

## Witch 1271

### Chapter 1271: The Fiery Sky

Jodel was observing the Tusk City through a peephole of a deserted house in the Tusk Castle. Due to the difference in elevation, he could only spy a small area outside the city gate. This would be the first stronghold they had to seize after the battle broke out.

In this operation, Mojins would advance first.

This did not mean, however, that Brian thought Mojins were disposable. In fact, they had earned this opportunity.

The general rule in the Southernmost Region was to prove oneself through power and strength, and attain resources through victories.

Jodel was from a small clan in the oasis. As the Silver Stream Oasis gradually shrank, his clan was on the brink of extinction. That was the reason that he had risked himself dealing with northerners in the first place. But now, all the clansmen had relocated to the Port of Clearwater, the permanent oasis that they had dreamed about. It was a reward from the chief for the victory of the battle against the Wildwave and Cut Bone clans.

Jodel requested to join this battle simply because he wanted to kill as many enemies as possible in exchange for greater rewards. He did not really care about who the enemies were. Fighting demons was actually better than living in fear of hunger, thirst, and uncertainty of the future.

Jodel believed that most Sand Nationals had the same feeling.

“Did you find anything?” someone asked him from behind.

“No, except that the Red Mist gets thicker. I can’t see anything,” Jodel said as he blocked the peephole quietly and turned around.

The one who put questions was Farry, the youngest soldier in the unit. Even his gun was taller than him. A deep scar ran the length of his face from his forehead all the way to the corner of his mouth, making his young face look a little grotesque. Jodel remembered his outstanding performance during the training, despite his young age. Even some of the most experienced warriors found it hard to beat him.

Jodel was surprised that Farry had yet made his name in the small oasis. He had actually never heard of him before.

“We’ve been waiting for two weeks, right?” Farry complained. “It’s so boring getting stuck here with hundreds of people.”

“Didn’t Sir Brian say that the demons have flying Devilbeasts? In order not to attract the demons’ attention, we have to wait,” Jodel answered. “Haven’t you hunted before? It’s common for us to wait for half a month to ambush a sandworm. Be patient.”

According to the operation plan, Iron Axe had sent around 2,000 people to the northern part of the Broken Tooth Castle where these soldiers dispersed and hid themselves. Another 1,000 soldiers were sent to the inner city in the south as a reserve unit. Their hiding spot looked no different than a ruin from outside, but the inside was pretty spacious. Its upper level was used for scouting while the lower level served as a temporary residence. Soldiers were supplied with water and food. Bedrooms and washrooms were separated. Although there was, inevitably, some odor, it was much more sanitary than where they had lived during the hunting event.

Jodel did not quite understand why Farry suddenly started to complain.

“You don’t understand,” Farry returned hesitantly as he glared at Jodel and slumped against the wall. “What do you think these iron barrels are used for? The demons have come, but they haven’t done anything but digging and burying.”

“I have no idea... but it’s the chief’s invention. I’m not surprised.”

He had seen too many marvelous tools and weapons in the past one year.

“I hope this isn’t a new Pill of Madness,” Farry muttered.

Jodel had heard of the Pill of Madness before. He was about to ask Farry for more details when someone poked his head out from below and said, “We’ve got a message from the rear. We’re going to launch an attack soon. Get yourselves prepared.”

Farry let out a deep sigh and said, “Finally we can do something. I’ll go right away.”

Jodel was more cautious. He asked, “What’s the signal? Is it what we’ve planned?”

“That’s right,” the same person replied to him. “When you hear the explosion, advance.”

“It’s about the time,” Iron Axe said as he put down the telescope and turned around. “Now, connect it to the power.”

“Yes, sir!” two soldiers from the explosion unit shouted and immediately began to operate the hand crank generator. The third soldier put his hand on the lever.

It was finally the time to test out what they had been preparing and planning for such a long time. The Red Mist had already spread throughout the entire king’s city of the Kingdom of Wolfheart. If the First Army continued to retreat, the demons would soon seize the Broken Tooth Castle eventually. Like the king’s city of Graycastle and Silver City, the king’s city of the Kingdom of Wolfheart and the Broken Tooth Castle were also adjacent to each other. The Broken Tooth Castle formed a natural barrier for the Tusk City. It was said that the king’s city would remain intact as long as the Broken Tooth Castle did not fall. However, at the moment, they had to use the Broken Tooth Castle to give the demons who had occupied the Tusk City a heavy blow.

Iron Axe had noticed that all the demons were equipped with a breathing device, which was quite a burden for them. Except for the Mad Demons that were pursuing the refugees, the other demons pretty much confined their activities to the area permeated with the Red Mist.

This gave the First Army a great opportunity to launch a counterattack.

“Sir, the explosion unit is ready!”

Iron Axe ordered heavily, “Ignite the explosives!”

As the soldier pressed the lever, a jet of dazzling red flash suddenly rose into the air above the northern part of the Broken Tooth Castle. More than 500 iron barrels were ignited at the same time. Golden flames lit the sky and the king’s city.

Everyone heard the ringing explosion.

However, this was just the beginning.

The barrels actually contained the slimes of the rubber worms created by Kyle, mixed with inflammable oil and accelerants such as powdered aluminum and magnesium. The mixture itself was not hazardous when it was solid, but when they were sent into the air and spread out like a mist, the slimes would become fatal. As the slimes were immediately burned off, the reaction resembled an explosion. In a split second, the air around the explosives was heated up to nearly 1,000 degrees, and the expanded air currents further inflamed the fire.

Just at that moment, the chain reaction occurred.

The explosives should have showered down at the ground. However, as the temperature exceeded the absolute threshold, the explosives continued to spread out like red orangey lightning and formed a giant net above the city. The flames, amazingly, started to move onwards!

Iron Axe was also shocked by this incredible scene. Then he suddenly came to the realization that the fiery rain had ignited the Red Mist. In an instant, the rapidly spreading red “lightning” infiltrated the air, and the giant net had now transformed into a massive shade!

After that, there was a more intense explosion.

The fiery shade suddenly broke as a gigantic fireball soared into the sky like a hatched fiery bird.

The sound produced by the fireball was much louder than the previous blast created by the iron barrels.

Iron Axe even saw that the air around the king’s city distort.

The earth began to quaver!

## **Chapter 1272: Beneath the Flames**

As soon as he heard the first explosion, Jodel and his unit filed out of their hiding place according to the instruction.

However, no sooner had they trooped out than an ear-splitting boom came from the north. Dust was stirred up, and they almost fell as the ground shook violently.

Jodel managed to steady himself and looked toward the Tusk City in surprise. As he was standing on the lower land, he could only spy an orange fireball punch the air as thick smoke spiraled up. The Red Mist around the fireball was lit up, and the sky was aflame.

The Sand Nationals looked horrified.

They could only think of one phrase at this moment: the wrath of the Three Gods!

“Don’t be afraid,” Jodel yelled through clenched teeth and waved his arm. “This is a weapon created by the chief to fight the demons! It’s the demons that should be scared not us!”

His words jerked everyone out of the trance.

“That’s right. This is Heaven’s fire summoned by the chief!”

“Don’t just stop there. Move!”

The unit resumed to run. People came out from behind the wall, the windows and the collapsed houses. They soon joined the advance team and swarmed toward the Tusk City like a tidal wave.

Jodel was running at the very front of the unit.

Although he had completely submitted to the chief’s ruling, he still believed that Sand Nationals were more suitable to fight than northerners, especially for warriors from small clans like him who had grown up in a barren oasis and been used to struggling to live. He could use not only bows and swords but also flintlocks. After receiving further training from Brian, he could now shoot fixed targets accurately and also fire on the go.

This was a perfect time for him to demonstrate his power.

He not only wanted to be the first one that entered the city but also the first person to gain the victory.

He wanted his name to be remembered by the entire army!

However, when the troops ascended and gained the city wall of the Tusk City, a smothering heat wave greeted them. For a second, Jodel thought he had returned to the desert blazed in the summer sunlight in the Southernmost Region.

His skin was basking in the burning air, and he could hardly open his eyes.

Neither could the soldiers following him.

The whole unit was thwarted by an invisible wall and slowed down. Some northerners at the front even retreated in embarrassment and crouched down below the slope, in an attempt to protect themselves from the heat.

Jodel forced himself to march forward, but he immediately realized that something had gone wrong.

The fireball in the air was extinguished. A thin strand of smoke was still coiling. The thick veil of the Red Mist was now missing one corner, as though a giant beast had bitten it off. There was thus one blank area in the sky free of the Red Mist.

Through the wide open city gates, Jodel saw heat waves rolling at the end of the horizon, and the buildings on the ground looked distorted after the impact. The wooden houses all collapsed during the explosion, their blackened pillars sprouting out like the devil’s claws. The demons, however, did not come up to stop them or disperse in various directions. In fact, there was not a single demon in his view.

Jodel suddenly felt it hard to breathe in the scorching heat, and his body started to protest. His step became increasingly heavy.

*“Darn. Why do I suddenly get so weak?”*

The city wall was within his reach, but in a second, he lost all his power, and his vision blurred.

Jodel stumbled and then fell to the ground.

That last thing he saw was the contemptuous look on Farry’s face as the latter dragged him out of the way.

This battle exceeded Iron Axe and the General Staff’s expectation.

They had expected that the north of the king’s city of the Kingdom of Wolfheart would be ablaze. The flames would have not only burned all the houses but also the Red Mist outside the city. Then the Tusk City would have been isolated temporarily, and the demons without the breathing device would have been in a panic.

After that, the ambush unit should have raided the demons and finished the rest of the enemies off. Although Iron Axe did not know how many demons there would be, based on the past intelligence, the demons would normally assign troops according to the population of the city. The demons definitely knew that the Tusk City had been evacuated. Therefore, during the first few days after the appearance of the Red Mist, the number of the demons should have been no more than 500. In other words, the First Army should have gained a very advantageous position in terms of number and strength.

Nevertheless, they were not relying on this battle to eliminate the demons, for the soldiers had to hide themselves in the underground passages and ruins to avoid the scrutiny of the Devilbeasts. As such, they could not use any heavy weapons. It was not hard to suppress the demons with the rifles and the anti-demon grenades, but it was difficult to pursue them with only light weapons.

The main goal of this battle was to lower the demons’ morale and make them realize that human beings could fight back even while they were retreating. In this way, the army would be able to alleviate the stress of the retreating unit.

Nevertheless, the battle simply ended after the explosion.

The fire wall did not appear as planned. Instead, the heat waves as a result of the earth-shaking explosion barred the ambush unit from entering the king’s city. Many soldiers were burned and had even passed out. As such, it was impossible for them to continue with the operation.

Of course, it did not necessarily mean that they had failed. They could easily imagine what the inner city looked like judging from the heated air outside.

No written records had shown that demons had a higher tolerance to heat than men.

The only thing that Iron Axe felt regretted about was that he could not see the outcome of the battle at the front in person. As he had no idea when the temperature in the city would drop, he had to leave to avoid getting burned.

“Sir, all the troops except us have withdrawn from the Broken Tooth Castle,” Brian said as he walked out of the headquarters in excitement. He had not participated in the test of the new weapon, but he would remember what it had done in this battle for the rest of his life.

“Very well. Let’s retreat,” Iron Axe said while nodding. “I think it won’t be long before the demons notice us. It won’t be so easy to escape when they come after us.”

Just as Iron Axe had predicted, the next day, a demon unit arrived at the Tusk City on the Devilbeasts, the leader of which was none other than the Sky Lord, Hackzord.

### **Chapter 1273: The Demons’ Guile**

20 hours later, Hackzord received a report saying a fireball blasted in the Kingdom of Wolfheart, which caused substantial damage to the supply unit. At that time, he was still in a city in the west of the Kingdom of Everwinter, whose lord had just pledged allegiance to him.

To be honest, Hackzord did not really want to deal with such a trifle. However, the report stressed that the explosion was exceptionally powerful. He thus decided to come to take a look in person.

Hackzord dreaded dealing with human beings, but he was the only one capable of this job at the Western Front. Not everyone was as smart as Ursrook who would like to learn various things, even though they appeared to be useless. Most of the Upgraded viewed humans as low lives and certainly would not invest their time in learning their language.

His commanders were very loyal to him and were all outstanding warriors. However, they also despised the mankind. They would have probably ripped men apart had he sent them to negotiate with human beings.

Nevertheless, men were submissive and meek animals. Although they were weak, they were somewhat clever. Hence, they could replace many Inferior Demons at the early stage of the war. It was, therefore, not advisable to exterminate them immediately.

This was actually all Valkries’ fault.

She should have been the perfect Senior Lord to communicate with human beings, but she wasted her time in the Red Mist Pond. Hackzord felt that his patience was running out.

When he arrived at the Tusk City, however, he immediately realized that something had gone terribly wrong.

The Red Mist was extremely thin as though it had been wiped off the sky. The city had been devastated. Remains of houses and blackened wooden frames could be seen everywhere.

As he dropped, Hackzord felt the high temperature and greeted a pungent smell.

He soon discovered where that smell came from.

A group of strange Inferior Demons curled themselves up on the street, their burned skins peeling off. Apparently, they had died in the fire. What puzzled Hackzord was that there were no visible signs of

combustible materials around them, apart from some bricks and mud. Hackzord did not know how the fire had started.

He saw more than one burned Inferior Demon.

“Totolock, take ten people with you and search for the human army. Report to me immediately after you find them.”

“Yes, master.”

“Siacis, look into this matter and see if there’s anyone still alive.”

“Yes, sir.”

The two Upgraded soon heeded his order. Hackzord strolled along the street toward the northern area where his army sustained the greatest damage.

According to the report, one supply unit comprised of Inferior Demons was attacked. These poor Inferior Demons, who had never had a chance to upgrade themselves, were pretty much like laborers and slaves in the human society. At that time, they were shipping obsidian and a secondary Red Mist Pond to the Tusk City, for the purpose of building a campsite for the Junior Demons and the Upgraded.

From the remains at the scene and the scattered obsidian, it was obvious that the Inferior Demons suffered the blow while they were working, for some of them still stayed in the last position when they died. The fact that there was no sign of a fight indicated that human beings had not confronted the supply unit directly. The explosion had ended as quickly and unexpectedly as they had occurred.

Hackzord thereby judged that this was a trap of the enemies rather than the work of an organized army under the scrutiny of the Bogle Beasts. Totolock might not find anything during this search.

This fact made Hackzord feel increasingly uneasy. He would rather see the human army swarm toward him than hiding in the dark. He did not really care about those Inferior Demons, but he could not accept any failure at the Western Front. If the main force encountered a trap like this, the result could be disastrous.

Without a doubt, human beings, once again, used “fire” as their weapon. Hackzord was familiar with fire. In the past Battles of Divine Will, they had also used fire to attack the cities occupied by the human race. They rarely used it simply because the Red Mist could easily get burned at a high temperature.

But it was his first time seeing self-combustible fire.

Unless the whole city had become a furnace.

But how could it be possible?

If the mankind had the ability to achieve such an incredible transformation, he must inform the king of the potential danger at the Western Front.

*“Hang on... Fire?”*

An image suddenly flashed across Hackzord's mind. It was an image he had captured when he had been searching for Kabradhabi's memories in the Realm of Mind. A bright fireball blasted in the air like the rising sun.

Was this weapon what Kabradhabi had seen?

Hackzord shuddered involuntarily.

While he was lost in thought, Siacis' voice came to him suddenly, "Sir, I've figured out what happened. There were 350 Inferior Demons in the supply unit and around 10 Primal Demons that guarded them. I haven't found anyone that survived, but I think I know how those low lives did that."

"Really? Then tell me."

"Please follow me."

Hackzord thus followed Siacis to the northern city wall where some Primal Demons were digging something. Around them lay a few black metal fragments. A little farther on, Hackzord saw some tumbled chariots. After they had developed powerful and flexible symbiotic demons, these old-school war machineries were obsolete and only served as transportation tools.

"Look," Siacis said as he extended out his tentacle and grasped one fragment that were clearly melted down. "If we put them together, we could roughly see the shape of a vessel. These vessels spread out in a line along the city wall, and there were around hundreds of them. I believe those low lives put snow powder and combustible materials in them, in an attempt to cut the retreat of our supply unit, and then launch the attack."

Hackzord was now very familiar with humans' weapons, and he had indeed obtained a lot of them in this battle. Both "fire forks" and "fire bolts" required combustible materials such as snow powder to be effective. They were much more complicated than weapons powered by magic. Because of this, most of these weapons had pretty complex structures, which was something that Hackzord had not seen 400 years ago.

"If this was just an ordinary fire, why did it cause so much damage?"

"Sir, the fire wasn't ordinary. At least, its temperature was much higher than an ordinary one. However, I don't think it was self-combustible. The key, in my opinion, may lie in the chariots."

"What do you mean?" Hackzord pursued. Siacis was a psychic, so he possessed a greater insight than the other Upgraded. That was why Hackzord brought him to the battlefield.

"When the snow powder was ignited, the heat was transmitted to the chariots through the city gates. The chariots are usually used to ship heavy equipment rather than the storage tanks for the Red Mist. The chariots thus exploded and further broke down the Red Mist," Siacis hissed while waving his nimble tentacle. "You know that everything would burn at a certain temperature, including us."

Hackzord was a little relieved after hearing Siacis' explanation. No matter what combustible materials they were, the fragments of the giant iron barrels made him feel settled a lot. It seemed that human beings needed to make a lot of preparations beforehand to make this kind of explosion happen. They



could not throw the explosives at their will. Hackzord thus believed that these traps would not pose a threat to the main force of his army as long as he took precautions.

Hackzord certainly did not think it easy to inspect a city occupied by human beings in a short period of time. Suspending the transportation of the Red Mist Pond and the storage tanks would not stop a second explosion either. He could not entrust this matter to the simple-minded Primal Demons and Inferior Demons.

The best way was to have human beings attack each other.

“Sir, what should we do next?”

“Don’t enter the city just yet. Let men inspect the city for us,” Hackzord said quickly. “I can’t get more Inferior Demons from other locations. Let the Snow Reflection Castle make up the loss. I believe Earl Marwayne would love to serve me.”

“Also, shouldn’t we obtain some of the enemies’ weapons?” Hackzord went on. “Many nobles loathe the Graycastle men. Give them an opportunity to avenge themselves.”

#### **Chapter 1274: Ambition**

A thin veil of Red Mist dropped down from the crest of the Impassable Mountain Range. Marwayne Parker had thought that it would be as intolerable as the mine, where the air was impregnated with dust. Surprisingly, however, he felt fine.

If he took a deep breath, he could sense a hint of cool wetness in the surroundings. The demon commander had told him that the Mist contained the essence of a life form. It would not cause human beings any harm but would instead strengthen them. Only witches, their mortal enemy, would suffer a fatal power rebound.

Marwayne was not sure whether he should trust the demon commander, but from what he could see at present, the Red Mist seemed to be harmless, except that it obscured his view sometimes. After a month, he had completely got used to living in an environment permeated with the Red Mist.

“My lord, the Sky Lord sent an ambassador.” Just then, a guard entered the study and reported, “He’s waiting for you in the yard.”

Marwayne nodded silently and said, “Ask him to wait for a moment. I’ll be there right away.”

“Yes, my lord.”

Marwayne smiled after the guard closed the door.

Every time he heard others call him lord, he felt exhilarated. He had thought it would be his last when the demon had crossed the abyss and invaded the Snow Reflection Castle a month ago. However, the demon had set him free.

After abandoning his prejudice against the demons, Marwayne found the Sky Lord was quite communicative. In a way, he was easier to deal with than the Graycastle men. At least, the Sky Lord would not strip the nobles of their lands without any reason.

The demons did not require him to pay taxes, nor did they loot his lands and usurp his power. As long as he pledged fealty to them, he could retain what he had now and also have a chance to gain more rewards. The demons could be rude, but they did not really prejudice his personal interests. After the Sky Lord asked him to rule the three cities near the Snow Reflection Castle, he became even more satisfied with the status quo.

The Snow Reflection Castle was a fortified, isolated island. Nobody could easily invade his territory, but he could not expand his domain from here either. Marwayne had thought he would remain as an earl for the rest of his life. He had not expected, nevertheless, that he would elevate to duke on the doomsday.

Now, he ruled the entire northern region of the Kingdom of Everwinter and was, veritably, the Duke of the Northern Region.

Marwayne covered his mouth and forced himself to keep up a straight face. He closed the window and walked downstairs.

The demons had indeed killed dozens of his guards and hundreds of his subjects, but no war did not have bloodshed. Nobles also competed for lands through wars. As he was currently the ruler of four cities, his army expanded a great deal. As for the loss of population, he was sure that in a few years' time, with sufficient lands and food, there would be more people in his domain.

He should also hang those who were pointing behind his back and accusing him of submitting to the demons out of fear.

Marwayne immediately saw the ambassador sent by the Sky Lord and the giant monster lying beside him as he entered the yard. To be honest, he did not know how to distinguish these demons. Unlike Hackzord, these demons were disgusting and barbarian. Had they not been sent by the demon commander, Marwayne would not have spared a look at these savage beasts.

"What can I do for the Sky Lord?"

The ambassador produced a stone from the pocket of his mount and opened his large, crimson mouth. Then he blurted out a word, "Listen!"

It was again magic voice transmission.

Marwayne stepped a few paces back involuntarily, for he could not stand the terrible breath of the ambassador. He forced himself to suppress his revulsion and said, "I'm listening."

The stone flickered, and then a familiar voice reached his ears.

"How do you feel like being the ruler of a region? I hope you haven't forgotten your promise, Mr. Duke."

"Of course not, Your Excellency," Marwayne replied quickly. "I'm at your service."

"Very well. I believe that your subjects have got used to our presence after a month. Now it's time to build an army and help us build a campsite. I want the campsite to be built in the Kingdom of Wolfheart

rather than the Kingdom of Everwinter, and I need at least 2,000 people. Well, the more, the better, naturally.”

Marwayne wondered if Hackzord wanted heavy labor. He estimated that it was not going to be hard to fulfill this order. Therefore, he replied, “Leave it to me, Your Excellency.”

“I did pick the right person,” the Sky Lord commented in satisfaction. “Also, what about the research on those weapons? Can you duplicate them?”

“Well...” Marwayne faltered. “We can use them, but it’ll take a few more days to replicate them. I summoned the best blacksmith in the Northern Region and asked every one of them to forge a part. It was not very successful. I believe the witches are involved in the creation of the weapons. The blacksmiths told me that these weapons are not likely made by ordinary people.”

“That’s what I thought,” Hackzord said. Luckily, he did not blame Marwayne. “Even if that’s the case, you should also use them to resist the Graycastle men. This is my second order. Send people to Graycastle to stop them taking refugees. I’ll give you the rest of the weapons we obtained.”

“But I don’t have knights anymore — ”

“Then recruit them!” Hackzord talked over him. “Don’t you men like to recruit people? You tend to grant lands to others and ask them to serve you. Don’t be too cheap. If you succeed, you may become the King of Everwinter.”

Marwayne quavered. He had been dreaming of becoming the King of Everwinter. He had never anticipated that his ambition would come true in this way. Marwayne placed his hand on his chest, trying to slow down the frantic pounding of his heart. It took him a great deal of efforts to steady his voice. “Yes, Your Excellency. I’ll do my best to carry out this mission.”

“Be fast. I want to see the result as soon as possible.”

“I won’t let you down.”

The flicker disappeared.

“I, come, a week later,” the ambassador again blurted inarticulately.

With these words, he clambered onto the winged monster, raised his arm, and rose into the air. The winged monster howled and flew toward the outer city before it quickly disappeared from Marwayne’s view.

Marwayne’s face was, however, soon, covered in the dust that the monster had kicked up.

“Sh\*t!” He coughed. Had all the demons acted like the Sky Lord, men would not have viewed the demons as monsters from hell.

Marwayne summoned the old scholar at once after he returned to the castle. Although this aged scholar had wetted his pants last time at the city wall, Marwayne could not find anyone else that could help him.

After relating Hackzord’s order to the old scholar, Marwayne asked, “So, what do you think?”

“My lord, this is a perfect opportunity!” the old scholar exclaimed while holding Marwayne’s hand. “I dedicated my whole life to the Parker Family, and I remember your father always wanted to expand the Snow Reflection Castle. Now, you not only did that but also got a chance to become the King of Everwinter. You must not let this opportunity slip!”

“I think so too, but do you really think those knights can defeat the Graycastle men?” Marwayne asked. “You’ve seen how ingenious those snow powder and bolts are. It’s impossible to replicate them, and the demons might not be able to obtain many of them. What if we run out of the weapons?”

“No, my lord. We don’t have to directly confront the army from Graycastle,” the old scholar said while shaking his head. “The Sky Lord doesn’t plan to do that either. He said ‘stop them taking refugees’. As far as I know, the Graycastle troops are quite scattered. Once we have adequate weapons, we may stand in an advantageous position! If we successfully crush a few units, the Graycastle soldiers will become hesitant. In fact, I just thought of an excellent idea!”

“Really? Spit it out.”

The old scholar then whispered his thought to the duke.

Marwayne’s face lit up.

“That should work!” Marwayne said while nodding vigorously. “In that case, their strength will become their weakness. Let’s do it!”

## **Chapter 1275: The Pharmaceutical Industry in Neverwinter**

In Neverwinter, Graycastle.

Two days later, Wendy sent the test results of the two new witches to Roland’s office.

“I have to say that their abilities are very... complicated,” Wendy said as she handed in the reports. “It was my first time seeing that there are so many variables in one ability. This is just a part of the test result. If you want to have the full report, you probably need to wait for another few days.”

“Hmm,” Roland said as he put down his work and reviewed the report with great interest. “I believe that the Taquila witches are also interested in them, right?”

Wendy replied with a nod, “They asked Phyllis to conduct the test for the Chosen One immediately. Unfortunately, the light beams of the two new witches are quite weak. They definitely aren’t the keys to the Instrument of Divine Retribution.”

Roland was profoundly relieved after hearing this news. He had just approved the nationwide electricity plan, and all the magic cores were currently being converted into Mystery Moon’s power. Had the Chosen One suddenly appeared at this moment, Celine would have been pretty resentful. It would take a few decades to restore the Instrument of Divine Retribution, and it would definitely not be a pleasant experience monitoring the device every day.

Roland had heard from Honey that the Senior Witches from Taquila had recently developed a new hobby of “sunbath”. Instead of lying sprawled across the field under the sunlight, they actually crept out

of the cave at night and lay there until the sunrise. Since direct sunlight could cause harm to the carriers, they generally did not like coming out of their hidings. Roland did not understand why the Taquila witches suddenly started this new activity, but at least, he could tell that they felt quite relaxed.

This was undoubtedly a good sign.

Roland quickly turned to the last page of the report.

Thylane's ability mainly affected a person's mood, and it would only take effect after that person took the pill. Like most attaching magic type, her ability would lose its effectiveness after a certain period of time, and its lasting power normally depended on the size of the object and how much magic Thylane invested in the first the place.

The test result showed that the "magic pill" could alter literally every emotion that a man could feel, including but not limited to happiness, pain, fatigue, tiredness, anxiety and fear. Once the power of the pill faded away, those suppressed emotions would come out altogether.

Roland somehow figured out why the magic pill could do so many things but the light beam was weak. The magic power, in a sense, was a nerve block that delayed the nerve conduction and the transmission of hormones temporarily. Its mechanism was very similar to that of some drugs in the modern society, except that the latter had very serious side effects and could be addictive as well.

Nevertheless, the light beam was not the only factor that determined the value of one's ability. Thylane's "magic pill" would definitely create a lucrative market and bring Roland immense wealth that could shock the entire pharmaceutical industry if he sold the drug in his previous world.

Mental illness was usually far more complicated than physical injuries, and it was normally harder to cure. Thylane's magic pill could not eliminate symptoms but could delay them. As long as he took control on individual dose, the pill could minimize the impact of many diseases. Patients, for example, would feel less tired and anxious, and thereby live a normal life. All the negative emotions could get out when the patient was fast asleep. In that way, he would be able to "absorb" negative emotions without even realizing it. Once people felt well rested and calm, their bodies would repair themselves a lot faster.

The magic power could also help with some fatal injuries. People tended to lose their consciousness when experiencing excruciating pain. A lot of times, the injured was not able to properly handle their injuries in a timely fashion and thereby missed the best time to receive treatment. If they could treat themselves immediately before the paramedics arrived, they would have a higher chance to survive. The paramedics would then just need to deal with the shock and pain coming after and help the patient overcome the very first few days after the injuries, which were usually the hardest and most crucial.

Also, there were other witches who could help with injuries. Roland remembered that Tilly had once told him about a witch named Della on the Sleeping Island who could alleviate pain. Hero from the Witch Union could transfer diseases to other living beings. Although he was not sure whether Hero could also transfer negative emotions, he could ask her to give it a shot.

The key was that without Thylane's magic pill, neither Della nor Hero could be of much help. Soldiers could get injured anytime during a battle, and witches could not always come to their rescue. In fact,

many First Army soldiers killed in action had died on their way to the hospital because they had lost their consciousness and failed to give their wounds an emergency treatment.

Now, this situation might be changed.

Wendy's report stated that Thylane's ability could either positively or negatively influence a person's emotions in general, but she could not choose what specific emotion she would like to apply her ability to.

This was also what a new witch needed to learn. She had to understand and learn how to accurately control her ability. Roland trusted that Wendy and Agatha would teach her. Once Thylane learned how to apply her ability to a certain emotion, all the current problems would be solved.

Roland could already see a prospective pharmaceutical industry from the report. This giant industry would definitely be more economically profitable than Chaos Drinks.

As for the other witch...

Roland ran his fingers through the form in the appendix on the last page and lapsed into thought.

"Your Majesty, this is..." Nightingale apparently also saw the sections of the form in various colors. She looked up at Wendy and said, "Are you sure the report is accurate?"

"Most of it is accurate. I can't really collect a large sample in such a short time," Wendy replied. "The only thing I'm certain now is that the number could decrease and increase."

In short, the strange number Momo saw was the remaining years a person had at the current stage. The color of the number represented its future trend. Wendy recorded the numbers for the residents in Neverwinter that she and Momo had observed in great detail in her report and found that the color of the numbers for Neverwinter residents was significantly lighter than the refugees in the temporary residential area.

She thus concluded that the color of the number was subject to change under the influence of different factors, including hunger, health and disabilities. The deeper the color was, the lower the number would be. She also provided an example in the report that the number for a refugee from the Kingdom of Wolfheart had increased from five to seven after he had drunk the Cleansing Water.

If Momo's prediction was accurate, then this refugee must have carried some infectious disease, for at first, he would have only lived for another five years. However, after he drank the Cleansing Water, the situation had changed, and Momo reassessed his condition.

Although Wendy did not know what the color represented for at present, she viewed it as an unhealthy condition.

"Your Majesty..." Nightingale said apprehensively.

"It's better than what we thought, isn't it?" Roland comforted. "At least, the number could go up, as long as we use the right method."

Wendy wanted to say something, but in the end, she remained silent.

Roland thus returned to the report. It appeared that there was a huge difference in the numbers between various parts of Neverwinter. The average number in the North Slope Mine area was the lowest among all, and that for refugees was a little higher. The numbers in the Witch Building and the Sleeping Spell were 10 to 20 higher than the other areas, which reflected that the awakened witches did live longer than ordinary people on average.

### **Chapter 1276: An Overlooked Ability**

Roland took out a piece of paper from his desk and roughly estimated the average age of the residents in the urban area and the temporary residential area. He then concluded that the average age of Neverwinter residents were between 40 and 50, while that of the latter was around 35. He could already tell many problems from these numbers.

Generally speaking, it took a long time to increase men's lifespan. Apparently, the life in Border Town in the beginning should be no better than the refugees'. However, in just five years, the lifespan of the local residents had increased significantly, to which Nana and Lily made a great contribution.

"We've collected data of 1,000 people within just two days. I don't think Momo looked at each individual one by one, did she?" Roland asked.

"No. If she has sufficient power, she can see the numbers of all the people in that area," Wendy replied quietly. "But she hasn't done that before, neither does she know her limit. She thinks that her ability is like a curse. She can see when they're going to die but can't do anything about it."

"Like she's watching people around her die," Nightingale commented after a sigh.

Roland, however, thought it totally wrong. This was definitely not a curse or a misfortune! When the development of a country reached a certain level, every single policy could exert a profound influence on the nation. Roland certainly had to abandon that outdated management style, and that was the reason statistics was so important.

Every modern organization should develop a well-functioning system to collect, observe and track the data change and make adjustments to their policies accordingly. A statistical analysis of the residents' average lifespan was an indispensable step in this process.

It would normally take several decades to found such a well-organized department and recruit enough employees to conduct the survey without Momo's ability, for people would never know how long a man could live after he was deceased.

Currently, except for Neverwinter, the other cities in Graycastle only had a secondary city hall to execute orders, and they were always short staffed. It was, therefore, almost impossible for them to conduct the census in the communities.

In fact, the establishment of such a complete information system was largely attributed to Scroll's hardwork. Only when they could delegate literate people to grass root organizations such as local communities could they say that a fully-developed government had been established.

Momo's ability, however, could help Roland skip all the preparation work and develop a national statistical system right away from scratch, even though she only knew a little about her ability at the moment.

Once Wendy figured out what those different colors indicated, possibly hunger, disease, environment, etc., he could then easily build a huge database that predicted the future trend of the population. With proper management, Roland believed that the kingdom would benefit a lot from Momo's ability.

Those nobles in the Kingdom of Wolfheart never knew what they had missed.

Roland had already viewed Momo as an honourous clerk of the Administrative Office, and she could possibly become a minister in the future.

"By the way, did you get Nana's treating schedule?" Roland asked as he closed the report.

Wendy answered with a nod, "She's working today. Do you want to see her?"

The hospital was indeed the busiest place in the city, especially after a major war. Unlike Anna, Nana Pine did not have to stay in the laboratory all day, but she was fully booked every day. It was said that there were hundreds of people on the waitlist, and that number was steadily increasing.

Her busy schedule was also partially due to her ability. Nana would exhaust her power within only 15 minutes when she treated a person with a broken limb. As such, she would not treat anyone that had lost a body part larger than a palm now. All these people would be granted a certificate of disability. Only after Nana came of age or upgraded could these disabled men jump the queue and receive treatment. They would need to show their certificates of disability to enjoy this privilege, of course.

Speaking of upgrade, Nana would enter her adulthood in the Months of Demons this year. However, the first thing that came to Roland's head was when Nana had held that injured chicken and indignantly accused him of inflicting pain on the poor creature. Roland remembered that she used to study in the same school as Anna.

"Alright. Let's go take a look."

Momo had not expected that Wendy would treat her with great hospitality instead of banishing her after knowing about her ability.

She and Thylane thus moved to the Witch Building and became members of the Witch Union.

Every night after dinner, there would be some other witches visiting them, although Thylane and Momo could not match the faces to their names. The food here was heavenly delicious, and someone also taught them how to use the facilities in the room and told them what they should pay attention to in the Castle District. Within just two days, they had changed their previous idea about the world completely.

It was so nice to be alive.

When Momo learned that she could see again, she threw herself into Wendy's arms and cried.

This was the only place where she had the liberty to cry.



“Don’t worry,” Wendy consoled her while patting Momo on the back. “Nana rarely lives in the Witch Building, but she’s also a member of the Witch Union. She’s around the same age as you and would love to treat you.”

On the day of her appointment, Momo followed Ring to the hospital early in the morning. On her way, Ring explained to Momo Nana’s background. Unlike her, Miss Pine was from a noble family. She had great power and was called Miss Angel by Neverwinter residents. In other words, she was a person Momo looked up to.

Momo could even see Nana in her mind’s eye that the latter must be a smiling and elegant lady wearing pretty clothes whom everyone adored.

Momo was thus very nervous when Ring led her to Nana’s room. She lowered her head, feeling somehow ashamed and embarrassed.

“Is this the patient I’m treating next?” a silvery voice reached her ears.

“Yes, she’s Momo. Like you, she’s also a witch,” a familiar voice responded. Momo looked up and, surprisingly, found the person was none other than the king!

And then she saw Miss Angel that everyone was talking about.

It took Momo all her efforts not to scream.

Nana Pine was wearing a white robe, with only a pair of eyes left in the air. Her clothes were far from being pretty. Instead, she wore even simpler than civilians.

What truly horrified her was the fresh, dripping blood on her chest!

### **Chapter 1277: Out of Darkness**

“Ah, don’t worry. This isn’t my blood,” Nana said as she took off the robe with Ring’s help. “The previous patient broke an arm when operating the machine, so it’s a little messy.”

“R-really?”

“That’s right. Come here. Let me take a look at your eye.”

*“She’s so confident and strong. Is she really of the same age as me?”*

Momo swallowed hard. She took off her eye mask carefully and slowly approached Nana.

“Right. Just like Wendy said. I should have sufficient magic power to cure you,” Nana mumbled after a preliminary examination and handed Momo a bowl of liquid medicine. Then she patted the bed next to her and said, “Lie down after you drink it. It’ll only take about 10 minutes.”

Momo heeded Nana’s words, and, to her astonishment, saw the latter take out a knife.

“Your, Your Majesty... Wendy...” Momo said while looking at the two spectators helplessly. She was almost going to cry.

“Well, Nana,” Wendy said. “Can’t you take things slow and give our new sister a bit time to get used to it?”

“But this is the normal procedure,” Nana refuted in surprise. “If I don’t cut the old wound open and remove it, my magic won’t work.”

“That’s true, but you can first have a small chat with her...”

“Well, in that case... how about talking about my previous patient? I feel it easier to cut a limb with a saw than an ax.”

“No, not this...”

“Correct,” Roland rejoined. “A saw can ensure a clean cut, but I don’t think it’s going to be easy to cut a big bone, like a thigh bone, with a saw, right?”

“Neither for a scull. Those female nurses are no stronger than me by any means. If Anna could help me, that would make my life a lot easier.”

“My fault. But it’s simple. I can design an electronic one for you later. How does that sound? I assure you that you can break a bone within a second.”

“Your Majesty, please stop!”

“Ahem, sorry, I can’t help when it comes to technical issues...”

Their voice gradually drifted off.

Momo turned away and, dimly, saw Nana talking to the king and Wendy while gesturing with the knife in her hand from time to time, as though she was going to do an experiment on her.

Cut? Saw? Ax?

Her eye lids became increasingly heavy as sleep crept over her. *“Sorry, Thylane, I probably wouldn’t be able to see you again after this treatment.”*

“Ah, she’s asleep now,” Roland said after he noticed that Momo had closed her eyes and fallen asleep.

Nana raised her scalpel and nodded at the two. “Now, I’ll start.”

Nana thus made a cut into the socket, removed the old wound and cleaned up the skin around it. Soon, blood oozed out and soaked the gauze. During the whole process, her arm remained stationary except for her fingers and wrist. She had to complete this initial step manually. Her nimble operation was the sole result of a long-term training and practice.

“Amazing...” Wendy muttered under her breath.

“I have to be fast,” Nana said while twitching her lips. “When I was in the field, I only had half a minute for each individual patient. If I couldn’t give them an emergency treatment as fast as possible, I might not be able to save other patients.”

*“That’s why she’s become so swift,”* Roland thought to himself. “You’d pass out at the sight of blood in the past, and those chickens — ”

"Your Majesty!" Nana exclaimed in agitation while rolling her eyes. "Don't ever mention it! You were the culprit."

"Alright," Roland conceded while waving his hand.

"Plus..." Nana paused for a second and said, "I like the way I am now. At least, I'm much stronger, right?"

For a split second, Roland seemed to see the little girl he used to know again.

Roland stroked Nana's head involuntarily and said, "Of course."

Several minutes later, Momo's eye was cured.

"The sleeping fern will lose its effect in two hours. Such little amount won't cause harm to a witch, so she'll be OK once she wakes up," Nana said while looking toward Wendy.

"Thank you," Wendy said smilingly with a nod.

"By the way, how much magic power do you still have?" Roland asked casually. "Could you take a look at me?"

Wendy's expression immediately changed, and Nana grasped Roland's arm in a sort of trenchant manner.

"Are you hurt?"

"No... I just feel that my nose is running lately."

"Then you should go seek Lily," Nana said gruffly as she withdrew her hand. "I took a look. There's nothing wrong with you."

"That's what I thought," Roland said while averting his eyes as Wendy cast him a suspicious glance.

It appeared that Nana was not omnipotent. Roland was not sure if she could cure those "underlying illness", as these invisible diseases were not, technically, injuries.

Anyway, he had to do some research later.

When Momo slowly opened her eyes, a slope of orangey red clouds slid into her view. The clouds soaked in golden rays gradually faded to purple and drifted off in the distance. She could hear the rustling of the grass in the breezes, and occasionally, a few leaves rose into the air and brushed past her cheek.

Everything was so peaceful and sweet.

*"I'm still alive..."*

Momo thought.

But Momo soon noticed something unusual. Her vision seemed to have expanded, and the distant scene had become clearer. She raised her head and found Thylane look into her eyes smilingly. The latter said, "You finally woke up."

It was not until then that Momo realized that she was sleeping on her friend's legs, and they were currently right in front of the Witch Building.

"How long did I sleep? Where's Wendy?"

"She brought you to me and then left," Thylane said while shrugging. "You slept for the whole afternoon, although Wendy said you'd wake up in two hours. She told me that it was normal even if you didn't wake up in time. It's a sign of recovery. You'll feel better after waking up. How are you feeling? Can you see with your new eye?"

Momo sat up and studied the surroundings curiously. She had thought that half of her world would be submerged in the darkness forever after her eye had been removed. She had never expected to see the world in its entirety again.

"Thylane, what should I do?" Momo muttered.

"What's the matter?"

"How are we going to repay them for their kindness?"

Thylane was stunned for a second before she burst into a laugh. She looked up at the sky and said, "I don't know either, but Wendy told me to work hard. This is how we can repay them. By the way, Wendy already told me what I should do in the future when you were asleep. I'll work with Nana Pine who just helped you, and provide medical services to Graycastle." At these words, Thylane scratched her nose and said in embarrassment, "Although I still don't know how I can help treat patients..."

"But my ability..." Momo said while clenching her fist.

"Wendy mentioned you as well."

Momo looked up and burst out in surprise, "Really?"

"Yes!" Thylane confirmed while nodding. "It's His Majesty's idea. He wants you to work in the Administrative Office with Ms. Scroll and help with the operation of the kingdom."

"Huh?" Momo could not believe her ears. "Can I?"

"You need to ask yourself," Thylane said in amusement and pushed her at the back. "I haven't even figured out how I'm supposed to work here, but I think as long as we keep studying, we'll know one day."

"I'm not as confident as you..." Momo muttered in a hushed tone. "Do you think we can live here forever, like living in our home?"

"In fact, I also asked Wendy the same question."

"Yes?"

It took Thylane a while to reply this time.

"She said of course we can, because it's already our home."

**Chapter 1278: A Historical Moment**

A week later, Roland received two pieces of good news.

One was that Iron Axe had repelled the demons with the napalm and thereby held the demons back temporarily.

The commander-in-chief described the explosion of this new weapon in his letter in great detail. The blast was even more spectacular than the test. In fact, human beings had already used fire to repulse the demons back in the first Battle of Divine Will, where they had set the forest on fire at the rear. The massive wildfire raged for several days and dispersed the Red Mist in the sky, which, in the end, helped human beings gain a small victory.

The demons thus learned their lesson and destroyed the forests, meadows, and even farms to avoid future disruptions of the Red Mist. They also built small stone towers similar to outposts in the area covered in the Red Mist just in case. With sufficient Red Mist on the campsite, they could then keep fighting even when the rear was ablaze.

Without a doubt, Iron Axe and the General Staff were inspired by the previous battle and developed this plan.

The strength of napalm was its portability. It could burn in the thin air, and it was extremely hard to extinguish with water. Roland had not expected, however, that the fire would result in such a magnificent explosion in the whole city.

Roland wished that Summer could reconstruct the scene. If he could find out the reason why the explosion had occurred, he could possibly exterminate the demons using the napalm.

However, the Tusk City should have already been enveloped by the Red Mist again by now. It was almost impossible to get into the city for a second time.

Also, Roland's heart ached at the fact that he had consumed more than 500 barrels of napalm all at once. It was not hard to produce fuels, as he would simply need to invest more manpower. However, the key to produce napalm was to mix the slimes of the rubber worms with animal blood, and only the Ministry of Agriculture could farm rubber worms.

Nevertheless, the refugees from this battle were most important to Roland. Roland heaped praises on Iron Axe in his letter and also sent another 100 barrels of napalm to the front.

The second piece of news was that the plant assembling the "Fire of Heaven" had finally assembled the first biplane.

Roland immediately visited the plant in person after receiving the news from Anna.

This brand new plant was built at the same time as the Aerial Academy. Compared to the steam engine plant built with slabs and bricks two to three years ago, this plant was designed for technologically demanding products. The steel frame provided the plant with a spacious area, which enabled workers to assemble and repair a dozen planes at a time. The plant was equipped with adequate illumination devices. The floor was tiled with polished slabs, and the whole plant looked phenomenal.

Even Tilly was impressed with it when she entered the plant.

Lay men might view it as a palace.

Roland also invested the best equipment and hired many elites for the operation of this plant. He had sent the most experienced managers and workers, and equipped the plant with the third generation machine tools powered by electricity to meet the production need. As such, the plant consumed most of the electricity in the industrial zone. Thanks to the Mystery Moon devices, otherwise he would have had to suspend the operation of all the other plants to keep this one running.

In a way, this new plant displayed all the technologies developed in Neverwinter over the past five years.

Barov had told Roland that Neverwinter residents took pride in working here.

When the new plant was in operation, each workstation would be responsible for assembling one part. The plane assembly would start from the first workstation to the last. Workers would start with the frame, and then wings, then parts, then skins, and finally to the testing stage.

However, the plant was far from ideal. There was only one "Fire of Heaven" waiting to be assembled at the workstation closest to the exit at present, and the other workstations were all empty.

"Is everything OK? Did you have any problem?" Roland asked as he walked up to Anna.

"I have tons of problems," Anna answered while shaking her head. "I don't know how many parts and materials workers had wasted before they successfully produced this plane."

Roland was amused at the resigned look on Anna's face.

He had foreseen the difficulties when he had made the decision to create planes. It was practically impossible to learn about new materials and techniques in a short period of time, despite that he had tried his best to simplify the production.

For example, he had, specifically, created an assembly line to produce various drive rivets and break mandrel rivets for the single riveted joints on the plane. Compared to traditional double riveted joints, single riveted joints were much easier to assemble.

Roland had also numbered all the parts of the plane and drawn out every assembly step like those model assembly kits in his previous world. He had even installed user-friendly ports for parts that could be easily mixed up to reduce the possibility of assembly errors as a result of carelessness.

Despite all his efforts, the workers only managed to produce one plane in the past half a month. Obviously, the assembly task was too hard for them to handle.

"Do you need my help?" Tilly asked suddenly.

"No, that's fine..." Anna said while shrugging. She would only shrug and be less "lady-like" in front of a few people. "Roland asked me to supervise the workers, so I must solve the problems all by myself, no matter what they are, although I did want to give up a lot of times."

Tilly smiled and said, "So, you're actually very happy, aren't you? Finally, there's one real plane."

Anna curled up her lips and replied, "I know you'd see through me."

“If we have one plane, we’ll have a second. Once all the workers have learned about the assembly process, we’ll soon have more qualified planes,” Tilly said as she glanced at Roland. “If you could praise her now, that’d be even better.”

“I never expect him to praise me,” Anna said while twitching her lips.

“Huh?” Roland was dumbfounded. What had just happened? Why did they suddenly switch the subject from the plane production to him?

Just then, a guard trotted to Roland and reported, “Your Majesty, the first ‘Fire of Heaven’ is ready. We can start the celebration ceremony anytime.”

Roland thus rested his eyes again on the biplane and saw two logos on the light gray body, one the coat of arms of the royal family and the other a knight holding a spear while spreading out his arms. The whole plane looked extraordinary, but Roland felt that something was missing.

He pondered for a while and suddenly realized what had missed. Then he waved his hand and said, “Get the ribbon!”

Soon, a bright red ribbon was tied to the plane, with a red ribbon flower attached to the propeller at the head of the jet.

Roland then nodded in satisfaction. Now, the “Fire of Heaven” was ready to meet its audience.

After that, he made a speech, cut the ribbon, and took a photograph with Anna, Tilly, and all the workers who had participated in the design and manufacture of the plane, as well as the brand new aircraft itself, which was now numbered 001 and parked behind them.

“Now, look at me. One, two, three!”

Soraya summoned the magic brush and recorded this historical moment.

## **Chapter 1279: Conspiracy**

“Your Excellency, Frost Town is right there at the front.”

A knight reported.

Marwayne Parker raised the telescope and observed the town. This town was situated at the southwestern border of the Kingdom of Everwinter and the Kingdom of Wolfheart, surrounded by mountains. One could see the view of the whole town anywhere from above. Due to the geographical advantage, the lord here did not build any castle in the town.

There were many towns like this one on the border of the two kingdoms. Marwayne would have paid it no notice in the past. But now, the town held a special place in his heart.

“Has the scout come back?”

“Yes. He only paid townsmen several silver royals for the information,” the knight said triumphantly. “There’s a unit of Graycastle soldiers here. Not many of them, only about 40 to 50 people, and they show up every now and then.”

“Why aren’t they stationed here?”

“The road beyond the border is treacherous, and it’s rumored wild wolves often come out around that area. Refugees can’t cross the border without guards.”

Marwayne immediately knew what he should do.

The Red Mist did not spread out along the border. In fact, the area covered in the Red Mist was in the shape of a semicircle that kept expanding. Currently, the Red Mist originating from the Kingdom of Everwinter had traveled beyond the king’s city of the Kingdom of Wolfheart. Therefore, Marwayne was more comfortable to conduct a battle in his own country than having an expedition.

Frost Town was on the border of the Kingdom of Wolfheart. As it was not very accessible to the public, refugees would seldom enter the Kingdom of Wolfheart from there. Compared to those major cities with advanced transportation facilities, Frost Town was as insignificant as a mosquito.

This was exactly what Marwayne wanted.

This meant that the Graycastle men would not notice his movement, and the information given by the scout also confirmed his theory.

Just like the old scholar had said, the demons would deal with those difficult Graycastle men themselves. What he needed to do was just to stab them in the back. Whatever the outcome of the battle would be, once people learned about his role in this battle, they would fear him.

Of course, the old scholar had developed more sophisticated plans to defeat the Graycastle men. If their schemes were successful, he believed that the Graycastle men would eventually slow down their movement, and then the Sky Lord would trust him even more.

“Let’s head back. It’s time to call a meeting and discuss the operation.”

Within half a day, Marwayne had returned to the closest town and patrolled into the previous lord’s mansion triumphantly. This mansion used to belong to an unknown baron who used to rule this area, but he had fled upon the arrival of the demons and the Red Mist, so Marwayne took his residence as a matter of course.

Although Frost Town was not under his jurisdiction yet since Marwayne only had the authority over the four cities in the Northern Region, he believed that the Parker Family would continue to expand their territory.

Soon, all the nobles gathered here and waited for Marwayne to break the silence.

The duke surveyed each one of them and memorized their countenances and expressions. There were 45 people in the room, most of whom were knights, although some were barons. The person with the highest rank in this room was the previous lord of the Northernmost Port, Viscount Narnos. These nobles lost their lands and subjects to the Graycastle men and immediately pledged allegiance to him



after being promised that they would receive rewards. The number of the soldiers in this army had exceeded 300, including all the guards, squires and henchmen.

With so many people and a carefully-planned scheme, Marwayne believed this would be a perfect opportunity to defeat the Graycastle soldiers. More importantly, it was his first time using the enemies' weapons. The reason that the Graycastle men had flattened the nobles in the Kingdom of Everwinter was that they used weapons much faster and far more powerful than snow powder. Without the support of the Sky Lord, nobody would have been willing to fight the Graycastle men, even if the number of the soldiers doubled.

"I wonder if you've prepared yourself for the upcoming battle?" Marwayne asked after clearing his throat. "I think everyone has learned how to use the firearms, right?"

"We just need to load the gun, take aims and pull the trigger, don't we?" Viscount Narnos said indignantly. "Even savages know how to use them. I see no reason that we can't. The captives didn't tell us how to use the weapons until we tortured them. They were pretty reluctant to disclose the information. These weapons are really not a big deal!"

"That's right. The weapons are ingenious indeed, but they're much easier to use than swords," a knight rejoined. "I also interrogated the Graycastle men. They just joined the army two years ago, and it only took them a month to learn how to use the firearms. However, I spent five years learning how to use swords."

"Those low lives are foolish, and that's why it took them a month. I would only need three days to master it," another person spoke, and all the others guffawed.

"I'll let them know they'll be nothing without firearms!"

"They rely on witches to produce firearms. I think the King of Graycastlebeated the church simply because the church was too busy dealing with the Kingdom of Everwinter and the Kingdom of Wolfheart at that time."

Marwayne suddenly realized that those infuriated nobles were usable. They had been holding a grudge against the Graycastle men for a long time. Although he had only built this new army a week ago and hardly knew anybody, at least, they were acting in concert for a common purpose, and everyone was eager to seek revenge.

"But the number of the bolts named bullet is limited, so each of us only has a few," the knight said while spreading out his hands. "I hope that everyone could go easy on them and fire at a close range."

Marwayne cast the knight a glance of approval. His name is Fueler, a local from the Western Region. Marwayne knew that he was pretty smart, and it appeared that Fueler had already grasped the key to the victory. Marwayne was thinking of recruiting him later for his own use.

"Don't worry," Marwayne said confidently. "The Graycastle men don't have many bullets either. The northwestern part of the Kingdom of Wolfheart is mountainous, which restrains their mobility. Also, they'll let us approach them. Their goal is to get refugees out of here, isn't it?"

Everybody sneered.

That was right. Since the Graycastle men came here for people, they would definitely not abandon the lambs that voluntarily came up to them. However, they did not know that wolves could also hide among those innocent lambs. It only took a second for a hunter to turn into a prey. By the time the Graycastle men discovered the danger, it would have been too late.

Then, they could disguise themselves as the Graycastle soldiers and looted the towns on their way back. In that case, people would stop believing the Graycastle men, and this immigration campaign would, as a matter of course, fail.

“I’ve let the Graycastle men know that we’ll go with them. I believe we’ll soon hear back from them. Let’s fight this battle out, and all the resources and food gained from this battle will be yours!” Marwayne proclaimed as he rose. “This is a great opportunity to avenge yourselves and gain lands and wealth! You have my words. It’s time for the Graycastle soldiers to pay for what they have done, everyone!”

### **Chapter 1280: Disguise**

When Fish Ball ascended the crest of the mountain, his view suddenly expanded.

Orange flowers carpeted the field and formed a glaring contrast with the road that meandered through the mountain. Wind rustled the flowers and refreshed the exhausted travelers.

Against the sea of flowers loomed a small town, which was the destination of their trip, Frost Town.

It was his sixth time climbing over the mountains.

Although Fish Ball was the leader of the machine gun squad, he was also a soldier of the First Army. After receiving the instruction to expedite the evacuation process, like many soldiers, Fish Ball came to rescue refugees.

He had not encountered any demons so far on this route, possibly because the Red Mist had not reached here or because the demons did not really want to waste their time on those refugees. Anyhow, the more people he brought to Neverwinter, the better.

There were nearly 1,000 people following him.

According to common practices, the army would first pitch their tents outside the town and get in touch with the refugees before they sent them to Neverwinter in group. The First Army had warned the residents during their first visit not to travel to the south alone, as the trip could be dangerous. They asked the residents to wait for the Graycastle army to retrieve them.

Nevertheless, not everyone would listen. In fact, Fish Ball had met many desperate refugees who had run out of food on their way. For those who were less fortunate, they simply died in the mountain on their own.

But this time, Fish Ball found that things were a little different.

From the mountain, he, surprisingly, saw many people in Frost Town.

“Did some major city fall?” the squad scout Hanson whistled. “So many refugees in just around 10 days. We’ll be very busy in the next few days.”

Fish Ball also felt excited. Only about 1,000 people had departed for Neverwinter over the past one to two months. It seemed that the number of the refugees this time would exceed that of the previous trip.

Although Fish Ball did not understand why these refugees chose to come to this small town down the valley instead of other more accessible cities, he still had the obligation to send them to safer places.

At this thought, the army sped up.

Going downhill was apparently much faster than going uphill. About half an hour later, the unit reached the encampment in Frost Town. Many refugees had noticed them, and they soon swarmed up to the street and rushed toward the army.

“Well, they’re in... such a haste,” someone joked.

“Didn’t we tell them to wait in town?”

“Perhaps they ran out of food and want some from us?”

Most of the soldiers held the same opinion.

“If there’s a catastrophe in a neighboring city, then it makes sense that these people don’t have food,” Fish Ball commented and quickly made the decision. “But it’s hard for us to count them and maintain the order. We have to stop these people. I need ten soldiers to help me set up the checkouts. The others shall keep them in order.”

Fish Ball knew there would be serious consequences if they failed to stop the refugees. If they all rushed forward at once, those refugees would be no different than bandits.

Most of the time, there was a very thin line between refugees and bandits.

“Yes, sir!”

The soldiers were soon dispersed. All of them grasped their guns.

As the refugees slowly approached, they could see them more clearly.

Fish Ball raised the amplifier and turned up the volume to the maximum. “This is the rescue team of the First Army of Graycastle. Please stay calm and stop right away to wait for further instructions. We have ample food and medicine, but you’ll need to cooperate. Again, stop where you are, otherwise, we’ll take hard measures!”

Some people hesitated but soon resumed to run, as though something were pushing them from behind.

Fish Ball frowned. He then asked his team member to fire into the air as a warning.

Just then, Hanson whistled.

“Hmm.”

“What’s the matter?” Fish Ball asked.

“Leader, they look a bit strange...” Hanson said while watching through the telescope. “Have you seen any refugees take a roll of cloth with them before?”

“A roll of cloth?” Fish Ball echoed in bewilderment. He grabbed the telescope from Hanson and saw about 300 meters away, these refugees were running toward them. He could roughly tell what they were wearing and carrying. Like Hanson had said, most of them were carrying a roll of cloth on the back or at the waist. It was indeed very strange.

Refugees would normally take all their belongings with them, and the First Army would usually ask them to abandon heavy luggage and take light items that would not cause inconvenience to the trip, such as gold royals. Generally, the army would not interfere with refugees’ personal affairs. During the past two months, Fish Ball had seen various strange personal items, but it was his first time seeing rolls of cloth.

The more he looked at them, the more strange they appeared.

These refugees were all in rags, but surprisingly, they were all wearing shoes. Their clothes were not old or worn at all. Instead, it appeared to Fish Ball that the clothes had been made look old just very recently.

Now, the two parties were only 200 meters away from each other.

“Bang!”

His team member again issued the warning.

The crowd was immediately dispersed, and the next moment, Fish Ball froze to the ground. The shot frightened some refugees at the front, who unrolled the cloth and revealed the rifle that the First Army usually used underneath!

Soon, all of them revealed their weapons from underneath their cloth. They were carrying all kinds of weapons, including swords and tridents.

Fish Ball suddenly realized that this was a trap!

“Retreat to the encampment!” Fish Ball yelled at his team members. “Run!”

No sooner had he finished than the disguised refugees started to fire.

Bullets whistled past Fish Ball and exhaled dusts and earth. The other nine soldiers from the First Army finally realized what had happened and hurried to the campsite while lowering their heads.

The unit had camped their several times. Although there were no trenches or blockhouses, they had built fortresses. These fortresses constructed with sand and stones were designed to fight demons, but now, they had to rely on them to avoid the attack of the refugees.

By the time Fish Ball reached the fortresses, all his team members had crouched down. They were now utterly outnumbered, for there were more than 40 enemies while they only got nine people. Fish Ball’s heart leaped to his throat when he thought of the possibility that all of them would be shot dead unprepared on the battlefield.

He seized Hanson's arm and said, "Go see how everyone's doing, now!"

Hanson immediately left, and Fish Ball held up the gun and aimed at the running "refugees".

No... they were not real refugees but nobles that had submitted to the demons!

Only the demons could obtain so many weapons from the First Army!

"Damn it!" Fish Ball swore under his breath. He had never expected that his own kind would disguise as refugees and set up such a nasty trap. Did they not know who they were helping?

In a few minutes, Hanson came back, which was faster than Fish Ball had thought. Hanson reported, "Everyone's fine, except one soldier. He's got minor injuries, but he can still fight."

Fish Ball stiffened for a second. "Just one person?" He remembered that the "refugees" had shot quite fiercely.

"Yes," Hanson confirmed, looking hugely relieved. "We're pretty lucky. Now, everyone has returned to their positions. We'll fight to the last!"