

## Witch 241

### Chapter 241 Liberation

At the moment, there were undoubtedly 2000 or more people gathered in the public square, yet their excitement didn't differ much to that of a large gatherings of more than 10'000 people of the later eras. Roland inwardly sighed, Echo's ability was indeed extremely handy.

The reason why he had chosen these three people was mainly in order to set an example for the masses – of the three of them not one was a noble, Iron Axe belonged to the Sandpeople and had come from the other side of the Southern Border; even though Kyle was an alchemist, he had been born in a common family and reached his rank after starting as an apprentice and climbing up the ladder step by step; while Nana, was a witch.

They were an alien, a civilian, and a witch; putting it in a way that modern civilization would have, this choice had been inspired by an impeccable sense of 'political correctness'.

Roland hoped that through this ceremony he would be able to impart his concept to all of his people – Border Town only focuses on your merits, it doesn't pay any attention to where you might have come from.

The first person to come forward and receive his medal was Iron Axe, Roland had personally engraved the gold medal with an insignia of Graycastle's tower surrounded by wheat ears and with an edge of pinions. The moment Iron Axe took the medal the members of the First Army in the audience, raised their hands in applause and many other people began to whistling.

"His name should already be known to all of you, Commander of the First Army's Firearm Team, Iron Axe!" Roland turned to face everyone, "Before the arrival of the Months of Demons, he was just one of the many hunters in the town. But whenever there was a fight endangering Border Town, Iron Axe would never be absent, and in the previous month, he has also led the First Army soldiers to King's City, saving those refugees besieged by the demonic plague from the Eastern Region! The recent 6000 people temporarily living outside of the city wall had all been brought back by him!"

Most people on the square were either Border Town's natives or member of the First Army, while the number of serfs and refugees only accounted for a few hundred people, but under Echo's sound transmission, the mood of the corw didn't become awkwardly silent. The moment Roland paused his speech, the fugitives at the scene all immediately began to cheering out loudly, and their intensity wasn't the least bit weaker compared to the First Army's.

Iron Axe also appeared to be very excited, most probably, with his identity as a member of the Mojin Clan living in another kingdom he would never have thought that he would ever obtain the Prince's favor. He first presented Roland with the First Army's military salute and then went down on one knee in Graycastle's knight ceremony. In case Roland hadn't stopped him with his hand, he would most likely also have gone through with the ceremony of the Sandpeople.

"Get up, as a soldier, just using a military salute is already enough," Roland laughingly stated.

"Thank you... Your Highness," he answered with a slightly trembling voice as if was making supreme effort to suppress his emotions.

The Prince patted Iron Axe's shoulder in a consoling manner, placed a bag with 100 gold royals into his hand then signalled Kyle Sichi to come over.

"This one, you may be seeing for the first time, he came to Border Town from the kingdom's Central Region, the former chief alchemist of Redwater City's Alchemic Workshop, Mr. Kyle Sichi!"

Hearing his words, let the people exclaim in wonder.

"A chief Alchemist? Aren't they people who even the king has to treat with respect and courtesy?"

"You mean just like royal astrologers?"

"No, the position of an alchemist is even higher than that of an astrologer, after all, no one can guarantee that the latter's prophecy will become true, while the alchemist at least does something that is tangible."

"Furthermore, he even came from Redwater City's Alchemic Workshop; I heard that only the Alchemic Workshop in King's City is comparable to it!"

"..."

In the Four Kingdoms, alchemists and astrologer all had a lofty status, and within the ranks of the civilian population they were also called sages, and were the only people worthy of lecturing the powerful nobles and lords. When he saw the reaction of the crowd, Roland was very satisfied, he stretched his hand out to calm the crowd then said: "Even though Mr. Sichi didn't personally participate in the battles, but with the continuous improvement of the firearms, from single shot to salvo, it would never have been possible without his chemical laboratory, which was also an important factor in guaranteeing the First Army's victories. Without these alchemical and chemical products, Border Town would not be able to win and obtain true peace."

After taking a short pause, the Prince then continued, "Incidentally, the chemical laboratory is currently enrolling trainee alchemist, they will accept people who have completed the Primary Education course and also went through Border Town's citizen inspection. After being accepted, you won't only receive a generous salary, but you will also receive the chance to become an outstanding just like Master Alchemist as Mr. Sichi!"

The moment his voice fell, the masses once more began to loudly clamor, yet Sichi himself wore a face covered in impatience, when he took the medal he ill-humored said, "You called me over because for such a matter? This was indeed a waste of time; I might just as well have done a few more experiments instead."

"This is a great opportunity for publicity, didn't you complain that you were short-handed," Roland shrugged his shoulders, "By the time when the number of apprentices are doubled, I intend on writing the book on 'Advanced Chemistry' and teaching it to you."

"Advanced... Chemistry?" Hearing this, Sichi immediately bowed, "Thank you a lot, Your Highness!"

Although it was quite important to focus on one matter, fostering a successor was equally important and also demanded immediate action. And the wider the foundation, the easier it would be to achieve results, the same as was true for scientific research. Roland never planned to put all of his eggs in one

basket, so whenever there was a perfect advertising opportunity like this, he certainly wouldn't just let it go.

The final one was Nana.

The girl seemed a bit nervous as she came to his side, Roland couldn't help but sigh in sorrow.

Compared with the time during the Months of Demons, when he didn't wish others to see them, today, he finally intended to announce the witches presence to everyone – after nearly six months of preparation, Border Town has now reached the perfect moment to welcome them. Furthermore, choosing Nana as their representative was also the result of careful deliberations. All the soldiers of the First Army called her an angel, and within their ranks she even held a higher rank than Iron Axe, second only to his own reputation. While there were also many town residents who had already received her treatment. No matter if it were mine accidents or injuries caused by machines, the injured had already developed the habit of looking for their angel for treatment.

After watching the drama "Witch Story" several times, the attitude of the serfs had already changed and they were no longer against them. Seeing the tragic fate of the witches but also that they were always brave enough to make a stand and fight in the dramas, created an image of witches which was capable of winning a lot of people's sympathy and goodwill.

The same could also be said about the refugees who could only survive because of Lily's ability. Even if there were people who loathed the witches in their heart, after being rescued by them they couldn't any longer slander them with malicious talk. Even more now after they hadn't received help from the Church in their most vulnerable state – at least in Border Town, these woman with their extraordinary abilities would be protected by the Lord.

However, the most crucial point was: Even if there were Church follower who wanted to expose them, it would be difficult for them to set off any wind and waves here in the Western Region. Border Town was completely under his rule, and the Church in Longsong Stronghold had been completely destroyed, in that way they lost the possibility of monitoring the Western Region. Only if they went to the cities further away, like Fallen Dragon Ridge or Redwater City, would they be able to find any of the Church's priests.

"This is -" Roland did not even have the time to finish his introduction, before the square burst into thunderous cheers.

"Miss Nana, Miss Nana, the young lady has come!"

"Young Angel, thank you for curing my husband!"

"Little girl, when you have time come to my house and eat. I specifically raised two chickens, whether steamed egg soup or stewed chicken soup they are all possible!"

"Nana looked at me!"

"No, she looked at me!"

Nana could not help to cover her mouth, and her eyes became moist. Roland believed that the other witches went through the same feelings as she did – they had finally broken away from the evil identity

the Church had forced upon them, and were now finally able to walk under the sun like any other person. Roland smiled brightly and patted her head, "You don't need to be afraid, just speak some thankful words in response to everyone's enthusiasm. Don't forget that from now on you are the representative of the Witch Union."

"Um..." She sniffed and wiped her the tears flowing over her face, bowed to everyone then said, "Thank... thank you!"

#### Chapter 242 New Construction Area

The award and honor ceremony lasted until noon, as he had to fill two positions at the same time, commentator, and host, Roland couldn't help but feel utterly exhausted by the end. Luckily the ceremony finally came to its perfect conclusion with the bell sounding at midday simultaneously with Echo's gun salute. But when he came back bathed in sweat back to the castle and stepped on the third floor, he was surprised to see Anna smilingly leaning against his office door.

"What happened?"

"You'll know when you step inside," she blinked with her pair of lake blue eyes.

It's improbable that this would be a trap, Roland confusedly thought as he pushed open the door only to then freeze in surprise — at the sight of the twelve witches neatly standing in two rows in front of him, Wendy and Scroll were standing at the front. The moment they saw the Prince appear, they held the sides of their dresses, bent their knees in a curtsy and offered him a salute.

"Keke. What are you..."

Scroll was the first to speak, "Your Highness, with the action you have performed today, you have proven that everything you have told us was true. We sisters are all deeply grateful for this. No words can ever describe our gratitude, please allow us continue serving you."

"So, it was like that," Roland sighed in relief. "I almost thought that all of you wanted to collectively say goodbye."

"Pfft," Wendy couldn't stop herself from laughing, "How could that be Your Highness? This place is the Holy Mountain us witches have dreamed of. As long as you don't desire for us to leave, we hope that we can live here forever."

"And that is exactly what I want to see... In fact, there is no need for you to be so grateful, my helping you wasn't a selfless act, it was also in order to help myself. There is no need for you to be so formal, I prefer your relaxed and unrestrained appearances much more than this."

"Humph! I already said that it wasn't necessary for us to be so formal," Lily snorted. "And as you can see, now he thinks we're being too serious."

"How can you say that? You also readily agreed to come over," Mystery Moon whispered, "Traitor!"

"Alright everyone, let's go to the dining hall, His Royal Highness still needs to change his clothes," Scroll ordered while helplessly tapping her forehead, "That's right, I have heard from Miss Anna that recently you have gone to bed late every evening. Please take care of yourself, you must not fall before that one goal is achieved."

“Feel relieved,” Roland smiled. “For I am in good health.”

Afterward, the witches left one after another, only Anna stayed behind.

“Why did you stay behind, do you also want to express your gratitude to me?” Roland asked mischievously.

“Ah, I wish to say the same as them,” Anna raised the corner of her mouth, “‘No words can ever describe my gratitude.’ ”

“And also... do you want to always live in Border Town?”

“No, not always. ”

These unexpected words startled Roland, and his heart began to jumping fiercely, “Why is that?”

“Because it is unlikely that you will stay in Border Town forever,” Anna said, tilting her head. “...no matter where you go, I will always follow you.”

His heart suddenly filled with warmth, from the first day since he had known her, she had never changed her promise. No matter if she received the invitation from the Witch Cooperation Association, or during the critical moment in the battle against the demonic beasts, she had always chosen to stand by his side.

At this moment, Anna suddenly took two steps forward, then gently hugged him.

“Wait, I’m covered in sweat,” Roland tried to warn her.

But rather than giving him a reply the young woman placed her head on his chest and took a deep breath as if she wanted to imprint his scent into her memory. He finally gave up any thought of pushing her away, instead opened his arms and enclosed her in his embrace, not releasing her for a very long time.

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After lunch, Roland rushed to the bathroom to take a cold shower and afterward threw himself back into work.

He had called Karl van Bate over, spread a detailed map of Border Town out on the table, then pointed to a position along the Redwater River, “I want you to construct a bridge here.”

“Not a pontoon bridge?” After pondering about it for a while, Karl opened his mouth and said, “Your Highness, please excuse me for being outspoken, but at this place the Redwater River is already close to 100m wide, if you want to build there a stone bridge will be almost impossible to achieve. Even if we consider building an arch bridge, at most it would only cross one-third of the needed distance. Furthermore, the Redwater River’s water flow rate is so enormous, that it is impossible to anchor a bridge-pier for a very long time, even if we used stakes the size of a person, it would still be washed away after a time... With the exception of wooden rafts used as a pontoon bridge, it is impossible to build a bridge across the entire river.”

“This won’t be a stone bridge. You will be building a steel bridge,” Roland answered, “Altogether it will have three spans to cross the river. However, the middle of the bridged piers will be handled by the witches. You only need to get the position of the bridgeheads ready in advance. Construct a slope on both ends of the bridge, so that the whole bridge is raised to such an extent that a river boat can pass it without having its mast touching the bottom of the bridge.”

“Won’t that be a bridge which reaches into the sky?” Karl asked surprised.

“It will be enough if those parts of the bridge are 6 to 7 meters above the ground,” Roland said as he quickly sketched the schematic drawing from the three-span iron bridge. “In order to quickly open up the south bank, as well as construct the docks, there must be a bridge there which doesn’t affect the passing ships on the river. Even though a pontoon bridge is very simple to build, it is the equivalence to blocking the river channel, making it unfavorable for future development.”

The expedition of the First Army to King’s City by river brought Roland a lot of information. Currently, within the borders of Graycastle, the river would open the roads in all directions, and the other major cities were also mainly built next to a big river. In the case that he carried out any further military operations within the kingdom’s borders, he would then have to possess several heavy river gunboats. With them he would have a powerful weapon which had enough firepower to use when besieging cities or conquering territory.

After all, the caliber used for the famous warship canon was far greater than what was used by the field artillery. And if he wanted to build more vessels, he would first need to build a dock, and due to this, the steel bridge plan had come into being.

“But I don’t possess any similar experience for building bridges...” Karl seemed to somewhat hesitate.

“Me neither,” Roland merely shrugged, “For the first time it is alright to go through the project slowly. It won’t be a problem if you first erect a test bridge at the shore, and afterward, moves it over to the Redwater River.” With this Roland incidentally also introduced the other side to the concept of using prefabricated components which could later be transported to the construction site, “Just like during the construction of the water towers, as Hummingbird reduced its weight, and your student Anna helped with assembling and welding the pieces together. If we will do it again like that, the project shouldn’t be too difficult.”

“I’ll obey... your order. Your Royal Highness,” he nodded.

“Apart from this, there is also another tremendously important project I will give you,” the prince moved his finger to the castle area, “I intend to expand the size of the backyard. I want it to contain all of the surrounding high grounds, and at the same time you should construct a three-story house here.”

If everything went well, next month Tilly’s five witches would arrive in Border Town, however, the castle no longer possessed any extra rooms. Although the rooms could temporarily be turned into three person rooms, the number of witches would only continue to increase with time, and it would be impossible for things to remain like this. Offering a superior living environment with all kinds of novelty and cozy experiences, was also a part of his strategy for convincing them to stay. No matter if they were people from ancient times, it would be hard for them to live in a frugal environment after becoming

accustomed to luxury, or to use the sugarcoated-bullet method of modern people, 'a good and easy life will always make people addicted'.

"A three-story... brick house?"

"Not an entirely brick house," Roland smiled, "The correct name to call it with should be brick-concrete structure; the pillars, and beams of the house are all made out of reinforced concrete, similar to bones within a human body. A structure like this will allow us to build houses which are even higher, increasing it to a four or five story building wouldn't be a problem either."

"Reinforced... concrete?" Karl replied confused?

"It is a mixture consisting of cement, sand, and stone and reinforced with steel bars implanted into it," Roland explained. "Of course, the precise amount of each ingredient will need to be strictly tested, but in case the project is successful, it will even be stronger than natural limestone."

However, this was only theoretical, such a product would have a very broad range of quality, that was similar to concrete. The self-mixed cement bought in rural areas and the cement purchased at configured mixing stations were entirely different things. And the same was also true for the quality of steel reinforcing bars... Some people living in the rural areas, when they built their houses themselves, they wouldn't even use pebbles or use thin bamboo or wire in place of steel reinforcing bars. When Roland had gone to the countryside, he had witnessed the whole building process of several of these "county estates".

And now he also intended on doing it himself, after all, it would just be a three-story house, no matter how much they skimmed on the job and stinted the materials, it would still be difficult for it to collapse.

In addition, he hoped that the witch's residential building project would let Karl grasp the concept of it and let him change its form, to turn it into a perfect building material like engineered stone. As for its achievement within the construction industry, buildings made out of reinforced concrete occupied nearly half of the country. However, Roland wasn't proficient in architecture, everything he knew was only superficial knowledge he learned during his time in the countryside. He therefore thought that broadening the mason's horizons and leading him to path of developing it himself, was the right approach.

"Uh... will you also let me slowly explore it by myself? Karl finally asked.

"No," Roland smiled, "This is something I can teach you."

#### Chapter 243 Establishment of the Intelligence Organization

After the moon appeared in the sky, the hot air gradually cooled down. From Theo's place in his garden, he could see the light that was coming through the windows of the distant pubs, brothels, and casinos. Within the curtain of the night, they looked the same as all the many stars in the night sky, showing a city's bustling.

It was only possible to see such a scene in King's City inner city – even though the demonic disease came to its end, nearly one-third of the population of the outer city had already died. However, all of that couldn't affect the mood of the noble's drinking parties. If he listened carefully, he could hear their subtle cries being carried over by the evening breeze.

He had spent one hundred and fifty gold royals to buy this house with its garden and pond. Its location was on top of a hillside that was near the outer edge of the inner city, and even during the day, there weren't many people that were strolling through the neighborhood. Besides when Theo met with his informants to exchange the newest gathered intelligence, he usually didn't live here. He would instead choose to stay in an inn for the night, or go to the Covert Trumpeter and stayed there for a few days.

"My Lord, by now everyone should be present."

A man carrying an oil lamp came out of the house, it was Hill Fawkes, one of the members of the Skeleton Fingers.

"Take the candle, I will follow after you." Theo nodded, and soon entered the house.

In the dim candlelight, he saw Hill and five other men sitting around a round table, when they saw the personal guard appear they got all up and bowed in salute. Theo sized expressionlessly sized all of them up, hoping to catch even the smallest movement in their expressions, to see whether they were reliable or not. Unfortunately, Miss Nightingale had followed the fleet back to Border Town, if she were still here, he would have been able to make accurate judgements almost instantly.

They were Hill's partners, the former members of the acrobatic troupe "pigeon and cylinder", who were full of hate against the New King and had sworn to exact vengeance. One week ago, prior to the attack on the pier, by lucky coincidence, one man had concealed himself as a member of Dreamland Water and had him informed him about the rats' plan to attack in advance. Nowadays where the incident of the demonic disease had gradual settled down, he decided to meet with his men in King's City face to face. If it was really like Hill had said, contrary to what one might expect they might indeed be pretty good seedlings to use as a spy.

"With the exception of Mr. Fawkes, all the others should give a simple introduction of themselves." Theo began.

Taking the lead, the man with the most muscular body said: "My name is Rocky Hill, Sir." He was nearly six feet tall and with his bulging muscles in his arms he appeared to be incredibly strong. "Within the acrobatic troupe I played the role of the strong man. Currently, I'm a member of the Bloody Sails."

"I'm a clown," the little man sitting next to Rocky Hill said, while pointing to his nose. He seemed to be the youngest of their group, around 18 to 19 years old. "Within the troupe it was only natural that I became the clown, however, contrary to the others I haven't sneaked into the ranks of the rats. Instead I go from one tavern to another, and show off some tricks."

"Joe and Neal," the following two men were a pair of brothers, regardless of whether it was their appearance or their style of clothing, there was no difference between them and the commoners living in the outer city. They had offered all of their possession to Priest Ferry and were now so called, "devoted believers of the Church". Theo couldn't stop but ask himself, can it be that these two men had both felt affection for Hill's wife at the same time? Forcing down his doubts, he turned to the last person.

"I'm called a magician by them all, Sir," the last one said, saluting once again, "I originally pretended to be a frustrated person and entered Dreamland Water, but unfortunately most of them are already dead



or fled by now, even 'Fierce Teeth' Tanis was killed by the Church's Army of Judges. Currently, everyone else is occupied with seeking a new organization."

"He was killed by the Army of Judges?" Theo raised his brow. "Weren't they secretly supported by the Church?"

"I only heard the news from others," he spread out his hands, "After their attack on the docks was repelled, Tanis and his men then suffered an ambush from the Skeleton Fingers during their retreat to the eastern district. In the end, he had only a few dozen people left by his side. On that same night, he left the nest once more and went to the Church in anger, but by the next day, only two to three of his cronies made it back. According to their explanation, Priest Ferry and he had begun to quarrel, which was cut short after a Judge shot into his chest... All in all, Dreamland Water is dead."

So, that's how it was, Theo thought. Presumably, because he had nearly lost nearly all accumulated strength he had gathered after great difficulty, Fierce Teeth felt that his position as the gang leader was in immediate danger. In his desire to save it, he tried to seek the assistance of the Church but was refused which then led to the dispute. But all these minor details are unimportant, the only important news for me is that only the name Dreamland remains, yet in reality they are already as good as gone. This is definitely good news, maybe I can take advantage of this opportunity to draw in some of the homeless rats and use them to expand my intelligence source.

"Surely you all have already heard my name from Hill," Theo knocked on the table and waited until the sound fell. "I am a personal guard of His Highness Roland Wimbledon, I am responsible for collecting intelligence from all parts of the kingdom. Since you all have willingly arrived here, from a certain attitude, it can be said that you have already made your intentions clear. However, to be certain that this dangerous mission will be successful, I still have to ask at least once, are you willing to work for His Royal Highness?"

"We are willing!" The five said in unison.

"As long as Timothy Wimbledon will receive his punishment, I'm willing to do anything," Hill stated, slowly pressing out each word.

"Excellent, then by next week at the same time, we will meet here again. In case there is any critical information, you can also report it to me in advance – just put a pot of purple flowers at the entrance of my house." Theo explained, "After I noticed it, I will be waiting in this room for you to come in the night. However, remember to knock on the door and use our secret signal of three-longs and two-shorts, understood?"

Seeing them nod in unison, Theo said in satisfaction, "A qualified spy will never lightly expose themselves, so the first thing you need to do is to conceal your identity. No matter if you're gathering information by yourself or are developing a network to collect suspicious information, you have to always bear this in mind. In case you need further money, you can come with the request to me... Remember, in every action, one must never act blindly, without thinking it over first. It is improbable that Timothy will sit on the throne forever, this is a promise given by His Highness Roland Wimbledon himself." He paused, "With all this said, are there any questions left over?"

“Sir, today Timothy had returned from the Eastern Region back to King’s City,” Hill said, “You should must have already heard of this news.”

This afternoon a procession of the new king’s knights holding up his banner had entered the City through the East Gate, which was a scene witnessed by many citizens. But he wasn’t sure if Theo had already heard about what happened afterward.

“But in the evening, I heard from Black Hammer, that Timothy intended to recruit some rats for his army, and in exchange for their pledge of loyalty they would receive the opportunity to become free people. Several leaders of the Skeleton Fingers already went to the royal palace, so it doesn’t sound like a fabrication.”

Drafting the rats? On the surface, Theo was able to keep a calm expression, but his heart suddenly sank. It was evident that those rats would never be able to serve as regular soldiers, so the most likely possibility was that they would be made to consume strengthening pills and would afterward be sent to start surprise attacks, the same as last time when they attacked Longsong Stronghold. The only question though, was who their target was going to be this time.

“That’s actually an interesting piece of news,” he said. “Remember to always pay attention to those rats whereabouts, in case you hear any other news, immediately come to me to report it.”

Hopefully, Timothy isn’t thinking of dashing against the Western Territory, Theo thought.

#### Chapter 244 Identity Registration

Outside of the western city walls, under the guidance of the First Army, the refugees were undergoing an unprecedented identification inspection.

By now, Barov had naturally come to understand that the resource which His Highness regarded as the most important was people. In order to bring all of these people back to Border Town, His Highness had spent a lot of gold royals and had even sent the First Army on an expedition to King’s City. When Barov had seen the final bill from Margaret’s chamber of commerce, he had almost climbed up the wall.

Adding up the caravan’s charter fees, the transportation fees, and the fees for the food supply after half a month, the Prince had spent more than two thousand gold royals, which was equivalent to the price of four steam engines. If they hadn’t received the deposit for the transformation of two ships by last month, Barov was afraid that the financial report statistics this time would have shown a deficit.

After the evacuation of the people, the task of creating this cumbersome and huge statistics had all been placed on his shoulders. Almost all of the City Hall officials and apprentices had been dispatched to set up the wooden sheds and the related lines for the crowd, so that they could start with writing the classification statistics. Seeing the more than a dozen lines of fugitives all slowly going through the inspection, it was as if Barov was seeing a group of moving coins.

Compared to the lines for the ordinary civilians’ registration, the line for the professionals that he himself was personally responsible for was far more deserted. Until now, there had only been fifty to sixty people come in.

“I am... a carpenter,” a middle-aged man said after slowly walking over, “I heard that any craftsman can get their own place to live?”

“That’s right,” Seney Darley then further asked. “What’s your name? Are you able to read?”

The former knight of the Wolf Family had come over from the Ministry of Agriculture. But he had managed not to make any mistake, which left Barov very satisfied that he chose him for this task. Although this had to do with demographic statistics, the City Hall unfortunately only had a small number of people who had learned how to read and write, so without any better option, they had no other choice but to pull all of the literate people from the other departments together here.

“Uh... to answer Sir, my name is Maser.” The other party paused, “I must admit, I have never learned how to read.

“You can’t read or write?”

“Yes,” the middle-aged men nodded.

“Well, as a carpenter then...” Sirius turned his attention to the pile of questions on the table, looking for the one marked with carpenter, “Ah, found it. Let me ask you a few questions.

The preliminary trial method was an idea His Highness came up with, he had gathered craftsmen from all kinds of industries, inquired them about specialized knowledge together with some problems and their corresponding method to deal with them. He then recorded all of their answers and formulated a set of questions. As a result, as long as they compared the given answers with the answers on the form during the audit, they would immediately know if the other party was lying or not. It was the first time that he had ever seen such a method used to detect lies. Barov couldn’t help but want to applaud the devil’s mind, if the other side wasn’t engaged in the industry, most civilians would never be able to understand these concepts. In case someone wanted to feign his occupation, as long as they asked two to three questions, the liar would be choked speechless.

“What kind of tool is used to flatten a wooden surface?”

“It’s... a carpenter’s plane, Sir.”

“What are the commonly used saws?”

“Frame saws and two-man saws, occasionally hand saws when cutting small items.”

Several questions later, Maser could almost answer all of them, and with every further right answer, his voice became more smooth and easy.

“Ah, it seems you are indeed a carpenter,” but the moment Sirius wanted to write down his identity into the register, Barov interrupted him.

“Sir?”

“Don’t be so quick with your judgment, first you have to examine his hands,” then he said to Maser, “Stretch out your hands.”

The moment Maser heard this command he felt startled, but he then spread out his hands with a look full of confusion on his face – the skin on his palms was very rough, fissured and had many traces of earth particles, furthermore below every finger were thick calluses, all in all, they looked very weather-beaten.

“If he was a carpenter, then his palms should not be so rough, especially those two pads beneath the palm, due to constantly rubbing over the wood, they should be smooth and hard. Furthermore, carpenters often need to use black paint to draw contour lines, therefore their palms will often be stained with a black ink that is hard to wash off, turning their palms black instead of yellow.” Barov calmly explained. “Another point, before he gave you an answer he would always break eye contact – many people who were trying to recall something that they didn’t usually do in the past, would show a similar kind of expression to this. However, if was a real carpenter, he would have given his answers in a very natural manner.”

“Understood... then,” Sirius’ eyes became large.

Barov looked at the astonished Maser, then said with a heavy voice, “You should have heard the warnings of the First Army when they called you over, any act of impersonation, deception or refusal of register will be severely punished. Either by being sentenced to work in the mines, or being expelled from the Western Territory, so if you understand this, do you still think you are a carpenter?”

“No, Sir, I was wrong!” Maser said, falling to his knees. “My neighbor was a carpenter, I would just often watch him work!”

“Then go over there and line up.”

Seeing the other flee, Sirius asked full of wonder, “Sir, how do you know all these things?”

“During the Months of Demons, I have done a census for His Highness. I had to deal with every carpenter in the town, and at that time I conveniently recorded such information,” Barov answered while pretending to be unconcerned. But when he saw the admiration and shock in the knight’s face, a feeling of pride arose within his heart.

Although the devil’s methods appeared to be clever, in the end, some people will eventually deceive it, and only people like himself, have the talent needed to make up for His Highness deficiency.

But under the influence of His Highness, their recent approach to deal with such problems was no longer the same as it was in the past... Barov couldn’t help but secretly sigh. For example, commoners of the previous kind, in the past it had been important to punish them with in a thunderous manner, in order intimidate those who would otherwise begin to stir. But nowadays he had to let all of them go, this was most likely because the Prince wanted to save gold royals – after all, every fugitive here was worth a lot of money. In case they didn’t live and work in Border Town for several years, they would simply not have been worth the expenses of transporting them over such a long distance by ship.

When the next fugitive passed the specialized inquiry, instead of immediately writing him into the register, Sirius first looked to Barov for his approval.

Who in return seized the man up, and then nodded, “Write his details into the register, I will take him to see His Highness.”

After going through a passage in the city wall, they came to a stop in front of a shed set up for His Highness, which was also the last checkpoint.

Here, they would receive His Highness’s personal inquiry. If it is confirmed that there is no problems, they would be given a “Resident Identity Card (ID)”, and from then would become a formal resident of

Border Town. With the current lack of houses in the inner town, they had no other choice than to give priority and provide the first living places to the artisans. While the fugitives with no particular skill, had no other option than to wait outside of the wall for two to three months.

Barov also possessed a ID card – it was a sheet of hard paper painted with color. It was almost palm sized and on the left upper corner was a painting of his head, which looked the same as a real person. While his name, address and number was written in the middle. The back of the card in turn was covered with the Graycastle's crest and His Highness personal seal. No matter if it was the paper itself or the film it was wrapped into, they were both very strange. Whether it was by soaking it in water or trying to burn it in a fire, nothing could damage the ID card.

There was no doubt that this thing was certainly made by the witch named Soraya. It seemed that His Highness intended to spread the ID card to the whole town, so that in the future whether it was to buy food or pay, they would have to show their certificate.

Since His Royal Highness had awarded the medal to the young lady of the Pine Family during the Award and Honor Ceremony, it had become evident that the Prince no longer intended to hide the existence of the witch. Which in turn meant Barov had finally to come to a conclusion of who was right and who was wrong, the Devil or the Church... unexpectedly discovering that there was a faint hope within his heart that His Highness can defeat the Church and ultimately unify the Kingdom of Graycastle.

There was no doubt, the higher position His Highness could achieve, the greater the reward he could reap would become.

Of course, there was still a long way to go before they reached that moment, so it could still be put aside and considered later on. By now the population of Border Town had surpassed Longsong Stronghold's, furthermore, His Royal Highness had also revealed his next year's construction plan – once the town was connected with the stronghold, more than half of the Western Territory would be turned into one city, with a size that was undoubtedly larger than King's City, becoming the most magnificent city of Graycastle. And at that time, as the City Hall Premier Minister, what kind of promotion would he receive?

Barov's heart was full of expectation for the future.

#### Chapter 245 Means of transportation

Roland sat on his office chair, carefully looking over Barov's report statistics.

It took the city hall three full days to sort out all 6000 refugees, coming out with the low number of 186 artisans who had managed to pass the audit in the end. Of course, this small number was also related to the effort they had put into the verification, after all, this involved the distribution of houses as well as IDs.

It was Roland's vision that from now on, only people in possession of such an ID would be considered official citizens of Border Town. Thus he needed to install proper safety measures, while the numbers were still small, which would also help him to better control the his core supporters inside the town. Using this, when the population started growing further, he could use the strength of his people to help assimilate the newcomers among them. After all, humans were social animals, as long as the

environment continued with this way of living, more and more people would eventually come to approve of his ideas. Furthermore, he would indeed lead his people into a better life.

“The final room arrangement for the artisans will be done by you, no matter if they are unmarried or have a family to feed, they will at least have their own apartment assigned to them,” Roland commanded.

“Yes,” Barov agreed, “May I ask Your Royal Highness, are these houses to be given as a present?”

“They will be rented,” he shook his head, “The reason why the native citizens received houses as a gift was because most of them had already owned a house before this, it can be considered as exchanging their former house for a new home. But if we now also gift a house to the new inhabitants, they won’t be motivated to leave their houses and throw themselves into their work. Of course, we can still calculate a relatively cheap rent for them, and we can also tell them that as long as they work hard and save enough gold royals they could always buy their own house in the future.”

“I understand.”

For a moment Roland was silent, but then he suddenly asked: “After the Award and Honor Ceremony, how many people have fled the town?”

“Up to today, there have been none among the ranks of native civilians, and there were seven within the ranks of the serfs,” Barov paused. “However, there were more within the refugees from the Eastern Region, of them a total of one hundred and fifteen has already chosen to leave.”

“Is that so?” Roland softly sighed, the moment he had decided to push the witches to the front of the stage, he knew that something like this would happen. Therefore, in order to assess the public response and to avoid any accidents from happening, Roland had especially stationed a firearm teams several miles away from the town. There they could temporarily stop these people from running away and at the same time could also count the number of fleeing people, this way they could hold a survey on the general level of the acceptance of witches.

Even though the result wasn’t perfect, it was excellent that at least the Border Town’s natives had ultimately come to accept the existence of the witches, something which was along his prediction. The number of serfs who have fled was less than that he had expected, showing that the effect of the theater performance was quite good. Yet within the ranks of refugees from the Eastern Regions who had openly accepted the treatment from the witches and were moreover also in a desperate situation – with their houses destroyed and no homeland for them to return to – had more than a hundred people who had chosen to leave, which came as a bit of a surprise to Roland.

“Your Royal Highness, I suggest that we sentence all of these people who have tried to flee to death,” Barov said calmly, “Since they still decided to leave, even considering their situation, they must be people who have been deeply affected by the Church. So, for the foreseeable future, they will never choose to side with Your Highness. In all likelihood they will become firm believers of the Church, for people like them, there is no need to show any kindness.”

“This is not necessarily the case... the truly devoted believers of the Church should be those three hundred people who decided to not leave King’s City and instead face the demonic disease.” The Prince

closed his eyes, "Perhaps these people are just unable to change their minds, still thinking that the witches are evil and this made them want to flee."

"Even if that's the case, they are still your potential enemies," Barov insisted.

In fact, if he met that group of people on the battlefield, Roland would defeat them without any hesitation, but that didn't mean that he was following this era's backward way of thinking, wantonly swinging the butcher's knife to kill a group of civilians. Something like that would be against his ethical belief. So after a short hesitation, he finally rejected the suggestion, "I will let Nightingale go and interrogate the runaways, in case there is a hidden spy or scout in their ranks, they will be seized and hanged, all the others will be expelled from the Western Territory."

Hearing his words, Barov gave him a meaningful glance and then lowered his head, only then did he slowly agree, "As you bid, Your Royal Highness. "

"Do you have anything else to report?"

"For the time being, no, Your Highness," he coughed twice. "I'll now go and deal immediately with the allocation of the houses."

"It isn't urgent, you can take your time with that issue," Roland opened his eyes then stood up, "First come with me to take a few pictures and we can relax the mood."

"Taking... pictures?" Barov asked shocked.

"You'll recognise it immediately," the Prince answered with a smile.

Entering the castle's front yard, they saw that Carter, Iron Axe, and Soraya who he had previously called had already arrived. Placed in the corner of the garden were several pieces of four to five meter long planks, while an item on the ground that was covered with canvas.

"For now, Border Town is still considered small, but when the land in the south is developed, and the road between Longsong Stronghold and Border Town is finished, it's scale will be dozens of times larger than it is now. By that point, you will have to spend one or two days on the road if you want to walk from the eastern side to the western one. Therefore, we need something that allows us to travel faster from one place to another. However, breeding horses is not only very expensive, but it is also impossible for every citizen to invest a lot of time for learning how to ride them." Roland said as he opened the canvas, "Because of this, I plan to promote this new type of transportation method in Border Town, it is easy to use, and its price is also much lower than a horse."

"What is this...?" Carter was instantly attracted to the novelty, "It has two wheels and an iron shelf, is it a cart?"

"The two wheels are placed in front of each other, instead of side by side, it will be tough to maintain balance," Barov shook his head. "I do not see how it will be able to replace horses."

Only Iron Axe kept silent, calmly waiting for the Prince to explain further.

Roland smiled, "This thing is called a bike, I will demonstrate how you should use it." He placed both feet on top of the pedals, assumed a standard starting posture, one foot on a pedal, then he began to ride the bike along the path of the flower garden.

With Anna's welding technique and Soraya's coating skill, producing a bike manually wasn't challenging at all. Its principle and structure didn't hold any difficulty, for example, the rubber required for the inner tubes had been replaced by coating, which was directly drawn over a paper roll. With regards to this, Roland even customized a simple and easy to use bicycle pump. While the outside and the breaks of it were made with a hardened leather coating. The frame was made out of hollowed pipes, and for the brake wire, they had used a copper wire and an anti-corrosion coating. The only issue was with the chain, for it, he needed to completely rely on Anna, cutting and shaping one chain link after another and afterward connecting them all to a string. As for the kind of pedal, which were directly installed on top of the wheel as had been used for the first bicycles, he didn't even consider them.

Coming to the end of the lap, Roland pressed the brakes, easily jumped off the bike and turned around only to be faced with a row of stunned men, which caused his heart to fill with pride. This was the reaction a change to a superior mount deserved. Compared with horses, that needed to be tamed and fed, bicycles seemed to be more frugal.

"I'm going to open a new bicycle factory in the industrial district, for the production of this transportation tool. But for this we not only need to recruit workers, but we also have to make them known the publicity, promoting them to the whole territory as soon as possible," Roland briefly explained. "This is also the purpose why I called you over today. You will first learn how to ride this bike, and then let Miss Soraya paint a picture of you riding them on top of the planks. I want all my subjects to know that as long as they spent one or two gold royals, they can have the same mounts as the Lord, First Army Commander, Chief Knight, and City Hall Premier Minister all have."

#### Chapter 246 New gunpowder program

What was the symbol of the industrial age, Roland first thought was of a speeding train continuously running down a railroad track, emitting rolling clouds of steam.

The cast-iron cylinder covered with oil, the thick and robust crankshaft together with those huge iron wheels, its rumble and vibration full of vibrant rhythm, as well as the sound of the steam-whistle piercing through the vast sky was what was associated with the machinery of the first steam trains. Compared with the mechanical designs of the later generations, which hid its structure under an outer shell, used high-precision machining to reduce the tremoring and a mechanical system which emphasized sound insulation and sound absorption the first engines undoubtedly showed more directly the power and beauty of industrialization.

He also wished to cover the territory with railroad tracks so that trains towing railway carriages with goods and people could go to and from all part of the Western Territory. Yet even though this was a good dream, it was still just a dream. Actually, it was not unthinkable to manufacture a steam train, only that the large amount of steel needed for the tracks would be far above the production capacity of the North Slope Mine Kiln's group.

Therefore, he could only settle for second best, which left the human-powered bicycles as Roland's best option. The flatter the roads within his territory were built, the greater the benefits of cycling would be. Furthermore, compared with the relatively complex structure of the steam trains, a bike almost didn't require any maintenance at all, besides occasionally putting some oil on the chain.



If Roland wanted to start mass production of bicycles, he naturally couldn't let Anna produce all of them by herself, so he had to first open a factory and train a group of workers that would specialize in the production and assembly of bicycles. Considering that the earliest date for the completion of the Kingdom Avenue would be in next spring, it wasn't necessary that the factory would immediately be able to produce large batches. Due to this, it was possible that the workers could slowly become familiar with the needed production lines made by Anna and would only need to produce a dozen bicycles for the first month. One of the most technical demanding parts was the chain, every chain link had to be made with a stamping press and would afterward be connected with a pin by hand.

However, to manufacture the parts made out of rubber, like the tires and brakes, Roland would still need to rely on Soraya's ability. But as long as all the other parts were ready, Soraya could always draw her magic pen and quickly draw a lot of them. The same was true for the bearings. Since he couldn't produce reliable ball bearings, he could only take a cut off part of an iron part and use it as a sliding bearing. For that, the inner ring became coated with a smooth mirror coating, which produced an effect which wasn't much worse than the former method.

When the first bikes would be sold, only the nobility would be able to afford such an expensive vehicle, but in order to spread this to the masses and create a hype, Roland also intended to implement a payment by installment system to minimize the burden caused by purchasing as much as possible. Of course, only people that were in possession of an ID could go to the City Hall and apply for such a payment.

The three had trained for a whole afternoon, Carter Lannis, worthy of the title of the Chief Knight, was the first to master the skill of cycling; followed by Iron Axe, who was the second to successfully cycle around the garden. Only Barov, who after trying it more than a dozen times was still unable to succeed; and was only able to advance in a crooked line, almost falling to the ground. In the end, Roland had Soraya draw a static scene of him standing beside the bicycle and holding the handlebar.

"Are they all right?" the witch asked after completing the fourth propaganda poster.

"Almost, you only have to add a few advertising words." After thinking for a moment, Roland added, "Above you should write: a new era of mounts, I own one and you can also own one. While beneath you should write: Bicycle factory is recruiting workers. Generous payment, as well as the opportunity to receive a free bicycle which will belong to you. Those who have completed the primary education, can apply at the City Hall."

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After dealing with the bicycle advertisement, the Prince returned to his office to take advantage of the time that was left until dinner and let his guards call Kyle over.

Now, after having finally made a breakthrough for the development of mercuric acid, developing a new generation of weapons was to be put onto the agenda. In the age of firearms, those who had the bigger caliber would become the justice, those with a faster rate of fire would achieve freedom, power brought honor, turrets brought equality... However, an awkward problem was, according to the current kind of development they had, by relying on only the laboratory the production of the two acids would not be able to keep up with the consumption.

For example, if he wanted to increase the rate of fire, he would need to reduce the remnants of black powder, and change to using pyroxylin the smokeless propellant, or some kind of mixture of pyroxylin and nitroglycerine. The same was true for high-powered explosives, it didn't matter if he couldn't produce trinitrotoluene (TNT), he could use nitrostarch instead, which except for its poor stability, would be much more powerful than TNT was.

No matter what kind of the previously mentioned methods he used, he would need a lot of high concentrations of fuming nitric acid, yet nitric acid purification required amounts of concentrated sulfuric acid the laboratory just couldn't meet. In other words, there was no way to produce the two acids at industrial levels. Even if he developed even more efficient weapons, he would once more fall into the plight of having no bullets to use them with.

After the Head Alchemist entered the office, Roland began, "I have a new assignment to hand you.

"Don't hesitate to tell me," Sichi answered while shrugging. "As long as I don't have to attend another honor and award ceremony."

"I need much more acid, but at the moment the chemical laboratory alone is unable to meet my needs, thus your new task will be to design a chemical production system that can produce both acids efficiently and easily."

"Chemical production... system?" Hearing the unknown words, Sichi looked a little puzzled.

"Yes, you have to create a apparatus which can mix several liquids and let them react, so that as long as you put in the raw materials, it is possible for it to produce a steady flow of the finished product."

Roland briefly explained the nature of industrial production, "I don't know much about it, so you will have to rely on yourself to slowly work it out."

That being said, the Prince knew that this was a very difficult task, and it was quite possible that even after years of study, it wouldn't necessarily produce results. After all, the other could only rely on, the basic reaction principles and chemical equations of "Elementary Chemistry".

"I understand," Sichi nodded. "Those ideas you come up with always let me feel refreshed."

"No matter if you can do it or not, I'm in desperate need of the two acids." Roland paused, "Thus for the next month I plan to extend the laboratory at the Redwater River by three more rooms and also to recruit some qualified candidates for the position of a laboratory technician from the citizen. In case you don't have the time to personally teach them, just choose some of your apprentices to administer them. After all, the industrial acid production system will be a very long research project."

Presumably because of the temptation of "Intermediate Chemistry," Sichi readily responded, "Yes, Your Highness."

After Kyle Sichi had left, Roland sighed softly.

In case there wasn't any hope for the industrial acid production system, he could only have Lucia learn the purification of acid. And when all was said and done and the next war was coming, he would need to come up with some even more powerful weapons to gain victory for Border Town.

Roland opened the drawer, intending to eat some dried fish to dispel the boredom, only to discover that the snacks stored within the drawer were all gone now.

After gawking in disbelief, he looked up only to see that a dried fish had been handed to his mouth.

“Were you looking for this?” The blond woman standing opposite asked with a smile.

Biting into the dried fish, Roland couldn’t help but start to smile, “I thought you’d be staying in the fog for the rest of your lifetime.”

“That kind of life would also be nice, at least you couldn’t see me, but I could still see you.” Nightingale curled her lips.

Unknowingly to him, his originally dull mood had already been lifted by a lot. Now where he could once more see the other’s familiar appearance, he couldn’t help but breath out in relief, “Previous you had said that you didn’t know what kind of expression you should show...”

“Yeah?”

“In fact, I think this one is quite good.”

Chapter 247 Graduation Ceremony

“Look, it’s Lady Scroll,” Piper used his elbow to secretly poke Jilly, “I heard that she is the Head of the Ministry of Education.”

“Ministry of Education... The Minister?” The latter wondered, “What is that?”

“That’s the person who manages the teachers. Teachers like your most liked Teacher Ferlin and your most hated loudmouth teacher, Teacher Harben.” Piper explained, “No matter if it is Ferlin or Harben, all of them are supervised by Lady Scroll.”

“Where did you hear that?” Jilly blinked amazed, “Does it come from that important person you had mentioned?”

“Hrumph, of course,” he smiled proudly, “And that isn’t even everything, I know more. Today, it won’t be only the City Hall’s officials who will come to the Graduation, even the Lord, His Royal Highness himself is going to come to the college!”

“Really?” The little girl’s eyes light up, “His Royal Highness is coming to talk to us?”

“Er... this, I don’t know,” Piper touched the back of his head, “Probably.”

After all, he had heard all of this from his big brother, Van’er, who could now be considered as an important person. Originally, he had only been a common gravel worker in the neighborhood, but after joining the militia, he had immediately become a platoon leader, and started leading several soldiers. Nowadays, he was even the artillery officer of the First Army, with a monthly salary of 25 silver royals and the possibility to shake the Prince’s hand and talk to him!

Even though he spent the majority of his time in the barracks, but whenever he came back to visit, he would always bring back interesting new stories and information. And like always, Piper had once more come to his door to pester him for it, asking from the east to the west of everything. As big brother

Van'er's former neighbor and admirer, Piper had often heard news in advance of time from Van'er's mouth.

For example, Van'er had already told him the news that His Highness himself would personally attend the graduation ceremony one week ago. Because of this the First Army had received a protection and alert order and had also held an exercise near the college.

And really, after waiting for a short moment, a team of soldiers, that were brimming with energy, wearing military uniforms all came over, escorting His Highness and the Chief Knight in between them.

As they saw them arrive, the crowd immediately began stirring.

After the soldiers surrounded the entrance of the college, Roland walked into the hall and waved to the rows of students, "My people, how are you? I am the Lord of Border Town, the man in charge of the Western Territory, Roland Wimbledon. Congratulation on being Border Town's first batch of graduates to complete the whole content of primary education."

The crowd had suddenly turned silent, not because of indifference, but simply because most people were so excited that they didn't know how to respond.

Jilly continuously grabbed Piper's arm and exclaimed, "His Highness is talking to us!"

Piper felt an equally inspired, this way, he and big brother Van'er both had close contact with His Highness.

"The reason why you were able to rapidly go through the assessment and reached graduation is because most of you were former students of Karl van Bate, from the beginning you had a lead when compared to the other students. Therefore, you shouldn't become arrogant and complacent, there is still a lot of knowledge in the world only waiting for you to be explored." After a short moment, Roland continued, "Of course, this day is still worth celebrating, and from today on you will have embarked on a path that is very different from others. No matter what kind of work you involve yourself in, you will always be able to receive rich rewards. Today, I am here to express my congratulations to you!"

"His Highness... long live!" Piper didn't know who had shouted first, but afterward, everyone began to shout, "Long live His Highness! I am willing to serve His Highness!"

After waiting for the cheers to abate, Roland said cheerfully: "Next, I will release the diploma to you, as honorary proof for the completion of studies." He opened a booklet, "Piper."

Piper only felt how his whole body began to tremble, he looked towards the Prince, opened his mouth, but he didn't know what the proper words were to say.

Seeing him freeze Teacher Ferlin Eltek turned towards him and waved, "Do not be afraid, come to His Highness."

Rigidly moving his limbs Piper slowly walked out of the ranks, his heart already jumping so loud that he could hear it himself. He then suddenly remembered Van'er frequently mentioning a military salute that was simpler than the knight ritual of the nobility but still could express one's loyalty and devotion, and had been made by His Highness himself. Although he wasn't clear about the specific posture, but he still mustered all his courage and according to his memory placed his hand flat in front of his forehead.

Seeing his movement the Prince began to laugh, nodded and handed the booklet to Piper. "In the future, if you want to show it once more, move the hand a little, so that it is in line with your ear, this way it will be more to the standard... Congratulation on your graduation."

"T-thank you," Piper took the booklet and circled stiff as a log bag to the ranks. Only when His Highness began to give out the diploma to the other people was he finally able to recover.

"Show me what's written on it." Jilly curiously turned her head.

"You will get your own ah, why are you so anxious," Piper muttered in a low voice and opened the booklet cover with trembling hands, only to see a parchment with fine stitches on it. In the upper left corner was a painting of his head, in the middle was the royal emblem with the tower and pike, but there were also a few written lines of text on it. If it was but six months ago, he could only have gone to Teacher Karl and asked him for the meaning of the characters. However, today Piper had already accomplished the basics of reading and writing, so he quietly read it in his mind.

College of Border Town, first course of study graduate: Piper

Dean: Scroll

Issuer: Lord of Border Town, Roland Wimbledon

...

After Roland had handed out all diplomas he clapped his hands and once more attracted the attention of the crowd. "From now on, you can undertake some qualified works ordinary people can't, and all of these jobs offer you a generous pay, with at least ten silver royals a month. In the following, Miss Scroll will inform you about the details of the work you can get from City Hall." He raised his hand to stop everyone's discussion, "You do not have to make a choice immediately, you can go back home and discuss it with your families. After making your decision take your ID and graduation certificate and come to the City Hall for your application."

Taking advantage of the time during which Lady Scroll introduced the several tasks, Jilly stepped close to Piper and asked, "Do you already have any idea what you want to do? I want to go to the bike factory, its payment is higher than that of my father and I will also get the chance to get a new bike free of charge!"

"It is indeed great," Piper replied casually. Recently on the town square, four wide pieces of wood had been erected, on whose tops were paintings of the portraits of His Highness and several ministers, everyone holding or sitting on a strange iron mounts which had become the hot topic of many enthusiastic conversations. And with a salary of 15 silver royals a month, in case it wasn't necessary to have completed the general education, Piper was afraid that the factory would already have been crowded to the point of bursting.

But he had thought that there was another better place to go to.

Since his visit of the Honor and Award Ceremony, Piper couldn't suppress the image of himself standing in the same spot as his former classmate Nana. One day, receiving the glory, to get a reward out of His Highness hand, on top of a stage on the town's square in front of thousands of people.

According to His Royal Highness, he must become an outstanding contributor to the town in order to be honored. In case he took a job to work in the bike factory, he feared that he would never get this opportunity even during his entire lifetime. But neither could he be like Iron Axe and lead the charge during a war, nor did he have any similarly incredible ability as a witch did, so the only example he could follow was that of Head Alchemist Sichi.

Previously he had heard more than once, if he could grab the principal of refining an alchemical product, he would immediately bring immense wealth and prestige to the territory, and would also have achieved something that was worthy of the title of a sage. For that he needed to be neither brave nor have any powerful background, the only thing he needed was a bit of luck... making it to the most suitable way for him.

Thinking until here, Piper had made up his mind.

"I want to go and sign up for a job in the chemical laboratory," he said, putting emphasis on every single word.

Chapter 248 Sudden change

Even during the hot summer, the ice at the top of Hermes' plateau never melted.

Standing on the top of the heaven tower and looking at the far distance, Mayne merely saw a mixture of two colors of the green grass and the white snow from the wilderness behind the walls, resembling a scar left behind by war during the Months of Demons. Within this climate it was impossible to grow any sort of crops, so all the food they consumed in the New Holy City came from Old Holy City that was at the foot of the plateau and brought up by some animal drawn carts.

After staying in the city for more than a decade, Mayne had already become accustomed to the omnipresent cold of Hermes.

"This time it will only be the two of us?" Tayfun pushed the door open and stepped in, "Furthermore, shouldn't we hold the meeting in the secret room?"

"Don't tell me that you are fond of being shut into that narrow place?"

"No... of course not," the old Bishop touched his white beard. "If it wasn't for Heather being in charge of all the rules and proclaiming the commandments over and over, I would be only too eager to exchange information at this spot each time. Even if she became lost in the gossip of the city talk again, I would at least be able to enjoy the scenery of the Holy City below. And..." He smiled and said, "I never expected someone like her who is always punctually, to not return on time."

"Perhaps she had met with some difficulty," Mayne said, going back to the table to take a place. "Or perhaps she is already on her way back."

"Maybe..." Tayfun curled his lips, "You really should not help her look for an excuse, everyone should be able to send word even during their travels, these are words she had often said herself. Even if you are in trouble, you should always report to us first. Furthermore, she isn't alone in the capital of the Kingdom of Endless Winter, so sending a messenger wouldn't take any more effort than raising a finger would've."

“Let’s leave that matter for later,” Mayne said, then pushed three letters over to Tayfun. “We seem to have a problem.”

“There’s trouble?” The latter became startled, but then sat down across of the round table, spreading out the letters, “Are this all bad news?”

“Yes,” he took a deep breath, “It’s so bad, that it can’t get any worse.”

Tayfun lost his smile and began to carefully read the first letter, “... the spread of the demonic plague has been stopped and the whereabouts of Faceless is unknown? Wait a moment, what is the demonic plague?”

“It is the result of the Pivotal Secret Area’s latest research, you do not need to know all of the details, you must only know that it can be regarded as a rapidly infectious disease,” Mayne simplified. In fact, according to what Grandmaster Crow Eye had said, it was a kind of micro-demonic beast, that after special cultivation would mutate to directly attack the human body, and the Holy Elixir able to restrain the disease were also demonic beasts, merely with an even more smaller body. “The cause of the disease cannot be directly observed with the eyes, and thus cannot be healed through conventional methods, and there should only be one kind of person that can stop the demonic plague.”

“Is that a witch?” Tayfun quickly thought of the answer.

“Moreover, it should be more than one.”

After reading the letter, the old Bishop hit with his fist on the table, “This idiot, what was he thinking? Not even mention that he wanted to let the rats encircle and annihilate the mercenaries, he had even sent out Faceless? In the end, isn’t he even aware of the fact how important a pure witch is for us?”

“His plan wasn’t wrong,” Mayne frowned, “If the numbers in the letter aren’t a lie, then a thousand rats should have been enough to annihilate those one hundred mercenaries. However, the other side seems to have powerful long-range crossbows, which can be continuously fired. Regarding this matter, I remember that Priest Taylor who was stationed in Longsong Stronghold had also mentioned that those weapons were the reason why Duke Ryan had lost his battle against a group of miners, the other side’s crossbow were simply too powerful. A shield could significantly reduce the power of a crossbow bolt, but rats don’t have any such equipment.”

“Granted that it was right to send out those dregs, he should still have never easily sent out Faceless!” Tayfun answered enraged, “I’m afraid that after Heather comes back she will fly into a terrible rage, being able to grow a pure witch, furthermore, one with such a rare ability. The training alone is already very energy consuming. From a certain attitude, they are even more valuable than the God’s Punishment Army.”

“But whether it is a witch or the God’s Punishment Army, in the end, their final goal is to annihilate the enemy, and gaining victory.” Mayne slowly said, “Losing some of them during this process is inevitable.”

“Don’t tell me you are thinking of keeping Priest Ferry?”

“Do not forget the law of the Church,” Mayne’s voice sank, “Just viewing the outcome is the way the aristocracy loves to handle such matter. Although this was clearly a failure of Priest Ferry, but his motive

and plan didn't have many issues, it was just that the enemy was so much stronger than expected. Of course, he will be punished, but the specific punishment we will have to be considered further."

"But Heather won't see it like this," Tayfun said, then shook his head and opened the second letter. "Don't forget that she is responsible for arbitration of the Church."

"I'll inform her of it personally."

Not long after, the old Bishop turned the over the letter in his hands, not daring to believe its words: "Timothy's militia troops have committed a sneak attack on the Church in Longsong Stronghold, and even cleanly killed off all of our Priests? He must have gone insane!"

Actually, the content of the second letter came from two sources, one was the report of the strongholds Acting Duke Petrov and one was information that was sent by one of the local believers. All in all, it was certain that a military force from outside the Western Region had sneak-attacked the stronghold, and also looted the church. Not only had they used the Berserk Pills themselves, their main target was also the drugs that had been stored within the church... Therefore, it was a bit unclear from where the troops had come. They could not only be sent by the new King Timothy, they could also have been sent from the Queen of Clear Water Garcia. But after comparing both sides, it was clear that the former possibility was much more likely.

As for the latter's message, Mayne had felt that it was a bit odd. According to the report sent by Petrov, after burning down the church, and withdrawing from the stronghold the other side had immediately gone missing without a trace, but shouldn't they have been intercepted by the group of envoys? At this time the delegation should already have arrived in Border Town, making it impossible that the two groups haven't met yet.

Seeing that Mayne wasn't saying a word, Tayfun soon also became aware of this point and immediately took up the first letter to read it again. Soon the wrinkles on his forehead began to form deep ditches, "Is it... possible that after getting rid of the envoys Roland Wimbledon pushed all the blame onto his elder brother Timothy?"

"We might as well speculate," the Archbishop said, after a moment of silence. "Roland intended to obtain the group of low-cost population, thereupon he had assigned witches to treat the demonic plague and sent all of the refugees back to the Western Territory. Thus, in order to avert the envoys from becoming aware of him keeping witches, he sent his knights out to raid the envoy's camp, not even giving them the opportunity to send out a pigeon and placed all of the blame on the stronghold attackers. After all, the Acting Duke depends on the support of Roland Wimbledon, so providing him with assistance to pass off a fake as genuine is also something which should be right. Of course... all this is merely our own speculation, but the disappearance of the messenger group is indeed too suspicious, and currently we have no energy to send out another group of messengers."

"If it was like this, we should send out troops to punish his arrogance immediately," Tayfun said coldly, "Even if the event of the disappearance of the envoys has nothing to do with him, being able to clean up the witches within the Western Territory is already worth it."

Mayne didn't offer a response, instead, he merely pointed to the third letter, "We should put off our discussion until you have read the third letter."



Throwing a questioning gaze towards Mayne, Tayfun opened the letter. Soon, his hands began to tremble, until he finally was almost unable to hold the thin paper, "How can there be so many witches within the Fjord, and what's more, they have destroyed all of the churches there? Then this letter is..."

"From the Sea Dragon Bay, which was the last bastion of our Church to fall," Mayne closed his eyes, and sank into the chair, his tone suddenly full of fatigue, "There is only one possibility if a large group of witches have emerged without any fore-warning in the Fjord, they must have immigrated from the mainland in the past." Moreover, the letter even mentioned the appearance of an extraordinary, yet within the law and decrees of the Church, it is clearly regulated that once any traces of activity of an extraordinary witch is found, it has the precedence to dispatch the God's Punishment Army to seize her. Yet the islands of the Fjord were simply too far away, and furthermore, the current battle with the Wolfsheart Kingdom is at an anxious moment, which makes it impossible for us to take into account the affair of the other side of the shore.

"Must we, or mustn't we ask the Supreme Pontiff for instructions?" Tayfun asked.

"..." Mayne slightly shook his head, forcing down the over and over rolling feeling of powerlessly within his heart. Maybe this was the Church's test given by God, only after cutting their way through the thistles and thorns would they be able to see God's true intentions. Opening his eyes, he had finally recovered his former serene state, "The matters of the Holy Church of Hermes shall be handed by you and Heather."

"Don't tell me that you want to go to the Fjord?" The old bishop stared at him with wide open eyes.

"I will lead one hundred soldiers of the God's Punishment Army together with some of the pure witches, to thoroughly clean out the Western Territory of the Kingdom of Graycastle, afterward I will take the opportunity to deal with the witches in the Fjord."

"But the law says..."

Mayne immediately interrupted him, "That's only the case when an extraordinary was found within the borders of the Four Kingdoms, but now she is separated from us by the sea and furthermore also had nothing to do with our plans. Do not forget, that in the end, we are only doing this to obtain more land and a larger population, so that we can continue to expand the size of the God's Punishment Army. And by now, it became clear that the 4th Prince is a hindrance on the path to archive the goals."

"But..." the moment Tayfun intended to interrupt, loud footsteps could be heard from outside of the hall, startling both men, who both coincidentally turned towards the door.

Only to see the door fly open with a loud bump, and a magistrate rushing into the room in a helter-skelter manner, "Bad news, Your Excellencies, bad news!"

"Speak a little calmer," Mayne shouted, "Report slowly what you have to say."

"Her Excellency Heather has sent an emergency letter, a large fleet has landed on the coast of the Kingdom of Endless Winter, and by now a large force of the enemy is besieging King's City, the situation is imminently dangerous. The other's sea-faring vessels are all uniformly sailing under black sails, and a blue flag of a sailboat and a crown that is flying at the mast." The magistrate seemed to be extremely anxious, "The delivered news states, that two city gates have already fallen into the enemy's hands and

Her Excellency Heather is doing everything she can to resist with the help of the followers. However, besides the enemy's large number, they are also using the Berserker Pills!"

"What?" For a long moment, Mayne couldn't believe his own ears. Black sails, a sailboat with a crown...

The enemy was actually the Black Sail Fleet of the Queendom of Clear Water!

Chapter 249 New Clearwater

...

The granite steps of the Kingdom of Endless Winter Capital's temple were dyed red with blood, and the sweet and strong smell of fish within the air assaulted the nostrils.

The ground was covered with corpses – there were former members of the God's Punishment Army, followers of the Church, people from their own side and also Sandpeople of the Mojin Clan. They had died in all kind of ways, but most of them had traces of burns, their limbs had been shattered into small pieces and their viscera spread everywhere. Ryan knew that they had died under the fire and impact let out by the fierce Snow Powder.

Whenever he took another step through the city, he felt as if he was placing his feet on a mountain of sticky guts. This battle had demonstrated that the battle will of the Church's Army of Judges and believers could only be described as madness. Even in the face of so many drugs strengthened slaves, they still had not shrunk back at all. Rather they used their own bodies as meat shields and firmly wrapped themselves around the enemy, trying to create a chance for their comrades to cause a fatal injury to their enemy – although the pills allowed people to become all powerful and unafraid of pain, their heart, neck, and head were still crucial areas like before. Her Majesty Queen Garcia simply did not have any extra armor to equip those cheap slaves with.

If they'd not had the snow powder, it would have been really hard to say how this battle might have unfolded.

But we won... Ryan's heart felt like it was blazing, in the end, we still won!

The flag of the Queendom of Clearwater was already flying on top of the city walls, and even the Church's most unyielding stronghold had broken under the waves of their attacks. In this way, the Black Sail Fleet had broken apart the siege they were under and freed itself from the deadlock situation it had been in at the corner of Graycastle. Which allowed them to no longer fear that they would burn themselves out in an endless war of attrition.

Even entering the temple hall he was still able to see the picture of pure chaos, everywhere on the ground were fragments of shattered glass and streams of blood, but all of this was unimportant to him. He went directly to the woman standing at the other end of the hall and fell onto one knee before her, "Your Majesty, all four gates of the city have fallen and are now in the hands of your Black Sail Fleet, the capital of the Kingdom of Endless Winter is now yours."

"Thank you for your trouble, you can get up." Garcia raised her arm, holding her hand in front of him.

Ryan gently took the Queen's hand, placed a symbolic kiss on the back of her hand, and then got up to stand on her side.

“Strange ceremony,” Kabala opened his mouth and said, “You haven’t even touched the back of her hand at all, so why then put on such a display?”

The question came so sudden, he couldn’t refrain himself from frowning, but the other side was the patriarch of the Sandstone Clan, so it wasn’t good to rudely reprimand in public, without any better option he said coldly: “This is a commonly used courtesy between aristocrats and stands for politeness and respect, to touch would show somebody’s lack of manners, but as Sandpeople you’re unable to understand this, so it’s only normal.”

“Is that so?” She raised her eyebrow, then pointed to her own neck, “We are obviously jointly allies of war, who just finished the battle a moment ago, yet you still put this kind of thing on me. The politeness and respect of your mainland people are really beyond comprehension for me.”

Kabala’s neck was enclosed by an iron ring, with a bulge in its middle, seemingly resembling an ornament, but Ryan knew that within it was a God’s Stone of Retaliation embedded. Which with the exception of a unique key was tough to undo, but this key was always in Garcia’s hands. Since the other was a witch, it was only naturally to be careful when dealing with her, but she indeed exerted herself extremely during the fight. In case they hadn’t had her method of command, Ryan was afraid that their slaves that had been carrying the fierce Snow Powder, would have never dared to charge into their believers’ strong defensive line. In the end, even after already opening his mouth, he didn’t know how to refute her.

“Well, don’t argue about such trivial matter,” Garcia interrupted. “You mustn’t forget the purpose of our coming – compared with this vast land, is it impossible for you to tolerate the stone?”

“I simply spoke without thinking the matter through,” Kabala shrugged, “I hope you will honor your promise.”

“Of course, this is the foundation of our cooperation,” the Queen smiled.

“What is your next task for the Black Sail Fleet?” Ryan asked.

“Let’s leave the discussion about the plans concerning the next step until later, for now, we should all take a look at a good show which is about to play out.” Garcia clapped her hands, instructing her personal guard, “Bring her in.”

Not long after, two armored guards led a woman with her hands tied at her back into the temple.

She was about thirty years old, had average looks, with messy brown hair scattered over her cheeks and wore the golden robe of the Church. It was of exquisite workmanship and was made out of materials which could generally only be worn by the Hermes’ Archbishops. However, right now, this gorgeous robe had been ripped in several places, and was stained with blood.

“This woman is an... Archbishop?”

“Yes,” the Queen of Clearwater raised the corner of her lips, “I have gone to several of the local nobility and made them confirm whether she was indeed one of the Church’s three Archbishops, Excellency Heather.” She looked at the other woman and asked, “How about it, am I telling the truth?”

“...” Heather did not answer, but Ryan could see a strong ridicule and disdain within her eyes.

Apparently, Garcia had also seen the expression within her eyes and thus chuckled twice, "I already knew that you wouldn't surrender so easily, that's also the reason why I was so kind and took you to the church. It was so that I could bring you back to your Kingdom of God. Here you may beg for God's redemption as you beg me for forgiveness. First, I will slowly cut off your fingers. Then I will go on to your four limbs and then I will destroy all five of your senses. This way you will fully experience the suffering and helplessness of the citizens of the Port of Clearwater's for yourself."

"And afterward?" the female Archbishop suddenly asked, "What will you do when you are crushed by the Church's army? Are you intending to drift across the sea for the rest of your life, never to come close to shore ever again?"

"It is needless for you to worry about this," Garcia waved towards the guards. "In comparison, the Church's Army is nowadays also attacking the walls of the Wolfsheart Kingdom, and in this way turning Hermes into an undefended city. This should be much more important for you to think about this than about my personal destiny. I might be unable to set foot on the land of the New Holy City. However, I should at least be able to reach the ruins of the Old Holy City at the foot of the plateau. You should already have heard that the water of the Styx's River in Graycastle's extreme south, it's easy to light, but hard to extinguish. This time I've taken a whole shipload with me."

One of the personal guards pulled out his dagger, approached the Bishop laying on the ground and cut off two of her fingers.

Heather, however, merely bite her teeth not releasing any shout.

Seeing this, the Queen of Clearwater climbed up the flight of steps, sat on the large throne, used her right hand to support her chin and showed an expression that was full of interest.

... soon three other fingers were cut off, in this way her left hand had now been turned into a bare meat palm which made beads of sweat appear over Heather's forehead.

"Must you do this?" Kabala shook her head, "If you don't want to intimidate the enemy or receive intelligence via torture, this kind of pure torment is unnecessary."

"Unnecessary?" Garcia laughed coldly, "You should ask her what they do with all the witches who fall into the Church's hands? But I guess you wouldn't be interested in knowing this."

"Hahaha..." At that time, Heater, having already lost all her fingers, suddenly began to laugh, "You're simply unable to understand the greatness of the Church. And clearly, you will never understand how important the Holy City actually is. Ignorance is your lifelong companion, even on the eve of your destructing, you will still be unaware of it! , Hermes will let you see what it means to wield true power – besides destruction, there is no other end for people who go against the Church!"

"Is that so..." Garcia raised her legs and smiled. "Then I will have to wait and see, won't I?"

Until the Archbishop had died, she never cried out any plea for mercy. However, what surprised Ryan even more, was that she had never cried for God either, or begged for his salvation. At the end, when Heather was already losing her consciousness due to the excessive loss of blood, her expression turned from cold and detached to dreadful. As if she wasn't suffering any punishment, but was rather standing

at the sideline and looking at a farce which had nothing to do with her – within her two eyes, Ryan though he could already see his own doomed future.

Feeling this kind of indescribable oppressing feeling, almost made him feel breathless.

“Chop off her head and hang it over the church’s door.” After confirming the Bishop’s death, Garcia gave an order. She then looked to Ryan, “Now, we can begin to talk about the next step.”

“Yes, His Majesty,” he forcefully suppressed the discomfort within his chest. “Do you intend to attack Hermes?”

“Yes, but we won’t dispatch our whole army.” She spread out a portable leather map, “Taking with it the least required amount of sailors and the Eastern Region’s slaves, the Black Sail Fleet will follow the River westwards, and go to the Old Holy City. However, we will instead directly go south, crossing Eternal Winter’s border, with Wolfsheart Kingdom’s capital as our destination”.

“Wolfs... heart?” Ryan got started.

“Wolf King Woolf and I have already reached an agreement,” Garcia explained, “In case I help him ward off the Church, he will give me a hand in taking over the whole Kingdom of Eternal Winter. So if the Church does not recall their troops, the ships loaded with fierce Snow Powder and Styx river-water will turn the Old Holy City into a sea of flames – unlike the New Holy City, which is surrounding by high city walls, the old city does not have any walls. Thus, without enough manpower, they won’t be able to stop the slaves’ attack from all directions.”

“However if they retreat, the western border of the Wolfsheart Kingdom will be able to receive breathing room, and with the joined border of the two countries, we will also be able to work together against the Church in the future!”

“Indeed,” the Queen of Clearwater nodded, “We will also be able to obtain a firm grip over Endless Winter for ourselves.”

## Chapter 250 End of Midsummer

Seeing that the second month of summer was coming to an end, Border Town was on the verge of greeting summer’s final month, which was also the hottest of all of the months, all the more leaving Roland in a mood where he didn’t wish to leave the castle.

Aside from using it to make gunpowder, the rest of the saltpeter brought in by Margaret had been used to lower the room’s temperature – nowadays a bucket of saltpeter with a kettle soaking in it had been arranged within almost all of the castle’s rooms. This way, not only were they able to show the effects of endothermic cooling, but it also allowed them some ice water which they could drink to quench their thirst. Only in this way was he able to keep from sweating as he sat in the office each day.

With the exception of Anna, he had called all of the other witches to stop their work. Outside of their daily practice and learning, they were mainly gathered in the hall of the first floor, either chatting or comparing their skills in Gwent against one another, displaying an appearance that was of both harmony and happiness. However, Anna... It wasn’t that Roland didn’t want her to rest, it was rather that she didn’t hate the heat at all. Compared to holding ingots which were still red from the fire directly in her

hands, the hot temperature of summer was nothing to her. Even when standing next to the fireside and producing steel for the whole afternoon, she did not even shed one drop of sweat.

In order to reward Anna for her hard work, Roland had recently specially created some ice cream desserts. For example, the later generation classical types of ice cream – made from stirring a mixture of egg yolk, butter, milk and syrup. Which were then cooled off once more by using saltpeter. Anna was exceptionally fond of this soft and fragrant ice-cold snack, every time he saw her take a small bite of ice cream, her lake-blue eyes would turn into stitches, making him feel very pleased.

Moreover, looking over the monthly reports sent by the City Hall was also a joyous pleasure of his.

By now, Border Town's population had once more doubled, almost reaching a total of 18'000 people. On top of that, with the addition of Longsong Stronghold's monthly "transferred" batch of serfs, breaking through the 20'000 mark next year would not be a problem for him. Leaving out the size of the territory of Border Town or the number of villages and towns belonging to it, this scale could almost be compared with the size of Redwater City, the city of Valencia, and King's City.

However, something which was somewhat regrettable was that even though the population might have grown a lot, the quality of it hadn't improved by much. At present, there were still more than 1000 of Border Town's native inhabitants who had yet to receive an education. Furthermore, it would still require one year before they could obtain the capacity needed to graduate without a hitch – although Karl's previously opened college had fostered a batch of talented students in advance, their number were still less than one hundred, which when compared with the general population, seemed insignificant.

Perhaps I should first carry out an education program for the Eastern refugees, and not start with the steps of building enough living quarters, Roland thought, after all, receiving the education earlier would only bring benefits and not cause any harm.

The current development of the town's factories was also excellent.

After more than half a year of construction, the industrial park now had three operating factories: there were two steam engine production plants and a bullet processing plant. The number of workers in the first plant had also expanded from the 10 blacksmiths at its opening to the 100 people it now had. The follow-up worker were mainly natives – which was also something he wanted to see, a group of apprentices would gradually grow into craftsmen, who would then provided the foundation needed to raise the next group of apprentices.

The worker of the second plant were the artisans belonging to the Crescent Moon Bay Caravan. Just during this one month, they had already grasped a roughly understanding of the machine tool's usage, even though their yield was still quite bad, but compared with the blacksmith of the first plant, the first-month performance of these craftsmen was obviously better. According to the previously signed contract, all of their produced steam engines were owned by Roland. With those two factories Border Town could now manufacture almost eight to ten steam engines per month, which was also the town's primary means of income.

As for the bullets factory, after its establishment, it had been directly handed over to the First Army, who not only placed a lookout post at its entrance, but also arranged for patrols all around the factory,

and even the production was the responsibility of the soldiers. After a week of trial operation, nowadays, they had already begun the mass production of a new generation of bullets.

Roland plan for the assembly line couldn't achieve full mechanical production, no matter if it were the primer, gunpowder or warheads, they all needed manpower for the filling compaction. The main processing tools were the two mechanical stamping machines. The one could press the thin copper pieces previously cut by Anna into the shape of the cartridge case, while the second was used to push the primer towards the bottom.

The soldiers only needed to place the mercury fulminate evenly between two thin pieces of paper, glue the edges of the two papers together, press the primer towards the lower part of the cartridge then finally place the cartridge with the primer's end at the bottom into the ring-shaped ammunition case, before the entire process was complete. As for the process of loading and compacting the black powder and putting on the projectile, it was still done in exactly the same way as the previous practice.

There were only a small number of people working in the factory around forty people, which could still almost produce more than 500 bullets every day. For the future, Roland intended on turning these forty people into his full-time processing personnel to maintain the standard operation of the bullet production factory.

The next step on Roland's to-do list was to open a soap factory, and a perfume factory – the former would play a very important part in the military industry, while the later might be able to open up a new income channel for the town. As for the bicycle factory, its opening could still be delayed, it would be opened early enough as long as it went into full production by the time the Kingdom Avenue was finished.

"Your Highness," Nightingale said, pushing open the doorway, "Maggie and Lightning are here."

Both girls run over from Nightingale's side, and after stopping in front of the desk, they pointedly asked. "Were you looking for us?"

"Tomorrow is the start of the final month of summer," Roland pulled his formerly written reply to Tilly out of the drawer and placed it in front of Maggie, "When you return to the Fjord, remember to help me hand this over to Tilly."

"Ah..." For a moment Maggie froze, only able to look at the message with blinking eyes, before she took the envelope and carefully placed it into her personal bag, "No problem, goo!"

Seeing an expression of sudden understanding from the other side, Roland feared that she had already forgotten the important matter of her monthly reports. Restraining the smile within his heart, he thought of the town's charm which seemed to be really powerful.

"I have entirely forgotten that tomorrow is the beginning of a new month," Lightning tapped against her forehead. "Does it mean that we will be unable to see each other for a long time?"

"Tilly's plan to sweep the Fjords clean of the Church had delayed my plan to come back last time, this time I will be back as soon as possible," Maggie shook her white hair that was about to reach the ground, "Wait for me to come back to explore the eagle nest together... Goo!"

"I got it," the other little girl said, curling her lips, "It's a promise."

“You have your own mission,” Roland spread out a map of the region south of the town. “This is the map you had previously drawn, do you still remember the location of the shoal near the mountains?”

“I remember,” Lightning pointed at a place on the map, “Probably around this area.”

“Well, you will fly back to it again, and this time you will take Maggie along. Then you will place flags on both sides of the shallow beach and the junction of the mountains, and also mark them on the map,” Roland ordered, then looked towards Maggie, “If Tilly agrees to send the witches, you will lead the sailboat to this shoal, and I will welcome you at the top of the mountain.

“Send witches?” Lightning asked curiously, “Could it be that there will be new sisters coming to Border Town?”

“I do not know yet,” Roland said, a smile on his face. “It all depends on Tilly’s answer... but I have a feeling that she will agree to it.”