

Alpha's Rejected Mate Returns as Queen

Chapter 353 The Evaria Couple

Selma Payne's POV:

I took a light nap in the baby's room and woke up when the sky brightened. The bottom of my feet felt warm. It was Maxine, who was lying on the carpet. I was covered with a soft blanket, and a cup of hot tea was on the small table beside me.

Thanks to my superior physical fitness, the pain from childbirth had completely disappeared. I moved my stiff legs and woke up the napping Maxine.

"You're awake?" She opened her mouth and yawned, her sharp teeth shining coldly under the crystal light. "The child seemed a little unwell just now, so Aldrich went to get a doctor."

Just as she said, Aldrich arrived with the doctor, although I felt that a veterinarian would be more suitable for the current situation than a pediatrician.

"You're awake, my dear." Aldrich gently kissed my forehead. "The child suddenly coughed a few times just now."

I immediately became nervous and asked the doctor, "How is he?"

The doctor carefully examined the baby and replied calmly, "The little prince is fine. A newborn's lungs have not fully adapted to the external environment, so a slight cough is normal."

"Thank you." I heaved a sigh of relief. "Sorry for the trouble."

"This is my duty." The doctor adjusted the temperature of the incubator before leaving.

Last night's experience made us extremely exhausted. Maxine started to doze off again. Aldrich and I snuggled up against each other on the sofa and looked at our child, drowsy.

"Do you wish he was a boy? I heard you use 'he' to refer to the child," Aldrich asked in a low voice.

"To be honest, I haven't thought about it yet." I shook my head. "I'll love our child very much either way. However, he doesn't need me to grant him his gender. Maybe he will choose his gender when he grows up. Or is he able to change his gender at will? That's good too."

“As expected of the child of you and me, you were born different from the rest.” Aldrich laughed softly.

I suddenly thought of something fun and chuckled. “You know what? When I was young, I read a science book that said that some fairy races have dozens of different genders and can switch their genders back and forth according to their needs. I was so envious. Every day, I would dream of obtaining this cool ability. I didn’t expect that in the end, our child would help me realize my childhood dream.”

At seven o’clock, I was sitting at the dining table enjoying a sumptuous post-natal breakfast when a group of uninvited guests arrived, destroying my good mood.

When Kara said the Evaria Family wanted to see me, I instantly lost my appetite for the sweet milk porridge.

“What about Earl of Marlowe?” I asked, “Did he bring her here? ”

“The Earl has gone to see his Majesty,” Kara replied. “He did bring them here. They have some connections with you. They are Miss Emma’s parents, Your Highness.”

Were they the old fogey parents who had shamed their daughter?

I immediately became interested and wanted to see what they were up to. So, I said, “I will meet them in the garden in half an hour. Tell Emma her parents are here but don’t let her see them, so she won’t be caught between her parents and me.”

Due to last night’s fierce battle, the garden had lost its usual fresh and luxurious natural charm. Even though the gardeners had rushed to clean it up overnight, they only had time to pull out the withered flowers and Willows by the roots, leaving behind a bare lawn that was not beautiful.

The young Evaria couple didn’t expect me to meet them here, and their proud yet humble smiles froze. I looked at their ever-changing expressions with interest, not having any intention of explaining.

That was right. I deliberately chose this place to humiliate them. I knew their purpose for coming, and I didn’t bother to hide my attitude. Since I didn’t have to maintain a poker face, why shouldn’t I watch the other party’s jokes to make up for the frustration of being unable to finish my breakfast?

The young Evaria couple were the typical aristocratic children in stereotypes. In this era, where everyone was used to wearing modern clothing, they still insisted on embroidering every inch of their clothes with their family emblem.

Mr. Evalia Jr. had a neat and stiff mustache, and his greasy hair shone in the sun as if a hundred horses had just licked his hair before he left home.

Lady Evaria's waistbands were shocking to see. Werewolves didn't have a tradition of wearing waistbands. I guessed she was a modern middle-aged woman who was happy to accept a foreign culture, but the culture she accepted was slightly different from the time.

"Greetings, Your Highness."

"Good Morning. Please take a seat."

The couple began to chat with me about insignificant things. This was a common problem with people like them when communicating with others. They had to beat around the bush.

354 A Boring Conversation

Selma Payne's POV:

I wanted to avoid going along with their wishes and ignored the hints in their conversation as if I were interested in the weather and family affairs they were discussing. This successfully made the young Evaria couple's faces turn green.

Finally, the other party understood that I had ill intentions toward them and no longer hid their intentions.

"Actually, we're here today to ask you for an explanation," the young Mr. Evaria said carefully. "Why did you ask Sir Aldrich to lead troops to capture my people in the middle of the night? If they have offended you in any way, I won't argue for them, but at least let us know the reason for all this."

"Why don't you know?" I asked with a half-smile. "I thought you were involved in this."

The young Evaria couple's expressions instantly changed, but when they saw my smiling eyes, they suddenly realized I had tricked them. They pretended to be calm and said, "I don't understand what you're talking about."

"You don't have to understand. You're not the main character in this. It doesn't matter how much you know." I slowly sipped the hot tea and saw a drop of cold sweat sliding down the forehead of the young Mr. Evaria. "Compared to me, I think Earl of Marlowe would be more willing to answer your questions, right?"

"My father asked us to ask you for instructions." The young Mr. Evaria looked like he was about to faint. "I'm sincerely asking you, Your Highness. For Emma's sake, please believe in our loyalty."

I suddenly felt indifferent when I saw two faces that were filled with fear and uneasiness yet refused to let go of their pride that came from nowhere. I didn't want to continue

talking about such nonsense, so I waved my hand and called for someone to take them away.

“Emma is not the same as you. Go to the dungeon and see your clansmen,” I said. “Ask them what they did, and ask yourself if you know what they did.”

The young Evaria couple wanted to say something but stopped. Finally, they left with the guard, looking back at him three times with every step they took.

I believed they must be dissatisfied with this conversation that came out of nowhere and had no information at all. They might even be suspicious of my dark and unclear attitude.

However, I didn't care. These little rats were destined to be unable to cause any waves. Let them torture themselves as they wished. This was the price they should pay for their actions.

Back in the baby's room, Aldrich was guarding the incubation box and handling a few military documents. He said that Emma had just come to see me but left after seeing that I wasn't there.

I sighed softly. It was obvious why Emma had come.

The conflict between her and her family had not been properly resolved. Earl of Marlowe valued this little granddaughter who had become the princess's attendant, but this importance was not enough in the face of the family's interests. The prideful and old-fashioned young Evaria couple was also unwilling to 'bow their heads' in front of their daughter, acknowledging that her social and political status had long been higher than theirs.

innread.com

They treated her daughter coldly and cruelly, but Emma couldn't bear to break up with her family. Because of this, she was often in pain. I saw it, but as an outsider, I couldn't do anything other than comfort and support her.

It was not impossible to order the Evaria couple to disappear from their daughter's sight forever, but what was the use of that? Emma's restraints did not come from one or two people, and if the root of the contradiction were not removed, she would never have peace.

I asked someone to invite Emma over. She was still forcing a smile when she faced me. First, she reported the results of her internal affairs but didn't say a word about her parents.

“Your parents came to see me just now,” I said. “Last night, I had people capture the Evaria family members involved in the attack.”

Emma's forcibly put-together face suddenly collapsed. She covered her face and cried, "They used me to threaten you, didn't they? I'm very sorry, Your Highness. I'm very sorry... I don't know how to communicate with them. I've tried everything I could to break down the logic and analyze it for them to hear, but it's useless! They were still so stubborn and stupid! I'm sorry, Your Highness. I'm really sorry..."

I immediately went up to hug him while Aldrich considerately left the baby room to give us some private space.

"Hey, hey, good girl, don't cry. This isn't your fault. You have no reason to apologize to me." I gently wiped away her tears, but more tears came gushing out in the next second. "Even without you, your parents would have come to me. This is related to a political struggle, not personal feelings."

"But I became your obstacle." Emma sobbed. "My grandfather, my parents, my people, they used me to placate you because you are a kind and good king..."

"Then, they're wrong. There's nothing that can restrain me. If there is, it's because I'm not strong enough. I can't blame you."

I held Emma in my arms and patted her trembling back as if I were coaxing a baby. "I love you, Emma. You'll always be my friend. But no one can use you to threaten me because I know I'm not a purely good person. Nothing can stop me before I achieve my goal."

355 They Won't Take Turns, Right?

Selma Payne's POV:

"You didn't do anything wrong. You're just a poor, innocent girl dragged into the center of the whirlpool. If I really want to settle the score with someone, it will be the Evaria Family who colluded with foreign enemies or your grandfather, the Earl, who turned a blind eye to everything and chose to acquiesce, but it will not be you because you said that I'm a kind and good king, right? A kind and good monarch would never vent her anger on her friends and subjects.

"Now, wipe your tears and calm down. You know that wild beasts are waiting outside to bite you when you're not focused. You're not willing to give up. You want freedom. I've seen it all. I swear I will help you break free from the family's restraints and become a truly free and independent person."

Emma looked at me in a daze. "But this is not your responsibility. I should be the judge myself."

“This isn’t a matter of responsibility. It’s because I need you, so I have to help you grow and improve. This is what a monarch should do to his subjects and also what a person should do to his friends.” I cupped Emma’s face and said seriously.

“We must support each other and progress hand in hand because we are walking on a difficult and ever-changing path. This path was unpredictable, and it was rare to meet a companion who could walk hand in hand. Any hesitation or letting go will cause us to lose our companions. I don’t want to see such an ending, and you don’t want to either, right?”

Emma nodded.

I helped her tidy up her messy hair and chuckled. “Are you feeling better now? Don’t worry, come to me the next time you feel confused. I’ll always be your solid support.”

With my persuasion, Emma left with vigorous steps. She said she had some internal affairs to deal with, but I knew what she would do.

In the afternoon, my parents invited me to lunch. They told me some things during the meal, and Earl of Marlowe came to find me.

If I rejected him again, would the Evaria Family have to go through it all again?

I thought to myself as Earl of Marlowe entered the room, successfully making myself laugh.

Earl of Marlowe just happened to enter the door. After he saluted me, he asked, “You’re smiling happily. Did something good happen?”

“It’s just a small matter. I waved my hand. Compared to this, the biggest joy I’d encountered recently was that I successfully gave birth to a healthy and lovely child.

Earl of Marlowe calmly congratulated me as if he didn’t hear the hidden meaning behind my words. “I haven’t congratulated you on the birth of your son yet. This great news dominated today’s newspaper. I heard many people talking about this on the way, discussing the child’s gender and future name.”

My child had no gender, so the royal family announced to the public to cover up this matter. It was easy to explain. After all, it was not unusual to use any means to obscure information to protect the child’s safety.

I couldn’t blame the people for discussing the issue of the child’s name. Even I hadn’t thought of one yet. The custom of the werewolves was to name their children three months after they were born on the day of baptism. It was said that it was a tradition derived from an ancient legend that had been lost. I guessed the truth was that the child

death rate was too high in ancient times. Many children younger than three months could not live for more than a few days, and the naming was useless.

The royal family usually used traditional names that were more representative. My name was Madeline, just like one of my great-grandaunts.

It was as if Earl of Marlowe really came to chat with me. He suggested several names with good meanings. He seemed even more enthusiastic than my father and Duke Frank, the two real grandfathers.

He was willing to beat around the bush, and I was happy to listen to these mindless words. We'd been going back and forth, and the room atmosphere was uplifting and harmonious.

During this time, Kara came to me and told me that the child was crying and asked me to go and take a look. I originally wanted to use this opportunity to send Earl of Marlowe away, but who would have thought he would say that he could wait for my return? I knew he couldn't wait to lay his cards on the table with me.

The baby was fine, and it was normal for a baby to cry and fuss. However, because of its unusual body, we should be careful.

I waited for the doctor to examine the child before returning to the living room. It had already been half an hour, but Earl of Marlowe was still waiting. The tea in front of me had already turned cold.

I didn't mean to ignore him this time. However, after half an hour of waiting, even seasoned politicians couldn't help but become anxious.

When did a powerful officer who was used to having everything his way ever receive such 'neglect'? He could put on such a kind expression right now. I wanted to applaud his ability to maintain his composure.

"Sorry to keep you waiting," I said apologetically. Of course, it was an act. I asked Kara to bring him a cup of hot tea. "It's difficult with children. You have so many children. I think you can understand my situation."

"Of course." Earl of Marlowe calmly took a sip of tea. "Why don't we get to the main topic immediately? What will it take for you to let the Evaria Family go? "

356 Sincere And Fake

Selma Payne's POV:

Finally!

From the moment he entered the room, we'd been waiting for this moment.

"Look at what you're saying. I've never laid my hands on the Evaria Family, and you say you're here to visit?" I asked back with a smile.

Earl of Marlowe's face turned serious, and he said sternly, "I know that you're not someone who likes to argue, and I'm not someone who likes to waste my breath. Please believe that I'm here today with utmost sincerity and want to have a frank and open talk with you."

My face also darkened as I asked expressionlessly, "What do you want to talk about?"

"You suddenly took away a few of my people last night," said Earl of Marlowe. "I understand that last night's situation was extremely urgent, and it was inevitable that you were angry. However, I can guarantee that these people have never colluded with the enemy. Perhaps their behavior is a bit out of line, but seeing that they have not made any contributions, I ask you to be magnanimous and let them go!"

"Do you think they don't have the intention just because you say so? It's a pity that I don't think so. Be it the time, place, or related personnel; it's too coincidental. It's so coincidental that I can't help but suspect them.

"Moreover, they were the people in charge of the finishing work last night. Your words can't offset such a big mistake. A dereliction of duty is inevitable. Or do you think they're used to escaping punishment without restraint and will return home safely without paying any price this time?"

I wouldn't fall for this old man's tricks. Taking credit and acting pitiful wouldn't work here. Besides, what hard work could those people have done? I looked at their information last night. During the rotation of the person in charge, they didn't neglect their duties and didn't work for many days. Was his hand tired from counting his salary?

Earl of Marlowe could see that I was impervious to his words and helplessly gave in. "At least let them go home first. Can't you send them to court after all the evidence is gathered? You suddenly asked people to take them away and even put them in the palace's dungeon. Their families are all uneasy and don't know what mistakes their relatives have made. Early in the morning, they came to the palace restlessly to ask me for an explanation. I almost couldn't stop a few agitated young people. I was also in a difficult position."

"Are you threatening me with the Evaria Family?" I sneered and stared into his old eyes. "You mean to say, if I don't let him go, the next ones to come to the palace to make a scene will be your other clansmen? Ha, this is interesting. I've never seen a noble perform acrobatics before. Could you pass on a message for me? He told those impassioned young people to come quickly and let me broaden my horizons."

This old man dared to threaten me, so I didn't have to play nice. He said that one shouldn't hit a smiling person, but was a threat with a bitter face, not a threat?

What was the Evaria Family? It should be known that the change of power was only a matter of time. Any family could replace the Evaria Family's position because they had gotten it wrong. They were just one of the many carriers of power, not power itself.

However, Earl of Marlowe was indeed an old crook in politics. After seeing that I was angry, he immediately retracted his probing and respectfully said, "What are you saying? This is just a little complaint from an old man like me. I don't have any complaints about you."

I waved my hand to signal him to stop his useless flattery and said bluntly, "In short, I can't let the people in the dungeon go. But you can rest assured that I don't have a hobby of killing people for fun. If they are innocent, I will never let them suffer injustice because of my selfishness.

"On the contrary, even if they had little to do with last night's attack, I would not tolerate anyone. As for the Evaria Family, don't worry. I'll only work on this issue and won't vent my anger on anyone else."

With my resolute and decisive declaration, no matter how much Earl of Marlowe wanted to say, he could only keep it in. He was silent for a few seconds and then sighed tiredly, saying, "You've surprised me, Your Highness. I apologize for my underestimation of you before."

"Young people always receive all kinds of contemptuous looks. Your attitude is nothing. I don't care." I said arrogantly, "I accept your apology and understand your motives. After all, we're all serving all werewolves to make us better people, right?"

Earl of Marlowe nodded silently. He did not stay any longer and immediately left.

After he left, I asked Dorothy to inform the Intelligence Department to increase the surveillance on the Evaria Family and record any news of their private meetings with the Council of Elders and unknown people.

Then, I informed Benson, who was far away on the mobile patrol, and got him to secretly lead a small team to each pack to investigate the officers and merchants who belonged to the Evaria Family, their in-laws, and their friendly clans. I wanted to see if they had any contact with the wanderers suspected to be from the Azazel faction.

Earl of Marlowe's performance was flawless, but politicians were excellent actors. I couldn't believe his sincerity because he was not willing to give me that kind of thing.

357 Wait And See

Selma Payne's POV:

The Lycan pack had entered a state of emergency.

The arrival of the royal family's newborn brought joy to the werewolves, but it did not completely neutralize the panic about the wanderers, which had once again ignited chaos. An unspeakable tension lingered in every inch of the air among the packs.

This time, my father's warning order was strictly followed by every pack, not all Alpha would protect his will from the bottom of their hearts, but no one would want their pack to become the next Floodwater, Saber Tooth, or Yellow Leaf Packs.

Even if they had now merged into Spring Rain Pack and were thriving, it couldn't hide the fact that there was no Alpha there, and it had become my sphere of influence.

The Evaria Family was temporarily out of business as if they did not care what kind of disaster their clansmen in the dungeon would bring to the family. Judging from Emma's expression, that was becoming more and more relaxed by the day, be it their sudden change of mind or Earl Marlowe finally willing to reorganize the family ruthlessly, everything was developing in the direction I wanted.

The werewolves seemed to be peaceful internally, but they were extremely fortunate. We had encountered unprecedented difficulties in tracking down the Azazel party.

The wanderers who had attacked the palace seemed to have evaporated into thin air. No reconnaissance means, or witchcraft could capture any clues about them. This meant that the power that helped them escape and hide their tracks was much stronger than the current strength of the werewolves. Since they were a group of cultists, it might be Azazel himself.

Although I took away his divine persona, a divine persona was only a form of identification. Any god who wasn't so weak that they were about to disappear could re-condense their divine persona after some time, even if the price was the loss of some authority or power.

Some hidden history and myths recorded such events. A god who had condensed his divinity for the second time would be greatly weakened, but he was still an existence that mortals could not compete with.

Of course, it was not like we didn't have a chance. As long as Azazel was not crazy enough to declare war on the Moon Goddess, he would not be able to come to the world in his true form. He would most likely need his believers to sacrifice a body that could walk on earth like the one sealed in the Rocky Mountains.

However, a sacrifice was more complex than drawing an array and throwing a sacrifice. The more powerful the sacrifice, the more precious the things needed to be prepared,

and the more complicated the preparation process was. The right time, place, and people were all indispensable. It was not easy to find a body that could withstand the descent of Azazel. This meant that we could sort out the cultists' potential targets based on the relevant records of our ancestors. Then, we could use this as a basis to wait for them to come and destroy the possibility of Azazel's arrival at the root.

Of course, everything was easy to say, but there were many hidden difficulties.

After a day and night of emergency investigation, the Intelligence Department and the Sorcery Research Association worked together to compile a five-centimeter-thick list of more than 400 sacrificial candidates. Some of the 400 or so sacrificial candidates were precious, some were ordinary, and some were so rare that they could be found all over the streets. However, in terms of importance, they were all indispensable.

The problem was that we didn't have enough manpower to monitor these sacrificial candidates individually. Furthermore, many of them were located in the territories of other races, even in uninhabited places like the north and south poles. Before the fire reached their homes, most people would watch it from the river's other side. It was impossible for other races to cooperate with us.

Although the advantage of this situation was that we could put our limited manpower into the sacrificial candidates in our territory, the disadvantage was that the number of sacrificial candidates under our control was greatly reduced. In conclusion, there were only twelve choices left.

So be it. We spent the whole night discussing the plan and immediately sent people to camp around the twelve candidates. The rest could only be negotiated with the other races. I hoped that they would take this seriously, not only for the interests of the werewolves but also for themselves. Those cultists didn't care whose territory they were in when they go crazy.

On top of that, my return to the Spring Rain Pack was delayed as I was under strict protection.

Not only me but my newborn child, Maxine, Aldrich, Dorothy, and all of my family members were under strict protection. This was because our physical fitness was far superior to that of ordinary people, and we were good choices to hold a god's descent.

Although the matter of his followers was strictly kept a secret, I had snatched away Azazel's divinity. He might know how we had been revived in the Rocky Mountains. If he knew, there would be no reason for him to give up on the ready-made, high-quality 'container'. He would command his claws in the human world to attack us.

However, I had a vague feeling that this might not be that simple because the black cocoon we had not found anything about had gone missing. Was it really dead as it seemed?*innread.com*

358 Where Is The Way Out?

Selma Payne's POV:

Half a month had passed, and everything was calm. Nothing had happened.

The warriors secretly stationed around the sacrificial candidates did not touch a single strand of wolf hair. The works of art, plants, books, and other things deeply related to the demons were still safely left in museums or on the land as if no one cared about them.

However, we still couldn't let our guard down.

It would take time to form a new divinity. It could be a few days or a few years. Perhaps Azazel had already filled his pitch-black chest again, or he still needed more time. But no matter what, we were far more anxious than Azazel. We needed more time and couldn't wait for him to drag it out.

The Evaria Family's parasites in the dungeon were relatively easy. They did not even have one percent of Locke's stubbornness and quickly confessed. They were related to the wanderers but did not admit that they deliberately conspired to attack the palace. They only said they were working together to do illegal immigration and smuggling.

Even the wanderers had to survive. They were like stray dogs that ate and slept in the open. They live by stealing things from different packs, like rats. They argued, "I admit I made some money from them, but this is purely business. I know nothing about their attack on the palace."

The one in charge of the interrogation was Aldrich; he had a lot of experience in this, and it would be a wonder if he believed these people's nonsense.

"Purely business?" He snorted coldly. "Having private dealings with the wanderers is purely treason, gentlemen."

The other party immediately turned red and shouted at the top of his voice, "Slander! I swear to the Moon Goddess that I have nothing to do with those wanderers other than trading money and goods. I have never had the intention to harm the werewolves!"

"Even if you only sold a piece of bread to a wanderer, it's also considered aiding the enemy from the law." Aldrich laughed sarcastically. "You're confessing."

innread.com

The other party didn't expect him to keep harping on smuggling. Other than panic and anger, he didn't know what to say.

This was not hard to understand.

For these scumbags, stepping on the bottom line of morality and the law to accumulate wealth had almost become their survival instinct. This was the primary means by which they maintained their extravagant life. This was what they did, their relatives did, and their ancestors did. This had become a tradition, so what was wrong with tradition?

As for morality and the law, they were nothing in their eyes. Morality was just a cover to embellish themselves, and they wanted it to make themselves as bright as possible.

There was no need to mention the law. Several years ago, the laws were even personally revised by their ancestors. If that was the case, then wasn't the law just one of the luxurious legacies left behind by their ancestors? Wouldn't they be able to do whatever they wanted?

That was why they were angry and felt wronged. They believed that Aldrich had betrayed them and the nobles. As a member of the nobility, he should follow these unspoken rules like them, find a way to take power from the hands of the Lycan King, and use a blunt knife to cut off the flesh and blood of the people and all the werewolves to maintain their high and noble status.

Therefore, after all the quibbles and hints were fruitless, these people bitterly criticized Aldrich, "Do you think that you can be a Prince or a King after marrying the Princess? Stop dreaming! You either take away your power from her or become a dog under her feet! No king is willing to share their power with others.

"Your path of survival is on our side. We are your companions! The Oromalivira Family would not last forever. It would one day be crushed by the werewolves like all the royal families that had taken over the kingdom of werewolves. Only the nobility is eternal. Only by returning to our camp can you pass on your power and status to your descendants!"

Aldrich only quietly looked at their spit flying everywhere, not saying a word.

They were still babbling on. "Don't be stubborn. Look at the current situation. The wanderers are starting fires everywhere. Even the demons hate us. What else can it be if this isn't a sign that the werewolves are about to enter chaos? A country bumpkin who came out of nowhere, openly occupying the crown prince's throne, not knowing anything, and daring to mess around at the border, do you see any Alpha agreeing with her actions? She was digging the roots of all Alpha. She was personally burying her future! The royal family has already declined, and the Oromalivira Family might be finished in her generation. It'll be too late if you don't jump off the ship.

"If the Oromalivira Family is finished, what about you? What will happen to the Evaria Family?" Aldrich suddenly interrupted them and asked in a deep voice.

“When the royal family is gone, and the werewolves have to choose a new one. The Evaria Family has always been close to the Oromalivira Family. Do you want to succeed as the new royal family?”

Those people were stunned by his questioning. They were like elks frightened by the sound of gunfire for a moment. They could only look at the hunter in a daze, not even thinking about running for their lives.

359 Getting Rid Of Corruption

Selma Payne's POV:

Aldrich did not care about those disbelieving or meaningful gazes and continued, “But according to what you said, becoming a member of the royal family is no doubt a death knell for your family. Then, are you not going to do anything and wait for the next unlucky person to take over? Repeat the old tricks of fighting for power for decades or centuries, and then wait for the next unlucky man to take the throne with greed for the throne and fear of destruction?”

Aldrich choked those people. They were like children who had just learned to speak, opening their mouths and chewing the air, but could not form a word.

Their faces turned red and then pale as if they were going through the history of their families in the next few hundred years in their minds. It must have been a rotten and ugly struggle, struggling to suffocate in fear, and money and power provided fake oxygen.

The awkward status of not being at the top and not being at the bottom was so painful for them, but it was already aggrieved enough for them to be under someone else, so it should be fine even if they blamed the family that was suppressing them for their greed and delusions, right?

Looking at their funny expressions, Aldrich chuckled and said, “You don't have to answer because I don't want to know the answer. If I say one more word to you, I'll be so disgusted that I won't be able to eat for three days. In any case, there is enough evidence. Whether it is colluding with the enemy or rebelling against the royal family, you all personally admitted it. I did not tempt you to confess.”

He leaned back in his chair leisurely, and the arrogant Evaria Family scums finally realized they were about to be sent to court for their stupidity and panicked.

However, what was the use of struggling now?

Ignoring their angry roars and pleas, Aldrich left directly. I also walked out of the secret room to meet him.

I thought my face must be very gloomy, so Aldrich came to comfort me. “Don’t mind the stupid words of those scumbags. These short-sighted fools can’t see what you and your Majesty have done for the werewolves. Their greed and stupidity are about to send their entire family to the guillotine.”

“I’m not angry at them,” I said, and then I had to admit it. “Well, I’m-little angry, but not anymore. I don’t need to waste my time on a problem that has been solved.”

Just like I said, the people in the dungeons had already been brought under control. Just the fact that they were aiding the enemy was enough to make them spend the rest of their lives in prison or join the camp of their former partners.

In fact, everyone knew whether they had colluded with the wanderers, but the Evaria Family was indeed an old noble family that had existed for hundreds of thousands of years. They were good at cleaning up the mess, and the Intelligence Department could not find decisive evidence. My father also gave me a hint, indicating that I should stop while I was ahead.

“Just because Earl of Marlowe is your vassal, you want to protect them?” I said a little angrily. “I admit that Earl of Marlowe has done a lot of hard work, but what the Evaria Family has done to the people is enough to offset these contributions a hundred times!”

My father didn’t get angry because of my disobedience. His expression was serious, but he still taught me kindly, “Morton has indeed contributed to the werewolf clan, but this doesn’t make me cover up for his entire family. We need to be wary of a cornered dog that will do something desperate, child. Morton understood the principle of ‘we are all in together for good or bad’ whether it was for him and his family or his family and the werewolves. But sometimes, a person’s power is not as strong as it seems on the surface. Morton can restrain the words and actions of his family on the surface, but he may not be able to restrain their hearts.”

“... are you saying that if I pushed too hard, the other members of the Evaria Family might go over Earl of Marlowe’s head and cause trouble? That’s not impossible. After all, their family members are spread out in all aspects of society and industries. When they gather, it’s not a small matter...”

“It seems like you have understood this.” My father smiled. “Since we already know what they’re thinking, why don’t we use the long line and catch the big fish? Furthermore, our main enemy is the hidden Azazel party. We should gather all the forces in a crisis to face the foreign enemy together. Internal strife will only give the enemy an opportunity.”

I realized that I had been blinded by anger and admitted my mistake in embarrassment. “I’m sorry, Father. I was too impulsive. I should have considered it more.”

My father patted my shoulder and said kindly, "You've already done very well. To have such thinking ability and order of action at such a young age has already made your mother and me very proud.

Speaking of my mother, the ranking of love in her heart had already changed tremendously. Of course, her precious grandson or granddaughter was ranked first, while Maxine took second with her furry appearance and warm belly. As for the rankings after that, they were unimportant because they were nothing in front of the top two.

360 Weeds Never Die

Selma Payne's POV:

Even though I hadn't enjoyed my mother's meticulous doting for a long time, now that I was also a mother, it was better not to be laughed at for such a childish thing as fighting for love with my child.

Earl of Marlowe tacitly agreed to how the Evaria family members were dealt. As my father had said, this old man who had given his life to the werewolves might be arrogant and greedy for power, but the fact that he could get to where he was today showed that he was a clear-minded character.

Half a month later, Benson sent us a message. It was not about the pack or the Evaria Family but an unexpected guest.

The mobile patrol team was in charge of inspecting all packs in the werewolf territory, so it was customary for them to go to the new Spring Rain Pack.

However, it was strange to find a wizard there.

If this wizard claimed to be Dorothy's father, it would be even stranger.

When I first received the news, my first reaction was disbelief. Dorothy's parents had been living in seclusion for so many years that even their daughter couldn't get any of their attention. Why did they suddenly have to visit a newly rising little pack at the border?

Dorothy had accompanied me to many public events, and her mixed-blood identity was no longer a big secret. Who knew if someone was trying to use this opportunity to trick her?

The first thing I thought of was the Evaria Family. This might be another one of their schemes.

However, the photo that Benson sent me next overturned all my conjectures. The man in the picture looked the same as Dorothy's father, who was in her only family portrait.

This was not too easy to conclude. After thinking about it, I still told Dorothy about it.

To my surprise, Dorothy reacted very calmly. She didn't show any anger or sadness. She just asked calmly, "What is he doing here?"

I couldn't tell if she was calm or pretending to be calm, so I tried to speak as softly as possible, "He won't tell Benson. He wants to see me."

"If he wants to see you, then go ahead. He must have been living in seclusion in the Elf Forest. Maybe he has some important information that no one knows about."

"You don't mind?"

"Why would I mind? He wanted to see you, not me."

Looking at Dorothy's calm and emotionless eyes, I suddenly realized that I might have said something wrong. Her father, who had been missing for more than twenty years, suddenly appeared not to see his daughter. Anyone would feel uncomfortable if they were that daughter!

"Don't be nervous. I don't mind at all." Dorothy laughed out loud and suddenly lifted the corner of my tightly-pursed lips. "Whether it's my father or mother, they're no different from strangers to me. The few memories of my childhood are already too fuzzy. If he didn't suddenly appear today, I wouldn't even remember that I have a father.

"Not to mention them, even my impression of grandmother has faded. I've been getting busier and busier in recent years, and I've been visiting her less and less often. Every time, I'll only be there for a few minutes to listen to the doctor talk about her condition. It's good enough to know that she's living a good and peaceful life.

"The pain of being abused has faded, so how excited can a strange man I've never met make me?"

I didn't know what to say. Dorothy's relief at this moment made me feel relieved, but at the same time, I also felt lost. She was such a good girl. Why must fate give her such a cold past?

In short, I'd decided to meet this 'father' who had suddenly appeared.

Benson quickly escorted Dorothy's father to the Lycan pack. The middle-aged wizard named Cage did not fit the evil image of a fairy tale at all. He looked ordinary, but there was a kind of youth that did not match his age. It was as if time had not taken away any of his vitality but had frozen his age in the photo.

My parents and I met him in secret, but Dorothy did not come.

“Greetings, Your Majesties and your Royal Highness. I, Cage Doloria, a foreigner, am here to greet you.”

“Hello, Mr. Doloria.” My father gestured for him to take a seat. “What urgent matter did you have that you had to come and see us for?”

“Your Majesty, I have a very important piece of information that I must tell you about the group of wanderers who fled in the Elf Forest a few months ago.”

When we heard that it was about the wanderers, we immediately took it seriously. The wanderers within the werewolf territory had been scattered again. Could the two or three of them that had fled outside the borders have done something?

“They brought a very dangerous concentrated evil power, and several cities have fallen. Thanks to the help of the werewolf pack, the disaster was stopped.”

Cage continued, “But the crisis didn’t end when we thought it was over. It has been lurking in the shadows. Just half a month ago, a group of wanderers had suddenly attacked the Elven Capital City, trying to pollute the city with the same thing as before. Although the pollution is under control, tragedies still occur, and the most important symbol of the elves, the Mother Tree of Nature, has been attacked and lost an extremely precious thick branch. ”

361 The King’s Emissary

Selma Payne’s POV:

Like all ancient myths and legends, the ancestors of any race would have strange experiences different from ordinary people, the elves’ ancestors were no exception.

This race that crazily worshipped nature believed their ancestor was born from a flower blooming in the winter desert. After he was born, the desert that struggled in the winter and heat instantly became a warm forest with a pleasant climate, which was now most of the Elf Forest.

The flower that gave birth to the elven ancestors came from the Mother Tree of Nature, so it was not an exaggeration to say that it was the most precious treasure of the elven race.

Now that the Mother Tree of Nature had been stolen, it was like the Louvre or the Taj Mahal suddenly torn down by terrorists. It was an extremely humiliating act that threw the elves’ pride and dignity on the ground.

However, for the werewolves, the purpose behind the theft was even more creepy. The Mother Tree of Nature was recognized as the source of vitality. Be it its leaves or

flowers, every part of its body contained strong vitality that could strengthen the body, heal injuries and illnesses, and it was even said to be able to revive the dead.

No one would believe that the wanderers who stole the Mother Tree had nothing to do with the Azazel party. They must have taken the risk of offending the entire elven race to steal the branches of the Mother Tree because they would be willing to bear the crazy revenge of the elves.

What was the reward?

An answer that I didn't want to believe slowly appeared in my mind. What else could it be other than sacrificing me to Azazel? The Mother Tree of Nature fulfilled all the requirements for sacrifice. Although there had never been a precedent of it being used as a sacrifice in history, it was the first time it had been used as a sacrifice.

Obviously, my father thought of what I could think of as well. He realized this was not a simple act of theft and immediately called the ministers into the palace to discuss countermeasures.

Dorothy was no longer the wizard apprentice who did odd jobs. As Master Mary's assistant, she had already stepped into the quasi-werewolf grandmasters ranks and carried out many tasks independently. Therefore, she also participated in this meeting. She wasn't affected by Cage's appearance at all. Instead, Cage looked at her several times. Although he didn't say anything, I felt he wanted to say something but stopped.

The people in the meeting room were divided. Those who were close to me, those who were loyal to my father, those who were neutral, and those who had unknown intentions. However, the people who liked to fight and scheme today also knew their priorities, so no one stood up to say bitter words like in the previous large-scale meetings.

After everyone was present, Cage explained his purpose for the visit in detail.

"Before everything begins, I have to be honest with all of you. I'm not an official elf, and I have yet to be recognized and trusted by most elves."

Whispers immediately broke out in the meeting room, but Cage was unaffected by the surprised or suspicious looks. He continued, "The elven race is in a mess internally. To control the corruption of the evil power, the Elf King sacrificed himself and sealed all the corruption sources at the cost of his own life. As a result, he fell into a coma.

"At present, the Crown Prince is acting as the King, but some city-states don't obey his rule, some courtiers obey on the surface but disobey on the inside, and the Crown Prince's sister-in-law has her ideas. So, the elven race is currently in a state of disunity.

In these troubled times, it wasn't good news for our neighbors to suddenly split up, especially when we were also in trouble.

The chaos in the elves meant that it was easier for the Azazel party to take advantage of the situation. The elves were too close to the werewolves, and if they caused trouble, they could easily threaten the borders of the werewolves and even spread inside.

However, what Cage said next made our hearts sink. "There are three main forces with authority in the elven race. The Orthodox Party led by the Crown Prince, the temporary Alliance formed by the Western city-states, and the New Political Party led by the cabinet Speaker. It's no exaggeration to say that the only thing left before the Civil War begins is who makes the first shot."

For most intelligent creatures, human relationships were never worth mentioning in the face of power and fame. I didn't know what the Elf King, who had sacrificed his life for justice, would think if he saw his children, ministers, and compatriots still busy fighting among themselves in times of crisis. But if even I, an outsider, couldn't bear to see this, he probably wouldn't be too pleased.

"So, who asked you to come?" Someone asked.

Cage shook his head. "I've told you. I'm not here on the orders of any government. I'm here on the Elf King's last order to ask for help from the werewolves as the king's envoy.

"Before the Elf King fell into a deep sleep, he asked me to help care for the elven race. If there is any danger, we can ask for help from the neighbors.

"Right now, no one in the elven race is taking the attacks of the wanderers seriously. Everyone has ulterior motives, and everyone is chasing fame and fortune. No one even cares about the theft of the Mother Tree of Nature.

362 The Holy Diamond Seal

Selma Payne's POV:

"But I know that the wanderers won't just disappear like that. The power of the Mother Tree is obvious to all. If we can't kill the wanderers this time, when they realize that the elves are strong on the outside but weak on the inside, they will become their den of thieves sooner or later.

"The crisis is right before us, but no one took the Elf King's teachings seriously. I can't betray my old friend's trust, so I've come alone to ask for your help.

"The werewolves have warned the elves to be wary of the wanderers, and the Elf King has also greatly regretted his negligence. The two races were close to each other, and

once the wanderers infiltrated the elves, they would become a sharp blade pointed at the werewolves. Therefore, on behalf of the Elf King, I would like to request the werewolves to help the elven race eliminate the foreign enemy for our safety and honor.”

I realized that Cage wasn't a man of few words like he appeared to be. At the very least, his words successfully tied the werewolves and the elves together.

However, the ministers present were all smart people and would not be so easily moved by one or two words.

The president of the left, Arkadius, was the first to question, “Just as you said, the elven race is currently divided, and you don't belong to any force. Without the official endorsement, how can we believe you? Just a few words from the sleeping Elf King? With all due respect, this kind of unverified argument has no credibility.

“Besides, if I'm not mistaken, you're a magus. Is it reasonable for a wizard to ask for help on behalf of the elves? I'm not attacking you personally, Mr. Cage, but this is against common sense, and we can't trust you easily.”

Cage heaved a sigh as if he knew he would be questioned. He was neither angry nor panicked. He took out an item wrapped in layers of silk from his bag and placed it on the conference table.

“I know I can't easily win your trust, but you'll believe me after seeing this.”

No one picked it up rashly.

“What is this? Please open it yourself,” Aldrich asked warily.

As if he didn't see their wariness, Cage obediently opened the layers of silk and revealed what was inside.

It was a seal overflowing with light; under the sunlight, it reflected a rainbow-like brilliance.

After seeing what it was, some people even stood up in surprise.

“This is the Holy Diamond Seal!”

I couldn't blame them for being so excited; even I was stunned.

The so-called Holy Diamond Seal referred to the highest seal of the elven race – the Elf King's seal. This seal was basically the proof of the elves' royal authority, representing the elves' supreme power.

The Holy Diamond Seal of every Elf King was different. The Goddess of Nature would bestow the Holy Diamond Seal on the day they ascended the throne. It was under the special protection of the goddess, and unless the Elf King took it out voluntarily, no one could take it away.

Cage's Holy Diamond Seal was the only evidence that the Elf King trusted him.

All the questions about Cage's identity were solved. He must have come at the request of the Elf King, which was no longer a question.

Some people in the meeting room started to change how they looked at the Holy Diamond Seal. Before they could say anything embarrassing, I said, "Please put it away, Mr. Cage. There's no need to suspect your identity anymore."

Someone glanced at me in dissatisfaction, perhaps blaming me for not forcing Cage to hand over the Holy Diamond Seal.

I turned a blind eye to these idiots who wanted to use the Holy Diamond Seal to plunder the elves. Not to mention whether such an action would put the werewolves on the blacklist of all supernatural races, just based on the current situation of the elves being divided, no one even cared about the last will of the Elf King, let alone a seal that couldn't speak.

Since Cage was here on behalf of the Elf King, it was questionable whether or not he should accept the request to help the elves.

innread.com

Those who agreed and those who disagreed each stuck to their own words.

The more open-minded ones believed that the two races were in close contact and that allowing the Azazel party to act wildly in the elven race would affect the safety of the werewolves.

If they turned a blind eye to the elves' encounter, then in the future, if the werewolves needed help, their only neighbor would be powerless.

Those with more interests were more straightforward, "The creditors must always suppress the debtors. If we help the elves now, not only will we gain many benefits in the process, but it will also be much easier to blackmail them in the future."

Many disagreed. Some believed that even if the elves were divided, the theft of the Mother Tree was still their internal affairs and that the werewolves should not interfere. Even with the Elf King's instructions, which of the current forces would take it seriously?

No one wanted to waste their energy and get blamed for it. Moreover, a starving camel was still bigger than a horse. Didn't the divided elven race still form a few powerful

forces? They wouldn't be so stupid as to hand over their people to outsiders, would they? They would deal with the problem of the Azazel party on their own.

363 Dagger

Selma Payne's POV:

The people stuck to their opinions argued endlessly, and no one could convince the other. The meeting lasted the whole day, and there was still no conclusion by evening.

In any case, how to deal with the relationship with the neighbor that had fallen into a period of division was a sensitive matter that had to be carefully and cautiously handled. In the end, no matter how much they quarreled, they were still carefully weighing the balance between contribution and return. Compared to their neighboring clans, they were still more important.

The meeting ended in the evening, and everyone took a short break to prepare for the overnight meeting.

As a distinguished guest, Cage was arranged to stay in the palace temporarily, which meant that he was monitored as a foreign guest. He might have understood it as he had no objection to it.

During dinner, I paid close attention to Dorothy's every move. She did not intend to get along with her father, so I did not point out this problem insensibly.

Cage, on the other hand, asked to meet me before the meeting.

Hello, Mr. Cage. I met him in confusion. what can I do for you?"

"Your Highness," Cage said. "I think you know that I'm Dorothy's biological father."

"Yes." I couldn't help but look a little indignant. "Dorothy showed me your photo before. I have to say, you look no different from twenty years ago."

Cage smiled bitterly. "It's only natural that you're unhappy with me. After all, I'm not a responsible father. I didn't care about my own daughter for more than twenty years. I don't want to explain my actions. I'd like to ask you to pass something on to Dorothy for me. "

"What is it?"

Cage handed me a dagger wrapped in sackcloth. I looked at it and saw that it was an antique dagger with an obvious ancient color. It was still sharp and cold even after so many years.

“What is this?” I asked.

“Do you know the ancient legend that has haunted my family for hundreds of years?” Cage asked in return.

“You mean the matter about Mullwica’s son?”

innread. com

“Yes, then you must know that Mullwica’s son killed his adoptive father during the magic outbreak.”

“That’s right. For this, he asked for the help of the devil, which buried the root of the tragedy of the mother and son killing each other.”

“Then, I’ll be honest about the part not mentioned in the legend – the innocent adoptive father who was killed did not accept death with relief and tolerance. Before he died, a demon told him everything about the identity of his adopted son, and he used his soul as a bargaining chip to curse every descendant of Mullwica’s family so that they would be separated from their flesh and blood for generations. Once their children lived together, they would face tragedy. This is the story hidden behind the legend.”

“... are you making excuses for your actions?”

A complicated expression suddenly appeared on Cage’s face. He seemed to have a thousand words to say, but he had to hide all the surging emotions under his brave front.

“I will never argue for abandoning Dorothy, Your Highness.”

“Forget it... Why are you giving this dagger to Dorothy?”

“This is the dagger Mullwica’s son used to kill his foster father 300 years ago,” he said, his voice still empty. “According to Dorothy’s mother’s teachings, it should be passed on to the next generation of the family.”

I immediately felt that the dagger in my hand wasn’t so ordinary anymore. Even the small scratches on the dagger that had been sharpened by time seemed to overflow with a strange power.

“Alright,” I promised Cage. “I’ll give it to Dorothy for you.”

Cage didn’t stay any longer. He thanked me and was about to leave. However, before he left, I hesitated again and again, so I called him back and asked him a question.

“How is Dorothy’s mother now? Why didn’t she come home to visit Dorothy?”

Cage was silent for a few seconds. "Did Dorothy tell you who her mother and I are?" he asked. "Did she tell you?"

"Yes, you are Mullwica's descendants, and her mother is the descendant of the mixed-blood werewolf foster father of Mullwica's son.

When I mentioned their identities, I suddenly understood something. As expected, Cage said, "It's because of our sensitive identities that our union made the power of the curse extremely angry. Its power also spread to its descendants. Dorothy's mother had tried to raise Dorothy herself, but the result had inevitably led to an even worse outcome. She did not dare to take any more risks, so she could only stay far away from Dorothy."

I remember Dorothy saying she spent some time with her mother when she was young. So her sudden disappearance was not because she gave up on her daughter for love, but because of something else?

We thought we knew the full story of what happened 300 years ago, but we did not expect that secrets were still hidden in the torrent of time, silently exuding their power. Dorothy was trapped in the tragedy 300 years ago and could not escape.

And what was the source of all this? Had everything been set in stone since the magic riot?

364 The Same Thought

Selma Payne's POV:

"Who told the foster father of Mullwica's son his identity?" I asked.

"I don't know either, Your Highness. The legend only mentioned 'a demon', and did not leave the name of Azazel like the other parts."

innread.com

"You know of Azazel?"

"Yes, as the descendant of a certain part of the legend, I know more details than the legend spread outside."

After a moment of silence, I asked, "If you don't mind me asking, do you have the Eye of Insight?"

Cage was stunned for a moment, but he still replied meekly, "No, Your Highness. I didn't obtain the great power that my ancestors had. There might be rumors in the outside world, but I'm just an ordinary prophet."

I was secretly relieved to hear his answer. I also hoped that Cage didn't have the power to see through all fate. I could tell Dorothy that her father did not turn a blind eye to her disasters and encounters. He just had no way of knowing. He thought she was living well with her grandmother and could not guess the pain and death she had experienced in the past.

She was not the one who had been abandoned. She could only blame fate for being so cruel.

After Cage left, I went to Dorothy, gave her the dagger, and told her everything about her parents abandoning her.

The baby fat on Dorothy's cheeks had completely disappeared, and his thin edges still showed signs of fatigue that had not recovered. The Eye of insight wasn't a useful cheat because you needed to find out whose fate you could see through a person.

When she was interrogating Locke, she tried to use the Eye of Insight to analyze everything about him, but she didn't expect that Locke's soul had already completely fused with the devil. She was severely backfired by Leviathan's power and fell seriously ill, taking several months to recuperate.

At this moment, there was no special expression on her thin face. She calmly put away the dagger, indicating that she understood.

"I lied to you, Selma. I'm not as calm as I make myself out to be," she suddenly said.

"I've secretly looked at him. I've seen everything about him."

"What?" I didn't know how to react.

Dorothy smiled slyly. "I used the Eye of Insight to look at my father. It was the first time I met him in the conference room. I know there are better times than this, and he's a powerful wizard, so I'll have to pay a huge price.

"But I couldn't help but go and see. I wanted to know why he abandoned me because this question had bothered me for over twenty years. I thought I didn't care about it for a long time, but the moment I saw him, I knew I was lying to myself. I've never really let it go. I couldn't solve it, so I could only pretend that the problem didn't exist.

"I saw everything, how he and my mother loved each other, how the power of the curse forced him to leave me, and how my mother left me in pain. I didn't lie to you about one thing: I don't hate them.

"But after knowing everything, I can't help but start to complain. It's just a curse. Even if we have to be separated, why haven't they sent us a letter to explain the reason for all these years?"

“But I only complained for a few minutes before I stopped hating them.

“No one can reason with a curse. Even a letter, a message, or a few words can cause a tragedy. They were not asking about me to protect my safety.

“I can only see people’s fates, but I can’t see people’s hearts. However, they do love me, and they’re not showing any concern because we can’t resist the curse’s power. Did they suffer less than me when they abandoned me? And because they fear the curse affecting me, they can’t even show this pain. What kind of heart-wrenching suffering is this?

“My father gave me this dagger because it has become a symbol of protection, protecting me from being harmed by the curse. He could only coldly use his family’s rules as an excuse. Without the protection of the dagger, he could not give the curse even a single loophole.

“It’s only now that I’m truly at ease. Maybe we can’t reunite like a happy family, but I know our hearts are connected. That’s enough. Enough to drive away the nightmares of the past twenty years.”

A drop of clear liquid dripped onto the ancient leather scabbard of the dagger, creating a deep amber color.

Dorothy’s face was covered in tears, but she finally smiled sincerely.

The night meeting began.

The elders also invited people to join the meeting, but Cage could not attend because of the upgraded security clearance, Cage could not attend. He was not a person who could be like a fish in the water among the politicians. He had no dissatisfaction and silently accepted all arrangements.

The supporters and the observers were still arguing, trying to convince my father with their own opinions.

Even at midnight, there was still no general conclusion to the matter.

This was a serious matter, and seeing that time could only be wasted meaninglessly in an argument, Arkadius finally suggested, “Whether or not to help the elven race is a matter that requires extreme consideration. I request to open the Council of Elders for a decision, Your Majesty.”

365 A Sensitive Period

Selma Payne’s POV:

The so-called Council of Elders, as the name suggested, was a process where the entire Council of Elders voted for a resolution.

Generally speaking, the ministers of the imperial court were composed of two groups: The first group was made up of simple ministers. They might be born as civilians, nobles, or soldiers, but they had no additional political status other than official positions. Members of the Council of Elders held the other part. In addition to their various official positions, they also had the identity of an elder.

Most of the Council of Elders members did not have any official positions. They might have worked in a certain government department or shouldered a certain burden, but time had forced them to retire from their previous positions.

Becoming an elder was essentially the same as becoming an advisor hired by the government, but in terms of ritual, it was a very high status. And the power they held would not dissipate because of retirement. Instead, they would accumulate amazing connections and power in their long-term political life. This was why the Council of Elders had such great credibility and influence on the court and society.

The left and right representatives of the Council of Elders participated in the daily political affairs on behalf of the other elders. They did not need the approval of the Council of Elders to make decisions during normal times. They just had to follow the normal government procedures. However, if there was a serious matter, the Council of Elders might be called to make a decision, and the highly respected and experienced elders would assist the government in making decisions.

Ultimately, it was not as if the Council of Elders could decide anything. The decision still needed to be approved by the court and the King. It would also need to be announced to the public to gather the people's opinions to adjust the decision.

In short, this was a very complicated and time-consuming process. It could be as short as a few weeks or as long as there was no ceiling. Spending more time and energy would undoubtedly make the final decision more sensible and correct, but the price to pay could not be ignored. Furthermore, there were many variables, and the final result might be completely different from the original proposal.

Could the elven race afford to wait?

Just because the elves were noble didn't mean they would not care about power and fame. If that were the case, they would not have been divided now. A civil war could start at any time. We couldn't wait for days, let alone weeks.

If the elves really started fighting, it would have nothing to do with us on the surface. The problem was that Azazel's party was stirring up trouble in the elven race. Was their ultimate goal the elves? No! It was a sacrifice to Azazel so that he could take revenge on us!

Therefore, no matter what, it was best to avoid a fight among the elves. However, this was not something we could control. While they were still in a stalemate, we should take advantage of the fact that they were still testing the waters and end the battle quickly. We should uproot Azazel's party in the elven territory.

The Council of Elders' decision was a waste of time. Even if we really wanted to carry it out, we could only sit at home and do something else while waiting for the decision.

Thus, I was the first to object, and the reason was that it was a waste of time.

However, Arkadius' reasoning was also very valid. It was more complex than sending a small team to the edge of the elf forest. The elven race was extremely sensitive, and any inappropriate action could become an excuse for them to shift their conflicts to the outside world to avoid a civil war. Once there was friction or even war, who could bear the responsibility and take measures to compensate for it?

"The elven race is divided, but it's not anarchic. At least on the surface, the government left behind by the Elf King is still running. As long as we can obtain their agreement, no force will have an excuse to make trouble unless they dare to admit that they want to rebel."

I immediately retorted, "The current elven government is more anxious than us. They needed a powerful excuse to suppress the forces ready to make a move. What could be more suitable than clearing the invasion of foreign enemies? We only need to offer them an olive branch, and they will immediately climb up the stairs."

"Are you saying that we should use the werewolves as a raft to deal with the internal conflicts of the elves?" Arkadius asked sharply. "Forgive me for being direct, but that will only push the werewolves to the forefront of the battle and make them the first targets of the fire!"

"Of course not! Who would be stupid enough to sacrifice their race for the sake of an outsider? Our roles are only 'helpers' and 'guests'. We don't need to be the main driving force in the pursuit of Azazel's party. Although we were the ones who suggested it, we only need to uphold the attitude of reminding our neighbors of morality.

"The elves have to take the initiative to invite us for help to avoid all the dirty water that 'invades' and takes advantage of the situation. Our purpose is to eliminate Azazel's party. What does it have to do with us if the elves want to choose a new boss?"

Arkadius nodded, then he changed the topic and asked, "You're right, but the problem is, how can we guarantee that the elves will invite us? They aren't fools. Don't tell me they won't be on guard against us taking advantage of their internal strife to create trouble?"

Selma Payne's POV:

I didn't have any strange intentions and just calmly stated the truth, "Isn't it chaotic enough for them? What was the root of this chaos? It's all because they were arrogant and didn't take Azazel's party seriously. In the end, their territory was destroyed."

"For the current situation of the elven race, the most important thing is to deal with the division and internal strife. The fact that internal strife broke out is enough to show that these divided forces don't have a long-term vision. Even if they knew the importance of eliminating Azazel's party, they wouldn't take the initiative to stop this dangerous mission to prevent other forces from attacking them."

"In that case, an external helper who has no interest in the internal affairs of the elven race is just like charcoal in the snow. Someone is helping them solve their problems, and they're not even prepared to share the power. Would they not agree to such a thing?"

"There's no such thing as free lunch." Arkadius shook his head. "We indeed have no interest in the internal affairs of the elves, but the other party won't believe us so easily."

"No, they'll believe us as long as we reveal a little bit of our 'weakness' to them."

"What 'weakness'?"

"It's about our inability to reach out to the elves and the 'weakness' that we can't grasp even if we achieve some results. It's easy to create this weakness as long as we can introduce a suitable spokesperson."

I looked around at the ministers in the meeting room and said, "I know that I'm young and inexperienced and that all of you have some opinions about me. However, at this moment, this may not be of no help to us. A Crown Princess tied down by power and interpersonal relationships, who appears noble but does not have the awe-inspiring prestige and power of the Lycan King, is still racking his brains to gain the recognition of the people. In the eyes of outsiders, am I not a paper tiger full of weaknesses?"

"I am a paper tiger, but I had no choice but to push it out to negotiate with the neighboring race. Because my race is also so busy dealing with Azazel's party, I couldn't even care about the wanderers who had fled to other territories."

As the Crown Princess, it's easy for people to misunderstand that I'm in charge of negotiating with my neighbors, especially when I don't have any respected courtiers or experienced helpers. They might think I'm collecting my experience, gilding my resume, or just running away with the excuse of being the Crown Princess to avoid the danger in my race.

“I’m not a threat to the elves. They’ll treat me politely and scornfully with the idea that they’ll treat me well. And what we need right now is this kind of contempt.”

I was very direct, and the ministers immediately understood my intentions.

Now the direction of the discussion had changed again. Some people opposed my point of view and thought I was taking things for granted and might not go according to my wishes. I convinced many more people. They felt that there was no harm in trying. It would be best if we succeeded, but if we didn’t, it wouldn’t affect anything.

It did not conflict with the decision of the Council of Elders.

Everyone’s opinions gradually became unified. Arkadius secretly exchanged glances with me, immediately looking away as if nothing had happened.

This was the advantage of having teammates. Sometimes, support would only help you a little. Friction and conflict allow you to express your views and persuade others smoothly.

There must be some people here who could tell that we were playing the good cop bad cop, but since no one had stood up to object strongly, they still agreed with my point of view.

My father listened to the entire story quietly. He didn’t agree or disagree, but I understood that his silence was his greatest trust in me.

I could no longer hide under his wings and use the name of the King to intimidate others. I had to learn to face the officials who might be known by their faces but not their true intentions. I had to learn how to deal with the ever-changing, real government affairs and change from ‘the daughter of the King’ to ‘the future Queen of the werewolves’.

In the end, the meeting came to two conclusions. First, after dawn, the imperial court and the Council of Elders would immediately convene to the Council of Elders to make a decision. They would throw away all unnecessary etiquette and face-saving procedures and try to reach a preliminary decision as soon as possible. Second, they would send a polite greeting to the elves and hint if they needed help to deal with the wanderers of Azazel’s party in the elf territory.

It hadn’t even been a year since I returned from the elf clan, and I was preparing to go on a long journey again. The difference from last time was that I’d changed from a newly-wedded girl to a mother. Although my child usually had no sense of existence – he was obedient and didn’t fall sick too often – a mother’s worry for her child never needed any reason.

Of course, the child would be well cared for by my mother. In fact, due to the busy government affairs, the time my mother took care of him after his birth far exceeded the time he spent with me. But he was no stranger to me. Every time he saw me, he would come over and groan like a real wolf cub, easily melting my heart.

However, I couldn't let go of my concern for him no matter what, so I took him back to my side and took care of him.

367 The Second Coming

Selma Payne's POV:

I hoped to leave as soon as possible and rush to the Elf Forest to solve the problem, but in my heart, I also hoped that I could wait until the child's baptism was over before leaving.

My conflicting thoughts tore me apart, but this problem was quickly resolved. Tracy and the werewolf grandmasters suggested that I temporarily delay my child's baptism because he had yet to show signs of developing into a human form.

On the day of the baptism, the child had to appear in public no matter what, so one could imagine what kind of uproar this image would cause.

I also had an inexplicable feeling that this child's development would not follow the path of ordinary children, so I agreed.

Just as I expected, the elves immediately understood our hint and sent an invitation to help us. They asked us to help the elves quickly eliminate the wanderers in the Elf Forest.

The elven government mainly retained most of the framework of the Elf King's reign. They were in a neutral state, neither inclined to the legitimate heir, Prince Chris, nor inclined to the powerful temporary Alliance of the Western city-states nor accepted the application for a change of new political parties.

It carefully maintained the balance between the major forces because it also knew that it represented the Orthodox of the elven race, and its opinion was seen as the last order of the Elf King to the outside world. Once they were inclined to a certain force, the other dissatisfied forces would immediately start a civil war to seize power.

Their harrowing situation meant they didn't have much time to spare for our foreign neighbors. Of course, they would send people to monitor our movements, but that was all. They didn't even expect us to be able to annihilate the entire Azazel party in the Elf Forest. It would be a blessing if we kept them in check and didn't make the already dangerous situation even more chaotic.

The day we set off was a sunny summer day. The bright sun and the endless white clouds made me feel as if I had returned a few years ago, back to the day when I was about to set off for the Rocky Mountains.

Back then, we were full of hope and didn't know what was waiting for us. But now, we were still full of confidence and would overcome any difficulties ahead.

As members of the 'diplomatic corps', in addition to the action team of various members, there were also Maxine, Dorothy, Master Hayley, and Eve.

As a general, Aldrich's identity was too sensitive. No matter what, the elves would never allow him to swagger into their territory. Thus, he had to secretly lead another team to lurk in the Spring Rain Pack. If anything happened to us in the Elf Forest, he could come to our aid as soon as possible.

Emma was originally part of the diplomatic corps, but she withdrew herself.

"I don't have powerful martial strength, nor do I have sharp intelligence. I won't be of any help in the Elf Forest," she said these self-deprecating words, but her eyes shone with confidence.

"But I'll help you keep a close eye on the families in the Lycan pack, who each have their ulterior motives. Whether my blood relatives or strangers, all their conspiracies will be snuffed out in the cradle, and they won't cause you any worries."

And so, at my request, Emma was transferred to my father's secretarial group. It was one of the organizations closest to the center of power, but its blood-related nature with the royal family also firmly marked its members as a royal faction. This meant that Emma had officially drawn a clear line with the Evaria Family, but she had never regretted it.

"I'm saving my family," she said to me. "Greed and shortsightedness are pushing them to the execution ground. I don't know if I can pull them back from the cliff of destruction, but in any case, I have to keep a little hope of survival, at least."

In short, after everything is settled, we would finally officially enter the Elf Forest.

The people sent by the Elven Capital City to welcome us were well-behaved, and it was clear that the government had already done its best to show us its sincerity. There were also many old acquaintances, such as Kaya and her third patrol regiment.

Her arrogance when we first met had long turned into nothingness and flowed into the spring breeze. Although she still had a serious and beautiful face, the fatigue and helplessness in it could not be concealed.

innread.com

We only exchanged a few pleasantries. Our experiences in the four cities of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter immediately warmed us up and created a friendship that shouldn't exist between werewolves and elves.

Along the way, she was silent, as if the arrogant female warrior from before was just a ridiculous dream.

Autumn City had become an empty city. In such an eventful autumn, no mayor had the energy to take over this dead land that had been ransacked. Naturally, nature had taken back its ownership of the land. Plants and animals grew and multiplied without restraint. They were naive and chaotic, alert and blind to outsiders.

We took a short break here. I asked Kaya in private, "You look very tired. Did something happen during this time?"

She only sighed softly and answered me with silence.

368 The Moon

Adele's POV:

The wind at night was very cold. It would carry the frost and dew on the treetops to attack an unlucky person's head, so his clothes were wet. However, one could not compete with the wind. One could only curse and then continue to travel in his wet clothes.

This comical scene caused me to shift my gaze for a while. When it ended, I returned it to the quiet night sky.

I didn't know where I was, and the person who took me away said something to me loudly, but I didn't want to talk to him, so I turned a blind eye. I'd used this move against many people who tried to talk nonsense with me, and it worked without exception, no matter who they were.

They all thought I was crazy. What a joke. Who wouldn't go crazy? Anyone would go crazy when they saw the nature of the world. Madness was everyone's final destination.

My head hurt. It kept hurting. This was one of the after-effects of my spiritual world being severely damaged. The pain made me irritated and made me give up thinking. I used the void to deal with the endless pain. There was no way to repair what had been destroyed. Perhaps I should hate someone or be remorseful, but my ability to trigger my emotions was destroyed along with everything else.

Someone was hurt, and being a fugitive was not a job worth enjoying. Even if one was a werewolf, one could still die if he didn't have enough medicine. No one was willing to die. At first, they hoped that I could save them. After all, I was a half-baked 'pure white

witch'. But when they learned that I had become a disabled person who had lost all my magic power, they no longer placed their hopes on me.

To cultists, what could be more generous than an evil god? They sacrificed a few dying companions, and their injuries were immediately healed.

With fewer people, I naturally became a burden, but for some reason, people didn't dare to abandon me.

There were both men and women in this group of desperadoes. The men tried to strike up a conversation with me, and the women tried to get close to me. However, I didn't say a word, so they could only resentfully give up.

All of this was a waste of effort. What did they want to know? Why wouldn't they ask their evil gods to ask the moon? Didn't they see that I was staring at the pale moon? Everything about me was visible under the moonlight, whether it was a clear sky or a quiet night.

As long as they asked the moon, what else would they not know?

What a bunch of fools. They were not even as good as me, a lunatic.

I didn't like to talk to stupid people, so I just quietly watched them run around like wild dogs, unwilling to plead with the moon.

Perhaps it wasn't because of this. It was just that the moon never heard me.

I was not sure. I was tired. I needed to rest.

By the time I was able to connect my thoughts, I was already in this boundless forest. I thought I should know where I was, but it was too difficult to find a small piece of paper in the ruins, so I gave up and followed the wild dogs anywhere.

This team of wild dogs met up with another team of wild dogs. There was a leader among them, haggard and weak, but I could see the corruption and madness hidden under his fake skin. He was even crazier than I was. I observed him with interest for a while before I finally looked away out of boredom. Nothing could attract my attention more than the moon.

The moon was so beautiful.

Why did I have to look at the moon?

I wasn't sure. Maybe I shouldn't have looked at the moon, but I still did.

That madman also tried to say something to me like other wild dogs, but I didn't want to talk to anyone. He said that my father, Kafka, was looking for me, and he would come to take me home.

Who was Kafka?

Who was my father?

Who was the man who was silent with me over the phone?

I didn't care about anyone. I only cared about the moon.

The moon was shining on me.

We entered a bustling city, and the wild dogs started to bite everything. They left behind an evil power to mark their spoils of war, and this dizzying power instantly contaminated more people.

Blood and fire illuminated the dusky sky as if it were daytime.

innread.com

There was no moon tonight, and the thick clouds blocked it from view.

Was it afraid?

Did it hate it?

I thought I should clear the clouds and let the moon appear, so that it could see what kind of soul-stirring drama was being played out on the earth for it.

I climbed to the highest building... Was it the highest building? However, this was not important. The rough bricks rubbed against the soles of my feet, and my shoes had disappeared without me knowing.

There was a half-burnt flag hanging on the flagpole beside me. I took it down and washed it with blood or some other liquid. Then, I reached out to the gloomy clouds in the sky...

"Adele."

Someone suddenly appeared behind me. I turned around and saw an old man with a long beard and white hair.

I knew him.

Who was he?

“Let’s go. We should go home.”

The old man extended his hand to me. I thought for a moment, threw down the flag, and followed him.

A gentle light suddenly appeared on my path. I raised my head to look at the sky, but the thick clouds had completely blocked the moon as if the moonlight from before was just a lunatic’s ridiculous fantasy.

‘It’s okay,’ I thought.

It didn’t matter if there was a moon or not.

I liked the moon.

I did not care about the moon.

369 The Elves’ Quest

Kaya’s POV:

The forest in the early morning was always a lot more humid than the boundless plains. When a stream of dew wet the bottom of my pants, I suddenly thought of a certain ordinary day many years ago. Back then, I was just a little girl. I followed my mother, who was on a business trip, to the edge of the elf forest.

My mother pointed at the barely visible guard tower beyond the horizon and told me it was the werewolves’ territory. I was still young and innocently asked, “Is father over there? When will he be back?”

My mother did not answer me, and my father would never return.

It had only been three years since the end of the Wolf-Witch war, and the lingering effects still affected all the races. Although it was called the ‘Wolf-Witch war’, how could those crazy people whose brains were blown up by magic only target the werewolves?

As a centurion, my father naturally had to bear the heavy responsibility of protecting the country. Swords and sabers had no eyes on the battlefield, and I lost my loved ones forever like many children.

It was a long time ago, and I was lost in my thoughts, so when my companion suddenly called me back to reality, I was shocked.

“Captain, the elders have invited you to the palace.” He looked at me suspiciously but didn’t ask anything. “The palace attendant is waiting for you outside.”

I nodded and casually used a wet towel to wipe my tired face before leaving the tent.

If it were in the past, I would have taken a bath, changed my clothes before entering the palace, and tidied myself up. However, the consecutive duty days left me with no extra energy to maintain my meaningless and bright appearance. Now I only hoped there would be no more trouble in the palace.

Everything had become a mess since His Majesty fell into a deep sleep.

On the way to the palace, I met the chairman. As a powerful official, power didn't bring him much joy. Instead, it made him frown and rush to the parliament with his fans.

It was not surprising that the chairman, known for his radical reformist tendencies, was worried when he heard that the elders who formed the government according to His Majesty's last will had a cold relationship with him.

The elders were currently receiving guests, so I needed to wait outside. Not long after, the heavy door of the conference room opened, and His Highness, the Crown Prince, walked out. Like the chairman, he was constantly troubled and worried. He hurriedly greeted me and quickly left.

I thought I was a person who could take on the heavy responsibilities entrusted by His Majesty, but the endless tasks did not give me much political wisdom.

Therefore, I didn't understand the Crown Prince's worries, and I didn't understand the current strange ruling structure. Since His Majesty was in a deep sleep, why didn't he let the Crown Prince inherit the throne? Why did the chairman repeatedly ask for a change of the interim government? He knew that this was the last order of the King.

I didn't understand, but this wasn't something an insignificant patrol captain like me should be thinking about. I should consider maintaining order in the East District, which had suffered the most damage and was destroyed.

The elders looked very tired, especially the Great Elder. This 400-year-old man had never been as dispirited as he was today.

He sat powerlessly on the high-back chair made of vines. The sun shone through the crystal window on his tired face, but it did not add vitality or energy to him. Instead, it made him look like he was going to return to the arms of Mother Nature in the next second.

He was an old-fashioned old man who liked to use fancy words, but he was so direct with me today – a rare occurrence. "I have a task for you, Kaya. We've already invited the werewolves to help us capture the group of wanderers who had escaped. The diplomatic mission they've sent will arrive at the border before 3 p.m. tomorrow. You'll be in charge of bringing your team to meet them."

As a loyal warrior, I knew that what I should do now was to nod in agreement and immediately prepare to set off. However, my eyes widened in shock, and I asked in confusion, “Werewolves? But... but why did they have to be invited? His Majesty has already sealed the source of the contamination.”

I didn’t finish because I realized I had mentioned an inappropriate fact. Although everyone knew about it, they all tacitly pretended that business was the same as usual.

The Great Elder didn’t reprimand me. He only tiredly rubbed the space between his eyebrows and said, “This is the decision of the entire interim government. Go, child, and bring them back safely. The Crown Princess of the werewolves is on a diplomatic mission and is a precious guest. Please don’t make any mistakes, okay? I’m sure you can tell we don’t have the energy to deal with the accident now.”

I was still filled with questions. For example, why was there no news of this sudden invitation? Why didn’t we send anyone to eliminate the wanderers? There were many questions that even a political noob like me could point out.

However, the Great Elder looked too tired and weak. The other elders’ expressions were not much different, as if a gust of wind would immediately make them fall to the ground and shatter.

So, I accepted the mission respectfully and left, filled with questions.

370 The Werewolf’s Quest

Benson Walton’s POV:

After so many months, I was back at the Lycan pack. This time, I didn’t bring any small baggage with me. I came here purely with the mobile patrol team.

That was right. Even the Lycan pack was within the inspection range of the mobile patrol team. Although our existence allowed the central government to keep track of the local situation, who hadn’t heard of the saying ‘darkness under light’? There might have been a hidden danger right under the nose of the Lycan King, so it was necessary to be on guard.

The mobile patrol team usually did not move together as a whole; rather, such a situation was rare. After all, the werewolves had so many packs that even a single team could not finish checking half of them in a year. That was why we usually split up into a dozen or so teams.

A middle-aged man of few words led the squad I was in. I heard he had been on the mobile patrol team for almost seven years. This was an extremely abnormal number, as most members would retire after three years of service. This was to ensure the mental health of the members and the loyalty of the mobile patrol team. Other than experience,

time also accumulated complicated relationships and growing ambitions. After all, living day after day in suspicion and conspiracy was maddening.

A veteran who had served for seven years was undoubtedly experienced, had a strong heart, and was trusted and valued by the higher-ups. This made his orders extremely prestigious and allowed our team to work exceptionally smoothly.

However, he should have informed us of our specific destination when we came to the Lycan pack. He only asked us to hang out all day long, as if he was using the excuse of a mission as an excuse to take a break. However, no one questioned anything. Everyone silently and loyally carried out the order and wandered around the huge bustling pack.

The small restaurants on the side of the road even had posters of discounts and revelry. The excuse was the same as that of grocery stores or coffee shops, all to celebrate the birth of the next generation of the royal family. This caused me to stop in my tracks for a few more seconds, and the memories that I had suppressed in my heart suddenly came back to me.

A child?

Had Selma become a mother?

My impression of her was that of a timid little girl or an overbearing Princess. It was said that the reform she made at the border was very popular and loved by the people. The people loved the house and its crow. They also liked a newly born child from the bottom of their hearts and spontaneously organized many celebrations.

It wasn't just the Lycan pack and its surrounding packs. Even in remote, small places, one could hear a few words of praise for 'Her Highness'.

In contrast to the public, the attitude of the Alpha was subtle, some supported him, some opposed her, and some remained silent and watched from the side.

In any case, Selma's approach undoubtedly touched the core interests of the Alpha, there would be far-sighted assertiveness chasing after her footsteps, but for the old families used to the ruling, her approach was undoubtedly digging their graves.

If I were still an Alpha, I wouldn't agree with Selma's reform even though it brought the three dying packs back to life and gave tens of thousands of people a good life. It was an achievement in the present era and a benefit in the future.

However, it made the Alphas step down, and it seemed there was no chance for them to come on stage again, so no matter how good it was, I would oppose it. Who knew if I would be the next one to step down?

But now, I was just an insignificant mobile patrol member, so I just stood by the poster and thought about it aimlessly, then entered the small restaurant for a meal.

A few days passed, and the captain still needed to give us clear instructions. One day, he suddenly gathered us and asked, "It has been three days. Are you guys familiar with the terrain of the Lycan pack?"

Every time we arrived at a new location, we had to familiarize ourselves with the terrain and landmarks. This had almost become an instinct for the entire mobile patrol team.

"You are the best members of the mobile patrol team, selected after a long observation period. There is no room for criticism, be it ability or loyalty. Now, no matter your mission, their priority will be lowered before I announce a new mission," the captain said.

"From today onwards, the fourth team will officially begin the 'hidden sentry plan'. You will become the hidden sentries of the entire Lycan pack, each responsible for monitoring different areas. Report to me immediately if there's any movement, understand?"

"Understood!"

No one asked what the ultimate goal of this mission was. They just had to carry it out.

My biggest problem was that I would be stuck in the Lycan pack indefinitely. This way, I would not be able to help Selma gather information on the Evaria Family's movements in the other packs.

I contacted her, but she said she was fine for the time being, as she was about to go on a diplomatic mission to the elven territory. The country's internal affairs would be temporarily left to her female attendant – the newly-appointed trainee secretary of the King.

"If there's any new information, you can contact me and send the information to Emma at the same time."

She gave me a new way to contact her.

371 Excuses

Selma Payne's POV:

What would a dead city look like?

If one were to look at Autumn City alone, it would be full of interest during the day, but at night, it would seem so gloomy and terrifying. The dark doors and windows seemed to

hide ghosts peeking in the shadows. They looked at the world that had left them behind with chaotic eyes. Their blood-stained hands were always itching to take a life to appease the grievances and anger they had nowhere to vent.

Of course, all of the above was made up. The truth was that the night in Autumn City was terrifyingly quiet, causing one to shiver and feel their hair stand on end.

As outsiders, we could only feel physical discomfort. However, as elves, Kaya and the others felt more complicated and in more pain than we did. The entire team looked as if they hadn't slept for a week. They were mentally and physically exhausted. Under the torment of their hearts, they seemed to be on the verge of collapse, as if they were about to fall apart.

I was a little worried about her condition, so I asked Kaya, "Is there really no problem? If you're really tired, we can slow down."

"Thank you, but no." Kaya forced a smile, even though her stiff lips looked pale under the moonlight. "One more minute of delay and those stray werewolves may do one more evil thing. What do you call them again? Azazel's party?"

"Yes, they're a group of cultists who believe in Azazel."

Kaya mumbled, "This isn't some famous demon. It's nothing compared to Lucifer or Beelzebub."

It was a lame joke. Perhaps she wanted to ease the atmosphere, but it only made things worse.

Kaya and the others probably didn't need any words of comfort. Having a good night's sleep was better than anything else, so I suggested, "Let us keep watch tonight. You guys need enough rest."

"How can we do that? There's no reason for the guest to worry about the host..."

"You're welcome. You know I'm not really here to be a guest, right? No one knows where Azazel's party would suddenly appear, and every bit of combat power is extremely important. We need strong and alert soldiers, not patients who might faint on the side of the road at any time."

Kaya silently canceled her night duty arrangements.

The surroundings were extremely quiet, and only the bonfire crackling could be heard. Kaya was lying quietly in her sleeping bag. After a while, she suddenly asked, "Aren't you surprised that I'm not surprised by your true identity?"

“The grammar of this sentence is really awkward.” I smiled. “The elves have already received news about me, so it’s normal for you not to be surprised.”

“I didn’t expect you to take the risk again. After all, this time is different from the last time. Last time, no one knew your identity, but everyone knows who you are this time. Aren’t you afraid of what we might do to you? For example, using you to blackmail the King or something?”

“You’re really tired. This kind of question is very dangerous.”

“... I’m sorry. I didn’t think before speaking.”

“It’s fine. Aren’t you afraid I’ll sneak into the elven territory and do something to you?”

“I don’t think the elders are afraid. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have asked for the help of the werewolf pack.”

“Then, we’re not afraid either. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have agreed to the elf clan’s request for help. Moreover, we all know the consequences of falling out with each other, and we don’t have any excuse to do so.”

Kaya didn’t say anything more. After a while, I realized that she had fallen asleep.

Early in the morning, I woke up to the fresh fragrance of flowers. There was a bunch of sweet wildflowers beside my sleeping bag.

Every werewolf grandmaster had their field of expertise. For example, Master Kevin was skilled in the soul field, and Master Hayley was skilled in the rune field. Dorothy was also gradually looking for a suitable field for herself. Now, she had temporarily chosen Herbology.

Therefore, every business trip was a good opportunity for her to enrich her notes on herbs. The elf forest, which was usually difficult to set foot in, provided a valuable scientific research opportunity.

“This is chamomile,” Dorothy said. “It’s sweet and rich and has a lasting fragrance. Most importantly, it’s an inconspicuous but common plant in the elf forest. Its smell can better cover our tracks and help us hide them.”

Of course, we’d done some special treatment to prevent our scent from being tracked, but one could never complain about having more backup plans, right?

Autumn City was located in the southwest of the elf forest. If they wanted to get to the Elf Capital as soon as possible, passing through the city-states in the west was the ideal way. The problem was that the west now had a faint tendency to unite and become

independent, and I, as a 'guest' invited by the interim government, might not be welcomed by them.

Kaya said that the route had already been planned, but the replies from the western city-states to the interim government were vague and not very enthusiastic, but they did not explicitly refuse.

"Then, let's move forward according to the arrangement," I said. If you don't refuse, it means you agree, right? I don't have any grudges against the western city-states; I don't need their welcome. They shouldn't stir trouble with me. Treating me like air is what I want."

Was her cold attitude trying to intimidate the outsiders? The main purpose of this trip wasn't diplomacy, so there was no need to haggle over such minor details.

372 A Father's Request

Selma Payne's POV:

It was said that the western part of the elven territory was more developed than the eastern part, and the northern part was more lively than the southern part.

The first city-state we arrived at was called Chena City. It was named after the family of the ruler. Compared to the four cities of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, which had become ghost cities, or other slightly desolate small southern cities, this was a completely different world. The place's liveliness and modernization made me feel like I was in some advanced pack. However, the people here all had a pair of pointed ears.

From what I could remember, or rather, from what most people in the outside world could remember, the elves were a conservative and self-isolated race. That was why news articles mentioned the elves often included images of a group of elves hunting in the forest with bows in their hands. It was as if they were acting in some movie set in the old era.

The scene in front of me completely changed my worldview of them.

"The mayor of Chena City was a very... 'deviant' person. When he was young, he once snuck into human society to study abroad. After inheriting the city, he boldly modernized the city."

Kaya introduced the local customs to me. With the influence of Chena City, many city-states followed in their footsteps and undergone the process of modernization, especially the city-states in the west. However, Chena City is still the most modern city-state so far.

The mayor of Chena City was an elegant young man. Eighty years old was indeed very young for the elves, and he warmly received us, making him seem to respect the interim government. Kaya calmed down a lot.

Other than the fact that the vegetarian meal made me feel a little hungry, everything was fine. We had the most comfortable night since we entered the Elf Forest.

I kept feeling that the way Chena looked at me during the party seemed like he wanted to say something, but he hesitated. As expected, he met me alone after the party and made his request.

Facing a coffin that seemed to have grown naturally from a vine, he said mournfully, "In fact, I'm begging you to do me a favor."

Looking at the serene-looking woman in the coffin, I already had a few guesses in my heart.

"This is my daughter, Sandora," Chena said. "On the night the capital was attacked, she happened to be attending a literature seminar in the palace. She became one of the people who were killed in the chaos. Fortunately, His Majesty used himself to seal all the sources of contamination and forced all the contaminated people to fall into a deep sleep. They will only wake up when the contamination is completely gone.

"I've heard of your experiences in the four cities of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Not only did you generously purify the corruption of the evil energy, but you also helped the contaminated soldiers get out of danger.

"I beg you to save my daughter like you saved those soldiers. I'm willing to pay any price, even the entire Chena City."

I shook my head immediately. "I'm not an elf, so you should keep your city."

Just as he was about to say something about money, I beat him to it and said, "It's a free favor. I can help you purify the evil power in your daughter's body.

"But I must tell you beforehand that this contamination is not without a price. The longer it stays in a person's body, the more serious the contamination of the person's spirit will be. Moreover, this damage to the spiritual world is irreparable.

"I don't know if His Majesty, the Elf King's seal will stop the contamination activities or if it will only seal people's actions. Perhaps when your daughter wakes up, she will become... Forgive me for being blunt. I must tell you the consequences. Sandora might become muddleheaded and even a vegetable person with no happiness, anger, or sorrow.

“Even so, you still want me to purify your daughter now instead of waiting for a more secure method?”

“Yes, I want it now,” Chena City’s mayor said firmly. As you said, the longer we delay, the more damage Sandora will suffer. Who knows when a safer method will appear? Tomorrow? Or 100 years later? Sandora can’t wait any longer.”

I nodded. How could I refuse a father’s request to save his daughter?

“Okay, I can try to help you. But I hope you can keep it a secret. You know I’m just a guest of the elves to help you eliminate Azazel’s party. I shouldn’t and have no right to interfere in other matters. For the sake of the diplomatic relations between our two races, please keep this a secret, okay?”

“Of course. I swear to the goddess of nature that I will never mention anything that happened tonight to anyone without your permission.” Chena City’s mayor understood the complicated situation.

This was a very quiet palace. Other than Chena City’s mayor and me, there were only a few guards or servants, making it very convenient for me to open up New Flow.

Calming myself down, New Flow wrapped the girl in the coffin in its arms and carefully explored her spiritual world.

373 Western City-state

Selma Payne’s POV:

Just as I expected, Sandora’s situation was extremely bad. Although her spiritual world wasn’t riddled with holes due to the corrosion of the demonic shards like Frank’s, she had also fallen into a dangerous situation that couldn’t be quickly resolved.

The evil power that was lingering in her spiritual world was still. Even so, their roots were deeply rooted in the vast forest in Sandora’s spiritual world. The river representing his mental state was almost dried up, and the surrounding towering trees were bare and struggling with their withered branches towards the sky. Their vitality was weak.

Without any resistance, devouring the evil power became very easy. I tried to use the black-gold moth to repair Sandora’s spiritual world, but it failed. It could only repair physical damage.

So when I told Chena City’s mayor the truth, the young father showed a happy and sad expression.

“At least she survived...” Ignoring the presence of an outsider, the tears of Chena City’s mayor fell on the flowers wrapped in the gap of the coffin. “It’s good that she survived. It’s good that she survived. We can think of other ways.”

Ever since I entered Chena City, I had never seen the lady of this city. I thought there must be a reason for this. The lack of a mother’s role made Chena City’s mayor see his only daughter as a pearl in his palm.

Chena City’s mayor silently calmed his emotions for a while, then said to me, “Thank you for your selfless help, Your Highness. I don’t know how I can repay you for saving my life. I swear to the goddess of nature, Chena City will be your most sincere and loyal friend from today on. We will help you with anything you need!”

It was extremely precious to gain a friendship with the xenophobic elves. However, this excited father didn’t have the intention of having a long chat with me. Thus, I bade him and his sleeping daughter farewell.

Dorothy was tidying up today’s log. Seeing my return, she asked, “Where have you been?”

“Chena City’s mayor wanted to see me.” I didn’t hide what happened tonight. “I helped his daughter purify the evil power that had contaminated her body.”

“It’s true that I’ve heard Chena City’s mayor has a daughter. I was wondering why I didn’t see her today. How is she?”

“The situation is not good. The evil power has already caused damage to her spiritual world. This damage is irreversible, and I have no way to repair it. She’s still unconscious, and it’s hard to say if she’ll wake up in the future.”

“Huh?” Dorothy suddenly thought of something. “Just like how it was with Frank back then?”

I nodded and said, “There are indeed many similarities. However, Sandora’s condition is not as serious as that of Frank. At least her soul is still intact.”

I had already done my best for Sandora’s situation. As for what would happen next, it would depend on whether Chena City’s mayor could find a way to save his daughter.

We only stayed in Chena City for one night, and we had to continue our journey the following day.

Chena City’s mayor seemed to be in much better spirits than yesterday. He provided us with many portable supplies and even sent a team of guards to protect us. We accepted the supplies, but the guards were rejected.

I knew Chena City's mayor had good intentions, but as a werewolf, I couldn't get involved in any of the internal affairs of the elves. What was the point of swaggering through the city with a group of guards from the temporary Alliance?

Kaya looked back and forth between Chena City's mayor and me. I was certain she could tell that there must be some secret between us that caused Chena City's mayor to be so friendly toward me. However, she chose to remain silent and didn't ask anything.

She had indeed changed a lot. At the very least, the impression she left on me had taken a 360-degree turn. It was as if the proud leader of the third patrol team that I knew had disappeared. All that was left behind was a tired and taciturn, strange elf.

Not all the city-states were as friendly to us as Chena City. Some were indifferent to us, and some even had 'unwelcome' written on their faces.

Many western city-states who were dissatisfied with the interim government didn't care about the diplomatic documents issued by the interim government at all. Even if they had to receive me out of respect, they still had a strange attitude.

After all, traveling in the forest wasn't as flat as traveling in the plains. If it wasn't for the fact that we had to stop at a nearby city for our safety when night fell, I would have lain on a tree and fought for a bed with the monkeys. It was better than being bullied in someone else's territory.

Finally, after leaving the western region, we entered the city-states scattered around the elven capital. This place was very close to the capital, and the attack's impact was relatively serious. Many city-states were inhabited by elves who had run out of the capital city to take refuge. Both the nobles and the civilians were talking about the attack.

Here, the person responsible for receiving us would be changed from the mayor to the envoy sent by the interim government. This messenger had the same worried expression as Kaya and had an underlying melancholic aura.

The atmosphere in the capital must be very tense, which made me even more cautious.

It was already nighttime when we arrived at the city-state near the capital city, so we didn't travel overnight. We waited until the next day to set off for the capital city.

374 The Crystal Bottle And The Golden Bowl

Selma Payne's POV:

Before the murderer who attacked the capital city was caught, the elves had already imposed martial law. After eight o'clock in the evening, the streets and alleys of the western city-states and the immediate areas entered curfew time. This made the city,

which was sparse due to the low population of the elves, even more quiet, so quiet that it made people feel uncomfortable.

Dorothy and Master Hayley did not do anything along the way. They tried their best to track down the traces of Azazel's gang, but they seemed to have borrowed the power of the demons again, so they could not find any useful clues.

We did discover a few evil sacrificial formations, some of which had lost their effectiveness while others were still in operation. No matter what, we destroyed all of them.

Up until now, the elves still needed to provide us with helpful information about Azazel's party. They seemed to be focused entirely on internal strife and were unaware of it. They were at ease in leaving the task of eradicating Azazel's party to us, the outsiders.

Although we could move freely without anyone pointing fingers, without the help of the host, our investigation stagnated.

"It would be great if there were prisoners," Dorothy said disappointedly. "As long as I can use my Eye of Insight to look at the prisoners, their schemes and plots will be exposed."

Who said we didn't? Unfortunately, all the members of Azazel's party had escaped.

The following day, we finally arrived at the Elven Capital City. This ancient city, with a history of more than 3000 years, exuded a mesmerizing historical aura. The ancient elven-style buildings made people feel as if they were in the old era hundreds of years ago. It was as if a team of archers carrying bows and arrows on their backs would appear in the next second and take the thieves they had caught to the City Hall to complete their mission.

However, the disharmonious ruins and construction sites had completely destroyed the ancient beauty here. The guards who came and went were no longer guarding against thieves but every person walking on the street.

The palace, made up of giant vines and towering ancient trees, was the most spectacular landmark of the Elven Capital City. Although it was also covered with ugly patches like the other buildings in the capital, it did not prevent it from showing its majesty and magnificence.

As a diplomatic mission, we only suffered a few inspections and interrogations before we entered the palace. The elven elders hurriedly met with us. They were the core members of the interim government, so their faces were filled with fatigue and helplessness that was a thousand times heavier than Kaya's.

Let's not talk about the dry pleasantries for now. We also needed to spend some time getting our passes and identification documents. In short, the Council of Elders arranged for us to stay in the envoy suite in the palace as usual.

Otherwise, we could only move freely in the immediate area. If we needed to go to other city-states, we would have to go through different procedures according to the different policies of different city-states. Azazel's party would have already fled to the next place when these lengthy procedures were completed.

We didn't stay idle while waiting for our identities and travel documents to be processed. The elders had gathered as many clues as possible about Azazel to find their traces. I even asked if I could meet the Elf King, who was in a deep sleep, subtly saying that I could try to help him purify his evil powers. As expected, the Council of Elders rejected me.

Come to think of it, who would casually hand their King into the hands of outsiders? Even if she could purify evil power, if there were any problems or the results did not meet expectations, it could become an excuse for those who wanted to attack the relationship between the two races. At that time, it would not be something that could be explained with a few words.

innread.com

I felt a little regretful for my reckless suggestion -why did I have to be so kind? I should remember my goal and principles.

Among the clues provided by the elder group, Dorothy and Master Hayley placed the most importance on the crystal bottle and the golden bowl left behind by Azazel's party. The former was a container for concentrated evil power, which made it much easier to find traces of Azazel's party.

The paint left on the bowl was used to draw the evil sacrificial array. It was different from the evil sacrificial array we saw in the four cities of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter and the ones we found on the road this time. The paint was highly accurate in terms of composition and proportion. It was made by a professional. And who was this professional? Although I didn't know the specific candidates, the scope must be among the wizards and witches who had joined the dark side.

Thinking of the missing Adele, I suggested, "Could it be Adele? As a powerful witch, mixing paint and drawing formations were child's play for her."

"It's unlikely," Master Hayley said, shaking her head. "Adele's magic power has been completely sealed, and she's almost useless. Without the participation of magic power, neither paint nor formations will have any effect no matter how accurate they are."

If it wasn't Adele...

“Maybe it’s a Kafka?” Dorothy suddenly said, “Adele is his adopted daughter and subordinate. Perhaps to save Adele, he joined forces with Azazel’s party?”

Kafka?

I had to admit that I was stunned when I suddenly heard this name and realized who it was.

375 City Gates

Selma Payne’s POV:

As a notorious night magus, Kafka had once been very popular, but he suddenly disappeared for some reason. Some rumors said that he was dead, some rumors that he had become one with the evil demon he worshiped, and some rumors that he knew he had made too many enemies and was afraid of being besieged, so he hid his name.

In my generation, only the elders know what happened to Kafka.

When I interrogated Adele, she did admit that he was her adoptive father and master. But since Adele had been imprisoned for so many years and he hadn’t come to save her, I subconsciously ignored this person.

Now that I thought about it, how could Dorothy’s guess not be possible? No matter which evil god he believed in, he was still in the chaotic evil camp with Azazel’s party. In addition, he seemed extremely cautious, so it was possible to find a partner to use the reckless and arrogant Azazel’s party as his shield!

However, if this was true, it was not good news for us. A powerful evil sorcerer would cause us more trouble than a great demon restricted by the laws and couldn’t appear in the world. At least he didn’t need to ask for power from the demons, and he could destroy a city with his sorcery.

The danger Kafka posed was too great. We immediately informed the elder Council of this news and asked them to be more careful.

The elves had heard of Kafka, so the elders immediately invited us to go. However, compared to solving the problem, they seemed more like they were going through a helpless formality. From the anxious and weak expression of the Great Elder, it was not up to them to decide whether they could guard against Kafka.

This might have something to do with the division of the elven race. Without the highly respected Elf King to hold the line and the support of the various city-states, how much power can a single-handedly interim government mobilize?

However, the Great Elder obviously wouldn't tell outsiders like us about his secret, so I pretended not to know. We tacitly exchanged information about Kafka. In the end, the Great Elder had no choice but to ask me, "I'll have to trouble you, Your Highness. I know that this is the responsibility of the elves."

"A distant relative is not as good as a close neighbor. A cult is not a matter of one race, and everyone is obligated to get rid of it," I comforted the exhausted old man. "The more dangerous the situation is, the more we should help each other. No one can be self-centered."

After the official handover with the interim government, we could generally move freely in the elven territory. However, we didn't rush off like headless flies. Instead, we hoped to find some useful clues in the Elven Capital City.

Almost half of the capital city was being repaired or rebuilt. The people on the streets all looked sad. Many of them had relatives who were injured or missing in the attack. Many people like Sandora had fallen into a silent tug of war with the evil forces and never woke up.

The situation in the western district was the most serious. Kaya had been in charge of maintaining order there, so she was very familiar with the situation.

The western district had the capital's most deserted and laxest city gate. She led us to a tall city wall, which was temporarily stacked with giant trees and rocks. There was a massive gap behind them that was being repaired.

"They came from here, so the western district became the first to be hit. Most of the people living here are ordinary civilians without any armed forces. Many of them left this world forever before they could even resist."

Thinking of that cruel night, Kaya closed her eyes in pain. There were many children and elderly people. Compared to strong adults, they couldn't even put up a weak resistance. They were contaminated by an evil power and turned into soulless puppets.

"I'm sorry," I said in a low voice as if the cries and wails of that night were ringing in my ears. These b*stards..."

Kaya brought us to the broken city gate. Although the Elf King had sealed the evil power, remnants of the evil aura still made one tremble in fear.

"We didn't dare to send people to repair the city gate rashly," Kaya said. "No one knows if this place will still affect people. Even experienced soldiers, let alone ordinary workers, can't help but tremble after staying here for a long time. It's been so long, but there's almost no progress in the maintenance here."

"Then are we just going to leave this place? What if Azazel's party comes back?"

“His Majesty’s seal is very strong. It covers this gate, and no outsider can enter or leave through this gate. If you force your way in, you will trigger the alarm.” Kaya said desolately, “It’s the same for the other city gates. Even though they are in a deep sleep, His Majesty is still doing his best to ensure our safety.”

The West Gate was where the most evident traces of Azazel’s party were. Master Hayley found many runes related to Azazel in some places outside the city and some simple witchcraft runes. She could basically confirm that Kafka left them behind.

376 The Mark Of Nature

Selma Payne’s POV:

No wonder the attack had gone so smoothly. Compared to the half-filled bottle of water from the wanderers, the power of the evil power concentrate multiplied several times with Kafka’s help.

Although Kafka had escaped part of the punishment in some ways, he could no longer leave the Elf Forest. Although Dorothy could not see Kafka himself, she could still see many clues from the runes he had left behind. For example, some of his past with Adele, which we had already heard from Adele. For example, how he had broken through the city gates and led the wanderers to stir up trouble in the capital, and how he had been seriously injured by the power of the Elf King and forced to leave. Before the Elf King fell into a deep sleep, he had asked nature to mark Kafka.

Since he couldn’t escape the Elf Forest, his whereabouts were restricted to the elf territory, which meant we could find him as long as we spent some time.

Dorothy’s head was already covered in a thick layer of cold sweat. Just as we were about to ask her to stop, she suddenly said, “Kafka is... Very weak now. Is he... Is he sealed? No, that’s not accurate. More accurately, his magic power has been sealed... perhaps it’s not a seal, but a ‘mark of nature’. What is it?”

She broke away from the prophecy, and we looked at the only elf in unison, hoping she could answer us.

Kaya was also unfamiliar with this term, but as an elf, she had some understanding of it.

“Everyone knows that our race believes in the goddess of nature, and as Kings, the past elven Kings had the ability and authority to communicate with the goddess of nature directly. Although the goddess is not easily disturbed, the Elf King would always ask for the help of the goddess of nature whenever the elven race is in trouble.”

“Due to the law’s restrictions, the goddess could not directly descend into the world. It is said she would give the entire Elf Forest her power to monitor the intruders from all

directions, suppress their power, and make it impossible for them to leave the Elf Forest.

“However, since the Elf King is the only one who can communicate directly with the goddess of nature, once His Majesty falls into a deep sleep, no one else will know about the will of the goddess. So, even I only found out about the ‘mark of nature’ today.”

“Do the elders know about this?” I asked.

“I don’t think so.” Kaya shook her head. If they knew, the elders would have tried to contact the goddess.”

“So...” Dorothy suddenly said, “In theory, even if His Majesty has fallen into a deep sleep, his connection with the goddess has not been cut off, right?”

“I guess...”

“That’s good... I have an idea. Why don’t you let me ‘take a look’ at His Majesty? In theory, I can see the entire life of His Majesty. I should be able to see even the content of his communication with the goddess. This way, we can easily grasp Kafka’s movements, and even Azazel’s party can be caught in one fell swoop.

This was a good idea, but Kaya and I were not optimistic about it.

“I’m afraid the elders won’t agree so easily.” I frowned and pondered. “We’re foreigners, after all. How can they agree to let us spy on their King’s life? Moreover, the Elf King is still in a deep sleep. Even if we revealed all of the secrets of the elves, no one outside would know. From this point of view, it’s almost impossible to get the Council of Elders to agree.”

Kaya thought so too. “Not to mention the elders, even my first reaction was to disagree. Please don’t misunderstand. It’s not that I don’t trust you. I know that all of you are noble, but this is a matter of our clan’s secrets. Who can so easily let down their guard?”

But no matter what, this was the simplest and most obvious method. Even if there was only a glimmer of hope, we had to try our best.

inread.com

As expected, the Council of Elders flatly refused our request.

The great elder said seriously, “We appreciate everyone’s good intentions, but please forgive us for not being able to agree to such a thing. I think everyone is clear about the pros and cons. There is no need for me to elaborate. I have to say since we’ve invited you all to help us eliminate the stray werewolves, it shows that we have full trust in you. But no matter what, this isn’t a matter for us old fogeys to handle. This concerns the

entire elven race, so even if we trust you all, we still have to consider the opinions and opinions of the elves.”

“Well, in fact, we also expected that you wouldn’t agree to this,” I said with a bitter smile. “We fully understand your worries, but we have too few clues.”

The first elder suggested, “Maybe you can ask Mr. Cage. He’s a powerful wizard and is deeply trusted by His Majesty. He’ll be of great help to you.”

It was a pity that Dorothy’s father did not return to the Elf Forest with us. Instead, he stayed behind in the Lycan pack as the Elf King’s messenger. After all, he was a wizard. Before he confirmed the actual situation of the elves, the werewolves could not trust him completely.

377 Some Analyses

Selma Payne’s POV:

I believed Dorothy’s father must be a powerful wizard, but he didn’t have the Eye of Insight, which meant he couldn’t help much in this.

However, we still listened to the Great Elder’s suggestion and asked Cage Doloria. He left a lot of records about the Eye of Insight in his notes, so maybe he could find a way.

“In fact, there are indeed a few records in the classics that can be called solutions.” Surprisingly, Cage had solutions. The first is a ‘soul bridge’. If the target’s soul is strong and clear enough, he can freely move his soul area, such as opening or closing it. The owner of the Eye of Insight can negotiate with the target through the ‘soul bridge’ to open up the area and ensure the privacy of the vision.”

It sounded like a good idea, but... the Elf King’s soul had been sealed by himself. If he could communicate with us, we wouldn’t have to work so hard to find a way.

“The second is ‘synesthesia vision’. If the identity of the holder of the Eye of Insight is not trusted, she can choose to share her ‘vision’ with a trusted person so that the other party can monitor what she sees and hears.”

“Shared?” I immediately realized that it was a good idea. “How does that work?”

“It is a pity that this method has many restrictions because the Eye of Insight was a very closed power. It is difficult to share vision unless there is a very close connection with the person sharing it, such as marriage, bloodline, and other strong ties.”

Great, the second path was also blocked. We couldn’t just let Dorothy marry someone for this. The person who the elves would trust would be the elves.

Those were the two safest methods he knew. The other methods were harmful and had a high chance of leaving irreversible consequences. Other than that, Cage had no other choice.

After cutting off the communication, we fell into a state of helplessness.

Master Hayley tried to use runes to construct a two-way visual platform, but when she considered one of the platforms as the Eye of Insight, this task was filled with complicated challenges. The success rate was unsatisfactory, and it required a lot of time. Dorothy assisted her in the construction while I brought the others out to continue searching for clues.

We patrolled the forest area around the capital, especially in the direction of the attack from Azazel's party. The elves had already investigated it before us, but they found nothing. We didn't believe in heresy, so we searched again and again. In the end, we had to admit that the cultists, with the help of the demons, had cleaned up the place very thoroughly.

I had already stayed in the Elven Capital City for two days, but I couldn't help but feel dejected at my lack of progress.

"Maybe it's just a waste of time to stay here," I said in the evening, discussing with Dorothy, Master Hayley, and the others. "There are very few clues left in the Elven Capital. I think it's time for us to leave rather than running around like headless chickens."

"But the Elf Forest is so big. Which direction should we go?"

"The Council of Elders and Kaya said Azazel's party left from the West Gate, just like how they came. Logically speaking, they are most likely to be active in the western region, but we borrowed from many city-states in the west when we came here. We have not heard of that place being attacked by Azazel's party or any traces of them.

"Even the cultists have to eat. Considering that their suspected leader is seriously injured, they must be badly injured now and will choose to act in secret. Do you still remember the various evil sacrificial arrays we found on our way here? They're not as evil as the spell formations that use orphans as sacrifices we've discovered before. Therefore, Azazel's party is probably using these spell formations to solve minor problems, such as physiological needs such as food, clothing, housing, and transportation.

"But why don't they enter the city-state to solve these problems? Even if he was seriously injured, there were still other cultists. They could sneak into the city to engage in smuggling transactions or carry out another attack like the one in the Elven Capital City. According to the elves' explanation, Kafka and the wanderers didn't do much in the

attack, and most of the damage was caused by the elves who were infected by the evil force.”

“This is a business that’s worth a ton of money. As long as the source of the pollution is thrown out, even if Azazel’s party doesn’t do anything, they’ll be able to harvest a dead city in a few hours. The experiences in the four cities of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter have shown that only some have the powerful sealing power of the Elf King.

“The simplest option wasn’t chosen. Why is that? It couldn’t be that this group of heretic cult believers had suddenly become great philanthropists who abstained from meat and believed in a religion. They probably don’t have any more concentrated evil energy. Even if they do, it’s perhaps not enough, so they must use it sparingly.

“Here’s the problem. If they still have a source of contamination, why should they use it sparingly?”

378 This Isn’t My Problem

Selma Payne’s POV:

“As this evil power concentrate has to be left for a more important target. This means they will make another attack in the future, and the consequences may be even more serious than the attack in the Elven Capital City. After all, there is no Elf King in other places!

“Although the Mother Tree of Nature has never appeared on the list of sacrifices in history, it does have the qualifications to be the raw material for constructing Azazel’s body based on its powerful and precious power. So, I think the next move of Azazel’s party will still be for something with great potential.”

Dorothy said thoughtfully, “If you want to build a body that can withstand a divine descent, the more life force the raw material has, the more resilient and stronger the body will be. The most famous specialty of the elves is the large number of natural plants that are full of vitality and have lived for hundreds or thousands of years. These are all high-quality raw materials!”

I nodded. “That’s right. Also, since he’s been marked, I don’t think the other wanderers can escape. After all, the Goddess of Nature’s power can’t only mark one intruder, right? She would not let anyone escape. Therefore, it is very likely that all the members of Azazel’s party wandering in the Elf Forest are trapped here. This means that even if items from other regions are on their list of sacrifices, they have no choice but to find substitutes from the Elf Forest!”

After the logic was clear, everything was easy to explain. As long as the entire elven race was on high alert, there would be no place for Azazel’s party to hide unless they could get Azazel to create a folded space for them to hide.

However, the Elf Forest was not like the Rocky Mountains. This was the territory of the Goddess of Nature, just like how the werewolves were the territory of the Moon Goddess. The demon's power could not be used freely in someone else's home. Otherwise, the wanderers led by Locke, who believed in Leviathan, could hide anywhere and not be caught even after hundreds of years.

Therefore, capturing Azazel's party was inevitable as long as the elves were on alert and searched throughout the entire elven territory.

However, the problem returned to the current situation of the elven race. It was already good enough for the divided and restless forces to maintain superficial peace and not fight each other. It was difficult to unite.

Besides, I was a werewolf. Why would they listen to me? I heard that many nobles and officials were very dissatisfied with the interim government's invitation to 'assist in eliminating the wanderers. In this way, the option of lobbying through the interim government was impossible.

innread. com

I had no choice but to contact my father for help, hoping he could give me some advice based on his experience.

However, my father was not optimistic about this. He said bluntly, "No matter what method you use, you can't avoid contact with the local forces of the elven race. However, our bottom line is not to get involved in the internal affairs of the elven race. Once you have any actual contact with any force, this bottom line will be broken, and your image in the eyes of the elves will be completely reversed.

"Once you change from 'insignificant guests' to 'powerful foreign aid', you'll be instantly drawn into the vortex of power struggles within the elven race. By then, it'll be difficult for you to leave even if you want to, and your lives may even be in danger."

I had to admit that father was right. No matter if I hired someone to persuade them or if I went to convince them myself, I would come into contact with the elven leaders. Benefits need to be exchanged. I had a request to ask of them, so I had to exchange it for something of equal value. What could make the power-seeking forces more envious than the werewolf pack's external help?

At this time, the elves were not xenophobic. Interests were the strongest link that tied people to the same boat. However, as the old saying goes, 'It's easy to go through difficulties together, but it's also easy to share blessings and difficulties.' If I were to go crazy and conspire with a particular force, I was afraid that I'd encounter an even more unsolvable problem after they won.

I was here to solve problems, not to create more problems!

I lowered my head in dejection as I thought about it, but then I suddenly thought of something...

Wait a minute!

Why would I exchange it for the interests of the werewolves?

The current situation was that Azazel's party was lurking in the elven territory and would launch one or more attacks. In the end, the trouble was the elves' problem. They could either work together to solve the problem or wait to see who was the unlucky one to be attacked. Why should I take responsibility?

Also, why would I need to find an intermediary or persuade them individually? Wouldn't it be better to gather the people together? They learned of the bad news together and decided whether to continue the internal strife or unite to resist the foreign enemy first.

I didn't have to step up. The interim government could act as the leader. Even if it had no real power, it didn't matter because this only needed an initiator who had the leadership in name.

379 Suspicion

Selma Payne's POV:

I explained my idea to everyone, and everyone felt that it was worth a try. My father nodded in agreement, so we immediately met the Council of Elders.

Even though it was late at night, the interim government was still brightly lit, and the staff members were constantly carrying various documents or materials in a hurry. At this critical moment, they were the ones who supported the basic skeleton of the government, allowing the core of the elven race to survive in the open and secret struggles of the rulers.

The elders seemed to be exhausted all the time. I believed I would also be mentally and physically exhausted if I were them. In terms of age, they must have experienced the golden age of the elven race's prosperity when they were young. However, when they were old, they found their home seemed to be just like them, aging and fragile with time. This gap was really like a dream.

"Good evening, Princess of the werewolves," the first elder said. "What's the urgent matter?"

"Yes, it's about whether we can catch Azazel's party in one fell swoop." I said, "In fact, we already have an 80 – 90% guess that Azazel's party will continue to attack the elves. It might be one or ten."

“As they can’t leave the elven race, they can only find a replacement for the sacrifice they need in the elven territory. The elves had always been famous for their vitality-rich natural specialties, such as the Mother Tree of Nature. They won’t let go of any opportunity.”

The Great Elder’s reaction wasn’t strong, which was what I expected. After all, the interim government didn’t expect me to destroy Azazel’s party. They didn’t care much about this matter either, which undoubtedly revealed that they didn’t have a very urgent attitude toward it.

The Great Elder’s voice was hoarse and dry. “Do you have suggestions?”

“My suggestion is to ask all the elven mayors to hold a meeting and inform everyone of the severity and urgency of this. As long as they were united against the outside world, it would be impossible for Azazel’s party to hide from the search for long. This concerns the countless lives that might be harmed in the future. I believe they will understand the importance of this.”

Anyone would understand that this was the simplest and most effective method. However, the Great Elder only looked up at me and then suddenly asked sharply, “With all due respect, Your Highness, these evil cultists, including the despicable master behind them, were all provoked by the werewolves, weren’t they? How can you say such things that have nothing to do with you? Don’t you think the nobles should do something?”

For a moment, I was dazed, unable to accept the Great Elder’s sudden attack.

I subconsciously looked at my companions beside me. They were also in a daze as if they had just heard a funny hallucination.

“I don’t understand,” I frowned and looked directly into the Great Elder’s eyes. “You mean, compared to the evil cultists who barged into your country and slaughtered your compatriots, you think the werewolves should be more responsible for the disaster in your land?”

“It’s the evil deeds of the cultists and demons. How can you have the nerve to put it on us? Goddesses above, we are even here to help! Do you think we’re deliberately leading the disaster to the east? Do you think there’s any reason to talk to a lunatic?”

The Great Elder didn’t express his opinion. His attitude inevitably made me even angrier. I resisted the urge to curse and said as calmly as possible, “What is this? Picking a rotten apple to pick on? You know that you can’t expect to get back your losses from Azazel’s party, so you grabbed a spendthrift to pay for them?”

“It’s the evil deeds of the cultists and demons. As long as these evil cultists still dream of creating a true body for their master and creating a kingdom of sin for their master on

the surface, they will never stop their pillaging! How can you have the nerve to put it on us? Goddesses above, we are even here to help! Do you think we're deliberately leading the disaster to the East? Do you believe that there's any reason to talk to a lunatic?

"Be it the werewolves or the elves; they're just the latter of the first to be plundered. If Azazel's party chose the elves as their first target, would your people be willing to apologize and compensate all the other affected races?"

My words were demanding, causing the other elders to criticize me. However, I tried to reason with him and was unwilling to bear this baseless slander.

The Great Elder still didn't say a word. He looked at me hard, as if he wanted to see through my body and see my true heart.

I looked at him fearlessly.

After a while, he looked away and sighed. "Remember your words and tone today, Princess of the werewolves."

I was stunned again. Before I could say anything, he said, "We'll try to gather as many people as possible for a meeting. However, if you continue helping us eliminate the stray werewolves, you'll definitely be suspected."

"Remember what you said to me. If someone doubts you like this, then say these words to them."

380 Marriage

Emma's POV:

Selma had been gone for almost a week. It had been a peaceful week, and there was nothing to be proud of, whether within the elves or the werewolves.

inn **read.com**

I was getting used to being a trainee secretary under the Lycan King. At least my seniors were kind and didn't push me out because of my qualifications or identity as a parachuted soldier. I worked hard to learn all the skills needed to contribute to a country. I knew that this was necessary to assist Selma in the future. It was also the capital for me to settle down.

My life was not bad, but my biggest worry still stemmed from my family.

My home... Could that place still be called home? A place that was constantly staring at me with greedy eyes, trying to tear off my flesh and blood to support itself. Was that still

my home? Were the people there really my family, and not some evil spirit that had quietly invaded?

I'd endured, cried, and fought. As my tears of blood dripped, I finally understood that I had to pull myself out of the quagmire of depravity. If I wanted to save my family and my family, I must not sink with them.

Taking ten thousand steps back, if everything were set in stone, I would at least preserve a trace of my family's bloodline to repay the kindness of raising me for more than twenty years.

As for my 'rebellion', my grandpa's approval from the beginning had turned into tacit approval. I couldn't pry into his heart, but I had a vague feeling: Did he see the end of the family, so he took my departure as an opportunity-an opportunity to continue?

I couldn't be sure that he was no longer the kind and always smiling grandfather I remembered when I was a child.

Maybe he never had that kind of image, and I was the only one who changed. As the youngest granddaughter, 'Emma could accept all of her grandfather's love at the cost of being bound to the high gate and courtyard like a puppet by gorgeous gold thread. As a female attendant and trainee secretary, Emma had to face the real world, no matter how cold it was or how hopeful and bright it was.'

The work of a trainee secretary needed to be fixed, and the affairs to deal with were very messy. The overwhelming amount of boring documents would give one a headache, but these boring words could subtly influence one to understand the true appearance of one's country.

One day, I was sorting out some monthly financial reports when Bertha suddenly came to me and told me that my parents had arrived and wanted to see me.

My parents?

I frowned, my intuition telling me something was wrong.

"The last time they came to Selma, I quarreled with them because of it. I swore I wanted to be calm, but being treated like a three-year-old girl and being reproached without restraint still made me burn with anger.

After that, we didn't keep in contact. They couldn't stay in the palace every day if I didn't go home. This 'cold war' life gave me a little more breathing space.

What were they doing here?

I didn't know why, but I felt they were up to no good when they visited me while Selma was away. After all, my greatest 'backing' right now was Selma. In the past, they had to respect the princess, but now, they could act like my parents whenever they wanted.

I rejected her reflexively, but Bertha told me my parents came to discuss my 'marriage'.

My anger suddenly flared up. I suddenly stood up and toppled the chair behind me. The loud noise startled Bertha, which also attracted my colleagues' attention.

In response to their concern, I smiled and said I was fine. I immediately pulled Bertha and left.

In an empty corner, I thanked Bertha bitterly, "Thank you for informing me. I will go and see my parents. Where are they?"

Bertha said they were waiting for me in the public living room.

I thanked her again and was about to leave when I heard Bertha hesitantly call out, "You don't want to see young Mr. And Mrs. Evaria? Actually, you don't have to see them. I can reject them on your behalf and say that you're in a meeting and can't leave for a while."

I admitted that the proposal tempted me, but I refused. "Thank you, Bertha, but some things can't be avoided. I have to face them myself."

Bertha nodded in confusion. "Alright then... Good luck to you, Miss Emma."

In the public living room, my helpless parents were indeed there. As usual, they embroidered their family emblems in every corner of their clothes and whispered about the tea and snacks provided by the palace as if they usually ate gold and drank silver.

"Good afternoon, Father, Mother." I tried to speak to them politely. "How have you been? I'm sorry that I haven't been paying much attention to my family recently. You know that I'm too busy with work."

My father nodded in all apparent seriousness. "Yes, yes. As the secretary to His Majesty, the number of things you have to deal with usually pile up to a higher level than the Moon Palace. We understand that. You don't have to worry. Focus on work. Remember to tell your family if there's anything. We'll do our best to help you."

381 Resolute

Emma's POV:

I couldn't tell if he was being sarcastic or sincerely complimenting me. According to my previous experience, they would scold me first.

After a series of boring small talk and under my mother's impatient and numerous hints, my father finally got to the point.

"You're going to be twenty-five soon, my daughter. I was already married to your mother for three years at your age.

"We know that young people nowadays aren't as eager to start a family as we were back then, but as a noble, you should still retain some ancient ethics, right?"

"Father," I interrupted him impatiently. "If you have something to say, say it, Father. What are you here for?"

After being interrupted by me, my father's expression wasn't too good, but he still pretended to be calm for his purpose. "You know, many children from noble families don't care much about their lifelong events, which makes us, as parents, inevitably anxious. So, we formed a private club dedicated to solving young men's and women's lifelong affairs."

My mother hurriedly interrupted my father, "And you, my daughter, don't know how popular you are among the unmarried boys. Those young and rich Counts and Duches are all in love with you. As long as you agree, baby, you can immediately become a Countess or Duchess. You will enjoy endless wealth and glory for the rest of your life. Your father and I will also be able to rise to heaven! I've brought all their portfolios. Why don't you take a look? You'd better choose an auspicious day to get married this year. If you get married after twenty-five years old, you'll be a joke to your aunts...!"

Looking at their eager faces, I felt nauseated.

"So, you're here to tell me that you signed me up for a blind date club without my knowledge, and you even leaked my information so that people can pick and choose me like I'm a cabbage?"

My mother frowned disapprovingly. "Don't make it sound so bad. This is just normal social behavior. Since ancient times, blind dates have always been like this."

"Enough!" I interrupted her loudly. "I don't care about the past or present. Those things have nothing to do with me. Now, I'm telling you to stop all activities related to me without my permission! Be it a blind date or any other nonsense, I don't need you guys to add to my troubles!"

"How can you say that, child?" My father was furious and slammed the table. "Be humble! We are your parents."

"Be humble?" I rolled my eyes sarcastically. "Be like my cousins, serving their parents with their knees bent, and when they are old enough, like a female horse that has been bred, they will marry a random idiot?"

“I say, it’s time for you to open your eyes and see the situation in reality, right? I’m no longer the little girl that you guys could casually push around. I’m the Crown Princess’ attendant and the trainee secretary of the Lycan King. In the entire family, other than Grandfather, I’m the person closest to the center of power. Do you really think you can control everything about me just because you’re my parents? If you still have such thoughts, Grandfather is right. Such a childish descendant can’t inherit the family’s title!”

My father suddenly stood up, his face red like an angry bull, his nostrils twitching. He raised his hand as if to give me a slap but stopped at the last moment.

He finally remembered that this was the palace, not a place where he could do as he pleased. After a long time, he gritted his teeth and said, “Are you still with that filthy boy? Is it because of him that you’re not willing to go on blind dates?”

“It has nothing to do with anyone else. I’m indeed still in a relationship with Rhode, but why should I explain it to others?”

My mother screamed, “I knew it!” I knew it! Damn it, if I had known that there would be such a day, I wouldn’t have sent you to the palace to be the princess’ study companion! Look at what you’ve become! You’re arrogant, rude, and unvirtuous. You don’t look like a noble lady at all! Oh goodness, what sin have I committed that you have to bestow such an unfilial daughter to torture me!”

“I can date and marry whoever I want because I have the status, the power, and the capital. I don’t care if he’s a prince or a beggar. If I want to, I can do whatever I want.”

In the face of their bitter accusations, I only looked on coldly and did not say a word.

The clock rang at noon. I interrupted their never-ending complaints and coldly said, “If that’s all you’ve come to say, then please leave. It’s noon, and my colleagues and I still have a briefing before lunch.”

I stood up and was about to leave when my father stopped me. He said in disbelief, “You’re leaving just like that? You’re not going to give your mother or me any explanation?”

“What other explanation do you want?” I sneered and said, “If I have to say it, I’ll say that from now on, you shouldn’t be so self-righteous as to interfere with my life. A normal parent wouldn’t want to play with their child like a puppet. If you want to transfer your dissatisfaction with power to me, I can only say that you’ve got the wrong idea.”

382 The Gunman And His Gun

Emma’s POV:

“I don’t want to go too far, Father, Mother. However, I’ve tried all kinds of methods before, such as being nice, being soft-hearted, crying, and begging for your understanding and pity, but my weakness only made me get more harm and insatiable greed.

“This is the last time I’ll meet you over such pointless matters. I’ll go home during the holidays, so you don’t have to worry about me. If you’re still so unreasonable the next time you come, I’ll have to tell Grandfather about this. I don’t think he’ll agree to you coming to the palace to cause trouble, right?”

After speaking, I left without looking at my parents’ stunned faces.

Selma Payne’s POV:

As many nobles and mayors had returned to their territories after the attack on the capital, it would take at least three days to gather them for a meeting. In addition, it was likely that some or even a large number of people would be absent in the final result, which meant that no matter what decision was made, it might receive the support of only some of the city-state.

However, the group of elders was surprisingly unyielding on this.

“Whoever doesn’t come will automatically forfeit.” The Great Elder said, “This is a major matter that concerns the safety of all the city-states, and the power struggle can no longer be a reason for each to do their own thing. Whoever doesn’t come will be giving up their right to make decisions, so they can’t blame anyone else.”

“Aren’t you afraid of the backlash? If the city-states that aren’t here are dissatisfied, how can they gather the entire elven race to fight against Azazel’s party in the future?” I asked in confusion.

The Great Elder suddenly laughed slyly, which was very inconsistent with his white hair and wrinkled face. He didn’t look like a high-ranking leader but a child who was about to succeed in his prank.

“Who would dare to be dissatisfied? Who can be dissatisfied?” He revealed an expression as if everything was under control. They were the ones who were full of righteousness before. In terms of bloodline, contributions, and sacrifice to the elf clan, they were trying to get more benefits for themselves. But look at the current situation, whose side was justice on? Whoever dared to oppose or participate passively would condone the stray werewolves’ evil deeds. If another tragedy happened in the future, compared to the stray werewolves, who had disappeared without a trace, who would be the first to be punished? Do those who have nothing to do with it think they can escape unscathed?

“So, the earliest situation is just that someone is absent. No matter how many people were absent, no one would dare to disrupt the operation of the entire clan. Even if they each had their own plans and did things their own way, no one could make their little plans obvious in front of the elven race. Otherwise, they would be attacked by the others. No one would be willing to sacrifice themselves to be the first to stand out, so this meeting will be a success.”

Looking at his confident expression, I suddenly realized I had already entered a trap. I wasn't saying that anyone wanted to harm me or the werewolves, but it didn't feel good to be used as a tool without even realizing it.

If the Council of Elders only thought of this method after I made the suggestion, how could they be so confident?

They didn't even try to hide the pros and cons of this matter from me, a foreigner. This only meant they thought I was involved, so there was no need to hide it.

The Council of Elders must have wanted to hold a meeting with all the clan leaders for a long time, but they had failed because of many obstacles. Now, I, an outsider, had become their best shield!

Seeing my strange expression, the Great Elder bitterly smiled and said, “We don't ask for your understanding, Your Highness. It's just that you've seen the current situation of the elven race. No matter how much we pretend to be peaceful, this cover that's better than nothing still doesn't work. If he wanted to turn the situation around, he had to end the current fragmented situation first. You're a Crown Princess, so I'm sure you're familiar with the twists and turns of politics, so you should know that we can't do this alone. Anyone who comes will only want to take the scepter of power from our hands. By then, we will fight internally for the leadership.”

“Do you think I can unite the elves? How come I didn't know I had such a magical ability?”

The more I thought about it, the angrier I got. ‘I came to help you with all my heart, and you pushed me into the fire pit with a flip of your hand?’

I had always adhered to the principle of never getting involved in the internal affairs of the elven race. Judging from the Great Elder's tone, he was determined to push us to the front.

Once this meeting was initiated by the interim government and became a friendly suggestion of the werewolf pack, everything would change. Who would believe that it was really out of ‘friendship’?

I'd already received a lot of criticism for bringing my diplomatic mission to the elves. Now, the Great Elder's actions were undoubtedly confirming the rumors that the werewolves were trying to meddle in the internal affairs of the elves!

"If this is your attitude, we have to terminate this cooperation," I said decisively. "We are here with 120000% sincerity and don't ask for anything in return. But please don't bite the hand that feeds you. Can you really solve your crisis by shifting the internal conflicts of the elves to the werewolf pack?"

383 A One-man Show

Selma Payne's POV:

"We all know that even if you confirm the rumors, there will not be any bad consequences. At most, we will be driven back, and the elves and werewolves will have a diplomatic storm. Your troubles won't be alleviated in any way; instead, you will lose your friendship with your powerful neighbor. If there are any internal problems, do you think my pack will be so tolerant that they won't even think about taking revenge?"

As I spoke, I suddenly calmed down. The Council of Elders would not be unaware of such apparent gains and losses. So, what was their purpose in doing this?

As expected, the Great Elder didn't intend to fall out with us. He only let out a deep sigh, and his exhausted back became even more hunched. There were a few signs of unease as if the person sitting on the vine chair wasn't a wise man who shouldered the elven race but an old man who had no way out and had used all his clumsy tricks.

"I'll say this without thinking twice. You're an intelligent girl. It's rare for a young person of your age to have such thoughts. Sigh..."

He didn't elaborate, but his words had an implied meaning.

"I have to admit that we did consider using you as an excuse to hold a tribal meeting, but this option was rejected in the end. Just like you said, it's only harmful and not beneficial. In that case, it's better not to plant more bombs for the elven race. We, old people, have already exhausted all our abilities.

"Most of what you said is right, but you still don't know much about the elven race. 'Righteousness' doesn't need any external force or lies. Whether people are convinced of the interim government or not, no matter what power they have secretly accumulated or excuses they find, they have to obey our 'righteousness'.

"His Majesty is still alive. He used himself to protect the elven race, and even in his deep sleep, he is still contributing everything to maintain the peace of his people. As long as His Majesty was still alive, no one would dare to do anything outrageous. The heavens are watching, and those who go against nature will not be forgiven or

acknowledged by the Goddess of Nature. He will use himself as a sacrifice to drag the entire elven race into the wrath of god.

“And ironically, we only just saw this fact. I may have to thank you and your companions for this. The patience of the western city-state mayors made us finally understand what we’ve overlooked. If we had discovered this earlier, we wouldn’t have ended up like this.

“But what’s the point of saying all this now?”

At this point, the already tired old man became even more hunchbacked.

“I’m old. We’re all old. Sensitivity and wisdom are gradually stripping away from our aging bodies. Perhaps we’ll eventually fail to live up to His Majesty’s trust.”

I quietly listened to the old man’s muttering. He was right about one thing – he was indeed old. Only an old man would unconsciously let down his guard and dig into his fragile inner self to a stranger.

The Great Elder mumbled something and used the elf language. I gradually couldn’t understand what he was saying. After a while, he seemed to have suddenly woken up and said to me apologetically, “I’m sorry you had to listen to this old man’s long-winded talk, Your Highness. In short, I swear that I won’t drag you, your companions, or your country into the water. This is the catastrophe of the elven race, and we must face it ourselves, or we can only inch toward death.”

As he spoke, he started to mumble to himself again. I got the promise I wanted, so I didn’t stay any longer and left quietly.

Dorothy and Master Hayley, who had accompanied me here, did not speak the entire time, just like the other elders. It was only after they left the conference room that Dorothy asked, “Do you think they’re trustworthy?”

“You can’t believe everything they say, but I don’t think they’ll do anything stupid again,” I replied noncommittally.

Master Hayley was confused, and her eyes were still a little red. “Why? The Great Elder spoke from the bottom of his heart. The elven race has indeed fallen into a disaster, and I think he no longer has the energy to think about anything else.”

“Maybe, but one must always be on guard, right?” I shook my head. “Especially when facing a politician who has lived for more than 400 years. Acting is engraved in his bones. Have you noticed it? Other than the Great Elder, the other elders didn’t say anything the whole time. It can’t be that the Great Elder is the only one who can make decisions in the Council of Elders, and the others are just decorations.”

“What happened to them?”

“Silence means that they are watching from the side. What are they watching? A profound one-man show is always more moving than a quarreling farce.”

“So, these people still have evil intentions?”

“Not really. It’s just a normal way of doing things. We can’t trust the elven race completely, and the elven race can’t trust us completely, either. Tonight’s conversation is about exchanging promises. It doesn’t matter if we’re sincere or not. It’s enough as long as we’re sure we won’t cause trouble for each other.”

Dorothy nodded in a daze and said softly, “Alright, alright. Politics is really a profound knowledge.”

Chapter 384 Internal Strife

Selma Payne’s POV:

Master Hayley immediately shut up and turned her attention to the draft book she had never left her side. For a scholar, hypocritical and complicated politics were not more important than knowledge.

The following day, Eve came back with her team.

From the moment we entered the territory of the western city-states, I sent Eve to lead a team to investigate the clues in the west area. She didn’t let me down and brought back good news.

“We found a werewolf’s corpse on the western border. The corpse still has an evil aura. It likely belongs to Azazel’s party. Eve said, “The body is highly decomposed. All flesh and blood are rotten, and even the skeleton is broken. From the traces, it doesn’t look like artificial damage but like it decomposed naturally.”

innread.com

She gave us a few well-sealed evidence bags with pieces of broken bones inside.

“This is very unusual. Under normal circumstances, the bone insect can’t disintegrate so severely in such a short period unless there is external help. We didn’t find any corrosive chemical substances on the bones, and there was a residual evil aura, so...”

She didn’t finish her sentence, but I understood her meaning. “So this unlucky guy was killed by an evil force and became like this. And the murderer could very well be his companion.”

Master Hayley and Dorothy examined the remaining evil aura on the bones. To their surprise, they did not belong to Azazel but were closer to another demon – Leviathan.

“Leviathan? How did she get involved in this?”

On second thought, there were some clues to this. Locke, who Azazel’s party had rescued, was a Leviathan fanatic. Back then, we wondered why another evil god’s believer rescued him. Now the two sides might have joined forces.

Thinking back, Dorothy and I went to the Rocky Mountains because of Leviathan’s curse and instructions. As a Leviathan believer, Locke was still on the team of the priest. A few hundred years back, the ‘god’s blood’ of Madeline, who had given birth to Dorothy, was given to Mullwica by Leviathan.

From the looks of it, Leviathan had a hand in everything, but we were used to facing the enemy, Azazel, and ignored her!

Could it be that Leviathan was also involved in the elves’ affairs? If that were the case, it would be bad. It was already very troublesome to fight against an evil cult, and adding a bunch of lunatics would not be as simple as multiplying the trouble by two.

Kaya, who had been watching from the side, finally spoke. She asked in confusion, “Leviathan? Aren’t the cultists we’re tracking now believers of Azazel? What does this have to do with Leviathan?”

There were too many secrets in the Rocky Mountains, and I couldn’t tell anyone, so I told Kaya about Locke’s identity and the terrible things he had once led the Leviathan followers to do.

Since Kaya’s memory of our first meeting had been erased, I said, “You should have heard that we came to the outer edge of the Elf Forest a long time ago, right? Back then, we were chasing after the wanderers who were running away. Unfortunately, they managed to escape.”

How Locke and the others treated the orphans made Kaya and the elves beside her look unhappy. “Will they do the same to the children of the elves?”

“I wasn’t sure before, but I can’t say for sure now.” Looking at the bones in the evidence bag, my expression became more serious. If they can even lay their hands on their own partners, they’re either at the end of their rope, or there’s an irreconcilable conflict between the two factions. No matter which one it is, it can’t be considered good news for us. The cultists’ power came from the demons, and any exchange with the demons had a price to pay...”

Children were extremely important to anyone. However, for the elves, whose population growth rate fluctuated around 0 all year round, children were particularly very significant. The difficulty of elves reproducing was well known to all supernatural races.

Kaya’s face turned even paler. She subconsciously ran in the direction of the palace.

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“Going to inform the Council of Elders about this!” she said impatiently, “There may still be a chance of survival if you are contaminated by evil forces, but if you are sacrificed to the demon, you will die! How can I watch my fellow countrymen become sacrificial lambs for the heretic cult believers to offer to their master!”

“You’re right. The Council of Elders should know about this.” I said, “Go. Compared to me, you, as an elf, are more suitable to be the one to tell them this bad news. However, you must be the first to report this to the Council of Elders. Without their permission, you can not tell anyone else, alright?”

“Why?” Kaya asked, puzzled.