

Alpha's Rejected Mate Returns as Queen

Chapter 417 House Arrest

Selma Payne's POV:

I didn't know why, but when I heard about the jailbreak, my first reaction wasn't anxiety or anger. Instead, I felt that 'what was supposed to come was finally here'.

Was Locke a mole? He could dig a hole and run out no matter where he was locked.

This time, there were no ferocious mutated werewolves to support him. It was obvious that a spy had released Locke.

I took back my previous trust in the elves. For him to do something like this, he was either a demon's lackey or had a blood feud with the elves.

The Elven Capital City was immediately put under martial law, and a search was launched throughout the city. The surrounding areas were also immediately searched inch by inch to prevent anyone from escaping. However, after a day of vigorous search, not to mention Locke and Kafka's group, they didn't even find a single strand of wolf hair.

As a result, I was delayed by another day. The Spring Rain Pack urged me to take action, but the current situation made me change my previous thoughts. Now was not the best time to leave the Elf Forest.

Putting aside this huge commotion, was I doubtful of myself now just because I was anxious to leave? Based on the fact that Locke escaped, based on my previous encounter with him, this b*stard must have left some cards up his sleeve. If I didn't handle it well, there would be endless trouble.

I delayed my departure, but my companions didn't understand.

"I have a feeling that if we don't leave now, something bad will happen in the future." Due to her connection with nature, Dorothy did not have the extra energy to use the Eye of Insight for the time being. She could not even make a single prophecy, but this did not affect her superior intuition as a witch of prophecy.

"But we can't leave as we please." Through the thick flannel curtains of the Embassy, I saw a constant stream of serious-looking, fully-armed soldiers hurrying past. "Now the entire elven race is in a state of wariness. If we leave now, we'll undoubtedly be splashing non-existent dirty water on ourselves."

Eve didn't understand. "But if we want to harm the elves, we don't have to help them at all. I don't think they're stupid enough to not be able to distinguish between friend and foe."

"That's true, but there are spies in the elven race. They can't even trust themselves, let alone outsiders."

As expected, trouble came knocking on my door before I could contact the Council of Elders.

A 'temporary public order squad' made up of soldiers, nobles, and representatives of the people came to the embassy.

It was obvious that this makeshift team had a clear hierarchy. The blond aristocrat boy with his raised brow was the leader, and the others were just subordinates.

"I'm sorry to inform you that the entire capital's outer passageways are now closed due to a suspect's escape. I'm afraid your diplomatic mission's return plan will have to be delayed." His words were polite, but his expression was completely different. "There will be a temporary public order squad taking over the security work of the entire capital. As the person in charge of this area, I am honored to serve you all during this special period."

He kept looking at the green cloth and handcuffs on his belt. I did not doubt that, in his eyes, everyone in charge could be related to Locke's escape. In short, we were spies.

However, this stupid brat still wet behind the ears wasn't worth my attention. I ignored the crooked hand-drawn badge on his green cloth and directly asked, "We're also sorry that we can't cooperate with your work for the time being. As foreign emissaries, we will only listen to your government's arrangements. If you have anything else to say, please bring the warrant of the Council of Elders."

The other party had expected that we wouldn't be obedient, so the golden-haired boy smiled. He took out a bucket-shaped package wrapped in silk ribbons and wax and handed it to me.

"As the first-in-line successor to His Majesty, the Elf King, at this critical moment, according to tradition, His Highness the Crown Prince has the right to temporarily act as His Majesty's proxy. This is his approval for the temporary public order squad. Even if the elders are here, they can't do anything."

"The Crown Prince?" This was beyond my expectations. "But as far as I know, the Elf King handed all the power to the interim government before he fell asleep. Did the owner of your land change again without my knowledge?"

This golden-haired kid was furious. He forcefully stuffed the agreement into Eve's arms and said, "No matter what, the Crown Prince's right to govern the elven race is irrefutable. Please cooperate with us and don't cause any more trouble. No one can guarantee what will happen in these troubled times if you insist on acting willfully."

This could be considered a blatant threat. With a glance and smile, I stopped Eve, who was about to scold him. "Alright, I have no choice but to lower my head under someone's low roof. If there's nothing else, please leave. The embassy still has work to do."

418 Opportunistic

Selma Payne's POV:

The moment the other party left, Dorothy frowned and said, "This is a blatant house arrest."

"That's right." I nodded, took the consent form from Eve's arms, and threw it into the trash can. "It's house arrest. It seems that we're not very lucky. We've been very careful, but we still managed to make it in time for the internal strife of the elves."

Eve's old profession was to search for information, so she had seen many conspiracies and tricks. But the elves' choice to have internal strife at this time was also eye-opening for her. "Now? Are they still mentally sound?"

"Of course, it's normal. They wouldn't have chosen such a time if it's not normal." I could guess what the Crown Prince was thinking. The so-called coup and overlapping of power are just a few shows. "The country is in trouble, but it's also an opportunity for some people. It is only when power is on the verge of collapse that people can easily take it into their pockets. How can you say it is not smart to choose this time?"

"It's a pity that being smart doesn't mean it's right. For the elves, we can't say whether the current situation is good or bad. Maybe when we start from the Elf Forest, the history book will have to be changed again."

Of course, we couldn't adhere to the Crown Prince's order obediently. To put it bluntly, even if it were the elves, how many of them would listen to him? In terms of power, he did not have an orthodox interim government. In terms of interpersonal relationships, he was not as connected as the president. In terms of strength, which major mayor in the Elven Capital City was not more powerful than him?

It was impossible to call for hundreds of people to respond to him at this unstable time of the year just by relying on his bloodline. No one would buy his words, and his dignity and power would soon collapse like a castle in the air.

However, this was also what I was puzzled about.

I didn't think the Elf King would want to turn his eldest son into a fool. In that case, the Crown Prince should have some basic political literacy. How could he not know that his current prestige was just an illusion? If he knew, then he should be even more low-key now. What gave him the courage to make such bold moves?

"Can we still contact the Great Elder? Where's Mr. Cage?" I asked Dorothy.

She replied helplessly, "The Great Elder has been looking for me all this time, and I've contacted him through the Soul Sparrow whenever I need him. However, he obviously can't come now, and I'm not sure if it's safe to let the Soul Sparrow out. As for my father... We didn't leave any contact information. Father is still afraid that the curse would affect me, so he tried his best to avoid meeting me unnecessarily."

Speaking of which, I was not worried about the Great Elder, but I was still not sure about Cage's safety. Cage didn't seem to like his best friend's son, and the Crown Prince didn't seem to respect his father's best friend, either. Instead, he would gnash his teeth every time he saw him. There must be a grudge between them that we didn't know about.

I couldn't allow Dorothy to rashly release the Soul Sparrow. There were so many elves here who were extremely sensitive to nature, and there was no guarantee that the Soul Sparrow's sparrow-like mimicry would be able to hide from these beloved creatures of nature. However, we couldn't just stay here. There were more 'patrolling' soldiers outside the window. Who knew if they were really patrolling or taking the opportunity to monitor us?

Master Hayley suggested, "Should we send a message to the palace? We could use diplomatic means to solve our problem."

Activating the diplomatic procedure was the most useful trump card, but I didn't agree. "I'm afraid that even Father's personal negotiations will not help. Who should we send the diplomatic decree to with the elves in such chaos?"

"Others may not necessarily obey the words of the interim government. You can see it from the arrogant 'temporary public order squad' today. Contacting other forces is equivalent to us abandoning the interim government and starting to side with them. In this way, every force will fear that we will interfere in their internal affairs, pushing us into a more dangerous situation."

"Then, we can only wait." Master Hayley was a little discouraged.

"Yeah, we can only wait." I leaned against the window and looked at the elven soldiers hurrying back and forth. I muttered to myself, "But who said that waiting is useless? When everyone's in a mess, it's our advantage to stay calm and out of it. "

I just didn't know how long this advantage would last and how many people would be happy to see us maintain this status quo.

At night, the embassy was dark.

For safety's sake, we tried to rest together. Dorothy and I squeezed into a single bed. In my memory, when we were still students, we used to squeeze together and talk at night, but the atmosphere now was much more dangerous than before.

I didn't know why, but I suddenly felt a little emotional about life. The days of being an innocent and pure young girl were gone forever. It was as if my life had changed tremendously when I opened and closed my eyes. When I sat in the public high school of the Shadow Pack and was lost in my thoughts while listening to the history lecturer's boastful speech, I never thought I would one day have to cross paths with the elves.

Speaking of a young girl's fantasy, I never thought I would get married at such a young age or even become a mother.

An oil painting on the bedroom wall depicted the scene of the Goddess of Nature holding her adopted son. Dense white thorny vines surrounded them, and the bright red fruits were like fresh blood.

It was mother and son.

I wonder how my child was doing thousands of miles away.

419 The Princess' Party

Jordin Charlies' POV:

Every time I see the Spring Rain Pack full of vitality, I would feel an unparalleled joy from the bottom of my heart-like a farmer looking at a lush seedling, a mother looking at a healthy child. The Spring Rain Pack was like a tree that I had planted myself. I watered it with hard work and was overjoyed with every new sprout that grew.

Even though it didn't belong to me, I was still willing to give it my all. In the days when the girls were not around, I had to take on the heavy responsibility of the entire pack by myself. This was a little difficult, but my smooth-sailing life needed a difficult task to display my value. Besides, I'd made many like-minded friends here, including my old friend, Vanya.

After General Aldrich led the army to settle in, my work suddenly became much more manageable. At the very least, under the suppression of the austere army, the criminals hiding in the corners and trying to turn the Spring Rain Pack into their gold mine had consciously quieted down.

With the constant changes in the government structure of the Spring Rain Pack, my position was also adjusted accordingly, and I became a member of the city's Supreme Council.

Now no one mentioned the Alpha. Everyone understood that the world had changed, and the ancient tradition didn't bring any moisture to this land. In this case, it was easy to accept the new power that could bring visible and tangible benefits to the public. Moreover, wasn't it more impressive than any Alpha to have a princess as their leader?

"Ms. Charlies, the meeting is about to start in ten minutes." My assistant's voice broke my dazed state. I immediately responded to her and returned to my busy work.

Recently, the Spring Rain Pack had been put under martial law, or the entire border of the werewolves was put under martial law. After all, one did not know which dark corner those cult lunatics would come out from and try to destroy a city.

Strict security control would inevitably bring a blow to the economic vitality of the pack, but the people were temporarily accepting it.

The atmosphere in the conference room was more solemn than ever. Thinking of the bad news from the palace this morning, I realized that things seemed to be developing even worse.

"We've received news that the princess and her diplomatic mission have been detained in the Elven Capital City." General Aldrich's expression was very bad. "At the request of Her Highness, the palace has decided to suspend the negotiation with the elves. However, just in case, from now on, all the troops stationed at the border should be strictly equipped to prevent anything from happening... It was an accident."

I understood why he was so tense. Even I was burning with anxiety when I heard this news. As Selma's husband, the fact that Aldrich could still maintain his rationality and not lead his army to attack the Elf Forest was already a sign of his maturity.

Everyone's heart was heavy because of this news, and no one responded for a while.

As the president of the Spring Rain Pack, Vanya stepped forward to ease the tense atmosphere. "We can't just hide in the pack and do nothing. The Spring Rain Pack was about 100 kilometers away from the Elf Forest. It was neither far nor near, but it was only a few hours' ride for a fugitive. I suggest we set up more outposts along the border and strengthen the patrol deployment to prevent the escaped cultists from taking advantage of the loopholes."

It was said to be on guard against cultists, but everyone knew exactly who it was to deter. Therefore, this proposal was quickly passed after a simple discussion.

After the meeting, General Aldrich asked me to stay for another meeting. A few other people from the Lycan pack and we were called the 'princess' party' in the Spring Rain Pack. People knew whose territory this was, so they didn't object to our small meeting.

General Aldrich went straight to the point, "I've decided to lead a small team and sneak into the Elf Forest to receive Selma and the diplomatic mission."

Everyone immediately opposed this move. Even I felt that it was inappropriate. "I understand your burning anxiety, but sir, once our infiltration operation is discovered, the relationship between us and the elves, which is already like walking on thin ice, will be worse. What will Selma do then? Who could guarantee her safety? Who can guarantee the safety of the diplomatic mission?"

"The internal strife of the elves has reached the point of white heat. The one temporarily in control of the Elven Capital City is the Crown Prince. It is a blatant threat for him to put Selma and the others under house arrest! He's telling us that he doesn't care about the relationship between our two races. If he goes crazy and hurts Selma or the other people in the diplomatic corps, it'll be too late for us to regret it!

"Of course, I know that, but leaving Selma in the Elven Capital City is not a solution. She's also in danger!" At this moment, the awe-inspiring general looked a little dejected. "I can't keep her there. She's being attacked from the back and the front. Any damage may break the delicate balance."

420 The Poisonous Wine

Jordin Charlies' POV:

"Maybe things aren't that bad." I believed General Aldrich was just too concerned. "We should trust Selma more. In terms of force, I don't think any elves can cross the line of defense in New Flow. Maybe the Elf King can, but now he... Besides, Selma has at least helped the elven race. Unless the Crown Prince wants to be a tyrant in the people's hearts, I don't think he will act rashly for the time being. The so-called threat is not a show of strength but weakness."

However, General Aldrich was not so easily convinced by us. When it came to Selma, the calmness and restraint he was so proud of would always go out of control.

In all fairness, I also wished I could immediately fly to the Elf Forest and bring Selma back. However, this was the most unrealistic and irrational way of doing things, so I had to stop him. "So, does the palace know about this?" I asked directly.

General Aldrich was silent. I knew that this was his own decision.

"Please show the calmness and rationality that a general should have. Forgive me for being tough, but this is the last resort. Without the palace's order, you'll only cause more

trouble in the future if you do this without any reason. Besides, Selma's decision to suspend the palace's negotiations with the elves clearly indicates her attitude. She also believed that it was the best choice to pretend to be soft for the time being. Don't forget that there are still those cult lunatics who have yet to be caught."

General Aldrich gave a deep, exhausted sigh and rubbed his slightly haggard face. A few seconds later, that determined expression returned to his face. He allowed himself to indulge in his emotions for a few minutes and immediately turned back into the general who commanded his men, even though his heart was still bleeding from the predicament of his lover.

"I'm sorry, guys. I lost my composure." He said calmly, "You're right, Miss Charlies. We must cooperate with Selma's decision now. Now, please return to your posts. The visitors from the Lycan pack are about to arrive, and we still have a lot of things to take care of."

Speaking of visitors from the Lycan pack, I really didn't want to take on such a thankless job. These people were a mix of good and bad. There were all kinds of talents sent by His Majesty to contribute to the Spring Rain Pack, and there were also soldiers who were here to replace and replenish the army.

There were also the famous 'volunteers' from the major families and various packs. This group was the most troublesome.

Although everyone's information was placed in front of us, allowing us to see everyone's resume as clearly as a flower through a glass, even if you knew who the problem was, you couldn't rashly deal with him because he was a 'volunteer'.

We couldn't act rashly before these people do anything detrimental to the Spring Rain Pack. However, once they did something, we couldn't recover the losses even if we pursued it.

That was why I really hated those forces who tried to play tricks. The Spring Rain Pack didn't reject most of the builders who came with good intentions to create a bigger cake and take away the benefits they deserved, but there were still people who regarded schemes and intrigues as their lifelong pursuit. They felt uncomfortable if they didn't do something.

As a member of the 'princess' party', I couldn't avoid these guests who come under the official banner, so I was always in charge of receiving them. And the guests who came today caught my attention: People from the mobile patrol team were among them, and they escorted a batch of supplies approved by the palace. This was the usual kind of 'welfare'.

I knew the person in charge. He used to have some disputes with Selma, a former Alpha who worked in the mobile patrol team to atone for his sins. He was a man of few

words as if he did not care about anything. After handing over the supplies, he plunged into the mobile patrol's base in the Spring Rain Pack.

"What a strange person..." I mumbled, not taking him to heart.

No matter what, Benson was trustworthy. This allowed me to distribute these welfare resources to my employees of all levels who had worked hard for an entire month without any burden.

This was a very common thing. So common that no one would think there was a problem.

Therefore, when my assistant came in a hurry to report that General Aldrich was unconscious, I subconsciously thought that today was April 1st.

"What did you just say? Say that again," I asked in disbelief.

"General Aldrich is in a coma!" The assistant was anxious and stammered, "After he drank a bottle of red wine in the welfare package today! Our werewolf grandmaster and the medical team are resuscitating General Aldrich and analyzing the composition of this bottle of red wine. However, General Aldrich's situation is not good!"

In an instant, I felt the world spinning around me. It was as if a thousand seagulls were chirping in my ears simultaneously, causing me to have a sharp ringing in my ears. When I realized what was going on, my assistant had already brought me to a secret medical facility.

Looking at the red light sign on the emergency room door, I couldn't help but start to wonder... Who could it be? In these troubled times, who was it that had extended their hand to General Aldrich?

A wanderer?

Evil cultist?

Or perhaps... was this person from the Lycan pack?*innread.com*

421 Fake News

Jordin Charlie's POV:

It was no exaggeration to say that General Aldrich's role in the Spring Rain Pack could be said to be the cornerstone. Not to mention anything else, just the murderous army needed him as the leader.

Looking at the solemn-looking medical staff coming and going into the emergency room, my reaction was not to worry about General Aldrich's safety but to immediately start thinking. How could he hide this matter? How could they stabilize an army that was about to lose its leader? How was he going to report this to the palace? How could they quietly detain all the personnel related to the delivery of goods?

"Ms. Charlies!" My assistant ran over in a hurry. "As General Aldrich did not attend the army's night training inspection on time, and the army could not reach General Aldrich, they have sent someone to inquire about him!"

I did not doubt that the army would be the first to receive the news of my superior's disappearance.

However, at this moment, looking at the panicking assistant, I couldn't help but secretly judge whether she was trustworthy. She was born and raised in the Spring Rain Pack, or rather, she was born and raised in the past.

This was a hardworking and loyal girl. I didn't doubt her credibility. However, she had family and friends, which meant she had a weakness. Anyone could use this to threaten her to do things.

Alright, I knew my current thoughts were very dark. Forgive me for casting a suspicious gaze at the entire world. All the pressure had suddenly shifted onto me. I had to constantly check if the people and things around me were trustworthy because I knew that enemies were lying in the ambush, looking for the slightest mistake.

But in the end, I chose to believe my assistant, a girl with the same name as my friend Emma. It was not just because of her job in the past but also because I had no one to use now. I had no choice.

"Tell the army that General Aldrich has suddenly received a top-secret mission from the palace and has immediately set off." I clenched my fists and felt the sweat gradually drenching my palms. "From now on, all the power of the army will be temporarily taken over by the palace. Please ask them to complete all the daily work according to the usual practice. I will send the documents sent by the palace to the army later."

Emma – or should I call her Lady Kira – obviously knew that there were no documents or top-secret missions from the palace, but she still immediately went to convey my message.

After she left, I turned around to face the anxious people who surrounded the emergency room. They were all part of the princess' party, but that didn't mean they were all loyal to Selma. Some of them were subordinates of His Majesty, the Lycan King. I could trust them without worry, but I was not sure if there were any spies from other forces among them, especially those 'big families' who were used to taking

advantage of every opportunity. I was almost sure that there were their people among them.

“Ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, General Aldrich’s life and death are unknown, and we happen to be in an environment with internal and external troubles. We’re out in the open, the enemy is in the dark, and even evil cultists on the other side of the border are waiting to take a bite of the fat meat. Now, I ask everyone to calm down and unite to quickly maintain the stability of all aspects of the Spring Rain Pack. Don’t drag down the princess who is far away in the elven territory.

“No matter what General Aldrich’s condition is, we must keep the fact that he is poisoned and unconscious a secret. I think everyone knows how terrifying a time bomb an army without a leader is, no matter how strict its military discipline is. Once news of General Aldrich’s condition spreads, those who want to use the army to cause trouble will cause irreparable trouble. Everyone knows in their hearts.

“Next, I sincerely invite everyone to return to your posts and pretend that nothing has happened, as if you just left for a small meeting. Don’t reveal this information to the Spring Rain government yet. As I said earlier, General Aldrich is only on a top-secret emergency mission. The palace will take over everything in an orderly manner.”

Everyone’s expression was different. Some were heavy, while others were relieved. Everyone seemed to have found their backbone, but they also seemed to be breathless from the pressure about to come.

I couldn’t find anything suspicious.

Before everyone left, I said, “of course, I know some people may have unusual thoughts. The current situation may not be out of your expectations, and it will not stop all of your plans.

My voice was cold, even arrogant.

“But no matter what you’re thinking, I hope you remember not to mention the accident of the General. Even if this happened to the princess, the earth-shattering event to us is just a small ripple in the long river of the history of the werewolf pack. All the accidents will pass, and all the troubles will be solved. When the dust is settled, it will be someone’s turn to settle the score.

“A temporary success doesn’t mean anything. I hope you realize that everything you do leads you into the abyss.”

422 Detained

Jordin Charlies’ POV:

The person from the mobile patrol team who stayed in the Spring Rain Pack was supposed to be my most trusted person, but the bottle of poisoned wine was delivered by one of them, so I could not trust anyone of them on this.

Fortunately, the palace's Intelligence Agency also had spies in the Spring Rain Pack, so the task of arresting Benson in secret fell on them.

The first thing I did when I learned that General Aldrich was poisoned was to send a message to the palace. Just as we were busy dealing with the mess, the King sent me a video call.

"Good evening, Your Majesty," I said as I was exhausted, I really didn't have any extra energy to maintain the etiquette. "I think you are here to understand the current situation on the Spring Rain Pack's side. General Aldrich is not out of danger yet. We are in the process of analyzing the ingredients of that bottle of wine. This is currently being kept strictly confidential, and the Spring Rain Pack government will not receive any news related to it.

"And the Army... To stabilize the army, I lied and said that General Aldrich had gone on a top-secret mission and the palace would take over the army. They're urging me to look at the relevant documents, so I have to ask for your help."

After saying everything I needed to say in one breath, I realized that we hadn't even solved any of our problems yet. It was as if the entire night of chaos had been a waste of time.

However, the Lycan King wasn't angry. He nodded very forgivingly and spoke to me kindly, "Well done, Ms. Charlies. You've considered almost all the possible consequences that might happen now and in the future, and you've come up with the best solution."

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This was a compliment with a comforting nature, but I couldn't relax at all in my high-tension state.

"I also got the Intelligence Agency to arrest everyone related to the shipment, including Benson from the mobile patrol team... I wasn't sure if I should check all the remaining supplies and recall the supplies that had been distributed. After all, this would quickly alert the enemy..."

"Just as you said, there's no need to do more. It's obvious that their target this time is Aldrich," the King said. "Perhaps it also involves my daughter, thousands of miles away. But don't worry. They won't dare to involve more innocent people because no one is more afraid of things getting out of hand than these cowards. This is their usual style."

"So you've already guessed who's behind this?" I muttered.

“It’s hard to say before things are confirmed, child. In short, I will now officially hand over the military representative stationed in the Spring Rain Pack to you. Don’t be in a hurry to refuse, and don’t worry about your lack of military training. Compared to being a commander, the army needed a foundation that could stabilize the morale of the army. The palace will guide you on how to command the army. The officers in the army are also experienced, rational, and calm. Together, you will ensure the safety and operation of the army.”

I knew I couldn’t refuse, so I bit the bullet and accepted the task.

The call didn’t last long, and I realized it must have been a sleepless night at the palace.

In the end, the Lycan King told me, “Be careful, child. Always be alert and rational. Selma believes in you, and so do I. The Spring Rain Pack is now in your hands. We know you have the power to protect it.”

Did I?

Could I really protect this city that I’d raised and watched grow?

I wasn’t sure, but I knew it was in danger now. No matter what, I had to do my best to save it.

The next day.

Last night, the palace sent General Aldrich’s ‘transfer order’ over. However, to not let others suspect anything, I held back my impatience and waited until the next day, when the government started work, to send the ‘transfer order’ to the army.

The government did not doubt this and did not have any dissatisfaction with me, a military rookie temporarily commanding the army. Everyone knew that I was only a medium, and the real power was still in the hands of the palace.

Benson and the others were secretly arrested. During the questioning, everyone said that they knew nothing about the poisoning. The mobile patrol team was a special place where few people could stick their hands, but this could not clear them of suspicion.

My suspicions of Benson were high. His grudge against Selma was still vivid in my mind. Could he really hold back his anger when facing Selma’s husband? In the end, he might be the one who would be convinced to poison the wine. Not to mention, he was the general person in charge of the entire supply escort team. He was the one who could poison a bottle of wine specially provided for military officers without being noticed.

However, Benson did not admit to it. The reticent man was practically shouting his innocence, even though he could not produce evidence to clear his name.

423 Late Spring Flowers

Benson Walton's POV:

When I was brought to the secret prison, I had to admit that I was very ignorant.

When I discovered the cause of everything, a fit of irrepressible anger engulfed me.

Why was everyone suspecting me?

Just because I once had a grudge against Selma, and Aldrich was Selma's husband, so I must take revenge on him?

I thought that even though I didn't do the best, it was enough. I endured the coldness and darkness of the mobile patrol team without complaint, punishing myself with endless regret. I didn't ask for anyone's forgiveness. I wanted to find peace in my heart through constant, bitter cultivation.

However, I couldn't even fulfill this little wish. A sudden conspiracy pushed me into the eye of the storm again. Ironically, I didn't have any evidence to prove my innocence.

There was no evidence to prove that I was the murderer, and there was no evidence to clear my name.

Due to the alcohol case, I was temporarily suspended, and life in the secret prison without seeing the sun was enough to make me anxious.

I started to think back to my past life. My memories came to the few days before I accepted the escort mission.

The sunlight in the Lycan pack was always so abundant. There were lush plants and fragrant flowers everywhere. The urban greenery car gave them enough moisture, making the water droplets on the leaves shine.

Looking at the unknown wildflowers on the side of the road, I suddenly thought of the flower shop I had been to a few times and the person who received the flowers.

After the last conversation with the captain, I knew what choice I should make, so I never contacted the interim head servant in the palace again. Bertha couldn't call me. She asked someone to contact me a few times, but I didn't answer, so she didn't look for me again.

She was a gentle and intelligent girl, and I thought she understood what I meant.

However, Anjay was different from his sister. This brave but annoying boy had once come to look for me, but I didn't see him. I knew I should meet him and tell him coldly,

“Don’t bother me again.” From then on, he and his sister would disappear from my life and the dark dangers.

However, I suddenly became timid when I saw him stubbornly standing in front of the door, waiting for me. He was also carrying a small clay pot in his arms. I’d seen it at Bertha’s house.

I didn’t know what I was thinking at that moment, but before I could react, I had already left the stairwell like a zombie. I patrolled my area like a ghost, but nothing could stay on my retinas for a second. I didn’t go back for the whole day.

I didn’t know why I wanted to run, but I did it like a coward.

The next day, when I returned, Anjay had already left. He left the small clay pot at the front desk. The receptionist at the base was also from the mobile patrol team. I wasn’t familiar with him. He didn’t say anything when he handed the clay pot to me, but I knew that both the pot and the food inside must have gone through a round of strict inspection.

This was a mobile patrol team. Cold, dark, and inhumane. It could not contain anything soft or warm, whether it was a fresh flower or a pot of steaming seafood risotto.

After that, my contact with the Bertha siblings was completely cut off. I thought I would never meet them again.

But one day, my captain called me over and gave me a mission.

“The welfare supplies to be sent to the Spring Rain Pack are in preparation. You have been appointed as the person in charge of this mission.” My captain handed me a stack of documents. “In addition, there is a new batch of ‘volunteers’ with you. Some of them are special people who need to be protected. Other than escorting the supplies, your task is to cooperate with them and ensure their safety.”

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I flipped through the information and found no name list.

Without waiting for me to ask, the captain said, “This is a two-way confidential mission. You won’t know the mission’s target, and the mission’s target won’t know your identity. If anything happens during this period, you will know how to help them.”

“Even if there’s no proof of identity or secret code?” This was the first time I’d received such a strange mission.

“That’s right.”

My captain didn't say anything more and urged me to rush to the palace to supervise the distribution of supplies.

It was also because of this that I met Bertha again. She was leading a group of servants from the palace's wine cellar to obtain the officer's wine. She was also shocked when she saw me.

"Oh... Oh, hello, Mr. Walton." She was stunned for a moment but quickly greeted me in a polite and distant tone. "It seems that you are in charge of the delivery of supplies this time."

Her natural tone of voice made me secretly heave a sigh of relief, but at the same time, I also felt a strange sense of dejection.

"Yes, sorry to trouble you with the supplies, ma'am," I replied drily. "Is this the wine supply? Is there anything else?"

"There's nothing else. This is the last batch specially supplied to the high-ranking officers. To prevent confusion, I'll separately package the ones belonging to General Aldrich later to distinguish them from the other officers."

After such a dry and dull conversation, we didn't say anything else. I immediately said goodbye to Bertha as she led the servants to load the boxes of wine into the car.

424 The Poisoned Wine

Benson Walton's POV:

Bertha looked as stiff as I was, and she almost tripped over her left foot and fell when she left. I subconsciously tried to help her, but her servant was one step ahead of me. Bertha didn't say anything and hurriedly apologized to me for her loss of self-control. She then left with her servants.

Only then did I retract my hand that was frozen in mid-air and watch her disappear around the corner. I silently retracted my gaze and continued working.

After that, there was nothing much to say. The journey was calm, and there was no danger. Naturally, there was no need for me to cooperate with anyone.

It was rare to encounter such a peaceful mission.

However, things would not always be smooth sailing. Just when I thought the mission had ended safely, a bolt from the blue came. General Aldrich was poisoned after drinking the special wine from the welfare supplies!

As the person in charge of the supplies, I was naturally locked up as the most suspicious person.

I didn't poison the wine supply, even though no one believed me. What made me even more distressed was the choice of the murderer.

The wine came from the palace's wine cellar, a royal tribute. Every bottle had been checked 800 times before being put into the cellar, so there was no problem. This meant that the bottle of wine had been tampered with during the transfer, transportation, and distribution.

Every day, I would personally go and check the supplies. I could guarantee that Aldrich's specially sealed supplies had not been opened at all, which meant that the poison was injected into the wine during the process of mixing or distribution.

It would have been fine if it was during the distribution, as the people who handled it were all from the Spring Rain Pack. The noble lady from Selma's side would not be so stupid as not to investigate this point.

However, if the poison came from the process of extraction...

I couldn't help but think of Bertha.

Wouldn't she also become the most suspicious person? After all, as the acting head servant, she must have had access to the key to the wine cellar. She was more capable than anyone else in the palace of poisoning a bottle of wine without anyone noticing.

If you stayed in the mobile patrol team for too long, you would become suspicious of everything in the world. Thus, I couldn't help but suspect Bertha.

However, I quickly rejected this conjecture, not because I had any evidence, but because of my irrational feelings. Bertha was a kind and grateful girl. The royal family had done her incredible kindness, so she would never poison Aldrich!

This was based entirely on my biased judgment, but I couldn't control myself from finding excuses for Bertha's innocence.

I wasn't the only one who could think of all this. After being locked up for an entire day, I was interrogated again. This time, it was the noble lady herself.

"Hello, Mr. Walton." Her expression was cold, but she surprisingly didn't have any hostility towards me. I could see the fatigue on her face that she couldn't hide. The heavy workload and pressure had probably robbed her of any power to generate unnecessary emotions. This was a daily occurrence for everyone on the mobile patrol team.

“Hello, Ms. Charlies.” Her name and position were written on her badge, so I knew she must have come to me because of the poisoned wine case. “What do you want from me?”

“Let’s make the long story short.”

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Jordin Charlies put a dozen reports on the table and motioned for me to look. I flipped through them and found that they were test reports.

The test subject was the bottle of wine that had put Aldrich in danger. In addition to alcohol, aromatic amine, sugar, and other common ingredients in wine, there were also some things that should not have appeared, including silver and holy water, the two great weapons against werewolves.

In addition, a handwritten report by a werewolf grandmaster mentioned that the wine contained some very evil concentrated power, which wrapped the silver and holy water.

There was also Aldrich’s own blood within. The wine bottle was engraved with a very secret witchcraft. Only when it came into contact with someone with the same blood source would the witchcraft catalyze the reaction of evil power, silver, and holy water. After the three were combined, they would form a ‘poison’ that would attack the body and soul at the same time.

This was simply a trap that was directed at Aldrich.

According to the magic fluctuation test, the sorcery on the wine bottle came from about five days ago, the day the wine was loaded into the car.

Ms. Charlies spoke, her tired eyes flashing with unconcealed anger derived from irritation and exhaustion.

“As the person in charge, you followed the entire process of mixing and loading the wine into the truck. The palace has confirmed that you have not touched any wine during this process, so the traces on your body have been washed away for the time being.”

I didn’t feel relieved at all, even though she said that. I knew that there must be more painful things waiting for me. At that moment, fresh flowers, a clay pot, paella, and a snow-white apron suddenly appeared in front of me. I almost wanted to shout to stop Ms. Charlies from saying what she would say next.

However, the reality was that I was like a block of wood, motionless. I looked expressionlessly at Ms. Charlies’ mouth, opening and closing, throwing out the question I didn’t want to answer the most.

“As an outstanding member of the mobile patrol team, the palace believes in your judgment. So please tell me, from a professional point of view, who are the most suspicious of all the people who came into contact with the wine supply that day?”

425 Humans Are Contradictory

Jordin Charlies' POV:

I wasn't familiar with Benson Walton at all. All I knew about him came from Selma's calm retelling of her past and the cold, standard information she provided.

This was a man with a very divided life. For the first half of his life, he was arrogant and was a typical proud son of heaven. Then, the sudden turn in his life made him feel like he had fallen from a cliff and become a quiet and gloomy man. His interpersonal relationships were very simple. They were nothing more than his parents, teammates, and a few old friends from the past, although they had not been in contact much.

How could it not attract my attention for such a man to have such a soft and delicate girl on his resume?

Furthermore, this girl was the acting head servant of the palace. She was the only person other than Benson who could tamper with the wine without anyone noticing. To block the news, the palace had not taken any measures against the servants in charge of the deployment that day.

To a certain extent, Benson's attitude determined how the girls would be treated. They would not be hurt. It was just the difference between a serious inquiry and a silent beating around the bush.

If he chose to hide it from Bertha, things would go in a direction that no one wanted to see.

The iron table in the interrogation room was cold, and the pale light reduced the uncomfortable temperature by several degrees.

Benson lowered his head and looked at the pile of materials, deep in thought. Five minutes had passed, and he still had no intention of speaking. I didn't have that much time to waste on him.

It seemed that he had chosen the worst result.

I felt a little regretful, but at the same time, I felt even more frustrated. I didn't need any more trouble to push my nerves to the limit.

Just a second before my patience ran out, Benson moved.

He patiently, almost stiffly, arranged the scattered materials in order until the slightly wrinkled paper formed a thin rectangular shape, then handed it to me.

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“In my opinion, there are indeed a few people who are more suspicious.”

He spoke expressionlessly, like a wound-up machine.

“The servants who were in charge of distributing the supplies that day, the palace guards who were temporarily assigned to carry heavy objects, and the most suspicious one... Bertha, the acting head servant.”

He had said it.

This should have been a result that would have made me heave a sigh of relief, but I didn't feel relaxed in the slightest. At the last moment, I realized that this would only drag more people into the water. Things would become more complicated, and I would get into more trouble that would be difficult to solve. Because of this, the palace would conduct an extensive investigation, and countless worried, puzzled, or ill-intentioned eyes would become a dark cloud over the palace.

Or rather, no matter which answers Benson chose, the result would be the same. Everything was already heading in an irredeemable direction when the bottle of poisoned wine appeared.

Due to Benson's cooperation, the suspicion of him working with the palace's spies was temporarily lifted. It was only temporary, and it couldn't prove his innocence.

I had no choice but to keep Benson locked up in the secret prison. Perhaps getting the help of the mobile patrol team would make things a lot easier, but I couldn't gamble on the possibility that I could trust him, even if I knew that as a direct force of the Lycan King, the possibility of him having problems was very low. However, I was afraid that more trouble would appear and add to my troubles.

After a few days of being in a mess, I finally realized how weak and incompetent I was. The self-satisfaction brought by the Spring Rain Pack was almost exhausted.

Construction was exciting and proud, but not everyone cared about the house and its family. There would be people who would use schemes and intrigues for their benefit, even if what they got was not even one-tenth of what others lost.

But even if the conspirators didn't care, I couldn't. Caring meant weakness. It meant retreating. It meant losing the courage to press forward, being stupid, and not caring about anything.

When I realized this, I suddenly understood why my family would slowly lose their familiar appearance and become completely different from my impression of them.

It was helpless. It was really helpless.

Before I left, the silent Benson suddenly asked me, "Does Selma know about this? Is it about Aldrich and everything else?"

I paused for a moment before deciding to tell the truth. "No, she doesn't know."

Benson did not say a word. He nodded and obediently left with the guard.

Of course, Selma should know about this but now was not the time. I did not doubt the feelings she and Aldrich had honed through life-and-death situations. Aldrich was willing to save her at all costs. Could Selma retain much of her rationality in the face of her lover's danger?

I had to ensure I didn't make her situation worse, even if it was inhumane and cold-blooded.

I had already prepared myself for Selma's anger and resentment toward me when she returned and learned of everything. However, I would never regret my decision.

They would become weak because of their weaknesses, but they would also do anything to protect the things they wanted to protect. Humans were such contradictory creatures.

426 The Vine Key

Selma Payne's POV:

Everything was calm, at least on the surface.

The elves were still in a fragile state of peace, and there was no progress in the search for the cultists. I wasn't surprised by this at all. When everyone had invested their strength into the seemingly endless power vortex, even a rat with a broken leg could easily empty a house's warehouse, let alone a group of evil cultists who would use every means possible.

The Council of Elders didn't contact us. Looking at the decreasing number of soldiers belonging to the interim government on the streets and the increasing number of the Crown Prince's private army and supporters, I knew that the current situation of the Council of Elders wouldn't be much better than ours.

"How boring..."

I pulled down the heavy curtains and ruffled my hair in frustration, trying to suppress the anxiety in my heart.

Actually, it was very easy for me to leave. I'd choose a dark, windy night and use New Flow as a cover. I could easily fly away from this place of trouble with my wings. However, I could do it, but the others couldn't. I couldn't leave them here alone to face the unknown.

Moreover, those missing cultists also made it difficult for me to sleep. The fact that this pieced-together evil cult could be so ruthless as to sacrifice the big and save the small was a clear indication of the problem. Being in such a hurry to leave the Elf Forest, it was likely to mean that they had collected enough sacrifices and did not need more!

Besides, Locke was a fanatic believer in Leviathan. He had worked so hard and even sacrificed himself. Was it to create a body for someone else's master?

One Azazel was enough for the world to suffer, and now there was Leviathan. I really had to pray for the goddess to come!

However, my worries were of no use at the moment. The elves didn't care about where the cultists went. Perhaps they did care, but this kind of care was nothing in the face of power at their fingertips.

There was no news from the Spring Rain Pack or the elves. It was as if the cultists had disappeared from this world and hidden in another dimension. However, the space spells they had used before had strict restrictions, and even Kafka couldn't break this rule. Could it be that they had hidden in hell?

It was another quiet night.

On the day the embassy was sealed off, I ordered the lights to be turned off at a fixed time every night, not to save the elves' electricity bill but to reduce the attention of others.

The sudden knocking on the door was obviously slightly creepy in the darkness.

Who would come to find us in the middle of the night? If it were the force that currently controlled the Elven Capital City, their usual method would be to kick the door open. If it were the Council of Elders or Dorothy's father, they would not have chosen such a conspicuous door. They would have used a more secure and secretive method.

After having the civilian staff hide in the house and the combat personnel taking their positions in every corner of the Embassy, I opened the door a crack.

Surprisingly, there was no one outside the door. Even the soldiers patrolling back and forth with searchlights had temporarily disappeared. There was a vine-woven key on the

ground, and a swallow stood on a wire not far away, looking at me quietly. It then tilted its head and began to comb its feathers.

I picked up the key and closed the door.

Dorothy and the rest immediately approached me and asked me what had happened.

“Nothing happened except for this key.” I showed the vine key to everyone. “Has anyone seen something similar? Someone left this key in front of the embassy.”

Everyone was confused. This key made of branches and leaves was like a toy for elven children, full of distrust.

No one could give me a reason, so I had to ask everyone to go back to their rooms to rest and put more people into the frontline team to strengthen the embassy’s security.

Back in my room, I sat on the carpet and carefully observed the key in my hand. This couldn’t be a child’s joke, but it had appeared without any hint or warning, so it was very confusing.

Dorothy walked over with a lamppost and picked up the key to examine it carefully. Suddenly, she said, “I think I know what this is.”

Eve and I immediately looked at her. Master Hayley also came to our side.

“Due to the opposition of various forces, the Great Elder had no choice but to put a stop to his synesthesia vision plan on the surface and secretly take us to see the Elven King. He awakened the guardian spirit in the palace and opened a gate made of intertwining vines.”

Under the table lamp’s illumination, the key’s details became even clearer. This allowed us to see that there were no protrusions or grooves on the key, and the end of the key looked like it was half-woven and had a few thin vines supporting it pitifully.

“If a door made of vines could lead to anywhere in the palace, could a key made of vines turn any door into a door made of vines?”

427 The Parchment

Selma Payne’s POV:

The world was so big that there were all kinds of strange things. Just as Dorothy had guessed, the moment the vine key was inserted into the lock, the door to the bedroom was quickly wrapped up by the vines that came out of the lock, and in a few seconds, it had completely changed.

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“If I’m not wrong, behind this door should be some corner of the palace. This is an invitation from the Great Elder to meet us.” Dorothy then looked at me. “Do you want me to go over?”

I wasn’t sure if I should go. Although Dorothy said that only the Elf King and the Great Elder could use the power of the palace’s guardian, that didn’t mean I trusted the Great Elder completely. But in the end, I still decided to accept this meeting. Perhaps this was an opportunity to break out of this situation.

There was a dark corridor behind the door. The decoration was slightly shabby. I had never seen this place in the palace. At the end of the corridor was a medium-sized stone room. The light was dim, and only the Great Elder was waiting in the dark.

“Good evening, Your Highness.” The Great Elder bowed slightly to me. Even in such a weak light, I could see his tired face. “I’m sorry to disturb you so late, but I don’t think we can wait any longer.”

“Are you talking about the current situation in the Elven Capital City? I don’t think I can do anything.” I still insisted on my principle of not getting involved in internal affairs, even though it seemed that this was not something I could achieve with my wishful thinking.

The Great Elder laughed dryly and motioned for us to sit down. He was also sitting on a cold wooden bench and needed to use the walking stick in his hand to support his old body.

Faced with my direct rejection, he didn’t bug me and instead said, “We all know that His Highness the Crown Prince’s rule will not last long, but he seems to be blinded by something and stubbornly thinks that victory is in his hands. Other than a few nobles and mayors who took advantage of the situation, I didn’t find any forces I could name to join him. Then, his strange self-confidence is very strange.”

“Maybe he is such a stupid and arrogant person?” The Great Elder and I looked the same, but I didn’t want to be led into his trap of words. “With all due respect, although I haven’t spent much time with the Crown Prince of the royal family, his arrogance and stupidity – I mean, his fiery character is really impressive.”

“That’s right. The Crown Prince is undoubtedly an idiot. I agree with you on this point. This may be due to his pampered life and young experience. I think His Majesty will correct his shortcomings if he has enough time. However, now is not the time to slowly polish the stone. A ruler with the potential to be muddleheaded like the Crown Prince will be the nightmare of the entire elven race.”

That was not nice, and he shouldn’t say that in front of an outsider like me. As an outsider, it was enough for me to ridicule the Crown Prince’s personality. As for whether or not he could rule over the elven race, that wasn’t for me to judge.

Thus, I disagreed and just looked at the Great Elder quietly.

The Great Elder saw I was unmoved and said with a bitter smile, "You're so alert. I didn't mean anything else."

"I hope you don't, too. So, why do you want to see me tonight?"

"To be precise, I'm not here to look for you. I'm here for your friend."

The Great Elder looked at Dorothy, who was beside me.

"My dear Miss Dorothy and that respectable Master Hayley, I've come here tonight to seek their help."

"Me?" Dorothy pointed at herself. "Do you need to borrow the power of nature? Or a prophecy? I'm sorry, but I can't help you. I can only observe nature's power, but I've spent all my energy on prophecies. I don't have any more power to pry into fate."

The Great Elder shook his head and took out a small item wrapped in silk from his wide robe, saying, "That's not the case. I hope everyone can help me appraise something." He opened the cloth bag, and inside was a folded parchment. It was a rare item in modern times.

"This is a parchment from the Crown Prince's safe." He unfurled the paper slowly. Strange patterns were drawn on it, and the patterns exuded an uncomfortable evil aura. "I hope you can help me confirm the source of the power. Is it from a failed unknown priest or a demon we don't want to see?"

I suddenly raised my head to look at the Great Elder and coldly replied, "With all due respect, there should be many outstanding masters who are famous thousands of miles away in your land. There is no need to trouble outsiders with this kind of matter, and it is not something that we outsiders should interfere with."

This piece of paper was the key that the Great Elder had used to bring down the Crow Prince – if the patterns on it were indeed from the devil. I'd already decided not to get involved in the elves' family matters, so how could I easily agree to this?

"I know you won't agree easily, but I beg you to listen to my difficulties."

The Great Elder sighed and placed the parchment on the cold stone table.

428 III Intentions

Selma Payne's POV:

“I’m sure you know what the elf race is like now, so I don’t need to hide it. The power struggle was more intense than I expected. I thought that the Crown Prince would not go too far for the sake of His Majesty, but in fact, he was so reckless and tried to take everything away at once, which made it difficult for our entire Council of Elders to deal with because the interim government has racked its brains to maintain the precarious peace and has no more power left.

“The Crown Prince is reckless, but he’s not stupid. He knows that he has no power to compete with other forces except for his identity. I sent people to investigate the cause of all this, but most of them have yet to return. The only clue the remaining people gave me was this parchment.

“The evil aura on it is so strong that it seems to be able to erode the air. I immediately sent someone to identify it, but the final results were disappointing – no one could detect where the power came from. Although it’s evil, turbid, and dark, any inspection seems to run into an unbreakable obstacle, so much so that it’s impossible to see through its essence.

“That’s why I’ve come to seek your help. Miss Dorothy has the power to see through everything, and Master Hayley is a world-renowned rune expert. Perhaps she’ll be able to find more clues.

He spoke in detail and sincerity, but he still didn’t touch on the point that I was most concerned about – how could he guarantee that this test was only a ‘test’?

To be honest, I didn’t really care about the ins and outs of this piece of paper. After all, the game of power was always the same. Based on the smell of this piece of paper, I was sure that the Crown Prince had an unspeakable relationship with some bedbugs from hell.

Taking down the Crown Prince would be a shortcut to solving my predicament, but I had to ensure that we wouldn’t fall into an even more troublesome whirlpool after this matter was over.

Thus, I replied to him even more coldly, “You know that this isn’t as simple as just looking at this piece of paper.”

“I understand. That’s why I’m here alone. Other than the people present, no one knows what happened today. You don’t have to worry about me using this to threaten you to take a side or do something in the future,” the Great Elder said.

“I’m sorry, I can’t trust you.” Of course, I wouldn’t believe him! The guardian spirit had absolute control, and the Great Elder was now its chosen one. Who knew if there was a way to record everything that happened tonight that we didn’t know?

“If you don’t think it’s safe here, we can go to the embassy of the werewolf pack.” The Great Elder was still persistent.

“Why are you so sure that Miss Dorothy and Master Hayley can solve a problem that even the grandmasters of your land can’t do anything about?” I asked.

The Great Elder looked at me without saying a word.

It took me a while to react. He was saying that his confidence came from me.

Me?

Wait a minute.

This meant that this old fox’s purpose for coming here tonight wasn’t for Dorothy and Master Hayley at all. He was afraid I would reject him, so he first found two candidates to calm my emotions.

I realized what he was thinking. “The disguise on the parchment can hide the source of his power. However, no matter how much the cake looks like a flower, it can’t change the fact that it’s a cake. So, you only have to get New Flow to taste the power of the parchment to know what it is.”

“You’re really...” I should be angry, but I couldn’t help but laugh at the turn of events tonight. “You trust me that much?”

“You’re a noble person. To be able to travel thousands of miles to help an outsider who has no relation to you, there’s no need to question your character.” The Great Elder said gently, “Furthermore, I’m indeed at my wit’s end. To be honest, compared to the elven masters, you and your companions may be more worthy of my trust. After all, you will never secretly join any forces.”

Seeing that I was still unconvinced, the Great Elder added, “I think you guessed in your heart the moment you felt the evil power emanating from this parchment. Yes, I also suspect His Highness the Crown Prince is related to the heretic cult believers wandering in the Elf Forest. It’s hard to believe, but it might have already happened.

“The elven prince is colluding with the foreign enemy who attacked the elven race. No one will believe this if I tell them without any evidence. However, once both sides achieve their goals, the elf race will have to pay a heavy price, even if it’s not in danger. The demon’s gift isn’t that easy to take.

“Besides, if they succeed in their plot, do you think those cultists still missing will be executed? Once the demon’s physical body in the human world is awakened, who else can stop these lawless visitors from hell other than the goddess?”

429 Top Secret Mission

Selma Payne's POV:

I had to admit that the Great Elder had somewhat convinced me.

To be honest, my original goal in coming to the elven territory was to hunt down the cultists and stop the appearance of Azazel. Besides, there might be another Leviathan among the demons in the modern world, so I couldn't just let the cultists go.

Should I agree?

After weighing the pros and cons, I finally nodded. "Alright then, please follow me."

So we followed the old and dark corridor back to the embassy.

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Master Hayley and Eve were extremely vigilant when they saw the Great Elder behind me. After I explained the situation, they only lowered their hostility a little.

I ended the battle quickly as I gently absorbed some power leaking from the parchment. I immediately recognized that this power came from Azazel. It was still the same sentence. No matter how well-disguised the cake was, it could not change its taste and composition.

"But how do you make others believe you?" I returned the parchment and said, "You know I can't testify for you."

"I only want an answer that can make me feel at ease and do what I want to do." The Great Elder kept the parchment and smiled slyly. "As for evidence, this piece of paper is enough. Everyone will believe me."

I fell silent. He was right. People would believe him. It didn't matter, even if the paper was forged. Because the evidence was not the point at all. The point was whether or not they could pull the Crown Prince down from his position.

Before the Great Elder left, I asked, "We're still closely monitored. How should I contact you if I need to talk to you?"

"You have the key." The Great Elder looked at the vine key in my hand. "You can use it to open any door as you wish. Behind the door will be the room we just met in. Please leave the information there. I'll contact you as soon as I see it."

"Can you guarantee that it's safe there?"

"Yes, I promise... Other than the guardian spirit, no one else knows about it."

The next day.

Early in the morning, I could hear the chaos of war outside the window. I peeked through the gap in the curtains and saw that the originally desolate streets were now packed with all sorts of transportation. Those classical horse carriages or modern sedans had family emblems of various shapes and sizes printed on them, indicating that they were from some noble or feudal lord family.

The Great Elder acted so quickly to begin the Crown Prince's trial in such a hurry. The internal situation of the elven race was much worse than I had imagined.

"Should I send someone to inquire about the situation?" Eve asked.

I shook my head. "There's no need. Let the elves handle their matters. We just need to know the results. If we participate too much, it will seem like we have some ulterior motives. Today will be a full martial law, and it will be difficult for our people to sneak in."

Now, it was our turn to watch the show.

The embassy's location wasn't cheap, and the towering palace could be seen in the distance. All morning, we watched the cars come and go on the street.

The soldiers on this side were wearing the Crown Prince's armband, while the soldiers on the other were wearing feathers from an unknown force. Both sides were at daggers drawn and almost started fighting. At this time, a few more groups of people from unknown forces arrived. The several sides were in a deadlock, and in the end, they dispersed.

This was much more interesting than the boring soap operas on TV.

People had temporarily forgotten that a group of foreign visitors like us was in the embassy. Most of the spies around the embassy had also left. The Crown Prince would not surrender so easily. There was still a lot to happen.

At noon, I received a regular message from the Spring Rain Pack.

"Spring Rain Pack is under martial law?" I frowned and felt that something was wrong. "What happened? Why didn't the intelligence report mention anything? Also, why did the military use Jordin's seal when they sent out the news? Where's Aldrich?"

I immediately motioned for the intelligence personnel to call Spring Rain Pack back, and it was Jordin who picked up the phone.

"Good afternoon, Your Highness." Jordin looked a little tired.

“What happened, Jordin? Why do you look so haggard?” I asked worriedly, “Is the Spring Rain Pack okay? Why is it suddenly under martial law? Where’s Aldrich? Are you the one taking over the Army temporarily? What’s he doing?”

“Let me tell you slowly. I’m sorry, I’m a little dizzy now.” The dark circles under Jordin’s eyes were almost wider than her own. “A full martial law is a measure in the plan. Because we haven’t found any traces of the cultists for many days, the palace has decided to use this method to ensure the security of the Spring Rain Pack after some discussion.

“As for General Aldrich, he was suddenly sent to solve a top-secret mission. This matter concerns mankind and is considered the highest level of secret. The contents of the mission are only known to His Majesty and General Aldrich. I’m sorry I can’t answer you. The army stationed in Spring Rain Pack is now remotely taken over by the palace, and I took up the position as the temporary commander. To be honest, this is really a torturous job. I’m glad my uncle and aunt sent me to the palace instead of the army.”

I could understand why the Spring Rain Pack was on full alert, but Aldrich was suddenly transferred to a top-secret mission? Or a mission related to humans that only he and my father knew about?

430 “The King”

Selma Payne’s POV:

Unless the humans suddenly discovered the traces of the werewolves and prepared an army to invade, what else was more urgent than a demon eyeing covetously and preparing to descend on the human world?

It was hard to understand my father’s decision, so I subconsciously prepared to contact him after ending the call with Jordin.

However, before the call went through, there was a sudden loud explosion in the distance. My hand trembled in fear, and the phone fell on the carpet with a dull and ominous sound.

The girls and I gathered before the window to check on the situation. We saw that half of the palace had suddenly collapsed, and black smoke and fog rose from the ground, like a tornado connected to the gray clouds that had suddenly become thick, sweeping up countless building fragments and... A human-shaped object.

I narrowed my eyes and observed. I realized that the ‘human-like objects’ struggling in the tornado were living elves!

The negotiations had failed!

I immediately realized that something unexpected had happened over there. The Crown Prince didn't surrender without putting up a fight. I didn't even know where he had obtained this evil power from the demons to counterattack. At present, it seemed that the Crown Prince had the upper hand. The Great Elder must not have thought that this kid not only dared to collude with the enemy but also became a lackey of the devil.

"Are we going to support them, Your Highness?" Eve came to ask me for instructions. I nodded and said, "Send an 'inquiry' to the interim government first. There is no need to wait for them to answer. Immediately arrange for the team members to provide support."

By the time the interim government had time to answer me, there would probably be nothing left in the palace.

We ran into Mr. Cage on the way. He was in a hurry, obviously attracted by the explosion of the palace.

"A strong dark aura," he said firmly. "It's definitely from the devil. It's not even a power borrowed from the devil. It's more like a disaster brought on by the devil himself."

"You're saying..." We were shocked by this.

"That's right," Cage said solemnly. "No matter who used this power, he has integrated with a part of the demon to some extent. Although it's a very, very, very small bit, it can't be taken lightly."

The Crown Prince? Fused with a demon?

To be honest, this really shocked me. Cooperating with the cultists and praying to the demons for power was already shocking enough. Where did the Crown Prince get the courage to fuse with a demon fragment? Wouldn't it be better to rebel if he had the guts and courage? Was it worth it to pay such a massive price for power?

The Elven Capital City was in a mess. Most powerful people were trapped in the palace, so much so that a large number of troops gathered in the Elven Capital City could not gather enough power to maintain order. The soldiers under the interim government barely guided the people to take refuge on the streets. It was somewhat effective, but it was like a drop of water in the sand for the entire Elven Capital City.

There weren't even any guards at the palace's entrance. While we were on our way, the disaster had spread to even more places. There were broken walls and broken tiles everywhere, as well as important figures who were running away in a hurry. Their gorgeous dresses were burning with dust and blood, indicating that this ancient palace that had stood strong for over 4000 years was about to be destroyed today.

I randomly grabbed a noble kid running for his life and loudly asked, "How's the situation in the palace?"

The man was still in a state of shock as he described the miserable situation in a jumble.

There was no need for guidance. Anyone could see the most intense battle in the palace. A black aura filled the sky, and the dense demonic aura even reminded me of that snowy night in the Rocky Mountains.

Azazel...

All of a sudden, I had a chilling thought.

Did those cultists disappear at the border of the Elf Forest?

Or rather, did these people escape to the border?

It was as if we were the only ones who believed that the heretic cult believer had disappeared at the forest's edge. We couldn't find any traces of him, and we searched for him in vain.

However, what if the whole thing was in the dark?

What if the cultists were making a feint at the border and then secretly ran back to the Elven Capital City?

The Crown Prince was cooperating with the demons to fight for power. For him to be so crazy over the supreme crown, was it difficult to hide a few evil cultists?

"Dorothy, what is the extent of your connection with nature?"

Dorothy was stunned by my question and muttered, "How should I put it? It's not too deep or too shallow. I can see everything, but I'm never allowed to interfere."

"Are you sure that only the Elf King can use the power of nature?"

"To be honest, I don't know. My understanding of all this comes from the shallow experience of the Great Elder and myself over the past few days. I think only a King of the elven race is qualified to borrow the power of nature."

"The King?"

I mulled over this word as my thoughts continued to wander.

What kind of person could be considered a 'King'?

The ruler of the elves? However, if this ruler was now in a deep sleep and had one foot in the coffin, unable to exercise royal power and bear responsibility, could he still be considered a 'King'?

If he couldn't, then who would he hand him over to? The next King? How was this concept defined? Did it have to be acknowledged by the previous king, or was it only able to be passed on through blood relations, like other ancient traditions?

431 The Truth

Selma Payne's POV:

The Elf King was on the verge of death. Could the power of nature have entered the transition period? As the heir, did the Crown Prince also have the power to use a part of the power of nature? Since he was already in cahoots with the demons, it wasn't strange for him to help the cultists get rid of the mark that nature had left on them, right?

I admitted that this idea was crazy, but... Just look at the current state of chaos. No matter how crazy this idea was, it was not that rare.

If things were going in the direction I'd guessed, then I was afraid it wouldn't be as easy to deal with the Crown Prince as I'd thought. It wasn't scary to have an arrogant brat as your enemy, but if the brat held the switch of a nuclear bomb in his hand and thought that the power of the nuclear bomb was his power, things would be much more troublesome.

The palace was no longer as bright, beautiful, and dignified as it was when I first arrived. We didn't even need to walk through the winding corridors. We stepped on the broken walls and quickly arrived at where the conflict erupted.

The closer we got, the thicker the aura of the evil power became. Even the air seemed to be vaguely filled with a thick black fog. I was afraid they would be infectious, so I wrapped everyone in a layer of defense made of New Flow.

The hall used for high-end meetings had been destroyed, and the once beautiful stained glass had now become debris mixed in the mud. There weren't many people present, and even fewer were still standing. The Crown Prince stood proudly on the broken podium, countless nauseating evil auras radiating from his body.

As expected, it was him.

"Why do you continue to struggle?" He looked arrogantly at the Great Elder and the others, who were in a sorry state, and said disdainfully, "Anyway, no matter what the outcome is, it has already been decided. No one can contend against me. No one can change the outcome. I am destined to rule the world!"

“Stop dreaming!” An angry aristocrat shouted. “Even if we change the rules, the elves will never acknowledge you as the king! You’re a scum who colludes with enemies from the inside and has forgotten all about the rules!”

As soon as he finished speaking, a sharp black mist wrapped tightly around the noble. His luxurious robe was easily torn into rags, and blood gushed out of the deepening wound.

It was obvious that this was the Crown Prince’s doing. He wanted to use this cruel method to kill his opponents and intimidate others.

“Dorothy, take your team and spread out to search the palace. Save the survivors who did not manage to take refuge in time!”

I immediately ordered Dorothy to lead her team into the palace to rescue the people while I led Eve and Master Hayley to join the battlefield.

New Flow dissolved the black mist around the noble. He fell to the ground like a broken sack and fainted before he could even say a word of thanks.

The black-gold moth slowly healed his wounds. Master Hayley took him to a space that seemed to have once belonged to the hall for an emergency examination.

“Your Highness!” The Great Elder and the others looked at me in surprise. “Why are you here? This is too dangerous!”

“If I didn’t come, you guys would be in even more dangerous.” I didn’t want to waste my time discussing politics at this critical moment. “The embassy has sent you a letter of consolation. When everything is over, please give me a new agreement, so I don’t turn from good to bad.”

“Wow, look who’s here! The little princess of the werewolf pack. What now? Are you not going to take advantage of the chaos to escape? I thought you and your husband were very loving, but it seems like that’s not the case.”

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The Crown Prince looked at me provocatively, his annoying mouth constantly spouting below-the-belt provocations.

“What do you mean by that?” I squinted dangerously, feeling that his words had a hidden meaning. “Don’t mince your words. It’s not too late to talk about your trash talk after you’re in prison!”

The Crown Prince laughed exaggeratedly, obviously not taking my warning seriously. He even ridiculed me even more, “Look, what an admirable career woman. Your husband is dying in bed, but you are still standing in other people’s territory and

meddling in their family affairs as if nothing happened. How heartless! I'm so ashamed on behalf of the werewolves to have a cold and disloyal woman like you as their leader!"

What did he just say?

Aldrich... Dying on the hospital bed?

In an instant, my mind was thrown into chaos. Even though I knew that this b*stard was probably releasing a smoke bomb to disrupt my fighting spirit. However, at this moment, I suddenly thought of the strange changes in the Spring Rain Pack, Jordin's unusual attitude, and Aldrich's 'top secret mission' story that was full of flaws.

I realized that everything was a lie. The Spring Rain Pack, Jordin, and the palace had teamed up to lie to me. Something must have happened to Aldrich, and it was a very serious accident. Otherwise, they wouldn't be so secretive about it with me!

"Speak clearly. What do you know?" I gritted my teeth and interrogated the Crown Prince.

He said something that broke my heart, "Silly girl, your husband has consumed poisoned wine with no antidote. He's going to die now."

Selma Payne's POV:

Poisoned wine!

It was poisoned wine that was targeted at Aldrich alone.

In an instant, it was as if a thousand tons of boiling lava had been poured into my body. The intense pain spread from every inch of my heart to my entire body and blood. It had the power of sulfuric acid that corroded my bones, destroying my defenses.

Aldrich...

No, no...

I couldn't help but tremble because I realized everything the Crown Prince said was true. I could even guess who had poisoned Aldrich – the lackeys of Azazel or Leviathan, those lunatics who believed in demons. Even if they hadn't done it themselves, this couldn't have been separated from them. That was why the Crown Prince knew everything in detail.

Aldrich...

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“Selma, keep your spirits up. Don’t be fooled by him!” Eve’s angry shout brought my scattered soul back to its original place. “He’s just a lunatic. How much can a lunatic say? It won’t be too late to ask the truth after he’s been brought to justice.”

As she said this, she glanced at the elves at the side. She meant I shouldn’t easily show my fear in front of outsiders. They were allies now, but who knew how long this precarious relationship would last after everything was over?

“... You’re right.”

I forced myself to calm down and not think about scenes I didn’t want to see. Instead, I turned all my uneasiness and discomfort into anger and swept it toward the first Prince.

“You’ve lost your last chance to defend yourself.” Feeling the transformation of my body, I heard my voice so cold that it could drop ice shards. “Now, no matter what stupid words you say, ‘I’m confused’ or ‘I’m controlled’, it’s useless.

The Crown Prince continued to look at me in disdain. A second later, I immediately jumped away from my original position. A thick and sharp tree root was stuck there like a sharp sword. If I were even a second late, I would have been skewered.

“Then, come at me,” he said with a malicious smile. “Let’s see whose side fate is on.”

In an instant, it was as if two balls of flames had exploded and collided. No one had the upper hand in the first wave of confrontation. The shock wave had instead destroyed the palace even more.

“Please stay away, be careful not to get injured!” Eve led the embarrassed elves to retreat to an open and safe area, and several elves volunteered to stay.

“This is the elves’ business. We can’t just stand by and watch such a sc*m appear in our family.” The Great Elder sighed heavily, and faint green patterns gradually appeared on his skin. “Besides, how can the host escape while the guest suffers? We know our strength is not enough to compete with Her Highness, but please let us at least help her a little.”

Eve didn’t insist and left with the more seriously injured elves.

“Sigh, what an evil creature... What vile creature...” The Great Elder sighed. The patterns on his skin became more and more complicated. In the end, his voice had a hint of a gentle female voice. “Since you’re my brother’s descendant, let me, this unprofessional granduncle, teach you what the immensity of heaven and earth is.”

The demonic fragment had strengthened the Crown Prince, and even I found it challenging to catch up to him. He knew what New Flow was capable of, so he guarded him tightly, not letting any of the men get close to him. He kept using the broken bricks

to form a protective layer around himself. New Flow could only absorb energy and was helpless against ordinary construction waste. He could only push it away again and again.

“Looks like you’re only so-so after all.”

My arm was accidentally cut by the roots of the plants that shot out. Although it healed in a second and disappeared, the Crown Prince still arrogantly began to mock me, “I’m starting to doubt the authenticity of the information. Is it not those trash who exaggerated your ability to cover up their incompetence?”

“What do you know? All sacrifices are necessary! Those lowly and useless commoners are just the soil under the goddess’ feet. Sooner or later, they will return to the arms of nature. Since that’s the case, why didn’t they come and make some contributions to my cause before they died? There are as many lowlifes as there are ants. It doesn’t matter if we lose a few. There will be more babies born sooner or later!” The Crown Prince refuted me.

“So you were the one who let Locke, Kafka, and the others go.” I questioned in a deep voice, “Where did you hide them? Don’t you know how evil they are? Don’t you care about the safety of your people? Do you still want to be the King of the elves with such an awareness?”

I knew it was useless to talk to him. This madman had already lost his mind to power.

Just as I was about to launch another attack, a loud noise suddenly came from the other side of the palace. The remaining part of the palace that was relatively intact had also collapsed. Immediately after, Dorothy’s anxious voice rang in my ears, “Selma, I’ve found Locke and the others. They’re on the other side of the palace!”

I suddenly turned around and met the Crown Prince’s eyes, filled with malice. “Look, these wild dogs can’t stand being nagged at. The little princess was thinking about them, and they came. What a coincidence, right?”

433 The Spirit

Selma Payne’s POV:

“You’re the one who hid them!” I was furious. Although I had expected it, I was still shocked when I faced reality.

The Crown Prince did not say anything. With a contemptuous smile, he disappeared quietly under the cover of the tree roots.

Of course, this unusual calmness couldn't be due to him being timid and retreating in the middle of the battle. I searched blankly for two seconds before suddenly realizing that this b*stard had changed his target to Eve, the Great Elder, and the others!

A loud sound suddenly erupted from behind me when I realized it. Thick roots covered the sky like long whips and surged toward the people. The distance was neither too close nor too far, but I didn't know if I could make it in time to rescue her –

BOOM!

Just as the people were about to be burned by the roots, a green vine appeared out of nowhere and quickly dissolved all the attacks. They were like sea snakes wrapped around the octopus's tentacles, quietly turning the saboteurs' claws into their nutrients.

"This is impossible!"

The Crown Prince cried out in shock. Opposite him, the Great Elder's entire body was covered in unfamiliar patterns. These patterns emitted a faint green light, looking like a miniature version of the vines.

"You're too arrogant, Jill. There are still many things in the world that you haven't understood. Your pride is just a little bit of teeth wisdom. Anyone can master it, but you're the only one who treasures it. You don't have a noble bloodline in your blood, but contemptible stupidity and arrogance. They have already destroyed you, and you are about to destroy everything."

The Great Elder didn't look very nervous, like an old man who had come out to eat. Furthermore, his name was Crown Prince Jill? This was the Crown Prince's real name. People didn't address him like that so casually because of his status. Even the Great Elder, I'd never heard him blurt out the Crown Prince's name, even when he hated him the most.

This was not the Great Elder.

I immediately confirmed this.

Combined with the strange patterns on his body, the sudden change in his expression, and his tone, I believed he must have been 'replaced' by something.

I looked at the vines all over the ground...

Could he be the legendary ancient princess who guarded the palace?

However, the Crown Prince did not notice this. He kept using the power of nature to attack the people, but the sharp roots and indefensible wind blades did not even need me or anyone else to do anything. The seemingly gentle vines could resolve all the

attacks in the first instance. Even the evil power full of contamination could not do anything to them.

In the Crown Prince's mind, his power was probably almost on par with a god's, and he had gone completely crazy after repeatedly losing to the Great Elder. In the beginning, he still had some concerns, but later on, he almost wanted to turn the whole palace upside down. Even the bed chamber of the Elf King, which was deliberately opened at the beginning, was attacked.

After the stained glass window at the top of the king's bed fell to the ground and shattered into pieces, the calm 'Great elder' finally couldn't keep his calm. He frowned seriously, and the vines swarmed up as his expression changed. They broke through the Crown Prince's chaotic defense like a hot knife through butter, almost wrapping him up like a dumpling.

However, at the critical moment, the Crown Prince relied on the corrosive black mist condensed from his evil power to block the advance of the vines, narrowly avoiding them.

"What the hell are you? No one, nothing, can escape the control of nature. You are not that old man! Who are you?"

"You don't have to know who I am."

The 'Grand Elder' was still as calm as an ancient well. Behind her, the vines attacked again.

However, the Crown Prince was much smarter this time. After knowing that he could not restrain the opponent in front of him, he made a prompt decision to give up.

Sensing the remaining magic fluctuations in the air, Master Hayley said with a serious expression, "It's a spatial spell, just like the ones used by the cultists. It can teleport an unknown distance."

"Unknown distance' was a very subtle thing. In a situation where we couldn't track him, it was possible that the Crown Prince was right behind us, or he might have already run out of the Elven Capital City.

However, this was not okay for some people. The "Great Elder' said firmly, "He didn't go far. He's on the other side of the palace with those disgusting wild dogs."

"Are you saying the Crown Prince has met up with the cultists?"

The 'Great Elder' didn't reply to my question. Instead, she disappeared in a flash.

Her disappearance shocked everyone again. This was probably some special privilege of a guardian spirit.

We obviously couldn't bring in some wounded people in the current situation. I arranged for Eve to escort the elves out of the palace and refused their request to stay and help.

When faced with someone who truly wanted to help me, I tried to persuade him with kind words. I wasn't so polite to those who couldn't let go of their schemes at this critical moment. Without any hesitation, I pointed out the fact that they were of no help in the battle. In the end, these 'trash' was escorted away by Eve with a sullen expression.

Selma Payne's POV:

The other side of the palace had become a living hell.

There were high-ranking officials in the palace and even more servants, craftsmen, and guards. These people obviously could not be protected like the nobles and mayors in the first instance of a disaster, so they became the first target of the cultists' wanton attacks.

I sensed a familiar evil aura. I realized that the heretic cult believers were using their old tricks again, attempting to mutate more elves. The worst thing was that they had already succeeded a lot, and the condition of the infected this time was worse. Dozens of 'elves' with twisted limbs and bloody bodies were attacking everyone indiscriminately like zombies without any sense of reason.

The palace guards were cautious and could be infected if they were slightly closer. Although my team members were not at risk of being infected, there was nothing I could do to these irrational 'opponents' – even after they were knocked out, they would be controlled by the evil force to continue standing up. I couldn't kill them!

I was even more helpless regarding the 'core figures' like Locke and Kafka. I couldn't defeat them; if I let them be, more victims would be born. I had no choice but to bite the bullet. As a result, more and more guards were injured, and even my team members didn't get any advantage.

Two light and agile birds were flying in the sky. It was not difficult to see that they provided a wide vision for the people trapped on the battlefield. There were a few broken feathers on the right wing of the Soul Sparrow. Obviously, the enemy had also discovered them and launched an attack on them.

"Selma!" The moment Dorothy saw me, she ran over from afar. "How's the situation on your side? Has it already ended?"

“No, the Crown Prince ran away. He came here and joined the cultists.” I carefully observed every enemy figure, but I didn’t find any trace of the Crown Prince.

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Dorothy also helped in the search, but neither the Soul Sparrow nor Nature could find any trace of the Crown Prince.

At this moment, a few screams were heard, and the mutated elves’ symptoms worsened again. Many people’s bones rapidly grew, piercing through their flesh and blood to form harmful bone spikes. This made the infected suffer and put the people dealing with them in more danger.

“Let’s deal with the current situation first.” With the guardian spirit suppressing the situation, I wasn’t worried that the Crown Prince would cause any trouble for now. It was obvious that dealing with the infected and the cultists was the most important thing right now.

Leaping to the center of the battlefield, New Flow ‘hunted’ the infected elves at lightning speed, devouring the evil energy. However, what surprised me this time was that the contamination source in their bodies seemed to be connected to the ocean in an endless stream. It didn’t seem to be contaminated by a mass of power, but more like a parasite infected by an evil seed.

Some memory fragments of the Rocky Mountains flew into my mind, and I realized this was a serious matter. These contaminated elves were like the ones in the past; demon fragments had parasitized them. Although it wasn’t as serious as Frank’s situation, it couldn’t be dealt with by simply devouring a little bit of overflowing energy.

Only now did I understand why these people still dared to attack despite knowing that there was someone in the Elven Capital City who could purify evil energy. It was because even I would need to focus my attention and spend a lot of time resolving this situation. The battlefield wouldn’t provide me with such conditions.

I tried to use the river to trap the infected, so I could deal with Locke and the rest. However, the infected elves struggled unconsciously under the control of the evil power and tried to attack themselves. I had to control them and purify the evil power. I also had to split my attention to observe the battlefield. I couldn’t split my attention at all.

Unlike their fierce underlings, Locke and Kafka wandered around the battlefield as if they were playing with cats. No one could do anything to them. The strange thing was that they didn’t seem to care about anyone and didn’t launch any fatal attacks.

Very quickly, Locke saw me and exaggeratedly took off his hat. He said unusually excitedly, “Good afternoon, my dear Princess. I hope you’re well!”

"I can't feel good when I see you." I looked at him coldly. "If you can pull out your dagger and kill yourself now, I would laugh, maybe."

"Hahaha! You're so funny, but unfortunately, I'm not a wastrel willing to spend much money on a beautiful woman. My heart is with my Lord."

"Leviathan? What are you guys trying to do? Why does your master always get involved in matters related to Azazel?"

"Who knows? Servants don't need to figure out their master's thoughts. Whatever orders they have, I will faithfully carry them out. As for His Highness, Azazel..."

Locke spoke respectfully, but when he mentioned Azazel, he didn't hide his disgust.

"I rely on my friends when I'm out. If I want to complete the task given to me by my master, I must seek the help of some brothers and sisters, even if they don't believe in my master."

"That is to say, Leviathan wants to appear in the world for some reason?"

"You're really good at fishing for information!" Locke burst into laughter. "Unfortunately, I've said enough today. I can't tell you what you want to know!"

435 The Vessel

Selma Payne's POV:

"Then, we have nothing to talk about." I stretched my muscles. "You know we'll fight to the death today, right?"

Previously, I was still hoping to get some information from Locke, but now, my only hope was for him to die quickly. This was an out-and-out time bomb. One more second of living would cause a lot of trouble.

"My dear Princess, I think my Lord will like your soul very much!"

Locke laughed as he charged at me. His already burly body underwent another huge change in a few seconds. Sharp and thick bone spikes grew out of his joints like fish bones, wings covered in a thin membrane grew out of his back, and his sharp venomous fangs glowed with a green light that made one shiver.

The humid ocean mist gradually mixed with the smoke-filled air. The nauseating ocean stench was hallucinating. That was what New Flow told me the moment he touched it.

"Cover your nose and mouth! Don't suck in the sea mist. It has a hallucinating effect!"

The moment I shouted, Locke was already in front of me. I caught his heavy punch and was surprised to find that he was completely different from before. There was probably no one present who could catch such a terrifying power.

The powerful Locke did not become clumsy because of this. On the contrary, he was even more agile than the most agile elf I had ever seen. The bone spurs could not stop his movements at all. His attack angles were so tricky that I could only take it head-on.

After a few rounds of fighting, I didn't suffer any injuries, but Locke didn't suffer much either.

Unfortunately, this didn't mean that our fight was a draw. Looking around, I discovered that the hallucinatory mist had bewitched many elves. They were frozen on the spot as if something was extremely interesting in their illusions. Some wore gas masks, meaning the fog was pervasive and did not necessarily spread through the mouth and nose.

Even some of my team members were starting to lose their minds. As I said, there was a limit to how much New Flow could withstand without the ability to channel energy to me. Obviously, their protective barrier had reached its limit and was no longer working.

In this situation, most people couldn't even protect themselves. The battle situation started to become sluggish with the sudden attack from Kafka.

Locke could also see the disadvantage that they were in. He snorted and said in a twisted and hoarse voice that did not seem human, "What should I do? Our little princess is going to be a lone hero."

"Cut the crap. Everything can be discussed after I'm done with you."

I took the initiative to approach him and gave him a punch that forced him to lean back. This caused his throat to be exposed to me. Unfortunately, the tissue that was like a fish's gills but a thousand times harder than them protected it firmly. It could be imagined that all attacks would eventually be rendered useless.

Locke only dared to expose his weakness to me because he had no fear.

Unfortunately, my target wasn't his throat.

When he turned around, countless silk-like New Flow slithered into the gills, trying to find a way in. Locke's expression changed, and he quickly retreated. Unfortunately, unless I wanted to, the river would not break even if he left earth.

When I saw the fish-like tissues on his body, I wondered if they were just a layer of defense on the surface or if they were biological structures. Which parts of the body were they connected to? Would it lead to the blood vessels, nerves, and internal

organs? If New Flow went through the crack, would it find the weak core under the steel?

Now it seemed I had made the right bet.

Locke's gills were hard, but that didn't stop them from connecting to his lungs. Locke's internal organs had also mutated, but it didn't matter. New Flow loved all kinds of energy that could be devoured.

In the end, the countless threads gathered into a black hole-like vortex in Locke's body, continuously devouring Locke's life force and the demon fragment that had been supporting him in stirring up trouble, just like the one in the Crown Prince's body. No matter how Locke struggled, it was useless.

"Cough, cough, cough—"

After losing his power, Locke's body, completely mutated by Leviathan's power, began to fall apart. Large pieces of internal organs gushed out of his mouth and nose with blue-black blood.

However, Locke didn't seem to care at all. After the initial panic, he quickly calmed down and even laughed crazily.

"This is so interesting! This is so interesting! The Lord will like you! The Lord will definitely like you! Ah no... Perhaps the Lord has long regarded you as her beloved actress, so she sent me to bring you back to her side! Haha... Hahahahaha! We've all been deceived! We're all her actors, her puppets. Everything is in her script. Everything is a play to please her!"

I didn't want to pay attention to the nonsense of my defeated opponent. A change occurred just as I was about to make him completely disappear from this world.

Unlike the demonic shards or Locke's life force, this cold, damp, abyss-like, terrifying ball of underwater fire —

In that instant, I immediately controlled New Flow to leave Locke's body, but it was too late.

"You've noticed, little princess."

Locke's eyes were filled with malice.

"She's here."

Selma Payne's POV:

Who was here?

She was here.

Who was she?

She was...

"Everyone, retreat immediately! Put down everything you have to fight for the sake of your lives. Take your companions who have lost the ability to fight and leave immediately!"

I desperately asked all the innocent people to leave, even if they couldn't understand or were confused. However, the current situation was so urgent that I didn't even have the time to spend a minute explaining the facts.

My team members still listened to me, and their long-term combat experience made them subconsciously retreat. However, the elves weren't so easy to talk to. Many soldiers didn't know me at all, so they naturally had a suspicious attitude toward my orders.

I had no choice but to mobilize New Flow to bring them away from this land about to become hell.

"What's happening? Selma?" Dorothy was the only one who refused to leave. I knew she was worried about me, but I was afraid that the situation that followed would not be something that the two of us could resolve.

"Take everyone and leave the Elven Capital City and the Elf Forest immediately. The further you drive, the better. Don't waste any time," I said quickly. "I'll explain everything else to you on the way. The most important thing now is to leave!"

Seeing my unyielding attitude, Dorothy pursed her lips and ran away, turning back to look at me every few steps.

The situation on the battlefield had changed dramatically. Other than Loke and Kafka, the mutated cultist werewolves had suddenly twisted and changed their forms. They were like dried meat that had been suddenly drained of water. They had lost their lives and even their souls.

They were absorbed by Locke as nutrients... Or rather, Locke was just a carrier. She was the one who came.

Leviathan.

Unlike the demon's projection that had been sealed for hundreds of years that I had met in the Rocky Mountains, the one that was about to break out of Locke's body was an actual demon. The moment I touched the forbidden soul slice in his body, I knew that the most dangerous part of this trip was about to come.

Although it was only a slice of the soul, it was undoubtedly a terrifying creature that could summon clouds and rain with a flip of its hand. Back then, I almost paid the price with my life when dealing with Azazel's weak projection that had just been released from the seal. Now that I'm facing Leviathan, what will the outcome be?

A drop of cold sweat slid down my forehead, along my dirty jaw, and fell to the ground, breaking into unremarkable mud.

Just as his sweat was dripping, everything finally came!

Locke let out a sharp howl. There was no anger or fear in it. It was the most foolish and primitive emotion in a living being's body.

As he screamed, black mist gushed out of his throat, and the strong smell of the sea permeated the entire field like a ten-thousand-meter-deep ocean.

The black fog ferociously eroded every corner that carried the breath of life. Some of the infected or seriously injured elves who had not been taken away by their companions in time were instantly turned into a pool of seawater-like liquid under the erosion of the black fog. Then, they were wrapped by the black fog as nourishment for Leviathan's appearance.

Wrong, wrong, everything was wrong.

I thought that the two Leviathan believers, Locke and Kafka, had cooperated with Azazel's party to create a human body for their master, but now it seemed that Leviathan had accepted the sacrifice and completed its descent, so there was no need for any sacrifice!

So why? What did she want by letting her lackey get involved in this? Was it to kill in the elven political center to publicize her mighty existence?

I didn't have much time to think. In the blink of an eye, there were no living things here except for Kafka and me. I didn't know if Locke was still alive. This pitiful, lamentable, and hateful heretic's physical body had already rotted, but his soul had forever become a slave to the devil.

Compared to the projection in my spiritual world, Leviathan in the real world looks more beautiful and dangerous. She was like the Goddess of Beauty in Greek mythology, with only a piece of soft gauze on her body. However, no one would have any intimate thoughts because her existence represented pain and death.

Kafka bowed and humbly greeted, "How are you, my master? It's my life's honor to see you."

"You're so sweet," Leviathan said with a soft smile. "It would be great if you thought so in your heart."

Kafka wanted to explain, but he immediately shut his mouth when he saw Leviathan's amorous gaze.

Leviathan ignored him and turned to look at me.

"We meet again, my dear. How have you been? The scenery in hell is boring, and I've been thinking about the beautiful scenery on earth every day."

She mumbled softly as if she was speaking to her lover or close friend. Her girly attitude was disgusting.

"I heard that you're married and have a cute child. It's a pity that I couldn't witness all of this. Perhaps I should think of a way to give the newborn a congratulatory gift. I heard that the human world values this very much, and I don't want to be impolite."

At the mention of the child, I immediately replied coldly, "There is no need. Your disappearance now is the best gift."

Selma Payne's POV:

Leviathan laughed lightly and said, "You're really interesting, but I'm sorry to disappoint you. The scenery of the human world is so lovely. Coming here is not easy, so how can I leave so easily?"

"You don't belong to the human world. Your existence will only destroy everything." I suppressed the fear in my heart as I said that.

"I know, but who dares say they were born to be there?" Leviathan giggled like a patient with schizophrenia. "The abyss is too cold and dark. I've seen enough of the life and scenery there. I was born here, but once my heart leaves, I no longer belong there. My heart is in the human world, and the human world is my home."

"And you? My dear, where do you belong? A small bedroom? A gorgeous suite? Or perhaps even in the world's vastness, you still don't know where to put your little heart?"

"Don't be too harsh on me. I was just born with some power and lived a little longer. In fact, I'm no different from you. I'm afraid of loneliness, and I want friends. That's why I came to find you. You see, isn't the power you have now a gift from me to you?"

I knew that demons were shameless, but Leviathan's ability to distort the truth still surprised me.

Looking at her charming yet cold eyes, I coldly said, "If your gift is to make me neither human nor ghost and also lose a few years of youth, then may the goddess bless you, and you will never have any friends in your life."

In the blink of an eye, Leviathan was suddenly in front of me. The distance between us was less than ten centimeters. I subconsciously wanted to step back, but Leviathan's sharp nails were already on my chin.

"What do you call it? "New Flow"? It's a really good name. If you weren't a princess, you could definitely become a poet. I like poets. Was it useful? I've never seen this ability before. To any living being that relied on strength to survive, this was truly an unassailable murder weapon. I'm beginning to understand why you could steal the divinity of Azazel's projection.

"It's a pity that no matter how strong the infusion tube is, there are not enough containers. Do you want to try and suck me dry? A god's soul slice is much more nutritious than a dry projection. Come on, let's see what the result is."

Even a three-year-old child wouldn't believe her stupid words. I knew my limits, and Leviathan was like a river in a wine barrel. It would be impossible to hold it by force. Perhaps I might die right away, or I'd be reconstructed like when in the Rocky Mountains and become an unknown creature.

Under Leviathan's girlish, innocent appearance was a stone heart that did not hide its malice and indifference. I believed she didn't care about what she said to me. It was as meaningless as a human teasing a wild cat. But she didn't lie to me about one thing – she was here to have fun. I could be her entertainment; anything could be her entertainment.

Dorothy constantly reported to me the progress of their evacuation, as well as the fact that the Great Elder had begun to organize the evacuation of the citizens in the Elven Capital City. I had to buy as much time as possible for them.

Just like Azazel, who had just been released from the seal, Leviathan, who had just appeared in the world, also needed some time to get used to its body and majestic power. I thought that was why she had the time to chat with me.

However, Leviathan shattered my fantasy in the next second.

"Are you in a daze? What were you thinking about? Your cute puppy friends? Or those pointy ears?"

Leviathan laughed as she mentioned them, but I felt as if this was the death knell of the Grim Reaper that made me feel like I had fallen into an ice cave.

“Oh, my dear, don’t be nervous. I won’t do anything to them. You look as if I’m going to eat them raw for afternoon tea the next second, but I’m not that Samuel b*stard who likes to kill for fun.”

Leviathan pouted and suddenly moved away from me. The floating gauze fell on my arm and left, leaving a smooth touch like an octopus’ tentacle.

“But sometimes, I’m also very curious. Happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy are all human emotions, but why do people always like comedy and hate tragedies?” Leviathan tilted her head and pretended to be deep in thought. “I like to watch all kinds of plays in the human world, and I like the endings given to them by any author equally. But one day, I felt a little bored as I looked at it. The scripts that have been created are all the same. No matter how many twists and turns there are in the middle, it’s inevitable that people will be annoyed when they see the cliché ending.

“So, one day, I suddenly thought, ‘Why don’t I write a script for fun? Or I don’t have to write a script. I just have to find a few actors I like, give them a little foreshadowing and push them forward, and maybe I’ll be very satisfied with the ending?’

“So I played like this for a long time. Sure enough, the ending was always zero, and I was very satisfied. Unfortunately, it’s always hard to find an actor I like, so I created my own actors.

“Selma, my dear, you are my favorite actress. What kind of surprise will you bring me?”

Selma Payne’s POV:

Mental illness was a disease for humans, but it could kill many people for demons.

I had a bad feeling when Leviathan became more and more excited as she spoke, and what she said next made my eyes almost pop out of their sockets.

“So far, I’m very satisfied with this play. It’s a pity that the actors seem to be lacking in succession, causing this play to begin to slide in the direction of cliché. How about we have a half-time break? Get the actors to take a break and get the clown to come up and do some light-hearted entertainment.”

“So far, this city has forty-four thousand five hundred and seventy-six humanoid individuals. There are pointy-eared individuals and your puppies. Of course, a great city-state would not have only this few people, but since those who left have already left, we shouldn’t force them to come back and perform, right?”

“I heard an ancient legend that’s especially popular in the human world, and authors use it as an inexhaustible source of inspiration. The seawater will slowly submerge the city in the bubble in the next hour. Note that it’s submerged! If you can find a way to save everyone within an hour, then this play of a great hero defeating the flood will be completed!

“On the other hand, if you fail...” Leviathan laughed. “That’s nothing. Didn’t I say that I treat all endings equally? Tragedies are often renewed after a long time!”

Flood! Human lives! One hour!

This was an almost impossible task.

Even if the ‘bubbles’ made by Leviathan burst like soap bubbles, it would be difficult to send tens of thousands of panicked people out of the city in one hour.

And I did not doubt that judging from Leviathan’s malice, the eye of this ‘Play’ was not the ‘flood’, but the ‘one hour’. If the crisis were not resolved in an hour, she would not be stingy to be the villain who would destroy the world!

The fishy smell of the seawater had begun to spread over my feet. I knew I had no time to waste, so I looked deeply at Leviathan, turned around, and ran away.

Behind me, Leviathan was still shouting excitedly, “I have to put in more effort to please the audience!”

Just as I had expected, the Elven Capital City was in an uproar. After discovering that all the exits were sealed by a layer of seemingly soft but firm and corrosive film, the panic among the people could no longer be appeased by the weak interim government.

This was especially so for some of the ‘big shots’ who had yet to leave. They even went to the Great Elder to demand an ‘explanation’.

What kind of explanation could the Great Elder give? Dorothy had told him about Leviathan’s malice. Could he release the news of the devil’s arrival at such a chaotic juncture and let everyone die in madness and despair before the flood drowned them?

It wasn’t that they didn’t have any hope that their will would be united, but it was a pity that the premise of everything was that everyone could be of one mind. Judging from the current situation where they had to scheme against each other at the moment of life and death, once the truth was revealed, let alone fighting against an undefeatable demon, there might even be a few traitors like the Crown Prince.

When the Great Elder and the others retreated, the Elf King’s slumbering body was also transported out, accompanied by a few birds. The moment Nature saw the Elf King, it

automatically returned to his side, but Dorothy's natural vision was still temporarily retained.

Master Hayley, Dorothy, and Mr. Cage tried to break the bubble with sorcery, but to their surprise, although they couldn't make the bubble disappear, it was not because they couldn't understand the structure of the bubble but because the power contained in the bubble was too strong.

This meant that New Flow could absorb them easily and open up an escape route.

But would things be that simple?

Looking at the endless crowd of people gathered in front of the city gate, I suddenly understood Leviathan's bad taste.

Be it the flood or the bubbles, these were not the main point. The main point was the people.

Just like the creatures in the legends who always sought their destruction at the critical moment, the black mass of people in front of me was the most uncontrollable.

As war had broken out in the palace, most people had subconsciously run away from the palace through the west and south gates. The south gate was relatively closer to the palace, so the Great Elder and the other 'important figures' had come here at the first moment. This move led more people to the south gate, thinking there was a way out.

The power split caused the people's distrust of the government to peak. People did not believe in the government, so they naturally would not listen to its command. There were tens of thousands of people here, and the gate was only a few dozen meters wide. What would happen if everyone ran out fighting for the city?

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Pushing, stomping, death.

They couldn't even blow up the city wall because the people surrounded the city gate so tightly that they couldn't even clear out a safe zone.

At this moment, be it the ancient city walls that pretended to be old-fashioned or the people's hearts worn down in the fight for power, everything came together and sounded the death knell of self-inflicted suffering.

439 An Attempt

Selma Payne's POV:

As time passed and the water level gradually increased, people's emotions became more and more agitated. Parents held their young children in their arms and cried, and the dazed children in the crowd were silent.

Even the 'big shots' could not escape the fear of death. Some gathered a few 'messengers' and found the Great Elder, asking me to immediately 'release' the bubbles around the Elven Capital City.

However, once the bubble was lifted, the people would rush to the city gate like crazy. One could imagine a tragedy that no one wanted to see would happen.

But was I going to wait here and let time pass? It was either being stomped to death or drowned to death.

"How long will it take to move a portion of the people to the other gates at the fastest speed?" I asked the Grand Elder.

His answer to me wasn't optimistic. "There are too many people. Moreover, no one is willing to listen to the interim government now. Even if only 10000 people are taken away, it will definitely take more than an hour."

"Is there no way to shorten it?"

"Well, unless we can travel a thousand miles in a single step..." the Great Elder said tiredly.

A thousand miles in one step?

He reminded me that such a method could allow one to appear thousands of miles away without any effort-spatial magic.

But the question was, who could make that happen?

Master Hayley had already left with the first batch of elves who had left. The only one by my side was Dorothy. She could only shake her head regretfully at my question. As for the elf masters, they weren't very proficient in this profound magic.

The only way seemed to be out of reach.

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Just as I was at my wit's end, I aimlessly looked at the crowd. Suddenly, a barefooted woman in a gray robe caught my attention. She was tied to the same prison cart with a group of fans of the Crown Prince. As the Crown Prince had disappeared in the chaos, the faces of the wolves who had lost their masters were ashen, and they kept muttering chaotic prayers.

“Who’s that?” I asked, pointing at the grey-robed woman.

The Great Elder looked at where I was pointing and replied, “This young lady is your acquaintance, Your Highness. She is the daughter of Kafka.”

“Adele?”

I exclaimed in a low voice. Didn’t he take his adopted daughter with him? He didn’t seem to trust that idiot, the Crown Prince, at all. Why would he leave his daughter alone?

He didn’t pay attention to Adele even though he came to rescue her. What was Adele to him?

There was no time for me to think about the details of the father-daughter relationship. I immediately had someone bring Adele to me. She looked a lot thinner, and there were small scars scattered on her haggard face, which looked like they had been cut by branches or something.

This reminded me of the high-spirited girl from the Sibir Academy a few years ago. Although she was evil and disgusting, that arrogant girl would never show her flaws.

This crazy girl made me lose focus for a moment, but I quickly recovered.

Kafka was an expert in using space sorcery, but could Adele do it?

“Hey, Adele, do you still remember who I am?” I tried to communicate with the girl staring at the sky. “If you understand what I’m saying, please lower your head and look at me.”

I’d only heard that Adele went crazy, but I knew nothing about her mental state. I was a little worried that she could understand what I said.

To my surprise, Adele lowered her head and looked at me. Her eyes no longer had the liveliness she had in the past. They were like a dried-up old well, lifeless and without any waves.

She was silent, and when she knew I thought she needed me to repeat it, she said softly, “Ah, it’s the little moon.”

“What?” I was stunned for a moment, but I didn’t care about this strange way of addressing me. I directly asked, “Since you can comprehend me, I’ll be direct. The entire city is in danger. Everyone, including you, may be drowned by the rising water. That’s why I need your help. Adele, do you know how to use space sorcery?”

Adele was silent again. She looked back at the sky and returned to her world as if no one was around.

I tried to say something repeatedly, but she was already completely ignoring me.

“Alright, alright.”

I tousled my hair in frustration. I suddenly felt that my desperate actions were laughable. Did I expect a mental patient who has lost all his magic power to save the world? What a lame thought.

I turned around to look for the Great Elder and said, “No matter what, let’s evacuate a portion of the people first. We can transfer as many as possible, even if it is a few hundred people. Otherwise, it would not end well for everyone to squeeze in front of the door. Lead them to the nearest city gate and walk as fast as you can. I will devour the bubbles twenty minutes before the clock starts ticking, and I think the water will be up to our chests by then. However, I can’t advance, because if the door is opened too early, then all transfer actions will be meaningless.

“In addition, organize your men to blow up a gap between the two city gates. Although I feel that the strange seawater will cause the explosives to lose their effectiveness, we can still try using magic, right?”

440 The Instigation

Selma Payne’s POV:

The only thing I could do now was to struggle with all the options I could think of.

Just as the Great Elder had predicted, only a few people chose to leave with the evacuation team. Even if thousands of people left, there was still an endless sea of people in front of the city gate. The people themselves didn’t trust the interim government much, and what made things worse was the backstabbing from some ‘big shots’.

They were unwilling to leave no matter what, as if this was the only escape route. The people were even more convinced that they couldn’t leave. After all, the big shots always cherished their noble lives and would not let themselves be like ants in the whirlpool of danger, leaving it to fate, right?

Such an attitude made the Great Elder extremely angry, but unfortunately, he had no way to deal with these stubborn people.

The water level rose, and when it reached knee-high, there were only thirty minutes left.

The water level did not rise at a constant rate, and it would rise faster and faster as time passed.

We tried to persuade more people to go to the city gate with less traffic, but the results were minimal. The rising water level was like a curse eroding people's rationality. Finally, the order that they had painstakingly maintained collapsed. With the first angry roar of dissatisfaction, chilling wails and angry curses resounded through the sky. The person in charge on the surface suddenly became the target of public criticism.

In the face of the people's monstrous anger, the Great Elder could only try his best to appease them. Unfortunately, the delayed opening of the city gate made the people unable to understand the interim government's decision. Some people even began to shout rumors that the interim government was the devil's dog and wanted to sacrifice the entire city to their master.

And at this moment of turmoil, there were even people who came to add fuel to the fire.

"My dear compatriots, it doesn't matter whether the gate is opened. What's important is what's outside the city – the evil demons have laid a thick barrier, which means that we can't leave the capital even if the gate is open.

"But it's not like there's no solution to everything because our Princess from the werewolf pack, this noble warrior, can solve all problems. Just like how she easily resolved the crisis at the southern border and Garland City in the north, the barrier will disappear as long as she makes a move.

"Unfortunately, the helper invited by the interim government doesn't seem to want to help. In fact, this is understandable. After all, the guest follows the host's will. If the interim government requests to close the capital, then the princess can't do anything, right?

"However, there's something I still have to say..."

I looked at the male elf standing on the car's roof and speaking through a loudspeaker. My eyes widened in disbelief.

Now, he was about to die! A dying man still had the leisure to fight openly and secretly, and he could even point at the mulberry and scold the locust, pulling me as the sword to attack the interim government. What kind of dedication was this? For some reason, I even started to admire him. Must a person reach this level to be qualified to be a new political star?

"No matter what, human lives are at stake. Since the interim government is not willing to disclose the reason, it is inconvenient for me to ask. However, everyone present was a fellow elf, and they were all living lives. What could be more important than saving their

lives at this critical moment? What is more important than opening the city gates and removing the barrier so people can escape?

“I don’t think I’m the only one who’s confused. Everyone here is confused. Then, Your Excellency, as the leader of the interim government, can you condescend to answer everyone’s questions? This will allow us to wait in peace, right?”

The chancellor, a man named Sirius, who had nothing to do with any stars, was holding a megaphone and looking at us from the car’s roof. It was as if he didn’t care about his life that was about to drown in flood.

In the face of his old rival, the Great Elder seemed to have put down all his pretense of politeness, unwilling to maintain the last bit of harmony. He said coldly, “I don’t believe that you don’t know the reason, Sirius. You’ve worked in the emergency rescue center for more than ten years when you were young. I believe you’ve seen countless disasters caused by humans. If you want the good of the people, you should lead your party to maintain order, help the people disperse, and do your best to reduce the possibility of a disaster.”

“I’m just asking the questions everyone has.” The chancellor bowed humbly. “If you don’t want to answer, you don’t have to change the subject.”

After he said that, many of the incited citizens stood out in support. This force was like a rolling snowball that was getting bigger and bigger, and it seemed like it would roll in some dangerous direction.

“Alright, then, let’s be honest.”

The Great Elder had no choice but to tell the truth.

However, just as we expected, after knowing that a man-made disaster might come, not only did the people not pay attention to maintaining order, but they also rushed toward the city gate. An accident almost happened before the city gate was opened.

This was why the interim government chose to hide it. When there was no effective arrangement, how much rationality and civilization could you expect people to maintain to save their own lives?

441 Self-Doubt

Selma Payne’s POV:

Maintaining order was a futile effort. Although the president hid in the crowd and no longer spoke after dropping the bomb, the anger and fear of the people had been stirred to the greatest extent. Anything that stopped them would be seen as ‘giving up’. “The high and mighty nobles are going to abandon us and run for their lives!”

I only felt profound fatigue in the face of chaos, and this was the first time I felt despair. It was not that I was afraid of Leviathan's ability to move mountains and fill the seas, but rather her deep and bottomless mind.

Could everything be in her 'script' all along? The chaos we were in was so 'logical.' They blamed the government for constantly wearing down their credibility, blamed the legitimate heir for personally destroying the people's trust in the royal family, and blamed the arrogant style of the nobles and mayors for tearing the class apart. However, was there no factor of human arrangement in all 'reasonable' things?

From the moment he incited his lackeys to confuse the Crown Prince, had things gone according to Leviathan's script?

Could everything be under her control?

Leviathan showed me the other side of the gods. Unlike the Moon Goddess' kindness or Azazel's arrogance, Leviathan was too much like a human. She treated people like toys for fun and played with layers of schemes. I was not afraid to fight with people who looked like humans or be opponents to people who looked like gods. But what should I do when facing a god that was like a human?

I couldn't wait for the appointed time, and there was no explosion. I thought that my plan to blow up the city wall had failed. The cries of the people grew louder and louder, and there were even people who clashed with the guards of the nobles.

It was no longer a peaceful time to hold their heads high. After breaking through the filter of aristocrats, the people no longer had any scruples.

Seeing such a scene, even some people of the interim government were shaken.

"Why don't we... Just open the city gates." An elder said dryly, "We can't go on like this. Let's get as many of us out as possible. At least most of us will survive."

"Most of the people?" The Great Elder looked as if he had heard a joke. "What about the remaining small portion? Do you think they deserve to die?"

"Don't speak in anger, Jodocus!" The elder frowned and growled, "You know that's not what I meant! But what can we do now? If we wait any longer, we'll all die!"

The Grand Elder was silent.

After a while, he looked at me.

"I respect all of your rules." I wanted to smile to show my friendliness, but the corner of my mouth was like a five-kilogram lead block. "This is all for... For everyone's sake, for survival..."

However, we all knew that if we opened the gates now, some people would die under the feet of our compatriots. While waiting for that faint hope, perhaps everyone would die in the flood.

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Do we protect the VIPs and neglect the citizens? Did the problem we were facing somehow become an unsolvable problem without us knowing?

Finally, the Great Elder made up his mind.

“... Open the gate.”

He let out a deep, deep sigh. The pattern that represented the guardian spirit was still engraved on his skin, but it had now dried up and cracked with the palace's destruction. It was like the Great Elder's current lifeless face, full of defeat.

“Try your best to maintain order. Let the old, weak, women, and children out of the city first. The young and middle-aged men should stand back as much as possible. And the nobles and mayors...”

He was at a loss for words again. What about the nobles and the mayors? Would they be willing to let the commoners go first? Even the elderly and children?

He couldn't even convince the people, let alone the 'big shots' who were already unwilling to listen to him.

“Anyway, let's open the gate first.” At this moment, the Great Elder, who had always been a strategist, showed only emptiness. “Go... just go...”

Standing on the tall city walls, the instant I reached out to the translucent 'bubble', my confusion wasn't any less than the Great Elder. If he was heartbroken for his kind because he anticipated the tragedy that was about to happen, then I had an even more selfish reason other than the fact that I didn't want to see innocent people die.

I began to doubt myself.

Could it be because of my pride that we'd come to this point?

Was it because I was overconfident and thought nothing could stop me after I reconstructed my body and obtained New Flow? Was it because my pride had blinded me and made me unwilling to think? Was it because I only wanted to show off and use brute force to solve everything?

The heretic cult believer's plan of luring the tiger away from the mountain was a crude strategy. I had simulated it hundreds of times in military classes, but in the end, I was still deceived by such a childish scheme.

I should have listened to my partner's advice and left this chaotic place as soon as possible, but I didn't. I stubbornly used the diplomatic relations between our countries as an excuse. In reality, I felt that after I defeated Azazel, gods were nothing. I could solve any trouble.

However, reality told me that I could not get rid of the gods and couldn't even stop someone willing to walk down the path of death known as the 'gate of life'.

Oh dear, oh dear.

I did not want to open the city gate because this was destined to be a 'tragic victory' that would break apart countless families.

But shouldn't I open the city gate?

Now that things had come to this, did I still have to be stubborn?

Selma Payne's POV:

Like a hungry child, New Flow pounced on the bubble and started devouring it. I felt cold all over, and I couldn't tell if the cold came from the evil power with the smell of the sea or from my heart.

The bubble became visibly thinner quickly, and the people cheered as they scrambled to get to the city gate.

The 40-meter wide city wall was not narrow, but it was like an ant hole on the river bank in front of tens of thousands of people. Water could not flow out, but the entire river bank would collapse sooner or later.

People were squeezing like sardines in a can, and children were constantly crying. Someone's child fell, but the people behind them stepped on it as if they didn't see it. Anxious parents tried to pull their child up, but it only brought more pain to the child. As a result, a few parties started quarreling, and this farce attracted more attention, making the place even more crowded and thus giving birth to more similar tragedies.

A mother cried and emphasized that she had a child, but no one cared. An old man was either hiding under the wall or standing in the crowd with his eyes closed as if he didn't want his dying body to block the way of life for the young people.

Whose family had been torn apart? It was a young couple. They called out to each other in grief, but no one could see each other's lovely faces in the vast sea of people. Suddenly, the wife began to cry. Perhaps it was because she had some telepathic connection with her husband, and her husband's cries had just been cut off by an abrupt wail.

People's lives under the city wall were like grass, but I was all alone on the city wall.

I tried my best to calm myself down and not be curious about what was happening below the city walls. However, my superior hearing has now become a sharp blade that cuts my soul. Those who yearned to escape didn't care about tragedies, those who were enveloped in tragedies couldn't even take care of themselves, and those who were in despair skimmed through all tragedies as if they were looking at a broken flyer.

Only I couldn't escape. I couldn't close my eyes and listen.

I created the door of life in my hands, but I felt like I was already in hell.

The moment the bubble burst completely, the city gate opened.

It was so tiny that not even a finger could reach out through it. That was what happened the moment the door was opened. However, I saw countless hands reach out from the crack, greedily grabbing at the empty air as if they had just survived a disaster.

Was this a way out? This was a way out!

How I wished that after I opened the door, it would be the cliché happy ending, that everyone was alive, and that no one was injured or killed in today's disaster. Everything was just like a dream. When the children in their parents' arms became old people, they could still joke with their grandchildren about what sensational scenes they had experienced in their youth.

How I wish this were true.

It was a pity that the Goddess of Hope had closed her eyes.

Along with the finger, the turbulent seawater escaped the door. The restless sea water finally found a gap to vent and immediately poured out, bringing a turbulent flow of water with it.

The people walking in front didn't even have time to look at the sun before the water washed over them. How many people could still get up after falling? The seawater that gushed into their mouths and noses suffocated them, so they struggled, inadvertently causing more people to fall. The seawater was not the most terrible thing. What was more terrible was the 'harm' caused by his kind.

No one had the time to look at what was under their feet, and no one could help the fallen. They couldn't do that even if they wanted to because they were no longer themselves. They couldn't control themselves.

Everyone was swept away by the water, crowd, fear, and hope. Together, they formed a huge, irresistible force. If one was in it, one could only follow this power. Whoever tried to resist would become the stepping stone for others.

I'd seen countless bloody scenes. Be it the smoke from the battlefield or the bloody limbs, I could keep a straight face. However, facing a group of harmless ordinary people like them, I felt a sense of powerlessness and fear that I hadn't felt in a long time. I would die if I looked at it for one more second, so I closed my eyes.

After losing my sight, my hearing became even more acute. It was hard to tell whether it was torture to watch the disaster happen or to hear the details of the disaster.

There were even more children crying, followed by desperate wails and angry curses from adults. It was as if certain conditions had to be met to pass through this door, or they would have to stay here forever. Before the fleeing people could cheer, they turned around and saw their loved ones, lovers, or friends mercilessly swallowed by the dark gate.

As for the mayors, nobles, and commoners? Now, there was no difference at all. In the face of life and death, everyone was equally miserable. It didn't matter if you were sitting in the Council Chamber a few hours ago or cooking a pot of unpalatable home-cooked soup on the stove; now, they had to put on the ugliest expression and struggle in the crowd with the most twisted movements.

For a moment, I wished I were deaf.

443 Resignation

Selma Payne's POV:

I lost. I knew that Leviathan had won this game without a doubt. Or rather, there was no winning or losing at all because, in my eyes, something bigger than the sky was just an amateur skit to kill time in Leviathan's eyes.

I'd been wondering, what did Leviathan want by doing all this? To use fear to attract more believers? Obtaining some unknown precious treasure? Or was this a deterrent to the Goddess of Nature or some other gods to show off her great power and to gain more territory in the human world?

But now, I suddenly understood.

No, there was nothing. There was no purpose, no desire, and no one could think of anything.

It was just a game. Even if a race was destroyed, countless people were displaced and even lost their lives; it was nothing to Leviathan because we were just toys in her eyes.

When playing with a toy, who would think about what benefits they could get from it? Even if they could only get temporary, fragmented happiness or even damage the toys, these were unimportant because playing with them was very happy. To people, if the toys were broken, there would always be new ones to replace them.

Everything Leviathan did, as she said, was just for fun.

I suddenly felt that it was ridiculous because I had been fighting with the air for so long, and in the end, I found that all my struggles were in vain. What should be lost would still be lost, and what should die would still die.

What about Azazel? I didn't seem to know why Azazel wanted to appear in the world so much. Was it really just to take revenge on me? Or was he, like Leviathan, tired of the long and endless life, so he wanted to come to the human world to find a few unlucky people to entertain him?

Since that was the case, what else was there to do? If a god's wisdom, schemes, and power were something that mortals could never hope to catch up to, then what was the point of struggling?

When I was nineteen, I could say, "Then, let me become a god" and make it a reality. I was still young, but everything had turned upside down. I was a mother in despair among the crowd, a wife who cried for her husband, and a daughter who had lost her child.

If one day, god destroyed everything I had, I had no choice but to curse fate for my powerlessness, just like all living beings.

After an unknown period, the surging stream of people stopped, and the one-hour time limit had long passed.

When they realized the flood would not rise after an hour, many people gave up on the city gate and ran to the roof to wait for the flood to subside. Thus, an ironic scene happened. The people who tried their best to squeeze into the front of the crowd to leave the city might not necessarily survive. On the contrary, most people who were left behind or even gave up on themselves were safe.

Many nobles and mayors left the 'land of trouble' as soon as they left the city. Some of them were gentlemen who had a conscience and left their lives to the old, the weak, women, and children. Some of them were losers who did not make it to the front of the crowd, and some were confident that the matter would be solved smoothly, so they were calm.

The last type was specifically for people like the president.

“The crisis has been resolved, Your Excellency, thanks to your wise decision.” He walked over and pretended to be flattering or sarcastic.

The Great Elder glanced at him but didn’t say anything.

His silence made the president think that it was just a form of submission, so he ‘suggested’ in high spirits, “Are you alright? Many elderly were frightened by the disaster. The flood made them uneasy, and their joints protested and went on strike. Please don’t misunderstand. I don’t mean anything else. I’m just thinking for everyone. After all, you still must lead the government and lead everyone to rebuild the palace.”

“There’s no need,” the Great Elder said.

“It’s better to have a check-up. Health is not a small matter. Is your doctor here? Or did he escape from the city? If you don’t mind, I can...”

“No, there’s no need to check,” the Great Elder interrupted him coldly. “I know my own body well. Even if the doctor came, he would not be able to extend the life of an old piece of wood.”

The president was still consoling him hypocritically, “Don’t give up so quickly. Please believe in the skills of doctors and masters. You should know that many old people in the northern territory have longevity-extending cures...”

Without waiting for him to finish, the Great Elder suddenly reached out and took off the badge on his chest. It was a very ancient, even a little rough, silver emerald badge. It was said to be an antique from many years ago. It came from the hands of the first Elf King to be crowned by the Goddess of Nature, representing absolute power and dignity.

Such an incomparably precious badge was like a rock in the eyes of the Great Elder. He casually tossed the badge to the president and said expressionlessly, “There is no need. If you want it, I’ll give it to you.”

It was only then that I realized that when he first said ‘there is no need’, he wasn’t referring to a physical examination, but ‘leading the government’.

The Great Elder was going to resign?

Selma Payne’s POV:

With the Elf King in a coma and the elven race without a leader, the Great Elder, the only person who could take the lead, suddenly resigned. This was bound to be another major upheaval for the elven race. Normally, I would have paid close attention to this and analyzed all the possible outcomes of this matter and the opportunities and hidden dangers it could bring to the werewolf pack.

But I was not in the mood for that right now. I couldn't even deal with myself. What did the matter of the foreign clans have to do with me?

So, I just watched everything happen in a daze, like a stone man in silence.

The only thing I was concerned about now was the palace that had been reduced to ruins. Was Leviathan still there?

Looking at the ruins, anger suddenly ignited in my numb chest. Everyone was bearing the consequences. Everyone was lost, so what about the main culprit who caused all this? Did toys have to be left to fate? Couldn't a toy spit on the murderer's face?

I ran toward the ruins of the palace, but when I arrived, it was already empty. There was no Kafka, no Leviathan, and even the evil aura had disappeared. It was as if the two had never existed, and everything was just a nightmare for the entire city.

However, Locke's body was still there. After Leviathan broke out of the cocoon, the rotten container was heartlessly abandoned. It was a pile of mud mixed with blood, flesh, and smoke, making people hate it so much that they couldn't start.

Leviathan left. I could feel that she didn't just leave the Elven Capital City but the entire elven territory. It was a mysterious feeling that came from New Flow. I had never been wrong in my ability to capture power.

Even if I could no longer believe my arrogance, I knew Leviathan had left.

After causing all this, she didn't even look at these pitiful bugs trying to please her with their lives. She just walked away like a feather.

How ridiculous and laughable.

However, I soon discovered something even more ridiculous was yet to come.

When Nature flew over, I realized that Leviathan might not have left of her own will.

Would the Goddess of Nature allow other gods to cause trouble in her territory?

Leviathan was expelled. Perhaps the process was not as embarrassing as 'expelled', but the fact was that Leviathan would leave when the time was up, even if nothing were done. Perhaps the 'one hour' wasn't a time limit for me, but for herself. How long could she hide it from the Goddess of Nature?

I laughed out loud at this absurd realization.

I should be sad, fearful, fragile, and discouraged because I got into a few significant troubles, my husband's life and death were unknown, a group of conspirators was

eyeing my throne, and not long ago, I found out that I was still a waste, just from inferior trash to a waste who thought highly of herself.

But I didn't feel uncomfortable at all.

I just wanted to laugh. I just wanted to laugh out loud. Many things came together and blocked my brain, making it impossible for me to give instructions other than to laugh.

My strange laughter caused the people who had followed me here to be confused. Master Hayley walked up to me and put her arms around my shoulders. She seemed to want to say something, but in the end, all she could do was remain silent.

The flood swept away everything, leaving only laughter and a pitiful worm curled up in ruins.

We didn't stay for long.

Even though everyone was exhausted and no longer had the high-spirited look they had when they first arrived at the elf territory, no one had the mood to stay for another night to rest and recuperate. It was as if the once prosperous and old city had become a terrifying beast in the middle of the night. Whoever got close to it would become the beast's dinner.

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Before I left, the Great Elder came to see me. He wanted me to take a group of little sprites that looked like middle school students.

Before I rejected him, he took out a document signed by both my father and the Elf King and said, "Exchange students... This is a tradition between the two races. It's held once every five years, and this year is the new batch."

"You've seen the current situation. In our current state, it's not suitable for us to escort these children. Why don't you wait for me to return to the werewolf pack and send someone to pick them up? That way, you can have more time to rest and recuperate. These children must be frightened..."

However, the Great Elder's insistence caused me to look askance at him. No matter what, he insisted on giving us these little elves as if this was some sacred mission he had to complete before stepping down.

Despite my repeated rejections, these little elves became our companions in the end. This was because Dorothy had coincidentally brought back the people who had left the city earlier to meet up with us. She had also brought news from my father, requesting that I get the little elves back with me.

It was only then that I realized that my communication device had died without me even realizing it. All that was left was a half-empty outer shell hanging by my tactical belt, comically maintaining my last bit of dignity.

445 A Miracle

Selma Payne's POV:

There was no farewell ceremony, no diplomatic rhetoric, and no one could even come to see me off. Just like that, we left the Elven Capital City unceremoniously.

The little elves who left with us didn't cry or make a fuss. It was as if they had no reaction to their desolate old home or were about to set foot on a strange foreign land. However, their childish pretense was still too superficial. I could tell many children were forcefully suppressing their reluctance and apprehension, only suffering because they didn't have anyone to rely on.

That was right. Most of these little elves were orphans. I didn't know why the elves would choose these children. It wasn't a coincidence, but I wasn't in the mood to ask.

The leader of the exchange students was a little boy who looked familiar to me. He recognized me at first glance and greeted me politely.

"Hello, child. Do you know me?" I asked doubtfully.

The boy nodded shyly. "Perhaps you might not remember; you saved my classmate in the basement and me."

Oh, I remember now.

"I'm glad to see you alive and kicking, child. The life that I had once saved is in good health. This undoubtedly gave me some comfort. I hope you enjoy your journey in the werewolf pack."

"Thank you, Your Highness."

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With the Elven Capital City's chaos, the elven race immediately became an anarchic state. Fortunately, the city-states had long become semi-autonomous, so the fall of the capital city did not cause much trouble for the huge Elf Forest.

For us, the only inconvenience was that the approval of the interim government was not so useful. Although it didn't have much effect before, it was now properly a waste paper.

We had no choice but to accept the inspection and interrogation of every city-state we passed. Due to my status, these necessary procedures were reasonable. However,

they severely slowed down our progress, so much so that we were still stuck in the western region even after spending the same amount of time as we came.

In the end, it was Chena City's mayor who helped us.

The Lord, who valued his family more than anything else, did not participate in the chaotic storm of power struggle. He only sent someone to the capital to show his face. He had searched through countless books and professionals for his daughter's health before finally pulling Sandora back from the brink of death.

At this moment, this little girl, who was so thin that she was only left with a handful of bones because of her illness, was playing with the exchange students. The Chena City's mayor and I were drinking tea on the terrace. The clear laughter downstairs made people laugh.

"Although it's not appropriate for me to say this, I think I have to apologize to you on behalf of the elves," Chena City's mayor said. "I know that you're here to help out of goodwill. Although I didn't participate in the battle of the capital, I know that they must have made a lot of jokes out of you and perhaps even caused you to suffer a lot of unfair treatment."

I smiled and shook my head, not saying anything.

Chena City's mayor helplessly sighed. "To be honest, I tried to avoid everything related to the capital because I had long expected that power would change one day. Anyone could become its slave, thinking they could control it and plunder everything, but history has long told us there will never be a final winner."

I didn't want to think about everything that happened in the Elven Capital City. I simply replied, "Perhaps, but this is your territory's business. No matter what, I shouldn't comment on it."

"You're still so detached. I'd heard about your behavior in the capital. With all due respect, it's as if the word 'avoid suspicion' is written all over your face."

"Is that so?" Thinking about what I'd done, it was a little obvious. But so what? It was better to avoid suspicions openly than always be the one to take the blame. The things I had to face had already made me physically and mentally tired, and I didn't want to cause more trouble.

Besides, even if I made it so obvious, it turned out that I was still worrying for nothing. A diplomatic incident was nothing at all because worse things had already happened, and I could do nothing about it.

It would only make all my efforts seem laughable.

Seeing that I was in a bad mood, Chena City's mayor said nothing more. Looking at his daughter's cheerful back, he couldn't help but lament, "I used to think that I was going to lose Sandora forever. Before you arrived, everyone told me that Sandora didn't have long to live. Be it the doctors, the elven masters, or even the witch doctor I had secretly hired, they all shook their heads. It's no exaggeration to say that I was already in despair then, and even resented the goddess. I thought I was a devout believer and had never done anything evil in my life, so why did the tragedy of my family being destroyed fall on me?"

"Just when I was at my most desperate moment, you came. Please don't misunderstand. This is not flattery. Just think of it as a single father's heartfelt words. Because of you, Sandora could see the light of day again. I don't know what other people think, but you are a miracle to Sandora and me.

Looking at the sincere expression on Chena's face, I smiled helplessly. "So you've noticed."

I thought I had covered it well, but I didn't expect Chena City's mayor to see through my world-weary mood so quickly.

"I've embarrassed myself in front of you. As a guest, I shouldn't be rude in front of the host."

446 A Moth

Selma Payne's POV:

"Please don't say that. You're a kind friend, and you don't have to be so formal with your friends." Chena City's mayor shook his head. "I shouldn't have asked too much about your private affairs. However, if you're willing, Chena City is more than willing to become a place for you to evacuate."

"It's nothing. I just..."

I stopped halfway through my sentence. Was it just that my arrogant self-confidence was destroyed by reality? Was it just that the dead spirits under the city walls cried day and night in my dreams? It was just that I regretted coming to the Elf Forest, and I'd returned to being that little girl who escaped from the world.

There were thousands of words on the tip of my tongue, but I could only sigh helplessly in the end.

All in all, after receiving a letter personally written by Chena City's mayor, our follow-up actions were much more convenient. The complicated inspection process was suddenly reduced by more than half, making me uncomfortable.

Perhaps people wondered why I moved so slowly. Was I not worried about my Spring Rain Pack and my husband, whose life and death was unknown?

Of course, I was worried. I was so anxious, but my father's orders made me hide all my worries and pretend everything was fine in my hometown.

According to the news from the Spring Rain Pack, Aldrich's situation had temporarily stabilized. He had fallen into a very strange 'balance'. Some power was suppressing the spread of the poison, preventing it from harming Aldrich's core. However, that was all. The power did not remove the poison in Aldrich's body.

In the eyes of the werewolf grandmaster and the doctors, rather than saying that this power had the effect of dispelling the poison, it was more like it could provide Aldrich with an endless stream of vitality, which just happened to neutralize the damage to his body.

I suddenly recalled the black opal embedded in Aldrich's chest. I had never felt so fortunate that I had been a god for a minute. If I hadn't become a god and condensed this life-saving gem for Aldrich, I would have long been wearing a black veil and crying in front of his grave.

As for why I had to act like I didn't care, it was because the Lycan pack was currently in a precarious situation.

After being accused of having an affair with wandering forces and cultists, the Evaria Family suddenly did not care about anything. They became more and more unreasonable and actively bribed various forces in the dark to get more support. This wasn't just for obtaining a greater right to speak in the imperial court but also for the clan's ambitions that had persisted for countless generations.

The Evaria Family's ambition for the throne was now evident.

To be honest, I didn't really understand why this family could act so brazenly, especially when their leader was an important official trusted by the Lycan King. Wasn't this family torn apart?

However, my doubts didn't last long, and I quickly felt relieved.

This was as simple as 'you can't put all your eggs in one basket'. Be it the Evaria Family or the Earl of Marlowe; they wanted the outside world to see a divided family.

Half were loyal to the King, while the other half were ambitious to reach that supreme position. The defeat of either side would not be a fatal blow to the Evaria Family because they had the other half of the victory.

From ancient times until now, how many ancient families had survived because of such opportunistic wisdom?

Right now, the conflict between the Evaria Family and the Oromalivira Family had reached a level that even passersby could understand. As the heir to the throne, my existence was naturally the most eye-catching.

The Spring Rain Pack was a brand-new city model, and it attracted the attention of the entire werewolf pack. If I succeeded, then countless poor, weak, and even small cities that were about to disappear would be able to find a way to regain their vitality. If I failed, all my efforts would be a farce, and I would become an unqualified Crown Princess who was 'whimsical and incompetent' in the eyes of the people, which would be a huge blow to even the entire royal family and me.

The Evaria Family had wanted to get into the Spring Rain Pack countless times. If they knew that the Spring Rain Pack had countless hidden dangers, they would not give up this opportunity to dig at my foundation.

So, as the actual controller of Spring Rain Pack, I had to do it flawlessly and not let the enemy see anything. Even if my heart was in pain, even if I was biting my lip so hard that it was bleeding, I had to endure it. This was the cruelty of politics. Most of the time, it was not profound, and the stupid and laughable situations would exhaust you.

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These few days, I didn't feel much of the outside world, as if an invisible and untouchable layer of preservation film isolated me from the world. Even my emotions were slow, and it was hard to feel anything other than numbness and self-loathing.

Rationally, I couldn't help but think about all the possible outcomes and countless possible solutions. However, in reality, I lazily forgot everything in the next second. I hated myself, the Evaria Family, the danger Aldrich was in, and this world.

I felt like a desperate moth, stumbling to a dead branch and using the last of my strength to spin a cocoon, trying to use this fragile disguise to hide from the world.

447 Falling Sick

Selma Payne's POV:

At the border.

From afar, I could already see the members of the werewolf pack coming to receive us. It had been a long time since I last saw my fellow countrymen, and my mood improved for a moment. Then, I thought of my husband, whose fate was unknown, and my good mood instantly disappeared without a trace.

The little elves were a little uneasy. In their opinion, they should be sitting on the bus and singing, not being surrounded by a group of fully-armed warriors.

“Don’t be afraid. They’re border soldiers. They’re only here for a routine inspection.”
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I heard Dorothy comforting the little elves. My duty as the leader was to comfort the people, but Dorothy helped me with most of the work.

I didn’t know what was going on with me. It was as if my life force had disappeared from my body overnight, leaving behind an empty shell. The one who cried and wanted to get everything back was surprised that even the feeling of ‘pain’ had become very vague.

I believed I was sick. Dorothy and Master Hayley thought so too.

Master Hayley once told me privately, “Don’t give yourself so much pressure, Selma. There are many things that you and I cannot change. The helplessness of life is endless. Most of the time, we can’t do anything. We can only accept and work hard to not repeat the same mistakes. You’re almost crushing yourself, my dear, but you know that’s not your responsibility at all.”

I knew she was right, but I couldn’t adjust my state of mind. People with cancer couldn’t live just on their own will, could they?

After not seeing each other for a long time, Jordin gave me a big hug when we met. I hugged her back and felt the warmth of her body and the familiar scent. I finally felt like all the stones hanging in the air had fallen to the ground.

It was over. Everything in the Elf Forest was over.

I saw the worry in Jordin’s eyes, but she forced a smile and didn’t ask or say anything.

I was not the only one feeling helpless. Once caught in the vortex of power, you could only go with the flow, whether you wanted to or not.

“When you weren’t around, the Spring Rain Pack went on as usual, running smoothly. We’ve developed a few policy drafts based on the current situation and are currently implementing them. At present, the results are good. Wania has been eager to report to you.”

Jordin reported everything that happened in the Spring Rain Pack to me.

“Spring Rain Pack doesn’t have a mature military base, so the army is divided into three parts, stationed in the east, north, and south of the Spring Rain Pack city center. The headquarters is stationed in the south, and currently, they have a good working relationship with the Spring Rain Pack. By the way, since you’re back, when will we

hand over the military power? I sent a report to the palace this morning, but they haven't replied yet."

I forced a smile. "I'm sorry. I think you'll have to bear with it for a few more days."

"What?" Jordin stopped in her tracks. She understood what I was implying and frowned in confusion. "Are you leaving so soon? Do you want to go back to the Lycan pack?"

"Yes." I nodded and pulled her closer. "You know about the situation with the Lycan pack. The Evaria Family is getting more and more arrogant. I can't back down now. I have to go back to the Lycan pack to solve this problem. Once I hide in the Spring Rain Pack, it would prove my cowardice in the eyes of others, and it would only make the Evaria Family more arrogant. Furthermore, the Spring Rain Pack is still too far away from the Lycan pack. If anything happens, I won't be able to make it back in time."

These reasons were so legitimate, so righteous, and so in line with my identity as the princess of a country.

However, it was not the princess and her courtiers facing each other now. It was just Selma and Jordin. So Jordin looked at me worriedly as I fidgeted with the wedding ring on my ring finger without a sound.

Aldrich.

If I left, what would happen to Aldrich?

I believed that the Spring Rain Pack would provide him with the best medical care, and I was neither a doctor nor a werewolf grandmaster, so I would not be able to help with Aldrich's condition. But were these reasons for me to leave in peace?

Or should I stay? I would reject the palace's proposal and insist on staying with my husband. Like every touching love story, I would keep to the promise that we would never be apart. But could I be at ease? Give up my responsibility, give up my identity, give up what I should do, and make everything be about my love?

I didn't know. I didn't know what to choose.

I no longer trusted my own choices.

I was still in a daze when Wania reported to me about government affairs. I didn't even pay attention to what she was saying. Dorothy, who had rushed back after hurriedly settling down the little elves, helped me out of the situation. Wania and the other government officials considerably understood that I was absent-minded. They thought that I was tired from the long journey and had let my soul wander.

I was actually focusing all my attention on my hearing. I wanted to hear medical equipment's cold and rhythmic hum coming from underground. However, the thick layer of soil and the special soundproof barrier made all my efforts futile.

Chapter 448 Monologue

Selma Payne's POV:

I stayed at the Spring Rain Pack for three days, which was a perfect time to patrol my territory. It was neither rushed nor delayed. I had to act as if nothing had happened to deal with the countless pairs of eyes in the dark. In fact, I could only sneak a glance at Aldrich in the dead of night.

He had lost a lot of weight. The poison had tortured his once-strong body, causing his muscles to shrink gradually and his face to turn progressively pale. There were many medical equipment that I recognized or didn't recognize that surrounded his bed, converting electricity into power to maintain his life.

"At the moment, General Aldrich maintains a delicate balance with the poison. This is good news for him. At least he can save his life. However, it also left us with a huge problem in our research." Tracy rushed over the day after Aldrich fell unconscious, using the excuse of giving a lecture to treat Aldrich secretly.

"Any inappropriate action can break this balance, be it modern medical means or sorcery, and we need to know which side the balance will eventually tilt to."

Through the patient's gown, I saw a black opal emitting a faint glow in front of Aldrich's chest. Perhaps it was because it was once my creation, but I could feel the boundless life force contained within it slowly flowing away. This meant that the current treatment methods could have been more effective. Aldrich was still alive, relying on his vitality to offset the poison's damage.

However, the concentrated energy in the black opal would be used up one day.

I told Tracy about this discovery, and her expression immediately turned serious. When she looked at me, she couldn't help but have an apologetic expression.

"It's not your fault," I said dryly. "We're both going through the worst moment... Everything is very difficult..."

Through the glass of the ICU ward, I looked at Aldrich's emaciated face, and tears flowed unconsciously.

'My dear, if you still pity me, please open your eyes and look at me. Look at my tears and sorrow, and then use your warm and broad arms to embrace me so that I can obtain a moment of peace in your love.'

I didn't know what to do anymore. Everything was a mess, and everything was going in the worst direction. God and humans had messed up my life, and I was even starting to regret it.

'Did you know? I had a dream yesterday. I dreamed that I didn't jump off the cliff but ran home and hid in my room, crying secretly. No one knew what had happened to me. Everything was going on as usual, except for me.'

'I didn't become the high and mighty Princess. I didn't meet you. My life was trapped in that cold town, a speck of dust in the shadows that no one cared about.'

'After I woke up, my first reaction was to rejoice that I had chosen a completely different life. But the next second, I started to regret it. Thinking about all I've been through these past few years, I suddenly felt a deep sense of exhaustion.'

'It seemed that no matter if I were a town girl or a werewolf princess, this lingering fatigue would stick to me like gummies that were half-eaten by children.'

'The ordinary me couldn't control my life, and I didn't seem much better off than that little town girl.'

'I still couldn't control the direction of my life, and I even felt confused about everything that happened to me many times. Is this okay? Is this something that should have happened? Is this something I should accept? I don't know. I've flipped through all the history books, but I couldn't find any chapter I could refer to. Everyone says to learn from history, but there's only panic and confusion in front of me.'

'My dear, please open your eyes and look at me. I'm exhausted. I can't adjust myself. I don't know who to seek comfort from.'

'Except for you, Aldrich, when I think of you, I feel like I'm bathing in the spring breeze. Your name can quickly dispel all the haze in my heart. It should have been this way. But now you have closed your eyes, and my sun is blocked by the dark clouds. Not even a ray of sunlight can reach me. I'm withering. You're disappearing.'

However, fate didn't create a miracle because of my tears. Aldrich was still lying lifelessly on the hospital bed. Other than the dull hum of the medical equipment, no one responded to me.

"Selma, it's time." Jordin knocked on the door, indicating that my short visiting time was over.

I couldn't disappear for too long. It would arouse suspicion.

At this moment, the restlessness in my heart reached its peak. I was tired of the power struggle. I was tired of the Evaria Family. I was tired of the cultists. I was tired of all the eyes watching in the dark.

I was tired of everything that lay before me. For a moment, I wanted to die immediately so I wouldn't have to face this cold world again.

However, I could only think about it. The following day, I still had to put on a pleasant smile and wave to the people who sent me off with the Spring Rain Pack.

I left, leaving the little elves behind. These children didn't have to leave with us in a hurry. Touring the city was also part of the study tour. The exchange students would carefully tour the new city of the Spring Rain Pack as the starting point of their learning and life in the werewolf pack.