

## Witch 201

### Chapter 201 Back to the Stronghold

Keeping the power of the pills in mind, Roland didn't immediately order the First Army to chase the fleeing enemy. Instead, he sent Lightning and Maggie to monitor the situation.

Those who had been injured in the line of duty immediately received treatment. During the whole battle, only five soldiers had been injured, they had all been hit by spears and from the five injured people, four belonged to the artillery. He was pleased to see that when the enemy's wave reached its striking distance of one hundred and fifty meters, his artillery group didn't disperse in confusion, instead they only lowered their bodies and hid behind the cannons, so that they could resume the attack as soon as possible after the end of the spear shower.

From the beginning Nana had been standing behind the defense line waiting on standby, but the most remarkable part was when the enemy turned around and fled, she ignored the rumbling sound of ongoing gunfire, and ran together with the old Viscount towards the position of the artillery soldiers, making sure to rescue and give medical treatment to those victims of short spears. After seeing her actions, it was hard to believe, that only six months ago, this little girl had become dizzy at the sight of blood.

In the end, the five injured managed to survive. And under the cheers and the salutes of the watching soldiers, Nana left the battlefield.

In fact, this battle was much easier than the last time when they had to deal with the Duke's coalition. Without the drugs, the addicted militia had entered an extremely vulnerable state, some of them even ran two to three kilometers, only to throw themselves onto the ground, no longer able to move.

Soon after, Roland's pursuing troops had caught them all and began to escort them back to the Longsong Stronghold. During the chase, the First Army was also able to capture two Knights, although they did not swallow the pills, they had still lost every thought of putting up a resistance. When confronted with the continuous pursuit, they simply chose to surrender, asking for the opportunity to send a letter to their family and giving a plea for redemption.

Four days later, they reached Longsong Stronghold.

Thanks to the intelligence gathered from the surrendered Knights; Nightingale easily disintegrated all the troops left in the stronghold's castle. After killing the captain on the spot, more than 100 militiamen fled in panic, blindly running into an ambush the First Army had set up at the gate.

Later, Roland's men found the captive Petrov in the castle's dungeons. He looked haggard, probably caused by his worry and anxiety, but because of his identity as a noble of the Honeysuckle family, he hadn't suffered through inhumane treatment.

After nearly three months, the Prince saw the Acting Duke once again.

"Being able to see you safe and sound is truly good news, Your Royal Highness," Petrov's uneasiness finally relaxed, then he went through his experiences of the last days, "I did not know that Timothy's envoy..."

“They all died,” Roland leaned relaxed against his chair and said indifferent “Most of the 1500 people they brought to Border Town have died, and the rest are currently locked in the stronghold’s prison.

When Petrov heard about the complete annihilation of the envoys, he somehow looked a bit surprised, “Your Royal Highness, with this, I am afraid that the new King... no, your brother will see you as a thorn in the eye.”

“So, do you mean I should have deliberately lost the fight, and obediently went with them to King’s City, begging for his mercy?” While asking, Roland looked him directly into the eyes.

Not able to face his view, the latter involuntarily lowered his head, “No, Your Royal Highness...”

“The moment he set foot in the Western Territory, he became my enemy,” the Prince declared in a calm voice.

“It seems that in order to seize power, Timothy Wimbledon is becoming more and more desperate. He is urgently in need of land and titles to divide between the other nobles to ensure their support. In case all you wanted was to live a life in pleasure, why would you want to manage the stronghold for me? You should already be aware of the point, only when I become the King of Graycastle will your position as the Lord of the Western Territory be set in stone.” Roland paused for a moment and then said, “To prevent this from happening for a second time, I need to form an army to guard the stronghold.”

“Army?” Petrov asked shocked.

“Yes, without any Knights, only built out of civilians, a permanent army.” Roland slowly explained his plans, “You have to pick out 300 people who live inside the stronghold, who will be trained by my subordinates on how to fight. The requirement for the 300 people is: They have to be civilians, they must not be guilty of any crime, they aren’t allowed to be followers of the Church, and lastly, they have to be between the age of 16 and 30 and without any physical disability. During the training, they will be living in Border Town, and I will provide them with weapons. From now on, your Knights and patrols will only be responsible for urban security, I have written down further details on the parchment,” with this, he handed a piece of paper to Petrov, “you can announce a recruitment order and follow through with the screening according to the previous terms.”

If he wanted to have the control of the city garrison in his own hand, it was evident that stationing his own army here was the most appropriate approach. But the scale of the First Army was too small, they weren’t even large enough to defend Border Town, so not even mentioning splitting the force to guard Longsong Stronghold and Border Town. The only possibility and best compromise was to let the other side provide the manpower, while he would carry out the training.

With Nightingale’s ability to detect lies he could guarantee the loyalty of the group, and together with new military training methods and ideological education, it should be possible to form a fighting force soon. As for their weapons, he would equip them with the rapidly outdated flintlocks, so even if they got captured by the enemy, it wouldn’t be a problem for him. Moreover, the army could also take over the task of information gathering and transmission, so as long as someone tried to attack the stronghold, Roland would be the first to receive the message.

“I understand,” Petrov nodded.

"I will review the people you select, so I can only encourage you to not try placing spies among them, because it would be a meaningless act." Roland warned, "You have already sent spies, and by now, they all have gone to the mines. If there is ever something similar again..."

"No, Your Highness," the other wiped off the sweat on his forehead. "I promise that won't happen."

"Then there's the matter of the church," the Prince said while once more leaning back in his chair. "You probably do not know that the stronghold's church has been burned down by Timothy's men and that they even killed the High Priest. There is only a ruin left now."

"They have burned the church?" Petrov became startled by the news, "This... I have to report it to Hermes as soon as possible."

The Church's law states that the King and the Lord's are obligated to protect the local Church's facilities from any harm, if they cannot prevent it from happening, it has to be reported to the New Holy City immediately. As the former ambassador who was proficient in the law, Petrov's reaction could be seen as normal, and furthermore, such a matter cannot be concealed anyway, I am afraid that the church's follower living in the stronghold have already sent a message to the Holy City on the same day it happened.

"It is true that we should report the matter, but the letter's contents needs to be adjusted appropriately," Roland said with a smile. "You only have to write in the message that the attackers belonged to Timothy Wimbledon and that after they looted and burned the church down, they left the stronghold, disappearing without a trace. In addition, you will put this thing into the letter, "he took a pill out of his pocket and handed it to Petrov, "just state they you had picked it up near the church, they will understand."

"What is this?"

"They are the secret medicine of the Church. Furthermore, it is also the object Timothy desired. It allows ordinary people to get a burst of strength in short time, but when the effect of the drug subsides their organs will slowly stop to function, and they will die," Roland explained. "Timothy wants to rely on the drug to strengthen his Army, allowing him to secure his precious throne. So, when the Church's sees the pill, they will naturally understand his intention."

As to whether or not they will take measures, is an entirely different question.

"I will follow your order, Your Highness," Petrov said, putting the pill into his pocket.

## Chapter 202 The road to development

Roland took a sip of his tea, then said: "In addition, I intend to set up a primary education system in Longsong Stronghold, which will be the examination project that decides whether you will continue serving as the administrator or not.

Hearing the word "examination", Petrov's ears immediately stood up, "Primary education system?"

"Yes," Roland nodded with a smile. Now, after the church had been destroyed, the High Priest killed, and the Church's forces weakened by more than half, it was a good time to start the fight over ideological positions. He didn't expect to transform all believers into potential workers who met with his

standards; he only hoped to weaken the Church's influence even further. In case the Holy City wanted to meddle in Longsong Stronghold again, Roland had thought about many ways to keep them away; they shouldn't even think about building a new church here.

"The primary education should be attainable for all of Longsong Stronghold's residents under the age of forty, regardless of whether they are men or women. The training will include reading and writing, simple calculation, the spread of natural knowledge and also ideological education." Roland waved his hand, holding off the other's questions, "Rest assured, the cost will be deducted from the tax paid to Border Town. From the beginning of the next month, you only have to pay 20% of the tax; the remaining 10% will be used as special education fee. With it can you recruit a few scholars from King's City, or hire local nobles, knights or squires, but these people won't need so much money. 10% of the tax are at least 1000 gold royals, so you have to do much more than just hire people with it."

After thinking for a moment, Petrov opened his mouth and said: "Your Highness, do you mean to say, that I should use the money to motivate the civilians to attend the education courses?"

This guy's mind is indeed very sharp, Roland laughed, "That's right, with the exception of the children, most people have to earn their livelihood during the during the day, so their education courses have to be held in the evening, allowing them to carry out their work during the day. And after being busy the whole day, instead of resting, no one wants to come round only to hear other people's nagging them, not to mention using their brain to learn how to read and write.

"Because of this you have to lure them with some means to learn, such as providing them a dinner that has meat, or if they are able to speed up the learning process they can also get a monetary reward, etc., and of course, a bright and spacious classroom is also essential." He paused, "In short, you must try every means to popularize attending the education courses to all the residents of the stronghold. As I said, this is also your examination: After one year, more than 50% of the stronghold's population needs to have reached literacy."

"But Your Royal Highness..." Petrov hesitated. "No matter if they are scholars or belong to the nobility, they fundamentally have no experience with teaching civilians how to read and write, even less teaching them natural knowledge and ideological education," he had to read the hard to pronounce noun of the parchment. "In fact, even I do not quite understand the words myself. By employing these people, I am afraid you cannot achieve your desired result."

"Do not worry, I have already taken all that into account," Roland paused. "I'll send a group of officials from Border Town's City Hall to help you realize it. Furthermore, all the books you need for the education will be provided by Border Town. They have a wealth of experience in how to teach, so they can show the people you recruit how to teach, and then, your personal will have to start to educate the residents. At that time you and they will have comprehended all the necessary details, the specific arrangements will be done when they arrive."

This way, as long as Petrov wanted to keep in control of Longsong Stronghold, it was inevitable that he worked together with the Prince's staff, and by placing his aids at critical positions within the Ministry of Education, news reaching or happening in Longsong Stronghold could also be passed on to Border Town in the first moments.

Seeing that Petrov didn't show any objections, Roland began to explain his final command: "Thirdly, I plan to build a road between Longsong Stronghold and Border Town to shorten the traveling time between the two locations for pedestrians and caravans."

"Your Royal Highness, don't we already have a way between those two?" Petrov asked in surprise.

A mud path created by people walking over it can be counted as a road? With a width less than two meters, filled with mud by the rain, and furthermore, with all its holes, it will never be suitable for high-speed carriages.

Roland shook his head. "I want to build a road that can accommodate at least two carriages side by side. A road that is flat and straight, and won't be covered with water during rain, exactly like the road in Border Town."

"You mean a macadam road?" the Acting Duke looked a little surprised, "The costs of such a road isn't low, it requires the mason to cut the stones and then they have to pick out the stones with the right sizes which can be used together. A gravel road to Border Town would at least cost five thousand gold royals, and with all due respect Your Highness, we will never get so much money without a tax increase."

"The stronghold only needs to provide the workforce." The Prince stated bluntly, "You will issue a recruitment notice throughout the whole Western Territory, not just Longsong Stronghold, including all of the other noble's territories. The monthly salary will be six silver royals, with that sum, I believe there should be plenty of applicants."

"For laborer, six silver royals are quite a high salary," Petrov nodded, "may you tell me how many people you want to recruit?"

"At least two thousand people," Roland replied.

The monthly cost for such an amount of handymen wasn't a small sum, together with masons and gravel workers, in the eyes of others, it would definitely regard as a ridiculously high costs. Very few Lords would be willing to put their money into building something which seemingly wouldn't provide and return. This thought process could also be seen in Petrov's expression. But now, with Border Town being able to sell steam engines, and to maintain the balance between income and expenditure, putting the remaining money into upgrading the infrastructure was undoubtedly the best choice to make. After all, Roland never intended to store all the gold royals in a vault, which was often the desire of many of the newly rich.

The construction of a high-quality road connecting the stronghold and Border Town was of the highest importance, not only to facilitate the trade between both places, but was also a prerequisite for the rapid deployment of the armed forces. If the trip is an inconvenience, even if I receive the news of an attack on the stronghold at the earliest possible moment, I would only be able to reach the stronghold in three days, I am afraid that by that time, the enemy's banner will already be flying over the highest tower.

"I understand," Petrov said.

“Now that you have so much to do, I will soon return to Border Town. Do a good job, ‘Mr. Ambassador’, don’t let me down.”

“What do you plan to do with the people held in jail, Your Highness?” Petrov asked, after a moment’s pause.

For the first time, Roland didn’t know what to answer, and after a moment of silence he spoke, “Contain them, they won’t be able to live for long anyway.”

...

Climbing onto Little Town, the Prince embarked on his homeward journey.

“You do not seem to be in a good mood?” said Nightingale after appearing next to him. “Is it because of the civilians?”

“They were all forced by Timothy,” Roland sighed. “If they hadn’t taken those pills, they would not act like his minions at all and wouldn’t have to die on an unfamiliar land.”

“This is not your fault.” The Nightingale reached out and held his arm.

“Of course not,” Roland said without hesitation, “If I hadn’t stopped them, Border Town would have become the victim of Timothy’s desire for power. And of course, the Church that made those pills is also one of the culprits.”

“That’s the reason why you will wreck the Church, to end the dispute, so that people no longer have to kill each other for such senseless reasons, right?” Nightingale asked with a smile, “No matter if they are ordinary people or witches, under your rule, they will all live a happy life.”

“...” Roland looked into Nightingale’s shiny eyes and gently nodded, “Ah, that’s a promise.”

## Chapter 203 Home

The sea was like a blue earth, only more flat.

If Maggie had been here, she would be constantly chirping and she could also ask her about how far it still was to the island, nowadays, the only sound she heard were the sea’s waves crashing against the sides of the ship. Although hearing that for a long time became tedious, for the crew, it was actually a lucky beat, it meant that today was a day good for sailing.

Oh, now there is another one, Ashes thought. Under the pressure of a foot, the old teak board issued a slight squeak sound, telling her that someone was coming.

“I did not expect that you actually lived in a place like the Sleeping Island,” a white-haired old man stepped to her side, his hands resting on the railing, “That place, although it looks great, once the tide comes, most of the land will be flooded by the sea, it’s not suitable for a settlement. Why not live in Crescent Moon Bay? It is the second largest Island of the Fjords, there are still many uninhabited spaces there.

One Eye Jack, the Captain of ‘The Charming Beauty’, as his name suggested, he had a blindfold on his face which completely concealed his left eye. He was also one of the few Captains that were willing to

transport goods for the witches, even though the people in the Fjords didn't hate witches, unlike the inhabitants on the mainland, but they also didn't love dealing with outsiders.

"Not everyone is willing to deal with witches like you are," Ashes smiled, "The sea will indeed flood sleeping Island, but it is precisely because of this, that as the third largest island of the Fjords, is still a deserted island.

"The third largest island doesn't mean that it also offers the third largest amount of living area," Captain Jack just shrugged his shoulders. "If you cannot live on it, its size doesn't matter, for example, the Searing Flame Island."

"What the witches are best at, is altering nature," she said earnestly, "Moreover, now where the island has become our home. As long as we don't have to face the suppression of the Church, we can create an entirely different world there, a... 'New World'." She paused for a moment. "How long has it been since the last time you were on Sleeping Island?"

The Captain took off his hat and scratched the back of his head, "It's been almost a month now. Last time I had to deliver a batch of witches and a warehouse full of pearl rice. To tell you the truth, when they saw the group of young women frolicking on the ship, the expression on the faces of my sailors was only too foolish. You know how difficult it is for a stripeling to sail over the sea, they are similar to a volcano that can erupt at any time, but fortunately I stopped them from drinking. Otherwise, my beloved ship may have met with a disaster."

Ashes automatically ignored the latter half of his words, "A month is enough time to make radical changes, Captain. I bet that when you see Sleeping Island again, it will be quite differently than from the Island you remember."

"Is that so?" Jack whistled. "Then I will look forward to it... Wait a minute, what's that?" He leaned over the side of the ship, trying to look ahead, "Monkey! There is something in front of the mast!"

The sailor, known as Monkey, used his hands and feet to nimbly climbed to the crow's nest at the top of the mast, and then lifted the observation mirror, "Captain, that should be an island!

"Island? What nonsense are you speaking, "Captain took out his compass and glanced at it," We still aren't near Sleeping Island, but except for it, what other island could it be?"

"But it really is an island, Captain, I swear!"

"To me your vow is as useful as a fart, let me take a look," Jack said, taking off his hat.

"No, no, Captain, do not you come up here, up here, the wind is very strong," after observing for a while, Monkey continued, "By the Three Gods!" He shouted, incredulously, "I know what it is, it really is Sleeping Island! It's become taller!"

...

The Charming Beauty slowly approached the pier of the Sleeping Island, and the boatman could scarcely believe his eyes.

The towering island was similar to a small mountain which stood out above the sea level. The mountain wall was perfectly straight and precipitous, distancing the top of it by at least several feet from the sea level.

Ashes, who arrived at the island for the first time showed a much calmer reaction than most of the other people, which was in the eyes of Captain Jack were the very symbol of calm and self-confidence.

“You win,” he sighed. “I never expected that you would be able to make an island rise. It is not surprising that the bunch of madmen in the Church hate your witches after all, your abilities make you almost comparable to the gods.”

“Uncle Jack, it’s not like you said, that the island has risen up,” a young girl that stood at the pier to welcome them laughingly said, “we just built a ‘wall’ around Sleeping Island, if you wait for a moment, you can come with us and take a look to understand it.” Finished speaking, she turned to Ashes and bowed her head in salute, “You have finally come back, Lady Tilly has been talking about you for a long time.”

Ashes touched her head, “You don’t need to be so polite, Molly. I will have to trouble you with carrying my stuff.”

“Leave it to me,” said the girl, patting her chest.

After the sailors had moved the grain from the cargo hold to the pier, Molly summoned her magic servant, a light blue sphere with two arms that could be transformed at will. It took hold of a dozen bags of grain with its arm. Soon after, the arm turned into a net, and was firmly grabbed by the other arm while the sphere floated in the air. Then she proudly said, “Let’s go.”

“Oh, that’s truly a convenient ability,” the captain slapped his fist in his palm. “Men, have you seen it? A work for which so many of you are needed, was done by a little girl.”

The constructed pier of the Island reached to the half the wall’s height, if they ever wanted to step on the top and enter the island, the entire group of people would have to climb the flight of steps which circled along the wall. Ashes instantly understood the idea behind “building a wall circling the island.”

Instead of raising the island, they had rather raised the outline of the island, turning the entire Sleeping Island into a basin surrounded by a thick edge. And this edge, which circled the island, was the so-called wall Molly had spoken off. At the inner side of the wall, there were many stairs leading down it and nestled below them laid Sleeping Island.

“This... is incredible,” Captain Jack smacked his lips. “You have turned this island into a city, just imagine how it would look like at high tide, my God, you would be living below sea level!”

“It’s indeed as you have said,” Molly was unable to mask her grin, “Because of this, we also have two docks, one at the bottom of the ocean, and one at sea level. Of course, you can also say that one is at sea level and the other is in midair.”

Coming to the center of the island, they came across of all kinds of houses. Unlike those traditional wood or brick houses, these buildings seemed like the wall as if they had just grown out of the ground, fusing the body of the house together with the ground.



There is no doubt that, together with the wall, they count as a Lotus masterpieces.

“Sister Ashes, the house at the most northern end is Lady Tilly’s palace, I will take the Captain with me to complete the delivery, you don’t need to come along for this, it would be for the best if you first went to go see the Lady,” the little girl waved in the direction of the path.

Ashes nodded, and said goodbye to the two, quickly following the path to the North. Along the way she saw a lot of familiar faces, they all either bowed in greeting or waved at her with a smile. The homeland of the witches, the word grew brighter and brighter within Ashes’ heart, filling her whole body with strength.

The founder of the homeland was Tilly Wimbledon, the Queen of Witches.

And contrary to the Royal Palace, her spacious house had no guards in it, and there were also no locks on the doors. Allowing Ashes to walk through the vestibule, and directly step into the hall, only to see a familiar back in front of her.

She quietly walked on tiptoe to behind her counterpart and blindfolding the gray-haired woman’s eyes with her hands.

“I perceived you as soon as you reached the door,” the other laughed. “Do not forget how I picked you out of the crowd to begin with.”

The extraordinary had the ability to sense the magic in others, and between two extraordinaries this feeling was even stronger. This was because their magic was connected with one another, like an invisible fetter, firmly connecting Tilly and her together.

“I’m back,” Ashes said softly.

“En,” Tilly replied cheerfully, “Welcome home.”

Chapter 204 Tilly Wimbledon

For a moment, the two of them enjoyed the warm atmosphere, until Ashes’ attention was drawn to a bunch of jewel-like gadgets in front of her, curiously she asked, “What are these?”

“Come,” Tilly patted the place next to her body, “I’ll show you something interesting.”

Ashes followed her suggestion and sat cross-legged next to Tilly, seeing how she put a white silk glove over her hand, which had a crystal ruby embedded on the back of the hand.

“This is... a tracking Stone?”

Tilly didn’t give her an answer. Instead, she just smiled and reached into the open air, suddenly, a flash of lightning jump from her fingertips, hitting the ground, issuing a crackling sound, followed by smoke rising from the ground, finally leaving behind a palm-sized black mark.

Ashes couldn’t believe her eyes, “You have a new ability...”

Tilly Wimbledon was an extraordinary, her magic was only usable on herself, manifesting in her unsurpassed intelligence, making it impossible for her to have her magic manifest like typical witches’ abilities would. The lightning flash just now meant that she now possessed a whole new ability,

something which should have been impossible. A witch could never have two kinds of primary abilities, this was common sense that all witches were aware of.

Tilly took the glove off and handed it to Ashes, "It is not that I have a new ability, rather it is because of this stone." She smiled, "It has the power to change how your magic works, and make your magic to even show an effect totally opposite to your current one."

When Ashes rubbed the jewel on top of the glove, she became shocked to her core; she immediately knew that Tilly hadn't lied to her, which meant that from now on, non-combat witches would also have the ability to fight, significantly enhancing the witches' ability to resist the against enemy. "How many of these stones do we have?"

"There's only one," it seemed that Tilly already understood Ashes thought process, "in addition, it's also not that easy to use. You have to accept magic as something that actually exist; then you have to fill the stone with this magic and only then you can release it."

For a long time Ashes painstakingly meditative wished for it, but no trace of light could be seen.

"Do you believe me now?" Tilly said teasingly, "We extraordinary have it better than others, we can sense magic, for other witches it is much more challenging, it's taking our imagination and comprehension to its limits. As a matter of fact, I have already tested a lot of witches, but only two to three out of one hundred were able to comprehend it and release the lightning early enough.

"Are you mocking me for being slow-witted?" Ashes took off the glove and threw it to the side.

"Pretty much," Tilly raised her eyebrow, "At that time, I merely used..."

To stop her, Ashes kissed her, only permitting her to croon for a bit... when they finally separated, the latter took in a long breath, "Well, not so stupid after all."

"And what is with those other stones?" As if wishing to continue, Ashes licked her lips. Only in the presence of the 5th Princess, was she able to fully relax, "Could it be that they all possess a different kind of capabilities?"

"Yes, they show a different result," Tilly confirmed, a blush had still not gone from her cheeks.

"However, they still won't allow the ordinary person to possess witch-like abilities, only people with magic power can arouse it." She paused, "Which left me with a question."

"What is your question?"

"What exactly is magic?" Tilly said slowly, one word at a time, "For a long time now, the witches abilities were manifold and varied widely, showing a high degree of uncertainty to it, and in the perception of an extraordinary, witches were also different. But with this strange stones, magic becomes completely be the same, through it, any witch can release the exact the same ability. Therefore, I might have been following the wrong lead previously, magic itself is perhaps one type of omnipotent power, but us witches can merely manifest one of its forms."

"Then these magic stones?" Ashes asked.

"They can only release, but they cannot gather magic. It is not clear whether they are human-made, or formed from nature," Tilly said regretfully, "According to legend, they were unearthed from within the

relics. At present, the greater part of them have already spread within the folk; I only managed to collect this much... I heard that an ancient ruin lies in the eastern part of the Seawind Region, I really want to go and take a look for myself, maybe I could find more information about magic and some intelligence on the forgotten history there.

Several of the words, Tilly had used, left Ashes unable to make sense of what she was hearing, and furthermore, Ashes also reluctantly had the thought, In the end, as long as we are able to live, who cares about what had happened 400 years ago.

"It is better you don't. Right now, the Seawind Region is the most dangerous region in all of the Kingdom of Graycastle."

"Why?"

"Before I set off from Port of Clearwater, I've heard the sailors chatting about that Garcia Wimbledon's Black Sail Fleet being dispatched, with the Seawind Region, which belongs to Timothy, as its destination. Directly hitting his camps from behind the frontlines." Ashes explained, "When the martial law had finally been lifted, I took the next opportunity to leave the harbor. If my information is correct, I am afraid that the Seawind Region has already been turned into a sea of flames."

"They are still fighting each other," Tilly looked a little worried, "This way, the Church will take advantage of it and start an invasion. If we cannot unite, Graycastle will fall. The same as had happened to the Kingdom of Endless Winter, we will be swallowed by the Church."

This sentence started Ashes, and was instantly noticed by the 5th Princess, "What is it?"

"Nothing," she sent her a wink. "You look just look somewhat similar to Roland Wimbledon. Furthermore, he even said the same thing to me."

"Oh? Did you see him?" Tilly's interest was picked. "By the way, you didn't tell me anything about the trip to the West!"

"I had heard news that the Witch Cooperation Association was in Border Town, but Shadow should have already told you of this," Ashes embraced her counterpart, "The results that I had discovered, was that the so-called Holy Mountain they had supposedly found, was a hoax created by Roland. He took over the Witch Cooperation Association and was secretly recruiting the witches... "

Afterward, she told Tilly what she had heard and seen during the week she had stayed in Border Town, "And at the end, he also said to me, that we have to unite, if we want to resist the Church. If they ever attacked us here in the Fjords and we could no longer stay, we are always welcomed in Border Town."

"Well..." Tilly thought for a moment, and then suddenly said, "This man is not Roland Wimbledon. He has been replaced by someone."

"What?"

"You said he had gathered a great number of witches around him, right?" What I guess is, that among them was a witch who took control of him, or simply changed her appearance to match his." Tilly said bluntly, "I've grown up with Roland, it is clear that compared with my two other brothers and my third

sister, the thing he was always the worst at was to cover up the truth, even if he were to tell a lie, the lies would still be full of a hundred loopholes. It is impossible for him to disguise as another person.

As for the weapons you said they could use to fight against the God's Punishment Army, they are only proving it... An individual may hide his true character, but he cannot fake scholarly knowledge, the court mentors never taught him those things, so how can he know it?" Tilly stated, "The people that are born into the world aren't born with knowledge, so he is certainly not my stupid and annoying brother."

"Is... it's like that?" Ashes frowned.

"Nevertheless, it is still necessary for me to get in contact with them," Tilly sighed. "After all, Roland Wimbledon is still my brother. Even though he might be ignorant and incompetent, that doesn't mean that he is hopeless. Compared with the others, he was the most harmless. So I hope, that the witches of the Witch Cooperation Association haven't already buried him in the earth."

"I do not think they'd do that," Ashley thought of Wendy, "I also left Maggie with him, at the end of the month, she should come back and bring us news from Border Town."

"That it the only way, after all, our current focus doesn't lay here," speaking until here, the 5th Princes freed herself from the embrace and went to the garden, and said, with open arms, "Now that you are back, the cleaning program can finally be implemented. I want no traces of the Church to be left in the Fjords, only then will the Fjord's truly become the home of the witches.

The sun shone from behind Tilly's body, making it appear as if she was covered by a layer of gold. Her long gray hair caressed her cheeks like golden threads, her face was full of confidence, as if there didn't exist any difficulty that could strike her down.

"I wish to devote my life to you, honored Queen of mine." Ashes vowed, with a smile.

## Chapter 205 Microscopes

After Timothy's armed forces had been repulsed, Border Town became calm once again.

Roland selected three people from the City Hall's Ministry of Education and added another two teachers to form a team, which he then sent, together with some of Soraya's books to Longsong Stronghold. No matter how much effect they could achieve, he finally took the first step for the assimilation of the stronghold.

Petrov, although he did not excel at commanding a battle, his performance in administration was outstanding. In just one week, two thousand recruited road-workers, escorted by cavalymen, came to Border Town one after the other. If not for the second batch of ten blast furnaces he'd already put into production, Roland would also never have dared to make the firm resolution to establish a hard road between the two locations. But now, he finally had the opportunity to extravagantly spent a lot of money.

Roland named the road the 'Kingdom Main Street', and Karl, the Head of the Ministry of Construction, was fully responsible for its construction. Its structure and the streets' in the town were exactly the same; a cement-stabilized gravel layer. During this era, where there existed no heavy vehicles, this kind of pavement was already sufficient to undertake every transportation tasks. Moreover, with a good

drainage performance, if the circumstances ever demanded, later on, an concrete or even a asphalt pavement could always be added.

To always have enough construction material, four steam-driven milling machine replaced the labor-power that was required to crush the stones, producing dozens of tons of gravel and material each day. It was the too small transportation capacity, which hindered the further rise of the output, so many stones needed hundreds of people to send the stones with carriages to the construction site during the day. For the later generation of roads, one single muck car would have been enough to complete the whole shipment.

With the exception of the four furnaces which maintained the clay brick firing, the rest of the blast furnaces had been put into the production of cement powder. After going through repeated component tests, as well as making sure that the mine provided enough iron powder, Border Town's cement production, whether it be its quality or quantity, they were both far better than the original batches.

However, the mass transport of gravel and cement powder also brought a large negative impact to the town, of which the most severe problem was the dust. Until the afternoon, there had only been little wind, so that a dense cloud of dust could be seen flying in the sky, turning the street into a light yellow. Although most of the town people did not mind such a situation, for Roland, there was nothing worse than having to shut all of the doors and windows during the hot summer.

Therefore, the carriages for transporting the cement powder and gravel had been fitted with a cover plate as quickly as possible, to reduce the dispersion during the transportation. At the same time, he also used it as a chance to promote Leaves' ability. Within a few days, the inside of the town was covered with shade providing trees, they were symmetrical parasol trees, which Leaves had grown one branch of after another, creating the impression that the scenery appeared to be full of green for as far as the eye could see. With Roland's additional appeal to all of the people, that they should take the initiative and sprinkle water over the dust, the situation had quickly been improved.

The straight distance between the two places was less than 70 kilometers, but considering that the road had to avoid the extensions of the Impassable Mountain Range, the total length of the road would be around 100 kilometers and its expected construction duration would be one year. With roads of such excellent quality, some modern kinds of vehicles could also come in handy, such as bicycles and steam powered cars.

In his vision for the future, the development of education and the upgrading of the road were necessary steps to fuse the two cities together. Just like the cities of the later generations would energetically carry out urban integration. After the land between these two places was fully opened up, Border Town and Longsong Stronghold would slowly merge into one huge city. And in case he could even integrate the southern hill into the city, he could then open up a path through the edge of the mountains, and even get an outgoing sea port for himself.

Of course, being able to develop so much land would require an even larger population. And in response to the possibility of future wars, the city would need to be self-sufficient with its food production, while also providing a significant number of workers for the industrial production. From his preliminary calculations, he would need around one hundred thousand residents, while Graycastle's largest city, King's City, had only around twenty to thirty thousand people.

When thinking about this issue, Roland remembered that the North and South of the Kingdom of Graycastle, are both places that have recently experienced a war. So, when the winter comes, it is likely that there will be a large number of refugees coming who would be deprived of food and clothing. By offering them food and a warm shelter they can all be absorbed into Border Town.

Furthermore, I also have to take into consideration that there should also be many refugees within the Kingdom of Endless Winter and the Wolfsheart Kingdom. For that reason, it would be better to write Margaret a letter and ask her to help me to find out how the situation is within those two countries.

...

After he had finished to writing down the recent development program, the Prince folded the paper and placed it into the drawer. Afterward, he stretched out his tensed-up body and decided to go to Anna's room to take a look at how much progress she had made with creating a lens.

Ever since he learned about the reasons for Soraya's magical evolution, he was intent on making a microscope, which would allow the witches to observe the structure of cells.

If they could examine the unusual microscopic world with their own eyes, it might lead even more witches to evolve a new ability, the worst case being, he will at least arouse their interest in learning about it.

For the production of microscopes, creating the convex lens responsible for enlarging the object wasn't difficult, the difficulty part laid in the problem that the focal length was differently for every hand-polished lens, therefore matching the eyepiece to the objective was a delicate operation, needing to adjust the distance between the two lenses repeatedly.

He had described the principle behind the convex lens only once, and then given Anna a few pieces of crystals that had a fine quality letting her cut the lenses and measure their focal length. Now, after three days, Roland's heart was full of curiosity at to what extent Anna had been able to realize it.

When he came to the door of Anna's room, Nightingale sent him a smile, standing against the wall. She seemed to be saying that she wasn't going to follow him in, since she had reduced her stealth time, Roland no longer had to guess her whereabouts. And whenever he and Anna wanted to be alone, she would always choose to stand at a distant location.

When he opened the door, he saw Anna sitting at the table, playing with a metal tube.

"How is it?" He asked, stepping forward.

The moment after the question left his lips, he became shocked. There on the table laid several instruments which resembled an actual microscope, coming very close to the sketches he had drawn for her.

"With the few test products I made according to your blueprints, I can indeed see a lot of details which are usually very difficult to discover," she looked up, letting her slender bangs slide down from one side of her face. "I used it to look at paper, leaves and stagnant water, and found out that they look very different from their usual appearance." Since their experience during the hot air balloon trip, when they had both been alone. Anna no longer used any titles, which also made him feel very more relaxed.

“How did you do it,” Roland exclaimed, “The sketch was only a rough outline.”

“The outline was enough,” Anna laughed. “You see, as long as the eyepiece and the objective lens are fixed at the appropriate distance, they can play the role of the amplifier. Afterward, they only needed to be fixed to an iron pipe, and with this, the microscope’s body is completed. As I was testing the magnification of the lens, I found out that the objective and observation target had to maintain a particular distance within which I could see a distinct image; whenever my hands shook the image would become blurred. From your diagram I could see that, you needed a frame to which to attach the lens to, and a platform, which could be moved up and down to get to the best distance to the object.” She paused. “But it is harder to figure out for what the bottom piece is, can you tell what it is for?”

Roland swept his eyes over the drawing and discovered that this issue was his own mistake. It was a mirror, which was used to increase the light falling onto the object, but during this era, they had yet to invent the mercury mirror. The typical aristocrat still used a bronze mirror or an iron mirror to arrange their appearance. While they had a glass frame that was covered with a thin silver layer within the Imperial Palace, to get a better reflection effect. Even without this mirror, as long as the sunlight was strong enough, the microscope could still be used.

After explaining the mirror in detail, he couldn’t help being amazed by Anna’s comprehension. Even by solely relying on a rough drawing of an outline, she had created a product which came close to the finished goods, something which would be absolutely impossible for him to have done.

Seeing that when Anna had bowed her head to examine a new lens, she was exposing her fair neck, Roland couldn’t stop from stepping forward, and wanting to kiss. But she merely placed her hand on his face and gently pushed him back, “Later, Your Royal Highness, I’m busy now.”

“Ah... fine.”

#### Chapter 206 “Insect swarm”

In the end, the problem of the mirror was solved by Soraya.

According to her, she had went and fetched some mercury from the laboratory, and spread it directly on top of the glass, afterward painting a shiny coated layer on top of it. In this way she achieved a similar effect to that of a mercury mirror, but also eliminating the risk associated with mercury vapor poisoning.

Compared to a pasted silver mirror, the overall coated mirror offered much better reflection. Afterward, Roland simply set aside a number of crystal glassware, so that each witch could get a small hand mirror. The small gift, which allowed the witches to clearly see their appearance made them all very happy, even Scroll who was usually always exposing a neutral expression revealed a rare smile. Seeing all this let Roland sigh in regret, although the witches weren’t fertility, they were still women at nature.

Unfortunately, this useful commodity could temporarily not be sold to the public at a low price. After all, its base was made out of the highly priced crystal glass. Furthermore, the laboratory had also consumed a lot of crystal glass to create this colorless, transparent container.

Kyle Sichi, contrary to what one might expect, knew how to create crystal glass, but the laboratory had been burdened with other tasks so that there were seldom any empty hands. Most of the apprentices were busy with refining the two acids, soaking the cotton fire. While the chief alchemist took two or

three disciplines and concentrated entirely on solving the barrier to the creation of mercury fulminate. Until the industrial acid method was thoroughly researched, they still didn't want to make anything else for the time being.

Apart from the reflecting mirror, Roland also suggested that instead of manually moving the stage to control the distance to the object, it could also be done by turning a small knob on the side. He only needed to describe the two alternation with a few words, before Anna understood what he meant. Summoning her black flame, the new stabilizing framework was quickly constructed. Afterward, she picked the two set of lenses with the highest degree of magnification, in this way creating the very first optical microscope.

Taking advantage of the sufficient afternoon sun, Roland called all of the members of the Witch Union into the castle's backyard, thereby starting the first ever Fundamental Biology class.

...

When Lily came to the backyard, she discovered that the plants had become more lush and flourishing.

The grapes on the wooden frame had turned into a bright red-purple hue. A foggy memory told her that they were less than a week from turning ripe. From time to time, Lighting would fly up and pick a bunch of ripe grapes for everyone. And that big and silly bird which had recently joined Border Town, bluntly sat on top of the shelf, raising its head to peck at the grapes and swallow them down.

In the backyard under the shade sat His Royal Highness and Anna. They were happily chatting with each other, looking just like an intimate couple. But Lily knew, they were definitely not telling each other words of affection. In case she was to approach them to listen, she would definitely hear a bunch of unfathomable mysterious nouns belonging to a debate that she was unable to make any sense of...

For example, about how the small balls looked like, how a cat could be living and dead at same time, matter turned into a wave, and so on. This was probably also the reason why Nightingale would always keep a distance of five meters away from them. After all, when listening to them for a long time, any person would definitely become drowsy, ai!

Wendy was always waiting with Scroll, whenever she met her, Wendy would show a gentle and soft smiling expression. Sometimes, she even felt that from the other's point of view she was seen as a child. Lily helplessly sighed, first looking at Wendy's chest, then bowed her head to look at her own, there was indeed worlds between them.

When can they turn into that, maybe then I won't be regarded as a child anymore.

After all the witches had arrived, Lord Roland put two gray-black metal utensils on the table, claiming that they made it that with them it would be possible to see the tiny world of microscopy. Lily thought, maybe the object won't look the same after magnification, but that everything in the world is made up out of small balls? This had always been hard for her to believe, after all how could rolling balls form a solid rock?

His Royal Highness sent a guard to get a bucket of water, then took a few drops and placed them under the microscope, which was different from what Lily had expected. The water in the bucket was neither muddy nor was it dirty. Instead, it was so clear that she could see the sunshine reflecting on the bottom,



as if there wasn't anything there at all. Is it... is it really possible that you can see the flowing balls from under the microscope?

"Something is moving in the water!" To her surprise a sister shrieked, and the moment her voice fell, she shrieked again, "Ah, it ran away!"

"More than one, there seems to be a lot more."

"Good gracious, these are bugs? None of them look the same at all!"

"This looks more like a transparent crab..."

Lily's heart suddenly suspended, not the small balls, but bugs? His Royal Highness had indeed lied! However... that there are insects is also very strange, ah, just look at the water, there is clearly nothing in it! When it was her turn, the little girl could no longer pretend to be indifferent, she headed toward the microscope and impatiently narrowed her eyes to take a look for herself.

And then, she saw an incredible scenery.

Just in the narrow illuminated area, she saw many bizarre objects recklessly moving about; some had a square shapes, while others whole bodies were covered with hairs, some looked like a mixed species of bugs and crabs, and others looked somewhat similar to the base of a grain of wheat. No matter which kind of strange shape they had, they were all mostly transparent, as if they had no skin or shell around them, in general, allowing to see the internal body structure clearly. Of course, these insects stomach was almost just as empty as their surroundings.

"Your Royal Highness, are theses really insects?" Scroll asked.

"What you are seeing should be some primitive organism or single-celled algae, calling them insects is not really appropriate, they should be assigned to the class of microorganisms." The Prince explained.

"Microorganism?"

"Yeah, they're also an independent life form, but their shape is much smaller, apart from the two you are seeing, there are also even smaller bacteria and viruses. At present the magnification of the microscope is not enough to permit you to see those two microorganism. They are also the reason for food spoilage and a variety of other illnesses."

The more His Highness Roland explained, the more spirited he became, " These infinitesimally small life forms are everywhere, and there are many different kinds. Fortunately, the majority of them is vulnerable to high temperature, and that is the reason why we boil the water before drinking, cook the fish before we eat it and do not reuse our bathwater."

Although it was difficult for her to imagine that there were even smaller creatures, when she thought about that with drinking she will also swallow a lot of insects into her belly, Lily felt goosebumps all over her body.

Hasn't his Royal Highness said that these humble little things are the culprits of food spoilage?

If I can keep the bread and meat porridge fresh, that water... should also be possible.

Thinking until here, she couldn't help herself as she released her magic, covering the droplets under the microscope.

Causing unexpected changes to be born.

She saw how the "insects" began to tremble, then began to quickly change their appearance. Their skin was no longer transparent, but seemed as if they had put on a purple armor. Then long tentacles began to grow on their whole body, and soon after, they started to swallow the insects in their surrounding which have not changed. No that wasn't right... instead of swallowing, Lily saw that they were assimilating each other at an alarming rate. Like a sharp sword, the tentacles stabbed into the body of other microorganisms which then assumed the same appearance as them.

Not knowing whether it was an illusion or not, she still felt that these transformed organism were still changing the invisible creatures, and it didn't take long until a little purple spot appeared within the water. After a few breaths, more and more of these purple spots appeared, gradually fusing into one piece, as if her field of vision was slowly being covered with a lavender-colored carpet. One by one the tentacle insects arranged themselves into rows, like a neatly organized army. As if they could feel her attention, they all raised their tentacles up, as if in salute.

This was the first time; that she saw the true face of her ability.

#### Chapter 207 Mothers and Replicates

Within her world of fog, Nightingale waited for the witches' magic power to change.

Within this black and white world, she rarely had the opportunity to see so many brilliant colors. Compared to the memory of the time when they were in the search for the Holy Mountain, the magic power within them had increased a lot. The unceasing practice each day, not only allowed them to better control their ability it also increased their magical reservoir. But, Nightingale was most deeply moved by the expressions on their faces.

With the Witch Cooperation Association, although Wendy was always gently encouraging them and Cara would always remain steadfast, but even with that, during the days they were in hiding, no one would get a restful sleep. Any wind that moved the grass was enough to rouse the sisters from their dreams. Under the constant chase of the Church and the suspicion of the masses, they were never able to breathe easy. Even after entering the Impassable Mountain Range, this stress hadn't been reduced by much. No one among them knew if they could really reach the Holy Mountain and obtaining their longed-for place to call home. Back then, the atmosphere within the camp was often very gloomy and most of the sisters had shown vacant and apathetic expression.

But now, no longer needing to starve and no longer having to worry about the Church's witch hunt, all of their faces had become filled with an unprecedented spirit. Seeing that everyone was relaxed and smiling naturally, Nightingale heart also felt happy at the thought of their comfort. In the end, the Holy Mountain was not in the wilderness, but in this small border town.

At that time, she felt a thread of magic shaking.

A cloud out of a purple mist began to rotate, unceasingly surrounding and being drawn to a magical source, like a miniature-storm. This shocking scene could only be seen by Nightingale, after recovering

from her initial shock, she stared with wide open eyes and held her breath not wanting to miss any details like the time with Anna and Soraya. Today would be her first time to seeing the condensation of magic with her own eyes.

At the center of this storm, Lily was standing.

She was completely immersed in the microscopic world beneath the microscope, never noticing that the magic within her body had underwent a drastically change.

The cloud of mist became more and more vigorous, steadily accelerating its rotational speed, appearing to become an entity on it's own. But at the same time, this silhouette also began to fluctuate, no longer appearing in its original vortex shape. Finally, the magic was drawn inwards, condensing into a ball, and then gradually came to a stop.

Her newborn magic power neither resembled Anna's solid and smooth cube, nor was it like Soraya's soft silk. It was only the size of a fist, its main body was round, but on top of it there existed eight pairs of wriggling tentacles, four pairs at the bottom, four at the top. At first glance it looked like an... insect.

...

Roland never expected that he would receive such immediate results with the first Fundamental Biology lesson, and even less that the first witch to evolve her magic would be Lily.

Because her ability was to preserve the freshness of food, in addition to the daily practice, Roland hadn't given her any other tasks, her understanding of her ability also wasn't deep. After listening to Nightingales full report, Roland remained calm and collected and just nodded. Waiting until the end of the lesson, so that he could ask Lily to stay behind.

"What, you said that my ability has evolved?" Lily was also utterly astonished, "I didn't see those balls you had mentioned."

"Of course not," Roland laughingly shook his head. "Those balls are thousands of times smaller than the microbes, even granted that we bring the optical microscope to its limit, you will still be unable to see the balls which form all of matter."

"Is that so? I thought that by understanding the ball theory it becomes possible to evolve our ability," Lily muttered. "I do not believe that everything in the world is formed out of small balls, something as hard as rocks and steel, if they were really made out of a lot of piled up balls, they would have collapsed into a puddle of sand."

So that's the reason, he thought; it seems that comprehending the microparticle theory is not the only way to promote the evolution of their ability. "In that case, what did you see?"

"Um..." Lily thought to herself. "Just several purple insects, I believe, that they were summoned by my magic, and it could turn all of the organisms you spoke of into something with the same appearance."

"Insects?" He slightly stunned for a moment, "And they were as big as a micro-organism?"

"Almost," she said, nodding. "Anyway, afterward I once again used only my eye to look at the water drop, and it was still as transparent and colorless as before."

“Then... next we should come to the real test.”

...

Because Lily's ability was not directly visible to the naked eye, unlike Anna's and Soraya's, it was also much harder to test.

When seeing the neatly arranged microbes under the microscope for the first time Roland became started. It seemed as if they all had a collective consciousness, showing an incredible amount of synergy and consistency.

Next were the sub-experiments, including its impact on the duration time of the magic and which influence the God's Stone of Retaliation had.

The testing continued for three days, although the little girl was fond of bickering under normal circumstances, she still meticulously carried out Roland's instructions, regardless of her complaints.

Through a large number of sample comparison, as well as discussion with Anna, he roughly figured out how Lili's new ability worked.

Her purple variation was clearly divided into two major categories: mother and replica.

After releasing her magic, the microorganism who changed on their own were the mothers.

The characteristic of the mother organism was similar to Anna's black flame, as long as they were supplied with magic, they would continue to exist. Furthermore, the caster also wasn't allowed to distance themselves further than five meters. Otherwise, they would disappear on their own. Just like any other summon, they were also affected by the God's Stone of Retaliation, within the suppressing area of the stone, the mothers would instantly disperse.

When the mother was in existence, the surrounding microorganisms would be assimilated into replicas in a short time. What made Roland feel incredible was that the replicas which were the “results” of Lily's ability, were just like Soraya's coating, no longer vulnerable to the suppression of the God's Stone of Retaliation. In simple terms, the creations that were transformed by Lily's mother organisms had become an entirely new life form, and this life form existed in reality.

The replicated organism were assimilated by the mothers, and would take the initiative to transform other organism on their own, yet some of the results made Roland feel very confused, it seemed that the assimilation process didn't go on endlessly. In some of the samples, into all of them were the equal number of replicas added, all of the microorganisms got transformed, while in some other samples, he could see the replicas and the non-variation of micro-organisms live in peaceful coexistence.

Due to the lack of more sophisticated observation instruments, this part apparently could only be guessed at.

After discussing it with Anna, Roland got the tentative idea that the number of assimilation a replica could perform was related to its size.

Lily's ability clearly did not distinguish between the different types of microorganisms. Thus a large number of replica produced by the mothers were created out of the too small to see viruses and bacteria, and also the with the microscope visible protist and single-celled algae. The former body of

these replicas determined its assimilation ability. The larger the previous organism was, the more assimilation the replica could perform.

However, a replica of a replica was unable to continue to live by further assimilate others. When the number of assimilation was exhausted, the last batch of replicas was only able to survive a day or so. Boiling the water would also kill most of the replica, in this regard they were no different than another microorganism.

But the interesting thing was, that whenever there was a mother around, these replicas would gather like a swarm of insects gathered around their queen, and arrange themselves in a neat queue, just like soldiers waiting for their orders.

Limited by means of observation, there were still many aspects of Lily's ability which were unknown. For example, whether the mothers and the replicas resembled bacteria and viruses in the regard that they had a variety of effects on other lifeforms, or if they could take the place of fungi and be used for the chemical industry and food production. It was a pity that currently the little girl was unable to make any sense out of these ideas, even less able to carry out his orders.

Even though, the replicas had shown an immense development potential in the area of medical treatment. Even if they were unable to do anything else, as long as they were able to assimilate deadly bacteria or viruses, they could still play a significant part in the rapid anti-inflammatory and disinfection. This so-called "medicament" could pave the road for an entirely new era of medical developments.

Chapter 208 "I'm truly a fool"

After wrapping her wet hair into a towel, Lily went back to her room.

Although she had previous accused the Prince of excessively pursuing pleasure, she had to admit, this bathroom thing was indeed... fantastic. Standing underneath the shower and enjoying the ice-cold well water that was washing over her body, sweeping away the sticky and hot feeling of the scorching sun, gave the body a sense of being reborn after a busy day.

However, being so carefree after the shower, she felt a hint of a guilty conscience. During the whole day, she had never restraint herself, instead she had given her sharp tongue free reign. But she now had to ask herself, whether or not she should go to His Highness and apologize.

"Traitor!"

"What?" Lily lifted the hair glued to her front head.

"You obviously do not believe in that ball theory, but now you are the first to evolve your ability," Mystery Moon knelt on the bed, with her upper body upright and her hand pointing at Lily, "You are a huge liar!"

Lily rolled her eyes, "Eh, I still do not believe that everything is formed out of small balls... how could that be?"

"But Nightingale sister had said that your magic has condensed."

"That has nothing to do with those balls," She shrugged her shoulders and climbed into the bed grasping Mystery Moon's hand. "His Royal Highness said that to evolve your magic you don't have to accept the

theory of the balls, as long as you are able to understand your own magic deeply, it is possible that a fundamental change can happen to your magic.”

“Really?” Mystery Moon pouted.

“Anyway, that is what he’d said.”

In the Witch Cooperation Association, Mystery Moon had never been taken seriously, which resulting in her constant lack of self-confidence, was what Lily thought. Which was the complete opposite to how they treated me, after all in times of food shortage having the ability to preserve food is very important. But now I can finally understand your feelings, because since we’ve entered Border Town, my ability had become like chicken ribs, completely useless.

She had constantly been afraid of being kicked out of the town, but the result was contrary to her concerns. His Royal Highness, the Prince, although he never assigned any additional task to her, his attitude to her and the other witches wasn’t much different.

Perhaps that was also the reason why Mystery Moon had changed, from being cautious out of a feeling of inferiority, to now becoming more and more daring. More than half of her cowering was because Cara had never actually paid any attention to her, even going so far as banning her from using her ability in the camp.

“That...” The Mystery Moon frowned, “How will I ever be able to understand my ability, ah? His Highness had said that the magnetic fields are invisible, even the microscope aren’t help with it, ah.”

“Don’t ask me; I also don’t understand mine,” Lily yawned, “In fact, I only know how my ability looks like, but what His Royal Highness said about those cells, bacteria, fungi... I don’t understand any of that. He also said that he would write a textbook for me,” she confessed helplessly, “Spare me, I can’t even read the words.”

“I also want to become more powerful,” Mystery Moon rolled over the bed, “I also want to do more things for His Royal Highness ah!”

Lily sighed, you’re obviously older, but you’re behaving as if you’re even younger than I am, really now... “Maybe you should go and ask sister Anna.”

“Ask her?” She suddenly stopped rolling.

“Yes, you are afraid to even waste the tiniest bit of His Highness time, so the next best thing would be to go ask sister Anna,” said Lily, “Within the whole town, with the exception of His Highness Roland, she is the one who will know the most.”

“But Anna is very busy too, I heard that all the machines in the town are manufactured by her,” Mystery Moon said hesitatingly.

“So you have to find her and ask during her free time, like after dinner, or ask her to help with heating up the bath water, or even just invite her to take a bath, don’t you have plenty time to ask?” The little girl made some suggestions.

“What you said... seems to be quite reasonable,” Mystery Moon’s eyes lit up.

“Then let’s get some sleep; we have to get up early tomorrow.” Lily finally untied the towel around her hair, and wiped away the hairs that have fallen into her face. Then finally, she laid her head on the pillow. “You’re the one who’s going to blow the candle.”

“Well, okay.” Mystery Moon climbed to the end of the bed and blew the candle out, “Goodnight.”

...

The next day, Lily did not go as she usually did to the kitchen or wheat warehouse to practice her ability, but instead sat down at the table and began to learn how to use the microscope.

This was the new task given to her by His Highness. Before the arrival of the textbook, she should fully understand the types and shapes of the various kinds of cells and fungi and record their differences. It didn’t matter if she couldn’t write, painting pictures would also be sufficient.

And according to His Royal Highness, Anna was also trying to enlarge the microscope’s magnification, in case she could achieve a magnification effect of 400 times, then she could see even the smaller microorganism and bacteria.

In the future, her practice content was no longer to keep food fresh. But to try to diversify the body of the mothers and their replicas. Regarding this point, Lily had some problems with comprehending it. Fortunately, His Highness had given her some ideas on what to practice, such as commanding them to mimic the appearance of a single cell, or to use her consciousness to destroy or improve the cells. Of course, this would only be possible if she had a full understanding of all kind of the microscopic life forms. Although Lily did not know if she could achieve this, she at least had to try.

What’s more, exploring the unknown world was an interesting thing in itself.

She’d worked on it until the evening, at which time Mystery Moon returned with a dejected expression.

“What happened?” Lily asked curiously, “What did Anna say?”

“She had said a lot,” Mystery Moon threw herself onto the bed, “but I could not understand a word of it. She said that the magnetic field is everywhere and that the reason the compass can indicate direction was because we are inside of a huge magnetic field. Does that mean that my ability is of no use at all? Not to mention the principle of the magnetic field, and the interdependence between moving charged balls and magnetic forces, and that the magnetic field can produce electricity... does all this mean that if I cannot understand the ball theory I also can not progress?” She mumbled softly. “Say, am I too stupid?”

“Somewhat,” Lily bluntly answered.

“Traitor!”

...

Wendy was delighted that another sister of the Witch Union had gained a new ability.

And Lily’s evolution increased also increased the enthusiasm of the other witches, this evening after the end of the course, several people stayed behind and constantly pestered Scroll with questions, even

Maggie, after hearing that she could increase her ability by learning, just squatted down on the chandelier and listened honestly.

There was only one person who was exception.

When she went to the back of the room, with her “Natural Science Theoretical Foundation” book under the arm, she saw Nightingale lying on the table, focusing on something else.

Wendy knew that whatever it was had nothing to do with learning.

So, she asked, “What are you doing?”

“Distributing fish, do you want one to eat?” Said the Nightingale, while letting a fish dangling out of her mouth, “I just got them from the kitchen.”

“So many?” Wendy was surprised to see the table piled up with golden brown grilled fish, from where a delicious honey odor assaulted her nostrils.

“Well, the chef saw that I came every day, so he just baked all the rest, anyway, this food can be contained for a long time.” She took out a small bag and put the fish into it. On top of the table already laid five or six similar bags, each of them stuffed to the state of bulging.

Wendy suddenly understood what Nightingale was doing; she was preparing rations. The Witch Cooperation Association always had to be prepared to leave the town at a moment’s notice, so they always had to have enough rations and to distribute among themselves, and they would carry their rations within those bags. Along the way, no matter how hungry they became, they could only eat their provisioned rations, in order to avoid a situation where their amount of food became insufficient. But since their arrival at Border Town, with its stable supply of regular meals, together with regular afternoon tea, none of the sisters had continued with it.

Of course, for Nightingale, rather than preparing food, it would be more appropriate to call it preparing snacks.

“Do not you read the book?”

“I wouldn’t understand it anyway, just alone from hearing those theories and theorems my head already becomes dizzy,” Nightingale swallowed the dried fish, then laughingly said, “Moreover, my ability is already enough, it doesn’t matter to me if I won’t be able to further evolve it.”

So, it was like that.

Compared to her former self, at present Nightingale’s eyes are sparkling. Within them, there is no reluctance or hesitation, only her incomparable nature. Lost people cannot make such an expression, Wendy thought, Nightingale must have found her goal.

Whenever Nightingale has decided on her goal, her firm side, which came from her noble background, would show itself; this was also the case when she had faced Cara.

But Wendy did not ask about it, because she truly believed that she would one day see the answer with her own eyes.



## Chapter 209 Convenience Market

“Stop!”

At May’s shout, Irene stopped her downward slash at the vitals with the dagger, “You don’t have to look so ferocious, although he is scum wicked beyond redemption, but he is still playing the role of your foster father. So, you have to show some hesitation together within your determination, and in the end you have to show an expression of both relief and peace. Come on, let’s do it one more time.”

“Yes!” Irene answered seriously.

Since the first performance on the town square, already half a month had passed; she herself did not know, why she still hasn’t left, and instead even took part in the second drama. Today, the cast and crew were rehearsing their third show, “The Diary of a Witch”. Merely looking at the script of the play, this stage drama was destined to become something incomparable. Even when reading it for a second time, it was still such a wonderful and captivating story. It was a story that entirely forsook the romance between prince and princess, had a plot about the intrigues of the court, at the same time was full of praise for the courage, friendship and faith of the common people and the witches... Even though she had only read the script, she couldn’t help; but want to applaud the story.

This play was also the reason May had claimed, that she decided to stay in town for the time.

But the real reason, even she did not know.

Irene grabbed the dagger and ferocious stabbed downward, Sam who was playing the role of her foster father released a miserable cry, “You actually...” Then his head fell to the side at a crooked angle, pretending to be gasping for air.

A little exaggerated, May shook her head, “The position she had stabbed you is your chest, how can you have the time to scream and then raise your hand to catch Irene; you will become weak at once. This is the most common form of death, so don’t tell me you had never heard anything about it in drama class!”.

Sam’s cheeks flushed red: “So-Sorry.”

“Again,” May stated expressionlessly.

But Irene’s performance was somewhat differently than May had expected, as long as she mentioned particular problems once, Irene would soon correct them. Whether it was her professional attitude towards the theater or her acting talent, both could be regarded as belong to the top-notch category; it seemed that the title “flower of the theater” was not entirely based on the mutual flattery of the actors at the lowest rung.

“This time it was superb, with this today’s practice will end here.” When the content of this scene was finally expressed smoothly and clear, May clapped her hands, “Ferlin Eltek should soon end his lecture, right? You should also go home and prepare the supper, after all, that something water...”

“Tap water,” Irene added with a smile.

“Uh, that tap water will be installed before dusk, so if you eat too late, then there will no longer be any water to take a bath with.” May coughed twice.

“Miss May, isn’t the main point we end the rehearsal because Sir Knight does want to meet with you?” Rosia covered her mouth to hide her chuckle, “Currently it is still at least one hour until evening.”

“I heard that Sir Carter is the Prince’s trusted subordinate, he is often within the castle, and also frequently accompanies the Prince,” Tina also shouted, “Ah, ah... but as West Borders most dazzling star, you do not lose, wherever you are you attracts all eyes.”

“You, that’s enough,” Irene beckoned them with her hand to stop. “Miss May has not accepted Sir Carter yet.”

“...” May raised her brow, could it be that I wasn’t harsh enough in the recent performances? In the beginning, these two people didn’t even dare to breathe loudly in front of me, but now they unexpectedly dare to play a joke on me. It seems that during the following days’ next rehearsal, I will need to provide them with some bitterness to swallow. Otherwise, if it goes on like this, they really won’t match my acting on stage, “I will go first.”

“Many thanks for your instruction!” Irene and the rest of the group lowered their heads in salute.

Originally, only a theatrical instructor was eligible to enjoy such a courtesy, but May did not care. She only nodded in response then left the rehearsal room, suddenly feeling the scalding hot outdoor air surrounding her.

After going over to the tree at the community center, she sat in its shade and waited. It didn’t take long, before a man quickly walked towards her.

It was Carter Lannis, the Chief Knight of the Lord of Border Town.

“I hope you didn’t wait for long,” Carter said, touching the back of his head.

“It wasn’t long,” May smiled faintly, “let’s go.”

At the first time, when he had invited me out, and I rejected him, he not only did not give up, but instead pensively paid me visits, which was completely inconsistent with the arrogance and indifference he displayed. In the end, he had me confused so much that I stayed.

What the other’s interest was, May knew very clearly in her heart, but the thought to settle down in this strange land confused and frightened her at the same time.

Even when she had first come to Border Town for Morning Light, she had never had the intention to live here with him for a long time.

In the stronghold, she was the moon that all the other drama stars surrounded, but here, there was no difference between her and the other members of the crew, quite the contrary, as Irene, also a teacher, was even more famous than she was.

Following the broad street covered in shade, the two walked into the direction of the convenience market in the town center.

This town, within one week had completely changed its appearance. Last week, the outside of the district was still bare, but nowadays, it is verdant and lush. As long as it does not rain, they are building almost everyday. If they aren’t repairing the roads, they are building those houses, normally they are

even building both at the same time. Even in King's City, it would be difficult to come across such a lively scene.

The convenience market was located in the northern part of the square, which itself was also divided into two regions, it was separated in the middle by a line of parasol trees. On the right was the inexpensive area, with a layout similar to that of other markets, and there were wooden sheds open on all sides, only offering a wooden roof. They were selling some affordable iron tools and agricultural products: The former were things like farm tools, hammers, drills, and nails, while the later were things like eggs, beef, grapes and other food she couldn't name. They were ordered in different categories these goods were put in front of the stalls and each booth had a person appointed for looking after it.

On the left side was the boutique area, its sides was surrounded by brick walls, appearing more like a one-story house. There they sold all kinds of goods, but the prices were much higher so there were fewer people frequenting this area. On her second day at Border Town, she was dragged around by Irene once. If the knight had not said that today there was a new rare product sale, she would rather have gone to the pub to drink two cups of iced wine.

After their identity registration finished, the two of them stepped into the boutique area. Here the way of sale was also very strange, the whole market had only one entrance, and all the goods were placed on shelves from where you could freely choose them for yourself. They didn't accept bargaining, and no one tried to boast about the products. Instead, the prices and commodity introductions were written down on a parchment stuck to their side, after picking their favored items, they had to pay at the door.

May noted that the first row on the left had dozens of colored cups, which had the same pattern as she had seen last time, indicating that within one month's these cups have not been sold at all. In case they were ordinary businessmen, they would be making make a loss.

So, she asked, "Was this market truly opened by His Royal Highness?"

"Yes," Carter nodded, "Because of this you can see some incredible merchandises." While speaking, he went to the third row of shelves, "Such as this."

"This... was the new rare commodity you were speaking about?" May followed the Knight and came to a stop at his side, only to see five or six light yellow boxes on top of the shelf, each was about palm-sized and she couldn't see what use they had at this time.

"This, however, is something His Highness had created himself, and now the castle's witches – cough, I mean attendants and personal guards, are all using it. Using it during the bath, you can easily remove the difficult to clean grease. After washing with it, you will experience a new kind of freshness. Furthermore, it will also give you a body the fragrance of roses. I dare to swear, that when taking a shower; there is nothing more magical than this. "The Knight solemnly vowed.

May turned her eyes aside to look at the parchment, only to see that on top of the tag stood two words: Perfumed Soap.

Chapter 210 Go or stay

"Perfumed Soap?" She picked one block up and placed it near her nose to smell it, and indeed, she could make out the fragrance of roses.

“Yes, it is tough to imagine that to manufacture it, you begin with a thick paste, into which His Royal Highness also added perfume, to make it full of fragrance.

May once more subconsciously glanced at the price written on the parchment, with a selling price of 25 silver royals for one block it could be seen as a luxury product, but compared to even more expensive perfumes, the price was clearly set too low.

“Are you sure that it’s perfume? When I’d performed in King’s City, there was once a powerful nobleman who gave me three bottles of perfume. Each of those bottles of perfume was only the size of the thumb, but their price was still more than five gold royals. For such a large piece of soap, you have at least add half a bottle of it, right?”

“Is that so?” Carter got startled, “Perfume is actually so expensive?”

“Of course,” May gave him a look, “It is one of King’s City Alchemy Association proudest products, except for crystal glass, perfume is their best selling product. I’d heard from other people, that besides the tribute they paid the Royal Family, they were able to let nearly one thousand bottles flow into the market each year. Individuals who can afford such a luxury belong to the upper nobility or are wealthy merchants. In case I hadn’t gotten it as present, it would be absolutely unlikely that I would ever purchase a bottle of perfume which costing as much as my salary from several plays.”

“But I have seen how His Royal Highness has used the perfume, and it didn’t seem to be a rare material...ah... listening to him, it appeared to be made out of sugar cane?” Seeing the puzzled look on May’s face, Carter added, “A sugar cane is just like a sweet stick, it is a typical crop of the Fjords, which looks like a stick. When you bite into it, you get a mouthful of sweet water. Currently, it is only planted in the castle’s backyard, but next time when I see His Royal Highness, I will ask him if I can take one out.”

Once again, it was His Highness the Prince... Since May had come to this town, the name she had heard the most of was Ronald Wimbledon. Whether it was Irene or Cater, whenever they talked about the changes happening in Border Town, they would always mention him. It seemed that His Highness was omniscient and there was nothing he didn’t know. Furthermore, all of these new things had been created by him.

Does there really exist such a learned person in the world? She couldn’t believe it, after all, even if they were smart, learning all this knowledge would still require time. Whether it was in King’s City or Longsong Stronghold, the people that were recognized as scholars were all old men with white hair. The folk of the Western Territory even had the phrase: ‘The longer the beard, the broader the knowledge’. But the Prince was only twenty years old, so how could it be that he knew all these things?

Even when thinking this way, May’s face still showed her usual expression, “No, if it could be used to make perfume, it has to be a very rare crop. Especially the perfume formula, that could be sold to any Alchemic workshop for an incredibly high price. You must never make discreet inquiries about this to His Highness, even in case you see it, you shouldn’t speak about it.”

“All right,” Carter said and took a handkerchief, putting four pieces of soap into it.

“Will you really buy so many of them?”

“The most a person can buy are two of these. So we will pretend to buy them separately and when we leave I will give them all to you – let’s first leave before you start disagreeing.” The knight raised his hand to interrupt May who wanted to say something, “When I use mine up, I can still go to His Highness to ask for new ones, but when they are sold out here, you never know when they will get new goods. So, by taking these four, you can use them for a very long time.”

When May saw her counterpart’s serious expression, it seemed as if her heart suddenly started burning. And for a long time, she just pursed her lips, not saying another word, just silently watched how the knight wrap up the perfume soap.

“Since we are already here let’s look at some other commodities,” he laughingly said as he held the bundle.

...

When she returned to her “home” in Border Town, the outside skies had already become dim.

The last light of the day falling through the curtain decorated the room with a touch of orange.

Since she had stayed to perform the second drama, May had received the same set of rooms as Irene. Although it wasn’t very large, it was still fully furnished.

After placing the novelty goods she’d bought from the convention market one by one on the table, there was in addition to the four perfumed soaps along with a bottle of wine.

This bottle of wine and the common wine found in pubs were different. It had almost no color and was instead pure and transparent with no difference to water. She remembered that according to the products description it was called White Liquor, having a higher concentration of alcohol, it wasn’t suitable to be ingested in larger amounts.

‘White Liquor’, she smiled, looking at it from its outer appearance, it really suited its name.

Pulling out the wooden cork, May poured herself a cup. Raising the cup, a burst of flavor hit her face and entered her nose directly, making her frown. However, after the first strong scent, a bouquet of delicious flavors entered her nose, they were sweet and mellow, not like the inferior watered wine from the taverns.

As a result of devoting herself to acting and the high amount of attention that gathered, May seldom went to the pubs. When a play became a great success, and the theater collective went to celebrate, only then would she follow them to go drink two cups of wine. Making sure that she never reached the state of becoming drunk where she’d be unable to speak as she had witnessed numerous actors who got so drunk that they forgot all sense of self-control. Instead, she was always controlling her drinking so that it would never affect her mind.

However, today May had a strong impulse to want to get drunk. Otherwise, she would have never bought such expensive Liquor against Carter’s advice. Wanting to try the story she had heard from other actors, that when they got drunk, they would be able to shield of all distraction and concerns, seeing the true answer that lay at the bottom of their heart.

May closed his eyes, raised the cup to her head and poured the drink into her mouth. Immediately a hot spicy sensation exploded in her throat, causing her to directly spurt out the liquor again, and to cough out until tears arose.

Hell, is this thing really wine?

Waiting until the burning sensation had completely faded, she bit her lip and tried once more – this round; she only dared to take a sip of the liquor. Once again, a spicy flavor appeared, but this time it was followed by an intense richness and mellowness when those two flavors mixed together, she actually couldn't say if it was a good drink, but it brought a kind of strange sensation with it.

Around a quarter of an hour later, May felt a dizzy feeling overlaying her mind.

She took a fist-sized box from her pocket and opened its lid, and saw herself in a bright mirror. This mirror was different from her previous bronze mirrors or the thin silver mirrors, its surface was smooth without a scratch and her reflection was very clear, presumably making it very valuable. Within this mirror, May could see her flushed cheeks and her confused eyes.

It was a gift given by the Knight as they parted, she'd wanted to refuse, but the other side had turned away so fast that he hadn't given her the opportunity to give it back. As he walked away, he once more turned around and waved goodbye to her.

Speaking earnestly, when Carter Lannis shut his mouth, his appearance can absolutely be regarded as being impeccable. But if he wasn't such a chatterbox, I might not have stayed behind.

So, should she really take root here? Far away from the bustling city, starting once more in this remote town, where beside the few people in the crew, no one else knew her identity... The fear of the unknown only made it harder for her to make up her mind.

May put the letter on the table she had received several days ago, and spread it out – it had been forwarded to her by the Prince and Irene, the writer was Longsong Manager Petrov. From the letter, she learned that the stronghold theater had announced that her current whereabouts were unknown and that Petrov hoped that she would soon return to Longsong Stronghold to continue her performance.

His Highness the Prince hadn't concealed this news and instead given her the right to choose.

After draining the rest of the cup, May's vision gradually became dizzy.

She staggered to the desk, spread out a piece of paper and began writing a reply.

Within her overlapping surging train of thoughts, she saw the stronghold theater, Irene, Ferlin Eltek, the thundering cheer of the crowd in the town square, and those third-rate actors who lost their self-control after performing together with her. Eventually, these images all slowly faded, leaving only the memory of Carter Lannis behind, as he invited her with a grin.

"Hello, Miss May, may I have a drink with you?"