

Alpha's Rejected Mate Returns as Queen

Chapter 129 New Companion

Selma Payne's POV:

We were also investigating the Eye of Insight. My father sent an advanced team to explore the ruins of the witch clan in the Rocky Mountains. We couldn't underestimate places where demons are sealed. We needed to get enough information before we could set off.

During the summer break, I trained while accompanying Dorothy.

What pained me the most was that my social class had been put on the agenda.

Anyone could see how ill at ease I was on the day of the farewell luncheon. My father didn't even have to say anything. My mother alone couldn't stand how I was at a loss in front of my peers.

"This isn't like a princess. Perhaps you need the servant in the tea room to give you some extra lessons?"

My mother rarely criticized me like this, which made me realize how careless I had been in this aspect in the past. Therefore, even if I was impatient with the elaborate formalities in social class, I forced myself to remember them.

At the same time, my mother also found me two 'social companions. I suspected this was the civilized name for 'female attendants'. They were responsible for attending classes with me and testing the results of my studies in daily life.

Being scrutinized all the time made me miserable.

However, I didn't hate them. These two girls were also of noble birth and weren't as rigid as Carolyn. In private, they were very open, no different from Mara and Avril.

"I'm so sick of these stupid rules." Emma took advantage of the absence of the etiquette teacher and took a big bite of the chocolate with a ferocious expression that ladies were not allowed to show. "Who was the first person in the world to invent social etiquette? We should give him the 'most torturous person' award."

Emma was the granddaughter of an Earl. As the youngest child in the family, she was naturally not well-behaved. Her mother sent her to the palace against all objections, hoping to 'wash away the ruffian aura on her'.

Jordin agreed, pretending to be serious.

She was the same age as me, but her parents, who had already taken on the noble title, made outstanding contributions to the Wolf-Witch War. A few years after the war, they passed away one after another due to old injuries, leaving Jordin, still in her infancy, to inherit the title of the 'Countess of Mirror Lake.'

Without her parents' upbringing and her relatives' neglect, Jordin was even wilder than Emma.

I introduced Dorothy to my female companions, and they got along well. Emma and Jordin were obviously confused about Dorothy's eyes, but they didn't say anything out of courtesy.

The three girls were a little too close. Sometimes, I was a little jealous. Every time I was forced to be silent because of a philosophical term that I'd never heard of, and I was watching other people's heated discussions, I always wondered, 'why am I here?'

In short, life passed by peacefully for a while.

At the end of July, my father called Dorothy and me to the study room to tell us some good news.

"The advance party has found the ruins of the witch clan. The werewolf grandmaster who accompanied them has already investigated it, and there is no danger. The witches who lived here then evacuated quickly and didn't even have time to arrange some defensive sorcery for the clan."

This was in line with the legend that the sorcerers had retreated in an emergency after sealing the demon and the boy and had not been able to take anything with them.

"What about the devil's seal?" Dorothy and I were most concerned about this. "Have the werewolf grandmasters found the seal? Has it loosened? Was there a pine forest hiding it? Has the devil's power seeped into the pine forest?"

The devil's seal was more important than the witch clan's ruins. Its safety directly determines whether we can proceed to the next step of the exploration.

If the werewolf grandmaster concluded that the seal was dangerous, all the plans that followed would be ruined.

My father said, "It's a pity that the werewolf grandmasters didn't find any traces of the seal. Although they can indeed feel the evil power intertwined with magic power, certain factors interfere with their judgment, making them unable to find the specific location."

"Do the werewolf grandmasters have any suggestions?"

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“Of course there is, but I don’t agree with it.”

“What is it?”

Under my questioning, my father passed the advance party’s report to Dorothy and me.

We found Master Mary’s report. At the end of it, she believed that no werewolf grandmaster, witch or wizard, would be able to find the actual location of the seal because the witch responsible for sealing the devil was the daughter of Mullwica. This meant that she might have used the power of prophecy or even the Eye of Insight.

Only someone with the same power could break through the layers of the fog she had set up, and that person was Dorothy.

But Dorothy didn’t have the strong body of a warrior or the rich experience of a werewolf grandmaster. We couldn’t just send her to the Rocky Mountains.

It was apparent from Adele that the power of prophecy was bewitching and could directly affect people’s minds. Dorothy’s mental barrier was not as strong as Adele’s. Although a large part of the latter’s madness was caused by herself, it could not be used as an excuse for safety.

Obviously, my father had considered this and disagreed with Master Mary’s suggestion.

130 Letting Go

Selma Payne’s POV:

No matter what, my father wouldn’t allow Dorothy to risk going to the Rocky Mountains, much less me.

We could only leave in low spirits.

Dorothy’s eyes were getting worse and worse. Recently, she often had dry eyes and tears in the wind. Tracy had done a checkup and said that Dorothy’s eyes had already developed some lesion. Although the degree was still light, no one knew how bad the results would be if this continued.

Although the advanced party’s news brought us hope, it made us even more anxious.

Thus, when we were having dinner alone that night, I couldn’t help but mention her father to her.

Dorothy was not as resistant as the last time, but she did nothing out of the ordinary. She did not care at all, as if I had just mentioned a stranger.

“I won’t beg him, Selma,” she said. “It’s not just because I’m a stranger to him but also because I don’t think it’s necessary.”

“Why?” I asked in confusion.

Dorothy, however, did not answer my question and instead started discussing her ‘collection’ with me.

“You know my mother left many books and notes, right? It’s not all hers. My father left quite some too. I’ve been studying them since I was young, but I was too young to understand anything. I could only read those strange pictures over and over again.

“It is only now, under the guidance of the werewolf grandmasters, that I fully understood those obscure symbols and words. After reading more, I realized that my mother was also a werewolf grandmaster, but she didn’t make it public. She only quietly studied her hobbies and didn’t let others know. Maybe it was because of my grandmother.

“My mother left behind many books, but after so many years, I’ve read them many times.

“I’ve never seen a single record of the Eye of Insight.

“It’s not in my mother’s books, and it’s not in my father’s books either.

“Do you know what this means?”

I slowly shook my head.

Dorothy chuckled and took a sip of orange juice, then said, “This means that they don’t know or don’t care even if they know.

“If they know nothing about the Eye of Insight, my father doesn’t have this ability. Correspondingly, he doesn’t know how to control the Eye of Insight. Since that’s the case, I don’t think I need to disturb their peaceful lives. We haven’t seen each other for so long that we’ve become strangers. What else is there apart from awkwardness if we suddenly recognize each other?

“As for the second scenario, they don’t care.” Dorothy’s voice became dejected. “Then, there’s even less need to say it, right? Perhaps they didn’t expect me to inherit this one-in-a-million ability, or they didn’t care if my life would be shortened because of this. Since they don’t remember me, I don’t have to be sentimental.”

“Maybe they’re just .. Just...” I retorted anxiously.

The words were at the tip of my tongue, but I couldn’t say anything.

But what?

Dorothy had considered every possibility. No matter how I tried to explain it, she would not admit it. She might not know anything about her parents who had eloped, or her father might not care. No matter the situation, he was irresponsible to his daughter.

Dorothy understood this cruel reality.

“You’re a good girl, Selma. Even though you always appear to be in a rush and have an impatient personality, I know you’re a gentle and sensitive girl.” Dorothy laughed.

“You’re sad for me, aren’t you? ”

I nodded uneasily.

“It’s not necessary at all.” She shook her head blandly. “It’s been nineteen years. If I still haven’t come to my senses, then it would not be Adele, who is locked up today, but me.

“Prophecy is a very fair ability. You can see through others, but you can’t see through yourself. This eliminates the possibility of you cheating in this world.

“And no one can change the fate of the past. Even those who read the Book of Destiny can’t cheat.

“If I could, I’d be able to see my blind-ending and then try my best to change it. But I didn’t see it, just like I didn’t see the ending when my parents were summoned to return.

“So, there’s no need to be bothered by this. It’s all destined. I believe the goddess will not abandon her believers, so there’s no need to worry about my future.”

There was a heartless sense of relief in her words. This cruelty was for herself and her past. She digested all her sorrow and anger alone and calmly put down the remnant pages of the past.

Because she knew she had no choice, letting go felt helpless, but it was also a kind of release.

At this moment, no one could help but feel sorry for this strong girl.

I then moved on from this topic and never mentioned it to Dorothy again.

131 Evil Sorcery

Selma Payne’s POV:

It was the middle of summer, but the air was filled with the fragrance of spring.

Avril and Perrin fell in love. She often shared her thoughts with us. From her behavior, it seemed like she couldn't wait to marry Perrin tomorrow.

Perrin looked like an honest boy, but he still said the same thing, "One may know a person's face, but not their heart. Thus, Dorothy, Mara, and I fulfilled our duties as advisors and protected their relationship.

Sometimes, Emma and Jordin would come over and give her some ideas.

That was right; from my introduction, they got to know Avril and Mara and quickly developed a friendship that didn't conform to the 'noble code'.

It seemed that being of equal social status was the basic standard of human relationships, so much so that even Avril and Mara felt it was unreal initially.

"I hope there won't be a noble lord who will bid one million to ask me to leave his daughter," Mara said jokingly. "I can't guarantee that I will remain loyal to my friends when I smell money."

It had been a week since my conversation with my father in the study. Due to my excellent acting skills, my mother finally relaxed her restrictions on me and allowed me to take a day off.

It was Mara's birthday, and we were invited to her birthday party.

As Dorothy was injured in the battle with Adele, she moved into the palace in the guise of 'recuperation' and finally did not have to hide anymore.

Correspondingly, under the watchful eyes of the public, her sorcerer bloodline could no longer be hidden.

The girls didn't have any resistance to this. At first, they were surprised for a while, but that was it. After all, no matter how bloody a legend was, it couldn't be more convincing than a friend who was with them all the time, right?

Emma and Jordin did not seem to be surprised at all. Their families were open-minded and progressive; they had even produced a few werewolf grandmasters, so they were not surprised at all.

We met at Mara's house.

She had invited many friends and classmates, and her house was full of guests.

The surging music and the dancing confetti stirred up everyone's dance bones. We excitedly sang loudly, almost shaking the roof.

In the corner of the crowd, I saw Ryan with a gloomy face.

He was no longer the high-spirited genius writer that he used to be. He sat alone in the corner of the sofa, with no one talking to him, and he just drank sparkling water alone.

Mara must hate him and would not let him appear in front of Avril. Why would she invite him?

I asked Mara about it, and she helplessly said, "I can't wait to never see this b*stard again in my life! His father is my father's superior, and my father asked me to invite him! Since you can't find an opportunity to show your emotions to your boss, you'd sell your daughter to see if you can get a generous reward."

"So, your dad wants you to date Ryan?" I asked in shock.

The girls also acted as if they had heard a ridiculous joke.

"He's dreaming!" Mara was indignant. "Ryan? I won't do it even if you give me ten million! How unlucky!"

Parents would sometimes think too simply of their children's interpersonal relationships. They felt that it was just a minor disagreement between their children and that there was no long-lasting hatred. They just had to hug and make up for a while.

Especially for some adults, in the face of benefits, even their children had to make way, let alone their children's interpersonal relationships.

However, based on Mara's attitude toward Ryan, her father would make a fool of himself.

"Can you just go and greet him?" Avril asked, a little worried. "Don't worry about me. I don't care about him anymore."

She and Perrin were holding hands.

Mara shook her head indifferently. "I don't want to go. Let the adults flatter themselves. Does my father expect me to win the CEO throne for him?" she asked.

Seeing this, we didn't say anything more and went to enjoy the party.

I didn't expect that something would happen that night.

We were all a little tired. Some students said goodbye to Mara one after another, and the rest gathered in twos and threes, whispering to the soothing music.

At this moment, a shrill scream broke the silence.

The sound came from the bathroom on the second floor. We hurried over to look, only to see a bloody scene.

Ryan was bleeding from his seven orifices and twitching on the ground. A strange magic circle was drawn around him, and on the nodes of the magic circle were a rabbit, a frog, and a bunch of disgusting caterpillars.

The moment I saw the formation, I felt a sharp pain. I held my head and fell. From the corner of my eye, I noticed that the others were in the same situation as me.

A spell attacked us.

Ignoring the pain, I stood up and shouted to the people, "All of you, get out! Don't look at the formation on the ground!"

Then, I picked up the cup from the sink, filled it with water, and poured it onto the array.

The water dispersed the blood, and the magic circle slowly lost its effect.

Ryan also stopped twitching.

No matter how much I hated him, life was at stake. I tried to wake him up. "Hey! Ryan! Can you hear me?! Hey! Wake up!"

However, Ryan's eyes were closed, and he showed no reaction.

I quickly called for an ambulance, and when I turned around, I saw Dorothy staring coldly at the incomplete formation on the ground.

"This is a spell to summon the devil. The blood is Ryan's."

She looked at me with the cloth over her eyes in her hand.

Her dark eyes were extremely clear.

132 Leviathan

Selma Payne's POV:

"You can see!"

Dorothy's eyes were no longer unfocused, and her vision was no longer as unfocused as before.

"Yes." She nodded, but her expression was still serious. "But I'm afraid it's not good."

“What?” I asked.

She didn’t answer me but used a spell to check Ryan’s brain. Then, she frowned and said, “He disappeared.”

“Disappeared?” I didn’t understand. Ryan was still lying there.

“It’s not like disappearing in the physical sense,” Dorothy said. “It’s his soul. His soul is gone. What’s left here is a cold shell.”

We looked at the formation on the ground at the same time. Although the water had destroyed it, it still had a strong evil aura.

“Demons again...” I sighed.

The Rocky Mountains demon hadn’t been killed yet, and now another demon of unknown origin had appeared.

Although I have no talent for sorcery, I learned much about this area from the werewolf grandmaster. After careful observation, I found this was a broken curse array similar to a cat and tiger.

Under the evil power’s corrosion, the animals’ bodies rotted very quickly. Before the police arrived, only their skulls were left on the ground.

Everything in hell was the opposite of the human world. Taking away the flesh and leaving the skull behind was proof of a Soul Catcher.

The pile of disgusting caterpillars also melted into a pool of sticky liquid, forming a whale pattern.

Dorothy and I looked at each other, and we both knew the answer.

Leviathan.

“I can’t believe it,” Dorothy said solemnly. “What price did Ryan pay to summon the great demon from the depths of the ocean? A small soul is not enough to fill the gaps between Leviathan’s teeth.”

Given that Ryan was performing the ritual in the middle of a gathering, I couldn’t help but worry that he had used the souls of everyone present as the price for the sacrifice.

Thus, I immediately gathered my anxious classmates in the living room and asked them to get their parents to come over.

“Before the police arrive, no one can leave,” I repeatedly emphasized.

Following that, I sent a message to the palace saying that a demon's sacrifice was beyond the scope of the police's responsibility and that a werewolf grandmaster was needed to resolve it.

Just as I was dealing with all the matters, a muffled sound suddenly came from the bathroom.

It was Dorothy!

I immediately ran up the stairs and saw a scene that made my eyes pop out of their sockets. Ryan was strangling Dorothy and pushing her against the mirror. His pale face was filled with viciousness.

Dorothy struggled with all her might, but she was unable to retaliate.

"Let her go!"

I picked up the incense table beside me and threw it at Ryan. When he subconsciously let go, I pounced on him like I had caught a rabbit. I picked up the toothbrush and nailed Ryan to the ground, unable to move.

When I met his eyes, all the hair on my body trembled. His eyes were darker than the chaos, and they were unfathomably deep.

He wasn't Ryan!

I was sure that Ryan's body was possessed by something, so I immediately sent Dorothy, on the verge of fainting, to the door and asked the students watching the fun to take her downstairs. No matter what happened, she was not allowed to come upstairs.

"Don't be so worried, Miss," Ryan spoke in a coquettish woman's voice. "This body is too useless. I can't do anything, can I? "

"Who are you?" I coldly asked.

'Ryan' smiled coyly, and honestly, this was strange. She looked at me innocently and replied, "You already have the answer in your heart."

I nervously clenched my fists.

Sure enough, the one who had occupied Ryan's body was the great demon Leviathan!

"Where's Ryan? Where did you take him?"

I vaguely knew that Ryan's fate wouldn't be too good. How many people had a good end after making a deal with the devil? The wild beasts of hell would have probably devoured him by now.

Leviathan did not care about his embarrassing situation and said indifferently, "You mean that stupid young man? Oh, who knows? Perhaps he is taking a bath in the lava? Perhaps he has made some new friends with horns? But don't worry, hell has always been very hospitable, and there's not a single guest who doesn't want to stay after enjoying our hospitality."

Of course, they couldn't help but want to. After becoming the devil's slaves, all that awaited these souls were endless enslavement.

I couldn't control Ryan anymore, but I had to figure out what deal he had made with Leviathan.

"What kind of deal did you make with Ryan? What did you promise to give him? And what price did he pay?"

Leviathan glanced at me and laughed. "How rude. Don't you know that every word a demon says comes with a price? If you want to know my answer, what can you give in exchange?"

How detestable! This greedy sea monster!

Of course, I wouldn't be so stupid as to exchange something for the answer, but I had no choice but to be in a stalemate with Leviathan.

However, Leviathan didn't seem to care about the stalemate.

133 The Mutation

Selma Payne's POV:

"I'm feeling a little cold." Leviathan looked at the toothbrush on his shoulder and the bleeding wound. "Are you not going to put me down? This is your classmate's body. Won't he die from losing too much blood?"

"What's the point of keeping a physical body if the soul is gone?" I didn't care about her crazy words. "Ryan's soul is in your hands. Are you going to be merciful and let him go?"

Leviathan laughed and shook her head. "Haha! That won't do. Only demons are greedier than dragons. I don't want to give up anything of mine for nothing."

The police sirens came from outside the window, and my phone also received a notification.

The police and the werewolf grandmasters had arrived.

“Oh, our time together is really short,” Leviathan said regretfully. “It seems that our gathering is coming to an end.”

“What are you doing?” I became alert.

She laughed awkwardly and removed her toothbrush. She stood up and said, “It’s been long since we last met. I’m giving you a piece of information for free. Just take it as an introductory gift.”

My intuition told me that this demon was up to no good. “What are you saying? Who’s reuniting with you after a long time?”

Ryan’s body began to rot and crack, and Leviathan’s gentle voice began to change. She said, “My dear, you destroyed the formation? I could have had everyone’s soul, but I only received one of the worst qualities.

“I’ve taken someone’s money and helped them get rid of their disaster. Since I’ve received the reward, I have to help them achieve their wishes.

“However, I can only complete a little of the same value as the reward.

“What a pity. The person he wants to take revenge on the most isn’t here, and you, my dear, I can’t bear to do anything to you.”

Leviathan looked out the door as if she had X-ray eyes, observing someone through the layers of concrete.

I had a bad feeling and pounced on her.

However, it was still too late. Black smoke with a strong fishy smell came out of Ryan’s seven orifices and slipped through the door’s crack.

I couldn’t care less about Ryan’s body and immediately ran downstairs.

When I stepped on the ground floor, a wisp of black smoke passed through the panicking crowd and gushed straight into Dorothy’s body.

“No!”

I was shocked and quickly went forward to check on Dorothy’s condition.

Dorothy was knocked back onto the sofa by the impact. Both her eyes were bleeding, and her pupils were constantly expanding until they occupied her eyes.

“What have you done?!” I roared.

Leviathan, who had turned into black smoke, chuckled and said, “It’s just a little help. I know what you’re worried about, my dear.

“What a magical eye. Even I am envious of its power.

“The price of a treasure is always heavy.

“If you want to know the answer, go to the Rocky Mountains and take a look.

“There’s a way to solve everything there.”

At this moment, the villa’s door was knocked open by the werewolf grandmasters. Through the door, I saw a group of strange monsters fighting with the police in the courtyard. They were soft all over, like boneless bugs.

I suddenly thought of the dead body of the caterpillar on the magic circle and looked at Leviathan in disbelief.

“Do you like this little gift?” She laughed maniacally. “Time’s up. I look forward to our next meeting!”

The black smoke suddenly dispersed. I subconsciously tried to catch it, but I only touched the air.

The room was still echoing with her voice, “Go to the Rocky Mountains and find the answer!”

Following that, a wisp of black smoke suddenly entered my mouth. I didn’t even have time to react.

The black smoke was even colder than liquid nitrogen. I instantly felt that my internal organs had been frozen. The terrifying cold air corroded my body from the inside out.

I subconsciously coughed. My cold and stiff internal organs made me extremely uncomfortable. I wished I could cut open my stomach and take them out.

Under this unbearable torture, I quickly lost consciousness.

When I woke up, I was lying in the hospital. Dorothy was on the bed next to me.

This was rare because there were plenty of medical pieces of equipment in the palace. I had to ask Tracy for treatment for any minor illness or pain.

However, there was no space in the palace for many large pieces of equipment. To be admitted to the hospital could only mean that Dorothy and I were in critical condition. We could no longer be treated with the medical resources in the palace.

I belatedly realized that countless drips were inserted in my body, and a few large instruments surrounded me as if purifying my blood.

“Is anyone there... ”

I was startled by my hoarse voice.

I pressed the call bell next to me, and someone quickly entered the room.

My parents were wearing a full set of protective equipment and looked at me in grief.

“Oh, my baby...” my mother’s tears fell like rain.

I asked weakly, “What happened to me? What’s wrong with Dorothy? What are these machines for?”

This question made her mother cry even harder, so much so that my father had no choice but to comfort her and send her out of the ward.

When he returned, he seemed to be helplessly thinking about something. Then, he said in a deep voice, “The demon has contaminated your and Dorothy’s bodies. Child, your blood has mutated, transforming you into a demon.”

“What?” I cried out in disbelief, and instantly, I was in excruciating pain from the tubes all over my body due to my sudden movement.

Golden runes could be seen on the vascular channel and the machine. It was the work of the werewolf grandmaster.

134 Seriously III

Selma Payne’s POV:

This was a purification spell, not sorcery. It was a gift from Moon Goddess.

They were the evidence that I was beyond cure.

"It's been a week," my father said. "In this week, the doctor has given you countless critical notices, and the werewolf grandmasters have been waiting outside your ward at all times."

"I know why. Once I undergo an irreversible mutation and become an irrational monster, the werewolf grandmaster must purify me before I cause any casualties."

The so-called 'purification' meant my death.

"But I'm lying here, aren't I?" I smiled and comforted my father. "I'm awake. This is proof that I'm getting better."

My father didn't say anything and only looked at me sorrowfully.

Thus, I fell silent.

Being clear-headed might not be a good thing. On the contrary, it was more like a final radiance before death.

"... What about Dorothy?" I asked.

My father looked at Dorothy, who was lying on the other bed. Unlike me, she didn't have so many tubes inserted into her body. Her eyes were covered with gauze, and the gauze and her entire face were covered with golden purification runes.

"The doctor said she has lost her sight completely," my father said.

"She's mutated as well, but unlike you, her mutation is in the soul. The werewolf grandmasters had no choice but to seal her magic power to prevent her mutation from causing any casualties."

Sealing her magic power, just like Adele, would make Dorothy, a cripple.

I couldn't believe how she would face all of this when she woke up.

One wave had yet to calm down, and another wave had come. Not only did she lose her eyesight, but she might also lose the power she was so proud of forever. How was this girl going to live her life from now on? What else could she place her hopes on in this world?

"Also, about Ryan Mafra's crime." My father suddenly said, "We've discovered that the demon he summoned is the deep-sea monster, Leviathan. We might as well stop the ritual. Everyone present is safe and sound, except..."

“Except for Dorothy and I.” I’d calmly accepted the truth. “Speaking of Leviathan, she said some inexplicable crazy things and even asked Dorothy to go to the Rocky Mountains to find the answer. Do you think that’s true? Or is it a confusing lie?”

“I don’t know, child. No one can see through a demon’s heart,” my father sighed.

At this moment, I suddenly realized that my exhausted father didn’t look like a king. He was like most fathers in the world, worried about their children until their hair turned white.

I felt guilty.

“I’m sorry, Father. I shouldn’t have faced a demon alone so proudly,” I apologized softly. “I should have known I was far from being her match.”

My father was very surprised. “This is not your fault, child. On the contrary, you protected the other students from the devil.”

He wanted to touch my hair like he used to, but he couldn’t because I was covered in tubes.

“I’m proud of you,” he said softly.

I heard a barely noticeable choking sound.

We fell silent.

After a long time, my mother came in. She seemed to have barely calmed down and forced a smile to face me.

“Did you sleep well?” My mother sat on a chair by the bed. “Are you too tired from training? You’ve been slacking off for quite a while.”

I smiled and replied, “It’s quite comfortable, but I’ve been lying there for a long time. I’m slacking off all over.”

My mother wanted to say something but couldn’t hold back her tears. She turned around and buried herself in my father’s arms.

Looking at my parents, enduring the pain, I felt extremely sad.

Once again, they were severely hurt because of me.

I left them when I was still a baby. The Moon Goddess took pity on my poor family and sent me back to them.

But this time, Moon Goddess no longer cared for me. The fire from hell was about to destroy this happy family I'd lived with for a year. Once I leave, I might never come back.

I knew that the purification runes drawn by the werewolf grandmasters were too weak in the face of the power of a supreme demon. They were unable to reverse my mutation from the root.

It was only a matter of time.

"I'm a little hungry, " I said to my mother. "Is there anything to eat?"

My mother nodded quickly, wiped her tears, and walked out of the ward to prepare food for me.

"I want to go to the Rocky Mountains," I told my father.

"No," my father immediately refused.

"I am not giving up on myself, " I comforted my father. "I do not want to go to the Rocky Mountains to die. It's just that I always felt that what Leviathan said to me at that time was not a prank but that there was a hidden meaning in her words. Maybe the Rocky Mountains hide the answer that can solve all our problems?"

My father looked at me in silence.

"I'm not stupid enough to listen to a demon," I continued, "But it seems that this is the only solution, right? You know me, Father. I've never been one to submit to adversity."

Waiting for death was not my style.

135 Engraved Runes

Selma Payne's POV:

I persistently tried to persuade my father. In the end, my father helplessly asked, "Even if I let you go, what can you do with your current state of health? It's just a change of place to insert the vascular channel."

"I know." I insisted, "But I believe there must be a temporary way to stop this mutation."

Since the purifying rune could purify my blood by drawing it on the conduit, if I engraved it on my body or even my soul, could it temporarily stop the mutation?

"This is too risky!" My father was shocked by my whimsical idea. "No, definitely not."

“But Dorothy’s face has purification runes, right? ” I asked. “I don’t think I’m any weaker than Dorothy. I can handle this.”

My father shook his head. “Dorothy’s runes were only drawn on. They didn’t harm her body. If the rune is placed on your body, the scars that contain the power of the Moon Goddess will never be healed. It will follow you for the rest of your life, let alone your soul!”

No matter how easy-going they were with their words, few people didn’t care about their appearance. Even a person with an acne scars on their face would be depressed for a long time, not to mention a face full of hideous scars.

Honestly, it was impossible for me not to care about this.

But I was not afraid.

Looks were precious, but my life didn’t revolve around my face.

“You once said that scars are a soldier’s medal of honor.

“No gorgeous metal or ribbon can compare to the blood-stained proof of warrior.

“I’m ashamed that I haven’t been tested by blood and fire, which often makes me wonder if I can become a powerful warrior and shoulder the country and people.”

I touched my soft face and smiled.

“No girl doesn’t take pride in their looks, and I’m no exception.

“However, no warrior cannot be proud of his courage. I am no exception.

“I care about my appearance, but I’m not afraid of scars. I look forward to becoming a true warrior to prove my courage and determination and that I can shoulder responsibilities.”

I scratched my soft cheek with my sharp nails, and blood gushed out of the wound.

I looked straight into my father’s shocked eyes and firmly said, “Let me draw the first stroke of the runes and take the first step to become a true warrior!”

The blood that dripped from my cheeks carried an imperceptible dark aura. However, I knew that my blood would become one with this black aura in a few months. By then, there would be no way to stop things from sliding into the abyss.

After a long while, my father smiled helplessly.

“You know what? You remind me of my younger self.” He looked at me kindly, as if he was looking through me. “I was just like you at that time. I was impulsive, reckless, and had boundless courage and motivation. I’ve suffered a lot because of this, but it’s also because of this that I’ve become who I am today.

“I promise you I will ask the werewolf grandmasters to discuss the feasibility of this method.”

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“If the werewolf grandmasters say yes, will you agree?” I asked excitedly.

“Of course.” He smiled and touched my hair. This time, he didn’t care about the tubes.

“You are my daughter. I will always support you in everything, child.”

Suddenly, another voice came from the room.

“And me, Your Majesty, Selma.”

It was Dorothy. She had woken up.

I looked over in surprise. Although Dorothy could not see, she looked at my father and me directly.

“What?”

I didn’t understand for a moment.

“And I will engrave those patterns on my face too.” Dorothy said, “As the princess’s friend and follower, I must have the courage and determination to match you, right? ”

This shocked me. For a moment, I didn’t know whether to answer about the ‘princess’ or to advise her not to put herself in danger.

I could be cruel to myself, but Dorothy was not in good health. How could she bear such pain?

However, Dorothy was one step ahead and cut me off, “I’ve made up my mind. Since Leviathan asked me to go to the Rocky Mountains, how can I leave my friend to face danger alone?

“Whether it was the devil’s scheme or her reminder out of conscience, I have to go. You can control your fate. Once you admit defeat to fate, it will not hesitate to devour you.

“Don’t underestimate me, Selma. I’m a mixed-blood of a sorcerer and a werewolf. I’m the master of the Eye of Insight. I will become the top sorcerer and werewolf master in the future. How can I fulfill my dream if I can’t endure this bit of physical pain?”

“So, take me with you.”

136 The Man And The Wolf

Selma Payne’s POV:

After our repeated insistence, my father agreed.

However, this was only one of the many mountains. My mother would not allow me to take the risk no matter what. In the end, I could only say, “If I don’t do this, I’ll die.”

My mother was so shocked that she couldn’t stop crying.

I didn’t want to reveal this cruel fact, but I had no choice.

“So far, all the methods have been useless against my mutation. Even the purification runes are like a cup of water on a burning firewood cart if they are only drawn on my skin.

“If I don’t do anything, my death will be inevitable. Since that was the case, why not give it a try? Perhaps this is my only chance of survival.”

My mother seemed to be on the verge of fainting, but in the end, she still agreed.

“Don’t leave Mommy behind, baby.” She said mournfully, “I don’t want anything. I only have one request, darling. Don’t leave Mommy behind again. I beg you.”

I nodded sadly. I couldn’t bear to look at her anymore. I turned around and entered the treatment room, closing the door.

The werewolf grandmaster, who was most skilled in ancient incantations, had already made preparations. She was in charge of carving purification runes all over my body.

“You still have a chance to change your mind,” she said. “This will be extremely painful than any wound caused by any weapon. The goddess’s power protects you, but the powerful divine power will constantly erode your muscles.”

I took off my clothes and displayed my arms. “No matter how painful it is, can it be more unbearable than turning into a monster? Come on.”

The engraving began.

The first time I cut with the special potion, I felt a sharp pain that pierced into my bone marrow. It was as if this thin blade had cut into my bone marrow and twisted around wantonly.

To divert my attention, I started chatting with the werewolf grandmaster.

“You look a little unfamiliar. I’ve never attended your class, have I?”

“Yes,” the werewolf grandmaster said, her pen moving non-stop. “My name is Hayley. I was on a business trip in Asia when you received sorcery education, so I’m sorry I couldn’t meet you.”

“But I think you look a little familiar.”

“Of course. Master Mary is my twin sister. You must have attended her class.”

“Are you and Master Mary sisters?” I was a little surprised. “It would be great if you didn’t go on a business trip. I think your classes must be exciting.”

Hayley chuckled and shook her head. “Of course not. Only ancient spells are the most boring among so many categories of sorcery. If you can listen to the class for thirty minutes and not fall asleep, you’ll be a rare genius in this subject!”

“What are the ancient spells?”

“It has everything. Ancient werewolf language, ancient sorcery, ancient Elven language, and even a myriad of ancient human languages. Any living creature’s language you can imagine is included. Because it’s too complicated and boring, few people are willing to learn it. Even the elves and sorcerers don’t value their ancient spells as much as they used to.”

“Why?” I was confused. “Ancient spells contain great power. How can there be a race that doesn’t value it?”

“Because it’s useless,” Hayley replied helplessly. “Most of the ancient incantations are variations of the holy words of gods or the teachings of sages. Of course, they can play a significant role in the chaotic old era. But now, even the vampires and the human churches can pretend that they can’t see each other, let alone others. What’s the use of those powerful burning sun curses and blood-changing curses?”

“Moreover, some substitutes for these powerful spells can be found today, and many of them are even more useful than ancient spells. Therefore, no one is willing to spend time studying these.”

After carving the last stroke on my left hand, Hayley concluded, “No matter how much we refuse to admit it, the influence of humans on us is thousands of times greater than

we think, right? It's no longer the era where humans are as weak as rabbits. They've become the overlords of the living, subtly changing the world."

Hayley's words made me fall into deep thought.

Indeed, today's world was no longer the world of the Middle Ages. Even if humans were physically weak and divided, no one could deny that they were far stronger than other races. Their influence continued to transform other races.

For example, the werewolves laughed at Avril, a Valkyrie-like girl who admired courage and strength. This was something that could not be imagined even a hundred years ago.

However, it was happening now. Humans liked pure, fragile, and innocent women, and the teenagers who grew up watching human movies and singing human pop songs would naturally have the same preference.

The lifestyle of the werewolves was similar to that of humans. Human society seemed to be no longer as fearsome as the Siberian wilderness. Some criminals who were exiled there even cheered for joy.

At this point, how much of the werewolf's ego did we still have?

And how much of this self would be left in the constant erosion that followed?

137 The Ancient Incantations

Selma Payne's POV:

An unbearable pain pulled me back from my thoughts.
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I couldn't help but cry out in pain. Hayley gave me a comforting look, but the carving knife in her hand didn't stop.

Every part of the seal script was connected. Once it stopped or was interrupted, it would completely lose its effect.

The first section of runes on my left hand had already been completed. Hayley was currently dealing with my forearm. The skin on the artery on my wrist was far too fragile, and it was even less painful than the other parts of my body.

"Please bear with it. It'll be over soon." Hayley moved faster.

I clenched my teeth and panted heavily, forcing myself not to think about the intense pain that felt like my wrist was being run over by a truck.

“Did anything interesting happen when you were on your business trip in Asia?” I had to talk about something to divert my attention. “I’ve never been there. I only learned about it in geography class.”

“There’s nothing fun,” said Hayley. “The whole trip was boring. Anything related to ancient spells is not interesting.”

She sounded resentful but also proud.

“Where have you been? China? Japan? Thailand? Indonesia?”

“I went to Myanmar, which is next to Thailand. Myanmar has a fascinating spell culture. I visited some masters who lived in seclusion and learned the local ancient spells from them.”

“What are these incantations about?”

“It’s very complicated. The local area doesn’t seem to have a complete system, or the once complete system has been destroyed. In short, I could only learn some fragments. Many ancient spells have lost their effect because they are too incomplete.”

“I’m sorry you made a wasted trip.”

“I didn’t go there for nothing. At least I learned a new language.” Hayley was inexplicably happy. “And I’ve filled in the blank space on the world map. Isn’t that the happiest thing to do?”

“The world map? Is this an ancient incantation version of the world map you compiled yourself?”

“It’s not a compilation, just a small hobby. According to the ancient incantations I have collected according to the map, so far, I have collected most of the ancient incantations in the werewolf area. I have also collected a lot in other places. Only Asia is left, so any harvest is precious.”

The pain in my inner arm was no less than that in my wrist. I continued to ask, “Why are there so few in Asia? Do you rarely have the chance to travel across the sea? Maybe I can help you apply for more opportunities from the Lycan King. You’re doing something very meaningful; he’ll agree.”

Hayley smiled gratefully and declined, “Thank you for your kindness, Miss. But there’s no need for that. His Majesty has not imposed any restrictions on werewolf grandmasters. I can leave at any time.”

“So, why?”

“There are many reasons. Language barriers, customs, family heritage, the safety of the local area, and so on. Asia protects ancient spells much better than the Americas and Europe, which means they don’t need anyone to cause trouble.”

“But it’s always a pity you can’t collect them.”

“That’s right, but my main purpose is to hope these ancient spells won’t be lost. Since they’re being passed down, I can’t just rob them of it, right? Do you know where I should go when I want to study the ancient spells in Africa?”

“Where?”

“The museums and libraries of various countries in Europe and the Americas. Many years ago, they were lost along with gold and silver, and humans couldn’t understand these strange words and pictures, so they called it the ‘ruins of the primitive people’ and openly showed it off in the glass cabinet.”

Hayley was a little indignant.

“How can humans know how to protect? The magic circuits between these ancient spells gradually dried up as time passed and stopped flowing. In the end, they became lifeless paper and stones. No matter how complete the spells or runes carved on them were, they were useless. Without magic, the spells would lose their lives forever.”

The topic was a little heavy, and we couldn’t help but fall silent.

After the engraving on my left forearm was done, Hayley mixed the potion and said in embarrassment, “I’m sorry. This is a little embarrassing. I’m just a little impulsive. I can’t stop talking when I’m in a rush. Mary always criticizes me, but I can’t change it.”

I gestured to her that she was okay. “Don’t think that way. You’re a person of justice. You’re right. The world has indeed lost many precious things.”

Hayley was pleased with my support. She whispered, “Thank you, Miss. This gives me more motivation to publish my ancient spell map.”

“Are you planning to publish your work?” I was surprised. “These spells are precious.”

“They are precious to be known by others, and they’ll be useful to them,” said Hayley in relief. “Otherwise, they would be no different from the forgotten collection in the glass cabinet and disappear sooner or later.”

“You are a noble person.” I was filled with profound awe.

“You’re flattering me too much.” Hayley smiled shyly. “These ancient spells are not mine. God and the sages created them. They belong to the world.”

We conversed for an entire day, and the pain of engraving the seal wasn't so unbearable anymore.

Late at night, the 'torture' that had lasted for an entire day finally ended.

138 No One Can Sleep

Selma Payne's POV:

Looking at the unfamiliar girl in the mirror, I felt like I was in a dream.

When I was a child, I saw a tyrant covered in tattoos in comics. I thought it was cool back then, but things were not so wonderful when I became a tyrant.

The pale golden medicine flowed into the scar, giving off a faint glow from time to time.

"With the healing speed of werewolves, these scars will be completely healed in about a week. The same tattoo as the purification rune will appear on your body by then.

The power of the Moon Goddess will continuously tear and heal your wound. The process is speedy, so it won't be evident on the surface. However, the pain won't disappear.

"You have to get used to this feeling. Don't scratch the tattoo. If the tattoo is damaged, everything will be in vain."

Like what Hayley had said, although my wounds had already scabbed, the burning pain was still wreaking havoc on my body.

"Thank you," I said.

I put on my clothes and walked out of the medical room.

My parents were waiting outside the door. My father was sitting on the sofa reading documents while my mother looked out the window in a daze.

When they saw me, they stopped what they were doing and came to me.

"Father, Mother, the process went smoothly," I said with a smile. "My mutation has been temporarily contained. Master Hayley said there will be no problem for the next six months."

My parents were lost in thought as they looked at the tattoos on my face and exposed arms.

“Moon Goddess,” my mother trembled as she touched the runes on my cheek. “How painful, how painful...”

“It’s okay, Mother. It’s not as painful as you think.” I held her hand and consoled her. “It seems like it was worth it, wasn’t it?”

“But you’ll have to wear these tattoos for the rest of your life!” My mother cried. The power of the goddess can not be cursed. Once it is imprinted, it can not be washed away. You are still so young; what will you do in the future...”

My father held my mother in his arms and said gently, “Have some faith in our daughter, Helena. Do you know how brave she is?”

“I know, but... Oh, my god...”

I hugged my parents tightly and sobbed, “Tattoos are the trend now. Everyone has one, so I won’t stand out.”

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After we collected ourselves, we looked at the other medical room.

Dorothy was inside with another werewolf grandmaster who specialized in the soul.

Dorothy’s engraving process was much more manageable. She only had to engrave on her head, but the foundation of her engraving process was her soul, which made all the work dangerous.

Therefore, Master Hayley first carved marks on my body to train the feeling.

After all, the skin could be changed, but the soul could not.

Dorothy was not idle either. The werewolf grandmaster had to cast layers of protection on her soul, which was even more time-consuming than inscribing.

Master Hayley packed up her tools and was waiting in the medical room. I wanted to wait for Dorothy, but my mother insisted I go for dinner first.

“It’s been a whole day, and you haven’t eaten anything. You have to eat something now, or your body will collapse,” she said.

I had no choice but to eat some of the kitchen’s special nutritious meals. Although nutrition doesn’t always come with good taste, this sick person’s meal was a little too difficult to swallow. When I returned to the medical room, Dorothy was being prepared.

“She’s asleep,” Hayley said. “We used some mild spell to ensure that she won’t wake up during the whole engraving process. It’s meaningless for her to feel pain in her body. Right now, she has to focus all her attention on resisting the pain in her soul.”

Dorothy was lying on a special marble altar with a tranquil expression as if she had a beautiful dream.

A special prayer was drawn on the marble altar in the hope that she would receive the protection of the Moon Goddess.

Dorothy’s lifeless face terrified me. I asked uncertainly, “She’ll be fine, right?”

“I promise,” Master Hayley said firmly.

Then, she closed the medical room door with the other werewolf grandmaster.

It was a sleepless night.

I kept praying outside the door. Later, my parents couldn’t stand my stress and called Aldrich to accompany me.

He had wanted to come to help me through the difficulties this morning, but I didn’t want him to see my embarrassing appearance. I was afraid of revealing any trace of an undeserved scream, so I solemnly begged him not to come.

“My heart is one with you.” Aldrich said, “Even if I was not here, I could feel your pain.”

Aldrich didn’t smile. In his worried eyes, I could see my haggard reflection.

Did I not mind being covered in weird tattoos for the rest of my life? Was I not afraid that my trip to the Rocky Mountains would fail and that I’d be torn to pieces by demons in my endless despair?

No, I was afraid.

I was forcing myself not to show it. I told myself, ‘Dear Selma, you’re a princess, a warrior, a future queen. Weakness is your stumbling block. You must show that you’re stronger than everyone else and give confidence and strength to those who support you.’

But once Aldrich appeared, I couldn’t hold it in any longer.

I buried myself in his arms and cried silently.

139 Unconscious For Three Days

Selma Payne's POV:

"Actually, I'm a little scared." I sobbed and mumbled softly.

"Why is fate so unfair to me? Why am I the one who has to suffer all this?"

Aldrich sighed softly and gently stroked my back.

"Everything will be fine," he said as I sharply sensed a trace of trembling and confusion.

"It'll all be fine... I promise."

The road ahead was long, and no one knew whether tomorrow or an accident would come first.

The only thing we could do was to do our best and pray for a good result.

I silently vented in Aldrich's tolerance, showing the fear of sorcerers, demons, mutation, and death to the air.

The sky was bright.

The door to the medical room opened.

Master Hayley was the first to walk out. I immediately asked nervously, "How did it go? Did you succeed?"

Master Hayley said with a strange look on her face, "I can only say that it was successful for the most part. However, the remaining portion has not shown any ominous signs at all. I have never seen such a situation before. I have never seen such an example in any ancient books."

"What?" My mental defenses were gradually collapsing. "What does this mean? Did the engraving fail? What about Dorothy? How is she?"

Another werewolf grandmaster, Kevin, ridiculed and emphasized, "It didn't fail. In reality, even though a small portion of the seal scripts didn't have any effect, the entire thing still displayed its proper effect. Dorothy's soul was not affected at all, which is what we cannot understand."

As long as Dorothy was fine, everything was fine. Before I could hear what he would say next, my vision went black, and I fainted.

I was unconscious for three days.

When I woke up, I was lying on my big soft bed with an IV drip in my hand.

Aldrich, by my bed, immediately noticed that I was awake.

“Selma, how do you feel?” He stuffed two soft pillows behind me and helped me sit up.

“Uhm, I’m a little nauseous and want to throw up, but I’m also starving.” I rubbed my temples, feeling like three hundred ducks had just held a concert in my mind.

Aldrich handed me a bowl of hot milk corn soup, but seeing my hands tremble, he changed his mind and fed me personally.

“It’s okay. I’ll do it myself…” I was a little shy.

However, Aldrich expressionlessly handed me a spoonful of soup.

I realized later that he was angry.

After drinking half a bowl of soup in silence, I asked softly, “Are you angry?”

He didn’t say anything and just fed me soup spoon by spoon.

I couldn’t eat anymore, so I pushed the spoon away and asked again.

Aldrich put down his bowl and lowered his head in silence.

“Yes, I think I’m furious,” he said.

“My heart is in a mess now. I think I should go out first. Madam Kara will take care of you.”

“Wait!” I grabbed his hand and insisted on asking him the reason. “What exactly happened? Please tell me, don’t give me the cold shoulder. I hate that.”

Aldrich helplessly sat back on the bed and softly said, “I’m not trying to give you the cold shoulder. It’s just that you just woke up and need professional care…”

“You’re the professional!” I interrupted him and said stubbornly, “You’re more useful than any elixir to me. So now, tell me why you’re so angry!”

“I am not… Oh, alright. I’m a little upset.”

Aldrich irritatedly ruffled his hair; only then did I notice the slight stubble on his cheeks.

He wasn’t taking good care of himself.

“You were unconscious for three days, Selma. The werewolf grandmasters and Tracy said that you were just too tired, and your body triggered its self-defense mechanism.”

Aldrich said in a low voice, "But I couldn't stop feeling anxious, babe. Every time I see you lying in bed with no expression on your face, I get scared. I'm scared."

I hugged him tightly and comforted the big, anxious dog in a low voice, "Shh, okay, I'm fine, aren't I? I'm sitting right in front of you, perfectly fine. Do you want to check?"

I took his hand and placed it on his neck, letting him feel my strong pulse.

We stayed in each other's embrace. After a few minutes, Aldrich's tense body gradually relaxed.

"I'm sorry, my dear. I was too weak."

He was buried in my embrace, his voice muffled.

"You know what? During the three days you were unconscious, I kept blaming myself because I couldn't do anything about it. I'm the youngest and most promising general of the werewolves, but I'm useless when it comes to my lover. I could only wait for your news outside the palace like an outsider, and even made you worry about me."

"No, it's not!" I didn't know where these came from. "You've never implicated me. I didn't let you come to the palace to accompany me in engraving the runes because I didn't want to expose my ugly and embarrassing side to you!"

I suddenly realized what I looked like to Aldrich right now.

My face was full of ugly, ferocious scars that had not yet healed.

I screamed and pulled the blanket to me to hide.

140 A Late-Night Chat

Selma Payne's POV:

Now it was Aldrich's turn to face me, who was trying to escape.

"Don't do that! You need fresh air!"

He tried to pull me out of the blanket, but I tried my best to stay away from him and retreated to the other side of the bed.

"Let's just talk like this for now!" I said gloomily. "I can't face you now. Please, don't force me!"

Aldrich softened his attitude and tried to get me to leave the fort made of blankets.

“Fine, you can do whatever you want. It’s fine if you don’t want to look at me, but please free yourself from the bed, okay?” He gently patted the edge of the bed. “We can talk with our backs to each other. You have your back to me, and I have my back to you. Can you do this?”

“Really? You can’t peek.”

“I swear to the Moon Goddess that if I peeked, I’d ask her to take my eyes away. I’ll turn around first; then you can come out, okay? 3,2,1, I’ve already turned around.”

I sneakily lifted a corner of the blanket, and Aldrich’s back was facing me, so I came out of the blanket and used a pillow to cover my face.

“Alright, we can talk now.”

I also had my back to him as I leaned on the soft pillow.

The elastic goose feather pillow pressed against my unhealed wound. It was a little painful, but there was also an inexplicable sweetness.

We were so childish.

I suddenly had this thought and laughed.

“What’s wrong, Selma? Why are you laughing?” Aldrich asked.

I cleared my throat. “Because I want to laugh. You’re not allowed to ask anymore.”

“Alright,” he said, surrendering.

In the end, I wanted to laugh even more. There was a mirror on the bedside table to the left. I turned it around and could see Aldrich’s every move.

The way he raised his hands made my heart soften.

I forced myself not to be stupid. It was more important to discuss business.

“What did the werewolf grandmaster and Tracy say about my coma?”

“Tracy believes that sleep is a form of compensation for overusing one’s energy. The werewolf grandmasters also agree on this point. Master Hayley says this is a positive sign of the runic patterns fusing with you. Sleep prevents most of the unnecessary activities of the body and tries to save as much space as possible to allow the runic patterns to form a hidden link.”

“What about Dorothy? How is she?”

“She’s still unconscious. Don’t worry; she’s not in any danger for now. Soul imprints are more complicated than physical imprints and will take more time. She will probably wake up only after your scars have healed.”

“Alright, may Moon Goddess bless her. Can I go and see her?”

“Sure, but there’s no need. Master Hayley believes that a quiet environment is more conducive to her recovery. Besides, your boyfriend doesn’t want you to talk about Dorothy all the time, even though she’s your good friend.”

“Hahaha, don’t be jealous, Aldrich! You know I love you the most. Did Father say anything about the advanced party?”

“There’s good news and bad news. The good news is that they’ve successfully set up bases in several locations in the Rocky Mountains and the ruins of the witch clan. The bad news is that there are movements from other forces in the Rocky Mountains, and at first glance, it looks like the human church.”

“The human church? From which denomination? What are they doing here?”

“It’s still unclear now. The human church has a wide variety of denominations that even they don’t understand. The advanced party can only confirm that their protective clothing has a cross printed on it. As for the purpose, the advance party is still carefully observing and has yet to make contact because they are unsure whether they are friend or foe.”

” I hope we can live in peace. At least we won’t start shouting at each other whenever we meet... Let’s not talk about this for now. Is there anything worth paying attention to in the pack these few days?”

“No, it’s calm, just like before Adele came. By the way, I should invite your parents to come down and see you. I was so excited that I forgot about this.”

“No, don’t. Please tell them I woke up safely, but tell them not to come over yet. I want to stay with you for a while.”

I looked up at the mirror and saw Aldrich had turned around without me knowing and was looking at my back with a smirk.

I knocked the mirror down and exclaimed, “You’re being shameless!”

“Yes, I cheated because my lover is beside me, and I can’t stand her leaving my sight for a moment.”

Aldrich acted as if he didn’t see my little cheat tool. He picked up a strand of my hair and wrapped it around his fingertips, his voice lingering.

“I’m not afraid the goddess will come for my eyes because they already belong to someone else.

“Without my lover’s permission, I will disobey anyone’s orders, even the goddess.

“So, please have mercy on your shepherd, my lover. Turn around and look at me.”

I slowly turned around as if the silver tongue had bewitched me.

Then, my eyes met with Aldrich’s, brighter than the stars.

He sighed softly. “My goddess, my lover, my universe. I have no regrets in this life since you looked at me.”

141 The Hidden Tracks

Selma Payne’s POV:

“You’re breaking the rules,” I mumbled.

“You can’t do this.”

Aldrich laughed loudly as he hugged me, asking the obvious, “Can’t what?”

“You can’t be so glib with your tongue!”

“Alright, baby, but I want you to know that you don’t have to hide anything from me. No matter how you look, you’re my true love.”

“But these scars are ugly.”

“How can it be ugly? This is the reward of the Moon Goddess, the proof of the bravest warrior. I’m proud of you, Selma.”

“You don’t mind?”

“I swear I won’t.”

We cuddled for a while, and when the bell rang at ten o’clock, Aldrich said, “We have to let the two majesties come. We can’t stop parents from visiting their daughters, can we?”

I washed my face and rinsed my mouth, hoping I didn’t look so haggard.

His parents arrived soon, accompanied by Kara, Tracy, Master Hayley, and Master Kevin.

Surprisingly, my mother didn't cry this time. Instead, she looked normal and personally took care of my daily needs.

Even though I could still detect a slight tremble in her body.

I knew she was shouldering the responsibility of a Queen and a mother. She had thrown her sorrow to the back of her mind and was doing what she should do.

'I'm the same.'

I begged my father to tell me about the advanced party.

"Perhaps you can worry about this after your wounds have completely healed," my father said gently. "Master Hayley said that a quiet environment and a stable state of mind will be more beneficial for you when you fuse with the runes."

Master Hayley nodded in agreement.

"But if I don't get news from the advanced party, I'll keep worrying, and it'll be even harder for me to heal my wounds." I acted coquettishly toward my father. "I'm begging you, Father. Please tell me. Just let me have peace of mind so that I can recuperate."

My father couldn't stand my coquettishness and had to agree.

"The advanced party will set up three bases in the Rocky Mountains. One at the foot of the mountain, one at the mountainside, and one at the ruins of the witch clan."

"The Rocky Mountains are so big. Why are there only three bases? Is it a lack of manpower?"

"No, child, that's not the reason."

"Then, why? Oh, wait, it's because of...?"

"That's right, Selma. The Rocky Mountains are human territory. A few hundred years ago, witches lived there, but the Rocky Mountains gradually lost their mysteriousness after they left. Humans were the first race to capture this land of no king. They explored, mined, and built research stations here, as well as hotels, sightseeing spots, ski resorts, and so on."

"The traces of human activity are too frequent, so the advanced party can't alert the enemy, right?"

"That's right. Although the human race is divided internally, they are always surprisingly united when fighting against foreign races. They are suspicious of all species not of their

race, so we do not need to provoke them. Who will directly reach these humans, and what kind of trouble will it bring?”

“I heard from Aldrich that the advanced party encountered a team from the human church?”

“Yes, they seem to be exploring something in the Rocky Mountains, but they didn’t make contact with them for safety reasons.”

Indeed, there were too many examples in history textbooks. From the sorcerers massacred to the non-human races treated as ‘aliens’ or ‘mutants’ and sent to the dissection table, it showed how much contempt humans had for life.

“How’s Master Mary? ” I asked. “Has she made any progress in her research on the ruins of the witch clan?”

My father replied, “Master Mary has read many ancient books left in the ruins of the witch clan. The good news is that she has found many ancient spells, runes, and magic circles that have never been discovered. Master Hayley will be with you when you set off.”

Master Hayley’s round face turned red.

“But the bad news is...” my father sighed helplessly. “For the time being, we haven’t found any words or phrases related to the prophetic bloodline or the Eye of Insight. In fact, from the number of houses and the interior decoration, there’s no trace of Mullwica and her daughter living in the ruins of the witch clan.”

“This is impossible!” I exclaimed. “But all the clues and hints point to the Rocky Mountains and the ruins of the witch clan. It can’t be Dorothy’s mother, Adele, and the great demon Leviathan working together to trick us, right?”

“That’s the problem.” My father rubbed his brows. “Between legend and reality, one is false. Since there are no lies, Mullwica and her daughter must have used some way to hide their traces, just like how they hid the devil’s seal.”

142 Daily Recovery

Selma Payne’s POV:

In other words, only if Dorothy personally went over would the situation turn for the better.

“Alright,” I said, a little discouraged. “I know. How was Dorothy? Aldrich said it’s best if I don’t go see her, I want to know how she’s recovering.”

“Everything’s normal,” Master Hayley replied. “There’s no rejection.”

“It’s more like it’s so normal that it’s creepy,” Kevin said thoughtfully as he pushed his gold-rimmed glasses up his nose. “Logically speaking, things shouldn’t have gone so smoothly, but it did happen. This means there’s an invisible accident in a place we don’t know about. It’s more serious than a visible rejection.”

Hayley glared at him helplessly as if to signal him not to talk nonsense.

“Wait,” I asked. “Please be clear. What do you mean by ‘an invisible accident is more serious than a visible rejection’? Is there a problem with Dorothy’s engraving?”

Hayley could only continue bitterly, “As we said before you passed out, some of the runes did not work. Logically speaking, the failure of a small section of the runes would cause all the runes to lose their vitality because they could not establish a hidden link.

“However, Miss Dorothy’s situation is extraordinary. A few small sections of runes have lost their effectiveness. Naturally, the hidden link cannot be established. However, her runic pattern engraving is working smoothly. There has never been such a precedent before, and...

“In addition, the soul is a fragile and pampered thing. There’s no way we can investigate it as we wish. Miss Dorothy’s immediate family member is in a bad mental state and cannot fulfill her responsibility as guardian,” Kevin interrupted. “The only ones who can sign the consent form for the examination are the two majesties.”

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“But I didn’t agree,” my father said in a deep voice.

“Why?” I asked anxiously.

“As master Kevin said, the soul is too fragile. It’s like a soft pudding, and any knock will cause irreversible damage to it.” My father looked at me seriously. “This is a matter of life and death. No one has the right to decide for her. We have to wait for Dorothy to wake up and let her understand the cause of this matter and all the predictable consequences before making a decision.”

“But if this continues, won’t the situation worsen as time passes?” I asked.

Master Hayley consoled me. “Not for now. The runes are currently operating in an unprecedented manner. It’s just like an algorithm still operating smoothly even though it has a bug. At this stage, the safest choice is to remain still. Otherwise, if we correct a single character incorrectly, the algorithm will completely collapse.”

I could only accept this explanation.

After having lunch with me, my father had to leave to deal with official business. On the other hand, my mother chatted with me to relieve my boredom. There was also Aldrich, who very gentlemanly took over the servant's role.

My mother told him not to trouble himself, but he said, "Please don't deprive me of my right to please my beloved and her mother, ma'am."

My mother was amused by him and laughed, and the sorrow in her eyes faded a lot.

Aldrich and I looked at each other and smiled.

The four days of recovery were boring. In the end, when my wound was almost fully healed, the pain was not as intense as it was at the beginning. However, this feeling of being bitten by ants still left me at a loss, especially when a calming power strangely accompanied this pain. I could only say that the Moon Goddess' blessing was not picked up for nothing.

The light golden tattoo had already taken shape. In the mirror, I looked like a primordial priest about to perform some ancient memorial ceremony. I was using herbs and animal blood to make a special paint as a medium for me to become one with the goddess.

However, the priest's paint could be washed off, but my tattoo would accompany me for a lifetime.

I could only try to find joy in my suffering and think, 'It's just as Aldrich said; this is a medal given to warriors by the Moon Goddess, isn't it?' Moreover, the tattoo looked quite good on closer inspection, with a charm of an ancient pioneer art.

In these four days, I'd been eating so much that I was about to throw up.

To hasten the healing of my wounds, Master Hayley developed a few diet recipes for me. This meant I was far away from the fragrant but oily and salty lamb chops and roast chicken. The main course of every meal was a carefully cooked 'stew'. If there weren't all sorts of weird-smelling herbs in it, I would say that this kind of healthy meal tasted pretty good.

Aldrich had military work to do and couldn't be by my side all the time. Once, he secretly gave me a piece of smoked ham that was specially provided by the army. Moon Goddess! I gobbled it up like a tiger that had not eaten for three days.

143 Dream

Selma Payne's POV:

However, this was quickly exposed, and Aldrich and I were reprimanded, and Aldrich was ordered not to see me again before I fully recovered.

In short, after four days of being bored to death, I was finally allowed to get out of bed.

Furthermore, Dorothy had awakened.

When I received the news that Dorothy had woken up, I did not even have time to put on my coat. I rushed out of the door in my pajamas.

Kara chased after me with a sweater and coat.

“Please take care of your health.” She didn’t catch me until she reached the infirmary. “At least take care of your dignity! Her Majesty the Queen wouldn’t want to see the results of this etiquette class.”

I took the coat and put it on guiltily. “Thank you, Kara.”

“I know you are excited,” Kara said helplessly. “Please don’t mind my nagging.”

At that moment, the door to the infirmary opened.

Master Hayley walked out and gave me a smile that made me feel at ease. “You may enter, Miss Selma.”

I couldn’t wait to run in.

To prevent it from being bruised by the hard stone platform, the platform was covered with a thick blanket embroidered with prayers. Dorothy was leaning on the pillow and smiling at me.

“Good Morning, Selma.”

I pounced over and hugged her, feeling tears in my eyes.

“I was worried you wouldn’t wake up, Dorothy.”

“It’s okay. I’m fine, aren’t I?” Dorothy said somewhat reluctantly, “Compared to this, my dear, you’re almost breaking me.”

I quickly let go.

“Master Hayley has already told me about the problem of the runic seal on my soul,” Dorothy said.

I was a little nervous, afraid she would be afraid of it. I asked carefully, “Don’t overthink, okay? The grandmasters will find the root of the problem and solve it. You are their student, so you know how powerful they are.”

“Yes, I do.” Dorothy nodded. “But I need to agree to that, right? Don’t try to hide it from me, Selma. I know that this can only be done by examining my soul.”

I had nothing to say.

In reality, I didn’t agree with Dorothy’s soul inspection. As my father said, the soul was like a soft pudding, and even the most careful movements would leave traces. If one were not careful, it would lose a part or even completely break.

The soul was billions of times more precious than pudding. If there were any side effects, it would not only affect the present but would be tormented for all eternity.

However, I had no right to choose for Dorothy. I could only pray for her safety if she decided to accept the examination.

As if sensing my unease, Dorothy held my hand and consoled me, “Don’t worry, I won’t be examined.”

I raised my head in surprise and subconsciously asked, “Is that your seal inscription?”

“It’s a blessing in disguise,” she said with a mysterious smile. “I think I’ve already discovered why some runes are ineffective.”

“What?”

“It’s very mysterious. I know it’s not convincing, but you can take it as the intuition of a prophetic witch. I think it’s true.”

“What’s true?”

“The dream I had in the past seven days was long and blurry .”

Dorothy told me about what she saw in her dream.

In her dream, she was in a mountain village covered in snow. There seemed to be no spring, summer, or autumn here. There was only the never-ending wind and snow and a small wooden window that shone warmly.

Dorothy realized that she was inside someone’s body and looking at the problem from her perspective, but she did not know who it was.

“Mommy, when will the snow stop?” she heard a girl ask.

The woman she called mother was making dinner. Hearing this, she replied softly, “The snow here will never stop. The only difference is how heavy the snow is. Don’t you like the snow?”

"I like it," the girl said. "But I also like the flowers in spring and the butterflies in summer. What does autumn look like? There are no pictures of autumn in the book. What do the golden leaves look like?"

The woman placed the steaming hot mutton risotto on the table in front of the girl and said, "Golden is the color of gold. Tomorrow, Mommy will make a leaf out of gold for you, okay?"

The girl agreed and ate her meal obediently.

Dorothy could not remember the rest of the dream clearly. She only remembered that it was a warm mother-daughter relationship, which made her feel warm when she thought about it.

The clear point of memory came when the girl grew up. From the change in perspective, Dorothy realized that a few years had passed.

The girl held a pile of books and stepped on the crispy snow. She seemed to like this feeling and had a lot of fun.

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When she got home, she shook off the snow on her body and started to make lunch.

"Mother, is potato cream okay?"

144 The Sorrow Of The Fire

Selma Payne's POV:

A woman's voice came from upstairs. It was weak as she said, "Of course, baby. I like whatever you make."

The girl brought lunch upstairs. Her mother was no longer as high-spirited as she was when she was young.

The woman's face was pale, and her body was thin. She was listless as she leaned on the sofa next to the stove. Only a pair of bright eyes shone like the sun against the fire, but it was unspeakably strange in this situation.

Dorothy continued.

The girl and her mother were quietly eating dinner. Suddenly, the girl asked, "Mother, where did my father go?"

The woman almost dropped her spoon and asked, "Why are you suddenly asking this?"

The girl said, "Linda left school early. She said that her father came to visit her and her mother, so she wanted to go home early to have lunch with her parents. Where's my father? Mother, why didn't he come to see us?"

The woman was silent for a while. "Let's eat, child. The food won't taste good when it's cold."

The girl was sensible and did not ask further.

It was another blurry dream during which the girl had grown up again.

She remembered the day she awakened.

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"I'm very uncomfortable, Mother..." the girl mumbled in a daze.

The woman had to support her fragile body to care for her daughter. Although she had a powerful spell that could give any furniture temporary life to take care of her daughter, the worry in her eyes revealed that she did not want to leave her daughter in the hands of others on such an important day.

"I feel so dizzy, I feel like puking..." the girl was half-unconscious when she suddenly said, "Did Older Brother feel like this too?"

"What?" The woman didn't react for a moment.

"Older Brother... Does Older Brother also feel this uncomfortable when he awakened?"

The woman looked sad and tucked her daughter in. She only said, "Have a good rest."

Before completely losing consciousness, the girl seemed to have heard a sentence, "I don't know..."

The last clear part of the dream came before everything was destroyed.

The girl was thrilled because her brother had found her.

The family of three hugged each other tightly. The axe in the elder brother's hand fell to the ground, raising a layer of snow.

The girl was living happily with her mother and brother. She was already a big girl but still couldn't get rid of her attachment to her mother. When a new family member arrived, not only was this attachment not divided into two, but it grew.

She felt extremely happy being with her family.

Sometimes, she would see her mother's sad expression. When that happened, it was because she was in the corner watching her brother's busy back.

"Mom, why are you unhappy?" she asked.

"I'm not unhappy. Go and help your brother," the woman said.

The girl stubbornly asked, "Why are you unhappy? Are you afraid of me leaving? It's okay. We can go with Brother. Although wizards can't stay in a witch clan, and witches can't stay in a wizard clan, we can move out of the village and live in seclusion, just like Linda's family."

The woman didn't say anything. She just smiled and shook her head.

That smile was so sad and beautiful.

The girl was still dreaming of a happy and stable family of three until that night.

Standing at the door of her mother's bedroom, the girl's eyes widened in shock.

The bed was covered in blood. The mother's body was lying lifelessly on the pillow, and her head was in her son's hands.

The girl's brother looked at his sister's stiff body sadly and stammered, "I... Don't..."

"Why?"

The girl exploded in extreme shock and anger.

"Why did you do that?!"

She didn't understand why her dear brother would kill their mother. Were they not happy? Did her brother not love her mother? Was he not their family?

The magnificent magic power instantly swept through the whole village, and the witches woke up one after another, rushing to the girl's house.

The girl's brother was also a powerful wizard, but under the siege of so many witches, he was outnumbered and finally caught and tied to the stake.

The girl, whose eyes were filled with hatred, personally ignited the wood that had been poured with oil. She placed her mother's head and body in front of her tortured brother as a tribute.

The moment the flames swallowed him, the elder brother summoned the demon in his painful wails. However, the demon played with him and made him lose his biological mother after losing his adoptive father.

The angry brother had decided to die with the demon, but the power of the two would raze the witch clan and half of the Rocky Mountains to the ground.

The girl had no choice but to join the witches to seal them, but she had to be a key to guard the seal forever.

At the critical moment, the girl saw her mother's soul.

She pushed her out and only had time to say, "Live on."

The fire engulfed the pine forest.

Amidst the scorching heat, Dorothy woke up from her dream.

145 No Name

Selma Payne's POV:

"I rarely had dreams since I was a child. Later, I learned from my mother's notes that this is the side effect of the prophecy bloodline. Once a witch's dream was prophesized, it must be a dream or an old dream."

Dorothy said seriously.

"I suspect that this dream is a real incident. From the content, it points to Mullwica's daughter."

"So you were dreaming about the whole life of Mullwica's daughter?" I asked in surprise.

"It was not exactly a lifetime," Dorothy said, shaking her head. "Mullwica's daughter didn't die, nor did she die with the seal. At the last moment, she was probably pushed out by Mullwica's soul."

I mumbled, "This also explains why Master Mary couldn't find the seal's location. With Mullwica's power, it's easy to hide our tracks. What's more, we have a powerful Eye of Insight."

Dorothy said, "I think Mullwica's Eye of Insight has lost its effectiveness. If it was still there, Mullwica should be able to see through Master Mary's intentions easily. If someone were kind enough to help her solve the problem of the loosening seal, Mullwica wouldn't have refused."

“Is it because of the death of Mullwica’s physical body that the Eye of Insight lost its effect?”

“I don’t know, but I don’t think that’s why. The Eye of Insight is an ability that is bound to the soul. It can only disappear if the soul dissipates or reincarnates.”

“That means Mullwica’s soul is still in the Rocky Mountains? It’s not just her remaining magic power that’s suppressed and sealed.”

“I think so. At least in the dream, she didn’t seem to have dissipated.”

Dorothy closed her eyes as if she was not used to the light.

Only then did I realize that she could see.

“How are your eyes?” I carefully moved closer to take a look. “Can you see? Does it hurt? Are you tired?”

Dorothy smiled, indicating that she was okay. “It’s unexpectedly good. It’s as if I didn’t awaken the Eye of Insight, and Leviathan didn’t contaminate me.”

“We all know this is the purifying runes’ temporary effect. It can suppress the mutation very well, but the side effects of the Eye of Insight will only be temporary.”

Tracy had said that her eye function had been completely lost. The ability to see now was only a temporary positive effect of the purification runes. Only by solving the problem of the erosion of the Eye of Insight on the main body could Dorothy be at ease and observe the world through the Eye of Insight.

This meant that we didn’t have much time to wait.

Master Hayley was outside, reminding us that it was time for the inspection. Just as I was about to leave, Dorothy grabbed my sleeve and whispered, “There’s one more question. Did you notice? I only used the term ‘Mullwica’s daughter’ because this girl doesn’t have a name.”

“No name?” I frowned slightly. “Could it be that it didn’t come up in your dreams? ”

“Impossible,” Dorothy said firmly. “In the dream, I could observe Mullwica’s daughter’s thoughts. I could sense everything, but I couldn’t find her name. She only knew herself as ‘the Supreme Witch Mullwica’s daughter’. This is very abnormal. Everyone’s first understanding of themselves is their name. If she can’t remember it, it means she doesn’t have it. But why doesn’t the daughter of a supreme witch have a name?”

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I understood Dorothy's doubts. A powerful witch would never allow anyone to remove her daughter's name. She had never given her daughter a name.

But why?

A name was the shortest spell in the world. Many ancient spells and runes were the names of some ancient gods, so the power of names was evident.

It was impossible that Mullwica didn't understand this. What was the reason that she would rather weaken her daughter's power than give her a name?

Some thoughts formed in my mind. I asked Dorothy, "What do you think?"

"I'm in the same boat as you," Dorothy said.

"Because of her father!" we said in unison.

That was right. The most suspicious thing was the husband and father, who had never appeared in the dream. The two children of Mullwica's didn't have the same father, which meant that his daughter's father wasn't a timid and unfaithful man.

Mullwica's unwillingness to mention him in front of her daughter meant that their relationship wasn't good, and there might even be some enmity between them.

Was she unwilling to give her daughter a name because she wanted to avoid this man?

"Bloodline is a magical thing," Dorothy said. "There are some special ways to trace the genealogy through the bloodline. With the correct incantation and a few drops of blood, a family tree will be drawn with blood."

I followed Dorothy's train of thought and came up with a possibility, "If that unknown father finds out his daughter's name, he'll be able to use the name as a spell to sense his daughter's location. When that time comes, regardless of whether Mullwica wants to face her husband or hold a grudge against him, this meeting will be bad."

146 Arriving At The Base

Selma Payne's POV:

However, there was a prerequisite: this unknown father had to be on par with Mullwica. Otherwise, Mullwica could easily block his detection with a shielding spell, so why would he do this?

Dorothy had thought of this as well.

“Well, one wave hasn’t settled yet, and another one has risen, ” I said helplessly. “I hope this irresponsible father isn’t some long-lived race. The Rocky Mountains are already chaotic enough. I don’t want any more trouble.”

Dorothy patted my hand and said goodbye to me. I let Master Hayley in for the examination.

After enduring the seven-day recovery period, I immediately recovered my spirit and could even receive training as usual.

At first, Aldrich didn’t agree. He feared that I still had some internal injuries that had not recovered.

However, every time I told him about the enemy who might be hiding in the dark, his reluctance wasn’t as fierce as before. When one faced a powerful enemy comparable to Mullwica, it was not too much to train their life-saving abilities.

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Ten days later, Master Hayley and Master Kevin agreed to let Dorothy out of the hospital.

We could finally set off for the Rocky Mountains.

The team consisted of Dorothy, Aldrich, Master Hayley, Master Kevin, and me. There was also a team of dozens of warriors behind them. They would act as guards, help, and replenish the base personnel the Rocky Mountains lacked.

On the day of departure, my mother cried again.

I felt bitter and guilty about this.

It seemed that my mother’s good days had ended since I arrived. She was always worried about me, crying for me, and worrying about me.

I gently hugged her and promised her, “I’ll make sure I’m safe, Mother. When I return, you’ll have a healthy daughter free of illness!”

“I just want you to be safe, child.” My mother choked with tears. “I don’t expect you to have any fortuitous encounters. I only want you to be safe and healthy. I can’t wait to exchange my own for yours.”

My heart ached. I was so afraid that I would yield to my mother’s tears, so I could firmly let go of my mother’s reluctant hands and walk toward the snowy mountains with unknown risks.

We weren't surprised that we could fly to the Rocky Mountains by plane. Sometimes, human inventions are convenient, aren't they?

The three advanced party members would meet us at the agreed location.

The leader was the captain, Frank. He was a robust middle-aged man with a big beard and familiar with Aldrich.

"When I first entered the military, Frank was my instructor. Later on, he was out on missions all year round, but we kept in touch," Aldrich explained.

I immediately had a good impression of Frank. I shook hands with him and politely said, "Hello, Captain Frank."

"Good afternoon, Miss Selma. And you, Aldrich, you've grown into a good young man, haven't you? Look, I can still remember how you looked when you first entered the military. You were a skinny sixteen-year-old boy, and now you're a mighty general."

Somewhat embarrassed, Aldrich scratched his head and complained, "There are so many people here. Save me some, Frank."

Frank was an interesting man. The unchanging snow scenery along the way was not so boring with him around.

"We can't build our base near the foot of the mountain," he answered my question.

"That's the human territory. Some people don't follow the rules. Poachers and pilfering are their major sources of income. We'll easily bump into these criminals if we don't choose a good base."

I saw a blurry black dot in the distance and said excitedly, "I see it. That's the base, right?"

"Yes, Miss." Frank laughed and said, "But don't be happy too soon. We still have a long way to go!"

After two hours, we finally walked out of the soft snow and onto the thick wooden floor.

"The materials are limited, and concrete pollutes the environment. We could only buy ready-made wood at the foot of the mountain to build houses. The conditions are simple, so we can only make do with it."

As if thinking that I would be dissatisfied with the simple wooden house, Frank explained.

However, I had no opinion about this place. I often hunted in the mountains with my adoptive parents when I was young. My temporary residence was much more simple than theirs.

However, before I could say anything, a strange voice came from the side, "Don't be so obsequious, Frank. Can't noble ladies live in leaking wooden houses? If she can't endure such a small problem, she'd better go back to the big villa and cry to her mother!"

He was impolite. I rarely receive such an impolite comment. Even Benson was only so mean to me when he found out that I was his mate

I didn't know the person who spoke, so I didn't have to give in to him.

147 A Midnight Visitor

Selma Payne's POV:

"Oh, really? It seems like you're very dissatisfied with the conditions here, Sir," I retorted without hesitation. "A leaking wooden house? To be honest, I think the construction level of this house is enough to shock the academic world. What? Such good conditions still can't satisfy you. Then, please make do with it. After all, we're on a mission, not on vacation, right?"

The thin young man's face turned red, and he looked at me fiercely as if he was trying to pierce me with his eyes.

Frank stopped him and reprimanded, "Behave, Yuri. You have time to spew nonsense, but you don't have time to work?"

The man named Yuri did not dare to challenge the captain's authority. He spat angrily and left with the rope.

"I'm very sorry, Miss Selma, " Frank said apologetically. "Life here is rather boring, and the members are a little hot-tempered. Yuri didn't mean any harm, so please forgive him."

I didn't need to be calculative with a small fry, so I quickly forgot about it.

Aldrich brought a few soldiers along with him and followed another member to identify the way, so he arrived much later than us.

"It's cold outside, right?" I handed him a cup of hot vegetable soup. "Drink some hot soup to warm your body."

“Thank you,” he said. Aldrich took it and drank a big mouthful while he looked at me like a dog.

I was sure he'd wanted to hug me, but we hadn't revealed our relationship to the public yet. It wasn't because we weren't sure of our relationship but because my parents wanted me to have a peaceful college life without being involved with the paparazzi and rumors.

Even though our current life was nothing like peace, we still kept our relationship a secret.

We'd only be spending the night at the first base. We'd be setting off to the next base tomorrow morning, so everyone went to bed early.

I shared a room with Dorothy, Master Hayley, and the other women.

“The wind is really strong outside,” Dorothy said softly.

I nodded in agreement as I listened to the cold wind outside the window.

Although it was summer, the temperature in the Rocky Mountains remained below 0° C all year round. The low temperature was accompanied by drifting snow and cold winds. In such a place, a living person would freeze to death in less than half a night.

Suddenly, I heard the sound of the wind outside the window.

I listened carefully, and a sound was getting closer.

“Did you hear someone calling for help?” I nudged Dorothy. She was in a daze, shaking her head drowsily.

The cries for help were still ringing in my ears. I couldn't just sit by and do nothing, so I prepared to go out and check.

Most of the others hadn't gone to sleep yet. They all got up when they heard someone calling for help outside.

Pushing open the door, the male dormitory's door also opened. Aldrich took the lead, and the night guard, Frank, greeted him.

“You heard it too?” Aldrich asked.

I nodded.

Dark clouds covered the moon, and there was no light in the sky. The light in front of the base could only illuminate a small open space. The darkness amplified the heaviness in

everyone's hearts. We held our breath and listened carefully, only to find that the strange cry for help had disappeared again.

"Something's not right." I grabbed Aldrich's hand, and he also realized something was wrong.

Frank called a team member to follow him out to investigate the voice. The one closest to him was Yuri, but this cunning kid immediately pushed another team member forward and pretended he didn't just get selected.

Frank couldn't be bothered to argue with him. He told the female team member, "Go into the house and get your equipment. Linda, let's go and take a look."

Three minutes later, Linda came out, armed with her and Frank's weapons. We tied special ropes on them, and Dorothy and the werewolf grandmasters also cast a special spell on them for protection.

The two set off, and after an anxious ten minutes, they returned with a man in ragged clothes.

"An unlucky guy who got lost," Frank said. He was relieved. "He's freezing. Hurry up and go in."

Master Hayley cast a recovery spell on the frozen man, and the man woke up after a while.

We tried to ask him who he was, but he seemed mentally abnormal. He stared at the empty corner and mumbled some strange words we couldn't understand.

I found some mountaineering equipment, warm supplies, and an identification card in his backpack. They were the same as the tattered backpack, all damaged to varying degrees. The identification card was completely messed up, and we could glean nothing from it.

In the end, Frank decided. "Let's allow him to stay for the night. Tomorrow morning, we will send him to the human police station at the foot of the mountain. Let the humans handle their matters."

"Will this do?" I was a little worried. "He doesn't look like he's lost. Maybe he has a companion? Don't we need to investigate further?"

However, before Frank could reply, a familiar mocking voice came from the corner.

"Save your kindness, Miss," Yuri said. "Humans are very sensitive. Do you think we or other races have never helped them before? "

Selma Payne's POV:

"However, humans will not be grateful to us. Sometimes, they attribute everything to their god and turn a blind eye to us. More often than not, we will suffer from them returning kindness with ingratitude for no reason.

"For human beings, being not of the same race is a sin. Maybe they even think that 'evil' creatures like us bring all bad luck!"

These words were extreme!

I retorted, "You can't just use partiality to conclude, can you? Not all humans are like this. They aren't uncivilized and ignorant creatures. They still have a basic sense of gratitude, right? Besides, even if we can't easily provoke humans, we can quietly do good, right? Do we have to watch people freeze to death in the wild?"

"Nice words." Yuri sneered. "Who's going to save him? You? Don't kid yourself. If anything happens to the noble lady in our small base, our entire team won't even be able to compensate you! In the end, aren't you still giving orders and the unlucky ones like us who have to do the hard work?"

Frowning, Frank was just about to scold him when Aldrich grabbed his collar and said coldly, "Don't be too impudent, kid. Other people's politeness is not an excuse for you to take advantage of, understand?"

Yuri still looked very unconvinced, but he did not dare to say anything in the face of a general who had been in power for a long time.

I didn't have to be calculative with a villain who bullied the weak and feared the strong, but I know that Yuri's words were the thoughts of many people present. Although they seemed harmonious on the surface, who would be convinced by a 'noble lady'?

Their mission was to explore the Rocky Mountains and find clues to 'cure' Dorothy and me. This kind of private order would only make them more dissatisfied.

If I wanted to obtain the respect of my team members, I had to put down my arrogance and show some real skills.

I walked up to Yuri and looked into his evasive eyes. "You're not happy with me, are you? Because of my background? Because of your mission? Is it because you think a rotten noble like me is not worthy of the service of a great warrior like you?"

"Isn't that the truth?" Yuri shouted. "Isn't that true? I don't know what kind of strange illness you and your sister have, but we are warriors born to protect our fellow

werewolves. We are not servants of the rich and powerful like you who can be ordered around by you!”

The more he spoke, the more agitated he became. He even brought up his parents. “In my opinion, the elders were right. His Majesty is already confused. He has long lost the wisdom and valor of his youth. He can’t stand the Queen’s tears. You don’t even have a title!”

I flew into a rage. “How dare you slander the Lycan King and the Queen?! You’re just a laughable and cynical clown! Without His Majesty’s wise rule, you would have long been chopped up by the sorcerers to be used as raw material for magic potions!”

Aldrich and Frank immediately stepped forward to separate us. The latter shouted, “Calm down! Look at yourselves!”

Yuri was brought to a corner by Frank. His expression was both disdainful and angry, as if he was very proud of being able to ‘admonish the superior’.

Aldrich looked like he wanted to punch Yuri, but his rationality told him not to.

Dorothy looked at me worriedly. I indicated to her that she was fine and tried my best to calm down.

“all right, ladies and gentlemen, it’s late now. Go back and rest. Don’t forget to set the alarm for the night,” Frank ordered everyone tiredly.

After returning to the cold sleeping bag, I was a little depressed. Dorothy did not know how to comfort me and could only hold my hand tightly.

It was a dreamless night.

At five o’clock in the morning, we were woken up by the whistle and began to wash up and make breakfast.

Thanks to my persevering training, I was good at getting up early. Dorothy, on the other hand, was not so comfortable. She was in a daze the entire morning and almost ate her hair.

“Are you very sleepy? There’s still half an hour before we set out,” I asked worriedly. “You should sleep a little longer.”

Dorothy waved her hand and yawned. “No, I’m fine.”

“Frank sent a team member down the mountain with the man he picked up last night, and then, they will personally lead us to the second base.

“The second base is built in a cave,” Frank explained on the way. “It saves us the time and effort of building houses, which is very good. The living environment in the cave is worse than the wooden house, which is very bad.”

“Why did you build the base in the cave?” I asked curiously.

“First of all, the cave is a natural residence that nature has provided for us. It’s sturdy and durable. Secondly, the cave was more effective in keeping warm, and it was easier to set up concealment measures. Third, there’s no main road here, so the construction materials can’t be transported. We can only make do with the current conditions.”

Indeed, the road from the first base to the second base was much more rugged than the road from the foot of the mountain to the first base. We only reached our destination when the sun was setting.

149 An Unmanned Base

Selma Payne’s POV:

A thick wooden door sealed the gate of the second base. No one answered, even after knocking for a long time.

We looked at each other and realized that something was not right.

“No matter what mission, we must leave someone to guard the base. This is an iron rule.” Aldrich said, “With his rich experience, it’s impossible that he didn’t emphasize this to his subordinates.”

At this moment, the tightly shut door seemed so strange, as if there was an unpredictable danger hiding behind the door, ready to give us a fatal blow.

However, it was almost dark now. We couldn’t return to the first base or find a place to camp for the night. The wind and snow could easily kill us in our sleep.

Frank’s expression was grave. No one knew what he was thinking.

In the end, he decided. “We have to force our way through the door. It’s going to be dark soon. We can’t wait any longer.”

The wooden bolt was very strong, and we took a long time to break in.

The situation in the base was shocking. As expected, there wasn’t a scene of wolves or a river of blood. All the wooden boxes containing supplies were neatly stacked together. Sleeping bags, blankets, jackets, and other warm items were stacked on wooden boards hanging on the rock walls. Simple tables and chairs formed a simple meeting

room. There was even a steaming cup on the table as if someone had just finished a routine report.

There were even a few bonfires with sparks, hot dried meat, and congee on wooden shelves.

Everything was in order, as if there was a group of people living here that we could not see.

I shivered, and all the hair on my body stood up.

No one rushed in rashly. Even the youngest team member could feel the strangeness of this place.

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“It’s snowing,” Master Kevin suddenly said.

He was at the end of the group, so he was the first to feel the snowflakes.

As expected, a layer of dark clouds had unknowingly gathered in the already dark sky. The whistling north wind became even sharper, and the snowflakes that grew larger and larger cut into our exposed skin like sharp blades.

We were in a dilemma, and the blizzard was more deadly than the strange cave base before us. We had no choice but to take refuge in the base.

The werewolf grandmaster’s restoration spell restored the lock to its original state, just like how it had caused us trouble in the beginning. It had used its solid body to withstand the whistling wind for us.

Right now, we were like lamb chops in an oven. If anyone tried to do anything to us, we had the underhand.

No one let down their guard. Although they were exhausted, they still held on to their weapons tightly.

“From now on,” Frank ordered. “Everyone is to move in groups of at least three. Find your groups and report to me in one minute!”

Aldrich, Dorothy, and I formed a team. From now on, we would temporarily be the seventh team.

“The base is only developed in the shallow layer of the cave. Starting from a quarter of it, it’s completely wild. Although the advanced party has done a sweep, you can see for yourself the current situation. No one can guarantee that the cave’s depths are safe, and we can’t conduct any checks rashly,” Frank emphasized.

“So, everyone’s activities must be limited to the base’s boundary tonight. Anyone who sees the cordon inside the cave must return immediately. Don’t touch any of the supplies. Save some of your emergency rations! Every three hours, at least two groups will be on night watch. Now, the person in charge of each group, come to me to draw the night watch lots!”

I’d drawn our group’s time slot from midnight to three in the morning. Fortunately, and unfortunately, the group that would be keeping watch with us had both Frank and Yuri.

I didn’t know if it was dangerous at night, but it was ‘lively’.

Yuri looked like he wanted to provoke me, but under the stern gaze of Frank and Linda’s dissuasion, he could only gnaw on his dry food.

The dry air spread throughout the base. Most people who didn’t have a turn to keep watch had already gone to sleep. Dorothy and I snuggled up together while Aldrich sat beside us with his eyes closed.

“The snow here is really heavy,” Dorothy mumbled. “And it’s also quite strange. The climate of the snowy mountains is ever-changing.”

I had a bad feeling gnawing at my heart. “Maybe it’s not the strange climate, but someone who created this strange phenomenon.”

“I can use my prophetic ability to check,” Dorothy said. “To see what will happen in the future, or at least to see what kind of danger there will be tonight.”

I’d thought of this, but with Dorothy’s current physical condition, it was too much of a waste for her, so I immediately disagreed with it. “Better not. You’ve not used your power after the engraving. It’ll be bad if something goes wrong.”

150 Time Shifters

Selma Payne’s POV:

Dorothy insisted, “It’s fine. I know my body. The power of the engraving is still very strong. It’s just a small prophecy. It won’t have any negative impact on me.”

She even called Master Hayley over as she spoke to prove her point.

“Master Hayley will monitor me at all times. If there’s any problem, she’ll immediately stop me.”

Under her insistence, I agreed.

We used the excuse of going to the toilet to hide in an empty area while I oversaw keeping watch.

Dorothy's bloodline was not a complete secret, but my father had issued a confidentiality agreement to everyone present on the day Adele wreaked havoc at the school, so there were still very few people who knew about it.

Most of the warriors had dealt with sorcerers before, so I didn't know if they held grudges against each other. For the sake of secrecy, it was better to hide it from others.

Dorothy broke free from that mysterious and sluggish feeling in less than three minutes.

"It's strange..." she murmured, "What does this mean?"

"What did you see?" I asked.

Dorothy said in confusion, "I don't think my power has failed. I touched a corner of the Book of Destiny but didn't see anything. No, it's not accurate to say I didn't see anything. To be exact, I saw nothing. I saw it, but there was nothing."

I was baffled, "What do you mean you saw nothing? Did you see anything or not?"

"This means I've seen a void," Dorothy said uneasily. "There has never been such a situation before. Nothingness. Why was it nothingness? There are so many people here. If I could catch the fate of any of them, I can see the future of this small cave."
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A creepy feeling surged up in my heart. I swallowed my saliva and asked in a small voice, "You mean this place is a void?"

Dorothy also looked at me in fear, saying, "It's just as you think. If I don't see anyone's fate, that means there's no one here."

I turned pale with fright as I subconsciously looked at Master Hayley. She also had an unpleasant expression, clearly shocked by this absurd possibility.

"But we here, aren't we?" She asked in fear, "Let's not talk about anything else. You're standing right in front of me. Don't you exist? "

"I don't know," Dorothy said. "Generally speaking, a prophet witch can't see her fate. Once her fate reveals a little, it means that she has seen the end of her life. However, the feeling this time is different from the past. It's not that the Book of Destiny is covered with a layer of black cloth but that its pages are blank as if I don't exist."

Things became increasingly confusing. At this time, everyone in the cave was covered in an invisible shadow. The dim light spread to the cold rock wall, and in the shadow of the gully, there seemed to be a pair of peeping eyes.

“Anyway, let’s go back first,” I said. “And remind our companions to be on guard and not sleep too deeply. Don’t engage with unfamiliar people for the time being, and be on guard against any possible dangers.

“Let’s go back to where everyone was gathered.”

It was quiet here. The bonfire was half-extinguished, and the dim light enveloped everyone like a cocoon.

“Wait!”

I stopped Dorothy and Master Hayley and observed them.

Everyone’s eyes were closed, and their breathing was steady as if they had all fallen into a deep sleep.

That was the strange thing. It was fine for the others, but how could the night watchmen fall asleep? Something must have happened when we left for even a veteran like Frank to lower his head!

I subconsciously looked at Aldrich. He was still in the same position as before I left. Not even a finger moved.

A crazy thought formed in my mind. It didn’t seem like I was asleep. It was more like time had stopped.

At this moment, Master Hayley secretly tugged on my sleeve, indicating for me to look around.

The rock wall was covered with tiny black monsters that looked like dried lizards!

“This is it! Time Shifters!”

I’d learned about this monster in the class of a werewolf grandmaster specializing in ghosts and monsters. It was a dark ghost that existed in the gaps of time. They could stop time and usually feed on the ‘remaining time’ of living creatures.

However, the conditions for them to activate their abilities were also very harsh. They could not leave their habitat for a lifetime, and there must be enough people to close their eyes simultaneously to trigger their abilities.

I couldn't help but wail in my heart. This was too much of a coincidence! Forget about the people who were asleep. There were so many people who were awake. So why did they all blink at the same time?

Time Shifters were also very easy to get rid of. We only had to leave their habitat.

But there were only three of us, and there was a blizzard outside. Even if we moved people into the cave depths as fast as we could, it would still be on a 'first come, first serve' basis. The people left behind would inevitably be eaten by Time Shifters.

151 The Missing Wolves

Selma Payne's POV:

I couldn't care less. Saving people was more important!

Dorothy used a spell to knock away a group of shadows eyeing us covetously. At the same time, Master Hayley and I immediately went forward to snatch away the few people closest to us.

I didn't know what kind of spell Master Hayley had used, but she had turned herself into a big, furry fellow. She could easily carry three burly men.

"My name is Julia. With Hayley's body size, it's time for me to make an appearance, right?" Master Hayley said.

How strange, even her name changed when her figure changed. However, this might be due to the countless limitations. I didn't have the time to ponder this. I carried the two female members and ran deep into the cave.

As expected! We guessed it right. The Time Shifters' habitat is only the shallow part of the cave. Although they looked very upset, an invisible barrier stopped them from chasing.

"Do you think the members at the second base disappeared because of the Time Shifters?" I quickly asked.

Master Hayley was hesitant about her answer. "Maybe, but the possibility is not very high. Do you think the chances of this happening would happen twice in such a short time?"

After saying that, we returned to the Time Shifters' habitat.

When I slapped a few Time Shifters away, I asked Dorothy while saving her, "How are you doing? Can you still hold on?"

“No problem at all. These little things can only eat the lifetime of the people they have frozen. They can’t do anything to me. Their soft little claws are not as strong as Avril’s fighting strength!”

Dorothy’s expression was serious but not strenuous. I relaxed and focused on saving the others.

Due to my selfishness, I saved Aldrich, who was the closest to the door. On the way there, I saw a Time Shifter about to open its mouth at Yuri and Linda. I kicked it away without thinking.

However, the demonic beast passed through the invisible barrier. It let out a blood-curdling screech after leaving its habitat, and before it could struggle, it quickly solidified into a stone.

This was the first time I learned that Time Shifters could do that. I immediately shouted to Dorothy and Master Hayley, “There’s a more energy-saving method! Pushing the Time Shifters out of their habitat! They will turn into stone!”

Saving all our members one by one was too much of a waste of time, so it was better to save them all at once!

Dorothy and Master Hayley immediately changed their tactics. The former used sorcery to tie several Time Shifters together, while the latter threw the rounded-up Time Shifters into the cave’s depths like a baseball.

The sound of stones crumbling was more beautiful than any music. Gradually, the number of Time Shifters decreased. When the remaining Time Shifters saw their companions’ miserable fate, they retreated and disappeared one by one.

We’d taken the opportunity to move the others. After leaving their habitat, the members whose time had been stopped would resume their activities within a few minutes.

To prevent any accidents, we shattered the rocks one by one. The furry Master Hayley was strong, and some of the rocks were even flung to the end of the cave.

After doing all this, everyone was almost fully awake.

Master Hayley, who had returned to her human form, described the dangerous situation to Aldrich and Frank. The two immediately felt that it was not a good place to stay.

However, the blizzard was still raging, and the only plan was to move into the cave’s depths.

After I settled down, I said to the exhausted Master Hayley, “How did you do it just now? Your wolf is tall and so big and so furry. It’s so mighty.”

Master Hayley looked at me strangely and said, "Uhm, that's my wolf, Julia. She introduced herself to you, right? "

"Your wolf?" I was a little confused. What Wolf? Is it a type of sorcery?"

This time, Dorothy and Aldrich surrounded me. Aldrich asked in confusion and worry, "What's wrong, Selma? Wolves, every werewolf has a wolf."

Dorothy said, "Just like my Elaine and your Maxine. Don't make such a joke. Maxine will be angry."

"And Morgan. Maxine met him before."

I became increasingly confused, and Aldrich became more nervous because of my confusion. "Please tell me that this is a joke, Selma. This is not funny at all."

"Wait! Let me think!" I didn't understand what they were saying. "What wolf? Which Maxine? Who is she? Have I met her before? What are you guys talking about?"

This time, everyone was panicking.

Master Hayley immediately called Master Kevin over. The commotion had attracted the attention of the others, so Aldrich could only explain to everyone that it was nothing, and after some deliberation, he dismissed Frank.

Master Kevin immediately said, "You need a soul examination, Miss Selma. We need to see what's wrong with the link between you and the wolf."

"Who can answer my question first?" I asked anxiously, "What's wrong?"

"We're not trying to hide it," Master Hayley comforted me softly. "It's just that you can't understand this concept right now. Something is blocking your thoughts."

152 Blocked

Selma Payne's POV:

I was already very annoyed, but someone interrupted me.

"Oh, it's been hard on our young lady. Is the presence of so many people enough for you to rest with peace of mind? Shall we send two more people to make your bed?"

I didn't have to guess. Who else could it be other than Yuri?

Master Kevin was examining me. I didn't want to pay attention to him, but someone was taking advantage of me. Yuri's voice was getting louder and louder. "Why aren't you talking? Do you think this place is a holiday resort?"

There was a thud, the sound of Aldrich lifting Yuri against the rock wall.

He didn't care about Yuri's frightened curses. Instead, he said to Frank, "You should discipline your subordinates, Frank. This kind of person would be scolded a hundred times a day in the military. I think you aren't a soft-hearted leader, right?"

Frank rubbed his temples tiredly and said in a deep voice, "Put him down, Aldrich. I will explain to you."

"Before I let him go, I'm afraid there's still something he hasn't done." Aldrich turned Yuri's face toward me. "Whether you're a warrior or a gentleman, isn't it unrefined and vulgar to attack a woman for no reason? You should apologize to her."

Yuri looked at Frank for help, but the latter only said, "Be a man, Yuri."

In the end, Yuri unwillingly apologized to me, broke free of Aldrich's grip, and hid in a corner, feeling embarrassed.

Linda, who was in the same group, seemed to want to comfort him, but he pushed her away rudely.

Frank sat down in front of us and sighed. "I apologize for what Yuri did. I didn't discipline him well as his leader."

I didn't have a good impression of this clown, Yuri, but he was a good person. I hurriedly said, "It's okay. It's not your fault. It's a matter of biodiversity."

"Actually, Yuri wasn't like this before," said Frank, chuckling dryly. "At first, he was like all the other ambitious young men. He was a passionate and cheerful young man, but some things happened later, and his temperament changed drastically."

"What happened?" I asked.

Frank seemed to be considering whether to reveal it or not. Seeing this, I waved my hand. "It's okay. It's his privacy. I'd better not ask."

He then gestured for Master Kevin to continue his inspection.

Next to me, Frank was looking at me with a complicated expression, sighing from time to time.

"You're a noble lady," he said after the examination.

"I don't think it's a compliment," I said indifferently. "Don't you want to rest? It's already very late, and you still have to keep watch at night."

"I miss the time you used the soft nail technique. I have no choice but to say it now."

I didn't deny it.

"I am not hoping that you'll be generous enough to forget about Yuri's words and actions," he said helplessly. "I want you to know that Yuri isn't vicious. He's just a little... straightforward."

"This has nothing to do with me. He's just a member of the advanced team." I acted very coldly.

"Alright." Finally, Frank surrendered. "I won't interfere with your decision anymore. I'll at least wait until everything is over, right?"

"Of course." I laughed. "You don't have to worry. I can still see the big picture. After all, even the vicious nobles have basic common sense, don't they?"

With a deep sigh, Frank left.

Dorothy looked at him in confusion and asked me, "What are you guys talking about? Why don't I understand a single word?"

"It's about dealing with Yuri," I said. "It's nothing. I'll tell you tomorrow."

Dorothy was still confused, but Aldrich's gaze told me he understood what I meant.

Did I purposely cause trouble for Yuri? I didn't think I was mean, and I didn't like to put on airs like a noble, but Yuri slandered my parents in public. Even if I didn't punish him in the future, his words and deeds had violated military discipline, and he couldn't escape punishment.

I respected him, but I wouldn't just let him go.

From the day I returned to my parents' side, I gradually realized that I could no longer be as weak-tempered as I was before.

When I was the orphan Selma, I could live a better life by giving in appropriately. But when I became Princess Madeline, weakness would only allow my enemies to push their luck.

Master Kevin finally completed his examination.

“The good news is that you and your wolf are in close contact, and there are no problems,” Kevin said. “The bad news is that you’ve been cursed, which has actively blocked communication with your wolf.”

“That’s not good. Selma hasn’t learned how to transform into a wolf yet. We can’t even get Maxine to come out and reverse the curse.”

Master Hayley wasn’t too optimistic, either. “This is the brilliance of the person who placed the curse. It forms a closed loop. We can’t find an incision to solve the problem.”

“Wait!” I raised my hand and asked, “Can’t I remove the curse myself?”

“That’s one way,” Master Kevin said. “But the premise is that you can understand the concept of wolves. But your thoughts in this regard have also been blocked.”

153 The Disappeared World

Selma Payne’s POV:

It was a bizarre feeling. I knew I had forgotten something, but I couldn’t remember it, no matter how hard I tried. Even the ‘forget’ itself became blurry as if there was an eraser in your mind constantly clearing your perception of it.

I could hear the word ‘wolf’ and copied it into my mind, spelling out the word ‘w-o-l-f’.

However, that was all. The only meaning of the word ‘wolf’ to me was to spell it. More than that, whenever I thought about it, there would be a voice reminding me that it ‘didn’t exist’.

This was the power of shielding. It could make something disappear into thin air and make you refuse to accept its existence.

I felt my blood run cold.

“When is it…”

I couldn’t remember. I’d searched through my nineteen years of memories but couldn’t find anything related to it.

This was where the problem lay.

“When was the last time you thought of the word wolf?” The grandmasters were also very concerned about this.

I forgot. I frowned. The strange feeling of emptiness made me very uncomfortable. Honestly, I felt like I just learned the word ‘wolf’ five minutes ago.”

Dorothy and Aldrich tried their best to recall, but the answer was not optimistic. They unanimously agreed that I had not talked much about my wolf since this year.

“The last time I can remember was a month ago,” Dorothy said. “You said Maxine fought with you for some reason.”

I had no impression of it at all.

Aldrich was even more helpless. “It was also a month ago, the day after Adele was executed. You said Maxine was joking and wanted to see Adele’s wolf if she had one.”

My memory of that day was already very faint, not to mention this.

“Alright, now we know you were affected by some kind of shielding spell at least a month ago.”

Master Hayley suggested.

“Do you think it was Adele’s doing?”

I didn’t think so. It was hard to say, but I imagined it was very unlikely. Adele was completely sealed then. She shouldn’t have the opportunity or the ability.”

“Perhaps she had already made a move on you before?”

But I’d never been in contact with her for more than five minutes. Besides, there were usually other people present, so she couldn’t have cast a curse on me without anyone knowing.”

We analyzed for a long time but could not come up with anything. The whole thing was too strange. After that, the grandmasters and Dorothy checked the mana fluctuations in my body again, and the results were even weirder. They did not find any traces of unfamiliar mana. It was as if I had cast a curse on myself.

Dorothy was a little dejected, “Why have I suddenly lost my prophetic ability? Otherwise, I’ll be able to see what happened to you in the past.”

I patted her shoulder, indicating that it wasn’t her fault and that she shouldn’t blame herself.

We didn’t sleep at all in the middle of the night, so everyone was still awake when it was our turn to keep watch.

“Once bitten, twice shy. Everyone’s afraid of another accident happening in the middle of the night,” said Frank.

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Things had been going in a strange direction since we arrived at the second base. It was good to be more vigilant. Who knew the trouble hidden here that was more troublesome than the Time Shifters?

It was six in the morning.

“Everyone, wake up! Pack up,” Frank said as he acted as a human alarm clock. “We should be setting off!”

The exhausted team members tidied up their luggage. Suddenly, Aldrich pulled me to the main entrance and said thoughtfully, “Something’s not right. Look.”

I peeked through the door’s crack but saw nothing other than the snow.

What was happening?

I used my eyes to express my confusion.

“Listen carefully,” Aldrich gestured for me to put my ear to the door.

I held my breath and listened carefully for a long time, but I still didn’t find anything out of the ordinary.

It was so quiet. What was wrong with that?

Wait a moment.

I suddenly reacted.

How could it be so quiet? It was snowing outside, so why was there no sound at all?

Aldrich gestured for me to continue looking through the door crack. “Not only that. Do you think it’s dawn outside? ”

Of course, it was bright. It was all white outside. It couldn’t be night, right?

Something was wrong.

If it was morning, there should be sunlight. Even if dark clouds covered it, the visibility would not be so low. However, there was nothing but snow in my vision. I could only see white in the gaps between the snowflakes. It was as if the rocks and mountains had disappeared into thin air, leaving only a pale and fake background.

I immediately called over Frank and the other werewolf grandmasters.

After observing for a while, Master Hayley said seriously, "It's very bad news. We've been blocked from the outside world."

"What?"

"Our existence is blocked from the outside world, so we can't see or hear anything. This isn't a problem with our senses. It's just that we've lost the right to observe the world, and this right is still shrinking."

"So, it's highly possible that the members who were here before disappeared because of this?"

I guessed so. I picked up the steaming cup on the table and said, "Did you notice? There's no change in the water temperature compared to yesterday."

154 The Huge Box

Selma Payne's POV:

It was a cup filled with vegetable soup. The sides of the cup were hot and steaming as if someone had just filled it with their breakfast.

However, this cup of vegetable soup had been in this state for at least ten hours.

The smoke rose and then dissipated. Before it completely disappeared, another cloud of steam was produced.

This process continued three to four times before I gradually discovered some abnormalities.

At the end of the steam, a new round of steam seemed to have appeared suddenly. It went past the process of turning from hot soup to steam, like a mist that arose from thin air.

Like the gifs in a game, there would always be slight gaps in the middle of the frame.

A crazy idea formed in my mind.

"Maybe we're not blocked from the world but locked up?"

I brought this cup of hot soup for everyone to observe.

"Have you noticed? What's strange about steam is that it doesn't completely abide by the laws of physics. Instead, it's like a smokescreen to act like it's normal, just like in-game animation.

“Is there a possibility that we’ve been locked up in an enclosed space like a game without our knowledge? The scenes here are all realistic pictures, including the Time Shifters we encountered yesterday. They were all set up as tiny monsters.

“This place, which looks the same as the second base, is not the real second base. Everyone was too nervous last night and forgot about one problem. There is more than one powerful and experienced werewolf grandmaster in the advanced party. Would they agree to set up a base where there are strange creatures with magic fluctuations?

“The reason we can’t see the second base members is not that they have disappeared. It’s because we have arrived at the wrong place. Therefore, there are no members of the second base here.

“Is everything here a one-to-one copy of the real second base? Perhaps the creature that locked us up here replicated a certain period in the second base. From the cup, it was about four to five seconds. Last night, we lived in this cycle of four to five seconds. Perhaps even the concept of time is distorted here. There was no blizzard in the real world. It was just an external background added to this period.

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“Since last night, all communication equipment has stopped working. We thought it was because the blizzard had interfered with the signal. But now, it seems that there is another possibility. This ‘game’ cannot send signals to the outside world.”

If it was as I’d guessed, things just got really troublesome.

The person who made this wanted to trap us inside.

To verify our speculations, we tried to open the door, but the wind and snow continued to faithfully carry out their mission as if they had been set on a particular track. They didn’t touch the territory of the base at all.

According to common sense, the base should have been swept up by the wind and snow by now.

With a few other team members tied to ropes, they explored the outside and returned after a few dozen meters.

There’s an invisible wall blocking us from the outside world,” he said with a serious look. “We can’t see the mountain or the snowfield. It’s like we’re being trapped in a huge white box.”

One of the younger members started to panic. “Don’t we have a way to get out? Will we be trapped here?”

“Don’t say such demoralizing things! Are you going to give up before the enemy even comes?” Frank rebuked him sternly.

Although few people showed it, this young team member expressed many people’s anxiety. We didn’t bring many emergency rations, and water was even more limited.

Helpless, Frank made a rule. “We can use a small portion of the resources here, only food and water. The rest cannot be used for the time being.

“Waiting for death is not a solution. Since we can’t go out of the cave, I suggest we go inside to look for clues.

“Yesterday, when I went to deal with the petrification, I reached the end of the cave in seconds. There didn’t seem to be anything wrong. It was just like any ordinary cave. I’m going to look for it again later. Maybe the end of the cave is also a smokescreen?”

The group was immediately thrown into chaos and split into four small teams.

This time, I was separated from Dorothy. I was in a group with Aldrich, Master Kevin, Linda, and others. On the other hand, Dorothy was in the same group as Frank, Master Hayley, Yuri, and a few other team members.

I was uncomfortable with Dorothy being on the same team as Yuri. The latter would provoke Dorothy.

However, this was a distribution that took into consideration our overall quality. Dorothy also advised me not to cause trouble for Frank at this critical moment, so I could only swallow my worries and dissatisfaction.

“Don’t you guys feel a little cold?”

Someone suddenly commented.

It was as if a switch had been turned on. Everyone shivered a few times as if the temperature in the cave had suddenly dropped by more than ten degrees.

“It’s getting increasingly weird.”

Without further ado, Frank gave the order to set off immediately.

Frank’s team was the first to set out.

Master Hayley and Master Kevin had marked everyone with a synesthetic imprint. Once their companions were in danger, the tiny new moon mark on everyone’s hand would become hot.

155 Chaotic Time

Selma Payne's POV:

This would allow us to rescue them in time.

In addition, the mark also had a simple communication function. It would glow when it was stained with blood, and others could receive a signal through this point.

Perhaps we'd accidentally broken through some 'barrier', and the cave had become deeper. It was three times longer than the time I spent exploring the cave, but there was still no signal from Frank.

According to the plan, the next group would set off at this time.

However, after the same time had passed for the second team, there was still no signal, not even from Frank's team.

The temperature was even lower now, and everyone trembled visibly. We had no choice but to put on the assault suits from the 'base's' resources, but the effect was insignificant.

The third group set off.

This time, a signal came in half the time. The mark was only glowing and not burning, which meant that one of the teams had safely found some clues.

According to our plan, everyone else could set off now, and only my group was left.

We didn't know what was going on ahead. We tried to bring food, water, and other supplies to be safe.

The deep cave grew darker and darker. I even had a strange feeling that this darkness wasn't due to the lack of light but rather the inferior quality of the 'server' itself.

The people who made this place didn't program the lighting well.

After only twenty minutes, we encountered an unexpected group – Frank's group.

"I thought Sam's group would be first." He was also shocked. "You guys changed the order?"

"No, the order hasn't changed. We're the last group." I was sure that I didn't meet anyone on the way or encounter any forks.

Frank looked at the time and frowned. "Wait, how long have you been waiting?"

“Almost three hours.”

“But we’ve only left for less than an hour.” He showed me his watch.

I also showed him my watch, and the different hands made our hearts sink.

“The law of time is chaotic here,” I said irritably. “Maybe the law of space is not working, or we would have passed the first two groups. Did you see a fork in the road?”

“No, I haven’t.”

As expected, this was a poor-quality ‘server’. Even the most basic framework was not built.

This might be good news because it meant that we could find the ‘server’s’ bugs, but at the same time, it was bad news. The people who built the ‘server’ obviously didn’t put much effort into it and didn’t care about our lives.

The experienced Frank quickly came up with a solution. “From now on, we’ll leave a mark on the rock wall every five minutes, indicating that we’ve met and our respective times. Maybe the other groups can see it. This will help them discover the problem and catch up with us.”

As he spoke, the mark glowed again.

“Did you guys send out a signal just now?” I asked.

“No,” said Frank, shaking his head.

My group hadn’t reached the agreed time yet.

This meant someone from the other two groups had already sent a signal. One of the groups was faster than all the other groups, while the other group was slower than that group, slower than Frank and my group.

My group waited for more than three hours, but less than an hour passed for Frank’s group. This meant that my group’s time was faster than Frank’s group’s.

I didn’t know if the time would be the same when we met. For now, I could only mark the walls, as Frank said.

I suggested, “Let’s do it this way. We can make a serial number on the mark and get the other two groups to send the signal according to their group number and the serial number of the mark. If the second group reached the first mark, he would have them flash the mark twice, then once again. The second mark would flash twice, then twice again, and so on. We’ll use this to calculate our time difference.”

“Good idea.”

We’d leave the first number. My time was 10:30, and Frank’s was 8:40.

The difference between us was one hour and fifty minutes.

For the second number, I counted that five minutes had passed, but the time on my watch was already 10:45, and Fred’s time was 8:45.

“Your time flow is normal,” I said. “Ours has become faster.”

“It looks like it, but it has only been an hour and forty-five minutes since we set off. You’re two and a half times faster than me.

“Furthermore, the time flow rate between us is increasing. My time is flowing exponentially faster.”

This was not good news. Although there were no ominous signs so far, the problem of the time was not small. The unexpected premonition was getting stronger and stronger.

At this moment, the mark flashed again.

This time, it flashed three times, indicating that it was the second group. However, it blinked four more times!

The fourth?

But we hadn’t even made the fourth mark yet!

We were all stunned.

A terrifying silence spread, and Dorothy said dryly, “If I haven’t forgotten what I’ve learned in kindergarten, we’ve only just left the second mark, right?”

156 The Cave Is Alive

Selma Payne’s POV:

“That’s right.” Looking at the scratch marks on the rock wall, I had a strange feeling that the hard rock wall was slightly wriggling.

Everyone wanted to say something, but no one opened their mouths. They didn’t know what to say. Everyone’s brain cells were not enough to decipher this phenomenon.

“Could it be that time and space are already in chaos?” Aldrich speculated, “We always thought that time and space were in the process of distortion but is there a possibility

that there is no stable space-time foundation here from the beginning, but that it was chaotic and disorderly from the moment it was formed?”

That was why the third group encountered the fourth mark. They were faster than us and met the mark we left in the future! I was enlightened.

But then, I was discouraged. Then, it was useless to calculate the time difference through marks. If time was chaotic, it was meaningless to figure out its rules.

Everyone was a little embarrassed, and their initially insufficient confidence was weakened again.

“Speaking of which, don’t you guys think that it’s a little too cold right now?” Linda sneezed. “I feel like I’m standing in a freezer naked.”

When she said that, we also felt the sudden drop in temperature.

“If the space is chaotic, then the inside and outside of the cave are not constant.” Aldrich said, “Who knows, maybe the cold outside the cave has been transferred into the cave. That’s why we’re so cold.”

However, there was no way out of the cave. We could only continue exploring the cave, hoping to find a way out before we froze.

Even the ‘next level’ would be better than freezing to death!

We didn’t give up on making marks because Master Hayley said, “We must at least make the fourth mark. Otherwise, the third team won’t encounter the fourth mark from the future and won’t be able to send the signal. This creates a time paradox, which will only worsen the situation.”

When we finished marking the fifth mark, we finally met the others.

The second group was about to send the signal according to our third mark.

“Hey, Sam!” Frank called out to the leader of the second group. “Are you guys alright? Did you encounter any problems?”

Sam was obviously shocked to meet us. We’d finally met him. “We’ve been walking for almost six hours and didn’t meet anyone. We didn’t receive any danger signals either. We were so worried!”

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After Frank briefly explained the current situation to Sam’s team, Sam said in shock, “We sent the signal after we received the first signal, which means that the fastest team is Kerner’s team?”

“I’m afraid they’ll be gone for even longer,” said Frank.

At this moment, the temperature in the cave dropped even more. I even felt dizzy. Under the dim light, the rock wall seemed to hide in the dark and quietly wriggle.

With a flash of inspiration, I realized the relationship between time and temperature. “Could it be that the faster time flows, the lower the temperature?”

When I said that, everyone agreed with me.

“That’s right,” said Frank. “After meeting up with you, I did feel the temperature around me drop again. After meeting up with Sam, the temperature dropped drastically.”

We looked at the thermometer that we carried with us. It was already -20 degrees Celsius.

At the entrance of the cave, it was only -4 degrees Celsius.

The faster time flowed, the lower the temperature would be. It wouldn’t be long before we freeze to death here!

Just as we were at our wits’ end, a voice suddenly came from behind us.

“You’re all here?”

It was Kerner.

“Moon Goddess! We finally found someone. You have no idea how long we’ve been walking. It’s been twelve hours. We were suspecting if there was a hidden fork in the road that we’d missed!”

As expected, Kerner’s group had the fastest time flow, and the temperature dropped even faster as soon as he arrived.

The thermometer was displaying -25 degrees Celsius.

We quickened our pace and went deeper into the cave, but the cave seemed to lead to the earth’s core, so deep that the bottom could not be seen.

At -30 degrees, one of the team members finally couldn’t hold on any longer and fainted.

It was not because of the cold. It was because of low blood sugar. After Master Hayley inspected the items, she said, “The resources in the base are indeed useless. They can’t provide any nutrition.”

We should have thought of this earlier. How could a pile of 'non-existent' material provide heat and nutrients?

After dealing with the emergency, we carried the team member on our back and continued on our way.

At this moment, Dorothy suddenly said, "Is the rock wall moving?"

We carefully observed our surroundings and found that it was indeed so!

This meant that my assumption earlier was not an illusion!

However, an even stranger thing happened. Under everyone's gazes, the mark that Frank and I had just made was slowly flowing over. It was like a leaf floating in a small stream, moving faster and faster with the water.

"It's really strange." Someone mumbled, "This phenomenon is like intestinal peristalsis. Could this cave be alive? "

That was right!

I suddenly thought, 'Why couldn't the cave be alive?'

I thought we were in a low-quality 'game', but what if it wasn't a program full of bugs but another form of life?

"Perhaps we're its food, moving forward in this wireless roving intestine!"

157 Malfunctioned

Selma Payne's POV:

The rock wall was moving!

As if realizing that it had been exposed, the 'cave' no longer pretended to be harmless.

The space in front of us suddenly twisted. The walls of the cave overlapped with each other, and the ground intersected with each other. Space twisted in a way that defied the laws of physics. Thus, the wrong model appeared first, and the intersection points appeared in unreasonable places.

"Everyone, gather around! Don't separate!" Frank shouted, "Stay away from the spatial intersection point!"

As he was talking, the cave had changed entirely. It was folded up like Inception, and we were standing upside down or floating in the air. Our vision was no longer reliable,

and things that we could see might not exist, and some things that we could not see might not necessarily not exist.

We tried our best to gather together, but it was to no avail. The irregular distortions easily split our team into pieces. Some of the members who were alone were isolated by space. We could only hear their voices but could not find them.

“The space is collapsing!” Master Hayley roared, “If we don’t find a way to leave, we will all be lost in the torrent of time and space!”

Some of the more experienced members were trying to find a way to save themselves, but the results were minimal.

Things seemed to have reached a dead end, and we had no other way.

Were we going to die in this god-forsaken place?

I wondered unwillingly.

A fluctuation of agitation came over, and Dorothy, holding onto my hand tightly, was flung away. Immediately, a void occurred beside her, and she disappeared from my sight.

“Dorothy!”

I subconsciously wanted to pull her back but was pulled back by Aldrich. “It’s dangerous, be careful!”

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The space in front of me suddenly tore apart. I would probably have been cut in half if I hadn’t dodged just now.

The same situation was happening more and more often. Not only was the space twisted and deformed, but it was also gradually filled with attack power. Some team members who could not dodge in time were already injured. Many pieces of clothing and backpacks were scattered everywhere, blocking the disaster for their owners.

As the dimension was getting increasingly fragmented, more members were being separated from the main group. Some of them had even lost their will to live. They cried and confessed their sins to the Moon Goddess.

“All of you, stand up, idiots!” Frank tried to rally his team members again, but it was no avail. More and more people chose to give up.

I saw Yuri lying on the ground like a mud pool, holding his collar and muttering something. Linda tried to pull him up, but he pushed her away, and she fell into a distorted space and disappeared.

This vile person! Was this how he treated his companions at such a critical juncture?

But now was not the time to care about this. If we couldn't think of a solution, we would all be buried in the torrent of time.

However, I was indeed at my wit's end. Time and space weren't my areas of expertise, to begin with. It was already all I could do to understand what was happening here.

Master Hayley and Master Kevin were not experts in this area, either. No one in the entire team knew more than them.

Was there no other way?

I could see the same helplessness in Aldrich's eyes as I did, and my heart sank.

"I've already sworn to live and die with you, but I didn't expect it to be this way," Aldrich said. "If I had known that we would never return, I would have proposed to you."

"What?" I was a little touched but also a little resentful of his frivolity. "Don't say such depressing things. We'll be fine!"

However, I also knew that this kind of comfort was fragile. How could we be fine? With the current situation, we couldn't escape death.

As I was at my wit's end, I suddenly heard Dorothy's voice, "Don't believe all of this, Selma. It's fake. It's all fake!"

I looked around but did not see Dorothy.

"Where are you?" I shouted.

Dorothy's voice came from a random direction. "I'm standing where I am. You can't see me because we're not in the same space. I understand now. I understand everything!"

"What is it? Are you alright? Are you hurt?"

I was extremely worried about Dorothy's safety. Her weak body was more vulnerable than the average person's.

"I'm fine," Dorothy replied, full of energy. "Don't worry. What I'm saying now is very important. You must remember this, Saroma!"

“What?”

“Everything is fake. Everything is fake in the space we are in, everything we see and hear, including the time we think we have experienced in the cave. Nothing exists!”

I was stunned by her. “I don’t understand!”

Suddenly, a ‘small piece’ of Dorothy’s skin appeared in front of me. A small piece of skin on the left side of her eye suddenly appeared in front of me but disappeared a second later.

I looked around and realized that this wasn’t the only case. Many of my team members who had been separated by space had a part of their bodies flash and disappear.

It was like a malfunctioning television; a corner of the visual would occasionally flash.

It wasn’t that there was a broadcast accident, but that the television was broken.

158 An Illusionary World

Selma Payne’s POV:

“You saw me, right? I saw you too.” Dorothy’s voice came from behind me. I turned around, but I could only catch an instant of her figure.

“I was standing before you earlier, and now I’m walking a few steps behind you. You can see me from behind, which means that the space we are in is overlapping orderly, and all the details correspond.”

“What?” It was like I had a hundred thousand whys, and I couldn’t think of anything other than asking questions.

“I knew you weren’t paying attention in class,” Dorothy complained in a low voice. “Master Mary talked about space problems before!”

“In short, I need you to know that our previous inferences are wrong because we have confined our thoughts to ‘time’. We thought that the disorder of time had distorted space.

“But this is not right. There is more than one space. The dislocation and overlapping we see are the results of the gradual integration of space. The primary and secondary relationship between time and space has also been reversed. It’s the fusion of space that affects the order of time. It’s as if a fragment has suddenly been inserted into the axis of time, and time has been forcibly extended.

“As for our four groups, we went to different dimensions and encountered different spatial fusion fragments, which is why there is a time difference. It’s not that our time is faster or slower, but that the distance we walked is different, which creates the illusion of difference in time.”

“But it doesn’t make sense.” I thought of Frank and my watches. Frank and my team walked the same distance, but time is different, isn’t it?”

“This is because you are in different spaces!” Dorothy said firmly, “Although you can see and come into contact with him, it doesn’t mean that this is just an illusion created by the overlapping space between you and him.

“Do you still remember the mark you carved? Why did the other teams send out signals based on non-existent markings before you carved them?”

“Because your space fragments were all intercepted! If I’m not wrong, the overlapping space doesn’t just include the cave’s environment and everything that happens inside. The space you marked was cut out and fused into the space of the other groups. The timeline did not change, which created the illusion that they sent the signal before you made the markings.”

“Alright, I think I understand.” After avoiding a tear in space, I asked while panting, “But is this of any help now? We still can’t solve the problem of spatial overlap.”

“No, we can solve this! Or rather... That’s not a problem at all!”

Dorothy suddenly appeared in front of me, and at that moment, a spatial tear pierced through her body, splitting her into two!

“No! Dorothy!” I screamed and caught her body, but she disappeared in a flash.

I didn’t have time to be sad when her voice appeared behind my head again. “I should have died, right? But I didn’t.”

“What... What?” I was stunned. “What’s going on?”

Dorothy appeared in front of me again. She looked completely unscathed, unlike the clothes and backpacks torn apart.

“I’ve said it before; all of this is fake, Selma.” Her face was calm as if she was not in danger. “I’ve been wondering. If everything is an artificial ‘game server’ as we initially thought, then there are too many bugs in it, right?”

“Constructing space is not an easy task. Although the constructed space is fake, it must conform to all existing world laws. This means it cannot have too many bugs, or its

existence will be self-contradictory, and it will collapse and disappear in less than a second.

“But look at where we are now. This place is a collection of bugs. No one can break the laws of nature to build such a place, not even the most famous sorcerer in history who is good at this.

“So, there is only one answer – everything is fake. There are no servers and no virtual world.”

My brain was unable to work. I asked in a daze, “Where are we now? Is this the second base in real life? Did someone use the power of space to ambush us?”

“No, although this is not a man-made space, we are still not in reality.” Dorothy tugged at the thick down-jacket on her body. “Can you feel it? The temperature is getting lower and lower. It’s as if we’re not in a cave but a world of ice and snow.

“No matter how many clothes we wear, we can’t avoid temperature loss because we only wear clothes in our fantasies. In reality, we don’t even have any clothes on our bodies.

“We are in an illusion, Selma.

“The danger we are seeing is harmless. It’s just a terrifying imagination.

“The thing that can kill us is the temperature.

“Selma, our bodies are about to freeze to death.”

159 Awakened

Selma Payne’s POV:

I was so shocked that I was speechless. I felt that Dorothy’s analysis made sense for some reason, but I could not accept it mentally.

“If all of this is just an illusion, and someone wants us to freeze to death, then what’s the point of creating so many dangers in this illusion?”

Dorothy closed her eyes, just like every time she prophesied.

“To stall us.” She opened her eyes, but she still could not see anything. “Remember what I said before? I can’t see anyone’s fate. It’s as if no one here exists.

“Now I understand. It’s not that people don’t exist, but that fate doesn’t exist. This illusion made up of everyone is fake, to begin with. How can real fate appear in a fake world? So it’s not that the Book of Destiny rejected me, but it doesn’t exist here.

“This is powerful proof that we are in an illusion.

“But illusions are too easy to see through. For example, I could easily pop the fragile bubble once I caught any trace.

“That’s why the people who want us to die deliberately released smoke bombs to confuse us. The so-called problem of time and space is a trap to delay us, confuse us, make us scared, tire us out of our illusions, and waste time. The longer we sink into our illusions, the longer our bodies, in reality, will stay in ice and snow.

“Ultimately, it doesn’t matter if we’re scared to death by our illusions because our bodies have long been frozen into solid popsicles.”

I looked at my team members, who were running around in fear. The panic on their faces was not fake, but their purple lips and pale faces were not fake, either. Everyone was cold, and this unusual cold was perhaps a reaction from the real world in the illusionary world.

I was suddenly enlightened.

“So, as long as we think this place is fake, we don’t have to worry about being hurt by the spatial distortion because these injuries are inflicted on ourselves by our illusions!”

“That’s right!” Dorothy nodded vigorously. Her figure was no longer flickering. After seeing through the truth, false illusions had no effect on her.

She was gradually leaving the illusionary world.

“Everyone, listen to me!” I used my loudest voice to shout, causing everyone to look at me subconsciously. “There’s no need to hide. There’s no need to be afraid. Everything here is fake! The current situation is something that someone deliberately guided us to hallucinate about. The damage we’re suffering is self-inflicted!

“As long as you see through the truth, illusions can’t hurt you, just like this!”

I deliberately didn’t avoid a spatial tear, but it passed through my body like harmless air. It didn’t have any effect on me.

Some of the team members sucked in a breath of cold air. One of them was frozen on the spot, so he didn’t have the time to dodge the spatial tear coming at him.

It was too late to dodge!

He could only close his eyes tightly, straighten his body nervously, and mutter something...

It tore through his body, but just like what happened to me, it didn't cause anything. There wasn't even a wound.

"It's true!" The team member said in surprise. "Calm down! This is all fake, don't scare yourself, and we'll be safe!"

Gradually, more and more team members gave up on fleeing and convinced themselves of the fact to fight against the illusion of fear.

The illusionary world made up of people began to collapse gradually.

"If no one supports the illusion, it will naturally dissipate," Aldrich said. "The future is terrifying."

"Dorothy is the smartest girl I've ever met." I nodded with pride.

As everyone held their breath and waited, the illusion suddenly disappeared like an avalanche.

A blinding light shone through the cracks like a heavy hammer had struck our bodies. Under the pressure of the light, we fainted.

What woke me up was the cold, the bone-piercing, terrifying cold that carried the aura of death.

I suddenly opened my eyes and took in deep breaths. The cold air poured into my alveoli, and the needle-like pain woke me up quickly.

An uncontrollable shiver and a feeling of stiffness as stiff as a stone followed.

I was sure that if I had woken up five minutes later, I would have been frozen into an ice sculpture.

"Hey! Wake up! Everyone, wake up!"

I was the first to wake up. I had to drag my uncomfortable body to wake up my team members, who had fallen on the snow one by one.

The situation was not optimistic. Several members had already entered a state of shock. The medical team members, Master Hayley, and Master Kevin had to push their weak bodies to take care of them. The others hurriedly carried the shocked members into the hut.

The stove had gone out at some point. In the gap between the fire, I subconsciously looked at the electronic clock.

Then, I felt goosebumps all over.

It was July 3rd, 7:09 am.

We arrived at the first base on July 2nd.

This meant that not even a day had passed!

Chapter 160 The Pine Forest

Selma Payne's POV:

We found ourselves lying on the snow outside the base when we woke up. We weren't wearing much, as if we were just going to the toilet.

That was where the problem lay. Judging from the time, we were very likely pulled into the illusion when we went out to hear the cries for help last night.

Furthermore, that man had disappeared.

We'd counted the number of people, and everyone was there except for Frank.

This wasn't good. We could only search for his traces in the surrounding area, but we couldn't find any trace of him within a 300-meter radius.

"Do you still remember when you went to look for someone with Frank?" We asked Linda, who was the last person to have contact with him, "Where did you go? Where did you find that man?"

However, Linda's answer shocked us. "I don't remember that. The last thing I remember is going out with everyone to check on the situation. I don't remember going out alone with Frank."

How was this possible? Except for Linda, everyone had a memory of it.

At that moment, someone knocked on the door of the first base.

Everyone immediately became alert and kept quiet.

Aldrich motioned for us to get ready, and he went to open the door.

There was a member of the advanced party standing outside the door. He looked a little familiar. Wasn't he the member who Frank sent to send the man down the mountain?

This person's name was Mike, and he was currently looking at us with a puzzled expression. "Why are you all looking at me like that? It's really uncomfortable."

"Weren't you sent by Frank to send that man down the mountain?" I asked, "You're back so soon? "

"What man? What are you talking about?" Mike's face was filled with doubt. "I've been staying in the second base all this time. I had to pick up a new team member this morning, so I went down!"

This time, everyone shivered in unison.

If Mike wasn't there yesterday, who was the person we saw?

Or rather, was what we saw real?

Now that I thought about it, I was still doubtful about that man's existence. From what I recalled, Mike was sent out 'this morning'. If we all fell into a coma last night, did Frank and Linda save the strange man?

Did we fall into the illusionary world the moment we stepped out of the base?

Suddenly, Dorothy's voice could be heard from upstairs.

"You guys have to see this!"

We ran upstairs, and Dorothy was leaning against the window, observing the outside world.

We followed her line of sight but found nothing.

"What's the matter?"

"That's right!" Dorothy pointed at the forest in the distance. "If I remember correctly, we didn't see many trees on our way here yesterday, right?"

In the direction she was pointing, a large patch of towering pine trees was in the shadow of the snowy mountains. It was impossible to notice without looking carefully.

That was the path we took to go up the mountain yesterday. I was sure that I had never seen this pine forest.

And it was a pine forest.

Thinking of that legend, I couldn't help but have a headache.

“The seal must have loosened, right?” I mumbled, “The demon’s power is overflowing.”

I thought the crisis last night was caused by the devil’s power. Although I didn’t know why he didn’t bewitch us to unseal it and instead tried to kill us, it was not important for now.

More importantly, our actions would be ten times more difficult under the devil’s shadow.

Since he had harmed us once, would he not do it a second or third time?

Silent dangers were always the most terrifying.

“Maybe we should go to the pine forest and look for it,” I suggested, “That’s the direction that Frank and Linda went last night. If saving the man isn’t an illusion, then Frank is most likely in the pine forest.”

Everyone agreed. Time was of the essence, and every minute late would mean more danger for Frank.

The werewolf grandmasters had to stay behind to heal the injured, and among the remaining candidates, only Aldrich was the most appropriate.

He didn’t feel at ease letting me go alone, but I knew he had to come out and take charge of the situation.

I had Dorothy place a mark on everyone in the rescue team, including Aldrich.

“It’s not far from here. It’s only two kilometers away,” I comforted Aldrich. “If there’s any problem, I believe you will come to me in time, right? Have some confidence in me, and have some confidence in yourself. We’re both carrying out our responsibilities.”

Aldrich was still frowning but didn’t say anything in the end. He only gave me a firm hug.

“Take care of yourself, Selma.” He did not seem to care about the gazes of others at all. He held my face and said gently yet firmly, “For me, for yourself.”

To be honest, I didn’t care anymore. I’d already experienced life and death. Who would care about the gossip of others?

“I promise you I’ll come back safely.” I pressed my forehead against his. “Take good care of the base and wait for me.”

After packing up, I led Dorothy and the others out.