

Witch 781

Chapter 781: Sand Road, Wolf Heart

This was a long dream.

A dream that Lorgar knew she was in.

The moment the Four-winged Eagle landed on her, the pain of the broken bones in her legs coursed through her veins. Her legs were, in her view, as crushed as the wheat under the millstone, in which she had seen her clansmen process food purchased from the north in spite of her lack of knowledge of how to grow wheat.

There was no way for her to stand up again for the rest of her life, not to mention fight.

But now she was standing.

Thus, it had to be a dream.

For only in a dream, what was made could be unmade.

Taking a deep breath, Lorgar looked into the space before her, where a sand road started from her feet and stretched as far as she could see. She stepped forward and, from time to time, she would encounter an opponent, one of those that she had defeated before, walking towards her with neither a hint of laughter nor mockery. One by one, they passed by her and disappeared into the endless sand behind her.

A sandworm was the first to come.

It was her achievement in her first hunt when she was 12 years old.

The sandworm would be most vulnerable when it was moving in the sand and leaving a clear tail, but once it was skulking in silence, it would be hard for the hunter to spot it. However, that could not baffle the civilians of Sand Nation, who might be more deceitful than any other creature in the desert. Lorgar attempted to disguise herself as a common bush and wait for the sandworm to come. By the time it was close enough, she shoved her spike into the sand as well as the sandworm beneath it.

Her excellent hunting performance had exceeded her siblings and even in the big clans of the Iron Sand City, was unmistakable. As a consequence of that hunt, she fell in love with the happy feeling of confronting and fighting.

The sandworm coming now did not take the cover of sand but raised its head as it traveled slowly in the sand like a snake. For a moment, Lorgar thought it would spit venom at her that would deform her face, but nothing happened. It went by quietly.

A Scorpion and a Desert Wolf came next... her second and third opponent.

The Scorpion passed by, but the Desert Wolf stopped, who, after a moment of hesitation, walked up to her, wagging its tail. It snuffed her calloused bare feet before turning around and walking by her side.

Lorgar recalled the brutal challenge between her and the wolf. Constrained by the fact that much more effort was required for a Mojin woman to be a qualified duelist, she had to seek for the next prey right after the hunt of many sandworms and scorpions. She aimed at the wolf pack.

But the wolves moving in packs were more fearful than she had thought. A sandstorm had struck them and untied the hunting team. By the time it subsided, numerous wolves emerged on the horizon.

The Sand Nation people hemmed in by wolves had fought valiantly, but they were outnumbered. One by one, they fell under the sharp claws and fangs coming from all around. Lorgar had thought she was doomed. At the last moment, a sharp pain took her and then she awakened to be a Divine Lady.

She became the giant King of Wolfheart.

Standing on the sand that was soaked in blood, she looked down at the wolves, whoever met her eyes huddled down, as if they were greeting their dominating God.

The road after her awakening turned much broader.

As strong performers of her age, clan fighters, and battle-tested warriors... approached her one after another and disappeared. Lorgar's heart tensed.

Perhaps the dream would come to an end when the last opponent passed by her.

There was not much time left for her.

She wanted to slow down... but it did not help.

Soon the earth darkened as if something large was passing over her head. Lorgar looked up and saw the Four-winged Eagle.

The last moment was coming.

At the same time, with a shaking roar, the Desert Wolf broadened its muscles and jumped at that sky-dominating beast.

The two beasts collided hard, sending blood and feathers all around. They fought their best as if wanting to finish the duel on the Burning Stage that had not played out yet.

Lorgar held her breath and gazed at her last battle. Her body would precisely record every feeling during the fight, which was exactly the reason why she could improve much more rapidly than ordinary people. If she got the chance to fight the beast again, it was certain that she could persevere longer and even snap its head before Ashes lent a hand.

What a pity that the opportunity was beyond her grasp.

As the battle was reaching fever pitch, Lorgar wanted to join and fight alongside the giant wolf, but her body was stiff and she even lost the feeling in her feet.

She realized it was time to wake up.

The fear grasped her heart and she began trembling all over.

She did not want to be confined to a bed, disabled.

She wanted to stand up!

To continue to fight!

However, she felt increasingly confined. The feeling had crept from her legs to her neck and she could not even manage to move her throat now.

Suddenly, the Desert Wolf howled agonizingly from the pain of its torn abdomen ripped open by the eagle. Its intestines poured out as it faltered to Lorgar. The wolf only managed to move a few steps before its last strength evaporated and it fell in Lorgar's direction. Even at the last moment of its life, it attempted to block the rest of the strikes from the enemy for her.

The strikes on its back were like the beats on her heart.

No!

Lorgar abruptly opened her eyes and sat up.

The sand road and the beasts were suddenly all gone. Beside her came the cry of her maid, "Princess... you, you woke up!"

"Yes..." She was in a trance for a while. "I woke up."

"Which means the time I can stand is... Wait!" Lorgar was bewildered. She could clearly see the maid approaching her bedside in panic and feel the touch of the towel on her skin when the maid wiped her sweat. In her sight, the roof of the old tent, the knife hanging on the wall, and the burning brazier were all incredibly vivid.

But how could she capture such a clear vision with only one eye?

Subconsciously, she touched her left eye... To her surprise, it was intact.

No, not just the eyes, both of her arms were good and her entire body was painless, even her feet!

Throwing back the covers, she scrambled out of bed and stood with both her feet on the ground firmly.

"What?" She looked at the maid who had been shocked by her behavior.

"The new Divine Lady brought by the northerners healed you," the maid stuttered, trying to explain.

"She didn't even use any medicine. With a slight touch of her hands, your wound healed over."

"There's a witch called Nana in Neverwinter of Graycastle, who can heal anybody, even someone who's breathing his last or whose limbs are entirely broken."

So what Ashes had said was not to comfort her, but was real. There indeed was a witch who possessed such a miraculous power.

"Where are they now?" Lorgar quickly slipped on a coat and asked, "I have to thank her."

"They've gone."

"What?" She frowned. "What about Ashes?"

"She's not in the Iron Sand City either. Two days ago, the Osha clan took the first batch of Sand Nation people to the Southern Territory."

"Is she..." the Wolf Girl slowed down. "How long have I been out?"

Timidly, the maid held up three fingers and then added three.

"Six days. What a long dream." She sighed. "Is there anything else that happened in the Iron Sand City during that period?"

"Yes, the Wildwave clan annexed the severely buffeted Black River clan and challenged us..." The girl looked a little depressed. "Lord Chief didn't, didn't take the challenge, but gave up directly. The rank of Wildflame has dropped to third... We couldn't keep the Stone Castle any longer."

"Really?" Lorgar raised her eyebrows. "I need to see my father."

"Ah... Wait My Princess, you forgot your hood and cloak!" The maid followed Lorgar to the doorway with some clothes. "Many people have come to the castle recently, some coming for negotiation, some for..." Her voice lowered as she spoke.

"Driving us out, right?" Lorgar reached out her hand to touch her pointed ear and then smiled at the maid. "Keep them, for I no longer need them."

"What? But..."

Her father had told her to conceal her unique unhuman-like features before she succeeded the chief, for even a Divine Lady would be excluded and mistrusted for an abnormal look. But she had understood what she really wanted after finishing the long sand road in her dream.

Half woman and half beast? A Monster?

That did not prevent her from continuing her fight, did it?

Lorgar waved her hand, giving no more words, she then walked directly towards the top floor of the Stone Castle.

Chapter 782: Say Goodbye

Along the way, she witnessed her clansmen coming and going with bags on their backs, their sad faces displayed an obvious reluctance to leave their homes.

Since their ranks had dropped down to third, they would be distributed to the much smaller houses of Stone Castle. It would be even worse for the people who were no longer be eligible to live in the castle. They were going to be moved to the campsite in the outer street. Even though it belonged to the Iron Sand City, it would be inconvenient when compared to the central area.

After all, the big clans Stone Castles controlled the limited pieces of land around the lakes and oases.

Lorgar etched their expressions in her mind and stored it in her heart.

As the guard stationed outside her father's bedroom saw Lorgar coming, he couldn't help but smile.
"Princess, you... are healed!"

"Yeah, as good as I was," Lorgar joked. "Is my father in his room?"

"Lord Chief is always in there, however..." The guard hesitated. "He is not alone."

She had an idea who they might be so she didn't bother asking.

That's when she heard the sounds of an argument coming from behind the closed door.

"I thought we settled this already. Your clan would vacate the main castle within three days. So, why are you still here?" someone inquired loudly. "Are you defying the vow of the Three Gods?"

"Mind your attitude, Kabucha!" a voice chastised. If she had correctly identified it, the voice belonged to her oldest brother Rohan. "Now that you've absorbed the Black River clan, you should make them vacate, so we can move in. We can't share a space with them while they are still mourning their loss, they still have white linens hanging on the walls."

"You can send your men in to tear down the linen. Our Lord Chief wants results, not your excuses."

"You—!"

"Ha, since your clan conceded during the holy duel, you shouldn't bother trying to be arrogant. Your chief still hasn't spoken and yet you dare to criticize us? Stay out of the way and be quiet."

Others started to join in, "Exactly, accept the results or we can defeat you again!"

"Cang—"

Subsequently, the sound of swords being unsheathed rang out.

Just as the guard outside the room drew his weapon to join the fight, Lorgar stopped him.

"Leave it to me."

"But..." The guard murmured as he attempted to argue. However, his next words were quelled by Lorgar's peremptory gaze, he lowered his head as he replied, "I understand, My Princess."

Lorgar pushed open the door and walked in, her face sullen.

The warriors of the Wildwave clan stood with their arms crossed, defiant, as they ignored the sharp blades near their throats, betting that the Wildflame clan wouldn't dare to swing them.

The warriors had guessed right. Both, her brother and the guards, only dared to threaten harm, making the Wildflame look weaker.

Guelz Burnflame was seated behind a square table and his eyes reflected the rooms unsettled flames. Momentarily, the room was silenced.

"Stow your weapons."

Lorgar's voice broke the tension.

Guelz smiled, "Finally, you're awake."

"Sister, you... are... no, I mean... this is great!" Rohan sputtered in disbelief as she approached them. At first, Lorgar wasn't able to read her brother's expression. She couldn't tell if he was shocked or surprised.

Lorgar suddenly realized that her father hadn't told anyone about the Divine Lady of the North. Only her father and those who had cared for her knew, the rest still remained ignorant.

Even her brother was surprised, not to mention the Wildwave warriors.

"Lo-Lorgar? Weren't you... badly wounded during the holy duel?"

"It's impossible! I saw clearly with my own eyes that her legs had been crushed and bloodied, as she was carried off the platform!"

"What's that I see... a wolf's ears and tail?"

"She's a monster!"

Lorgar, unmoved, walked over to the Wildwave warriors, who had clearly lost their cool as they continued to argue, "Anyway, Wildflame yielded during the duel on the Burning Stage, which was witnessed by the Three Gods! You have to wait six months before your next challenge."

This rule about participants who yield not being allowed to challenge the winner before six months had passed was a safeguard against planned surrender for the preservation of power and it was well known and accepted throughout the Sand Nation.

"We accepted the results, just like we believe in the Three Gods." Lorgar gave the answer which relieved the tension in warriors' chests, unfortunately, it wouldn't last long. What she said next tensed the room up again, "So... who's Kabucha?"

"I am!" the head of the Wildwave warriors had no choice but to step forward. "Now that you have promised to respect the results, move out immediately. You are no longer the strongest clan. Do you really still want to cling to this castle?"

The reply was a right hook to the face.

Kabucha was indeed a good fighter, even so, he wouldn't be able to defeat a wolf claw that had instantly emerged in front of him. He had been blown away, breaking the door, before he landed outside in a crumpled heap.

"You—" The other warriors glared at her, and yet, none of them dared to charge at her.

"Even though Wildflame dropped to the third clan, the dignity of the chief can't be ignored, especially by someone standing in the middle of our land. How dare you be so insolent?" Lorgar accused. "Take that punch as a lesson and get out, all of you!"

The moment Lorgar entered the room, the table had turned. Annexing Blackwater had contributed to a great part of Wildwave's force, so they hadn't feared the holy duel or the possible private challenge, they were confident they would transcend Wildflame. But, when Princess Lorgar of the Wildflame clan appeared before them, in the flesh, their confidence vacated them. They had to admit, even if

Wildflame had decided not to duel with them in six months, they still wouldn't be able to afford losses to the giant Desert Wolf, who could sneak up and assault them, from time to time, in the future.

Their day of reckoning would come, for they challenged them in the first place.

For the Sand Nation People, revenge was as sacred as the holy duel.

Wildwave warriors carried the bloody-faced Kabucha and left without a word.

"Father, now that my sister has healed, can we move back to this Stone Castle in six months?" Rohan asked excitedly, his fists clenched. "Or perhaps you could negotiate with the chief of Wildwave and save us from the trouble of moving—since they wouldn't stand a chance in winning the next duel, he should allow you the favor."

"Yes, our Prince is right," the guards echoed in excitement.

"Let me go and stop everyone who is packing."

"Also, don't forget to throw out the Wildwave clansmen who have been lingering in our castle."

"Don't forget to tell them to take their belongings with them."

They prattled on delightedly.

Guelz Burnflame softly coughed and looked at his daughter, "What'd you have in mind?"

That brought silence to the room. Everyone turned their eyes towards Lorgar and waited for her answer. Rohan was among them, slightly biting his lips, his eyes shadowed.

Lorgar barely noticed. She took a deep breath and said clearly, "Father, I want to leave and I'm here to say goodbye."

Chapter 783: Where I Belong

Her words shocked everyone.

"Sister, no... what are you talking about?" Rohan was the first one to recover from the shock. "You want to leave the oasis? What will our clan do without you? How will we deal with the holy duels in the future? Where do you plan to go?"

Lorgar gave no answer. Instead, she looked at her father quietly.

A rueful smile came over Guelz's face. He exhaled a long breath and waved to the others. "Leave us alone."

"Father..." Rohan opened his mouth, trying to say something, but swallowed the words.

The guards were as surprised as Rohan, but respecting the family's privacy, they obeyed the command and left in bewilderment.

Soon Lorgar and Guelz were alone in the room.

"You want to go to the north?" Guelz asked straightforwardly.

"Yes," Lorgar answered honestly without hiding anything. "I'll go to the Southern Territory of Graycastle to find Ashes, and then travel to Neverwinter with her."

"What about the Wildflame clan?"

"Go to the Southern Territory. You can find fresh oases there, without having to fight for food or water." She paused for a moment. "I'll bet that you had already made that decision long ago. That's why you didn't accept the challenge from the Wildwave clan."

Guelz raised his eyebrows, but denied nothing.

Lorgar continued. "It doesn't mean that you're afraid of them. Wildflame has been the strongest clan for decades, even before I turned into a Divine Lady. You would never spare them without making them pay an unforgettable price for their insolence, even if they did surpass us after taking Blackwater. It's this kind of spirit that we have always relied on to hold our ground in the biggest Stone Castles of Iron Sand City."

"The only reason that you wouldn't accept the challenge would be if the holy duel to determine the rank of the clans in Iron Sand City had already become meaningless. Our clansmen may fight and bleed to secure the future of the clan, but you would never let them fight a meaningless battle and die in vain. Am I right, Father?"

Guelz stared at her with a poker face for a long time before curling his lips into a smile. He shook his head and said, "I don't know whether you were born a genius or you have the nose of a wolf. Or maybe both? In fact, I kept putting off the discussion of this matter because I wanted to seek your counsel on our relocation after you woke up."

"I don't think I truly understand. Besides, I have neither the intelligence nor the wolf's nose you just mentioned. I just have trust in my fists." Lorgar shook her ears.

"Fists?"

"Yeah, I can figure out what kind of a person someone is once we've had a fight. You taught me to fight from a young age, and I've tasted both your punches and your weapons. It's only natural that I can perceive your true intentions."

"I'm so glad to hear that." Guelz laughed. "What about Ashes? Can we trust her?"

"For me, she's as unapproachable as a mountain... but a mountain is always silent and doesn't care enough to lie. She also gave me a feeling of a strength and safety," Lorgar said slowly. "Those under her wings must feel very warm and comfortable."

"I'm relieved to hear you say that." Guelz seemed to have made up his mind. "Since we're all going to the Southern Territory anyway, why don't you wait a few more days and join us?"

"I don't want to wait anymore, Father... I feel my heart beat fiercely when facing the north," Lorgar said, pressing her chest with her hands. "It's urging me to set out as soon as possible. If I get there earlier, I can see whether they really intend to keep their word to offer every civilian of the Sand Nation an oasis just as they've promised."

"Didn't you just say that you believed in them with all your heart?" Guelz laughed.

"It's Ashes I trust, not the 'Chief' behind her. Ashes may not be lying, but it doesn't mean that she can't be cheated." Lorgar waved her fist. "If the King of Graycastle deceives us, I won't let him stay in peace."

"What if Drow Silvermoon's words are true? Will you swear fealty to him if he treats the Ironsand people of the Mojin clan as well as he does his own people, or even serve him in the same way your mother did?" Guelz asked with great interest. "If all you want to do is to challenge his men for your own entertainment, I'm afraid he won't welcome you."

"I... I won't! Who would be interested in a monster that's half man and half beast?" The short fur on Lorgar's tail bristled and her eyes turned away. "I've heard from Ashes that there are extremely powerful alien enemies there. That's what I'm going for, not to serve the king. I'll pay them myself if I need any cures or treatment from the witches."

The chief of Wildflame stopped teasing her and waved at her. "Come over here. Let me have a good look at you."

Lorgar walked up to her father and sat down, placing her head on her father's lap as she always did.

Guelz gently stroked her hair and fluffy ears, whispering, "You'll be back, won't you?"

"Yeah." Lorgar closed her eyes. "If the people of Graycastle people can come to Iron Sand City, then so can I. It'll also be easier for me to pay a visit after our people move to the Southern Territory, as it'll be closer. If you don't want to be the chief anymore in the future, hand the position over to my brother. He's far more suitable for the position of chief than me. He'll be an excellent leader for when we don't have to constantly fight for the oasis."

"Don't bother yourself with those things at this moment," Guelz said. "Remember to write me some letters even if you don't have time to come back. Since we are going to move to the north, it won't be bad for us learn their ways."

"You can put up with my ugly handwriting?"

"Silly," he grunted. "When our people leave home, they always leave something behind. If you don't want to leave a word, I don't mind keeping your hair."

"Uh... I'll leave a word," Lorgar said, wagging her tail.

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After night had fallen, Lorgar left Iron Sand City carrying a bag that was much larger than herself.

No one saw her off. There was hardly anyone who knew that the Divine Lady of Wildflame was about to begin her own journey.

Having passed through the small outer oases, she entered the desolate desert, where she looked around to make sure that she was alone before taking off her clothes.

She folded every piece of her clothes neatly and packed them in her bag. After that, she stood up slowly in the cold wind, naked.

But she felt no cold. Instead, she felt an ineffable sensation running throughout through her body—as if a huge invisible hand was caressing her, and the things that bound her and held her down had vanished. She had been renewed in the cold wind.

Fine hair began to grow out of her skin, and her body was expanding. A few seconds later, a huge desert wolf stood in the vast desert.

She raised her head and howled without restraint.

"Ow—Ah—Woo—"

Her howls echoed and lingered in the air above the desert. Lorgar believed that all of the Wildflame clan must have heard her howls.

The heavy bag now looked small and lightweight. She lowered her head to grab the strap of the bag with her teeth. After confirming the direction she was supposed to go, she began to run towards the Southern Territory of Graycastle.

Chapter 784: Together with Worms

On the last day of midwinter, a scouting team consisting of the Taquila survivors and witches and soldiers of Neverwinter finally commenced their journey to the western area beyond the Western Region.

Roland stood by the wharf and watched the concrete boat, which carried so many people, slowly depart the dock.

The exploration could be considered as the most complex operation in the history of time, for the First Army, the Witch Union, and the Taquila witches were all going to collaborate and cooperate with each other to conduct a thorough search of the Great Snow Mountain. If everything went well, they would arrive at the headwater of Redwater River in three days. Then, they would pick a sheltered place shielded from winds to erect their tents.

They would first send their vanguard to locate the ruin with the help of Margie's Magic Ark and then use the devouring worm controlled by Fran to open a tunnel in the precipice for the rest of the party to enter the mountain.

This operation was indeed no different than a grave robber's business. Roland was burned with curiosity and was eager to see the ruin of the old civilizations in the Great Snow Mountain. Unfortunately, he was stopped by Wendy and Scroll, who had been insisting on his stay in the castle ever since a demon had thrust a spear through his chest.

Nonetheless, this did not mean that the scouting team would lower their guard. In view of the possible presence of invisible enchanted beasts that had once emerged in Misty Forest, Roland also included Nightingale in the team. It was a big party, so it was practically impossible for Sylvie to attend to the whole team, especially in the event that they had to split up. Meanwhile, the Taquila witches also brought the last three Five-Colored Stone to detect any objects that contained magic power.

According to Pasha, there would be a beam of light at the top of an object that possessed magic power. This theory also held true for demons and hybrid demonic beasts, except that their beams were extremely fine and tiny.

Roland believed his team, constituted of 50 God's Punishment Witch, 500 soldiers from the First Army and a large group of the High Awakened, was definitely an invincible army on the continent. If the operation was successful, it would indubitably lay a solid foundation for the future collaboration among ordinary people, extraordinary warriors, and various witches.

"Let's head back." Roland brushed off the flurries of snow on the nose and said to Anna.

"OK." Anna looked up at him and smiled back.

During the time while Nightingale was away, Anna was responsible for the safety of the king. As Roland and Anna were having an intimate relationship, both of them felt very comfortable to stay close to each other.

Roland held Anna's hand and walked to the castle.

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He did not, however, expect that Phyllis would be there upon his entry to the hall.

"You didn't go to the Great Snow Mountain with them?" Roland raised his brows. "I thought you would be interested in exploring the underground ruin."

Phyllis replied with a shrug, "I am, but Pasha prefers me to stay here. I know the castle better than anyone else, and most of your men have seen me. If they want to pick a person to take charge of the defense of this castle, I would be the one."

As a matter of fact, the Taquila witches had suggested that one of them should be stationed in the castle. Although Anna was powerful, her magic power would render useless in the vicinity of a God's Stone of Retaliation. Further, Anna presented much more academic talent than combat skills. Once she was stripped of her power, both Roland and Anna would be in a perilous position. In consideration of the potential danger, Pasha insisted that a God's Punishment Witch should stay in the castle to serve as their protector.

Since God's Punishment Witches could manipulate anti-magic areas however they pleased, they could easily vanquish any witches. Their bodies of flesh, which were impervious to any illness or injuries, allowed them to fight under extreme conditions. Even if their enemies happened to be Extraordinaries, God's Punishment Witches still stood a chance to win.

"Well, then I thank you in advance," Roland naturally replied.

Phyllis gave a nod. "That's my duty. I'll normally stay in the hall. If anything ever happens, I'll come to you as fast as I can."

Roland understood that Phyllis made this decision was to avoid any unnecessary conflicts or suspicions. The ample buffer spaces between the first floor and his office enabled both the protector and the protected to have some privacy without feeling agitated about the awkward presence of the other. It

was a delicate balance to keep. If the Taquila witches, on the contrary, demanded the guardian should be in the office, it would only irritate Roland more even if they meant no harm.

Pasha probably had also taken that into account when she had picked Phyllis as the protector, as the latter apparently knew the union witches better than any other God's Punishment Witches.

Nevertheless, Roland would not completely rely on his ally when it came to safety, although the protection from a God's Punishment Witch did greatly reduce risks. He also put some guards and members of the First Army at the staircase at each floor and the bedroom door. They would rotate their shifts every eight hours to make sure nothing would go amiss.

When Roland returned to his office, Scroll was waiting for him by the French window.

"Your Majesty," Scroll dipped in a perfect curtsy and handed him a report. "I've confirmed Lily's derivative skill."

"Really?" Roland's eyes lightened up. He immediately took the report and started to carefully read it.

Winter was almost close to its end. Although it was still the Months of Demons, most of the witches had peacefully made their way through their Days of Awakening. Among them, Lily was the most special one. Her magic power had entered its "adulthood" a week ago.

Like what he had done for Lucia, Roland had also spent the Day of Adulthood together with Lily. Apart from a substantial increase in her magic power, Lily also found there was something new in her ability which she felt delighted to see.

Without a doubt, Lily was lucky. On the day she had entered her adulthood, she had also attained her derivative skill.

However, Lily encountered some difficulties in understanding her derivative skill. Unlike the main ability, a derivative skill was usually more subtle and thus harder to perceive. Witches did not sense their derivative skills as easily as they did their main abilities. In fact, it had taken Scroll two years to learn how to utilize the Book of Magic after the entry to her adulthood.

But this was not a big problem. According to Agatha, to overcome this obstacle, witches only needed to practice their main abilities over and over again and thereby slowly searched for the solution.

Few witches would obtain a derivative skill entirely irrelevant with her main ability. The relationship between the main ability and a derivative skill was analogous to that of roots and twigs and leaves. Derivative skills could, to some extents, supplement and strengthen the main ability. Sylvie's ability to distinguish magic power and Soraya's painting brush were both solid proofs of this theory.

Roland was surprised by the report. "Is she now able to absorb a parent population into her body and keep it in there?"

Scroll inclined her head. "Not only one. It was actually an accidental discovery made by Lily when she did her experiment. She found some assimilated parent populations enter her body and remain in there ever since. She thought they would disappear once she summons parent populations again, but in reality... they could still get out of her body upon her call and continue to assimilate other microscopic creatures."

Roland soon realized what that meant. After the second evolution, the little girl had learned to turn parent populations she had seen into some specific microscopic creatures. Now, her new derivative skill simplified the matter. Lily did not need to actually "see" parent populations on the spot, but simply needed to "remember" them. In other words, she could collect converted parent populations aforesaid and released microscopic worms when needed. Her new skill largely accelerated the assimilation process.

Roland could envision, with the enhancement of the accuracy of microscopes and the increase in the parent population types Lily carried, Lily would eventually become a walking "biochemical bomb".

Roland was amused by the notion that a harmless assistant witch, after receiving continuous education in Neverwinter, had, in the end, become a combat witch who carried a potentially lethal weapon. He felt both lucky and relieved that Lily at least belonged to the Witch Union. He just wondered, however, if demons would ever get sick or infected by any diseases.

Chapter 785: An Intruder

After Scroll withdrew, there was nobody in the office except him and Anna.

Roland opened the half-completed textbook, planning to finish the latter half, but words seemed to elude him. For a long time, his quill in the air, he did not write a single word.

Roland noticed that he always involuntarily looked in Anna's direction, as though his eyes were glued to her.

"What's the matter?" Sensing his gaze, Anna put down the parts she was working on and smiled at Roland.

"No, nothing." Roland slightly shook his head. "If you feel bored here, we can go to the backyard of the North Slope Mountain."

Anna curled up her lips into an imperceptible smile. "I don't feel bored at all. I can finish the work here. Most importantly, I don't mind where I am as long as I can be with you."

These words might bring the color to a maid's cheeks, but they just came out of Anna so naturally.

"Alright." Smiling, Roland dropped the matter.

He knew Anna would never lie to him.

As Anna was the first witch with whom he got acquainted after coming to this world, Roland knew her quite well. Apart from a few academic discussions and pillow talks, most of the time Anna was quiet and poised, particularly when she was focused on her work. Roland did not think her a dull person in the least. Silence, to them, was also one means of communication.

Sometimes, a simple, occasional eye contact was sufficient enough for them to understand each other.

Roland decided to forget about the textbook for the time being. He put down the quill and started to study Anna's face.

Her side face always fascinated him. Her ash brown hair, which had grown quite a bit, tumbled down, revealing only a tiny bit of her milky-white neck. The azure in her eyes was as clear as lake water as ever. She was dressed in a puffy, pastel yellow sweater and a pair of comfy black flannel pants, looking dainty and airy. Roland was happy that he designed these modern apparels himself.

Since Anna had sliced the metal ingots (whose composition had undergone a precise modification) into palm-sized cubes beforehand, she would only need to process them with Blackfire in the office once they were delivered to the castle. Roland was impressed by how fast those metal ingots be converted to complete parts in Blackfire. To some extents, the conversion was more a performance of art than a plain demonstration of Anna's ingenious techniques and skills.

These little parts, which appeared to be so insignificant, would eventually be delivered to the plant and become one of the key parts of a machine or a weapon.

It was definitely not an easy task. Roland knew very well that the length and the width of the Blackfire were both needed to be controlled by Anna's magic power. To summon several Blackfires and direct them to cut from different angles would be even harder than using both hands to work on two separate tasks simultaneously. It required incredibly high concentration. Probably, only a person as hard-working as Anna was able to continuously dedicate to and eventually excel in this job.

The girl, who used to practice fire manipulation in the castle garden, had undoubtedly changed a lot, but there seemed to be something still remaining the same.

The day slipped away unnoticed.

After night fell when Roland sank into a slumber with Anna in his arms, the other world just woke up.

...

Yawning, Roland turned to the calendar on his nightstand.

It was Saturday, October 14.

Although time went much faster in the dream world than that in the real world, Roland did not come to this world every night. As long as he was not dreaming, time was frozen here.

Breakfast was ready when Roland entered the living room

"Why are you so late today?" Zero asked while chewing a fried dough stick.

"It's a weekend. Grown-people have their nightlife, so it's normal for me to sleep in." Roland went into the bathroom and picked up his mug and toothbrush. "Are you going out later?"

"No, I'm writing my homework," the little girl replied. Then she said to him as much as to herself, "Nightlife? Come back home even earlier than me yet talk about nightlife. This old grumpy man is nothing but a loser with no friend or career..." Roland knew Zero said it on purpose, for the mumble was just loud enough for him to hear.

He almost choked on his mouthwash. Roland was very displeased to hear Zero call him "uncle", now his title had directly skipped to an old grumpy man? He looked himself in the mirror. His appearance was not so much different than in the real world. By the look, he could be no more than 23 or 24 years old.

Although not splendidly attired, wearing only an undershirt and shorts, he could not be considered as a "loser" or an "old grumpy man" by any means.

Roland blamed the child's poor judgment.

He decided not to argue with the little girl but simply said, "In that case, I'll leave my key here. I need to go out later, and you should open the door for me."

"Got it!"

By the time he brushed his teeth and washed his face, Zero had finished her breakfast and retired to her room.

Roland waddled to the table and turned on the TV with the remote.

He needed to meet Garcia today.

Within several months, he had pretty much obtained all the necessary textbooks and materials and had shoveled them to the bedroom. The only work left for him now was to copy them. However, the search for other memory fragments met some obstacles.

No tenant in the Apartment of Souls was willing to let out his room. To this date, Roland had only persuaded two tenants, but there was nothing valuable behind the Gate of Memory. There were over 2,000 residents in the apartment, but it was hard for Roland to collect large capitals just by selling armors, for armors are no real antiques. His act would probably raise as much attention from the police as he broke into someone's residence.

After a full reflection, Roland concluded there were only two possible ways: one was to increase his revenues and the other his reputation.

If he could be as distinguished as Garcia around Tongzi Street, he could then easily persuade his neighbors to move or rent his apartment. If he became financially capable, another solution would be purchasing the whole building.

Either way was a big investment, and currently, the more feasible way to access such big funds seemed to be joining in the Martialist Association.

According to Garcia, anyone who participated in hunting Fallen Evils would receive competitive compensation. If a skillful and powerful martialist was willing to partake in the operation, the association would give him full support. When Garcia mentioned about the remuneration, however, she looked quite contemptuous, as if she slew Fallen Evils just to protect human beings rather than for the money.

Roland spoke highly of her valor and gallantry. He then inquired about the detailed rules pertaining to the rewards.

If truth be told, Roland felt this organization, which boasted of responsibilities and personal dedication, sounded quite fishy. He somehow tasted conspiracies and shady underground business. Given that, he felt reluctant to work for them, and certainly would not work for them for free. He decided to be a member of the Martialist Association simply because this was his last hope after numerous fruitless, vain undertakings over the past few months.

When it was 10 o' clock, Roland put on a suit and took off. Although they were going to meet up in Room 0827, Roland felt it advisable to be formally dressed since this was, after all, an official application.

But no sooner had he stepped out of the room than he heard a screeching child's scream behind him.

It was from Zero.

The shriek apparently startled Roland. He turned around and found the little girl dash out of the room, frightened and unnerved.

"What's the matter? Is there a mouse?"

Zero stammered out, "There, there's someone in the room."

"Someone?" Roland frowned and poked his head into Room 0825. He instantly stood rooted to the ground.

In the center of the living room, which had been empty just a minute ago, stood an unknown woman.

Chapter 786: The First Dreaming Experience

The woman had tawny long hair, her side-swept bangs clipping to one side, revealing half of her forehead. She had soft facial features, giving Roland an impression that the woman had a gentle and delicate character. Yet under the current circumstances, her exquisite beauty did not strike Roland but actually gave rise to his increasing suspicion of her being a ghost.

Apart from that, Roland also noticed that her gown was a little too shabby. A few stitches were coming out, and the cuffs and corners of the garment were torn and ragged, as though it were picked up from a waste station.

"I, I heard you go out, so I wanted to check if the door was properly locked. When I turned around, however, I saw she was standing there!" Zero was ghastly pale, evidently terrified by the event.

The woman seemed to also notice the commotion. As she raised her head and looked at the door, her expression changed abruptly.

Roland curled his hand into a fist in secret. He was ready to take the blow.

But what the woman said next completely blew his mind. The woman uttered an exclamation of surprise. "Your... Majesty?"

What?

Your Majesty?

"Um... you're..." Roland tried to figure out what had actually happened.

"I'm Phyllis, Your Majesty. What's happened here?" The woman was as puzzled as he.

"Phyllis?" Roland revolved a multitude of thoughts and questions in his mind rapidly "Is she the God's Punishment Witch in the castle hall? Why would she intrude his dream? Is this dream world now opening up and connecting to the other world? Where's Anna? Why hasn't she appeared?"

"Hold on, you know each other?" Zero realized something was wrong here. "What does she mean by 'Your Majesty'... Are you role-playing now?"

"Ahem, she's a... remote relative of mine." Roland suddenly realized that it was not the time for him to stand in a daze. "As to the way she addresses me, it was just a jape. We grew up together and it's normal that she comes up with some particular names."

"A relative?" Hearing that the woman was not some random ghost, the little girl soon slipped back to her usual bold, defiant manner. She started to become more skeptical as well. "You just asked who she was."

Utterly unabashed, Roland shot back, "Did I? I only saw a crying craven who almost wetted her pants."

Zero reddened to her temples. "You, you liar!"

"Didn't you just shriek? This lady was in the room earlier. You were just too occupied with your homework in your bedroom to notice her."

To Roland's dismay, the woman soon took the implication. "Sorry, I... I didn't mean to startle you. I was in another room when His Majesty was leaving. I was about to say hello when you cried out and rushed out of the room."

Roland put a final touch to their improvised show. "I guess that was it. She asked what had happened. The truth is that you scared her. If I find a little girl scream like crazy when I get out, I'll be as confused as she was."

"I... I..." Zero groped for words that did not come. She could not deny the fact that she did scream, for she was not in a habit of lying. Caught in such a dilemma, the little girl felt her eyes moist with tears.

Roland realized that was a bit too much for the little girl to bear, so he bent over and ruffled her hair. "Anyway, it was a miscommunication. Go back to study now."

He could not help feeling a twinge of guilt for Zero because he knew a child like her could not possibly see through the intricacies of guiles and subterfuges deployed by adults. Her life would only be complete after experiencing deception and lies of grown people, as this was an inevitable step, a ceremony she must receive, to inaugurate her adulthood and become mentally mature.

Roland had thought Zero would run into her bedroom in tears, but she actually sniffed and dried her eyes quickly before kicking him hard in his legs. "Uncle, you such a jerk!" With these words, she rushed back to her room in a fury.

Roland twitched his lips. Her reaction was a little different from what he had anticipated, but... overall, she had learned the lesson.

"Haha." The woman who called herself Phyllis burst into laughter. "It seems you aren't those common people's mighty king here."

"But I'm the creator and ruler of this world." Roland gestured the woman to come in. "Let's talk inside. I also have a lot of questions to ask you."

...

After half an hour, Roland was finally convinced that the woman was Phyllis.

She not only talked about Taquila but also about what she had experienced in the castle, as well as the fact that she used to disguise as a guide in "Black Money" under the name "No. 76". Moreover, she further corroborated her story by disclosing some details Roland had not been very clear about.

It was impossible to develop such a well-organized and logically consistent narrative by simply reading his memory. Roland was thus certain that the woman was not a sentient being automatically formed in this world.

Plus, the current body presented to him was exactly what Phyllis originally looked like.

Then the question was very clear.

Why would she enter this dream world?

Phyllis shook her head. "I don't really know either... It was pretty late at that time. The First Army just changed their shift. I was going to disconnect my body and have some deep sleep to restore my strength. When I woke up, I was here." She paused for a moment and then continued, "You call it... a dream world?"

"Correct. This is a world operating only in my dream, but I don't know if this rule still applies now." Roland felt there was no need to hold anything back from her at the moment, for he had to find out the reason why Phyllis could enter his dream as soon as possible. Although Roland knew this complicated world did not exist in his head, it was still... pretty shocking to see someone come uninvited. After all, he was positive that the dream world was created precisely according to his memory. An intrusion meant somebody entered his memory without his permission.

Roland unfolded the ladder behind the door and put it next to the bed. "Perhaps we can do a small test to find out why you came here."

"What's this?" Phyllis asked in surprise.

Roland explained to her, "When I fall off the top of the ladder, the dream will come to an end. You can try it first to see if you can return to the real world. I'll terminate the dream later. If both of us can successfully get out of here, you then wait for me in the hall. I'll be right back."

"Hang on... Your Majesty." Phyllis reached out her hand in an attempt to grasp him.

Roland was astounded at her behavior. It was definitely an act of extreme insolence in Neverwinter. Could she have completely abandoned all her manners and customs learned over the past hundreds of years after coming to a totally foreign environment? Roland thought that was very unlikely.

Phyllis asked in a low voice, "Could you... pinch me?"

"What?" Roland was stunned.

"With the greatest strength that you have, please." Phyllis rolled up her sleeve and presented her pale arm to Roland.

"I've confirmed that pain won't end the dream."

"I just want to experience some pains... Please."

"Experience?" Roland soon thought of Agatha's description of God's Punishment Witches and immediately understood what Phyllis meant. After a moment of silence, he pinched the witch's wrist with his right hand.

Phyllis clenched her teeth, yielding to an articulate moan of satisfaction. She trembled in such excitement as a thirsty traveler who had a delicious drink once tasted and long since forgotten.

It was after a long time that Phyllis finally opened her eyes and exhaled a long breath.

"God almighty, I can feel pains again!" Phyllis looked like a completely different person, her radiant eyes fixed on Roland, glistening with exhilaration.

Roland spread out his hands. "You can do it yourself too."

Phyllis shook her head and suddenly went to her knees. "That's different, Your Majesty. Perchance, this world is only a dream for you, but I would like to do anything just to stay in here. I'm afraid I would never be able to come back after I leave. Could you allow me to dream just a little longer, at least for now?"

Chapter 787: Go! To the New World!

Roland fell silent.

Phyllis was right. To Roland, sensations were something so natural that he almost regarded them as inherent elements of the world. As to his dream, due to its bizarreness and incompleteness, he viewed it as a fictional world created by his imagination. To Phyllis, however, this world was her dreamland. It was the light at the end of the tunnel. No matter what snares and toils awaited for her, Phyllis would try her best to reach for it.

If her intrusion was indeed an accident that would not recur and if she just left like this, she would probably lose something beyond Roland's imagination. If pains were the only thing that Phyllis would experience in this long-lost dream world, that would be too cruel for her.

Roland breathed out a sigh. At length, he held Phyllis' hand and said, "I see. Let's do the test in the evening."

Two days in the dream world roughly had the same timespan as a full night in the real world. He would just wake up a few hours later if he stayed in the dream until evening. So, that should not cause a problem. These few extra hours, however, would allow Phyllis to have a thorough exploration of this brand new world.

"Thank you, Your Majesty..." Phyllis rose and once again placed her hand over her heart, a particular salute normally conducted by senior members of the Union. "I now come to understand why the Witch Union fully supports you."

Roland was about to make a response when suddenly, somebody pounded the bedroom door. He heard Zero's voice outside the room. "I made some tea. Do you guys want some?"

"What the hell... is she doing?" thought Roland. Usually, Zero would disappear for quite a while when she was inflamed. She definitely would not boil water or make tea. "What trick is she playing now?"

Roland opened the door, brows remaining clouded, only to find there was nothing in Zero's hands. The little girl cast Roland a stare and then poked her head into the room. She studied Phyllis critically, eyes full of alert.

"Hey, where's the tea?"

"In the living room. Go fetch yourself." Zero grunted him a grunt. "By the way, don't you guys produce weird noises. You distract me from doing my homework!" At these words, she stormed away.

"Um... so that's the reason." Roland shook her head, speechless. Children these days seemed to be more sophisticated than he expected them to be. If it were him, he would just have inquired about their health with some concerns and asked if they would like to go to hospital rather than forming those crazy, inappropriate ideas in his head.

Roland shrugged after closing the door. "Pay no mind to her. A child born in the 2000s is supposed to be like that. It's a different age after all."

Phyllis looked quite confused. "The 2000s? A different age? What's your relationship with her..."

"Just a roommate," Roland explained to Phyllis without giving her the details. He simply waved away her questions. Although Roland had once told her that his battle with the pope was a Battle of Souls, he had not told her that this little girl was actually the former pope the pure witch. Zero had started a new life in the dream world. Her past was now a history. Roland did not feel it necessary to connect her with the other world again.

Phyllis bit her lip. "I see. Well... please continue. You can use other methods. I'll try to keep silent this time."

Roland put his hand on the forehead, feeling a little amused and frustrated.

"Is she addicted to pains now? There is so much fun in this world. She absolutely doesn't have to stick to this one sensation solely."

"Ahem." Roland cleared his throat. "Since you've come to the dream world, let me show you around."

"Can I go out... like this?" Phyllis asked in surprise. "It's apparently very different from Neverwinter here. Won't I cause you trouble if somebody notices my presence?"

Phyllis had clearly observed the dramatic change in the surroundings, but evidently, she thought people in this world still acted the same way as those in the four kingdoms where witches were repudiated by

the mass. She believed people who looked different would always be subject to discrimination or persecution.

Roland smiled at her. "If you were a witch, you would be nothing but a celebrity here. I've told you that this is a brand new world. Being different brings you no harm. Instead, you'll have a lot of fans who admire you. Of course, all of these is on the premise that you don't break the laws."

"Is, is that so?" Phyllis instantly cheered up. "There're taverns and inns here as well, aren't there?"

Roland curled up his lips. "Do you want to try some wines and food here? There're more food and drink than you can ever imagine."

"So her original plan was to stay in and feel pains over and over again?" Although the idea of torturing such a pretty, kind-hearted lady sounded quite thrilling, Roland thought this would lead him to do something irrevocably wrong.

That was such a narrow escape! He almost made a huge mistake.

"By the way, since you're now in your own body, are you still able to use your magic power?"

"Ah... I almost forgot about that," Phyllis exclaimed in a low voice. "Let me try."

She shut her eyes and held her breath. Nothing, however, happened in a while.

"It doesn't work?"

"Yes... I can feel the magic cyclone. It's just a bit rusty since I haven't used it for a while," Phyllis answered, a little embarrassed. "Just a moment... It's coming out."

At these words, two black, scrawny claws suddenly grew out of her back and spread out on her shoulders. At the first glance, they looked like a pair of devil's hands or wing skeletons.

Roland stroked his chin. "This is..."

Phyllis breathed out a long sigh. "I call it Blade Claws. The claws are retractable and can stretch as far as my ability allows. They're much sharper than ordinary ironware. When I fought with Army of Demons, those claws protected me from the attacks from behind and also helped me defy strong Senior Demons."

"So you were a combat witch."

"That's right. In the Taquila age, I was the guard of the Three Chiefs." Phyllis took a pause. "But there's one thing that I don't really understand. Based on the research conducted by the Quest Society, magic power comes from the Bloody Moon. Why does magic power also exist in your dream world?"

Roland spread out his hands. "Although this world is created by my imagination, it probably also has something to do with the Bloody Moon. I'm still trying to figure it out. I'll fill you in when we're outside. Since we've decided to do the test in the evening, we'd better get started rather than wasting time here."

"Yes, Your Majesty!" Phyllis replied with excitement.

As it was Saturday, Roland decided to take Zero with them. Otherwise, this little girl might hold a grudge against him for quite a long time.

"Also, you don't need to call me 'Your Majesty' in the dream, just Roland. There's no king in this era."

"Well... in that case, please excuse my impudence."

Roland was not quite sure if it was an illusion, for Phyllis paid more respect to him than before, and her respect seemed not to be feigned. Roland felt this accidental intrusion would not appear to be that bad if he could win the support of a witch from Taquila in this way.

Chapter 788: Gourmet Journey

"You're not coming? Hey, what do you mean by that? Not only are you late, but you just told me that you decide to bail out at the last minute?"

The yelling from the other side of the line got Roland to move his head away from the speaker. Even though he could not see Garcia, he could clearly sense her anger.

"I have an unexpected visitor whom I have to receive." While Garcia was panting, Roland explained quickly, "I have no other choice. You know that besides me, there's only a 14-year-old girl in my apartment. How can I rely on her to receive a guest?"

"Your room number is 0825, right? I'll come over and talk to you."

"Um... I'm not in the apartment right now..." After uttering those words, Roland squinted and prepared for the next round of vocal attack.

As expected, Garcia raised her volume again. "Don't you know that I've made an appointment with the seniors of the association? I thought you were finally able to take some responsibility. How can you just bail on me? Do you think I don't know what you're up to? Come back now!"

"Taking responsibility... what the hell is that supposed to mean? It's such a misleading phrase," Roland said to himself.

When he saw the taxi driver with an expression of "Man, well done, I totally understand you", Roland knew that further explanation would not work.

"What did you say? The reception isn't too good. I've just entered Oriental Road. Hello, are you still there? Hello... hello?" After putting on this self-directed show, Roland hung up the phone. He also turned the phone off, just in case she called back.

He had probably completely offended this Martial Arts star.

He had not expected that Garcia would care so much about whether he was going to join in Martialist Association. Her reaction once again confirmed Roland's speculation that she only appeared distant to strangers. As soon as he was recognized as the Awakened of the Force of Nature, she revealed her real personality.

"That was so cliché," Zero at the back seat said coldly, "do you think we're living an exclusive life in a deep forest? How can we encounter a reception problem when we're still in the city?"

"Aren't you smart." Roland took a glance at the back seat. Phyllis was still sitting close to the window, stupefied by everything outside. She had been sitting there, motionless ever since she had crept into the car. It was no surprise to see her react like this as high rise buildings, busy traffic, huge advertising bulletins, and wall hanging screens could bring a certain shock to an ancient person. As a matter of fact, the increase in productivity resulted in drastic changes in the era. The radicality of those changes, which might even shock the locals, could make a city look completely different within merely two decades and would certainly overwhelm a Taquila witch.

Before this trip, Roland helped her change from her raggy robe, allegedly the Taquila uniform, into his own clothes. A T-shirt and shorts were unisex and so there was no problem for Phyllis to wear them. Oddly enough, those cheap clothes looked rather casual and fashionable on her. It seemed a person's appearance could make the ugly become beautiful. The only problem was the bra. In the end, Roland had to request Zero to wrap a cloth around her chest to solve the issue.

The purposes of this trip were specific. They were taking the God's Punishment Witch to eat and buy her a new set of clothes. What if she could enter his dream again? She could not always wear his clothes and be wrapped in cloth.

"Here we are, Green Valley Park," the driver pushed down the taximeter and said, "25 bucks."

This park was not far from Roland's apartment. It was also a piece of fine green land that Roland discovered during his city exploration. There were not many people here and a business street was just nearby. Most importantly, there were KFC and McDonald's chain stores nearby.

Right, these two were Roland's first choices as roadside food stands offered too poor dining environments and there was no guarantee that they tasted good. After all, this trip was meant to let the guest from the other world have a good time. So naturally, flavors and the dining environment were the two basic criteria. There should also be enough food to feed the witch and make her feel full. Starred restaurants obviously had a better environment, but if the witch indulged herself... Roland was afraid he did not have that kind of financial capacity.

Therefore, fast food restaurants were obviously the best choice.

Besides, Zero had been talking about eating fast food for a long time though this was probably due to the doll toys coming with the kid's meals as it greatly appealed to kids like her.

He brought the two to a KFC restaurant and picked a window seat. Roland went to the counter and directly ordered two family buckets and one kid's meal.

"Why did you buy so much?" Zero asked in surprise upon seeing Roland put so much food on the table.

"Uncle, although you have a job now, you shouldn't squander your money."

"I am rarely generous. Why don't you just enjoy it?"

"Ok!" She finally stopped pouting upon seeing the toy in the kid's meal.

"Eat with us. If you want more, just tell me." Roland handed a piece of fried chicken to Phyllis. After being fried in a high-temperature, high-pressure environment, the chicken skin appeared a tempting golden color. One would get a good appetite by purely smelling at it. The chicken cooked with the modern method not only had its tender and smooth flavor, but the meat also had the fresh tastes of spices like black pepper, thyme, garlic, and salt. The flavor was entirely different and the plain boiled chicken in old times couldn't compare to it.

Although modern men always complain about the high calories and the universal taste of fast food, it was absolutely a delicacy in an area where food and seasonings were always in deficiency. It would definitely blow Phyllis away, who had not tasted food for the last few hundred years.

On the way there, she perfectly followed Roland's instruction and regardless what strange things she saw, she would not ask. She would try her best to imitate how others behaved, but the moment she bit into the fried chicken, she could not control herself any longer. Hot tears filled her eyes and trickled down uncontrollably.

"What's wrong, sister..." Zero was stunned.

"Um, nothing. It's just she's been starving for too long. Phyllis' families didn't treat her well... They've always wanted a boy, yet weren't able to get one... Anyway, you're too young to understand that. You only need to know that she didn't live a happy life there."

"I see..." The little girl's expression softened, probably out of sympathy.

Roland did not intend to make a fuss about why Zero called Phyllis sister, yet himself uncle. Watching the ancient witch gulp food down while weeping touched him.

For the witches, the mundane pleasure of enjoying food was a dream that they were willing to pay anything for. He felt sad for the unfairness of it all. Fortunately, the experience today gave Phyllis a little solace although it was hard to say whether there would be another chance next time.

What he could do for them was to try his best to fulfill her wish during this one-day adventure.

Chapter 789: A Guess on the Soul Transfer

"This is... awfully delicious!" Phillips finally slowed down after gobbling the food for quite a long time.

People who passed by were all shocked at the boxes of hamburgers and egg tarts piling up on their table. These food was apparently enough for five or six people. However, they only saw three people sitting here and two of them were slender, attractive girls who did not seem that they could eat a lot. Given this, most people passing by thought it must have been the man who had devoured so much food and despised him for being such a greedy glutton.

Seeing those disdainful looks on their faces, Roland felt helpless but at the same time rejoiced over his wise choice of picking a cheap fast food chain store instead of an expensive restaurant. Otherwise, this meal with Phyllis would definitely bankrupt him. He said to Zero, "Wipe her mouth."

The little girl took out a wet wipe to remove the tear and oil stains on Phyllis' face. Thanks to the natural beauty of a witch, she did not need any make-up. Otherwise, she would look terrible after eating this

brunch in a flood of tears. This was probably the first time for the little girl to meet so miserable a person that even a KFC meal would bring her to tears. Her attitude toward her totally changed because of a sudden flush of compassion.

Seeing her finish the brunch, Roland took a sip of his coke and said to Phyllis, "Here're some ice cream cones, but let's talk about the Dreamland first. Before you entered it, did you find anything unusual?"

"But..." She glanced at the little girl sitting beside her and hesitated.

He blinked at the ancient witch and said, "That's alright. It's just a dream you had in your childhood."

She immediately got what he meant and said, "Oh, well. It happened long before. Let me think... No, nothing special. I just leaned on the wall and disconnected myself. In this way, I can quickly refresh myself without being totally off guard."

"Can you sense the changes in the surroundings even after disconnecting yourself?"

She nodded. "Yes. By doing so, I just stop my control over the body and send my consciousness into the darkness. In the dark, I can still sense the dangers nearby, but I don't see or hear them. This feeling is hard to describe. It's like someone else reminding me of the dangers in the dark. Celine calls this phenomenon a subconscious connection. Only when we're kept in soul containers will we truly become unconscious."

Zero twitched her mouth. "What're you talking about? Who's this Celine?"

"A shrink. Don't interrupt when adults are talking." Roland gave her a glance and continued. "If you get bored by this, go to the park to watch people fishing or flying kites, but don't walk too far away from us."

She snorted and left unhappily with an ice cream cone in her hand.

Looking at the little girl through the French window, Phyllis asked, "Is it safe to let her go out alone."

Roland shrugged and said, "It's fine. It's pretty safe in this era, and she's not easy to deceive. Let's go on."

"Yes, once I'm in a deep sleep, I won't be able to do anything except drifting about in the endless darkness where there's no light, no sound, nothing at all." The ancient Witch paused. "However, this time, in my deep sleep, I saw your residence in this Dream World. My astonishment was beyond description at that moment. Fortunately, I saw you soon."

After a little thought, Roland said, "Well... The only special thing about your deep sleep this time was that you slept in my castle."

"Yes, just that." Phyllis swallowed her last ice cream cone and heaved a long sigh of satisfaction.

Seeing the cone disappear into the ancient witch's mouth, Roland suddenly thought of an idea. "Beams of the light!"

"What?"

"You told me that when I fell asleep, there would be a beam of yellow-orange light as huge as the city wall, didn't you?"

Phyllis was startled and then seemed to realized something, too. "Yes, I did."

"And you also have a beam of the light, don't you?"

"You mean... our beams of the light overlapped?"

"Yes. The lord castle of Border Town is just an ordinary stone building. It doesn't have the power to bring you into this Dreamland. I've thought this thing over and over. Only our beams of the light can do that." Roland suddenly clapped his hands. "But I guess the overlapping is just one reason for this. Meanwhile, you've also got to cut off your consciousness to get here. Otherwise, Anna, Nightingale and some other witches would have come to this Dream World long before you."

At the same time, Roland thought of something else. He had been baffled about the word "soul" in Taquila witches' stories.

They had transferred their souls into different shells, such as God's Punishment Warriors and those strange carriers left by the underground civilization. In this way, they had successfully controlled these shells, but they had never explained to him what souls were.

Based on his understanding, a person's soul was his or her thoughts and memories, which were generated by the communication between neurons through electric currents. He had believed that a soul was not something real or something which could continue to exist when it left a human body. However, the Taquila witches had told him that the underground civilization's soul core could not only extract one's soul but also transplant on something else.

He had attributed this to the wonders created by magic power, but now he thought it differently.

What if memories and minds could be analyzed? Supposing beams of the light and magic power all come from the Bloody Moon, these so-called souls may also come from it. Once the soul core is activated to extract someone's soul, his or her memories and minds will be somehow copied and stored in the Bloody Moon. The beams of the light just serve as the transmission passages in this process. That's how the Soul Transfer works.

Pasha used to say that as the process of transforming magic power into something real was extremely complicated, the deities took over this job and gave different witches beams of the light in different sizes. No matter she was right or wrong, her theory, to some extent, can explain why the beams on the heads of the God's Punishment Witches became much thinner after the Soul Transfer. Transmitting someone's mind and memories is much easier than transforming magic power into some effects or some objects in the real world. Given that, this Soul Transfer process won't need a wide transmission passage.

My Dream World is far more complicated than most of the witches' abilities. That's why my transmission passage, namely, my beam of the light is as wide as the city wall. When Phyllis cut off her consciousness within my beam of the light, her thoughts and memories stored in the Bloody Moon overlapped with my Dream World. That's how she got into this world.

Roland was thrilled at this discovery, since this theory seemed to be able to explain all the things that had puzzled him for a very long time. If overlapped beams of the light did bring Phyllis into the Dream World, that meant this world was also a part of the Bloody Moon. Through Zero's Soul Battlefield, he somehow created this world in the "Divine Domain" of magic power.

When he was about to tell this discovery to Phyllis, a loud bang broke out in a restaurant next door, coupled with lots of glass window fragments flying out. People fled the place in panic, crying and screaming, making the diners in the KFC restaurant nervous and confused.

Chapter 790: A New Fallen Evil

"Run! It's a Fallen Evil!"

"He changed just a moment ago. Call the police, hurry, hurry!"

"He-Help, I, I sprained my ankle."

"He's coming, watch out!"

"Ah—"

Roland followed the crowd out of the KFC store and found the restaurant next door was in a chaos. The diners all scrambled to the door, crowding together in the hallway leading to the only exit. Most people nearby turned around and fled the moment they heard a Fallen Evil appear, and some of them turned on their cellphone cameras to record what was happening while retreating from the scene. Only a few voluntarily stayed behind to help, carrying the people who got hurt or frozen in horror out of the dangerous place.

Phyllis burped and asked, "Didn't you say that this age is very safe?" She touched her full stomach, happiness lingering in her eyes, completely undisturbed by what was happening nearby.

"Ahem, this is just an accident. Don't worry," Roland said, feeling a little embarrassed. He just wanted to have a meal outside, but this cruel Dream World chose to let its creator run into another attack instead of taking care of his emotions.

He also noticed the name "Fallen Evil". He had come across it repeatedly in news reports in recent days. He was not sure whether it was an illusion. It seemed that recently a growing number of people had awakened with the Force of Nature, but most of them had turned out to become monsters that were unable to control themselves.

He knitted his eyebrows, thinking of "the Erosion from an alien world" mentioned by Garcia two months ago.

Phyllis asked, "Who's our enemy? Do you need me to take care of it now? Or go to find Zero first?"

Roland turned to look at the park behind them and shook his head. "She'll be safe staying there. Let's kill this monster first." He still remembered the first attack he had encountered in this Dream World. The moment he had met the burnt-face man, the strange man had made it clear that he had been trying to lure and kill martialists. Given this, Roland thought it was not a good choice to leave this enemy here.

More importantly, he really liked the queer sense of replenishment he had got when the Magic Cyclone of the Fallen Evil had disappeared in his hand, as though a gust of warmth had filled his body and made him feel more energetic and powerful.

"The enemy is probably a new Fallen Evil. You can consider it as a hybrid demonic beast. The Force of Nature protects it from all ordinary weapons. Given that, you've got to use the same force to defeat it."

"The Force of Nature?"

"Yes, it's the magic power in this world except that it has no gender restriction here. Look at me." Roland bent to pick up a stone. He summoned the flowing energy in his body and then pulverised the stone.

Phyllis was startled. "You've... become an awakened."

Roland nodded with a completely straight face, but meanwhile secretly took pride in the extraordinary power he had obtained in this world. He explained to her, "But, unfortunately, my power is only effective in this Dream World."

The ancient witch was so impressed that she exclaimed, "You're not common in either of the two worlds."

"We must hide and attract the monster to a secluded place to kill it. These two chain stores must have hallways connected to the indoor shopping mall behind them. Let's go."

Roland and Phyllis went back to the KFC store and found a door leading to the shopping mall in its staff area. As he had expected, the loud bang had scared most shoppers away. They only saw a mess behind the door.

Instead of getting into the McDonald's where the Fallen Evil had awakened, he asked Phyllis to summon her Blade Claws and release her magic power in the mall. Based on what he knew, a Fallen Evil would sense the power and eagerly run after it. The burnt-face man had been attracted by him in this way and had even mistaken him as a martialist.

Soon, with a loud explosion, the back door of the McDonald's was torn apart. A roaring man rushed out of its staff area in the smoke and darted at Phyllis without a word.

As the miraculous power had drastically improved Roland's dynamic vision and reaction speed, he clearly captured the appearance of the enemy. Different from the burnt-face man, this Fallen Evil's red cyclone in his left hand was much smaller and dimmer. That meant he had just awakened. This time, Roland did not feel a strong thirst for this newly awakened Fallen Evil' cyclone, since the circulating speed of the warm current in his body did not significantly accelerate.

According to their plan, Roland and Phyllis were going to drag this man into the KFC first. However, he suddenly stretched his left arm toward Phyllis and opened his left palm.

In an instant, the air in front of the Taquila witch expanded rapidly, creating surging waves visible to naked eyes. Roland had a chance to escape from the coming explosion, but he still decided to stay behind Phyllis to protect her, since the latter did not have a strong God's Punishment Warrior body in

this world. The explosion sent them flying toward the KFC's kitchen. He caught her from the back, cushioning the blow for her.

The blast sent them through a wall built with soundproof panels before they fell heavily to the ground near the KFC counter.

Covered by dust, Roland coughed and then tried to slightly move his lower back. He found that his resilience seemed to increase together with his strength, as he felt alright except for some numbness at this moment.

Meanwhile, he was surprised by this Fallen Evil's ability. No hybrid demonic beast in the real world had any attacking method like this, and even the burnt-face man who seemed to be more powerful had not revealed similar ability in the last attack he had met in this Dream World.

He looked at the witch in his arms. "Are you alright?"

"Sorry... I was too careless, but trust me, the fight will end soon." Phyllis lowered her head while slowly getting on her feet. The cheap short-sleeved shirt she wore had several tears, and one of her claws on the back was broken. Apparently, she had used these claws as a shield to protect herself in the explosion.

Before long, the Fallen Evil walked into the KFC, breathing heavily. As soon as he saw Phyllis, he smiled ferociously and stretched his arm toward her again. "Time to die, martialist!"

At this moment, he did not notice that the broken claw at his feet was not dead yet. Instead, it sprang up from the ground all of a sudden and struck at his neck.

With a flash of a dim light, the ferocious smile of the Fallen Evil froze. His head slowly slid to the side, hitting the ground like a ragged bag, and his blood spurted from his broken neck.

Phyllis immediately controlled the broken claw to cut off the man's left arm and precisely slit the arm to take out his Magic Vortex.

The headless body finally crumpled down to the ground.

"As long as a broken claw is within a distance of 10 steps, I can still control it. For my enemies, it'll be even more dangerous than the intact claws. Since most of them never expect those broken claws to move again, they can seldom escape from this kind of fatal strikes from the back." She smiled and handed the crimson vortex to Roland. "Is this the Force of Nature you said?"

"Yes, it's like a Magic Cyclone, isn't it?" Roland had noticed that the vortex had stopped twirling the moment it had left the Fallen Evil and had become something like a shining gemstone. It remained to be so in Phyllis' hand. However, when he picked it up, it started to twirl rapidly again, its color changing from red to light blue. In the end, it turned into a beam of dazzling light shooting toward the roof and then become a silver thread gradually disappearing into the air.

He felt greatly satisfied again, as the warm current inside his body began to calm down.