has worsened after summer... Do I indulge her too much?" Roland pondered.

As the times he came in and went out of the Dream World increased, Roland had mastered the trick of how to enter the Dream World. In other words, it depended on him. If he had not intended to enter it,

the strange Dream World would not appear, and he just slept through the night without any other dreams.

Thus, he could easily control the passing of time in the Dream World.

Over two months, apart from further explorations of the Holy City of Hermes, Roland had spent the rest of his time in various libraries searching for some half-remembered books he had read long ago.

In addition, he found that the peculiar power flowing in his body also worked in the memory fragment. For that reason, his venture to the snowfield turned out to be much smoother than he had imagined. With the purchased climbing ropes and drilling machine, he could reach deep into the cave under the cathedral, where the Pivotal Secret Temple was located and do an investigation. Although Roland did not find the Prayer Room that Isabella had mentioned, materials recording the secret history and the research on Magic Stone were really mind-blowing to him.

But he failed to enter the old Holy City by passing through the secret passage in the Pivotal Secret Area because when he was halfway in the passage, he saw that the road ahead just disappeared, leaving nothing but endless darkness and scarlet lightning, as if the void had consumed the other end.

It seemed that when Zero was defeated, her will to resist was still very strong and that only a small area, New Holy City, was saved in the memory fragment.

Roland's deposit was accumulated rapidly by selling the armor that he had moved out from the Holy City. Finally, he bought an air conditioner and installed it in the living room, as well as a bigger refrigerator to replace the old and small one, significantly improving his living conditions in the department.

Of course, there were still some troubles. He had not expected that some people had taken some photos of him when he had been running incredibly fast on the street to save Zero. Those photos were not only posted on the internet but also reported by the local news channel. But fortunately, since no one clearly captured his look and he also discarded his clothes right after the accident, Zero did not suspect him.

As a result, the topic of who this martialist-like man was and why he would wear such a casual suit of vest and shorts had gone viral on the internet for some time.

And about this, Roland had to say... "Ahem, my apology for being too poor to buy some decent clothes."

Now that he did not have to worry about his livelihood, he naturally turned his attention to his neighbors in this building.

He wondered if there were similar doors that opened into the memory fragments hidden in these people's rooms.

Apart from cheating, the simplest way to knock open their doors was to pay them.

"I'm ready, uncle. Let's go," Zero said as she finished dressing and walked to him with a bag on her back.

Today was September 12th, the first day of the new term, the attendance of every student's parent was mandatory.

Roland was impressed by Zero's new look.

She had put on a black short-sleeved shirt paired with a short pleated skirt and a pair of white stockings and sneakers, which made her look quite youthful and lovely.

She had tied her soft white hair in a twin tail that hung on her shoulders along with yellow hair ribbons, her lineament impeccable, her skin fair and translucent, her pupils light red, as if she was an elf walking out from the pictures.

Roland could not help reaching out his hand to rub her head and said, "That's right."

"I just happened to want to tie my hair like this, it's not because of what you said..."

"Yeah, I know."

"It's true!"

"I didn't say it's not true."

"Why do I think you're lying to me?"

"That's because you think too much," he said, pretending to be serious while holding back the laugh in his heart. "Let's go, or we'll miss the early bus."

...

All Roland needed to do in the parents' meeting was sitting in the back of the classroom and listening to the children reporting their goals and guarantees in the new term. Students at this age were not accustomed to lying and would work harder to meet the goals they had promised in front of their parents.

Roland had thought that it would be a peaceful morning, but he did not expect that the Dream World would be so unpredictable.

"Why is it you again?"

A crisp female voice rang in his ears.

He turned his head and found that it was Garcia who was sitting beside him.

Chapter 696: Victory of the Wise

Garcia wore a low-key outfit. She had on a plaid shirt and a pair of jeans paired with a pair of sunglasses and a cap on her head, probably not to draw unwanted attention. But Roland's impression of his sister was very deep, so he could immediately tell from her voice who she was, even if her face was veiled tightly.

Roland glanced at the note on the arm of the chair to make sure that he did not take the wrong seat before he asked, "Why can't it be me?"

"Well," she let out a nasal sound to show her dissatisfaction, apparently having seen the name on the note too.

"Anyway, I can't believe you have kids!"

This was totally mind-blowing. Did Zero take possession of both Garcia and her child who she gave birth to at the Port of Clearwater in the battle of Everwinter?

"My cousin," she spat out coldly.

"Well... It only seems to be a substitute." Roland thought.

Somehow he felt a bit strange about the change in Garcia's attitude towards him, from the contempt and disgust when they first met, to the current impatience which was open and obvious.

As attendees trickled in, the parents' meeting finally began. After the teacher on stage finished talking about his plan for the new term, it came to the part where every student had the right of speech. As soon as Zero rose from her chair, her pure natural white hair and crystal red pupils that looked remarkably unique, coupled with her beautiful appearance, triggered a sudden surge of argument among the parents and drew fixed gazes from all of the children. Her beauty was something that every witch maintained in the Dream World, something that could be count as a huge advantage in Roland's opinion.

Roland had no choice but to enjoy the "eye salute" from other attendees since he had to stand up to accompany Zero who was about to make a speech. He could sense the doubts and jeers in the other parents' eyes, thinking that Zero certainly belonged to another family and he was unqualified to be a parent. He could sense all that from their eyes and smiles. Roland had to admit that his casual outfit, a cartoon short-sleeved shirt paired with a pair of knee-length pants, made him look extremely different compared with the rest of them.

After Roland returned to his seat, he sensed Garcia's secret gaze, which depressed him even more. With a pair of sunglasses, she could gaze at him as freely as she wanted to, but if he stared back to her and found out that she was not actually paying any attention to him, that would be quite awkward.

It was not long before he felt his elbow being nudged by Garcia and a note was passed to him.

Roland frowned and unfolded the note. Her handwriting displayed such a sharpness and sternness that even someone who could not appreciate calligraphy could feel the power behind it. As Roland read the note, his heart thudded slightly.

"You're the mysterious martialist who pelted in the street the other day, right?"

"Hell, how did she know that?" Roland cursed in his heart.

Roland could not help but turn to look at Garcia, unexpectedly finding that she was still writing something.

Soon came the second note.

"Don't deny it. Martialists have a very acute sense of judging body figures and a sharp memory to capture the details of the movements. When I first saw you in the news, your figure gave me a familiar

feeling, but now I'm sure it's you. Tell me honestly, did you just awaken your Force of Nature not long ago or did you mean to hide who you really were from the beginning?"

Remembering his figure? How dramatic! Even if a video was placed in front of him, he was not sure he would be able to recognize himself. Anyway, Garcia could not go so far as to ask every man in her eyes that had a similar figure. That meant that she must be, in a sense, extremely observant in order to connect the mysterious martialist with him.

"Is this why she changed her attitude?"

Roland hesitated for a moment, and then as soon as he raised his hand, a pen was given to him.

He had intended to deny it, to argue about how absurd it was, but an idea suddenly hit him as his pen touched the paper.

To be honest, his interest in the martialist was as much as that of any onlooker. He did not even have the slightest intention of picking up the gauntlet. In the Dream World, he could be regarded as half of a creator God, so winning a fight was no big deal, yet losing would be undoubtedly humiliating. Moreover, in nine cases out of ten, according to what he saw on TV, he would most likely lose without any formal training.

Actually, compared to collecting materials and exploring the memory fragments, the studying of the Force of Nature was not a top priority, yet he found out that he might as well take this encounter as a nice breakthrough. It would obviously be good if he could take this opportunity to improve the relationship between him and Garcia. He could use it to get the chance to visit her in her apartment.

Following his mind, Roland wrote down the answer on the back of the note, his handwriting crooked.

"What is Force of Nature? I don't quite understand what you mean."

"Even kids know that. Why are you acting like a fool?"

After tossing back the note, she also took off her sunglasses and cast a stern glance at Roland out of the corners of her eyes.

"So the Force of Nature is the reason why my strength grew suddenly?"

"The Force of Nature can do more than that. Haven't you paid any attention to the propaganda of the Martialist Association?"

"I am neither interested in fighting nor concerned with what you said."

"Besides participating in the competitions, being a martialist also comes with the responsibility to preserve urban order and ensure social security."

"What is that?"

"It's complicated. We'd better find a place to discuss more details."

Excellent, Roland applauded himself for his own intelligence in his heart. Things seemed to be moving in the exact direction he had hoped.

"Really? But I have to go to the company this afternoon. What about visiting you in the evening?"

Roland got everything under his control. He thought if he promised Garcia now, they would probably find a cafe or a small restaurant nearby to have a talk, but if he made up some excuses to delay the talk until evening, she would find it hard to refuse his visit her home. After all, room 0825 and 0827 were so close that made it much more reasonable to have the talk in her home at a time that was between dinner and midnight.

As Roland expected, Garcia hesitated for a while and then nodded.

The students and parents took turns to speak on the stage. When it was Garcia's cousin's turn to stand up and make a speech, the murmuring of the audience burst out again.

But this time they focused on his social class and background rather than his school performance and his appearance.

"Is he the little lord of the Clover Association?"

"He didn't come with his parents."

"How could famous entrepreneurs like them have time to attend this meeting?"

"Does this lady also belong to the Clover Association?"

"It should be. Apparently, she specially dressed up to avoid unwanted attention."

"It would be nice if I could accost her."

"Stop daydreaming. How would a lady like her ever talk to you?"

"The Clover Association? What the hell is that?" Roland rolled his eyes. "Sounds like an extraordinarily big company, but in that case, how could a relative of the owner of the Association live in the shabby tube-shaped apartment?"

Moreover, Roland noticed a little strange expression on Garcia's face. Although her eyes were hidden under the sunglasses, her clenched fists and sinking mouth gave up her emotions.

Roland had a feeling that there was more to it, but he did not think more about it. Tonight, he would have the chance to check whether his assumption was correct.

Chapter 697: Meeting Garcia at Night

...

After finishing his dinner and waiting for Zero to return to her room to do her homework, Roland arrived at the doorstep of apartment 0827 as promised.

The door creaked open after he knocked on it a few times.

Garcia, still wearing that ice-cold expression of hers, said, "Come on in."

After entering, Roland found that the decoration of her apartment was much more luxurious than his. The flooring was changed into real wood. There was a shoe shelf by the entrance, and a crystal chandelier hung from the ceiling. Even the walls were painted over with fine white paint. It was definitely not the original cheap paint that covered the walls of this tube-shaped apartment building before.

"I don't have extra slippers. You can wear mine for now." She pointed to a pair of slippers decorated with furry rabbit ears in the bottom layer of the shoe shelf. "I love wearing large slippers so they shouldn't be too small for you."

Roland put the slippers on. They were not small but they were winter slippers. He felt hot the moment he put them on. He could not stand the pair of furry rabbit ears and could hardly imagine what Garcia looked like when she wore these cute slippers.

She seems so standoffish. How can such a pair of slippers match her dry personality?

He walked to the sofa and sat on it. "By the way, could I have some water? Dinner was a little salty."

Garcia frowned and gave him a look. "Only cold water."

"Cold water is fine."

When she turned around to fetch water from the kitchen, Roland held his head up and looked around the room. All the apartments in this building had identical layouts. Every two adjacent apartments were symmetrical. Based on the layout of his own apartment, he was certain that this corridor facing the entrance must lead to the storage.

As he expected, he saw a similar room at the end of the corridor, but Garcia had redecorated it. She even changed the door into a louvered sliding door. Normally, this type of door could not be locked, which was good news for him. But he was still worried that she might have also dismantled the iron door and refurbished the outer walls when decorating.

When Garcia returned to the living room with a glass of water in her hand, Roland had stopped looking and leaned on the sofa to watch the TV.

"Thank you!" Roland said as he fetched the glass. "You live here alone? But in the parent's meeting this morning, they all said that you're the daughter of the Clover..."

"No, I'm not. I've got nothing to do with the Clover. You could even say that they're my enemies." Garcia interrupted in a cold tone.

"Enemies?" Roland was stunned. "Then your cousin..."

Garcia seemed somewhat depressed. She explained, "They're taking advantage of my cousin by getting him to talk me into going back, but if I leave here, the Clover Association would demolish this building."

"So it's the Clover Association that launched the mall expansion project next door?"

"Who else would dare to demolish such an ancient building?" Garcia looked confused and asked, "You live here. Why don't you know this?"

This is going to be bad! She isn't Zero. She's a mature grown adult. If she inherits the characteristics of Princess Garcia, it would be even more difficult to fool her.

"Ahem... I've paid little attention to what's going on around this place. Plus, I've lost my job earlier and haven't stepped out of my apartment for almost six months." Roland shifted the topic in a hurry. "You've told me that a martialist has some other jobs besides participating in contests?"

"Yes. For a martialist, to participate in a contest is just equivalent to training. The most important mission of us is to fight against erosion from the outside world instead of winning prizes and publicizing the martial arts to the audience."

"What erosion?" he was stunned and asked.

"You should know the Fallen Evils. They're one kind of the erosion and also the most common. They aren't people who lost their control over the Force of Nature after awakening. Instead, they're those who were eroded by the outside world, thus turning into another lifeform. Conventional means can barely harm them, so we need to stand up and fight against them." Garcia explained to him with a low voice.

Roland swallowed hard as a sense of unease grew in his heart. "The Dream World is eroded?"

"What's the meaning of the outside world?"

"I can't tell you more about that unless you join the Martialist Association and obtain a hunting license."

"Why?"

"Because not all people who have awakened their Force of Nature will choose to side with the martialists." Garcia pronounced her words one by one. "Some people even hope that forces from the outside world would break into our world. These people are hostile to all human beings. Hence, a hunting license would not only allow a person to fight against Fallen Evils, but also permit martialists to kill those awakened people who want to destabilize the society."

"So that's why it's called the hunting license?" Roland was frightened upon hearing this. In other words, if I confirm that I've awakened with the Force of Nature and refuse to join their Martialist Association, wouldn't I be considered as their mortal enemy?"

Garcia shook her head as if she saw through his concerns. "A small part of the awakened refused to join the Martialist Association or to work for those forces of evil. They're called the centrists. Our Martialist Association won't take action against them, but the Fallen Evils are different. Most centrists act alone, so they would frequently get attacked by them. If you don't plan on joining the Martialist Association, you'd better hide your power forever."

Seeing as Garcia had told him so much, Roland could not help but feel awkward. He initially thought that she was a callous person, but actually, she was not that difficult to talk to. When they first met each other in this world, he had even thought that she was an arrogant woman who thought she was above everyone else.

"When we first met each other, your immediate reaction was to reach for the weapon on your back, so why should I be nice to you? You should feel lucky that you didn't actually pull your weapon out."

Otherwise, you would already be lying in a hospital bed." He finally loosened up and let go of his earlier doubts, but all he got was a blank stare.

Just at this moment, Garcia's phone started ringing. She glanced at her phone and frowned, saying, "I've got to take this call."

After saying that, she took the phone into her bedroom and closed the door behind her.

Apparently, she did not want Roland to overhear her phone call.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!" Roland thought.

He stood up right away and took off the slippers fashioned with furry rabbit ears. He then quickly walked to the end of the corridor with bare feet.

Through the gaps in the louvered door, he was able to get a glimpse of what was inside. Garcia had redecorated it into a walk-in closet where there were various types of female clothing, including some female underwear.

However, nothing could stop him from exploring the truth of this world.

He pushed the louvered door without hesitation, and while smelling the fragrance of those female clothes, he walked into the closet.

After walking through layers of clothing, he found a dark turquoise gate at the far end of the closet. He noticed that it was unlocked and its handle was covered with a thick layer of dust which stood out of place among the clean surroundings.

Has Garcia never entered this Gate of Memory?

But this was not the time to think about this. Roland took a deep breath and lightly turned the handle.

The smell of seawater immediately filled his nose, and the sound of waves lapping the beach came from afar. The deep blue sea slowly unfolded in front of him like a vast curtain.

Chapter 698: Nightingale's Suspicion

...

It was the morning of the next day when he woke up from the Dream World.

Roland excitedly swung his fists in the bed as he found out that his guess was right. Every household in the Apartment of Souls has a gate leading to a memory fragment, just like his, and the world behind each gate was a place on which the loser living in the room, had once placed their biggest hope.

Given that, Princess Garcia must have left her last memory in the Port of Clearwater, the location of her lifetime's work and the starting point to compete to be the new ruler of Graycastle.

Due to the fact that Garcia could have hung up the phone at any time, Roland had not entered the gate to further explore its inside world. After all, he had been in an embarrassing position and it would not have been a pleasant experience if the martialist had considered him an underwear thief. Before leaving

her room, he had tactfully asked her about the memory portal by complaining about the useless iron door in his own room, but her response was quite cold, even boring.

It meant that either she was telling a lie or she still did not notice the weird iron gate.

If the latter was true, it deserved to be thought through.

Perhaps, except for him, all of the people in the Apartment of Souls had no access to those sealed memories and he might be the only one that could see and open the memory portal.

It was simple to prove this thought. Next time he would ask Zero to clean up the lumber-room, and at that time, he would know the answer.

Anyway, it would be an exciting discovery.

Since the demons swallowed by Zero held the key, it was not necessary for him to explore each household thoroughly. The demons had become the residents of the Apartment of Souls. Finding them and entering their memory fragments might help him find some useful information about the Battle of Divine Will.

...

When he went to his office, Wendy had been waiting for him for quite some time.

There was a stack of resumes on the desk, which was the detailed information about the four witches from the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Although he had known the general situation from Yoriko, he was also willing to conduct a whole review of it, especially those things happening in the Kingdom of Wolfheart.

Roland read each page of the document co-written by Wendy and Scroll. In the end, he fixed his eyes on the name of Annie.

He felt quite familiar when he first heard of Annie. After Nightingale reminded him, he remembered the resentful history between the Bloodfang Association and the witches of the Kingdom of Wolfheart.

However, Annie was a quite common name, especially among the poor people in the lower class. At least, five or six out of 100 girls were named Annie, so it was normal to repeatedly hear the name. But the resume clearly recorded that she had indeed looked for the Bloodfang Association, and that she had not only been rejected but also almost sold to the nobles, so she was probably the "sister Annie" mentioned by Iffy.

"I have to say that such a coincidence is really filled with dramas."

A week ago, he had received a confidential letter delivered by a carrier pigeon from Fjords. The letter read that Tilly and the other witches had started their trip. They should have done half of the trip by now. He did not know what the scene would be like when the two met.

Although the reunion was not all about joys, and Iffy would certainly have a mixed bag of feelings of happiness and guilt, would Annie forgive Iffy who had betrayed her?

Roland secretly sighed and hoped that the time would heal the trauma between them.

He closed the resume and looked up to see Wendy asking, "Which places have you decided to show them around today?"

"Your Majesty," Wendy replied, "I want to give them a tour of North Slope Mine, the steam engine assembly plant as well as the Chaos Drinks plant."

The proposal was put forward by Wendy that the Witch Union would lead new witches to show them around Neverwinter. As far as she was concerned, this method would let newcomers be familiar with the local life and eliminate some unnecessary precautions and misunderstandings at the same time. After a two-day visiting tour and one-day resting, they could voluntarily choose to sign a contract or not, which had become a usual practice for the Union. Since Roland left the management of the witches to Wendy, she gradually got to the right track.

Judging from the visiting spots she had picked, these places all demonstrated that witches could collaborate with the subjects and also proved to them that the assistant witches could cast their abilities for other purposes, not only for fighting.

Roland nodded in satisfaction and said, "So I leave all this matter to you. Please take Lightning and Maggie with you. If something unexpected happens, they can help you control the situation."

After all, Wendy was not good at fighting and he also thought that every new witch would not be as nice as Anna. If there were two assistants flying in the sky to keep them alerted and Wendy had a revolver, she could deal with most unexpected emergencies.

"I see."

"By the way, what do you think of the guide?" He changed the topic.

"You mean No.76?"

"Yeah." Roland took a sip of tea. Usually, he would not spend his precious time on a normal slave, but Yorke spoke highly of her. Additionally, after hearing the story told by his old friend, he also respected such a lady that would sacrifice her own life to save others. If there was no problem in her identity and background, he would like to offer her a good job.

"She gets along with the four witches, especially Amy who considers her as a relative. As for me, if No.76 were vicious, she wouldn't have saved others' lives at the expense of her own life at the critical junction."

"We have the same thought. What if she is appointed to be a clerk of Witch Union? I remember that there are only three or four people in your office. If you have more subordinates, you'll find it easier to manage the organization."

This position did not have extra requirements. The salary was acceptable and the job was quite easy. As long as she got on well with the witches, she was eligible to do the job.

Wendy smiled, "I've no problems if she's willing to take the job."

"No, Your Majesty," Nightingale abruptly appeared and interrupted him, "don't offer her any job at present."

Roland was stunned, then asked, "Is there anything wrong?"

"I... I can't tell," she hesitated for a while and continued, "but I can feel something isn't right."

He took a weird look at Nightingale and kept silent for a while before saying, "I got it. Put this job thing aside."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

After Wendy bowed and stepped out his office, Nightingale anxiously held Roland's hands and asked, "Sorry, Your Majesty. Am I going... too far?"

"For the sake of safety?"

"Yes."

"That's what you should do." He tapped the backs of her hands and comforted her, "You're responsible for the internal security of Neverwinter and you're not the one to blame if you're extra cautious about that. But no records in your documents suggest that something is wrong with her. What on earth is the problem?"

Hearing that, Nightingale relaxed a bit. "No.76 didn't lie and my ability can also prove it. But..." She paused for a moment and spoke out her doubts. "I think that she doesn't behave like a normal slave when she's faced with strangers, so it would be safer, if I'm given more time, to observe her."

Chapter 699: An Unappeasable Mood

When No. 76 entered the living room, the other four witches were sitting around the round table and enjoying the new food that had just been provided by the servant.

"Good morning," Amy was the first one to greet her, "Come over here and have breakfast. Besides bread, we have fried eggs and milk this time! I haven't had such a sumptuous meal in a long time."

"Sure," She agreed, a happy look on her face, as she took a seat beside Amy. After losing her sense of taste, food was only consumed to sustain life, while the process had become torturous. Having this affliction for hundreds of years now, she could calmly engulf the trash-like, tasteless food. She would then provide the appropriate praised based on her distant memories. "This is really delicious!"

"Isn't it?" Amy mumbled as she chewed some egg, "It has been over a year since I last ate fried eggs..."

"Don't complain, at least you ate it a year ago." Broken Sword objected, "I haven't eaten fried eggs in almost 10 years."

"Ahem..." Annie cleared her throat and said, "there is someone who has never eaten a fried egg."

"Who?" The three echoed, all in a daze.

"Me." Annie pointed to herself before continuing, "When I was in my village, my neighbor raised a flock of old hens. I always wanted to crawl into the henhouse and steal an egg so I could have a taste. But, my

first attempt ended with me almost being beaten to death by my father, with a rolling pin, after he discovered me."

"Your father is honest." Hero said in a respectful tone.

"Honest?" She shrugged and said, "he was only afraid that the neighbor would discover me and make a claim for damages. As for the eggs, I had stolen, they were eaten by my father and younger brother."

The living room instantly fell into a brief silence.

"Ahem, let's have our breakfast," Hero deflected, somewhat embarrassed.

"Pfft..." Amy was the first to burst into laughter, "Hahaha...so that's what happened...haha..."

As soon as Amy laughed, the rest of the witches were unable to restrain their laughter.

Even No. 76 could not help but smile herself. After struggling to survive for so long, these witches finally found a peaceful home. From here, she felt like she could see the epitome of Taquila in its heyday.

No, it was not the epitome any longer. She told herself that Neverwinter would be the new Holy City and that the witches would be bound to regain their glory.

Because The Chosen One had appeared.

"Huh, you didn't sleep well, did you?" Amy stretched out her hand to wipe the corner of No. 76's eyes, "You have dark circles under your eyes."

"Oh...maybe," No. 76 lowered her head as she replied, "I was too excited to fall asleep last night."

Even though she only needed two hours of deep sleep to replenish her spirit, she couldn't go days without sleep. If a soul was overused, the effects were reflected in the physical body, which was a big taboo for witches. After all, a damaged and senile body could be remedied while a traumatized soul would remain perpetually withered.

How could she sleep though! She did not want to fall into the dark dormancy at all, she was afraid that everything was just a dream and that when she woke up, The Chosen One would have disappeared into thin air.

What she needed most was to find the one with the orange light and to contact Pasha.

It really wasn't going to be easy.

According to Wendy, most of the witches lived in the Witch Building of the Castle District. However, she wasn't a witch and she couldn't enter the castle by joining the Union. It was unlikely that she could depend on these witches from the Kingdom of Wolfheart.

Of course, she could risk being discovered and try to sneak into the castle. That way she could confirm The Chosen One, unfortunately, that was not a smart option. She didn't know if The Chosen One would believe her and the green-haired witch, that had the ability for magic perception, was difficult to deal with. No.76 wasn't sure if she could smoothly extract The Chosen One through the maze ruins while being pursued by combat witches. God's Punishment Army was born to battle witches, but they were not invincible.

There was also the local lord that happened to be dreadfully powerful, which acted as a type of deterrent. Since the lord could defeat Starfall City they feared him taking possession of the many soldiers of God's Punishment Army.

Since they lost the ability to repopulate, they needed humans to help them restrengthen their numbers, even if the demons are defeated. Hence, Pasha being right about them needing to, sooner or later, cooperate with the Four Kingdoms.

Therefore, unless absolutely necessary, Taquila wouldn't turn against the Kingdom of Graycastle.

Of course, if the king wanted to kill The Chosen One, it would leave her no choice. Even if she had to sacrifice herself, she would protect The Chosen One, who could dominate the Battle of the Divine Will.

"Can't you nap later?" Amy hid her smile as she said, "The servant informed us that lunch and dinner will be served on time, so unlike before, we don't need to go out and spend the day finding our own food."

"No worries, Miss Nana completely cured me." No. 76 stated while patting her chest, indicating her energy had been replenished. Then she hesitated before asking, "Is Lady Wendy going to show you around Neverwinter later? I...I don't want to stay alone."

"You can come with us," Amy responded instantly.

"But..."

"Don't worry about it, we can hang around the streets. Plus, if you come, you can help carry Hero."

"I understand," Broken Sword echoed, "I don't like staying alone in the room, either."

"I'm sorry if I am any trouble for you," Hero smiled at No. 76.

Annie calmly said, "Don't worry. I'll talk to Lady Wendy about it."

"Thank you..." No. 76 bowed deeply, lowering her head.

She had to admit that she had some affections for this younger generation. Even though they weren't considered a combat witches, the survivors of the Union had gradually started to change their minds. After 400 years, with the constantly shifting fortunes from prosperity to poverty and their hopeless lives in the deep cave, their moods were finally starting to shift.

However, they did not have to take turns carrying Hero as they had expected.

Wendy brought a delicate wheelchair.

"You can push the wheels to drive it back and forth. If you rotate the wheels you can change directions." She personally demonstrated this as she explained, "Anna and Soraya worked together overnight to forge this wheelchair. With it, Hero can go anywhere, within a limited area."

Hearing the name of Anna, No. 76 was startled. Wasn't Anna the High Awakened claimed by Nana? Would they really go through so much trouble for a common witch who had lost her legs?

"Thank you...My Lady," Hero said, choking back tears.

"You're welcome. Please regard Neverwinter as your personal home." Wendy said gently, "As I've mentioned, all the witches here are your sisters."

While Hero familiarized herself with the wheelchair, Annie asked Wendy, the leader of the Union, if No. 76 could join them.

However, Wendy didn't respond quickly, instead, she turned to look at her. After a moment passed Wendy nodded, "Sure, what's one person more." However, the long pause caught No. 76 off guard.

Somehow, the pause made her feel uneasy.

Is my inspection not over yet?

Chapter 700: The First Senior Witch

It would be meaningless to fret over the matter now as she had to follow those four even if that would catch attention from others; this would be the best opportunity to observe the city and the Witch Union closely. If she waited until the witches entered the Castle District, it would be much harder to keep in contact with them.

With that thought, No.76 showed Wendy a somewhat timid smile. "I'm sorry to have caused so much trouble."

"See, I told you that Miss Wendy wouldn't mind," Amy said with a grin.

Instead, it was Annie who sensed something strange. She looked at the two people and did not say a word.

"Let's go." After Hero became a bit familiar with using the wheelchair, Wendy clapped her hands and smiled. "Our first stop for today is the central area of Neverwinter, North Slope Mine!"

"Mine?" All five of them were dumbfounded for a moment.

"What's the point of visiting a mine?" That was the first thought came to No. 76's mind. She could bet that the rest of the group were having similar thoughts. In both Taquila and the Kingdom of Dawn, labors such as mining were all distributed to slaves or prisoners. The working environment in the mine was extremely hazardous. It was common to have deaths and injuries for heavy labors like mining and transporting. Only the valueless ones would be left in the mines to perish.

"Perhaps Wendy's purpose is to exhort newcomers like us to behave ourselves by showing us the consequences of disobedience?" No. 76 guessed.

However, there were no hints of threat in Wendy's tone. "Instead of a mine, it's more like the source of power to Neverwinter. The more steel that one could produce, the more qualified the one would become to represent justice. This is a sentence that His Majesty always says to us. It's a mouthful, right?" There was a lingering smile in her eyes when she talked about the king. "Anyways, you guys will know when you guys see it."

"Represent... justice?"

No. 76 pondered this phrase several times in her mind and still failed to figure out the relation between steel and justice.

When they walked out of the Foreign Affairs Building, the snow on the street had been cleaned. They did not know what kind of magical method that the locals used, there was now only a puddle of water at where the heavy snow had previously piled up. New snow was flowing from the sky, but much less compared to that a few days ago. Hectic freemen were everywhere on the street, seeming to have endless work, they walked hurriedly through the streets and allies in the snow. It was the serene time of severe winter and the Months of Demons, but the whole city was filled with liveliness.

The Five-Colored Stone heated up again, she looked around and soon found her target. There were two people above her head... no, it was a human and a bird, presumably coming to keep an eye on them.

The Witch Union had impressed No. 76 furthermore this time. Such means and conscientiousness were comparable to the small city-state during the Taquila age. It did not seem like a wild witch organization after the decline of the Union.

Besides, she also confirmed that her judgment was accurate, with the clairvoyant power of the green-haired witch, plus the tracking of the flying witch, it would be impossible for her to escape from this place after having exposed her identity.

"Since we've got some time on the way to the mine, let me simply introduce the identity of the witch along with some knowledge regarding witches' power." The red-haired witch led the group to the north and said, "Since the awakening stage, witches are facing the trouble of the magic power bites. The church used to call it the Demonic Torture. However, it's actually a natural reaction due to the continual growth of magic power. You guys must have already known this point by now."

Annie calmly nodded and said, "Yes, otherwise it would be difficult to survive through adulthood."

Amy raised her hand and added, "I heard about it from Broken Sword."

Broken Sword said with a little embarrassment, "I used my powers quite frequently at the time when I wandered in the wilderness. I was just randomly guessing though."

Wendy exclaimed with a sigh. "The Witch Cooperation Association said the same words too. It's a blessing that we all made it through. Once we've stepped into adulthood, the original power of the witch will be solidified and a witch might even develop a derivative skill. The specific symptom is that the magic swirl in her body will expand and becomes distinct."

"What's that?" Amy asked in curiosity.

"Something that every witch has, it's like an air current that never ceases to stop swirling." Wendy patted the young girl's head lovingly. "Only a few witches are able to observe them. It's the exact form of the magic power, the specifics of its form determine the type of magic power."

"Is, is that so?" Amy asked in astonishment.

Wendy smiled and said, "Wait until the day to test your magic power. These are all the items that need to be recorded. By that time, you'll know the look of the magic swirl inside your body."

No. 76 could not help but frown, thinking, "Has this kind of knowledge about the survival of witches become a secret? What did Starfall City do? The more witches survive, the more ingredients they'll have to establish the God's Punishment Army. Why did they block information like this?"

"Or perhaps, in these 400 years, the witches of Starfall City deviated from the will of Lady Alice?"

Wendy continued to explain, "However, the day of adulthood isn't the end of a witch's magical power. Besides the consolidation of power, there's even the evolution of power. There are no limits on the number of times a power can evolve. It'll not be confined to the original power either. As long as a witch continues to strengthen her understanding of herself and magic power, her ability will continue to evolve."

"Really?" Amy exclaimed in excitement. "Someone like me could evolve too?"

"Of course. As long as you study hard." With these words, Wendy took out a thin silver plate with a red crystal embedded in it and said, "Come to me, I want to introduce a new sister to you all."

No. 76 could not believe what she saw. "That's... The Sigil of Listening?"

Her pupils contracted all the sudden. "How can a wild witch organization own the heritage of the Holy City of Taquila?"

"No... they would have such a chance. They might find a couple of remaining Sigils of Listening from the scattered ruins of the kingdom. This equipment was usually distributed to Blessed Warriors. I remember... the Quest Society never made such crude Sigils of Listening."

"Yes, it looks like an incomplete sigil. Like a temporary test target made by some unknown witch."

As soon as the red-haired witch finished her sentence, the silhouette in the sky rushed down and perched on her head.

It turned out to be a lovely blonde girl and a fat white pigeon which No.76 thought must be the girl's pet.

The group still stood agape as they were shocked by the speaking crystal.

"Hello, everyone." The young girl showed a bright smile. "My name is Lightning, the greatest adventurer of Neverwinter!"

"I'm Maggie! Coo-Coo!" Pigeon said and spread its wings.

"Gosh, the bird is talking!" Amy widened her eyes.

"They're witches," Annie said calmly, "The power is most likely related to changing the body shape."

"You guessed right." Wendy stretched her arm to allow the Pigeon to rest on it. "She's a sister of ours that went through the evolution of power."

"So it's not a pet..." No. 76 blanked out for a moment. "Wait, what did she say? That pigeon called Maggie is a Senior Witch?"

She stared at the pigeon. It rubbed Wendy's cheek amiably and spread its wings and lifted its head up when being introduced to the group. It seemed to be presenting its strength by doing so. She could not help but wonder, "Is, is it really a Senior Witch?"

"Back in Taquila , she would be able to join the upper class of the Union and become one of the rulers of the Holy City!"

"I should show respect to every Senior Witch. It's an unbreakable rule of the Union, but..."

No. 76 felt something cracked in her heart.

Chapter