

## W. Secret 991

### Chapter 991: Defeat in a Single Blow!

Doomsday's information was very detailed indeed. Before Doomsday turned twenty-eight, his life was ordinary. He had a mid-tier almighty beast bloodline called the Fantasy Hawk.

Although this Fantasy Hawk was a mid-tier almighty beast bloodline, unlike a mid-tier almighty beast bloodline its ability was of little value as it was very weak. Therefore, Doomsday was just like countless ordinary people before twenty-eight and used his almighty beast bloodline to become a bodyguard of an aristocrat.

Initially, Doomsday's life might have gone on in this manner right up until his death, but in the year he turned twenty-eight, something had happened. The aristocratic lord to whom he was loyal had erupted in a clash with another lord. Both armies of the two territories ruthlessly killed each other.

In the end, the lord who Doomsday was loyal to was defeated, and the entire territory was slaughtered until there was nothing left.

At that point, Doomsday seemed to vanish without a trace. Even the information of Phantom's Intelligence Team had no records of this period at all. Only after a full decade, Doomsday suddenly appeared once more.

No one knew where Doomsday emerged from, but once he did, the first thing he did was to massacre everyone within that aristocratic lord's territory; even the young children. No one was left behind and the aura of death soared to the skies.

With this as a prologue, the entire Holy Dragon Empire was shaken up. The ruling powers of the empire's royal family declined year after year, no longer powerful enough to constrain the numerous, massive territories of the empire. Therefore, the turmoil of the Holy Dragon Empire soon arrived.

Rivers of blood ran in every place Doomsday passed by. The royal family had once sent three full-shifting formidable existences to punish Doomsday, but he easily killed them in the end.

After that, the name of Doomsday was gradually born and indicated that wherever he went, it was as if doomsday had arrived. The place would fill with a frightful, bloody carnage.

“Disappeared for ten years!”

Naturally, Merlin took note of Doomsday’s greatest secret, which must have been those ten years when he vanished. From a mere inheritor of a mid-tier bloodline, he had become one of the top-level existences of the whole Holy Dragon Empire in one leap. Doomsday merely had used a decade for that, which was really unbelievable.

There was no doubt that Doomsday had done something in those ten years he disappeared. It very likely involved an enormous secret, one which belonged only to Doomsday himself.

In truth, it was not just Doomsday. Amongst those leaders of the rebel armies, which one did not have a secret? Each of them seemed to have appeared from thin air and became the most top-level existences all at once. It was precisely due to these mysterious and powerful rebel army leaders that the Holy Dragon royal family was not as powerful as they wished to be because they were only able to put up with the present chaos of the empire.

“Deputy Minister, you did not guess wrongly. Those ten years in which Doomsday had vanished must surely involve some momentous secret. It’s just that other than Doomsday himself, no one would know about this matter.”

Merlin bobbed his head and put down all this information on Doomsday. As for the contents of this information, he had already memorized everything. Merlin even told the members of the Intelligence Team, “Keep a close eye on Doomsday, and in particular, pay extra attention to those ten years when Doomsday disappeared. If there are any updates, you must tell me at once.”

Merlin became more and more interested in the ten years when Doomsday had disappeared. Back then, Doomsday had nearly forced Merlin to expose his Illusory World, which would destroy Merlin’s foundation. Merlin was not someone who would forgive so easily.

“Haha, Leon, you’re here indeed!”

Suddenly, a tall and muscular man came from the outside with many people following behind him. Merlin turned around and frowned slightly. This muscular man was the Combat Team's Team Leader, Hert the Ursus King.

This Hert approached Merlin purposefully and his tone did not sound too courteous. No matter what, Merlin was now his immediate superior. However, Hert still dared to call out Merlin's name so frankly. This in itself was provocative behavior.

"Hert?"

"Leon, back then you were the Deputy Team Leader of the Combat Team. Even if you've become a full-shifting contender, you're still a Deputy Team Leader! The Minister made an exception in promoting you to Deputy Minister. I have an objection to this. We're all members of the Combat Team, so let's use the methods of the Combat Team to settle this. How about that? I myself want to see, now that you're a full-shifter, how powerful you are. Killing that idiot Black Gorilla King isn't much of a feat, you know."

It turned out that Hert the Ursus King was not happy that Merlin, from being one of his subordinates, had become his superior. Nonetheless, this was the Minister, Farron's decision. Hert had always respected Minister Farron very much, so he dared not oppose Farron directly. Even so, he ultimately felt that, even if a Deputy Minister had to be elected, he was the best candidate and not Merlin.

In Hert's plans, he could become the Deputy Minister while Merlin became the Combat Team's Team Leader. Only then would this be a win-win solution. Therefore, he was full of discontent and immediately vented this towards Merlin.

Merlin smiled. All of their burning stares were fixed upon him. In fact, many people did not understand why he had become Phantom's Deputy Minister. Even if he had slain the Black Gorilla King, could he actually compare to Hert the Ursus King? It should be known that Hert had also killed a full-shifting contender before. Moreover, it was an accomplishment of killing a full-shifter with a mid-tier almighty beast bloodline.

Only Iza, Shiya, and the rest were not concerned. Conversely, they were worried about Hert. "The Team Leader is too reckless. Still, although he's more approachable, he's actually very proud too. How could he tolerate Leon becoming Deputy Minister? Perhaps only a fight would calm the Team Leader down."

It was not just the Combat Team. Even the members of the Intelligence Team, the Logistics Team, the Research Team, and so on, had received the news and all came here, staring at Merlin and Hert. This was the most fighting force amongst all of Phantom's various teams so far.

"Alright, Hert. Let's do this right here. You may attack," Merlin spoke evenly. He knew that if he did not face this challenge today, he would surely not have much dignity left as a Deputy Minister in Phantom from then onwards.

"Right here? Are you trying to destroy the Intelligence Team?"

Hert knitted his brow and laughed coldly.

"That won't happen. Attack."

"Alright."

Hert did not waste more time chatting and let out a roar. Instantly, he shapeshifted fully, becoming an enormous Blackbear and exuded a fearsome force. This was his true shifted form, the Ursus King!

The black Ursus King extended its massive claws, and without any hesitation, swiped at Merlin as it whistled through the air. This swipe had the force of nearly two hundred tons, and even the air itself was compressed, emitting sounds of escaping pressure.

This strength was definitely greater than the Black Gorilla King!

"As expected of the Team Leader of the Combat Team. The strength of the Ursus King is truly greater than the Black Gorilla King! However – a match of strength?"

Merlin laughed. With his current form, would he be concerned about a match of strength? Perhaps only some Supreme Talents would make Merlin feel slightly apprehensive.

Of course, that would be mere apprehension!

“Boom.”

Merlin lightly reached out with a hand, after which his arm swiftly shapeshifted, forming a massive paw. He stretched it out, turned it over, and smacked it down. Instantly, a rumbling sound boomed incessantly in their ears. Moreover, that frightening power was something that would make everyone remember this blow.

Furthermore, this was merely a casual strike from Merlin. He had only shapeshifted one arm.

“How is that possible?”

As Hert the Ursus King stared at that gigantic paw, he felt almost suffocated. This was not a Supreme Talent. As a full-shifting fighter himself, Hert knew very well that this was definitely not a Supreme Talent. Just like him, this was the purest strength!

“No, no, Supreme Talent, Enhance, let me break out!”

Hert unleashed a furious cry as his body expanded by an additional size. His muscles bulged, containing terrifying power. It turned out that Hert had activated his Supreme Talent, and his Supreme Talent just so happened to be strength itself, able to upgrade his physical attributes twice over. This was a rather fearsome Supreme Talent, as it would amplify his physical attributes.

It was by relying on this Supreme Talent that the Ursus King had steadily occupied the position of the foremost contender amongst Phantom’s various teams, second only to the enigmatic and formidable Farron. His Supreme Talent had played a part in this. Thus, after sensing Merlin’s threat, Hert at once unleashed his Supreme Talent, exploding with his mightiest strength.

Nonetheless, Merlin’s eyes merely flashed an admiring look, but his gigantic paw did not change at all and still smacked down directly and viciously towards Hert.

“Bang.”

There was an immense crash as Merlin’s blow seemed to have struck everyone in their hearts which made them feel a sinking sensation.

Dust and smoke filled the air. Hert the Ursus King that was so full of extraordinary vigor a moment ago was now lying pathetically on the ground. His body force had not vanished, but he had been ruthlessly smashed past the ground's surface.

Only Hert knew that Merlin had been holding back. Otherwise, this blow would have immediately crushed him to death. Merlin's strength was unbelievably formidable. Hert had only felt such a terrifying force from Minister Farron.

Just from this blow alone, Hert knew that Merlin and himself were both in completely different leagues. Merlin was a contender that could be placed on par with the mysterious and powerful Minister Farron who was one of the most superior existences in the entire Holy Dragon Empire!

"Hert, let's end this here. How's that?"

Merlin's arm had returned to its original appearance. Before that, Merlin had merely used the strength of his shapeshifted arm, perhaps not even mobilizing a tenth of his power. Not even Merlin understood how strong he really was now.

"Cough cough... Deputy Minister, I accept defeat wholeheartedly!"

Hert the Ursus King struggled to stand up. Just one shapeshifted arm of Merlin's was enough to defeat him. This made him understand profoundly that Merlin was a great existence on the same level as Minister Farron.

"Alright, it's over now. Everyone, head back to your teams."

Merlin waved his hand and the surrounding people immediately dispersed. After this battle, Merlin's position in Phantom was especially solid. He could even rope in some factions to contend against Minister Farron in the future.

However, Merlin thought that there was no need for so much trouble. He could defeat Farron directly and be done with it.

Defeat Farron; if someone learned of Merlin's intention, they would think he had gone mad. Farron had managed Phantom for decades, and his position had always been steady as a mountain. No one had actually defeated him. Of course, no one knew how strong he really was either.

"Honorable Deputy Minister, Minister Farron is asking for you."

Suddenly, a man from the Intelligence Team reported timidly to Merlin.

"Minister Farron?"

A smirk tugged at the corner of Merlin's lips as he fell silent for a moment. "Let's go and pay the Minister a visit then."

Following that, Merlin trailed behind this person from the Intelligence Team, heading into the depths of Phantom Headquarters.

Phantom Headquarters was exceedingly complex. The various sorts of mechanisms and secret passages were endless. Although Merlin had become the Deputy Minister of Phantom, he had only been part of Phantom for a short time and did not understand the layout of Phantom Headquarters.

After passing one secret passage after another, Merlin came to a stone room. The man who had led the way now stopped and stood outside the door, pointing towards the room. "The Honorable Minister is waiting inside."

Merlin had no doubts. Who else would have such a clear understanding of this place other than Minister Farron?

Soon enough, Merlin walked into the secret chamber. This space was rather dark, but even in the darkest night, Merlin could see the situation clearly within the room.

"Splash."

There was a sudden sound of flowing water. Merlin looked over with a steady gaze. There was an immense blood pool and it was still boiling over. What was terrifying was that, in this boiling blood pool, Farron was silently immersed in its midst.

“Deputy Minister Leon, come in.”

Farron languidly stood up from the blood pool and casually draped a blue robe over himself. After seeing Merlin coming in, Farron smiled and said, “Within this blood pool is the blood of all the rebel army leaders I’ve killed. Most of these are fourth-form shifters, as well as a few occasional full-shifting contenders. At a level like mine, it’s hard to improve my strength. I was hoping that this blood pool might be somewhat useful.”

Although Farron’s voice was calm, Merlin felt a chill spreading throughout the secret chamber. Perhaps the blood pool did not only belong to those rebel army leaders, but also those who opposed Farron or the royal family. They too would ultimately become a part of this blood pool.

“Deputy Minister Leon, you’ve just defeated Hert?” Farron asked breezily.

“Ah, it’s just a fluke,” Merlin’s emotions were calm as well as he replied mildly.

“Oh? That was no fluke. Hert’s strength is greater than the Black Gorilla King. For you to defeat him so easily is actually very astonishing to me. It looks like I’ve somewhat underestimated Deputy Minister Leon in the past. Still, this is good. The stronger you are, the better it will be for our Holy Dragon Empire. Even if you surpass me in the future, I can even yield this position of Minister.”

Merlin did not know what Farron really meant. He was somewhat in the dark.

“Minister, you’ve asked me to come here. Do you have any orders?” Merlin asked respectfully. At least for now, Farron was still the Minister and one with the highest authority within all of Phantom.

Farron gave Merlin a deep look and was silent for a long while before he slowly spoke, “Deputy Minister Leon, Her Highness the Princess Royal is also a member of the royal family who ultimately serves His Majesty.”

Farron's voice was deep. This was practically a warning to Merlin. It looked like His Majesty the King was not too happy with the actions of the second prince, the Princess Royal and so on. He had not yet abdicated the throne and was still the king of the Holy Dragon Empire's royal family. As for how the Holy Dragon Empire had practically fallen apart under his rule, His Majesty the King did not think that it was his fault.

Farron was on the king's side. There was no need to doubt this. Farron's words, on some level, represented the king's stance.

Merlin could join the king as well but he would not gain many benefits in doing so. Moreover, the Princess Royal would share her authority with Merlin, even share everything. Could the king do that?

After a moment of thought, a smile crossed Merlin's face and he said calmly, "Minister, I'm devoted to the empire. The Princess Royal can attest to that. Her Highness had done me a favor, so I simply helped her out with some small favor. I believe that His Majesty the King wouldn't find fault in this."

Merlin's words instantly caused the atmosphere to become tense.

Now the king was even more afraid of the Princess Royal, for no reason other than the fact that she had obtained Merlin's support. Initially, Farron had thought that Merlin could be controlled, maybe even become a powerful assistant under him.

However, now it seemed like Merlin had refused completely. There was even a vague feeling of confrontation. Merlin's force was faintly discernible, but it made Farron feel as if frightening energy would explode at any time.

In this period, Merlin must have grown stronger significantly!

Farron was silent for a long while before finally heaving a long sigh. "Marquis Leon, the Holy Dragon Empire is currently plagued by external and internal strife. We all serve the empire. That's the most important thing. You must remember that the king represents the empire! Alright, you may leave. Henceforth, you'll still be in charge of the Combat Team. As for the other teams, they'll report to me directly. In the future, when you're familiar with the various teams in Phantom, I'll let you take charge of other teams."

Merlin stood up and ceremoniously bowed to Farron, then left right away. The final arrangement that Farron had made regarding his duties was actually a limitation.

A lofty Deputy Minister, only in charge of the Combat Team; this was totally unusual. This time, it was assumed that Merlin had broken off with Farron and the king. From then on, there was a possibility that Merlin might face more obstacles within Phantom.

Nonetheless, this was nothing much. As long as he had formidable abilities, Merlin could establish a faction belonging to him within the Combat Team, acting as the Princess Royal's most faithful support.

"The royal family is really bogged down by conflict..."

Merlin shook his head and immediately left the secret chamber.

Within the secret chamber, Minister Farron's face gradually turned cold and the entire room seemed shrouded in a chilly layer of ice.

"The Princess Royal is really willing to invest her capital, allowing Leon to enter the secret chamber with the Sacred Lion Beast. Has Leon broken through or not? Based on his appearance, he still had not broken through to his Supreme Talent, yet there's still a dangerous feeling about him..."

Farron's expression was grave and uncertain. He had no authority to prevent the Princess Royal from entering the place with the Sacred Lion Beast. Not even the king could stop her. This was the royal family's encouragement towards their descendants. Only those whose bloodline was especially concentrated, who had made special contributions to the royal family, could enter.

The Princess Royal met all these conditions, so she could bring Merlin in.

Nonetheless, Farron did not sense that Merlin possessed any powerful Supreme Talent, but Merlin had easily defeated Hert. In addition, Merlin had exuded a faintly discernible force of danger just now which made it hard for Farron to determine the truth.

“Oh the royal family, still caught in this adversarial, deadly struggle. Father and son, father and daughter, sibling and sibling, everyone’s in open and secret conflict. If they were to gather all their strength, what would Doomsday amount to?”

Farron could not hold back a sign. He had an unparalleled understanding of the situation within the royal family. Still, he was loyal to the king and would never betray him. Therefore, even though he was unwilling at times, he could only obey.

Perhaps in the not-so-distant future, Farron had a premonition that between him and Merlin, only one could live...

“To think that the young fellow back then had grown to such a stage. I don’t know if this is good fortune or a disaster.”

Farron entered the blood pool once more, quietly shut his eyes, and steeped himself in the blood pool.

Chapter 992: Assassination!

After leaving Phantom, Merlin boarded the carriage and said evenly, “Go to Count Altadin’s castle.”

The carriage driver did not ask anything, simply brandished the whip and urged the carriage on towards Altadin’s manor.

In the carriage, Merlin narrowed his eyes slightly. The current situation was getting more and more strange. In other words, things were becoming clearer as well.

The king, the second prince, the Princess Royal, were now similar to three different legs of a tripod. In fact, the king’s influence was not as scary as one would imagine. The power held by the princes and princesses within the royal family was actually fearsome as well.

As an example, the army that now protected the palace completely was actually in the hands of the second prince and the Princess Royal. The second prince had slightly more authority. Still, by now the Princess Royal had Merlin’s support, and the situation might reverse soon.

Once the tide had turned, it would disrupt the balance. This was sure to rouse some conflict. Perhaps, following this, Merlin would have to get ready to face these abrupt conflicts.

“The biggest possibility is the second prince. Perhaps he will make his move...”

Merlin’s mind did not stop analyzing. Once the balance was disrupted, one side would surely make a move. Merlin had never crossed paths with the second prince and only knew that the second prince also had a few full-shifting contenders under his command. These were the contenders of the army.

The army, the palace, and Phantom were actually three factions. Initially, the king controlled Phantom, the second prince controlled the army, and the Princess Royal controlled some forces within the palace. Nevertheless, the second prince’s influence had been very overpowering, having reached a hand into the palace, and the Princess Royal suffered defeat after defeat.

Fortunately, the Princess Royal had acted decisively and immediately stopped at nothing to rope Merlin in. In that case, currently by relying on Merlin, the Princess Royal’s influence had extended into Phantom. It was because Merlin had gotten involved with the king’s power that the king had sent Farron to deliver a warning.

The matters of this royal family could be said to be simple, but it could also be said to be complicated.

“Creak.”

Soon enough, Merlin noticed that the carriage’s jolting was slowing down, then it stopped. Merlin pulled the curtain aside. It turned out that, without realizing it, he had already reached Count Altadin’s castle.

“Wait here for me.”

With that, Merlin leaped off the carriage and walked towards Count Altadin’s manor.

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Within a lavish room, candles were lit, and a faint and subtle fragrance drifted throughout the room.

In the room, a handsome man sat steadily in a chair, his eyes revealed a cold glint. He was listening to the report from the three middle-aged men standing before him.

“Your Highness, it looks like the Princess Royal had indeed roped in the new Deputy Minister of Phantom, Leon. This Leon had killed the Black Gorilla King and was later hunted down by Doomsday, but he was saved by Farron.”

The middle-aged man spoke in a low voice.

“Heh, that old fellow had saved this Leon, initially wanting to earn his service, but what’s the outcome? In fact, it made things easier for that good elder sister of mine. Tsk tsk, my good sister, your influence is expanding so fast, and you’re even dipping your finger into Phantom. I don’t believe that the old man would be unconcerned about this?”

This young man was actually His Highness the second prince of the Holy Dragon Empire who wielded authority over the army. The three individuals before him must have been the commanders of the army that he most valued. These were all full-shifting, formidable existences, not weaker in the slightest than the Team Leader of Phantom’s Combat Team, Hert the Ursus King.

As for why the second prince could control the army, this was connected to his mother. Within the royal family of the Holy Dragon Empire, his mother was a direct descendant of the most well-reputed military clan. It was just as shame that, as the empire fell into chaos, the army’s influence was not as dominant as before.

“Your Highness, I’m afraid His Majesty will simply bear it in silence. Currently, the situation is not as before. The royal family must think of a way somehow to bring in some powerful individuals. This Leon is impressive indeed. According to rumors, he’s also a Host. By relying on Leon, it would still be a significant achievement if the Princess Royal were to gradually control Phantom, even though Farron may be in the way and Leon could only control a portion of Phantom’s power. The Princess Royal’s influence would immediately surpass ours.”

This commander of the army spoke somewhat worriedly. In regard to the Princess Royal’s prowess, although they had never personally experienced her methods, they had heard that she was not to be underestimated.

The struggles within the royal family were sometimes even more ruthless and scary than any other matter.

“That’s right, my dear beloved sister. I’ve really underestimated her. Now that her influence is not yet fully consolidated, we must act at once. In terms of Leon, we can send someone to give him a warning. He’ll understand. Naturally, it’ll be best if he can come over to my side. If he won’t, well, after my beloved sister is dead, no matter how strong he is, it won’t be of any use.

“Therefore, both of you, immediately send someone. The main thing is to deal with Lisa – she must die!”

A cold force was exuded from the second prince, and there was a faint murderous aura as well.

“Your Highness, the members of the royal family must not resort to killing each other. Doing so is rather improper,” a middle-aged man replied after some hesitation.

“Humph, the rules set by those old fellows aren’t really that significant in usual times. Now that the empire is in such an unstable situation if I kill Lisa and also wield main authority over the army, would those old fellows really sentence me to death? Rest assured, the old man and those old fellows would reprimand me sternly at most. They would not act rashly against me.”

The second prince’s eyes were filled with a wild light.

The three middle-aged men were silent for a moment before they finally nodded. “Full-shifting contenders would be too easily exposed. The intelligence division of the Princess Royal had learned everything they could about the full-shifters in our army a long time ago. Therefore, we mustn’t send a full-shifter. Otherwise, we’ll be found out before we even get close to the Princess Royal.”

“If we can’t send a full-shifting contender, fourth-form shifters would be too weak. Could they manage to kill Lisa? Although that sister of mine isn’t very powerful, she has a top-tier almighty beast bloodline and is a fourth-form shifter! Moreover, there will surely be full-shifters by her side who would be protecting her in secret.”

The second prince knitted his brow. Trying to ambush and kill the Princess Royal was challenging indeed. They could not send a full-shifting contender. Once they did, their plans would be exposed.

“There’s still someone who’s surely up to the task. If he’s involved, the ambush would most likely work!”

The second prince’s eyes brightened as if he had thought of someone. He said softly, “You’re talking about Shadowthorn? He wants to come into close contact with the Sacred Lion Beast though. That’s really too greedy.”

“Your Highness, as long as he kills the Princess Royal, Shadowthorn won’t be useful anymore. At that point, whether we bring him to the Sacred Lion Beast is entirely up to us!”

The three middle-aged men burst out laughing. That was right. No matter how formidable Shadowthorn was, he was merely a fourth-form shifter. As long as it was not an ambush, Shadowthorn was not much of a threat.

In the end, the second prince could even make plans to murder Shadowthorn.

“Very well. We’ll go with this then. Inform Shadowthorn that I’ve agreed to his conditions. As long as he kills Lisa, I’ll bring him to touch the Sacred Lion Beast in close range at once!”

A look of anticipation grew over the second prince’s face. He had been waiting for this day for a long time...

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Within Count Altadin’s castle, Altadin was looking at Merlin warmly. In truth, Count Altadin knew a little about Merlin’s situation, being someone of his rank and position.

Of course, secret developments like Phantom’s Deputy Minister would not be known to him. Nonetheless, Merlin’s beheading of the Black Gorilla King had already spread around the upper echelons of the aristocrats. Almost everyone knew about this.

Therefore, of course, Count Altadin would know as well. Right now, his gaze towards Merlin was filled with fervor and eagerness.

“Leon, you’ve really become a full-shifter?” After a long while, Count Altadin could not help himself anymore and asked softly. By his side, even Baratha batted her wide beautiful eyes as she stared at Merlin steadily.

“That’s right!”

Merlin nodded softly. He had personally acknowledged this.

“Phew...”

Count Altadin let out a long sigh, but his eyes twinkled with an excited look. A full-shifter – a great contender at this level, only one had reached this stage amongst Count Altadin’s ancestors.

Furthermore, Count Altadin remembered clearly that Merlin was also a Host. A host that was a full-shifting contender was really unimaginable.

“Leon, is that Bead of Infamy still with you?”

Seeing that Altadin inquired about this, Merlin could only bring out the Bead of Infamy, shaking his head powerlessly. “I’m really sorry. Because of me, the almighty beasts’ wills sealed and suppressed within the Bead of Infamy had all vanished.”

Naturally, Merlin would not speak about merging the almighty beasts’ wills. This was now his greatest trump card. He would not reveal this if it was not a crucial moment. After all, having fused together countless almighty beasts’ wills, the increase in his strength was far too terrifying.

Yet, Count Altadin did not seem concerned at all and simply waved his hand. “It’s better if you keep the Bead of Infamy. I know that it’s able to seal and suppress almighty beasts’ wills. Maybe you still have use for it. If my ancestor knew that, by relying on this Bead of Infamy, a Host who is a full-shifting contender could be born once more, he’ll be very gratified.”

Currently, Count Altadin's attitude towards Merlin might be even more affectionate than his daughter.

"Oh right, Leon. Previously I've made an agreement with your father. We've missed the date of the wedding for you and Baratha, due to various reasons. However, never mind that. We can discuss this matter anytime we like now. From my perspective, it would be good after a month. What are your thoughts?"

"And there's also Lady Reese."

Merlin had not forgotten Reese, the young woman he had seen when he first arrived in this world.

"Very well. If there are no objections, how about if I take care of the matters of the wedding?"

Count Altadin seemed extremely enthusiastic, but this suited Merlin's wishes as well. He had no energy to prepare for these various chores. Naturally, it was best if Count Altadin could take care of things for him.

"Everything as you wish, Count Altadin."

Count Altadin appeared to be overjoyed and kept Merlin chatting for a long time. Only until the sky outside was somewhat dusky that Merlin was able to free himself and left.

"Hoo..."

As soon as he went out, a cool wind blew past which made Merlin feel as if his mind had cleared up. When he thought about Count Altadin's enthusiasm, Merlin felt very helpless.

Nevertheless, the matter had been settled at last.

After Merlin boarded the carriage, he said at once, "Return to the castle quickly."

The carriage driver nodded and instantly raised his whip, increasing the speed as they whizzed back towards the castle.

Under the gradually darkening sky, there were only a few stray people walking in the streets. Moreover, there were also some lights that illuminated the somewhat dim path.

Merlin lazily leaned back in the carriage. He was not thinking about anything for once, his mind a total blank.

No one noticed that on the bluestone pavement ahead, a dark figure silently leaned against the wall. When the carriage was passing by, the figure suddenly swelled up all at once and transformed into a frightening almighty beast.

“Bang.”

As the almighty beast snarled, its fist smashed into the carriage. This carriage could not put up any resistance, including the carriage driver, who was reduced into a pile of mangled flesh.

“Roar...”

Suddenly, an enraged roar rang out, and a gigantic paw appeared from the midst of the carriage’s wreckage. It seemed to block the entire sky as it smashed down upon that almighty beast.

“Crack.”

The almighty beast’s body instantly split open, its blood gushing out at an incredible speed.

“Bang.”

The pressure built up within the almighty beast until it exploded into smithereens. Flecks of flesh sprinkled through the air, turning into specks of bloody rain. It was a ghastly sight indeed, and even the air was stained by the thick stench of blood.

Merlin’s figure loomed out from the dust and smoke. A mere fourth-form shifter actually came to assassinate him. Was that not a suicide mission?

‘Who could it be? Farron? He had just warned me recently, and would not need to use such methods at all. Moreover, sending a fourth-form shifter to his death – this was not a true assassination attempt, but a warning.’

“A warning? Currently, in Holy Dragon City, I’m closest to the Princess Royal. If it really was a warning, it must be connected to the Princess Royal. Could it be the second prince?”

Merlin’s mind was immediately analyzing the various possibilities. At last, he concluded that there was a huge possibility that this was a warning from that second prince whom he had never met.

“If it really was a warning, why pick this moment? Don’t tell me that...”

Merlin’s heart suddenly throbbed as he thought of a possibility. At once, he turned around abruptly and raced towards the palace in large strides. Within Merlin’s current physical attributes, even if he had not shapeshifted, his full-speed run was much faster than the carriage by leaps and bounds.

“Boom.”

Suddenly, the palace seemed to tremble slightly. An almighty beast of incomparable size emerged from the palace. Moreover, its mighty presence contained a streak of unbridled fury.

“Oh no, it’s the full-shifter by Lisa’s side!”

When Merlin saw this almighty beast, the uneasy premonition in his heart grew more intense. Even the full-shifting contender by the Princess Royal’s side had exploded with this terrifying power, revealing their true full-shifted form. This meant that the Princess Royal was surely in danger.

With this in mind, Merlin’s speed was further increased as he raced towards the Princess Royal’s palace.

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As usual, the Princess Royal had left the palace, ready to head to the king's palace to pay her respects. This was an act of etiquette the Princess Royal had to perform each day. On this point, she was much better than the second prince.

However, this time, when she had merely reached the garden on her way there, a black shadow suddenly approached the Princess Royal silently. There was a white flash from his hands. The Princess Royal merely felt a slight pain, following which she was no longer conscious of anything.

“Rip.”

That white flash came from a small, sharp knife. In one slice, the Princess Royal's head had fallen off before she could even react in any way.

“Shadowthorn? You dare to kill the Princess Royal, die!”

There was a full-shifting contender by the Princess Royal's side. When he saw the Princess Royal's body crumpling to the ground, this full-shifting contender even felt rather humiliated.

Under his protection, the Princess Royal had died without a cry. This was the work of Shadowthorn. Only he could have such a capability, his target dying before they could even react.

“Bang.”

The full-shifted bodyguard unleashed a mighty roar, practically crushing the entire palace into pieces. Nonetheless, Shadowthorn's figure had vanished without a trace, as if he had never appeared at all. This was Shadowthorn, who had never slipped up, let alone caught. No one had ever seen Shadowthorn's true face before.

“D\*mn you, Shadowthorn. You must die, show your face!”

This full-shifting contender seemed to have lost his mind, wildly destroying the palace. This enormous commotion was certain to attract the attention of the adepts within the palace.

“Swish.”

Finally, Merlin hurried over. When he saw the Princess Royal's body lying on the ground, without a head, his heart was gripped by an unquenchable murderous rage.

That full-shifter who had gone mad was frantically destroying his surroundings and did not even notice Merlin. His massive fist smashed down at once, and the whistling wind even produced an explosive sound.

“Scram!”

Merlin growled loudly, and his arm instantly shapeshifted. A fist flew out, and that full-shifted almighty beast broke out into a pained expression. Its gigantic bulk was actually sent flying by a quick blow from Merlin's fist.

“Boom.”

The colossal body of the almighty beast crashed heavily into the ground. The full-shifting contender only then noticed that it was Merlin, but his eyes were filled with a look of reverence.

No wonder the Princess Royal would value Merlin so much. Previously, this bodyguard had thought that this was not right, but now a mere fist from Merlin had sent him flying. It would be a piece of cake for Merlin to kill him, not even taking much effort.

“Who killed the Princess Royal?”

Merlin's eyes had turned red through and through. Regardless of whether he was using the Princess Royal, or the Princess Royal was using him, they were indeed bound to each other for the moment.

Furthermore, only with the Princess Royal's support would he be able to share in her authority over the empire. To Merlin who wanted to rely on the power of the empire to better understand this world, this had been the best option.

However, the Princess Royal was dead now and Merlin's plans were all in ruins. One might well imagine the fury burning in his heart.

Faced with Merlin's cold, detached stare, the full-shifting contender felt a tremble in his heart and said hurriedly, "It was Shadowthorn. He assassinated Her Highness. Moreover, although Shadowthorn isn't on the second prince's side, he has a close relationship with the second prince. There's a high chance that this affair is incited by the second prince."

"The second prince, hmm?"

Merlin slowly stood up. Despite his calm gaze, his body exuded a piercing, icy force. Still, one would shudder not from the cold, but from fear.

"Marquis Leon, you... What will you do?" Even this full-shifter seemed to feel afraid as he asked timidly.

"Of course I'm going to kill someone!"

Merlin turned and was about to leave when the full-shifting contender clenched his jaw and seemed to come to a decision. He said softly, "Marquis Leon, in truth... In truth, Her Highness hasn't died!"

"Swoosh."

Merlin swiftly spun around, his gaze as sharp as blades, fixed steadily upon this full-shifter.

Chapter 993: A Royal Storm 1

"Huh? What did you say?"

Merlin's force remained terrifying. Although he seemed calm, his calmness seemed like a volcano that was about to erupt. This made the full-shifting contender very alarmed.

Faced with Merlin's inquiry, this full-shifter stood up hurriedly and looked around before saying secretively, "Marquis Leon, in fact, this is a body double of Her Highness. The Princess Royal had always been very cautious and prudent. She had many body doubles to guard against the unexpected."

“Body double?”

Merlin carefully looked at the corpse on the ground; he did not know the Princess Royal very well. Even after that intimate encounter, he was merely able to identify some aspects of her presence. Nonetheless, this corpse on the ground had the same force as the Princess Royal. It was unbelievable.

“Where’s Lisa now? Bring me there!” Merlin said in a low, urgent voice.

“Marquis Leon, please follow me. However, to prevent the people of the second prince from discovering their error, I must conceal this truth.”

Therefore, with this full-shifter covering up the truth, almost all of the palace learned that the Princess Royal was killed by an assassin. Conversely, Merlin was led by the full-shifter back to the Princess Royal’s palace.

As soon as he stepped into the palace, Merlin saw a familiar face. It was the Princess Royal.

“You’re really not dead?”

Merlin carefully looked at the Princess Royal. She looked rather the same, and her force had not changed. Still, after knowing that the Princess Royal had many body doubles, Merlin was even starting to suspect whether the one whom he had intercourse with was the real Princess Royal.

“I’m so lucky. I’m really not dead. I’ve never thought that brother of mine would resort to such underhanded means, but how efficient it was. If that was really me, I would have been dead by now!”

The Princess Royal had learned about everything that happened within the palace, and her voice had an icy edge to it.

“Lisa, how many body doubles do you have?” Merlin asked coldly.

“Body doubles? I do have a few. In a precarious situation like this, of course, I need plenty of body doubles, but Leon, don’t worry. That day, it was the real me! If you don’t believe me, you may check for yourself.”

With that, Lisa wound both hands around Merlin’s neck, her fragrance drifting into Merlin’s nose. This time, there was no aphrodisiac. Merlin could have held back, but at this moment, he did not wish to do so.

Therefore, he swiftly swept the Princess Royal up in his arms and entered the inner chamber. At that point, moans began to sound.

After a few hours, Merlin stared at Lisa who still wore a playful, taunting expression, and shook his head. This Lisa was enchanting indeed. Merlin did not feel much love for her, only pure lust. Although Lisa was not someone with absolute beauty, the scent of her body was astonishingly tempting to the senses.

“Lisa, tell me, what are you going to do?” Merlin asked in a calm voice.

“That good little brother of mine had gone against protocol. However, we’re not in a rush. I’ll see how King Father’s side reacts. If he exploits this chance to sort out that good brother of mine, of course, that’d be ideal. If he’s unwilling, humph, then don’t blame us if we break the rules too!”

Merlin could sense murderous intentions coming off Lisa. This ambitious woman would be vicious and merciless once she intended to kill; not softening in the slightest.

To avoid suspicion, Merlin did not stay on in the Princess Royal’s palace for long and quickly left the place.

...

“Swish.”

A pitch-dark shadow appeared before the second prince without making a sound. The second prince had not even noticed, nor did the three full-shifters from the army. Only until Shadowthorn spoke did they realize his presence. They swiftly moved to shield the second prince and hissed. “Shadowthorn, what are you trying to do?”

These three full-shifters, despite having heard about how strange and powerful Shadowthorn was, only now discovered that Shadowthorn was right beside them. They had not even sensed him in the slightest. This was too scary. The thought of it was enough to induce fear.

A smirk crossed Shadowthorn's lips as he glanced at the three full-shifters, following which he settled his gaze on the second prince and said evenly, "The Princess Royal is dead. When will you bring me to the Sacred Lion Beast's head, so that I can look at it closely?"

"What? The Princess Royal is dead? You... You've really succeeded?"

An astounded look appeared on the second prince's face as if he dared not believe this. He had only made the agreement with Shadowthorn a few days ago. Plus, the Princess Royal was guarded by full-shifters by her side. How could she be killed so easily?

Nonetheless, when they thought about how Shadowthorn appeared before them noiselessly, the second prince could somewhat believe this. If Shadowthorn had made a move instantly, the second prince had no assurance that he would be able to evade Shadowthorn's assassination.

"This... Shadowthorn, I have to determine the truth of this. If we ultimately determine that the Princess Royal has died, I'll let you know," the second prince calmed himself down and replied serenely. [Read more chapter on vipnovel.com](http://vipnovel.com)

"You have three days to ascertain this. I'll return then!"

Shadowthorn's gaze would cause one to tremble with dread. Clearly, Shadowthorn was not even a full-shifter, but he still inspired fear in full-shifters.

"Swoosh."

Shadowthorn quickly vanished from the second prince's sight without a sound. The three full-shifters cautiously inspected the surroundings. After making sure that Shadowthorn had left, they heaved a sigh of relief.

"D\*mn it, that Shadowthorn is really too arrogant and bold."

The three full-shifting contenders felt that Shadowthorn had disregarded them, and their hearts naturally were filled with rage.

Even so, the second prince appeared placid and said softly, “Forget about Shadowthorn for now. Go at once and find out if the Princess Royal is truly dead.”

Since he thought about the numerous benefits that would come of the Princess Royal’s death, the second prince who had always remained composed could not help his excitement.

“Your Highness, we’ll find out immediately. However, at this time, stay in the palace as much as you can, in case anything happens.”

The second prince nodded. He knew that at this moment, anything could happen. His safety was the priority.

...

The king of the Holy Dragon Empire was currently feeling slightly agitated. There was only one person standing before him, and that was the mysterious Minister Farron who controlled Phantom.

Farron did not say a word and only stood silently before the king.

After a long while, the king stopped his pacing, his brow still tightly knitted. He growled. “Farron, Lisa is dead. That second son of mine is really too brazen. He has disdained the rules of the royal family, and me as well!”

Farron still did not say anything. He knew that the king was venting, but this matter could not be resolved by getting angry.

At last, after the king had gradually calmed down, Farron ventured to say, “Your Majesty, I think that priority now should be to explain things to the Princess Royal’s people, especially that Leon!”

“Explain? What’s there to explain? Lisa is dead. I’ll take back all the authority she held. Moreover, Farron, go and give the second prince an admonishment, then spare no effort to

capture Shadowthorn. We can't let him live. As for Leon, now that Lisa is dead, he has no other choice."

At this time, the king's first thought was to regain his power. As a king, he was rather aggrieved. His own authority was not even as great as his own children.

Farron was inwardly calm. In the royal family, there was no affection to speak of. Power would always be the focus of everyone's struggle, without exception.

"Your Majesty, rest assured. I'll deal with this matter properly."

With that, Farron took his leave. In his view, the king was about to reduce this problem into a small matter, then nothing. He was only seizing Shadowthorn, which meant he was sparing the second prince.

"I hope that this Leon can see the situation clearly!" Farron mumbled softly. He did not know why, but he had always felt an ominous premonition towards Merlin. In so many years, Farron felt that Merlin was the greatest threat other than Doomsday.

#### Chapter 994: A Royal Storm 2

Merlin who had returned to the castle felt unprecedentedly relaxed. In those few days, he did not go to Phantom, nor the palace and simply stayed within his castle.

"Swish."

Suddenly, a shadow swiftly vanished from the castle. When Merlin looked up, there was a note on his table. He reached out to pick it up and carefully read its contents.

After reading it, Merlin used the candle's flame to burn the slip of paper to ashes, his face falling into a contemplative look.

"The king had made the decision to quickly gain control of the power vacuum left after the Princess Royal 'died' and he's indifferent towards the second prince, merely sending out the order to seize Shadowthorn. As for Shadowthorn, I wonder if there are dozens, or more than a hundred, of his wanted posters."

Merlin shook his head. Although he was in the castle and did not go out, he still knew everything about the palace and even the whole Holy Dragon Empire. This was the advantage of having intelligence.

As the Deputy Minister of Phantom, Merlin's position was not meaningless. Using the fortune of contribution points he had received from the previous mission, he had let Iza, Shiya, and the rest operate things. Now, he had gradually infiltrated every department of Phantom Headquarters.

Of course, the most important target was the Intelligence Team. These reports were sent by members of the Intelligence Team who had been converted. Whatever intelligence Merlin wished to learn about, it would be delivered endlessly from the Intelligence Team.

Currently, Merlin was like Farron and the King. Even if he did not go out, information on anything that happened at that time was still made known to him. Merlin only controlled a very small part of Phantom for now but the more he understood, the more he realized Phantom's fearsomeness. No wonder the King who merely controlled Phantom was able to suppress the second prince and the Princess Royal.

"I wonder what Lisa will do."

Merlin slowly got up to leave the castle and walked towards the palace.

Soon enough, Merlin reached the palace and went to the Princess Royal's place. Currently, the palace was dead silent, with only the Princess Royal alone inside.

"Lisa, what have you decided? What will you do?"

The Princess Royal stood up, her beautiful face as cold as frost. She said coolly, "That Father King of mine must be a dotard. Since he paid no judgment to that good little brother of mine, I don't have any reservations. Leon, are you confident in facing Second Brother's full-shifters? They're much stronger than the Black Gorilla King."

The Princess Royal exuded a harsh aura.

Merlin's expressions remained calm as he slowly replied, "I'm only worried about one person – Farron!"

"Farron?"

The Princess Royal was silent. If Farron was involved, this thing would be hard to carry out. Nonetheless, Merlin continued, "In truth, I wish to have a go at Farron myself. Back then, he saved me. I still haven't found the chance to repay him. If he interferes this time, I'll stop him!"

Merlin's words were resolute and firm, revealing no room for questioning. Even the Princess Royal felt a slight shiver in her heart. She did not expect Merlin to have grown to a point where he could truly threaten Farron.

At least, Merlin had the courage to face Farron. In the royal family of the Holy Dragon Empire, ] no one was brave enough to face Farron other than a few old fellows who lived in seclusion.

The Princess Royal drew in a deep breath, made a decision, and said softly, "Very well, we'll do this then. This time, that good brother of mine won't be so lucky. Come on, I want to give him a big, big surprise."

A trace of excitement flashed through the Princess Royal's eyes for once. Perhaps this was something she had always looked forward to.

...

Within a secret chamber of the second prince's, he and the three full-shifting old men were discussing how to handle Shadowthorn.

"Everyone, the three days are up. Shadowthorn can't possibly locate this secret room. How confident are you three in confronting Shadowthorn?"

The second prince's face was ashen. In truth, they had discussed this three days ago, but the three full-shifting old men dared not guarantee they could kill Shadowthorn. This had infuriated the second prince. High and mighty full-shifters who were relatively powerful than other full-shifters, and they could not even deal with Shadowthorn?

The three full-shifters exchanged glances and finally came to a decision. They said in a low voice, “Your Highness, as long as Shadowthorn shows himself in the main foyer, we’ll spare no effort in killing him. Moreover, to prevent him from getting suspicious, we must not arrange for secret backup and only have the four of us. Only then can we get Shadowthorn to really let down his guard.”

“That’s right. As an assassin, one who’s even ambushed full-shifters before, Shadowthorn isn’t simple at all. We must not let him become suspicious in the slightest. Otherwise, if he turns into a shadow, it’ll be hard for us to kill him.”

These old men analyzed the method to kill Shadowthorn. He could turn into a shadow, which was strange indeed. They could not guarantee that they could fully deal with Shadowthorn. Still, as long as he appeared, they still had some confidence.

“A mere Shadowthorn – if I can’t even kill him, how can I accomplish anything greater? Humph, the Princess Royal is already dead. This Shadowthorn dares to threaten me. D\*mn him! After killing him, my forces will be consolidated. I’m sure Father King will perceive the overall situation clearly.”

The second prince had already decided to kill Shadowthorn today.

“Let’s go. We’ll wait in the main foyer. Once Shadowthorn shows himself, we’ll strike!”

The second prince stood up. Once he had made up his mind, he had to carry it out even if it was difficult. Furthermore, if he dealt with Shadowthorn, who was a headache to the royal family, the second prince would have made the first step in gathering his forces.

Killing Shadowthorn was the first step in the second prince’s seizing of the throne. He could already see himself leading, quelling the rebellion in the Holy Dragon Empire. The hundreds of millions of people of the Holy Dragon Empire would pay attention to his name.

...

Within the well-lit foyer, a black shadow appeared without anyone realizing and gradually turned into a black-attired, masked man. He carried a slender sword on his back which induced a chilling sensation.

“Your Highness, the three days are up. Have you given it any thought?”

Shadowthorn was as elusive as a spirit. No one had found out how he appeared, nor where he came from. His voice was also incomparably cold and made them feel a bone-cutting chill.

“Shadowthorn, since I’ve promised you, I’ll fulfill my promise. Alright, follow me but you’re not allowed to bring any weapons.”

The second prince stared steadily at Shadowthorn.

Shadowthorn thought about for a moment, then flung off the sword on his back. He knew that the head of the Sacred Lion Beast was the royal family’s greatest secret, their most important place. There must not be any errors.

“Very well, follow me.”

The second prince slowly stood up. Seeing that Shadowthorn had truly let down his guard, a barely subtle cold smirk flitted over his lips.

“Boom.”

Suddenly, the three old men shapeshifted instantly, exploding with unparalleled strength. They formed a circle and trapped Shadowthorn within.

“Kill him!”

Without any more chatter, the three full-shifting contenders ruthlessly aimed their strongest attack at Shadowthorn directly.

At this time, although Shadowthorn had recovered his senses, it was too late to escape when faced with the attacks of the three full-shifters.

“Shadowshift!”

Shadowthorn let out a shout. Immediately, his entire person transformed into a shadow. However, faced with the attacks that filled the air, coming from all directions, this was not enough.

“In so many years, you’re the first ones to learn my secret. In fact, I’m no longer a fourth-form shifter, but... A full-shifter!”

“Boom.”

After Shadowthorn spoke, a huge swathe of shadow emerged. The whole foyer seemed to darken, blanketed in a layer of gloom.

“Supreme Talent?”

The three full-shifters were astounded. They did not expect that Shadowthorn would hide his secret so well. He was already a full-shifting contender and had a Supreme Talent.

It appeared that this Supreme Talent was very formidable.

“Bang bang bang.”

Three mighty attacks smashed heavily into Shadowthorn. Although he had Shadowshifted and was a full-shifter, he still could not fully withstand it and was instantly injured grievously.

However, he was not dead and just heavily injured. His Shadowshifting technique was powerful indeed with the ability to reduce the damage to its lowest impact.

“Second prince, what you’ve given me today, I’ll return the favor tenfold someday!”

Shadowthorn’s figure vanished without a trace, leaving only his cold voice echoing in the main foyer.

The second prince’s face changed greatly. Shadowthorn was actually so hard to handle. They had been ready, and three full-shifters had attacked at once, but he still escaped in the end.

As the second prince felt a chill gripping his heart at the thought of Shadowthorn's terrifying ability to approach anyone silently.

"No, we mustn't let him escape. Kill, kill him!"

The second prince roared in fury. It was too bad that they had not brought other full-shifters other than the three most powerful full-shifting contenders because they were worried about Shadowthorn finding out rousing his suspicions.

One of the full-shifters, despite feeling unwilling, still said powerlessly, "Your Highness, it's futile. Shadowthorn has already fled. It'll be hard for us to catch up to him."

The second prince was in a terrible rage and yelled, "How did you guys prepare? Didn't you say that once he appears, you were confident in killing him? Why did he manage to escape just now?"

"Your Highness, this Shadowthorn had hidden his secret too well. Who would know that he's actually a full-shifter already? Plus his Shadowshifting technique is too much. We couldn't kill him in one blow. To actually kill him would be too hard. According to Shadowthorn's personality, I'm afraid we must be careful at all times. Your Highness, you'd better stay within the palace. Don't just go out as you wish."

The three full-shifters were somewhat helpless. A troublesome character like Shadowthorn would be monitoring them at all times once he escaped. They were restricted in everything they did.

However, they could only do this for now.

"I don't care what method you use. You must kill Shadowthorn!" The second prince spoke coldly. He had not expected that in the heights of his lofty aspirations, he had failed at the first step just as he was about to seize the throne.

"My good brother, it's merely Shadowthorn. How about if Elder Sister helps you solve the problem?"

Suddenly, a sweet voice came from outside the foyer. The second prince and the three full-shifters felt their expressions changing into looks of disbelief. They stared bewilderedly out of the foyer.

“Bang.”

The doors of the foyer were thrown open and a figure came flying backward from outside, crashing heavily into the ground. This figure’s face was deathly white, appearing to be at his last gasp.

“Shadowthorn?”

They saw that this person on the ground who put up no resistance was Shadowthorn, whom they were so helpless against just now. Nevertheless, now Shadowthorn was sent flying by someone straight into the foyer, completely without the strength to retaliate.

“Swish.”

The second prince stood up abruptly, not even glancing at Shadowthorn who was on the ground. His piercing stare was fixed firmly on a familiar figure who was sauntering in from outside the hall.

“Lisa!”

The second prince lowered his voice and growled coldly.

Chapter 995: A Royal Storm 3

“Dear brother, are you surprised to see me?”

A few figures slowly appeared from outside, led by the Princess Royal who was claimed to be assassinated. Behind her followed Merlin and a few others, all full-shifters.

Besides Merlin, there were four other full-shifters who were the Princess Royal's hidden forces. Although on the surface, the Princess Royal's forces could not compare to the second prince's; in reality, both the Princess Royal and the second prince had hidden forces.

These four shifters were the Princess Royal's forces, which even surprised Merlin.

The second prince's expression was ashen. He glanced at the shocking scene on the ground and his face gradually became solemn.

"Dear brother, this Shadowthorn dared to be disrespectful to you, meaning he has disrespected the whole royal family. Although you're prejudiced against me, this Shadowthorn has committed lèse majesté and has to die! I simply took care of it for you."

Then, a full-shifter behind her directly pummeled Shadowthorn into a pulp on the ground with an invisible fist. Immediately, the entire hall was filled with the stench of blood.

The three full-shifters behind the second prince grew nervous. Earlier, the three of them had failed to hold Shadowthorn back and was only able to injure Shadowthorn.

Although the Princess Royal was suspected to be acting out of her own interest, to be able to kill Shadowthorn so easily was not something that a regular full-shifter could do. They all knew that the full-shifter who killed Shadowthorn was not the real problem. The truly terrifying one was the person who severely injured Shadowthorn earlier and sent him flying to the second prince.

"Lisa, my dear sister. I wonder which powerful gentleman it was who helped me deal with Shadowthorn?" The second prince appeared calm and asked evenly.

Lisa looked at Merlin and said, "Marquis Leon, it seems like my dear brother wants to thank you."

"Marquis Leon?"

The second prince's expression twitched. He knew that the Princess Royal recently recruited a strong person who was also the deputy team leader of Phantom's Intelligence Team.

He had originally thought that Merlin was just slightly stronger than a regular full-shifter. However, it seemed that Merlin had gone far beyond the category of an ordinary full-shifter. Perhaps he had already caught up to the mysterious Minster Farron.

The second prince's face became increasingly unsightly. After a long while, he said with a heavy voice, "Lisa, I've investigated clearly. Shadowthorn, who assassinated you before, dared to sneak into my palace to assassinate me. Thankfully, he did not succeed. You came just in time to kill Shadowthorn."

The second prince was able to come up with a solution in such a short amount of time. Since Shadowthorn was dead anyway, he could not refute no matter what accusations were pinned on him.

The smile on the Princess Royal's face gradually disappeared. She glared at the second prince and suddenly sneered. "Hehe, brother dearest, you're so cruel that you even raised your hand against me! Furthermore, Father did not even punish you. Haha, the royal family doesn't care about family ties at all. In that case, I have nothing to worry about."

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh."

With a wave of her hand, the four full-shifters behind the Princess Royal stood in four directions and formed a circle, trapping the second prince within.

"Lisa, what are you doing?" The second prince's face paled as he shouted sternly.

The Princess Royal continued to sneer. "What do you think I'm doing? I'm simply doing to you what you did to me."

At that moment, the second prince finally felt 'fear.' Even the King had to be wary of him ever since he took authority but the second prince began to be afraid when he faced the situation before him.

The second prince's forces were not limited to three full-shifters but because he had to deal with Shadowthorn today, he only arranged for three full-shifters to accompany him as he did not want Shadowthorn to be suspicious. Everyone else had been assigned somewhere else. He did not expect that his plan would land him in a very dangerous situation.

“Kill!”

With the Princess Royal’s command, the four full-shifters immediately shapeshifted into fierce almighty beasts and charged towards the second prince.

The three full-shifters under the second prince were not to be outdone and also shapeshifted, doing their best to resist. At that time, the entire hall began to shake, as if it could not bear the battle shockwaves of seven full-shifters.

With this, the second prince also calmed down a little. He sat in the large chair and stared at the battle between both sides. The four full-shifters the Princess Royal had brought were as strong as the second prince’s three full-shifters but the Princess Royal had one additional person, which gave them a quantitative advantage.

The strength of both sides was similar. Therefore, the side with the numerical advantage immediately gained the upper hand and suppressed the three full-shifters under the second prince.

The battle between the almighty beasts was very fierce and the shockwaves were enough to destroy the entire hall. However, the second prince burst out laughing. “Haha, Lisa, even I could only use Shadowthorn, but you’re trying to kill me foolishly and out in the open. Once your actions here are discovered by Father, would you still stand a chance?”

The second prince looked at the palace that was constantly shaking and regained his confidence. After all, he was the second prince and held true authority. If the king knew what was going on here, he would certainly intervene immediately

As long as he did not die, he could take advantage of this opportunity to launch an all-round attack on the Princess Royal, which would suppress the Princess Royal’s power. That would allow him more opportunities to compete for the throne.

“Is that so? Do you think I would act without making preparations? Absolute Divine Realm!”

The Princess Royal took out a crimson orb and injected her blood into it. Then, the orb began to emit a strange Divine Realm, which shrouded and dissolved the seven full-shifters who were fighting within in. No movements could be seen from the outside.

This was a very practical and powerful treasure and was one of the most precious treasures the Princess Royal possessed. Clearly, it was used this time to thoroughly deal with the second prince.

The second prince's expression paled again. The Princess Royal was incredibly well-prepared. It seemed that he really was in danger this time.

In the scene of the battle, although the Princess Royal's four-shifters had the upper hand, it was still very difficult to defeat the three full-shifters under the second prince in a short time.

Therefore, Merlin finally asked, "Lisa, do you need me to act?"

The Princess Royal hesitated. She knew that once Merlin stepped in, there would be no doubt that the second prince would die which was why she still hesitated.

However, it was only for a moment. Soon, she gritted her teeth and said, "Leon, do it. Be sure to kill the second prince. There is no compromise between us!"

Indeed, now that things had developed to this point, there was no more compromise that could be achieved. One of them had to die.

Merlin nodded and looked up at the second prince. The second prince's gaze also happened to meet Merlin's and immediately, the second prince understood that Merlin was going to step in.

"Am I really going to die today?"

Seeing Merlin's eyes, the second prince suddenly had a feeling that he would not be able to escape the calamity today.

"Sigh, Princess Royal, Your Highness, why must it come to this? Your father would be heartbroken if he finds out that you're killing each other..."

Suddenly, a light voice sounded from outside the hall. Even the Absolute Divine Realm could not stop this sound.

Merlin, who was just about to act, raised his eyebrows and immediately stopped. A smile appeared on the corners of his mouth as his gaze fixed outside the hall. He calmly said, “You’ve finally come...”

Merlin did not seem surprised at the arrival of this mysterious person.

Chapter 996: A Royal Storm 4

“Swoosh.”

The Absolute Divine Realm could not hold back this person’s arrival. Seeing this figure, the second prince was overjoyed and cried out, “Minister Farron, you arrived just in time. The Princess Royal seems to have misunderstood me. Please explain to the Princess Royal for me, or let Father come and judge it for himself.”

Originally, the second prince had already despaired. He was an ambitious man, but when his life was threatened, it did not matter how big his ambition was. What he wanted now was the let the Princess Royal leave as soon as possible and save his life.

Farron’s appearance represented that the King was beginning to intervene. Everyone knew that outside, Farron was the King’s shadow and represented the King’s position.

“Princess Royal, the second prince and you are siblings who share the same blood. Why are you fighting each other? His Majesty the King is deeply saddened by this. You should let your subordinates leave quickly. His Majesty will let bygones be bygones.”

Farron’s voice spread clearly to everyone’s ears. Even the four full-shifters under the Princess Royal seemed to be somewhat shaken.

After all, no matter how powerful the Princess Royal’s authority was, the King was still the supreme ruler of the royal family. The king was the one who truly held the greatest power in the royal family.

The Princess Royal’s face turned ashen. She never expected that the King would suddenly intervene in their affairs. Farron’s move destroyed her plan.

At this time, the Princess Royal looked at Merlin. Out of everyone here, perhaps only Merlin's strength was similar to Farron's.

Merlin's mouth was still fixed in a smile. He took two steps forward and said to Farron, "Minister Farron, I've admired the Minister from Phantom for a long time. However, the Minister is always very busy and I've never had a chance to learn from you. However, we have an opportunity now. I wonder if the Minister would be willing to give me some advice?"

"Advice?"

Farron suddenly laughed, but his expression immediately became cold. Farron was not an indecisive person. On the contrary, as the King's left and right hand, Farron's unceasing murders had frightened the King's enemies.

"Marquis Leon, it seems that you've made a choice. Very well. Princess Royal, I'll test Marquis Leon's true strength."

With that, Farron fiercely stomped.

"Boom."

The whole ground shook. At the same time, the surrounding space seemed to distort. Merlin felt a white fog appear and begin to envelop him.

In the white fog, Merlin could not see anything outside. He could only see Farron's figure standing still at the same spot in the white fog.

"A Supreme Talent?"

Merlin looked around curiously. The thick white fog did not seem to be an ordinary white fog and was filled with hidden dangers, giving him a strong sense of threat.

"Leon, now I regret saving you from Doomsday. That's because I never intended on having to kill you after saving you," Farron said calmly from the white fog, as if killing Merlin was an insignificant thing.

“Even though we’ve already climbed this high, there are still many things that we cannot help. However, Minister, I’m no longer the same as when I was hunted down by Doomsday. I’m afraid it won’t be easy for you to kill me.”

“Boom.”

After saying that, Merlin immediately shapeshifted. His body rapidly expanded and grew, and became almost three times as large as the previous full-shifted Blood-eye Dragon.

The incomparably huge body carried an oppressive force that seemed to squeeze aside the surrounding white fog.

Moreover, Merlin’s shifted form was no longer the Blood-eye Dragon. Although there was still a terrifying vertical eye and a pair of wings, and looked very similar to the Blood-eye Dragon, it was definitely not the Blood-eye Dragon.

“You’re not the Blood-eye Dragon?”

Seeing Merlin’s shifted form, even Farron who had seen many things, felt surprised. That was because he had never seen such an almighty beast before. Merlin’s body had scales all over and there were even bony protrusions growing out like a hedgehog.

However, even in the ancient era, there had not been such a large hedgehog. Furthermore, he even had a pair of wings. In short, Merlin’s shifted form was very strange and unlike anything Farron had seen before. It was also incredibly ugly.

“No matter what you are, today, you’ll die!”

Farron’s voice dropped as his figure disappeared completely, leaving behind a vast expanse of white.

“Hum.”

Suddenly, the white fog began to move, constantly rotating and vaguely forming a squall and it also became extremely corrosive.

“Chi-chi-chi.”

The white fog madly corroded the scales on Merlin’s body, but at that moment even the scales on Merlin’s body could not be removed which greatly shocked the hidden Farron.

Even against powerful full-shifters, they were powerless against his white fog’s corrosion. This move alone would render most full-shifters helpless unless they had powerful Supreme Talents. However, people like that were very rare. After all, Farron already stood at the peak of the Holy Dragon Empire.

“Strangle!”

Since the corrosion did not work, Farron used Strangle. The white fog began to surge up again and turned into countless swords which formed a storm that whirled wildly and trapped Merlin within.

“Roar...”

Merlin finally reacted. He clenched his fists and performed a simple punch.

“Boom.”

Just the pure strength of this one punch alone was too powerful to imagine. Even if the white fog swords were incredibly dangerous, they could not break past Merlin’s surface defense.

“How is this possible? The Blood-eye Dragon is not this powerful!”

Farron’s shocked voice sounded from the fog. He was well informed and naturally knew the strength of the Blood-eye Dragon. However, under the condition that its Supreme Talent was not enhanced, the Blood-eye Dragon was limited in strength and was no match for Farron at all.

Still, Farron could not do anything to Merlin.

Seeing that Farron had used two killing moves at once, Merlin slowly grew calm. Although his Supreme Talent did not improve at all despite devouring so many almighty beasts' will, he had embarked on another path instead, which was to continuously strengthen the almighty beast's body.

The strengthening of the almighty beast's body could actually reach this point. Perhaps he could not break Farron's white fog, but Farron was unable to hurt him either. Once his body became strengthened to this extent, nothing would be able to kill Merlin.

"Why can't I kill you?"

Farron's expression gradually became grim. He hesitated for a moment before making a firm decision. The white fog immediately started to roll and boil, and emitted a greater aura.

Farron was about to use his final move. He did not believe that he could not kill Merlin, whose Supreme Talent had not increased at all.

The white fog covered the heavens, and there seemed to be faint roars from almighty beasts. Each almighty beast condensed by the white fog began to roar loudly. It did not seem like an illusory almighty beast, but an almighty beast that possessed a powerful attack.

The heads of mid-tier and even high-tier almighty beasts all appeared as fog in front of Merlin. Their numbers started at a dozen and continued to increase.

Merlin could feel the power of these fog almighty beasts.

After a long while, Merlin said slowly, "I finally know your Supreme Talent. Minister, your Supreme Talent is Mirror. This fog of yours is actually a mirror image. It's no wonder you could save me from Doomsday. It's no wonder that Doomsday immediately left after seeing you. Mirror is not weaker than Doomsday's Soul of Light at all. In a sense, they're both a little similar."

Merlin observed for a long time and finally figured out Farron's Supreme Talent. It was Mirror. Perhaps it was mixed in with some other abilities, such as confusion, but the main one was Mirror.

This ability was quite terrifying. Farron could re-manifest any almighty beast or powerful existence he knew through the Mirror Supreme Talent. They would have more than 50% of their real fighting capacity, or perhaps even stronger. Merlin would have to give it a try in person.

This Supreme Talent was very powerful. Even Doomsday was unwilling to fight with Farron. Once cast, Doomsday's Soul of Light would not be able to trap so many almighty beasts from Mirror.

A smile appeared on Farron's lips. He seemed to be full of confidence after seeing so many 'mirrored' almighty beasts. He said calmly, "Yes, Leon, your guess is right. My Talent is indeed Mirror. You're the first one besides the royal family and Doomsday to have guessed my Supreme Talent. Now, you'll have a good taste of the ancient almighty beasts' impact, haha..."

Farron laughed, and with a wave of his hand, the dozens of mirrored almighty beasts charged wildly towards Merlin. Their power made it seem like they really were the ancient almighty beasts.

Merlin seemed to have returned to the ancient era. The strange almighty beast he shifted into also gave out a loud roar. Whether it was the Blood-eye Dragon's will or the new almighty beast's will that was formed by the fusion of the Blood-eye Dragon and others, it seemed to become full of fighting spirit as if provoked, and roared loudly in his Awareness.

"Kill!"

Merlin's shifted form depended entirely on the strength of his body. It was a completely different path that Farron and Doomsday walked. The path of strengthening an almighty beast's body was one that only Hosts could walk, and perhaps Merlin was the only one who did not fear being devoured by the almighty beast's will.

"Bang bang bang."

Merlin was the most ferocious of the ancient almighty beasts. Under his impact, no almighty beast was able to block him. The spikes that covered his body were his most powerful weapon. Only a slight touch was needed to completely pierce these mirrored almighty beasts.

Merlin combined the wills of many almighty beasts before such a strange appearance was born. It seemed like it was made for battle. Every part of its body was a terrifying weapon.

In just a short amount of time, Merlin smashed dozens of mirrored almighty beasts and turned them back into white fog. These almighty beasts could not threaten Merlin at all.

However, there was no trace of a smile on Merlin's face. On the contrary, his expression became grim because even after he just smashed dozens of almighty beasts, the white fog quickly gave birth to dozens more with no end in sight.

"Merlin, it's no use. This is my Mirror's space. It doesn't matter how many almighty beasts you kill, because the power here is cycled and endless. If you continue killing like this, even I won't be able to do anything against you. I'll only be able to let you tire yourself to death, haha..."

Farron's laughter seemed to come from every direction.

Chapter 997: A Royal Storm 5

"Tire myself to death?"

Merlin looked at the white fog around him. Indeed, in the unending white fog, it did not matter how many almighty beasts he had killed. Only by finding the weakness of Farron's Mirror Talent would he be able to break it. That was the correct way to win the battle.

As a result, Merlin stopped attacking. Although killing dozens of almighty beasts would only consume a little of his energy, that amount would slowly build up. He stopped moving and let these mirrored almighty beasts attack him.

"Bang bang bang."

Each of these mirrored almighty beasts was incredibly powerful and was equivalent to eighty percent of the almighty beast's power. That was already extremely terrifying. With these dozens or so almighty beasts, they could easily destroy city after city.

However, Merlin remained motionless. He wanted to know where the limit was after fusing so many almighty beasts' will. Every impact seemed to be very powerful but none of them caused him any damage. His defense could not be broken at all. He was like a giant mountain. No matter how great the attack, it would not affect him.

“So, I’m already this strong... Perhaps, there’s only a handful left who can cause damage to me in this world. Farron, your Supreme Talent is indeed strong and brilliant, but you can’t hurt me either.”

Merlin revealed a smile between the corners of his lips. He finally knew how terrifying his body was now. Not even high-tier almighty beasts could harm him, much less mid-tier almighty beasts. His current body’s strength was just too frightening.

It was even more terrifying than the top-tier ancient almighty beasts and was infinitely close to the legendary Sacred Beast.

The Sacred Beast was extinct and no matter how powerful one’s bloodline was, it was impossible to become a Sacred Beast. However, as a Host, Merlin continuously fused almighty beast wills. Perhaps one day, he could be a terrifying existence comparable to a Sacred Beast. After all, for the current Merlin, as long as there was an almighty beast’s will, he could continue to improve. There seemed to be no limit.

With no limit, it represented an infinite future and an infinite space for improvement!

The almighty beasts charged wildly toward Merlin as if they would engulf him in the stampede. However, no matter how many almighty beasts gathered, Merlin did not feel threatened at all and simply let them attack him.

He shook his head and said, “Farron, it’s useless. I can’t break your Mirror fort, but you can’t hurt me either. You’ll just end up trapping me here forever.”

Merlin was very calm. He had wanted to test his limits and see how far he could go by fusing the almighty beasts’ will. He wanted to know if he could surpass Farron and the others.

Now, it seemed like this path was completely different from Farron and Doomsday's. Perhaps no one besides Merlin had walked on it before. No matter the strength, Merlin's extremely strong body could not be harmed.

"Hoo..."

Gradually, the white fog began to dissipate and finally disappeared completely, and Farron appeared beside Merlin again. Farron's gaze at Merlin had become somewhat complicated.

"Marquis Leon, saving you was perhaps the biggest mistake of my life!"

Saying that, Farron turned and left the hall without turning back.

"This..."

Both the Princess Royal and the second prince were stunned. They did not expect Farron to leave so willingly. The second prince reacted quickly and shouted, "Minister Farron, how could you leave? The Princess Royal is trying to kill me. How could you leave at this time?"

The second prince's expression paled. No one on the outside could see the battle between Farron and the second prince, so no one knew what the result was.

However, seeing Farron leaving now and Merlin still in good condition and unscathed, he could tell that the situation was not good. Could Merlin compete with Farron?

Thinking about this, the Princess Royal felt ecstatic. She had never thought that Merlin would grow so fast and become someone comparable to Farron.

"Brother dearest, no one can save you now! Marquis Leon, do it. If those three stand in your way, then just kill them."

The Princess Royal's eyes were cold as she said in an icy tone.

Merlin nodded. He did not even reveal his shifted form and instead, merely stepped forward and stepped gently.

“Boom.”

The entire hall began to shake. Merlin’s arm began to shapeshift, turning into a colossal palm.

This huge palm completely enveloped the three full-shifters. Merlin was planning to deal with all three of them alone.

“You’re mad. One against three? You think you’re stronger than Farron and don’t even need to use your Supreme Talent?”

Seeing Merlin using his half-shifted form, the three full-shifters also grew indignant. They seemed to feel like they were looked down upon. Even Farron needed to use his Supreme Talent when going against them. However, Merlin did not intend to use his Supreme Talent.

Therefore, in their anger, the three immediately revealed their full-shifter form and transformed into three terrifying ancient almighty beasts. They roared and were about to tear Merlin’s large palm into shreds.

However, when the palm pressed down on them, they felt a slight panic. The power contained in this palm was so terrifying that they all felt the stench of death as if nothing could stop it.

“No, no, how can someone’s body be this tough? How can someone be this powerful? It’s impossible...”

The three full-shifters screamed mournfully but it was useless. None of them could escape. With one press from Merlin’s large palm, the shrieks completely disappeared and a strong stench of blood filled the hall.

“Blood-eye!”

The crimson vertical eye on Merlin’s forehead shot a beam of light and completely devoured the three full-shifters’ blood. Before this, Merlin did not fuse the almighty beasts’ will and the power of the Blood-eye Dragon had reached the limit, so his body could not grow stronger. Therefore, the large amounts of almighty beast blood in the Blood-eye he had devoured was turned into blood crystals and stored in the body as a backup source of energy.

However, Merlin's body was like a bottomless pit now. No matter how much energy there was, it could be completely devoured. After devouring the three full-shifters, Merlin gradually felt his body become stronger. However, Merlin did not know to what extent it had increased.

What he needed to do now was use the Blood-eye to devour the blood energy of almighty beasts. At least more than half of an almighty beast's power was in the blood.

He could also devour and merge some almighty beasts' will to improve his strength. In short, Merlin just had to devour madly for his strength to naturally improve.

Perhaps when he had reached a certain level, he would not need to be so passive when facing Farron again.

"Swoosh."

Merlin looked at the second prince again but this time, the Princess Royal had turned around and said coldly, "Leon, come to my palace when you've finished."

Then, the Princess Royal immediately left without turning back.

At this time, only the second prince and Merlin was left in the hall. The second prince could feel his heartbeat. He seemed to have felt the aura of death.

"Leon, whatever you want, I can give you. It's fine that those three trash are dead. If you let me go, I'll give you anything you want! What the Princess Royal gives you, I'll be able to give you more!"

At this point, the second prince only hoped to use benefits to persuade Merlin.

"Oh? What can you give me?"

A strange smile appeared on Merlin's lips.

"I'll give you..."

The second prince pondered but could not think of anything. Merlin was a Host who had reached Farron's level. What could move Merlin?

"Nourishment Pond formulae? I have lots of Nourishment Pond formulae!"

All Hosts hoped to have a Nourishment Pond formula. However, Merlin shook his head. Currently, Nourishment Pond formulae were useless to him. Even with one hundred Nourishment Pond formulae, it might not be as good as consuming a mid-tier almighty beast's blood.

"I... I can offer you many beauties!"

The second prince seemed to recall a rumor that Merlin and the Princess Royal had a warm and ambiguous relationship. However, Merlin shook his head again and slowly approached the second prince. A heavy aura enveloped the second prince.

"N-No. That's right, I know where there are lots of almighty beasts' will. You're a Host. Rumor has it that Hosts can undergo mysterious changes by fusing almighty beasts' will."

Facing the threat of death, the second prince said everything he knew.

"Oh? A large number of almighty beasts' will? Where is it?"

Merlin stopped and asked."

Seeing Merlin stop, the second prince, who had broken out in cold sweat, seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. However, he still appeared very cautious. He was not sure if Merlin would let him go but it seemed that Merlin was interested in almighty beasts' will. Perhaps this chip could save his life.

"Marquis Leon, I know of a place where there are many almighty beasts' will. As long as you let me go, I'll take you there."

The second prince tried hard to calm down. He was putting up his last stand.

“Let you go?”

Merlin suddenly laughed. He gently reached out and shapeshifted and instantly grabbed the second prince. The terrifying strength seemed to crush the second prince.

“If you don’t let me go, you’ll never find the place.”

The second prince knew that his hope at survival was to protect this secret to the grave.

“There’s no need to. You’ll tell me yourself later.”

Merlin’s mouth revealed a strange smile. Then, the second prince felt the passing of a life force and his will became groggy as if out of his control.

“Tell me, where’s that place?”

Merlin used very little of his Mind Power. Therefore, only if the second prince was toeing the line between life and death and his willpower was depressed would Merlin be able to achieve results.

Under the control of Merlin’s Mind Power, the second prince’s eyes gradually grew dull.

Chapter 998: A Royal Storm 6

“Tell me, where’s the place of the many almighty beasts’ will?”

Merlin’s voice was calm and it entered into the second prince’s mind. The second prince was now completely controlled by Merlin’s Mind Power and would obediently answer anything Merlin asked.

“There are many almighty beasts’ will in the royal family’s treasure vault.”

The second prince answered Merlin’s question without hesitation.

Merlin frowned. He knew a little about the royal family's treasure vault. Rumor had it that the royal family's treasure vault was the most precious to the royal family apart from where the Sacred Lion Beast was.

Most of the royal family's resources as well as thousands of collections were kept in the royal family's treasure vault. There were countless treasures of all kinds. However, the treasure vault was guarded by some ancient and powerful beings and even the King could not enter it.

Knowing this, Merlin knew that the second prince was only stalling for time for Merlin to let him go.

Merlin looked at the glassy-eyed second prince and slowly held out his hand. His pale fingers gently pressed on the second prince's forehead.

“Spurt.”

A bloody arrow shot out from the back of the second prince's head. The second prince's dull eyes immediately cleared but dimmed thereafter. Without even a groan, he fell to the ground.

Merlin did not look back. He turned around and disappeared from the palace, leaving behind a bloodstain and a strong stench of blood.

...

In the quiet palace, there was incense burning, emitting a strong aroma.

“Whoosh.”

A figure quietly fluttered from outside of the palace and stood in the hall soundlessly.

Seated in a chair, the King immediately raised his head. He appeared anxious as he quickly asked, “Farron, how did it go? Did you stop them?”

Farron raised his head and looked at the King. Although it was covered, there seemed to be more wrinkles. It looked like the King had aged even more than a few decades.

Perhaps the King was old!

“Your Majesty, unfortunately, I couldn’t stop them. His Highness the Second Prince, is dead!”

“What did you say?”

The King was in disbelief. His second prince had died just like that. He had been so powerful that he almost threatened the King but now, he had died quietly and by the hands of his own daughter, the Princess Royal, Lisa.

“How’s that possible? Farron, even you couldn’t stop them? Who was it that you couldn’t stop?”

The King’s eyes grew red. There were times where he was unreasonable but the second prince was his son after all, so he felt grief upon his son’s death. Just like when the Princess Royal “died” before, he had also felt grief. Only later did he begin to accept the authority left behind by the Princess Royal.

“Your Majesty, it’s Marquis Leon whom you’ve conferred! Although his Supreme Talent hasn’t been strengthened, he seems to have found a way to continuously enhance his almighty beast’s physical strength. I can’t kill him...”

Farron’s tone was bitter as he spoke. It was the first time that he had felt so helpless. Even if it was against Doomsday, as long as he retaliated, Doomsday would retreat.

This was the only time where he retreated in defeat!

“Marquis Leon? Has he grown so strong? He’s not loyal to me but to my ambitious eldest daughter, Lisa.”

The King narrowed his eyes and no one knew what he was thinking about at the moment. Perhaps the second prince’s death made him sad but it was only momentarily. He had many children and familial love in the royal family was thin.

What he faced now was a grim choice. Once the second prince died, there was no one to pin down the Princess Royal. Moreover, the Princess Royal's power would expand dramatically. The Princess Royal would force him to abdicate the throne even before it was time for him to step down.

"Farron, have we grown old?"

The King had mixed thoughts. He felt exhausted and overworked. Even the pride he had felt when he first ascended the throne no longer existed.

With the chaos and splitting of the Holy Dragon Empire, he may be evaluated the worst among the Kings of the Holy Dragon royal family. However, it was not due to his incompetence.

At times like these, the King seemed to feel "old".

"Your Majesty, what do you think should be done about the Princess Royal?"

The King's expression turned cold at the mention of the Princess Royal, and he answered, "Don't do anything about Lisa for the time being. I'm afraid Leon will have an all-out fight with you in Phantom's Intelligence Team. Phantom's Intelligence Team mustn't lose."

Phantom's Intelligence Team was the royal family's strongest force. Even if the Holy Dragon Empire was now in chaos, as long as Phantom was around, the royal family still had a chance to control the situation.

If the King wanted to maintain his supreme authority, then he must naturally hold onto Phantom. Originally, the King relied on Farron to control Phantom. Farron's strength was the greatest, and he stood at the top of the royal family. With him around, the King could control Phantom.

However, now, there was Merlin who was evenly matched with Farron. It was no longer Farron who dominated the entire Phantom Intelligence Department.

"Your Majesty, the greatest threat now isn't the Princess Royal but Leon. Do you want to consult some of the elders?"

Farron hesitated for a moment. He was very fearful of Merlin. He had always felt that Merlin's potential was too great. Moreover, since they were walking on different paths, he could not see Merlin's strength.

Farron alone could not deal with Merlin nor could he contain Merlin. However, Farron knew the royal family's secrets. The royal family did not just have powerful people on the surface. They had many full-shifters as well.

Moreover, the most frightening part was that there were a few unfathomable elders in the royal family guarding the treasure vault. They were the safeguard of the Holy Dragon City and even Farron was not sure if he could deal with them.

These elders in the royal family were ancient and mysterious. Even the King did not know how powerful they were. If these elders intervened, Merlin would not be able to resist no matter how strong he was.

However, the King shook his head and said, "The elders won't easily act if it's not a matter regarding life or death for the royal family. What's more, Leon is relying on the Princess Royal, who's also a child of the royal family. The elders wouldn't interfere with someone loyal to the royal family."

For the elders of the royal family, they protected the interest of the entire royal family, not the rights of a single King. Even if the Princess Royal tried to remove the King from the throne, the elders would not intervene.

For them, it was fine as long as the empire was still ruled by the royal family.

Chapter 999: Grand Wedding!

Lights were blazing in the Princess Royal's palace and all the subordinates under the Princess Royal commanded the people to celebrate. The second prince was dead and the Princess Royal's biggest rival was gone. Next was to wait quietly.

However, Merlin felt that the Princess Royal was getting ambitious. She no longer wanted to wait several years to become King.

“Authority...”

Merlin shook his head helplessly. He had no feelings for authority. In the Void Zone, he was even the person with the highest authority of a huge civilization but what use was that? The strong could destroy a huge civilization in an instant.

Authority was merely how the weak hoped to control the strong. Real strength did not have any interest in authority at all. For example, the elders in the royal family as well as Farron had no special preference for authority.

Even Doomsday had entrusted his subordinates some affairs to manage. When the strong stood at the peak, which one of them would lust after authority?

However, the Princess Royal was not strong. Even if she inherited the royal family's top-tier almighty beast bloodline, reaching the fourth-form was her limit. It was impossible to make a breakthrough and become a full-shifter.

That included the current King. He was also a fourth-form shifter and could not reach the level of a full-shifter. After all, full-shifters who had top-tier almighty beast bloodlines were quite terrifying even if they just became a full-shifter. They would be second only to Farron, who had developed his Supreme Talent to the limit.

“Leon, tell me. Who else can stop us now?”

The Princess Royal's lips were smeared in red. In the dim candlelight, it looked scarlet and alluring. However, Merlin saw the desire for power and authority in her eyes!

“Stop us?”

Merlin shook his head. Now, the only one who could pose a threat to the Princess Royal was Farron. Although Farron could not hurt Merlin, Merlin could not hurt Farron either.

“Lisa, I think you should calm down for now. At best, I can only be evenly matched with Farron and his prestige in Phantom is currently higher than mine. If we fight for real now, our chances of winning aren't very good.”

Merlin felt that it was necessary to burst the Princess Royal's bubble.

The Princess Royal smiled thinly and calmly said, "Don't worry, Leon. I've waited for so many years, so what's a little longer? Farron has been Phantom's Intelligence Team's Minister for many years. Moreover, his potential has reached its peak and he can't make any further progress. However, you're different. You still have a lot of room for growth. Leon, tell me. What do you need to continue to grow in strength and completely suppress Farron?"

The Princess Royal seemed to have made up her mind. All her hopes were pinned on Merlin.

Merlin frowned. The Princess Royal seemed to trust him a little too much but when he thought of how the King had trusted Farron in the same way, he felt at ease.

"The royal family won't worry about outsiders usurping power or threatening the royal family because they have great power themselves. Perhaps, those hidden elders are even stronger than Farron!"

Merlin was surprised. The royal family did not seem to be very strong on the surface but they still controlled the key departments and authority despite the current chaotic situation of the empire. This already demonstrated that the royal family was extraordinary.

Currently, there was no trouble in the Holy Dragon City. This was the manifestation of the royal family's control.

Merlin pondered. Perhaps he could use the Princess Royal's forces to obtain some almighty beasts' will, especially the ones sealed in the royal family's treasure vault as mentioned by the second prince.

"I only need almighty beasts' will now and a large number of them. If possible, I heard that there are a large amount of sealed almighty beasts' will in the royal family's treasure vault."

Merlin told the Princess Royal truthfully that he needed almighty beasts' will to strengthen himself. Perhaps Farron had already guessed it. It would no longer be a secret in the near future.

“A large number of almighty beasts’ will? That’s somewhat difficult. I can’t enter the treasure vault even if I’m king in the future, much less now. It’s guarded by the elders of the royal family. No one in the royal family is allowed to enter until a special period.”

Merlin was slightly disappointed although he already knew the answer. The Princess Royal could not enter the treasure vault even if she became king.

Seeing Merlin’s disappointment, the Princess Royal hesitated for a moment before saying, “Although I cannot take you into the treasure vault, I can order my men to look out for some almighty beasts’ will and inform you as soon as they find anything.”

Merlin nodded. That was all they could do for now.

Then, Merlin bid farewell to the Princess Royal and left the palace.

...

Since the second prince’s death, the palace had been strangely quiet and calm. Nothing was happening but Merlin knew that under this peace, a terrible storm was brewing.

However, Merlin appeared to be very relaxed and was even happy. He would be married today with Count Altadin’s daughter, Lady Baratha as well as Lady Reese.

This was a marvelous occasion in the entire manor. Many families who did not follow him from Boulder City even came from afar.

“Who would’ve thought that Leon would be a Marquis now. He even seems to have a high status in Holy Dragon City.”

“If I had known, I would’ve followed Leon and the others to Holy Dragon City, so I didn’t have to suffer in Boulder City.”

“It’s too late. We couldn’t leave our property in Boulder City...”

These people were full of remorse. In the beginning, they did not follow Count Stanwin to Holy Dragon City and chose to remain in Boulder City. Although Merlin later took Boulder City back, they were no longer people who could enjoy the core benefits of the clan. They had become the subfamily.

“Her Highness the Princess has arrived!”

Suddenly, someone recognized the Princess Royal from outside. Although the Hilderbrandt clan knew that Merlin was extraordinary, they did not expect that even the Princess Royal would personally come to congratulate Merlin on his marriage.

“Marquis Leon, congratulations!”

The Princess Royal’s attire today was very solemn and noble, making people feel inferior and afraid to approach her. However, when she looked at Merlin, she always seemed to adopt a “playful” look.

Merlin was somewhat helpless but bowed respectfully to express his gratitude. Then, he took Lady Baratha and Lady Resse and began the formal wedding ceremony.

The ceremony was complicated but everything went smoothly. From then on, Merlin’s formal wives were Baratha and Reese.

After the ceremony was over, the Princess Royal met Merlin alone. A smile appeared on the Princess Royal’s lips as she said, “Marquis Leon, your two wives are very beautiful. You must cherish them well. Originally, I didn’t want to disturb you today but this item might be very important to you. You can consider it a big wedding present from me to you!”

Then, the Princess Royal took out an oval reddish stone.

“What’s this?”

Merlin frowned. He did not see anything special about this reddish stone but if the Princess Royal was so serious when giving it to him, it should be rather valuable.

“Use your almighty beast’s will! It’s rumored that only Hosts can know the secrets of this stone.”

The Princess Royal shrugged. Even she did not know the specifics of the stone.

“Could there be a sealed almighty beast’s will inside?”

Merlin guessed upon seeing the mysterious smile on the Princess Royal’s face.

#### Chapter 1000: The Calm Before the Storm

Merlin did not scrutinize the strange stone in the public’s view. Once he had tucked it away securely, he invited the Princess Royal into the castle. The Princess Royal cast a cryptic look at Lady Reese and Lady Baratha who were standing next to Merlin and her lips quirked into a faint smile.

Merlin’s expression did not waver. He continued to welcome his guests. Besides the Princess Royal, the King had also sent his representatives. Of course, it was not Farron. No matter what, Farron was still the Minister of Phantom, which was not commonly known. Farron’s identity was still considered a quasi-secret. Instead, the King sent a few representatives from the palace. They presented Merlin with a magnificent jade carving which was almost as tall as half a person and absolutely breathtaking. This gesture made all guests to question Merlin’s importance, seeing as even the King had especially sent him a gift.

“It seems like Leon isn’t just ordained as a Marquis. Otherwise, His Majesty the King wouldn’t send such an elaborate gift.”

Some members of the Hilderbrandt clan had made up their minds. They must establish good relations with Merlin and move from Boulder City to Holy Dragon City as soon as possible. Here, with Merlin around, their lives would be much better compared to Boulder City.

Merlin did not know what these clan members were thinking. Today was his grand wedding with Baratha and Reese. Naturally, he did not want this festive atmosphere to be interrupted. Therefore, according to formal etiquette, from now on, Merlin’s official spouses were Lady Baratha and Lady Reese.

The castle was very lively but the Princess Royal did not stay for long. She only stayed for a short time and then got up to leave. As soon as the Princess Royal left, the people in the castle broke out in cacophony. Count Altadin, in particular, was ecstatic. It seemed that the best decision he had made in his life was to marry his daughter to Merlin.

Once dusk approached, most of the guests had left the castle. The exuberant vibe in the castle finally settled down. In a spacious room, Merlin was gazing at the two unfamiliar young women, whom were his wives now.

“Baratha, Reese, both of you probably know that I’m a Host. Currently, the situation in the Empire is very tense. It’s possible that one day, an ill fate might befall me as well. Should that ever happen, naturally, the butler will send you back to Boulder City.”

As soon as Merlin finished speaking, Reese and Baratha exchanged looks with one another. Then, the slightly bolder Baratha spoke. “Leon, the Empire’s situation is very tense. Several lords and aristocrats have suffered terrible fates. However, now that we’ve married you, you don’t have to worry. We’ll make sure that the Hilderbrandt clan continues on. We won’t allow the bloodline of the Hilderbrandt clan to cease.”

After speaking, both of them appeared shy. Although they were both aristocratic young ladies, they have been well-educated. Nevertheless, saying such things aloud to a recently-married unfamiliar man was not appropriate.

Merlin shook his head helplessly. It seemed like no matter which world he went to, bloodlines were regarded with much importance. In that case, Merlin would not change anything. This would only span a few decades anyway. Accompanying them throughout this short period was not too difficult.

Thus, Merlin threw both of them on their backs and blew out the red candles. The entire room was filled with assorted moans...

...

Merlin’s grand wedding did not cause much commotion in Holy Dragon City. This was because Holy Dragon City was very large, and Merlin was merely the Deputy Minister of Phantom. Moreover, in the eyes of the public, he was only a Marquis.

Considering the huge aristocrat population in Holy Dragon City, Merlin was not worth mentioning at all.

However, to those who had insider information, Merlin was a key figure concerning the throne in the royal palace of Holy Dragon City.

Following the second prince's death, Merlin's reputation had gained a life of its own. Perhaps, to an average person, Phantom Intelligence Department was an unknown name. Nevertheless, to the high-level aristocrats who held real authority, Phantom Intelligence Department was the most powerful force under the royal family's control.

Currently, the most powerful force in the hands of the royal family was in danger of being split into two. Merlin, who was supported by the Princess Royal, against Farron, who was supported by the King.

There were also rumors that Farron was completely unable to defeat Merlin. Therefore, for a good many days after the grand wedding, there were still people coming in and out of Merlin's castle. All of them were trying to forge good relations with Merlin.

Of course, Merlin would not pay any attention to these people but passed the responsibility to his two wives. Surprisingly, both Baratha and Reese were sociable. Furthermore, they have kept the castle organized, putting Merlin at ease.

Merlin was alone in the secret chamber of his castle. Lately, both the royal palace and Holy Dragon City as well as the rebel armies throughout the Holy Dragon Empire had been extremely silent. Such calmness felt abnormal to Merlin.

It was the feeling of the calm before the storm. Merlin wanted to improve his abilities to a point where he could even suppress opponents such as Doomsday and Farron. Only then would he be able to tilt the balance of the war.

Merlin's current abilities were sufficient to tilt that balance and yet, he could not turn the situation around. He needed to get stronger so that even Farron and Doomsday would have to look up to him.

Perhaps, for anyone else to have such thoughts would be completely preposterous but Merlin was formerly the most invincible existence in the Void Zone. In the end, even the will of the Void Zone was unable to kill him. Why would a great existence such as Merlin worry about not being able to surpass Farron and Doomsday?

Merlin was not too concerned about the legendary sacred beasts too.

In the secret chamber, Merlin flipped his hand over. Inside the palm of his hand was the odd stone which the Princess Royal had passed to him on his wedding day. Back then, Merlin did not examine it closely.

The stone was cool to Merlin's touch. Regardless, this was not the main point. More importantly, Merlin's Awareness hastily extended into the stone. There was a massive subspace in it.

"Roar..."

Upon entering this stone, Merlin immediately sensed the growls of countless almighty beasts. This meant that the stone contained a large number of almighty beasts' will.

"There are many almighty beasts' will. Who managed to seal and suppress so many of them?"

Merlin was astonished. Previously, Merlin at least knew the origins of the Bead of Infamy. On the other hand, he was completely in the dark regarding this stone. Most probably, even the Princess Royal who obtained this stone, did not know of its exact origins.

Nevertheless, the Princess Royal probably knew that the stone was related to the almighty beasts' will. She must have spent a lot of effort to find this stone. Otherwise, she would not have gifted it to Merlin as his wedding present. The Princess Royal spared no effort for Merlin's abilities to be enhanced as soon as possible.

Merlin took a deep breath and reined in his excitement. Then, he examined the almighty beasts' will in the stone. There was a large number of almighty beasts' will – about thirty or so. Although not as many as the Bead of Infamy, it was still a considerable number.

However, sadly, there were only two mid-tier almighty beasts' will. The rest were low-tier almighty beasts' will. In this regard, it could not compare with the Bead of Infamy.

After all, the Bead of Infamy was left behind by Count Altadin's ancestor who was a full-shifter Host. It was incredibly difficult for Hosts to achieve the level of a full-shifter. Perhaps, this stone was also left behind by a Host. Otherwise, no one would spend so much effort to seal so many almighty beasts' will.

Although Merlin was slightly disappointed at these low-tier almighty beasts' will, finding them was already a challenge. Therefore, Merlin mobilized his Awareness to draw out the almighty beasts' will from the stone.

“Devour and merge!”

Merlin's enormous will exerted itself on these almighty beasts' will. Presently, Merlin's will could terrorize any almighty beast's will, including high-tier almighty beasts'.

Under the suppression of this terrifying will, Merlin had devoured the thirty or so almighty beasts' will. The almighty beast's will which was nestled in his Awareness roared furiously as it underwent frenzied transformations.

His scales became tougher and his spikes became sharper. The almighty beast's body also expanded another fold. Anyone who saw him would feel threatened.

“My Supreme Talent hasn't improved!”

Merlin frowned. He initially thought that as he continued to devour more almighty beasts' will, eventually, he would undergo a truly “qualitative” transformation.

However, until now, he seemed just like a bottomless pit. No matter how many almighty beasts' will he had devoured, there was no “qualitative” transformation.

“I'm still lacking something... I'm looking forward to seeing a qualitative transformation. I wonder, to what extent can a Host transform? Will I become a sacred beast?”

Merlin was very much looking forward to it. According to his speculation, although he had yet to undergo any transformation, as long as he continued to merge with the parasites, he would eventually succeed.

However, before the transformation succeeded, Merlin could only enhance his body strength. His defense was sufficiently hardy now. Regardless of Farron's attacks, he was unable to cause Merlin any significant harm.

So, even if Merlin became more powerful, it would only make it more difficult for Farron to break through his defenses. It still would not help Merlin defeat Farron's Supreme Talent.

"Farron's Mirror Talent isn't infallible. As long as I can find its loophole and break through his Mirror Talent, Farron is no longer a threat!"

Merlin creased his forehead. He knew the Supreme Talents of powerful existences such as Farron and Doomsday were truly durable. It was very difficult, perhaps even impossible, to break through their Talents.

As for loopholes, those were even trickier. If the loopholes were easily discovered, then Farron and Doomsday would not have become so powerful.

Though Merlin could not discover any loophole for now, he would not give up. Instead, using Mind Power, he simulated Farron's Mirror Talent over and over again in his Awareness. This was another use of Merlin's remaining Mind Power.

Nonetheless, this was a very drawn-out process which, in the end, might turn out to be futile...