

## Witch 931

### Chapter 931: Your Name

The scuffling noises woke Tigerclaw up, and he yawned and scooped next to Snaketooth. "What's this? A letter?"

Snaketooth immediately pushed Tigerclaw's face away, afraid that he would drool on the letter. "What's wrong? Why don't you get back to sleep?"

"I'm hungry. I want something to eat," Tigerclaw said as he rubbed his belly.

"Then go boil some water and cook. I want oatmeal, by the way."

"Okay," Tigerclaw replied and then remembered something. "You haven't answered my question."

"It's my identity card and an offer notice," Snaketooth said impatiently.

"Oh?" Tigerclaw's eyes brightened and leaned in again. He threw one arm round Snaketooth's neck and shook him excitedly. "You finally got your ID card! Haha... This is worth celebrating! We need to have something better than oatmeal. Let's go to the market and buy some dried fish and mushrooms."

"I'm still trying to save money."

"I can lend you some," Tigerclaw said unconcernedly. "You've been waiting for your ID card for so long. How could we just let this moment pass without a nice meal for celebration? Did you forget what you said the day I got my ID card?"

Snaketooth knew he couldn't reject Tigerclaw kind intentions.

Tigerclaw was a tall and sturdy man. He worked hard and was often much more efficient than other workers, especially when he had enough food. His foreman was aware of this and started to value him more and later even chose him to be the model worker of the third construction team. He earned a higher wage and also got a bonus, so he actually had enough money to pay for the down payment of a house.

Any migrants would get their ID cards if they gained permanent abode. The day Tigerclaw got the key to his new house and his ID card, Snaketooth egged him on holding a feast for celebration and even moved his belongings into the new cement house.

"Okay, okay. I got it." Snaketooth said helplessly. "Let's go later."

"Well, that's settled then!" Tigerclaw was satisfied and returned to his bedside and rummaged for something to wear for shopping. "By the way, what's in that notification?"

"It's an offer from the railway construction team." Snaketooth drew a deep breath and said, "It won't be soon before I go to work in the Barbarian Land outside Graycastle's borders."

"What?" Tigerclaw hands stopped abruptly. "When did you apply for that? Why didn't you tell me?"

"What if you insist on going with me? This house will then be left unattended."

"I wouldn't go with you. No... I mean, why would I go to such a dangerous place?" Tigerclaw's voice raised. "You know what happened recently. There are demons outside the city!"

The demons' recent attack on the city wall had stirred up major unrest amongst the citizens. At first, the alarm went off again and again, then, there were weird monsters dropping into the city, and then the ceremony held at that night was just mind-boggling to everyone.

King Roland announced publically that they were the enemies humanity will have to face sooner or later. He also stressed that the so-called Barbarian Land was not deserted at the beginning but instead a place that was once had a nicer name: "Fertile Plains." That was where humans used to live. It was not until demonic beasts and demons started to harass them did people began to retreat to where the Four Kingdoms are now.

Some of the people who fled from the Fertile Plains established the church. They lied about the enemies, describing them as being omnipotent, and falsely accused the witches of being related to the demons, out of fear for their magic powers. But the victory Neverwinter had achieved this time proved that even though the demons were cunning and frightening, they were not invincible.

To expand the territory and protect Neverwinter from the enemies' attack, the King decided to march on the Barbarian Land as soon as possible to reclaim the land that had once belonged to humans! The King's declaration during the celebration inspired countless cheers, and as the First Army served meat porridge and roasts to the audiences, the atmosphere at the square reached its peak.

In the next five days, you could hear people discussing about the demons everywhere you went. Snaketooth's colleagues in the construction team were no different They were the most interested in the topics like "demon and demonic beast, which one is stronger?" "Should Neverwinter expand to the northwest?". Meanwhile, the City Hall issued a series of recruitment announcements, one of which was the job of building the railway in the Misty Forest.

Snaketooth barely cared about the answers to these question, yet he felt what His Majesty had said somehow enlightened his mind. Suddenly his mind became clear. He had never thought about where he had come from and where he would go. Now he finally understood that all of them had migrated from the "Barbarian Land." The world was much larger than the Four Kingdoms, and its boundaries stretched far beyond the Fertile Plains, which by itself was several times larger than Graycastle.

Also, he was tempted by the good pay.

Tigerclaw turned around and grabbed Snaketooth by his arm, and said, "You were always the insightful one, so I think you should understand this clearer than me. The demons are not as easy to deal with as everyone thinks they are. How could the demons drive humanity to the brink of extinction if they were weak? His Majesty said there used to be hundreds of city and millions of people living on the Fertile Plains."

"Of course I know that. That's why I have made up my mind." Snaketooth remained unmoved. "The pay is 35 silver royals per month, and they will even pay me the first six months' salary before I start work. Furthermore, I'll be eligible to buy a suite of two rooms. Chances like these are hard to come by."

"A suite of two rooms..." Tigerclaw twisted his mouth. "You are really obsessed with that aren't you."

"Of course." Snaketooth made a fist. "It's got a hot water supply system, and the kitchen and bathroom are separated. That's what a house should be like."

Although he did not get paid as much as Tigerclaw, he had saved up about one gold royal by now. Ever since he had seen their foreman's home, he had decided to buy a suite of two rooms of his own in the residential area in the inner city. But because down payment would cost him three gold royals, which was much higher than normal houses, he hadn't been able to do so.

Most importantly, although Snaketooth did not tell others, two bedrooms would be more comfortable for the both of them, unlike the single room where they had to share a small bed.

Seeing that Tigerclaw was still trying to discourage him from taking on the job, Snaketooth shook his head to stop him and said, "I know this is a little risky, but when we were Rats, we took risks almost every day. The only difference was that most of the risks we took at that time ended up being in vain, while now we could at least ensure that our effort will pay off. You all think I have a quick wit, but that's scarcely useful in Neverwinter. If we wanted to have a safe and settled life, why did we move to a foreign city to begin with?"

"You know that I can never win an argument with you." Tigerclaw raised his hands in surrender. "I have no objection as long as you have thought things through."

"Don't worry. I'm not so reckless as to care only about profit." Snaketooth said as he spread his palm. "The First Army will be responsible for the security, and it's said that some witches will set out with the construction team. Even if we were to run into demons, they wouldn't make us fight the enemies with our poles and shovels. Relatively, it's a safe job."

"I hope that's true," Tigerclaw muttered. "I'm going wash up. My stomach is growling. Now that you got a job with a better pay, I will make the most out of this meal."

Snaketooth rolled his eyes at that.

As Tigerclaw was washing, Snaketooth unfolded the third piece of paper and he was a little shocked by the content.

It was a transfer contract.

In short, it said that no matter what happened, the City Hall would not go back on anyone's salaries and rewards. The workers could choose any person to whom he or she would sign over their property in case of major accidents. That person would receive the notification from the City Hall as soon as the transfer contract is valid.

Snaketooth closed his eyes, some figures flashing through his mind: Joe, Sunflower, Tigerclaw... At last, the frame froze at a skinny, fair-skinned girl.

Snaketooth picked up the charcoal and wrote the name carefully in the blank space provided in the contract.

"Paper."

Chapter 932: Someone Impossible to Meet

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Horford Quinn stood in front of the french window with a filled wine glass in hand and stared at the city covered by the night sky.

This was the center of the Kingdom of Dawn, also known as "the city that never sleeps." The lights started from the Rising Sun Avenue and extended to both sides like a lush tree of light. At the top of the tree was the most famous market of the kingdom, where countless rare products were sold. For the merchants, the night was when their day started.

To maintain the glittering glory of the city, the daily consumption of candles, firewood, and kerosene in the king's city was astonishing. The fish fat from the eastern harbor and the wood from the northern hills were continuously imported into the city ship after ship. This industry alone could feed nearly 10,000 people and more than 100 merchants.

And this was only a small part of the commercial trade of this city.

Normally, Horford's greatest pleasure was to enjoy the glow of the night city. Under the joint governance of John Moore's royalties and the three families, the city changed from a wasteland into today's famous bustling place. This was also due to the continual efforts of their ancestors.

But today, he felt tired seeing all of this.

The night scene of the City of Glow looked the same as before. It remained captivating and touching. Yet just outside the range of its glow, was a dark undercurrent could no longer be ignored.

Even while faced with such a brightly lit domain, he still felt a great deal of anxiety

Maybe he was getting old... Horford sipped his wine, but the bitterness in his mouth overpowered the wine's sweetness.

"Father." The study door was pushed open, and a young man came in. "Baron Alfonse from Northwind City would like to meet you."

"No," replied Horford, without turning his head. "Just say that I'm sick."

"But..." He hesitated for a moment, then waved his hand at the old butler.

The old butler immediately nodded, then turned and walked out of the study.

Seeing that only two of them were left in the room, Hawn started to voice out his worries. "Father, this is the 12th noble that you have rejected. Even I know that there's a problem in the palace. These foreign nobles' intention for entering the city was very obvious. If you refuse to see them, I'm afraid they will mistakenly think that..."

"Mistakenly think what?"

"Mistakenly think that..." He bit his lip and said, "That you're still on the side of His Majesty Appen Moya."

"Hawn..." Earl Quinn turned around and frowned at the heir to the Quinn family. "Do you think it's a mistake that the three families are on the side of the King of Dawn?"

"But now His Majesty no longer needs us," said Hawn, as he mustered up his courage. "Since our army suffered a huge loss in Hermes, he no longer asks for your consultation! You're the Prime Minister, and you can't even enter the Royal Palace. And now even the patrol team has been replaced by mercenaries. Just look at the kind of people who are summoned into the palace these days. There are only clowns, dancers, and geishas!"

The earl did not answer but just stared silently at his glass of wine.

Hawn was only eighteen years old, but even he could see what the arrival of the nobility from all over the country to the king's city meant. The other local nobles must have also already sensed the changes in the castle. In fact, when he learned of the defeat of their supposedly unstoppable army, he had already expected that this day would come—more than 10,000 troops and most of the lords of the towns were involved in trying to get a piece of fortune from the husk of the once mighty church. However, not only did they not earn any benefits, many of the troops even lost their lives.

It would have been fine if that was the only consequence, but the King of Dawn had come back alive with his knightage in shambles. The news of Appen's shameful return had spread like wildfire as it fulfilled two conditions at the same time—the need for someone to be held accountable for this failed mission; and the fact that the power Appen held was no longer enough to dispel the greed of the other nobles.

These nobles that sneaked quietly into the city at night gave out a clear signal. They undoubtedly wanted to see the reactions of the three big families before deciding whether to support or unite—but no one would ever agree to uphold the status quo.

Horford could guess the thoughts of these people even with his eyes closed. Since there was such a huge loss of resources in Hermes, they would obviously try to find ways to make up for that loss.

"Father," Hawn spoke hurriedly as he saw that his father was silent. "Things are not like they were ten years ago, and Appen Moya is no longer His Majesty Moya. Look at the house of Luoxi! Otto Luoxi is still locked in the palace cell! You're the Prime Minister of the Imperial Palace, and you're held in high esteem by the people. If you make a stand and get the support of the two other big families, I'm sure the nobles will be happy to follow your lead!"

"Make a stand?" Earl Quinn's eyes narrowed and his voice portrayed a hint of danger.

"Uh..." Hawn stammered, and he lowered his head in panic. He replied in defense of himself. "You don't have to stand on the side of His Majesty Appen, right? Otherwise, why would you claim to be sick, and refuse to receive anyone? If it were the old king, you would have personally persuaded those nobles to consider the stability of the kingdom first."

Horford sighed and realized that his son was still too young. "And if you're right, do you think that Appen Moya wouldn't have seen that coming?"

"What?" Hawn was stunned for a second.

"I bet there are eyes watching us just outside of our mansion. They're spying on who I've met and where I've gone recently, and I'm Appen is kept well informed of this." The earl returned to his desk and sat down. "Imagine what would've happened to me had I just went ahead and met those nobles. Don't forget that even if he lost his entire knightage, the control over the kingdom still wouldn't be that much weakened. From the day Appen ascended the throne, he had already begun to change the guards and the castle guards to his people! Rebel right under his very nose? Do you think that those noble lords will come to rescue me when he puts the noose around my neck?" He slammed the table. "And now do you understand why the Luoxi family and the Tokat family hadn't come to find me, but only the foreign nobles?"

Horn gasped, "Then why don't you go back to the domain first? At least your knights and mercenaries are there, together with the recruited serfs, so even if he wants to plan anything against you..."

The Earl shook his head and said, "The Quinn family has already settled down here for far too long. Our connections, distant relatives, productions, power... Even if I could slip out of the city alone, I wouldn't be able to bring everything out. Our people will suffer greatly at the hand of the King if they so much as make any suspicious moves, so I can't make such a rash move. In fact, my stay in the City of Glow is a guarantee in and of itself. Feigning illness was already the most that I could show. Other than that, there really isn't much that I can do."

Being closely tied to the workings of the king's city used to be a source of pride for their family, yet it has now become the Quinns' fatal weakness. This was certainly a kind of irony.

"Really... but I don't think so." Just then, a strange voice came from outside.

Horford's face changed drastically, as the speaker was obviously not a servant or guard of the household as intruding upon them like that was a serious offense. How did this person get through the guards? Why didn't anyone respond when the person spoke?

"Who's that?" Horn was equally shocked. He turned around in panic and looked for a weapon, but could only get his hands on a candlestick.

"It's me." The door opened, and a blonde-haired girl appeared before Horford Quinn. The strange girl for some reason looked familiar to him. "Do you remember me? My lord."

### Chapter 933: The King's Orders

Earl Quinn froze, and he did not even realize that he had dropped the wine glass he had been holding.

The moment he saw her, he couldn't help but think of the name of two people—One of the two had stayed by him for more than half of his life, but because she had lost someone she loved, she fell into a depression that eventually led to the end of her life. The other person was the loved that was lost, and she was also someone he was supposed never to meet again. Nearly ten years had passed, and even though she was now much taller and more beautiful, Earl Quinn could still recognize her. But the two had such a striking resemblance that he almost blurted out the wrong name.

"Father, do you know her?" Hawn's words made him regain his senses.

Horford stood up slowly and asked calmly, "Are you... Andrea?"

"What? Are you saying that she's... the one, the one that had passed away..." Horn stared back and forth between them as he muttered disbelief.

"Master, it really is Miss Andrea!" The old housekeeper was more excited than anyone else in the room. "I can't be mistaken. She has inherited all the characteristics of Madame!"

"It seems like you remember me," said Andrea, in an expressionless manner, "in that case, our negotiation will be much easier."

Horford could not help but feel rattled in his heart. The fact that his daughter had awakened as a witch was a secret hidden from everyone. Even Andrea's mother, his wife Fenancy, had no idea about this. When Andrea's maid had informed him about the incident, he instantly chose to drown the maid by pushing her into the river and had his men cover it up as a fake accident.

Although he knew that doing so might make his daughter hate him forever, at least this way she would remember who her father was. But upon meeting again, the decision he made all those years ago had turned into a sharp thorn in his heart.

This stabbing sensation became even more apparent, as he started to question whether he made the right choice back then.

But the earl knew that there were more pressing matters now—why Andrea would appear in the City of Glow and whether her identity was true or false. Moreover, he couldn't figure out what she meant by "I don't think so." These questions were more important than pursuing past mistakes.

He suppressed all the doubts and thoughts in his heart and waved at Horn. "You can go out first."

"Father!" Hawn responded worryingly.

"Just do as I said!" Horford replied firmly.

Seeing that he could not change his father's mind, Hawn left the room reluctantly.

"Don't alarm the others," the earl said to the steward, "and at the same time close the courtyard door and put out the lights in the hall. If someone in the government asks, just say that I'm drafting some documents and that no one should be allowed to disturb me. Do you understand?"

"I will do that right away! But..." The butler touched his head and said, "What about those friends that Miss Andrea brought?"

"Friends?" He glanced over at Andrea, suspiciously. "Take them to the ballroom and take care of them properly."

"Yes, Master!"

As the door shut with a squeak, the study suddenly plunged into silence. The pair stared at each other for a long time, until the earl could not resist anymore and broke the silence first. "Although you and my daughter are a bit alike, I can't confirm so rashly that you're Andrea. After all, she was only 16 when she

left, and now ten years have passed..." He paused and said, "Do you have other ways to prove your identity?"

In truth, he had already believed that this was his daughter, so the question was just to confirm that—even the best kind of face-morphing abilities could not change one's soul. From her every move, the earl could see the shadow of the Flower of Glow.

Instead of answering, Andrea opened her hands, and a bow of magic power appeared in her palm. The glittering, longbow converged and diminished little by little, evolving into a distinctive appearance—that was a gift that he had made for his daughter's birthday, a long time ago.

At this point, Horford no longer had any doubt. This bow and arrow for beginners had long been destroyed together with the carriage, and even now he could not accurately describe its appearance.

Andrea, who was especially interested in shooting at an early age, clearly still remembered this gift.

"It's you..." said the count with a long sigh. "Why did you come back? I gave you away in the first place so that you could continue to live safely."

"Was that the only reason?" Andrea retrieved the longbow and said, "Or were you afraid that outsiders would find out that the Prime Minister had a daughter that had fallen under the temptation of the demon? I didn't think I was being protected. It felt more like abandonment. There was no safe place for a witch like me. If it weren't for my luck that I got to meet a group of people who had the same fate as me, I would have died ages ago in who knows where."

He opened his mouth but could not refute her argument because that was indeed one of his concerns back then. Once people found out that Andrea was a witch, the whole family would be in danger—not everyone would be comfortable with sending their family to the church or the other nobles. Rather than let the entire Quinn family face this difficult choice, it would be better for him to make that decision alone.

"But those were all in the past, and I'm not here to dig up old wounds." Andrea said positively, "You must be curious as to how I could enter the earl's residence so easily, even though the guards wouldn't easily believe my rhetoric. And when I saw the butler, I deliberately waited for a while outside the door. Is the one who called you father the heir to the family? When did I have such a brother?"

"He came from a branch... Your mother died a year after you left, and the Quinn family needed a successor," Horford whispered.

If that incident did not happen 10 years ago, this position would have belonged to the eldest daughter.

After hearing this news, Andrea was stunned at first; then her eyes started to turn dim. After a moment's silence, she spoke, "In any case, the family leader of the Quinn can't be changed at the moment, and His Majesty would like you to go one step further and not back down now. In the current situation, other than Earl Quinn of the three big families, he won't recognize any other agent."

"What does that mean?" Horford was a bit confused about the meaning of her words, "The Majesty you referred to is—"

"Who else but the king of Graycastle, His Majesty Roland Wimbleton. I've come here this time under his orders." Andrea took a deep breath and spelled out her next words one by one. "My lord, how do you feel about being the new King of Dawn?"

#### Chapter 934: Rise of The Glowing City

"What are you... saying?" Even Earl Quinn, who had been through countless storms in his life, was left completely dumbfounded by Andrea's sentence.

But what he was surprised of was not her mention of a "new King of Dawn," but that she was under orders of His Majesty Roland Wimbleton. These words carried a whole different meaning when said by different people.

Hawn had essentially suggested the same thing earlier, but the earl knew very well that the Quinn family alone had no way to rid Dawn of its current royalty. What Hawn meant by taking a stand was just an unrealistic fantasy.

However, now that the one speaking had the support of the King of Graycastle, those words carried more power.

"Just as you have thought." Probably due to the news of her mother's death, Andrea's tone was no longer as sharp. "His Majesty Roland doesn't want to have Appen Moya stay on the throne but nor does he wish for a destabilized kingdom. It's, therefore, necessary to support a new king with the backing of the populace to successfully control the situation as soon as possible.

After confirming that he didn't mishear her first sentence, the earl muttered, "But why me?"

"His Majesty doesn't have many people that he can trust in the Kingdom of Dawn, so he chose me at first. But I refused."

Just because of this?

Because the daughter refused, so the throne was thrown to her father. This kind of behavior was like that of a child's... But strangely, Horford did not think that this was a joke.

Although Appen had completely banned people from talking about the defeat at Hermes, it was impossible to block the flow of all the information related to the battle because too many nobles had been involved with it. Horford knew very well that the enemy he encountered was not the church; it was Graycastle that took over the holy city. The 10,000-strong army was defeated in an instant, and many of those who had survived could not even describe what happened during the battle. They only saw flames continually falling from the heavens amidst the chaos. The thunder-like flashes of fire smashed into their ranks, reducing both common serfs and armored knights into piles of ashes.

If the news was anywhere near accurate, this meant that Graycastle's power had far exceeded the expectations of the nobles. With such great discrepancy in military might, it would not be unreasonable for Graycastle to appoint new kings for neighboring countries anyhow they liked.

The only question left was why the King did not come himself.

"If the nobles in the Kingdom of Dawn were willing to group their forces under a single banner and start a rebellion together, the Earl would have definitely chosen this option." Andrea seemed to have anticipated that he would try to raise this question. "Simply said, right now, His Majesty Roland has more important enemies to deal with, so he does not have the time nor resources to try to integrate the Kingdom of Dawn into Graycastle in the next three or four years. After all, even though destroying the current ruling royalty was simple, restabilizing the country afterward would be a lengthy process."

"More important... enemies?"

"Yes, the demons." Andrea said slowly, "Otto Passi should have already mentioned that all the church's actions were due to the news of the Battle of Doomsday. That was just a small part of the mystery. The name of this war was called The Battle for Divine will and has lasted for nearly a thousand years."

After listening to his daughter's story, Earl Horford felt the cold sweat run down his back.

The Four Kingdoms, including the Kingdom of Dawn, was merely a corner of a continent? As of now, humanity had already suffered defeat in two consecutive wars and was unable to stop the advance of the demons, and a third defeat would lead to the extinction of humankind. Under such dire circumstances, Roland Wimbledon still dared to bear this heavy burden and go to battle with a mighty enemy to gain Divine Will.

How much will and courage would a man need to do this?

Just thinking about it was already enough to cause the Earl to forget to breathe for a couple of seconds.

"Why?" said the earl hurriedly. "How would this benefit him? Does he not fear the consequences of failing?"

"I don't know..." Andrea sighed and said, "This has been mentioned by Her Highness Tilly previously, but her speculation was even more puzzling."

"What did she say?"

"She said that he's not doing it for humanity, but for himself..." She hesitated and said, "It was as if he was looking for a new challenge, and we just happened to be the beneficiaries in this situation."

The earl did not answer, because he did not know what to say. He had seen many different nobles, but none of them was anything like Roland Wimbledon. Eventually, he put this question aside and returned to the main topic. "What does he require of me? To fight for him?"

"No," Andrea shook her head. "Your only job would be to maintain the stability of the Kingdom of Dawn, and provide resources when needed. This includes manpower, raw ore and other kinds of resources. As for the specific amounts and types, His Majesty will later send someone to discuss with you in detail."

Horford was relieved to hear that there was a price to pay for Graycastle's support. If Roland wanted to support the Quinn family without asking for anything in return, he would certainly be suspicious of any conspiracies behind it. Of course, even if there was a conspiracy, with the current situation in Dawn, he could only bite the bullet and agree.

Feigning illness was only a delaying tactic to reach a balance between Appen and the other nobles. If those nobles turned out to be capable of overthrowing the Moya family, Quinn's family would

undoubtedly be excluded from the ruling circle of the king's city due to them just remaining a spectator. That would actually have been the ideal result. If anyone wanted to overthrow the three big families, it would not be at all difficult to spread rumors about them still owing allegiances to the royal family.

This was a rare opportunity.

Not to mention the involvement of Andrea.

She might hate me, but she would never cause her family any harm.

As soon as he thought of this, Earl Horford immediately made a decision.

"Please inform His Majesty Wimbledon, that I'm willing to serve the King of Graycastle." He spoke in a serious manner. Although he was speaking to his daughter, she was now the king's messenger; hence the earl gave a slight bow according to the rules of the nobles. "When would he like to take action? It would take at least two to three months to prepare for Graycastle's troops to infiltrate the city."

Even if Appen took away his power to run the patrol team, Horford was still confident about letting dozens or so Graycastle men into the city. After all, as the prime minister who had served two different kings, he still had a certain degree of influence within the city. The earl believed that those foreign nobles who wanted to persuade him over to their side also realized this point.

According to the strength that Graycastle had demonstrated in the previous battle they fought with Dawn's troops, dozens of the Graycastle soldiers should be more than enough to take control of the city gate.

However, Andrea's following words went far beyond his expectations.

"Now that you've promised to our request, we will act immediately," she said lightly. "His Majesty Roland had emphasized that he did not want a political assassination, but rather a complete defeat of Appen Moya in front of the public. Not only does everyone need to witness the end of the Moya family, the greedy nobles who had selfish intentions would also have to be convinced that any resistance is futile."

"What?" He did not believe what he had heard. "But how?"

"Do you know how I got here?" Andrea laid out her hands and said, "I came in from the main entrance. Those guards did try to stop me, but they couldn't do it."

Horford immediately realized that the friends she brought were the key. Barging into the earl's residence at the king's city was not an impossible feat, as this was not his home territory. But to do so without raising any alarms was quite astounding. This meant that the guards were most likely subdued within an instant.

There is no doubt that this was not Andrea's doing, as each of those guards was armed with a God's Stone of Retaliation.

"Wait till you meet them. All of your doubts would naturally vanish by then." She continued and said, "So what the Quinn family needs to do right now is to cause a scene—the louder the noise, the better it is. Everyone in the Glowing City should have their attention on this so that Appen Moya will have no choice but to come out and face you in public."

## Chapter 935: A Glimpse of Hope in the Dark

Otto Passi was woken up by loud noises.

He struggled to lift his heavy eyelids and looked around. The candles on the candlestick had already burnt to the bottom, and the remaining flickers of flame weren't enough to light up the dark room.

He could not tell day from night in this underground cell, and the candle became his only measure of time. The guards would replace the candles every six hours when they come to bring him food.

But that was only in the beginning.

Now they seldom came, be it with candle or food. Sometimes, he would wake up from hunger and find that the cell was still completely dark.

How long had he been locked here? Otto pressed and shook his forehead, trying to squeeze out any last bit of remaining energy. The prolonged lack of sunlight had made him haggard, and constantly waking up in an isolated and pitch-black environment made him feel helpless and abandoned. As if he forgotten by the world.

But he must live on.

Because both his father's entire Luoxi family's fates are in Appen's hands.

Otto propped up his frail body, rolled out of bed and limped slowly to the railings. Other than replenishing the plates and jugs, he also hoped that the caretaker could give him a razor blade. His long unshaven beard had long since covered his cheeks, and bits and pieces of leftover food and grease could be found stuck there. Over time, his face smelled like rotten orange peels. If his caretaker were worried about the blade being a potential weapon, Otto wouldn't even mind letting the caretaker shave him instead.

Afterall, he was still a noble, and the request for grooming shouldn't be something unreasonable.

Otto then heard the sounds of a conversation outside the iron gate.

"What were those people thinking? The person imprisoned here is the eldest son of the Passi family!"

The ones who were speaking did not try to cover up their voices so it seemed that they did not mind their conversation being heard by Otto.

"Jokes and ridicule... Isn't that what clowns do?"

"Are they crazy? Normally, if these acrobats dared to offend the earl's son, I'm afraid that they would be fed to the fishes next day. They're nothing more than a group of homeless wanderers!"

"Well that was when times were normal. Back then, would the eldest son be kept in the dungeon? Now His Majesty likes to see these guys perform. Without the approval of the King of Dawn, I don't think they would dare to do such a thing."

"Pui, you're just speaking nonsense."

"I'm just saying. You don't have to believe me, and even if you don't, what can you do? Are you going to trade dinner with that lord in the cell?"

"Sigh, forget it. It's just a few mouthfuls of saliva. He won't die from eating it." Then the sound of a bunch of keys jingling around could be heard.

"That's right, and if this is what His Majesty wants to see, they aren't you just asking for trouble? Go ahead. I still have to retrieve the food tray."

The iron gate made a screeching sound, and the warden walked in while holding a tray of food.

"Oh, Milord, you're already awake?" He was a little surprised to see Otto already leaning against the railings, but he quickly hid his awkward expression. "Well then, you might as well finish up today's dinner now. I'll change the candles tomorrow. The chief steward forgot to send new ones over."

Otto did not answer. He suddenly felt his heart fill with sorrow and he even forgot to request for a razor blade. Although the exchange between the two people was short, he was still able to figure out the gist of the conversation. The clown of the circus troupe happened to bump into the man who was responsible for delivering his food, and he spat a few mouthfuls of saliva into his food in an attempt to amuse Appen Moya.

The shame made his cheeks burn as if they were being baked in an oven.

The warden did not care about Otto's reply and quickly changed the dinner tray before leaving soon after. Although the room was decorated like the room from a duke's mansion, the sense of repression that could be felt inside was unbearable, and no one would want to spend more time in there than they needed to.

As the footsteps went away, the silence once again washed over Otto.

In that very moment, he wanted to scream out loud, curse the warden for his negligence in duty, and reproach Appen for his ignorance... yet he did not do so.

Because that would be meaningless—the former would only delay the next replacement time of the food and candles, while the latter would just gladly let him fall into the trap of his "old friend."

As for the dinner that was used to humiliate him, he had no intention to touch it.

Otto could not help but wonder if he had been doing the right thing.

Just as he was ready to go back to bed, his whole body suddenly started trembling. In the corner of his eye, the oatmeal started to turn into a bowl of black water!

Passi's eldest son rubbed his eyes, slowly moved closer to the plate, and carefully lifted the bowl of oatmeal.

That was not an illusion, nor was it the shadow of the weak flame. The oatmeal had turned black, like some thick ink.

Suddenly, an idea flashed through his mind.

Acrobatics troupe, clowns, tricks... was all this arranged by that person?

"Yorko said you were an ordinary acrobat. Is that true? How did you come to know His Majesty, Roland?"

"It was a coincidence. As to why His Majesty would choose me was probably because my acrobatic performance wasn't bad."

"Oh, can you demonstrate it?"

"Ok, I'll perform the simplest trick of the thief who spits ink."

Otto stared blankly at the oatmeal for a moment, and suddenly inserted his finger into the bowl! After groping around for a little while, at the tip of his finger, he could feel a rough touch.

"How... how did this happen? Why did the water suddenly change color?"

"It's not done yet. Look at this chiffon. Can you see there's nothing on it? Now I'm going to put it in the water to make it wet and then use the fire to dry it. Guess what will happen next?"

"There's nothing, right... uh, wait, that's... a word?"

"Can you see what's written?"

"Let me see, is this... your name?"

"You're right, Hill Fawkes is my name."

Otto gently pinched that rough item, and slowly pulled it out of the oatmeal—it looked almost transparent, and he couldn't tell if it was immersed in the oatmeal. The chiffon could only be felt with his fingers.

He held his breath, walked quickly to the candlestick, and spread it out a little.

The faint black water marks began to fade, while the candlelight started to waver.

"Hurry... hurry... hurry... hurry up." His heart was shouting anxiously. The swaying shadow seemed to come from all directions, and it was as if the black chiffon he held in his hands was the only light in the whole world.

At the moment the letter marks appeared, the candle went out.

Darkness then engulfed the entire dungeon.

Otto could not help but laugh heartily.

He pressed down on his trembling shoulders and stuffed the chiffon into his mouth. Then he crawled back to the railing and swallowed it with the oatmeal.

The warmth spread through his throat and stomach and filled his whole body with strength. However, compared to the oatmeal, it was his heart that felt warmest.

As he drank the oatmeal silently, a tear rolled down from the corner of his eye.

His determination was finally worth it.

There were only a few words on the chiffon. They were written with beautiful handwriting and gave him a nostalgic feeling for his childhood.

"Don't be afraid. I'm coming."

Chapter 936: Close Combat

"What did you say?" The King of Dawn pushed away the dancer in his arms as he suddenly stood up.

The dancer, a beautiful woman with nothing more than a pink silk scarf wrapped around her half-covered body, fell to the ground. Though she was hurt badly, she did not dare to voice out her pain.

The rest of the servants, performers, and jugglers also lowered their heads in panic. The entire palace abruptly became silent.

"Your Majesty..." The Secretary of State gulped and said, "Your Prime Minister has rebelled."

"Are you sure he has truly rebelled and isn't just supporting those idiots on the outside?" Appen didn't know whether it was him who had misheard his minister or it was the fault of his staff blowing the news out of proportion.

Of course, he knew about the plans of those traitorous nobles—everyone who had returned alive from Hermes had witnessed the destruction of the king's personal knightage as well as his miserable escape. It would have been naive of him to expect them to remain loyal to the royal family.

Some amount of rebellion was only to be expected. Gathering support and forming alliances with the three major families in the royal capital would clearly be their first choice. Appen had long been wary about this, but he believed that, going by the characters of the three old veterans, they would most likely play by the rules and lie low behind closed doors. After all, the king's city was still in his hands, and any act of defiance was tantamount to suicide.

He did not expect that the first to cause a problem would be the Quinn family.

The collision with the smaller lords had already violated Appen's bottom line. Perhaps the old earl just wanted to leave a way out for himself or make a stand... But no matter what the reason was, punishment was absolutely inevitable for such an impertinent act. For example Otto Luoxi—Appen had already shown mercy by not killing his childhood friend on the spot.

But... what does 'rebellious' mean?

Earl Quinn is still in the City of Glow, and he has neither subjects nor soldiers here. Does he want to rebel with just his dozen or so guards alone? That would be ridiculous. How would he be able to rebel?

"The earl did contact the other nobles, but not in secret. He issued an invitation!" The minister wiped the sweat from his forehead and said, "And he publicly invited all the nobles to his mansion to persuade them to support the Quinn family!"

Appen was stunned and almost unable to understand the news he had heard.

This move could indeed be perceived as a rebellion, but the way he did it was incredible!

Instead of asking for help from the nobles, he's asking them to support the Quinn family—does Horford really know what he's doing?

He had already become a dangerous vessel that could sink any time. How could he still think about getting the support of the nobility? This act was undoubtedly going to turn both sides into bitter enemies, and there was no way Moya could ever tolerate such a grave act of provocation. The sheer stupidity of the situation would only make those nobles look down on him.

But still, was the Prime Minister such an arrogant person in the past?

Appen brooded silently for a long time before finally saying, "Pass my orders down. Commander Duke Bachov is to lead the patrol team to the earl's residence, arrest Horford Quinn, and bring him in front of me." "Everyone else in his residence is to be temporarily locked up in custody. If anyone opposes him, he may kill them on the spot! I would like to see how the earl is going to explain this."

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

After this news, he was no longer in the mood for seeking pleasure. He dismissed everyone in the hall and sat paralyzed on the throne.

He didn't really want to drown himself in pleasure, but once the surroundings became quiet his ears would echo once again with the roar of the sky thunder.

The war that ended more than a month ago had left a deep impression on him that he could never forget.

No... it was not a war, but a one-sided massacre.

His troops had no strength to fight back.

Whether it was the knights or the serfs, it made no difference when they were faced with the attack from Graycastle.

After he got back to the king's city, Appen found that he no longer had the courage to confront Roland—the failure on the battlefield caused him even more heartache than the death of his father.

What made things even worse was the fact he knew that the Moya family had effectively lost the entire Kingdom of Dawn. What was the fate of offending a powerful neighbor? There was no doubt that, sooner or later, the other party would annex the country that he inherited from his father, and there was nothing he could do about it!

When he ascended the throne, he was full of ambition and was bent on governing this kingdom well. He wanted the citizens to live a stable life, and no longer have to worry about witches, demonic beasts, or other foreign threats. But just a year after he took over, and he was already completely disillusioned and had lost interest in political affairs and commerce. He was just waiting for the enemy's army to attack and leave him hanging on the city wall.

As he thought about this point, Appen's hatred toward the king of Graycastle kept growing immensely, and he wanted to eat him alive!

If not for Roland Wimbledon, he would have left a mark in the pages of history as a famous leader of his generation!

All this was the latter's fault—Graycastle's new king had been bewitched by witches!

He slammed his palm on the armrest, and the burning fire in his heart had nowhere to be vented.

When Earl Quinn has been captured, I will make him have a taste of a king's anger!

However, in the afternoon, his newly appointed minister ran into the palace in a panic.

"Your Majesty, Sir Bachov is dead! The patrol... The whole army is gone!"

"What...!?" The King of Dawn grabbed his collar in shock. "Did they have traps set up in the mansion? Or did they hide in ambush?"

"Yes, they had hidden bodyguards," the minister quickly replied, "I saw it with my own eyes. At first, Bachov asked the earl to come out and barged directly into the house after being denied. But he was immediately killed by the earl's guards. Not only that, these guards also rushed out of the courtyard and ambushed the patrol team that was outside the mansion—they were like madmen. They had all kinds of weapons in their hands, including boning knives, wooden sticks, and even stone bricks... in less than half a minute, the platoon collapsed!"

"How many people did they have?"

"Probably... seven or eight."

"Bastard!" Appen struck the minister to the ground. "You call seven or eight people an ambush? In the City of Glow, even a businessman has a dozen guards. Have you been scared out of your wits!? The patrol team has about one or two hundred people. How can they be defeated by seven or eight guards? Even two hundred wild boars wouldn't fall so fast—don't tell me they can't even compare to pigs in the hunting grounds?"

"Your Majesty, those people... aren't human beings. They're monsters," the Minister cried out his grievances. "Most of the patrol team couldn't even block a single one of their blows. That wasn't the strength and speed of a man!"

Appen suddenly jerked up his head.

He seemed to have seen this type of scenario before.

That's right. He remembered now that his father's killers, the two Pure Witches from the church, had shown him the terrifying prowess of the God's Punishment Army.

Could... Earl Quinn be connected with the church?

An uncontrollable anger suddenly rose from his heart!

"Riseth!" Appen yelled.

A knight came in quickly from outside the hall and knelt on one knee. "Your majesty, what may I do for you?"

"Immediately summon all the mercenaries in the City of Glow and bring in the crossbows and rockets. I want you to burn Earl Quinn's residence to the ground!" He yelled, "I want them all to be burnt to ashes regardless of whether they are human beings or monsters!"

"But... that's the Inner City," the knight hesitated and said, "If it causes a big fire, I'm afraid it will be difficult to control it."

"Shut up and do what I say!" Appen growled hysterically, "If you don't burn him, you don't have to come back to see me!"

Even the God's Punishment Army, when faced with an opponent a hundred times their number and armored with crossbows, would not have a chance of victory. If they wanted to collude with the church, they would only be facing death!

...

The next day, the King of Dawn once again received news from the watchdogs that the entire mercenary group that had been prepared the night before had failed to even reach the earl's residence.

While passing through the Rising Sun Avenue, the mercenary team was attacked by an acrobatics troupe.

He had to make sure he hadn't misheard the minister's report.

An acrobatics troupe performing on the street suddenly attacked the mercenaries in the middle of their performance. The mercenaries caught off guard and suffered heavy losses. It seemed those actors fought the same way as Earl Quinn's guards.

But this time, the weapons in their hands were no longer random debris; they were wielding the daggers, iron hammers, and wooden shields that had belonged to the former patrol team

Chapter 937: A Stinger

In the next few days, the situation had changed so rapidly that it was beyond everyone's expectations.

People in the king's city had never thought that they would witness such a scene. The Quinn family, who had served the royal family of Moya for hundreds of years, publicly opposed Appen Moya.

This was not a secret conspiracy, nor a conflict of interest between noble families which civilians simply could not understand. Everything was on the table. The Prime Minister of the City of Glow stood in front of everyone and publicly declared his ideals and purpose, which was overthrowing the rule of the incompetent tyrant, and promising a bright future for the Kingdom of Dawn.

In his speech, the Earl exemplified the signs of the decline of the city and the tyranny of the new king for more than a year, and he used precise evidence to describe the inevitable fall of the Kingdom of Dawn. Since no noble ever told the people the principles and inside information of running the domain and the speaker was the Prime Minister who had served the king for over a decade, his act surprisingly caused a heated discussion. From the auction house of the Chamber of Commerce to the taverns on the Black Street, nearly everyone was talking about it.

"I have heard that hundreds of people starved to death in the slums last year. It turned out to be caused by the reduction of cultivated land in the outer cities."

"In actuality, more people died in the outer cities. There is nothing wrong with His Majesty's decision to occupy the land for the expansion of the palace, but the Earl said that the amount of grain saved is gradually decreasing. What should we do?"

"No wonder the price of food is so much higher recently."

"I heard that the peasants in suburban towns were forced to serve in the army. Now that the army was defeated, few people are able to come back."

"Doesn't that mean that the food prices will be even higher?"

"Oh, I hope we won't starve during the Months of Demons this year."

"Well, do you want to support Earl Quinn? He has promised, if his promises hold, that there will be no need to worry about the food in the City of Glow and everyone will be able to get enough food in the future."

"Hey, I didn't say that!"

The speech of the Prime Minister quickly spread throughout the City of Glow through these discussions.

Quite a large portion of the people were doubtful about the contents of the propaganda and it was the conflict itself that drew their close attention to this issue.

How often could they witness the conflicts between the great nobles and the royal family of Moya?

For the general public, they usually only heard, from the tavern, the exaggerated and modified rumors or boast of the nobles. These days it was simply too exciting for them.

This was not a show of drama, but a real treason!

King Appen did not remain indifferent. He had ordered several groups of men to stop Earl Quinn, all of which ended in failure. Earl Quinn possessed advantages beyond imagination, and an incredibly powerful guard team became his solid shield, which not only defeated the king's team in spite of a numbers disadvantage, and expanded from a dozen to forty or fifty members.

What was more exciting was that the Earl explained his plan directly. He would move the frontier line 200 meters toward the Castle District every day until the King of Dawn gave up his throne or was forcibly removed off the throne.

In other words, the confrontation would come to an end in five days or so.

...

"Bang!" "Bang!"

Appen threw everything from the desk on to the carpet. The delicate room became a mess, but it could not quench his anger.

"Damn, damn! When did I occupy the farmland outside the city? Isn't it the problem which my father ordered him to investigate? How dare he blame me for the cause of uncivilized suburban villages and towns! It's Roland Wimbledon's fault!" He almost roared, "It was his witches who killed them, not me!"

"Your Majesty, please appease your anger..." The minister and Chief Knight said, "Now the most important thing is to stop the pace of Horford Quinn so you can dispel his arrogance. The nobles in the kingdom are waiting for your move!"

"I should have thrown them all into jail at the very beginning," Appen thought in anger and then asked, "How many people do we have now?"

"There are still 1,500 knights, lifeguards, and mercenaries in the palace. And if we use the maids and servants, then we have an additional 2,000 hands." The Chief Knight replied, "Outside the Castle District, the stone wall can block the enemy. Though it's not as thick as the city walls, they can stand on it and easily kill the enemy even without much training."

Originally, he intended not to show his hand until he dealt with other lords, especially since the palace lifeguards were nearly as strong as the knights and were equipped to teeth. He had begun to cultivate them before his father passed away, but now he had to use them in the defense of the palace.

"Bring the boxes in the vault and tell the servants that they can get a reward of 100 gold royals as long as they kill a monster!" Appen said, gnashing his teeth, "If they can stop the treason, I'll give them titles and domains! Or promote them if they already have!"

"Yes!"

The God's Punishment Warriors of the church were not impervious to blades and spears, which he had confirmed from the Pure Witches. Even though the monsters were powerful, it was impossible for them to remove the entire stone wall by hand!

As for the fact that the monsters were increasing in number, it must be a trick played by Earl Quinn. He must have arranged for them to hide somewhere beforehand, and then disguised themselves as if he had more and more helpers.

No noble would believe that there were so many fierce warriors in the City of Glow and that they did not emerge until now. The stupid civilians might believe it, but their opinions had little effect on the situation.

"Has Horford gotten the support of other nobles yet?" Appen turned to the minister.

The latter immediately became embarrassed and replied, "Uh, well..."

"Speak!"

"It is rumored that 'Black Money' started to come into contact with Earl Quinn, but the specifics of the situation is still not known yet—"

"Those greedy wolves!" Appen clenched his fist and angrily said, "My father treated their underground kennel as part of the market. In my opinion, I should have confiscated their property much earlier!"

However, he also knew that he could do nothing but express his anger. The organizers of Black Money were all rich businessmen in the City of Glow, and their status was no lower than that of the great nobles. Moreover, a large amount of wealth accumulated by the Moya family came from those people.

"In addition, the Tokat family has openly supported the Quinn family," the minister swallowed and said. "But Your Majesty, please don't be too worried. I heard that the Luoxi family had rejected Horford Quinn's invitation several times. "

"These were the three families which my father was so proud of..." Appen sneered silently and thought, "Now two of them have become traitors, even faster than those minor nobles who are sitting on the fence. And the reason why the last family doesn't act is because Otto Luoxi is still in my hands."

But this might be his weapon.

"Send someone to tell Earl Luoxi that if he wants to prove his innocence, he must immediately bring his knights and squires to support the palace," said Appen coldly. "Otherwise... I will not show any mercy toward the rebellious family."

"It will be done!" The minister quickly replied.

Four hours later, the King of Dawn received a message that Earl Luoxi was willing to comply with his demands, which made his anger somewhat abate a little. He managed to mark a little comeback in the face of bad news.

Appen did not care too much about Luoxi's knights. Most importantly, he knew that the younger generation of the three families was close friends. He wondered whether they would still be line with the family when they knew one of them would die if they opposed to the king.

This was undoubtedly a stinger which they could not remove.

Soon, the deadline announced by Horford Quinn, the Prime Minister, arrived.

Chapter 938: The First Shot

When dawn's light shed over the city walls and into the inner city of the king's city, it showed that everywhere in the city was crowded with curious people.

It had never been so busy and lively in the City of Glow.

This was different from the auction exhibitions which were only available for the rich tradesmen and nobles, this was a "carnival" for all the people in the city. They originally had no connection with the upper class. Even the knights, the lowest level of nobles, were superior in their eyes. However, they now had an opportunity to witness the changing of power at the highest levels. Especially when they followed Earl Quinn's team to move forward, they even had the illusion that they were also making the change.

Now, few people mentioned the word "treason"; instead, it was replaced by "fighting for the throne".

This battle would give a clear answer to who would be the ruler of the Kingdom of Dawn.

"It seems that in everyone's eyes, your reputation is extraordinary," said Hill Fawkes, who was riding a horse side by side with Earl Quinn. "I thought the public opinion won't change until you occupied the Castle District."

"That's probably because I have reorganized the patrol team and dealt with the domestic affairs of the country for half of my life," the old Earl said with a sigh, "Is this also what you gathered when you ran the circus?"

Although Hill Fawkes was just a civilian without any title and the status of an acrobatics troupe performer was even inferior to a freeman, Horford did not dare to despise him. According to what Andrea said, Hill was the real representative of the King of Graycastle, and he had a higher position than Yorke the Ambassador. After Yorke retreated, Hill did not leave; instead, he began to run several acrobatics troupes. This way, he hid his identity and scattered eyes and ears to every corner of the city. In the face of such a skilled man who was deeply trusted by Roland, he had to show his respect even though he was an Earl.

In addition, he also needed his help at the moment.

"The wishes of the civilians are very important, my lord." Hill nodded. "In the eyes of the great nobles, they may only be humble grains of sand or tax-offering lambs, but sometimes the sand will bury people and lambs can ruin the herdsman. If this occurs in Neverwinter, I think the result probably will be completely different."

"What will happen in your opinion?" Earl Tokat, who was riding on the other side of the Prime Minister, curiously asked.

"As long as there is such a sign, the people will already report the revolters to the City Hall before His Majesty does anything," Hill replied with a smile.

"Hill... Sir," Oro Tokat, Otto Luoxi's good friend, coughed and pointed to the team following them, "Did you summon the Rats following behind us?"

"I happen to have some connection with their chief," Hill frankly said, "so what do you think of it? This gathers much more momentum for us."

"That's right," the old Earl thought, "After wearing the leather armors offered by Black Money, the team of over a thousand Rats looks quite plausible." Otherwise, his team would not be such a deterrence since there are only about 40 Extraordinary warriors, as well as the guards of Earl Tokat and his own. However, Rats were useless in other aspects. Moreover, as a great noble, he felt quite uncomfortable to march together with the Rats on Black Street.

In addition, the Rats were infamous for being double-crossers and asking for more than they should. Earl Quinn wondered what kind of deal Hill made with them.

"Don't you worry that they may rebel?" asked Oro, who apparently could not hide his feelings, "You know that they're not unfamiliar with betrayal."

"That also depends on what they can get," Hill turned to Earl Quinn, "I promised them the identity of freemen in your name. If you successfully become the King of Dawn, they'll be rid of the unstable life and become the citizens of the City of Glow under your protection."

Horford could not help frowning and said, "Although the Rats are indeed hated and despised by most people, the real reasons why they are degenerates are because of poverty and hunger, rather than the recognition of others. If this isn't changed, even though I can spare them of past crimes, the new identity is useless for them. They'll become Rats again sooner or later."

"Since these people are willing to take such a risk to get an identity, they're not stupid or lazy. Maybe they just lack an opportunity." Hill replied casually, "As for the cause of degeneration... Rest assured. When His Majesty's messengers come next time, you'll find that there are much more job opportunities than you expect, and you don't need to feed them... Because they'll feed themselves at that time."

The huge crowd walked through the market and entered Rising Sun Avenue. The wall of the Castle District was right before them.

Behind the stone wall was where the Moya family had lived for generations.

Looking at the palace and High Tower where the dawn shone, Horford suddenly became nervous. He had been the Prime Minister for over a decade and had experienced too many twists and turns. Except for the moments where he found that his daughter was a witch and Fenancy died of disease, he seldom felt so uneasy. Today, he stood at the threshold of a new field out of luck.

Even though the real ruler would be the King of Graycastle while he would be just a king in name, the Quinn family would reach the pinnacle of nobles, which was, to become the royal family of a country!

He had disobeyed the advice of his ancestors, but he also made it possible for his family to reach a new summit.

In such a complicated mood, the old Earl could not help asking, "Is it really okay.. to let my daughter participate in this battle?"

"Of course, you may not know, but Andrea is no longer the noble lady who couldn't leave without your protection. She's now an outstanding combat witch and she'll fire the first shot of the siege." Hill smiled, "Please prepare your speech before the final attack. It's not to the Extraordinary warriors and Rats, but to the people who accompanied us here. Tell them that the new age of the Kingdom of Dawn is coming soon."

...

Andrea stood on the top floor of the belfry, observing the palace in the wind.

This was the only place in the inner city where she could overlook the stone wall of the royal palace, though it was about 600 meters away. From afar, it seemed that she could embrace the grand palace in a hug and the people in it were little ants.

For the Castle District, this was an absolute safe distance. Even a heavy catapult could not threaten the stone wall here.

From here, she would open a gap for the God's Punishment Witches in the battle.

Just then, she saw a red flame flying upwards over Rising Sun Avenue, which was a sign that indicated the start of the battle.

She took out the bolt rifle, which was specially made by Miss Anna, loaded the ten-bullet clip, opened the aiming lens, and raised the gun.

She saw a fully-armored knight.

Andrea took a deep breath and began to control the magic power in her body. It was a wonderful feeling. The magic power seemed to turn into a pair of gentle hands that lightly held her arms, elbows, and fingers. In such an embrace, she felt that she entered a mystical state, as tough as a rock and as light as a feather.

The former made the weapon in her hands undisturbed, while the latter made her become part of the wind, swaying gently with the breeze touching her cheeks. When the two combined into one, Andrea snapped the trigger—

With a great roar and heat, the high-speed revolving bullet flew out of the barrel and fell toward the stone wall!

Chapter 939: Andrea the Marksman

Without bothering to check the result, Andrea pointed to the next target with the aiming lens.

The magic power consumed in precise shooting varied with the difficulty of the shooting. The more difficult the target was, the more magic power she had to consume.

That meant that her magic power, which could have been sufficient for arrow or stone shooting for two to four hours, would be exhausted in about eight minutes from shooting from such a long distance.

She had to shoot as many bullets as she could.

Her ability responded to her will.

Andrea felt that she was dancing rather than shooting. The adjustment of the gun, the rising and falling of her arm, and every movement of her body seemed to integrate with the world in harmony.

Shooting at every breath, Andrea soon used up ten bullets and immediately changed to a new clip. The whole process was as smooth as water and as proficient as a well-prepared performance.

However, it was not so easy for the people on the stone wall.

Death was flying to Appen's army within seconds, while they were completely unaware of it.

The knight who was commanding the mercenaries to adjust the crossbow machines became the first victim.

The shooting range of these crossbow machines was about 120 meters, and the cast-iron arrows would easily penetrate the large shields and armors of knights within 30 meters. This weapon could be described as the best weapon for defending the palace in terms of a normal attack.

In order to withstand the monster soldiers of extraordinary strength, Appen had ordered them to move all inventory from the warehouse on the wall. Eight crossbow machines were arranged on the wall

segment that directly faced Rising Sun Avenue. Considering the limited width of the avenue, any invader, no matter how strong he was, could not hide from the intensive shooting of the iron crossbows.

The mercenaries heard a muffled sound and saw the knight who had been giving orders fall silently back onto the ground, with his chest sunk in.

"Someone is attacking!" A warning immediately came from the top of the wall.

They drew their swords but failed to find out where the attack came from.

Followed by the second and third attack—

Death raised his Scythe again and again. The guards constantly fell, while the enemy did not appear. An inexplicable fear overwhelmed them. Death was not surprising for these people who had been used to fighting all their life, but it was a different story when they could do nothing but wait for death.

Especially for a few mercenaries who were confident about their abilities.

They found that their increasingly proficient skills were useless as their opponent did not even give them a chance to counterattack. Clumsy servants or experienced knights were no different in the face of such an unexpected attack. They saw their enemies in the Hermes battle at least, while they were just waiting for the call of Death this time.

Less than a minute later, over twenty people were killed on the wall segment. Upon hearing the painful moaning of the wounded, most people were about to collapse.

"Look for cover. There is a witch!"

Just then, the order of the chief knight somewhat woke them up, "As long as we hide behind the battlements and big logs, we can avoid the attack! Bring out the God's Punishment Arrows and shoot toward any possible direction to force that damn witch out!"

Andrea also noticed the change on the stone wall.

A knight wearing golden-lined armor seemed to be commanding their actions. Those guards were moving closer to him and hiding behind various obstacles while shooting arrows without targets. Some of them even threw arrows by hands. Their purpose was obvious.

The actions of the enemy were not threatening to her at all. However, if she could not completely destroy the enemy, it would hinder the actions of the God's Punishment Witches in the siege.

The position of the commander was a blind zone for Andrea from the belfry. She could faintly see his arm, which was out of the battlement, and a small part of his helmet.

Usually, it was impossible for her to hit such a target; however, she had a different idea since watching the First Army's cannon show.

Andrea constantly drew the magic power to fill her arms. Pushed by the invisible hands, the gun in her hand continued to rise up until it pointed to the sky.

When the familiar feeling of harmony appeared again, she pulled the trigger without hesitation.

At that moment, Andrea felt that she saw the trajectory of the bullet. It was thrown high in the air but did not lose all speed after passing the apex. On the contrary, it dived toward the target with forward momentum. Although the distance between the two was about 600 meters, it had flown a longer distance in the air, so the time for this bullet was much longer than the previous ones she shot.

Then she lowered the barrel, aimed at the knight's helmet and fired. The second bullet arrived earlier and accurately hit the edge of the battlement. Bricks immediately splashed, and the deformed bullet spun to hit the upper part of the helmet and knocked it away. The huge impact made the knight lose his balance and fall forward, and exposed his soft neck.

At the same time, the first bullet arrived and, as expected, pierced into his skin from an angle, and fractured his cervical vertebra into several sections. The chief knight had no time to react. He just heard a muffled sound behind his head, felt the chill on his neck, and then lost consciousness.

This shot almost consumed all the rest magic power of Andrea. A strong sense of dizziness overwhelmed her and the consequence of excessive consumption made her hands tremble. She even had difficulty holding the butt of the gun.

Nevertheless, the fall of the chief knight also became the last straw for the mercenaries. The defensive line of the stone wall immediately collapsed. Everyone turned around and ran toward the stairs, lest they would become the next target of death. No one even paid any attention to the big logs, hot oil, and crossbow machines, which were seen by the God's Punishment Witches.

"Woo————"

The horn for attacking was sounded.

Elena, who was in the siege team, rushed in first. In addition to carrying her commonly used tools, she brought a bundle of hemp rope in her hand.

Just as she approached the foot of the wall, she threw the rope. At the end of the rope, she had tightly tied a square-shaped hook.

A moment later, there were several "hanging cables" available for climbing the stone wall. The stone wall, which was about five meters high, was difficult for common people, but in the eyes of the God's Punishment Witches, it was a fence which they could directly climb over. Elena casually climbed to the top of the wall via the hemp rope only to find out the Castle District had been a mess.

The supervising and preparatory teams arranged by Appen did not play their roles. Just when the guards on the stone wall were defeated, the guards of Earl Luoxi suddenly drew their swords toward the guard team of the Kingdom of Dawn. The guards on the stone wall wanted to run away as soon as possible, so the three parties created chaos on the spot.

Elena raised her lips, took out the huge sword on her back, and leaped over the stone wall.

No one could withstand her frontal blows. As long as they were included in the range of the giant sword, the enemies were severely wounded or killed. By her power alone, she created a path in the crowd.

As the God's Punishment Witches joined the battlefield, Earl Quinn had the situation well in hand.

Chapter 940: Fading Past

"Earl Luoxi! That damn traitor, how dare he —!" Appen, who was watching the battle from the top of the castle, furiously said, "I'm going to kill him and his son! Ministers, where are my ministers?"

"Your Majesty, Lord Kerlong said earlier that he was going to... handle some things," after a while, the chief guard hesitated to reply, "but I think... he may not be back."

"What did you say?" The King of Dawn turned suddenly and gasped at the latter.

"You agreed," said the chief guard hesitatively. "In addition to Lord Kerlong, Lord Wirant and 'Gold Hourglass' Neal also left. Your Majesty, everyone is gone but me."

It was only then that Appen noticed that only the chief guard and several servants were in the huge hall.

He instantly understood what the chief guard meant by saying "may not be back."

"Traitors!" He threw the scepter to the ground and said, gnashing his teeth, "Traitors, traitors... My reign is ruined by these traitors."

He consented to their departure indeed, but what were their reasons? One said that he was going to check the defense of the stone wall, another said that he was going to the inner court to supervise the maids preparing for war. Those were originally their duty, but they now turned out to be their excuses!

Were his ministers ready to flee before the enemy had launched their attack?

"Your Majesty, those cowards are bound to be punished in the end, but the immediate priority now is to withdraw from here as soon as possible!" The chief guard approached and said, "Those mercenaries won't win us much time. Even the imperial guards could not withstand the enemy for over an hour. It'll be too late then!"

"No, I want to see the traitors be punished!" Said Appen, pushing the chief guard away, "Go to the underground cell and bring the head of Otto Luoxi to me!"

"But..."

"This is your king's command!" He yelled at the top of his voice.

"Yes, Your Majesty," the chief guard took a step back and bowed.

After his only subordinate left, Appen felt that his fingers were slightly trembling, and his eyes seemed to swell and even his vision was covered by a layer of light red.

He slowly sat on his chair and stared at his hands, hoping to tear the traitors alive!

It was over.

When the mercenaries on the top of the city wall fled for no reason and gave up the stone wall, his failure had been assured. The rebellion of Earl Luoxi was insignificant. But he could not understand why Earl Luoxi would risk losing his eldest son to betray him. Why would Horford Quinn get the complete support of the other two families? He was unable to explain it. Though the three families in the City of

Glow were seen as a whole, their respective interests were not exactly the same. In this challenge which might cost their lives, he could not figure out who would be trusted by them to such a degree.

Appen found that he did not know the city or the three families so deeply as he had thought.

In the end, he did not get the answer of the chief guard.

A team of warriors, whom he had never seen before, opened the hall door. Their weapons were still dripping blood, and their armor was also splashed with blood stains. However, there was no trace of exhaustion on their face. They were so relaxed, as if they had just gone through a street fight.

The chief guard declared that they could resist for an hour, but, in reality, they failed to even hold out for a quarter of an hour.

The rebellion had overwhelming superiority.

Then he saw the usurper, Horford Quinn, who had vowed to always support the Moya family.

In addition to Earl Quinn, two other traitors entered the hall together, along with their successors: Oro Tokat and Otto Luoxi.

When he saw the latter, Appen knew that the revenge he wanted had become impossible.

"Why is this—"

"Are you surprised as to why Otto is still alive?" Oro interrupted him, "It's not too hard to hide two warriors in the secret path of the palace, not to mention that the ordinary iron gates and fences could not stop their actions. As for how they got into the Castle District, you'd have to go to ask the guards. I don't think those guards, in their panic, may care much about the members of an acrobatics troupe."

Appen's pupils suddenly shrank. "If that's not a bluff, does that mean that they could have entered my bedroom at any time?"

"Yes, just as what you think." Oro spread out his hands and said, "The King of Graycastle needed to create a tribute; otherwise, you would have already been beheaded by them. To be honest, I'm so disappointed in you, Your Majesty... I thought you imprisoned Otto just out of anger. I had never expected that you would use him to threaten Earl Luoxi and even intend to kill him." He sighed and continued to say, "I had thought... Even if we're not friends anymore, you would not forget the days when we were."

"You mean Roland Wimbledon? So that was all his doing?" Appen did not care about the second half of Oro's words, as "King of Graycastle" mentioned by Oro had attracted all his attention. He said, "Do you know what you're doing? You're helping a demon. You not only betrayed your ancestors' vows but also sacrifice your kingdom and subjects to him! You're foolish!"

He pointed angrily to Horford Quinn, "And you! Do you think you can really sit on this throne? In fact, you're just a puppet! Haven't you thought about it? Why did he start the mutiny? Why did he fight against me if he were not attempting to annex the Kingdom of Dawn? Don't forget, since these people can easily overthrow me today, they'll easily push you into the abyss one day!"

"You're wrong," suddenly a woman from outside said, "he did it for two reasons, to save Otto and to protect the witches."

"Absurd—" Appen was ready to scold her presumption and ignorance, but his voice was suddenly stuck in his throat, "You, you're..."

She seemed to be very weak and could not stand up without the help of others. Even so, her superior beauty could not be hidden. Her long blonde hair and vaguely familiar face reminded him of a person who only existed in his memory.

"Andrea Quinn," her reply confirmed his guess. "It's been a long time since we met, Appen."

For a second, all the questions in his mind were answered. The reason why the Tokats supported Earl Quinn and why Earl Luoxi took risks— indeed, there was one person who could gain the trust of both families at the same time. That was because both of their children had been in love with her.

The anger in his heart was quenched and replaced by desperation all of a sudden. He murmured for a moment and finally asked, "Why?"

Why did you finally choose them and not me?

If I'm doomed to be defeated by Roland Wimbledon, why did you also betray me? I can give you more than he does. If it were not for that accident, you would have ruled the kingdom with me.

Andrea seemed to read his mind and replied, "Because I'm a witch, Appen. A Fallen who deserves to be killed in your mind."