

## D. of Pride 821

### Chapter 821- Strength of the Rimeblood Tribe

"Hmph" the Terraquake Rhino snorted and got up to leave followed by the indigo horn Black Ogre. Seems like Melinda's show of power not only toned down her own subordinate, but it also unnerved the two direct subordinates of the two kings causing them to leave without saying another word.

"Hoh, is the party already over? Did I come too late"

Just as the Black Ogre and the Terraquake Rhino were about to leave along with their subordinates, an extremely insensible voice rang out from the sky.

The next second, a large shadow breaking the speed of sound, swooped over and a couple of figures jumped down from it. Leading the group, was a man with pitch black hair and two crimson horns decorating his head.

He had mismatched eyes and wore unique regal clothes that was tailored made for him. Behind him, following a step back was a wild beauty with long peach coloured hair and toned skin.

She had an athletic and alluring body, a beautiful face and mischievous eyes. Decked out in armour over her maid attire, she was a beauty to behold.

Behind them, followed beings with appearances and looks that nobody here had seen before. But of course, thanks to the two people leading the fray, all attention was diverted towards them causing no one to pay much attention to the ones behind them.

"Oh?! That's quite an unusual guest we have here, Melinda"

The man; no, there was only one race that could define this person, the demon noble spoke. The Black Ogre leader and the Terraquake Rhino narrowed their eyes. Although it was surprising to see a demon noble around these parts of the land, it was not completely unusual since the Ghastly Winding Forest bordered the Demon Continent.

The two subordinates of the two kings, watched from the sidelines as the demon noble casually strutted forward, walking towards the queen of Harpies as if he owned the god damn place.

They all thought that the brazen demon had forgotten where he was and expected a good drama to unfold. However, to their disappointment, nothing of that sort happened. Instead, the demon was being received with a friendly welcome by all the harpies.

What was going on? Why was the demon being treated with such excessive indulgence? In fact, he was even being treated better than them who were the envoys of the two of the Seven Kings.

Who was this demon? Seeing the demon being treated so well, the two envoys couldn't help but wonder about the identity of the demon. As they looked on with consternation, they were given another surprise when they saw, Melinda bow her head and offer him her own seat.

This!!! For the queen of the harpies, a being who stood on an equal ground with the other kings, to bow her head to somebody else... This was a revelation that struck them like a bolt of lightning.

As surprising as the event was, the true shocking occurrence was yet to happen. After the demon sat on the seat of honour, he looked all around him before placing his eyes on them. The next second, he grinned in a way that was very much like his race and placed a question.

"So who are you guys? What business do you have in my territory?"...

My Territory? The Two Envoys wanted to ask what he meant; however, things seemed so bizarre that they didn't know where to start from.

"We are the envoys of two of the seven rulers of the forest. I am Gish-Bolg, a loyal subordinate of my Lord Gil-Garna the king of the Black Ogres"...

"And I am Drovos, the right hand man of the king of the Terraquake Rhinos, Lord Yverza" Gish-Bolg and Drovos introduced themselves.

"Hoh, subordinates of the seven kings huh. So what business do you have here?" resting his head on his palm, Simon continued to interrogate.

This time though, Gish-Bolg and Drovos did not answer him immediately and first looked around their surrounding. Finding it odd that the harpies were allowing a demon, a foreign race to take charge of this event they couldn't help but answer with a question of their own.

"This is a confidential matter that involves the seven kings. Who are you to question us about such matters?"...

"Hm? Ah, that reminds me, I haven't introduced myself. Look at my manners" Simon shrugged his shoulders before introducing himself.

"I am Simon, as you can see I am a demon noble. The lady beside me is my subordinate called Bea. Hmm, perhaps it will make more sense to you if I say that we are from the Dungeon of the East".

As soon as he said those words, it was as if somebody had dropped a huge boulder in a calm lake, the atmosphere immediately became tumultuous. The air was chagrined with sparks as all the black ogres and terraquake rhinos looked at Simon with wide open eyes.

Even their two leaders, the envoys were no different. After a momentary shock, their aura turned hostile as they glanced at the demon.

"You are the demon who created the dungeon in the eastern region of the forest?" Gish-Bolg questioned.

"That's right" Simon nodded his head, confirming his words.

"This... what is the meaning of this, lady Melinda?" They came here with the proposal to deal with the demon of the East. Who would expect for their target to appear right in front of them, what's more in between their meeting?

Could it be a coincidence or could it be that the hapries were already in cahoots with the demon of the east?!! Gish-Bolg who had a good head on his shoulder, thought of several worst case scenarios.

"Hoh to think that our target would willingly show themselves in front of us. It must be a lucky day for us. Lord Yverza would definitely be happy if I took you out right here and now. Haha, now that you have come out of your dungeon, don't even think about going back demon"

Unlike Gish-Bolg, Drovos was all brawns and no brains. He did not consider where he was or the consequences of his actions and directly rushed into action.

One of the most terrifying aspects of a terraquake rhino was the powerful horn that grew on top of their heads. The horn which curved sharply at the end, held enough destructive power to easily pierce through armours made of Blackgold as if it were paper.

Coupled with the powerful charge of the terraquake rhino and its monstrously strong body, the horn was a killer weapon through and through. What's more, among the terraquake Rhinos, Drovos's power was second only to the terraquake Rhino king.

If the attack connected, with the power of his horn, he could even kill a being above level 500 in a single blow. That is if it connected...

BOOM... before Drovos could even approach anywhere near Simon, he was sent flying with a kick so powerful that the very space bent unnaturally at the moment of impact and made a terrifying noise that unnerved everyone.

Whoosh... like a ball hit by a bat, his figure disappeared and crashed into a nearby rock mountain a few hundred meters away from here.

"Hmph" Standing in front of Simon, Bea retracted her foot with a snort and straightened her dress back.

When did she move?!! Everybody present at the peak, had the same question. Just a few moments ago, she was dutifully standing a couple of feet away from the demon. However, the next second just as they blinked her figure appeared right in front of him and intercepted the charging Terraquake Rhino.

Rumble... the rock mountain in the distance shook as Drovos picked himself up. When he came back to the peak, every single being present whether they be harpies, black ogres or terraquake rhinos, all of them were shocked to see his miserable sight.

A hideous indent a couple of feet deep was imprinted on the centre of his endogenous armour that was said to be stronger than Blackgold. For a simple kick to do that kind of damage, what kind of power was needed for that?

Even Melinda half opened her eyes in shock at the spectacle. Now that she was a subordinate of the demon, she was aware of how powerful the faction hidden deep inside his dungeon was.

That said, it was her first time meeting Bea. She had seen Annette and the other maids fight the last time around when they intruded on her territory. Which is why, she knew that the maids were strong; however, what she didn't expect was for them to be this strong.

The power packed inside that kick was enough to even unnerve her. Melinda's surprise wasn't without reason, after all, this was the first time a Valkyrie was fighting with all of her gears and heirloom on and without the orders to hold back.

What's more, the Valkyries were no longer the same as before. They had become stronger with training and had honed their skills, making them even deadlier than before.

If one of the seven kings herself was so surprised, one could wonder what kind of emotions the Terraquake Rhinos and the Black Ogres were going through.

"Are you alright Drovos?" Gish-Bolg appeared beside the injured envoy and asked.

Puff... Drovos coughed a mouthful of blood and rubbed the deep footprint that was imprinted on his chest. The previously mighty and pompous attitude of his was no longer to be seen, replaced by an atmosphere that made him seem no different than a defeated dog licking its wounds.

"Dammit, I suffered a serious injury"...

## Chapter 822- Strength Of The Rimeblood Tribe (2)

"That is to be expected. Who told you to rush in like that without thinking? If the demon of the east was so easy to deal with, do you think our kings would need to make an alliance and all those preparations?" Gish-Bolg talked some sense into Drovos.

"You are right. What do we do now? That woman beside him is clearly more powerful than us. There is no way we can win. Should we leave?"...

"I wish things were that easier. Don't you find it strange that the demon is being so well received by the harpies?"

A look of realisation appeared on the slow witted Drovos.

"Was the queen of the harpies defeated by the demon?"...

"Could be, or it could also be that the Queen of the harpies have changed sides. No matter what's the case, it is a serious issue that our kings should know about. If the queen of the harpies has betrayed us, it means that all our plans and strategies have been leaked to the enemy"

This was the worst case scenario that Gish-Bolg thought of. Being the seven kings of the forest, the Black Ogre king naturally saw the queen of the harpies as a potential ally and revealed much information regarding the alliance and the attack on the dungeon to her.

However, who would have known that the queen of the harpies was already conspiring with the demon of the east?

"What?!! If it is as you say, then we should leave immediately and inform our kings" Drovos urged, urgency could be seen on his face.

"Calm down and think clearly. Now that we know the secret about them working together, do you think they would allow us to go away just because we wish to? Of course not, see around you, we have already been surrounded by the high levelled harpies. One wrong move and we will be barraged by their attacks"

Gish-Bolg calmly observed his surroundings. At this moment, he could see harpy soldiers and numerous aerial monsters stationed around all the surrounding peaks. Evidence that they were not getting out of this scot free.

"Then what are you suggesting? Are you telling me to just sit back and let myself be killed?" Drovos grunted.

"Nobody is telling you to do that. What I am telling you is to be prepared, depending on the situation, we might even have to use our subordinates as shields and expandables".

"What are you two murmuring over there? I believe you still haven't answered my question"

Just as the two were making some kind of plan, Simon interrupted them releasing the powerful intimidation of a Demon Earl. The two envoys were immediately pressured by his aura and were forced to shut their mouths.

"It looks like you won't speak up easily. Well, that is alright with me. I have many means to pry open your mouth"

Simon grinned, just as he was about to bring out something from his space ring, from the corner of his eyes, he saw the indigo horn of the black ogre shine, before they raised their hand and pointed at him.

"Attack!!"

Gish-Bolg shouted. Immediately, all the black ogres standing guard behind him sprang into action.

"You all attack too. Show them the might of the Terraquake Rhinos". With the two envoy leader giving their orders, all the black ogres and terraquake rhinos charged towards Simon with all kinds of attacks.

"This... you dare make a scene in my territory"

Melinda spoke with a sour mood. She was just about to give commands to her subordinate to intercept their attack when Simon stopped her with a gesture of his hand.

"There is no need for you to move. This is a perfect opportunity to test their strengths" He pointed at the beings behind him. Melinda turned her head and saw some really bizarre creatures that she had never seen before in the mix among the entourage that he brought with him.

"I believe your name was Berisol? You will be the leader, take command of the others and intercept the enemy"

Simon randomly assigned one of the Rimeblood Tribe that he had an impression of from the previous battle, as a leader.

"Your wish is our command, Supreme Lord"

The orc named Berisol stood before all the other Rimeblood tribes and led them into battle. Thus an intense battle erupted at the peak of the rock mountain sending forth extreme shockwaves that shook the mountain and dispersed the clouds.

Whether it be the Black Ogres, Terraquake Rhinos or the Rimeblood Tribe none of the races was inferior to the others. Strength and level wise, they were on the same stage and were a close completion for each other.

The difference set in their individual race, the Black Ogres were a race that was proficient in agility and magic, and the Terraquake rhinos were built for defence and strength. As for the Rimeblood Tribe, their stats leaned towards Strength and Endurance.

From this one could see that each of the races has its own uniqueness and strength. The skills they executed and their strategies were all different.

"Hmm, it looks like it won't be possible to defeat the forces of the enemies with just the strength of the Rimeblood Tribe"

Watching the battle from his seat, Simon remarked. One of the reasons why he sent the group of Rimeblood Tribe to intercept the enemy was because he wanted to see their power. However, there was another reason he brought them here and that was to see how they would behave in front of their mortal enemy.

The black ogres who had once destroyed their village and killed tens of thousands of their kind. Even when face to face with their mortal enemy, the orcs who now became the Rimeblood Tribe, did not dare to utter a sentence or move from their place until ordered.

This confirmed the fact that the orcs were now completely loyal to him.

"Lord Simon, what race are they from? Why haven't I seen them around in the forest before?"

Melinda questioned. A race like the Rimeblood tribe with their powerful strength and conspicuous body, should be a powerful force not much inferior to the king clans of the Ghastly Winding Forest. However, it was her first time seeing such a race with her eyes today.



"Oh? You don't recognise them? Why don't you look at them carefully? They were also one of the races which used to live in the western part of the ghastly winding forest" Simon answered ambiguously, wanting to see if Melinda could recognise the former Diluvian High Orcs.

Hearing his words, Melinda glanced over at the rimeblood tribe and observed them carefully. "Used to... then does that mean that..."

"That's right, they have been expelled from their own territory by another race and recently too"...

"Expelled recently" Melinda thought deeply and an answer soon arrived inside her mind "Lord Simon, you mean that they are from the Diluvian High Orcs race?"...

"That's right. They might have changed a lot; however, there is no denying that they are from the Diluvian High Orcs race".

"But how could that be? I have seen and interacted with the Diluvian High Orcs many times before. Their previous king was an ambitious man who I am quite familiar with. As such, if they were Diluvian High Orcs I would have recognised them..."

"There are no longer Diluvian High orcs, but instead Rimeblood tribe, a new evolutionary line that they have unlocked after they were brought inside my dungeon"

Simon answered honestly, Melinda was already his subordinate and as long as she was marked by his Soul contract, she wouldn't be able to betray him. As such, there was no point in hiding something from her.

Besides, this was also a bait he was throwing towards the race of Harpies. He was pretty sure that with Melinda's wittiness, she would quickly understand his intention.

"New evolutionary race? Is that even possible?" As he had expected, after hearing his response, Melinda's eyes widened in shock as she muttered under her breath.

By all means, a race like the Diluvian High Orcs should have reached the limit of their growth and evolution at this point. Yet what was it that she was hearing right now? The Diluvian High Orcs unlocked a new racial evolution!! How was that even possible?

"Ah, the Rimbelood tribe is just one of the new evolutionary lines they have unlocked. A few of them have also evolved into Icevein Savages and Greatbrute Hulks. You can see how powerful they have become after evolving"

"If it was before, it would have taken a couple of Diluvian High Orcs just to handle a single crimson horn black ogre. However, right now, just one of them could take a black ogre or the terraquake rhino on their own"

Feeling that he had thrown enough enticement, he glanced at Melinda and smirked: "Hmm? Why do you look so surprised? This is not something that is unusual in my dungeon. You should know by now that my dungeon is special".

The queen of the harpies nodded her head dazedly. Of course, she knew how special that dungeon was. The territory of the harpies might be far from the eastern region of the forest. However, there was no way of hiding the colossal surge of mystical energy that fires out of the dungeon and the resulting phenomenon it created during its rank up.

How many times did that kind of phenomenon appear in the Ghastly Winding Forest? As one of the Seven Kings and a user of the Evil Eyes who was extra sensitive to mana, naturally she was able to sense the extraordinary rush of mystical energy in the eastern region of the forest.

## Chapter 823- Relocation of the Harpy Race

Even if she excluded all the extraordinary and unbelievable things that were inside the dungeon, just the fact that it went through so many rank ups so quickly, was enough to tell Melinda; no, anyone that the dungeon was special.

"Would our race of harpies be able to also evolve like that if we follow him?" This thought couldn't help but inadvertently arrive in her mind.

Simon was observing the emotional changes that Melinda was going through when suddenly, his eyes made a sharp turn.

"Oh? Where do they think they are going?"

There, behind the hordes of Black Ogres and Terraquake Rhinos, were the two envoys who were currently trying to escape from the place. The black ogre leader was using [Mana Wings] to fly

while the Terraquake Rhino leader was using the powerful strength of his race to leap from one peak to another.

Seeing them trying to make a break from here, Simon couldn't help but snort. Now that they knew the relationship between him and the harpies, there was no way he could let them get out of here alive. He had decided so, the moment he revealed himself.

"Revenant Crows, attack".

ZAAPPP... at that moment, out of nowhere a powerful beam of energy was fired towards the escaping Gish-Bagh and Drovos.

BANG... Drovos took the attack and crash landed onto a peak while Gish-Bagh narrowly dodged the attack.

"What the?! That stung, where did that come from?" Drovos complained pulling himself out of the debris. He suffered no damage thanks to the endogenous armour of his.

"I don't know, I couldn't sense the attacker too. Be careful, more attacks would follow next" While he said that, Gish-Bagh did not slow down his speed for even a second.

"Dammit" giving a deep grunt, Drovos followed behind. However... ZAAP...ZAAP... ZAAP!! More and more attacks came targeting them from all directions.

The two of them tried their best to block; nevertheless, the attacks were far too many in number and came from unexpected directions that it was impossible to completely block all of them out.

What was even more frustrating was the fact that they didn't have any clue where the attack was coming from. One of the deadliest aspects of the Revenant Crows Warmachine was its stealth ability.

Although they weren't equipped with as many high grade and powerful weapons as the Andromedas, their edge lay in the fact that they were the most suitable for covert and espionage operations.

As could be seen from the reactions of the two envoys who were completely baffled by the attacks that were coming from the Revenant Crows they couldn't perceive. And that was only from the lowest Edition V version, the higher version of Revenant Crows was stocked with even more powerful stealth system.

Gish-Bolg used his mana armour and powerful magical and physical attacks to retaliate. Nevertheless, he still got hit by a few. Although with his level and powerful stats, these kinds of damage were nothing, the attacks still managed to slow him down considerably.

Whoosh... multiple piercing noises of wind being split apart sounded out and the figures of harpies surrounded them from all directions.

"Hmph, it looks like your luck ends here. I will make you pay for the rudeness you showed against our queen" Leading the bunch, was Oro and the other direct subordinates of Melinda.

The latter was itching to teach them a lesson for a while. Now he could finally let loose without worrying about his queen snapping at him.

"Attack" Oro shouted leading the charge. The harpies although individually weaker than Gish-Bolg and Drovos, made it up with their extreme Agility and numbers.

The harpies weren't called the tyrant of the skies for nothing, their bodies and frames were developed in a way that made them extremely agile in the sky, making possible movements that were impossible for other creatures.

Coupled with their razor sharp reinforced feather and talons they were a force to be feared. What's more, this was their territory, as such they knew how to attack and retreat and use the terrain to their favour.

CLANG... Oro dived down from the skies, unfurling his wings at the crucial moment and using a screw dive move, he left a deep scar on the endogenous armour of Drovos.

Even among the other harpies, Oro and a few others were a cut above, being the direct subordinate of the queen of the harpies.

"Dammit" The terraquake rhino touched his armour in pain. He was still reeling in pain from the deep footprint left by that woman on his chest and now there was this scar made by the damn harpy.

If this went on, wouldn't this put the dignity of the Terraquake Rhinos and his lord the Ivory Terraquake Rhino into shame?

ROARRR... With a deep guttural roar that shook the very air, Drovos finally lost it. His eyes became crimson and was smeared with a trace of bloodlust as he charged towards his assailant.

He forgot his mission and was completely swept up by the moment, ignoring even the calls of Gish-Bolg. The harpies took advantage of this state of his to toy with and attack his openings, slowly wearing the terraquake rhino down.

"You damn fool, this is not the time for you to lose your mind. Tsk, don't pull me down with yourself"

Gish-bolg cursed. He activated a movement skill and quickly fled leaving Drovos behind. The harpies chased behind him.

Back on top of the peak, Simon observed the fleeing black ogre with a derisive smile. Whose territory did they think they were on? Did they really think that they could just escape from one of the seven king clans?

No matter how far he fled, he was still under range. Simon looked at Melinda and nodded his head. The very next second, the sky above the peak abruptly darkened as the queen of the harpies slowly opened her eyelids.

Four pupils in each eye, for a total of eight, were on full display. For the first time in a while, Melinda used her evil eyes. Those bizarre pupils that had extraordinary abilities, reflected the figure of the fleeing ogre.

Jolt... hundreds of meters away, Gish-Bolg who was running away with all of his might, suddenly shuddered and came to a stop after feeling some kind of ominous gaze lock onto him.

He couldn't tell what was the origin of this ominous feeling; nevertheless, he felt like a prey in front of a predator in front of this gaze.

"I don't have time for this" Shaking his head, he was just about to resume his flight, when suddenly a droplet of liquid fell down on his hand. Looking over, he saw that it was blood and not just any blood, but his own blood.

"What the..."

Just as he was about to question what was going on, more and more blood dripped down on his hand the next second. Not only that, his vision also started becoming blurry and he noticed that he was bleeding from all of his seven orifices.

"Evil... Eyes" Finally, Gish-Bolg understood what was going on. He fell prey to the evil eyes of the queen of the harpies. Although it was his first time being targeted with one, he had nevertheless heard from his king how dreadful this ability was. And today, he got to experience its full glory for himself.

"I can't die here, I must bring this report back to my lord" The indigo horn on his head shone brightly before he soon succumbed to the effects of the evil eyes.

The body of the envoy from the black ogre tribe fell down from the sky and was torn apart into numerous pieces in a matter of seconds by the harpies and the other aerial beasts living in the vicinity.

As for the envoy from the Terraquake Rhino, Drovos' fate was a miserable one. Due to the insane defensive power of his endogenous armour, he was repeatedly slashed and cut, causing him to die a slow and gruelling death.

Back on top of the peak, finished with her task, Melinda slowly closed her eyes.

"Good work" Simon praised, he then glanced towards Bea and spoke, "You can stop, that ogre is dead".

The Valkyrie heeding his words, stopped conjuring her spatial magic. It appeared that Bea would have taken action even if Melidna hadn't used her evil eyes. As a user of the spatial magic, this much distance was insignificant for her. She could have teleported there in the blink of an eye if she wanted to.

"Now then, it's time the farce over here finished too".

The battle between the forces brought by the two envoys and the Rimeblood Tribe was still going on. There were many injuries and casualties on both sides; nonetheless, it was the side of the Rimeblood tribe that suffered the most damage.

Fighting against two races together, was not an easy task. Yet even when faced with an unfavourable situation, they continued to fight with the same maddened fervour as the one before the fight.

The orcs would probably continue to fight till the last man or until he told them to stop. The reason why he brought them here was to assess their power and not to use them as a sacrificial pawn.

Simon had a good understanding of their strength now as such, he ordered the harpies to intervene in the battle and tip the scales.

With the involvement of the Harpies, the battle had turned and the flow was now in the favour of the Rimeblood Tribe.

#### Chapter 824- Relocation Of The Harpy Race (2)

The forces of the Terraquake Rhino and Black Ogre were already exhausted and low on morale after their two leaders abandoned them. Thus with the harpies joining the fray, they started losing.

Soon, all the Black ogres and terraquake rhinos lay on the ground, dead. As for the Rimeblood tribe, only a small number of them remained, Berisol was one of them.

"You all did a good job" Simon praised passing them a few bottles of elixirs.

"Thank you supreme lord for giving us this opportunity to avenge our fallen brethren and also for making us stronger" Berisol kneeled on the ground and thanked. The others of its race also did the same.

"All I did was provide you with the opportunity. The result was brought by your own efforts and perseverance" Simon smiled pleased by the attitude of the orcs.

"No, it is thanks to the magnanimity of the supreme lord that the race of our orcs was able to survive that day and become this strong. This debt, we will never forget it. Please let us continue to

serve you in the future too. No matter what battles you want us to fight, the Rimeblood tribe will always respond to your command and become your hands and feet".

Berisol words were sincere, one could see a light of resolve and extreme admiration for Simon in his eyes. It could even be said that the level of admiration he had for Simon, was even higher than Berigard, his king.

"Un, I plan to put your race to good use. Continue to work hard" Saying that, Simon left for the first peak of the mountain with Bea and Melinda to discuss the matters about today and the plans for moving forward from this point on.

Although they have killed the potential leak, the fact that the two envoys and many subordinates of two of the seven kings died here, would no doubt make them suspicious. Even if they are unaware of the realtion between him and the harpies, they would no doubt still be wary of the harpies.

The Seven Kings, especially Gil-garna and Yzerza might think that she was a thorn in their alliance and might even join together to take her out first. The events today left the clan of harpies exposed and in a quie a tight spot.

That being said, Simon already had a solution prepared. It all depended on Melinda whether she wanted to accept it or not.

"So..."

"Lord Simon, if there is still some space in your dungeon, I would like to bring the clan of harpies and relocate inside your dungeon"

Just as he was about to open his mouth to recommend relocation of their clan, Melinda spoke first, bringing out the exact same topic he was about to speak of.

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The place was a luxurious hall with a tall ceiling, numerous chandeliers hanging off from the ceiling illuminated the place bright. The hall was decked out with extravagant decors and luxurious furnishings, showcasing the taste of its master. '

The place was none other than inside the castle of Duke Montford. At this moment, in the head seat where the Duke of Castledor used to sit, a woman with violet hair and exceptional beauty could be seen occupying the place.

Below her, sat numerous people, their chairs facing each other like a congress as they discussed something intensely.

The atmosphere inside the hall was tense with both sides glaring at each other.

"There is no option alternative. If the other nobles have thrown their lots into the mix with the enemy, then we need to consider them as our enemy too" one of the noblemen of the dukedom of Castledor, argued strongly.

"But if we do that, then it would be like fighting the whole kingdom. Our enemies would not only be Blackthorn alone and would become too large for us to handle. As I said before, we should think about it carefully and take a safe approach" Another nobleman countered.

"Are you still talking about persuading the northern and western nobles? I'm sure there might still be some who retain loyalty to the kingdom and were only forced to join the enemy's side because they had no choice. However, if forgive betrayal so easily, wouldn't it set a bad example for others?"...

"That's right, we cannot forgive. No matter what their reason was for betraying, a crime like that cannot be forgiven, they are our enemies"...

"You all are not thinking straight. At a time like this when we are at a severe disadvantage, what does forgiving a few nobles amount to? What we should think about right now is how to increase our strength, even if we have to bring some nobles who have betrayed us to our side. That way, we would have a better odds when we eventually face Blackthorn's powerful knight legions. I'm sure Her Highness will also agree with that"

The noblemen turned to face the woman sitting at the head of the congress. Now with Alstin gone and no news of Aiden, there was only one candidate who could be addressed with that term.

Cynthia glanced at the senate of noblemen seated below her, with bored eyes. Now that she defeated the ruler of the city and took over the place, these noblemen were quick to change sides.

Like chameleons changing colours, the moment they saw the ruler of the city losing and the royal candidate they supported getting killed by her, they quickly defected to her side, bowing and bootlicking her just as it could be seen right now.

Cynthia looked bored as she looked at the two sides going on and on for a while without coming to an articulate decision.

One side wanted to cast off all the nobles who betrayed the kingdom and consider them the same as the enemy. While the others wanted to protect their interest and refused to wage war against the whole kingdom, even going to the lengths of wanting to persuade those nobles to join their side just so that they could stand a better chance against the forces of Blackthorn.

Seeing them unable to come to any resolution, Cynthia's eyes steeled as an icy light flashed in them.

"You are Baron Regor from the Raindell territory right?" She glanced at the nobleman who was asking her to consider joining hands with the northern and southern nobles.

"That's right, your highness. It is my privilege that you remember..." Just as Count Regor felt elated by the fact that the princess remembered his name, her next words almost caused his soul to leave his body.

"What will you do if your territory disappeared the next day?"...

"I don't understand..."

With a cold voice, Cynthia ordered "Count Cormall, you are to take your army and immediately head for Raindell. I want this territory to disappear off the map the next day".

Count Comrall who was one of the few nobles still loyal to her father, nodded his head and moved to the exit the hall.

"Please wait, Your Highness you cannot do this.." Seeing that the pricness really intended to invade his territory, he hurriedly spoke up.

"What's wrong Baron Regor? Why do you look so distraught?" Cynthia questioned feigning ignorance.

"Your Highness just now you ordered Count Cormall to invade my territory..."

"Ah that's right I did, but since you are such a stern believer that one should work with their enemies, I am sure this is not a problem for you. I'm sure you can work this out with Count Cormall in the future and he will surely leave your territory alone after all the efforts he took to invade it"

Saying that, Cynthia spoke with Count Regor no more and stood up to address the senate.

"There will be no mercy for any and all who betrayed the kingdom, no matter who they are. I don't want the support of the nobles who wanting to protect their own interest, sided with the enemy. There is more honour in defeat than joining with them and besides, I don't need their aid to win this war. So Marquess Pound, I don't want to hear you raise this topic again"

The nobleman named Pound who was the first to raise the topic of working with the enemies, was immediately shut down.

"As for Count Moris, don't think that I don't know your intention. By fanning the flames you are deliberately trying to slow down the Senate from coming to a decision. However, know one thing, my decision won't change. We will march towards the capital city ten days from now, so start making preparation for it. I have no need for those who disobey or aren't willing to listen to my orders"

She glanced or rather glared down at another witful nobleman before exiting the place. Once out, she finally released a deep breath of air she had been holding for a while.

"Good work, Your Highness..."...

"Haha, thank you"

Alvara who had been waiting there for her, comforted her. "It looks like things were quite hectic inside"...

"Yeah, the more I recall their words, the more it infuriates me. No wonder Alstin was losing. With spineless nobles like them, who only think about how to protect their interest, there is not even a slim chance we can win against the forces of Blackthorn"

Cynthia sighed, the strong autocratic look that she put inside the senate, loosened a little in front of her childhood friend.

"It must be tough for Your Highness"

As someone who had grown together with the princess, Alvara knew all about the troubles plaguing the latter. Now that she was the sole remaining royalty, all the pressure to rebuild the kingdom fell on those delicate shoulders of hers alone.

#### Chapter 825- Assassin in the Night

There were these egoistical and self serving nobles who she had to deal with. No wonder she looked more haggard than when she faced the duke. What's more, it hadn't even been a day since she killed her brother with her own hands and she already started handling the matters of the city.

It didn't need someone close to her like Alvara to see it, anyone could see that she was clearly pushing herself.

"Even if it's tough I cannot stop right now, not after I came this far. My resolve will not falter no matter what"

Cynthia spoke returning to the person she was back inside the senate. She had made her resolve a long time ago and seen far too bloodshed to stop right now. No one could dissuade her and if they did, she would simply discard them. Just like what she had done with Baron Regor by taking over his fief.

This was not only to show all those nobles not to take her lightly, but it was also an example for others to know as to what kind of kingdom the land of Ellesmere would be once she claimed the throne.

If it was her father, he would no doubt be unable to boot a Baron just like that, his merciful and compassionate nature wouldn't allow such a decision. However, Cynthia was different; no she was forced to change. It was precisely compassion that led to her and her kingdom's downfall, which was why she had discarded all such things.

Her rein would be through an Iron fist and absolute. Those who didn't follow her, would be discarded just like Baron Regor. As Cynthia walked out of the Hallway, she turned left and headed toward the underground chamber instead of going towards her room.

If it was her father, he would no doubt be unable to boot a Baron just like that, his merciful and compassionate nature wouldn't allow such a decision. However, Cynthia was different; no she was forced to change. It was precisely compassion that led to her and her kingdom's downfall, which was why she had discarded all such things.

Her rein would be through an Iron fist and absolute. Those who didn't follow her, would be discarded just like Baron Regor. As Cynthia walked out of the Hallway, she turned left and headed toward the underground chamber instead of going towards her room.

As she descended through the stairs and arrived before the large mithril doors that led to the emergency shelter, familiar faces came into her view.

"Your Highness" When she discovered them, they too noticed her.

The first one to greet her was Annette who was standing in front of a large stake implanted on the ground. Next to her, tied to the stake was a man who looked extremely miserable and on the verge of losing consciousness from all the beating and torture he received.

Around the stake other than Annette, there was also the group of adventurers whom Cynthia trusted the most, Blake and his team.

"Any results?" Cynthia questioned. The fact that she didn't look the least bit surprised and directly went on to ask a question meant that she was also involved in this matter. In fact, it was with her permission that Balke and the others went through this process.

"Yes Your Highness, we found plenty of useful information. This guy spilt all the beans once Miss Annette cast her magic. Some of which are so shocking that even you will be surprised after hearing it" Blake answered with a serious look on his face.

Hearing his words, Cynthia narrowed her eyes "Hoh, Let me hear it. I want to know too who this person is and why was he so close to Alstin".

Tied to the stake, the man was none other than the subordinate who tried to brainwash Alstin. When Cynthia heard all about the information the person spilt, a serious expression just like everyone here, couldn't help but descend on her face.

Why would it not after all, this person was a member of a special corps that was sent here by the kingdom of Blackthorn to Disrupt Alstin's state of mind and report every action of his back to the their army.

That was not all, he also corrupted many other nobles, abducted their families to forcefully make them change their alliance and even dug up quite a lot of dirt on every influential noble.

It need not even be mentioned how much damaging these kinds of information can be to a noble. From the secrets of their wealth to the most disgusting of actions they have committed, once this kind of information surfaces, it would ruin the status of noble forever.

As such, to protect their interest and hide this kind of information forever, a noble would do anything. The fact that this man was able to dig this kind of information meant that he had a noose around the neck of all the nobles and could secretly control their decision.

Cynthia had no doubt that many of the nobles she had met in the senate, had fallen into his palm and were doing his bidding.

"It was a good thing that we were able to find out about it before any serious damage could occur" Blake muttered.

Cynthia was of the same mind, it was thanks to those demi humans who disguised themselves as soldiers to spy on Alstin that they were able to learn of this spy from BlackThorn. Or else, just like the first prince, they too would have been played with without even them being aware of it.

Fortunately, they raided the city and captured this person.

"Such a huge operation, there is no way he could have completed it alone. He might have some accomplices here in the city of Castledor. The corps that he belonged to you mentioned just now, there could be other members like him here. Have you asked him if there are any more agents like him in Castledor?"

There was no guarantee that there was only one agent here. Cynthia who was in the midst of asking a question, suddenly noticed the peculiar expression of everyone around her.

"What's wrong?" Why did their eyes look so grim?

"Allow me to explain" While everyone was hesitating on how to explain her, Annette stepped forward to speak on behalf of everyone.

"It was my mistake. When I was trying to search through the mind of this person, I realised a step too late that there was a special mark implanted on his brain. This mark prevented anyone from prying into the mind of the person by frying their brain instantly. What's more, it is implanted inside every agent of this corps and are linked. When one mind is tempered with, the rest will automatically be able to sense it"...

"You mean to say that.." "That's right, they have escaped. The moment I tried to pry into his mind, the mark activated alerting others of his capture. I was only able to save this person" Annette bowed her head, accepting her mistake.

"If they have escaped then does that mean that they have relayed all the information and events that happened here back to their forces?" Cynthia questioned, a tinge of concern flashed in her face.

She knew that there was no way of preventing the spread of news that happened in the city of Castledor. No matter what measure she could take, the news would spread one way or another.

However, it was because of this reason that she was hurrying up and marching with her army to the capital city in just ten days. It was because if she gave the enemy any more time, the other nobles who have joined the enemy's side, would not just sit still and send their own forces to intercept her. With time, the enemy's forces would only just increase. This is why, she was in a hurry.

"No, they have been all tracked down and killed before they can reveal anything" Annette answered in a manner of factly, surprising everyone around.

How long had it been since the fact that there was a mind implant in all of these agents got revealed? If they counted the time, it wouldn't be even more than two hours. Yet in that short period of time, not only did she discover the enemy's hidden card, she even rectified the mistake she made. All the while when all of them were just standing here.

"I see... I should expect no less from a Valkyrie" Cynthia spoke with a tone of amazement. "Since the information hasn't leaked yet, it gives us a few precious days of head start. Once the army from Mountmend, we shall immediately head for the capital".

"I see... I should expect no less from a Valkyrie" Cynthia spoke with a tone of amazement. "Since the information hasn't leaked yet, it gives us a few precious days of head start. Once the army from Mountmend, we shall immediately head for the capital".

Everyone nodded their head, showing their agreement.

"Now then, what should we do with him?" Cynthia glanced at the blackthorn agent tied to the stake. Now that they have thwarted their plan and knew all about it, the man served no value. As an enemy, there was only one fate waiting for him.

"I understand" Wyot nodded his head and was just about to send the man to meet his maker, Annette stopped them with a gesture of her hand.

"A moment"... seeing Annette stand in front of Wyot, Cynthia couldn't help but ask "What's wrong? Is there still anything you want to investigate from this man?".

The Valkyrie nodded her head "Earlier when I was searching through his brain, there was something that I came in contact with for a brief period of time. Although it was just for an instant, it made me curious about it. If Her Highness does not mind, I would like to have this man kept alive for a few more days while I try to investigate about it".

This was the first time, that Annette had asked something of her, ever since joining her side to reclaim the capital back. As such, Cynthia saw no reason to deny her and besides, if there was something strange about this man that could make someone like Annette intrigued, then it was a matter that needed to be investigated.

"Very well, if you want to investigate this man, you are free to do so"...



"Thank you very much"

## Chapter 826- Assassin in the Night (2)

In the next few days, Annette carefully searched through the mind of the agent, hoping to get in contact with that strange energy she felt inside his body.

That's right, the thing that made her frown her brows in consternation was a peculiar energy that she involuntarily came in contact with when trying to break the mind imprint a few days ago.

This strange energy, for some reason she was unable to get it out of her mind. The reason for that made even her surprised. Although it was only for a fraction of a second, but when she came in contact with this energy, the feeling she got was awfully similar to the energy her master displayed from time to time.

But how could that be? That energy was something special to her master and not something the likes of a person from Blackthorn should be capable of even coming in contact with. She reasoned; however, no matter how many times she said that to herself, the feeling she got from that energy was still fresh in her mind and refused to go away.

"If I can just reconfirm my suspicions, this thing would no longer weigh on my mind" Annette spoke, using her spirit magic to surf through the agent's mind. Nevertheless, the past few days have proven that her efforts were useless and today was no different either.

There was not even a single trace of that strange energy inside that man, as if it was never there.

"Hmm, it's strange. Could it be that I was wrong in searching him? The energy I sensed might have come from the mind imprint. If that is the case, there is no point in searching this man"

Realising that it was a wasted effort from the start, Annette turned around to leave. As for the agent, these past few days of being constantly subjected to her spirit magic had deteriorated his mind, making him no different than a vegetable.

If he was left here like this, he would die on his own. After leaving the cellar, Annette appeared in front of the Main hall. At this moment, a senate was taking place with all the nobles present in the city, in attendance.

A day ago, the army from Mountmend arrived shocking all of the people and nobles present. Led by Count Alfred, the army numbered more than 110,000 soldiers and was a sight to see as they marched through the city gates while carrying the flag of Her Royal Highness.

For being the princess' personal army, the number was quite impressive. However, the reason why all the nobles were so shocked was because the rag tag army of soldiers hastily recruited by the princess that they expected to see was not there.

Instead, an impressive army, no different than the king's own, marched through the city gate. Decked out in impressive looking armours and riding on Mooseback, they looked regal and impressive.

It was not just their gears, but even the aura they gave off was powerful enough to give a heavy pressure to non combatants.

"Woah, have you seen the army that arrived yesterday? The way they marched, it looked so impressive. I still have goosebumps from that day"...

"Yeah, me too. Who knew that the princess had such an impressive army on her beck and call. With such an army, wouldn't it be possible to capture the capital back".

The gasps of awe from the shocking event from yesterday, could still be heard in the castle halls today. Annette picked up the conversation between two maids as they brought food and drinks for the nobles.

When the door to the hall was pushed open, the sounds from the inside flooded out.

"Your Highness, my forces are nearing castledor and are ready on your command" One of the nobles kneeled in front of the princess and declared.

"Your Highness, my army is ready too. 20,000 strong, we are ready to serve your highness and reclaim the capital back"...

"So is mine. We are currently stationed twenty kilometres north of here".

Inside, one by one the nobles lined up in front of Cynthia declaring their fealty and their eagerness to join the battle. After they saw the example of what happened to the nobles who refused to listen to her and the grand and impressive army that entered through the city gates yesterday, their opinion of her instantly changed.

Now they no longer thought that they were marching to the capital just to suffer a loss. Needless to say, not all nobles were going to a war out of their loyalty to the empire. In fact, many of them were only using this chance to make more profit out of it or were doing it because there was no other choice.

"I see that everything is going well. In that case, we will march as planned. I hope there is no one foolish enough to suggest otherwise" Cynthia glanced at the nobles. However, this time there was no one to go against her.

"Good, Alfred you are in charge of making necessary preparations for the upcoming war. You may use these illegal resources that I have just listed in the parchment of paper to fund our war expenses".

Taking out a paper, she passed it onto Alfred who received it with both hands.

"I understand" The latter gave the parchment a read and was wide eyed. "This!! With this amount, we can easily cover the expenses of the war, deck each soldier with good armour and weapons and still have more. Where did You Highness get this information from?"

Hearing his question Cynthia gave a smile that had several different meanings.

"Since you asked, let me tell you where I got this information from. Before defeating Alstin, I have been keeping an eye on his every movement and all the people he has been in contact with. Out of them, one person was particularly close to him and was by Alstin's side on every occasion. Later when I captured and investigated this person, they turned out to be an agent of the kingdom of Blackthorn".

At those words, it was as if a bomb had gone off, all the people inside the hall looked at Cynthia, eyes wide in astonishment. They couldn't believe what they just heard. One of the first prince's close aid was a spy from Blackthorn?

If the enemy actually got so close to their inner circle, then didn't it mean that all of his highness' plans and schemes were revealed to the enemy? What was even more astonishing was the fact that the princess was able to spy on his highness without him even realising it.

Most of the nobles showed an astonished expression at that news, except for a few who had a strange look plastered on their face. Cynthia observed them from the corner of her eyes before continuing.

"That's not all, what was truly astonishing was the fact that was revealed after my subordinates thoroughly investigated this agent. As it turns out, this spy did quite some research on all the nobles supporting Alstin and dug out all kinds of information on them. It appeared that he was using this information to blackmail some nobles to work for Blackthorn from the shadows".

At this point, everybody understood what was going on. Where did all this money to fund their war expenses come from and why Prince Alstin always seem to lose as if his every move was predicted by the enemy?

"Is that true Your Highness?" Alfred questioned, a serious look dawning on his face.

"Yeah, fortunately my comrades were quickly able to identify and capture this person before he could do any significant damage to us. In any case, since these are all illegal resources acquired through dirty means and hadn't been accounted for, feel free to use them to sustain our war expenses" Cynthia ordered off handedly.

"Yes, Your Highness" With those words, the deal was sealed. All those nobles who were associated with these illegal resources, could only bite their lips and stay silent as they saw their lifetime resources getting ceased.

They did not dare to try anything funny or even utter a word since they knew that they had been spared only because of this. Since the princess had investigated that agent, she must already know about their names and all the nobles who were involved in these transactions.

Nevertheless, she did not name them or even use it against them to snatch their fief and position. The nobles were not fools, they knew that the only reason why she didn't do so was because she was giving them a chance.

It was either they take her side and fight the enemy along with her or be destroyed just like Baron Regor.

The discussion continued and the senate moved on to discussing the diplomatic relations with Duke Redcrest who was one of the few Dukes still loyal to the crown.

Duke Montford and Duke Redcrest had good relations and were working together to fend off the invading army of Blackthorn. Now that Duke Montford was gone and Prince Alstin whom they supported was defeated by Cynthia, it remained uncertain as to what kind of reply they would get from the other Dutchy.

There were only a few days remaining before they started marching towards the capital. The messenger carrying the news was expected to arrive here soon. Just as they had expected the messenger arrived from the Dukedom of Redcrest carrying their message.

The messenger first bowed towards the princess before beginning his message.

"Your Highness and the esteemed nobles of the kingdom. I bring tidings from the noble Dukedom of Redcrest"

#### Chapter 827- Assassin In The Night (3)

"The Duke extends his heartfelt admiration for Her Highness' remarkable journey, witnessing her ascendancy from challenging circumstances to the triumphant ruler of Montford. He acknowledges the courage displayed by Her Highness and accepts her as the rightful ruler of Montford"

"Furthermore, his grace is impressed by her willingness and determination to fight the kingdom's adversaries head-on. As such, he accepts the alliance. In light of the shared goals and challenges faced by our realms, he wholeheartedly declares his support for the proposed alliance".

GASP... after the messenger finished with his message, gasps of awe and shocks could be heard being drawn in from all around the senate. Honestly speaking many of them were surprised by the unperturbed attitude of Duke Redcrest.

Even Cynthia was slightly surprised. As a good friend of Duke Montford, they thought that the duke would be enraged if not unwelcoming towards the new ruler of Castledor. However, far from it, instead of showing her any discourtesy, the duke instead sent her words of praise and extended his hands for the alliance.

This meant that the forces of the two duchies would now march together towards the capital further increasing their chances.

"Your Highness" Alvara who standing beside Cynthia, looked at the latter. A touch of joy of joy could be seen in those shiny black eyes of hers.

"Yeah, I was not wrong about him. Duke Redcrest still remembers the huge debt he owes to my father. A person like him would no doubt even put his life on the line to repay that debt" Cynthia muttered pleased by the answer of the Duke.

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Morning fell and night arrived. After a whole day of hectic work and dealing with the nobles and senate, Cynthia was enjoying a cup of wine as she looked at the beautiful moons hanging in the sky from the open balcony.

She was wearing a light violet coloured negligee and left her hair untied. As the moonlight fell on her pearly skin, she appeared extremely mesmerising and beautiful.

As she crossed her arms while taking in the cold night's wind to settle her tense mind when suddenly a voice rang out inside the room.

"It's such a beautiful night to be moon gazing isn't it? Do you mind if I join you".

Reacting to the voice, Cynthia hastily turned around and looked at the speaker with caution in her eyes. There inside the room, a shadow suddenly wiggled taking a hazy form before materialising into the figure of a man.

The man was lean, decked in black armour and a mask, his appearance couldn't be seen. However, from the sharp glint in his eyes that could be seen through the mask and the fact that he was able to enter the castle that was heavily guarded by the soldiers and even powerful adventurers, left no doubt about this person's skill. The man was unquestioningly an Elite Powerhouse.

"So the kingdom of Blackthorn couldn't wait any longer to deal with me huh. So who sent you here? Is it your king?"

Cynthia remained calm as she questioned the brazen figure who entered her room. Needless to say, there was only one organisation that could send an assassin of this calibre after her.

"Haha" hearing her question, the man laughed "You are overestimating your value too much, princess of an extinct kingdom. His Majesty is far too busy to pay attention to likes of you. I was sent here by Marshall Cavalier who heard about your recent success and ordered me to bring you a message"

""He first congratulates you for defeating that useless of a pawn Alstin and taking over Montford with your won effort and secondly, he has a proposal for you. He suggests that you surrender and bow before the red crown, just like what the other nobles and dukes did. That way, you will be able to prevent needless deaths and suffer a crushing defeat. This is the last grace, Blackthorn is willing to show you. You should take up this offer and stop this futile resistance".

In front of this plain provocation, Cynthia remained the very embodiment of calm. She did not take even a second to think and replied with a smile.

"Please thank Marshall Cavalier for his encouragement and benevolence. However, regretfully I have to decline this offer. The land was and will always be of Ellesmere's. As such, I cannot back down from this war. Please tell the Marshall that I am coming to reclaim the capital back".

She did not mask any words and directly said everything that was on her mind. Her words were tantamount to burning the last lifeboat the kingdom of Blackthorn was willing to throw at her.

"Presumptuous" the assassin was immediately enraged by those words "Do you know who you are turning down? The Marshall was benevolent enough to give you another chance and spare your people from further misery yet you refuse his kindness"

How could Cynthia not know about the Marshall? After Blackthorn invaded the kingdom of Ellesmere, the ranks of their army had now become common knowledge to the people of this kingdom.

The rank of Marshall was the second highest rank in the army of Blackthorn second only to the general. That said, in terms of influence and power any of the marshalls far outclassed the dukes of the kingdom of Ellsemere.

Cynthia had no doubt that given the Marshall's authority, he would really keep his word. That is if they surrendered; however, the very notion of it made Cynthia repulsed. She understood very well the implications of going to a war against a nation like the Blackthorn who was far stronger than them.

She did not even need to imagine it as the proof laid out there. With their capital occupied and numerous territories razed, hundreds of thousands of people were displaced from their lands, living the life of refugees.

Numerous more died fighting against the forces of Blackthorn and the remaining ones either surrendered or were destroyed. Going to war again meant that many more would die again. The army, the people who followed her... how many of them would survive until the end?

Even so, it was not enough to deter her. It was not like she was undermining the value of life, it's just that she had far too much blood on her hand and stood on the corpses of numerous comrades, friends and family to reach this point. There was no backing down for her.

"Hmph, I see still stubbornly holding onto ideals that cannot come true. Truly the height of folly. Did you think that just because you raised some army, you could march towards the capital and hope of winning? Haha, forget about this small of a force, even if you have ten times that number of soldiers, you are still no match for blackthorns knight orders"

"It's time you realise that your army is a joke to us. Even if you have killed our agents, it does not matter. Resistance at this point is futile, no matter what you do, you cannot reverse the fate of your kingdom"

The assassin stated with a condescending tone. It seemed that the enemy became aware that they had gotten rid of the spies they placed here.

"Even if that is the case, the victor hasn't been decided yet. The one to have the last laugh will be our side, you can say that to your marshall. And besides, doesn't the fact that he bothered to send a high level assassin as a mere messenger to dissuade me proves that he is wary of us? In that case, we stand plenty chance of defeating you".

At that remark, the assassin's already sharp eyes became even sharper as a killing glint flashed in them for a second. Though it was quickly suppressed by the latter.



"The Marshall wary of you? Hmph, stop dreaming of impossible dreams. Anyway, it seems there is no way to make you back down. Very well then, come to the capital and maybe then you will realise your grave mistake.

"However, at that time even if you regret it, there will be no pardon only complete annihilation. This will serve as an example for all those still holding the heart of resistance. My mission was to bring this message to you. Now that I have received your answer, I don't see any point in staying here"

Saying that, the figure was just about to meld into tiny black particles when...

"Where do you think you are going?" A voice as soft as a cloud, suddenly sounded out.

The assassin immediately raised his guard and turned around. There on the veranda, he noticed two women dressed in seemingly ordinary adventurer's garb aligning against the railing.

"When did they appear there?" Immediately, his sharp eyes went wide and he couldn't help but question in head. He was almost certain that just until a second ago there was no one there and the princess of Ellesmere was completely alone.

However, in that split second when he removed her eyes from her these two women appeared beside her.

Snort... It seemed that the reason why the princess was afraid of him was because she had backup. But so what? Not wanting to waste any more time here, he was just about to turn around when he realised that he was unable to move. His body was refusing to obey his commands.

What?!! Not only that, the assassin also realised that he was unable to activate his skills.

"Did you really think that you were able to enter all the way here based on yoiur skills? If so, then you are gravely mistaken. The princess allowed you to come here"

## Chapter 828- General of the Second Army

One of the women with exceptional grace and wearing spectacles on her eyes, spoke. She was none other than Annette. Beside her, the always gloomy and finicky Emma stood. Her fingers were at this moment extended as they pulled and tugged into the air.

If one had special discerning eyes, one would be able to notice that Emma was not simply pulling and tugging the empty air but instead numerous thin threads the likes of which are impossible to see with naked eyes, extended from her fingertips and interwinded around the room.

The threads, covertly sealed off the body of the assassin thus locking him in his place. That was not all, these threads were no ordinary threads, they channelled some kind of energy that prevented the target that got caught in it from using their skills.

The assassin although had decent skills, did not have the discerning eyes to recognise the threads binding him.

"Who are you?" he questioned. The fact that they were aware of his intrusion and were even able to lock him in his place, meant that they were fairly high levelled or at least possessed powerful skills.

"You don't need to know about that. Just know that exiting this place won't be as easy as entering. Besides, you seem to be fairly knowledgeable about the internal workings of Blackthorn. It would be a good thing to keep you here" Annette did not mix any words and directly told the assassin his fate.

"Haha, you plan to interrogate me?" Hearing Annette's words the assassin started laughing loudly.

"It's useless. Assassins like me are trained since birth, there is a special imprint in my brain that manages the information. Every piece of information and knowledge in my brain has been erased once the mission is completed. You won't find anything useful even if you interrogate me. So go ahead and do it...ahaha".

Annette and Cynthia narrowed their eyes. It seems that the way Blackthorn did things was quite decisive and brutal. They did not even hesitate to plant such a vicious imprint in the brains of their fighters.

Looking at things from another way, it also showed how tricky and powerful of an opponent the kingdom of Blackthorn was. Putting special imprints on one's brain wasn't easy. The fact that they could put this kind of imprint on every soldier and fighter they bred, meant that they possessed some kind of artefact that could do that or had the aid of someone who did that for them.

If it was the latter, things could become a little serious. Recognising that the man was telling the truth, Cynthia sighed and asked Annette to release him. The latter looked somewhat hesitant; nevertheless, she followed the instruction and glanced at Emma who immediately released her strings.

Now freed, the assassin smirked and was just about to exit with his skills when...

"Before you leave, tell this your Marshall and General. In the upcoming war for the capital, I won't show them any mercy" Cynthia declared, the aura of a ruler faintly emitted from her.

Hmph... the assassin snorted and quickly disappeared into faint black particles.

"Was it wise to let him go, your highness?" Annette questioned. The man was a level 500 assassin, taking him out here would lessen the burden on their soldiers later.

"There is no point in killing him. Based on what I have heard and seen about the kingdom of Blackthorn in the past few weeks, I have come to understand their Modus Operandi quite clearly. if they dared to send that man here, it means that he is just a pawn whose life and death did not matter to them at all"

"Killing that assassin would serve no purpose. On the contrary, if I let him go, he would bring the news back to their army and our fearless attitude would deter them somewhat" Cynthia answered.

Sometimes just having a fearless attitude in front of a predicament, was enough to break the composure of your enemies. She wanted the kingdom of Balckthron who became complacent after their continuous wins to get enraged by her reply. That way, during the battle there would be some kind of opening or the other to exploit.

"If you say so"

Annette nodded. Since the person she needed to support said that, there was no reason for her to say anything else. That said, as someone who was tasked to see this mission to accomplishment, she would stop at nothing to make this a flawless work and earn praise from her master.

As such, she secretly placed a spirit mark of her own on the assassin without him realising anything. After some time, this spirit mark would start affecting him, placing thoughts and wills of her own

that would make the assassin do her bidding. This way, she had paced a spy of her own on the side of the enemy.

"By the way, how goes the infiltration of Sir Theodore and Miss Maybell and the others who follow them"

Cynthia brought out two more glasses from the cupboard and placed them in front of Annette and Emma. With the assassin gone, the three women who had become friends from the many trials they faced over the time, sat down and drank together.

"Hehe, Theodore and Maybell are the Guardians of Laplace. Their power and abilities are without equal. The same goes for the kindred that follows them. Since they have taken the task, Your Highness just need to sit back and relax and enjoy the show" Annette answered with a smile.

Faintly, Cynthia could detect the tone of pride in her words. This was one of the rarest moments when the maid who was dressed as an adventurer right now, showed any sorts of emotions.

Usually, she would display this kind of emotion when talking about her master, the dungeon or her comrades. The other times, she would always stay astute and calm without showing any change in her behaviour.

Cynthia was already aware that the people who stuck with that demon were special as such, she stopped worrying about it and enjoyed the beautiful moonlit night.

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Capital city, Ellesmere Royal Palace...

At this moment inside the audience room, seated on top of the throne placed on a high dais, was a man. He was wearing military uniform that was decorated with numerous symbols and stars.

He was tall, had short grey hair and his well developed face gave him a seasoned and knowledgeable aura. As he lazed on the throne while looking down, he gave off a palpable aura that could even make people above level 500 shudder.

He was the general and commander in chief of the second army of his majesty, the king of Blackthorn.

"It appears that our enemy has assembled quite an army to resist us. Didn't you say that we will be able to conquer the north in around another month, Marshall?" As he lazed on top of the throne, he threw a casual question to the fat man standing at the base of the dais.

"The general need not worry, I stand by my word. We will conquer the north the only remaining bastion for the remnants of the old kingdom in about a month. I have sent one of my subordinates to give that lass who is on the rise recently in the north a message. If she is somewhat intelligent she would no doubt jump at this amnesty that I am willing to give them"

The man below spoke, a sneer hung on his lips. Similar to the person seated on top of the throne, he too was dressed in military clothes and was decorated with numerous stars and symbols.

However, if one looked carefully they would be able to see that the stars on his clothes and even his garb itself looked a little less impressive than the general. That said, the intimidating aura he gave off couldn't be underestimated.

The man addressed as marshal by the general was none other than Marshall Cavalier whom the assassin spoke of to Cynthia. At this current moment, the two were having a discussion about the affairs of the kingdom.

"I hope it is the case. However, you shouldn't underestimate these people Cavalier. They have doggedly held on for half a year even after our kingdom invaded them. In terms of persistence, the people of this kingdom could be said to be at the top" the general warned.

However, Cavalier took caution to the wind and laughed "I think the general is overestimating them. It's true that it took us longer than we estimated and we have yet to conquer the kingdom. However, how could a small third tier nation be compared to us?"

"The only reason they were able to hold on for this long is because they are timid and are turtling, just like that first prince of theirs. Even if it's that lass in charge now, the result would still be the same no matter how big of an army she manages to raise".

Marshall Cavalier's words were laced with thick confidence that bordered into blind faith. That said, it was not without any reason that Marshall Cavalier spoke those words after all, there really wasn't any comparison between their two nations.

The strongest person that the royal family of Ellesmere had was the Knight Captain named Cyrus who was only around the late level 500. Whereas, their kingdom of Blackthorn had plenty of such individuals.

What's more, their king was at the late stages of level 600 and was preparing to rise to level 700.

## Chapter 829- Battle for the Capital

Aside from that, there was also the hidden weapon of their kingdom, the individual that only their king and the top brass of their military were allowed to know about. If they made the strength of that individual public, they would have long been upgraded from their status of a third grade country.

Even the recently ranked second grade country, the kingdom of Ingolf won't be their opponent.

The general seated on the throne with a lazy expression was about to say something when suddenly he sensed something and his countenance changed.

"It is good to be confident; however, one shouldn't be concietful that they get the rug swept from under them. It looks like the subordinate you sent, returned back".

Just as he spoke those words, black particles suddenly started forming in this resplendent audience hall before a figure materialised from it. It was the very same assassin that appeared before Cynthia.

"Esteemed General, Esteemed Marshall" The assassin kneeled on the ground.

Marshall Cavalier placed his eyes on his subordinate and commented with a slightly displeased tone "What took you so long? You just had one task and that is to convince that lass to surrender"

"My apologies" the assassin apologised, his expression hidden by the mask.

"Nevermind that, so did that princess accept our offer? Of course she did didn't she? She is not a fool, she should know what's better for her people".

When Marshall Cavalier asked with a delighted expression, ready to hear a piece of good news, the assassin remained silent and after a while delivered the bad news.

"She rejected".

It was just two short words; however, those two short words immediately caused the foolishly grinning marshal to freeze in his place. One second... two seconds... a couple of seconds passed by in a nerve wracking silence.

Just when it seemed like it would go on, a powerful energy diffused in the air and heavily pressured the assassin until he was kissing the floor.

"What did you say?" Marshall Cavalier's normally smiling face was distorted into a hideous raging expression as a powerful killing aura came out of him.

"Cavalier, get a hold of yourself"

A calm voice interfered, sweeping away the energy and the tense atmosphere in the room. To be able to instantly blow away the energy of Marshall Cavalier who was in the late levels of level 500, one could imagine how powerful the general was.

The former immediately retracted his aura and put on his smiling face.

"It seems that your plan failed, Cavalier" the general mocked. It was generally known to the military that Marshall Cavalier was the most violent man who always had a smiling face. However, that was just a façade. Only the higher brass knew that this man was the most cruellest of them all and torturing and playing with his enemy was his hobby.

"So it would seem. However, I don't understand why she rejected my offer. Any sane person in her position would choose to take in my offer. It doesn't make sense... didn't she kill her brother with her own hands because she didn't want to fight us?"

"I wanted to deceive her leading her to believe that I would give her and her people amnesty as long as she surrendered than attacking her army when she least expects us. Thus capturing this kingdom in one go. However, this bitch foiled my plan" Marshall Cavalier grumbled, clenching his hands in frustration.

"Did she say why she didn't want to accept my offer?"

The assassin shook his head "She did not. She only said that the victor isn't decided yet. The one to get the last laugh will be her and her people".

At those words, both the Marshall and the general seated on the throne narrowed their eyes. It seems that there was still someone foolish enough in this kingdom to think that they stood a chance against them.

It seemed that they had been far too easy and taken lightly by the other region of this kingdom. Be that may, this was also quite interesting.

"Order our men to get ready for war. Since she declared all that, she would surely march towards the capital before the other nobles who had thrown their towels with us, could send their force. Also, tell the knight orders to come back we shall show them the might of Blackthorn"

The general sneered, he wanted to see how long the princess of this fallen country could stay conceited. The Marshall and the assassin bowed and hurriedly left the hall to carry out the orders.

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Four days later, outside the city of Castledor, in front of the vast plains that spanned for as far as the eye can see, an impressive and grand army could be seen slowly assembling. Like a black carpet that covered the green, their number was enough to blanket the entire area.

The army that was stationed outside the city was none other than the army of the princess of this kingdom. Decked in full armour and strong equipments, they gave off quite a visual impact to anyone watching.



At the front of this impressive army, neighs of Banemoose could be heard intermittently as lines of riders riding Banemoose could be seen. Compared to the infantry behind, these riders were equipped with even better gears.

Following beside them, the heavy infantry division followed. The huge shield that they carried had a unique shimmer about it, which told everyone that the material it was made from wasn't ordinary.

A few with discernable eyes were able to tell that each of these shields was made from Whitesilver. To be able to equip not only the special division of her but the entire army with such gears, how impressive was that?

The expenses needed to do something like this, at the very least none of the nobles watching from the walls of the city could do that. Forget them, even Alstin and the Duke did not have that much resources to splurge like that on random infantry.

As they looked at the impressive line up of the princess's own personal army, their faces couldn't help but become green with envy. It was not just about the types of equipment she geared her army with but even the levels of footsoldiers much less the captains, were much higher than your usual standards.

Then there were also veterans, elites and powerhouses whose level was enough to stir waves in the kingdom, mixed in the army. What's more, there was not just a few of them in her army in fact, there were quite a lot of them.

In these past few days, the nobles have witnessed the gathering of one powerful group of individuals after another in this plains. Looking at these awe inspiring armies they couldn't help but burn with jealousy.

Why couldn't they have such an impressive army? If they possessed such a lineup perhaps they could have fended off the forces of balckthron much earlier. At the same time, they couldn't help but wonder where the princess got hold of such impressive individuals.

Little did they know that the awe inspiring army they were looking at while feeling jealousy from the pits of their stomach, were displaced and injured soldiers that they sent towards the northwestern region of Mountmend because they didn't want to spend any expenses on them.

After being fed amply, healed and treated with care and respect by Cynthia, they had once again regained their morals and were ready to battle for her to death. It was the same case with the veterans, elites and the powerhouses that the noble mentioned.

All of them were once either powerful soldiers or adventurers. After being rescued from the claws of the criminal organisation, they devoted their life to her cause.

At this moment, more than seventy per cent of the powerful guild in the tower town had sent their forces to join the princess in her war. As such, it could be said that the whole of the forces of Tower Town was concentrated here at this moment.

It was only natural for these fierce warriors who fought with their lives to defeat monsters every single day to be head and shoulders above the rest.

In the vast green plains in front of the city, an awe-inspiring army stood. Numbering easily above 130,000 they looked like a surging black wave. However, they weren't the only army in the plains.

Towards the right of Cynthia's army, there was another army. Although not as impressive and large, they were the army of the noblemen of this dukedom. Aside from them, there were a few more legions flying the flag of their respective nobles occupying one side of this plains.

The reason for them assembling here was for one goal and that was to march to the capital and fend off the invaders who were occupying their kingdom.

STEP... STEP... on top of the city wall, sounds of footsteps rang out as an entourage of people slowly walked up the stairs and appeared before everyone. When the nobles and their attendants saw who it was, they tactfully chose to step back and open a path for her.

For them to show an attitude of submission and fear, needless to say, there was only one individual in this city who could evoke this kind of emotion from them.

Leading the group, was Cynthia who was at this moment dressed up in an article of gorgeous purple clothing with a fur jacket on top. Behind her followed her loyal attendants and Annette and her group.

There was also Blake and his team who had a strong bond with her. The moment this strong group of men and women arrived, the atmosphere seemed to have changed as their aura diffused in the air creating heavy pressure for these weak noblemen.

This kind of aura was not released consciously but instead was formed from the remnant aura their bodies naturally released in the air. For these weak noblemen who were used to staying inside the comfort of their mansion, the powerful and berserk aura released by Cynthia and her people was tantamount to a heavy mountain pressing on their bodies.

They could not breathe nor could they move from their place. This kind of aura which one could only have through numerous life and death experiences was a deterrence of sorts on its own on low level people.

Naturally, these nobles were unable to handle them. The subordinates behind them hurriedly used their powers to offset some of the pressure; however, to their surprise they realised that even after they used their powers consistently they could not scatter most of the aura that was subconsciously realised by these people.

Immediately, their eyes became solemn and they realised that their levels were far higher than them.

"Hmm, it looks like everybody has arrived. The siege engines are ready too. In that case, we shall march and meet with the army of Duke Redcrst midway before heading towards the capital"

Standing at the borders of the wall and looking at the army standing in attention on the plains, ready to march at her signal, all kinds of emotions surged through her body. She had finally gotten to this point.

After this one last final battle which would decide the ultimate victor, she would have finally completed the words she gave to her late father. Just as emotions were about to overwhelm her and her eyes glossed over with tears, she hurriedly took a deep breath and suppressed all of these emotions inside the deepest recess of her heart.

A steel like determination appeared on her face as she took a step forward and declared in a clear crisp voice.

"Soldiers of Ellesmere! Today, we stand on the precipice of destiny, staring into the abyss of a war brought upon us by the Blackthorn invaders. They have ravaged our lands, stolen our loved ones, and sown the seeds of sorrow in every heart. But let me tell you, this suffering, this pain, and this

agony will not be in vain. Today, we rise not just as an army but as the wrath of a people who have endured enough"

Although her voice was not loud, it mysteriously resounded all across the plains, pulling the attention of every man and soldier. Look around you, my fellow soldiers. The scars of this war are etched in every corner of our homeland.

"The rivers run not just with water but with the tears of our fallen brethren. Their memories, their sacrifice, call out to us. We cannot and will not let these invaders defile the very soil we call home. The Kingdom of Blackthorn has underestimated us. They thought they could break us, tear us apart, but little do they know that with every hardship, we grow stronger".

With each words, Cynthia instantly grasped the hearts of these people. Their fires of hatred, revenge and excitement all agglomerated together and gave a direction for release.

"For every brother, every sister, every child we've lost, we shall make them pay tenfold. The winds of vengeance blow in our favour. Today, we carry the weight of our people's hopes and dreams on our shoulders. The capital, our beloved Ellesmere, awaits. It has witnessed the tyranny of foreign boots on its sacred ground for far too long. Today, we declare that our kingdom is not a prize for the invaders. Ellesmere was ours and always will be".

Like a volcano raging, every infantry and soldier felt their blood boiling at the injustice that was done to them. Cynthia's words simply materialised those deep emotions within their hearts and helped them forge them into a blade that was pointed towards the blackthorn.

"Let our battle cry resonate through the hills, let the heavens themselves bear witness to our resolve! With every swing of our sword, every step that we take, let us cull down the number of enemies and show them the might of the people of the kingdom of Ellsemere"

"Soldiers, my brothers and sister in arms, let me hear you roar. Let this be the day we carve our names into the annals of history. Let our enemies tremble at the sound of our unity. For Ellesmere, for our fallen, for our future— March"...

The plains was silent for a couple of seconds when it was swept by a flood like fervour.

"Yeeaaaahhh!!" Every infantry and troop raised their weapons in the sky and gave a blood curdling wacry. Right now, Cynthai words raised their morals so high that the entire domain was swept off by their energy.

Even the ordinary citizens felt their hearts thumping in excitement and the notion of going to war to achieve great deeds flashed over their minds. Though their delusion didn't last long, and they quickly sobered up once reality struck them and their timid nature took hold of them once again.

Over at the plains, led by several captains the army started marching. Cynthia and her group also didn't stay for long on top of the walls and started marching with the army. The other nobles also did the same and travelled over with their own army.

As the citizens of Castledor saw the slowly departing image of the grand army, they couldn't help but sigh with various emotions. Victory or defeat everything would be decided after this battle.

Whether their kingdom would survive or get usurped by the invaders was now all up to these fierce and brave soldiers. They could only pray in their hearts for the victory of her highness and their kingdom.

The distance from Castledor to the capital was although quite large, it did not have any complex terrain like the Norther Outlaw Forest. As such, the army did not have to slow down their march because of the monsters and just had to travel through the road.

When they got tired of marching, they camped on the sidewalks and picked up speed after a timely rest. And so just like that army continued to march straight through the road.

On the fourth day, the princess' army finally met with the army of Duke Redcrest. The symbol of his flag was a red star marked on a cloth of gold and though his army paled in comparison to Cynthia's, they made up for that with their numbers.

The army that the Duke brought, was more than double the size of the princess's own army. That is if one only looked at the numbers, it surely did appear very impressive. However, they severely lacked strong individuals.

There were only a few soldiers who were above level 300 much less people above level 400. In the upcoming war, the army that Duke Redcrest brought would only be useful for filling spots.

Duke Redcrest must have also realised the power of the princess' army as his eyes widened in shock when he felt the fierce aura that any of the individuals in her army gave off.

'No wonder she was able to defeat Montford' The realisation struck him and he finally understood how Cynthia was able to defeat Montford and take over Castledor. With such powerful individuals on her side, it would not be an exaggeration to say that she would be able to completely sweep off Castledor.

Heck, forget about Castledor, with that kind of army she would be able to completely take over the northern region without any difficulty.

"I wonder how she managed to convince all those powerhouses to work for her"

As a ruler of a region himself, he knew how rare finding those kinds of individuals was. Not only were they extremely powerful, but due to their strength more often than not they possessed a conceited and prideful attitude that looked down on everyone else around them.

To get these lofty people to bend their heads and follow her... how could the duke not be surprised?

"Your Highness" sitting on his horseback, Duke Redcrest performed a perfunctory bow as he glanced at the princess who was currently riding on a fierce looking Banemoose and coming towards his place.

"Your Grace, how are you?" Cynthia also performed a perfunctory bow. In any case, this man was the duke of a region. In terms of status, he was even higher than her who was only the princess of the kingdom.

That being said, Cynthia's bow was only ceremonious and held no sincerity. If it was the previous her before she was pushed into a corner, her actions might have been earnest.

However, going through a lot in this short period of time had forged her character. She had shed the immaturity and gulliness that her previous self had and became more level headed. Right now, she was the ruler of Montford and the only candidate for the throne.

In regard to status, she even exceeded the duke in front of her. Duke Redcrest must have also felt the changes in her, though he did not mind and simply nodded.

"As you can see for yourself, your highness. Ever since the forces of Blackthorn invaded us, there has never been a peaceful day in our lives. The constant attacks and bad news have pushed all of us to the edge" he answered in a self-deprecating smile.

