

Witch 621

Chapter 621: Sleepless Night

"This is simply... God's Punishment." Iron Axe sighed. "They can only be passively attacked as they can't even see the shadow of their opponents. There's no way for the ordinary enemies to complete the mountain path with the gunfire on their heads."

Witnessing the power of howitzer, the chief commander of the First Army naturally knew the amazing effect when it fell within a densely gathered marching platoon. The first shell landed as far as five kilometers away in front of the battlefield. The enemy was running madly throughout the way, or consuming all their energy before the war, or moving forward fearlessly with the incomplete platoon to the battlefield. Of course, the most likely scenario was dispersing in an uproar and turning into escape instead of marching in.

"Unfortunately all the enemy we have to face is not normal," Roland smiled and said, "and not to mention that there's only a limited amount of shells, otherwise, we can easily wipe out the enemy with the two Longsong Cannons."

As Longsong Cannon was firing with the complete ammunition, the firing speed was as high as eight shots per minute. The firing efficiency could definitely be considered as an absolute insanity in this era. Since the alchemist from King's City moved into Neverwinter with a large batch of apprentices, the production of double base propellant had been rising steadily, and the number of shells had become the biggest limitation—the fuze trigger could only be manually produced by Anna currently, and its extremely precise mechanical structure had restricted the production of howitzer.

"Your Majesty, all the 20 cannons have been completely fired," Van'er, the battalion commander reported after several repeating fires. "A total of six valid target data was obtained, and most of them were roughly distributed in the second half of the mountain road."

"That's good. That's all for today." Roland nodded.

After all, the test shells required customized production. Although it was utilizing the solid bullet, the shape and counterweight were exactly like the grenade with the fuze installed—only Anna could handle such an exquisite task, so she would make time to produce a certain amount of test bullets every day for the Artillery Battalion test shooting purposes.

"Do you need to go anywhere else to have a look?" Iron Axe asked.

"No, I'll go back to the camp first, and you continue to arrange the training for the soldiers," Roland contemplated for a moment before he shook his head and said.

"Yes, Your Majesty," he bowed and said.

Returning to the campsite, Roland sighed extensively while leaning back against the couch. He realized that there was nothing much left for him to do, or perhaps, he had done what he could and the rest could only depend on the fate.

The church finally responded five days ago. According to Maggie's report, the city door of Holy City was opened, and countless men and horses gushed out from the city, heading towards Coldwind Ridge in an orderly line. Looking down from the sky, the shining silver armors of the warriors looked like a river of striking waving light flowing through the Impassable Mountain Range.

At the same time, the spy placed around the area of the old Holy City and Hermes highlands had sent a secret letter, stating that the scale of action of the church was unprecedented, even the crowd in the city activities was dramatically decreased.

Obviously, the enemy was swarming over.

After receiving the news, Roland immediately rushed to the front line. And his arrival had boosted the morale of the First Army to the maximum, the war that decided the future of both parties was approaching.

There were more than 4,000 elite soldiers: one team of reserved knights offered by Duke of the Northern Region, the preliminary investigation group organized by Lightning and Maggie, Sylvie's fire guide that never missed, and the combat witch who scattered around the campsite. It should be a complete preparation. Even the movement of the church was totally in accordance with the battle plan formulated by the Adviser Department, and the residents in Coldwind Ridge were evacuated. Thus, even if the enemy intended to use Berserk Pills, they would only consume the believers in Holy City or the forced residents in the other kingdom.

The opening was considered pretty perfect.

However, Roland was a little worried.

He was worried about the pure witches.

It was still unknown for the form they would appear to be and in what capacity would they intervene in this battle.

In order to prevent the casualties caused by the enemy's sneak attack, the witches in the front line had to be very cautious these few days. They were all gathered in a hall. Sylvie and Nightingale were divided into two groups to take a turn on night watch. The entire camp would be awakened by Echo's siren once the magic reaction was encountered.

As a result, the church had not taken any further action other than sending soldiers to take over Coldwind Ridge. Roland did not even see any pure witch.

He was not sure whether the enemy was planning an earth-shattering conspiracy, or simply disdained to disturb, and planning to crushed him into pieces on the official battlefield.

Anyway, all he could do now was to continue to wait.

...

Roland was lying on the bed early after dinner. However, he could not fall asleep until the bright moonlight was shining through the window slit onto his bedside. He put on his clothes and walked out of the bedroom. Nightingale who was staying outside the house immediately flashed over to him.

"Is there anything wrong, unable to fall asleep?"

"Slightly, it's probably due to too much straw below the bed." Roland rubbed his neck and pulled out a wheat leave from his clothes. "It feels like something is poking my back when I lie on it."

"I feel the same." Andrea who was on the same early midnight team agreed. "Not to mention moving a big comfortable bed over but at least it should be layered with two extra silk pads. Duke of the Northern Region is too stingy."

"Ladies and gentlemen, we're at war, not on an outing," Ashes angrily said, "It's considered good to have a shelter, don't be so demanding."

"Of course, it makes no difference for someone who has thick and rough skin."

"It's better than being weak and fragile."

"I think we'll need to have another duel to see who the weak and fragile one is."

"You'll understand after we finish with the church."

"Hold on... Can I place a bet?" Shavi put her hand up and said.

Nightingale pulled Roland aside and said, "Don't bother about them, it's a nightly routine."

Roland shook his head while smiling. "I would not put them together if I knew it earlier." Due to the fact that Nightingale's scope of investigation was far smaller than that of Sylvie, the combat mission of the early midnight team was handed over to the three poker players group. They would be the strongest offensive group with Nightingale. While those who were arranged for the late midnight team were mainly defensive-based. The members were Agatha, Breeze and Iffy, no one could manage and block the enemy better. "What about the others? Can they adapt?" Roland asked.

"Sisters from Witch Cooperation Association aren't as picky as you are," Nightingale blinked and said, "and they had experienced the days without shelter and food during their escape, so they could simply close their eyes and fall sleep in this situation."

"Well, looks like I'm the most impatient one..." Roland sat on the step and kept quiet for quite a while, looking up at the stars and finally said, "What will we do when all these come to an end?"

Nightingale sat beside him and said, "You're getting nervous, aren't you?"

Roland touched his nose in guilt and said, "I'm just being a little emotional. If we can't defeat the church..." He then thought, "Will Neverwinter continue to run under the current order? Will the kingdom be completely devoured by the church, or will it return to the previous path of the noble ownership? And what about Anna and the rest of the witches... Can they really safely flee to Sleeping Islands?"

He had devoted to forging the land and developed a strong feeling towards the people unconsciously.

"Don't worry," Nightingale held onto his hand and softly said. "As I mentioned before... You won't be hurt as long as I'm still alive," she paused and said, "not to mention that our story has just started."

Chapter 622: The Flames of Thunder

Roland had just come to the command post with his breakfast when he received Maggie's report in the next morning.

"The church is on the way, coo!" Her nervous voice could be heard from the magic stone. "A team has left Coldwind Ridge and it's moving forward to the defense line, coo!"

"How many of them?"

"One, two, three... five of them in total!"

Roland who was preparing for the frontline battle conference sat back down and said, "What? Five?"

"They're dressed in shimmery armors, holding the Holy City's flag up high. What a show-off, coo! Do I need to report to the cannon markers?"

"Uh... No, you just continue to keep an eye on what Coldwind Ridge will do." Roland put the bread into his mouth, wondering, "What's the church thinking?"

"They're probably coming to beg for mercy?" Nightingale twitched her lips and said.

"If this is the case, the church shouldn't send the army to invade Coldwind Ridge." Roland frowned.

One and a half day later, the platoon reached the frontline of defense. The priest who led the troop claimed that they were the emissary delegation sent by the church to meet with Roland, His Majesty. At the same time, there was a hand-written letter from Supreme Pontiff for the young King of Kingdom of Graycastle.

"What do you think?" Roland gathered the Adviser Department and the witches, and asked, "Could it be a trick of the pure witches?"

"I'd like to ask for your thought before this," Edith spoke, "Will you accept their peace negotiation if the church wants to surrender?"

Roland rejected the possibility without any hesitation, "Unless they dismiss the God's Punishment Army and bring all the senior management and those who kill the innocent to trial. However, I don't think the church will accept this term."

"Indeed," Edith instantly answered, "In this case, you shouldn't meet the emissary delegation. Not to mention if there's any conspiracy, the negotiation process may affect your determination."

"I agree with you." Agatha nodded. "Even though there's no magic reaction on five of them but the witch's ability is very strange, no one can be sure what's going to happen next."

"Perhaps we should just capture them for interrogation and get rid of them secretly after we know the actual purpose of them coming here," Iron Axe made a cut-throat gesture and said.

"Your Majesty, Kingdom of Graycastle isn't Iron Sand City," Sir Eltek quickly advised, "It's better not to do so, it's going to ruin your reputation when the news spread."

"I know." Roland contemplated for a while and looked at Iron Axe. "Get them to leave the letter and send them off."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Roland could not help but wonder. "What would the supreme ruler of Hermes say?"

"Is that going to be an advice or an inducement?"

After several inspections by Sylvie and Agatha, the hand-written letter by the Pope of Holy City had finally reached Roland.

Opening up the exquisite cover, the handwriting on the letter was surprisingly graceful.

And the content of the letter surprised Roland.

He described the origins and purpose of the church in an honest note and revealed the existence of the great enemy of mankind—the demon.

If he did not know the four-hundred years old secret before this, the content was probably enough to make him confused and inconceivable.

Is this the strategy of the enemy?

Confusing the opponent with the dust-laden history truth and taking it as the sincerity for peace negotiation?

As a result, after the first platoon returned, Coldwind Ridge sent another platoon of soldiers. And there were also five of them.

Of course, Roland did not meet up with them as well but asked them to simply leave the letter behind instead.

The content of the letter was more in-depth this time, and it had mentioned the Battle of Divine Will other than the brief introduction of the Union before the church was formed—the pope believed that the 400-years cycle battle of the different races was a deities' test towards the mankind.

Roland was contemptuous towards this idea but he could feel a slight uneasiness in his heart.

Coldwind Ridge had continuously delegated several emissary delegation troops to send a few hand-written letters by Pope to the frontline battalion within a week time after that. The letters did not reveal too much new information, and the content was getting shorter and shorter. Roland simply turned a blind eye to the suggestion to combine the efforts from both sides to confront the demon which was written behind the letter.

The church only stopped sending any new messenger when the hot summer days arrived.

The enemy had come in full force this time.

"This is Lightning, the enemy has entered the ninth zone! Repeat, the enemy has entered the ninth zone!"

Hearing the voice that came out from the Sigil, Cat's Claw nervously flipped through the booklet in his hand. "Uh... Ninth, ninth..."

"Quick!" Rodney shouted, "The shell is already installed!"

"It's already at the fastest speed!" Cat's Claw shouted, "Ah... It's here, angle 26, pitch 15!"

Nelson quickly swang the handle. "26... 15, complete!"

"Ready to shoot!"

Cat's Claw quickly covered his ears upon hearing the order.

"Fire!"

Jop quickly pulled the matchlock, the 152cm Longsong Cannon instantly issued a stirring roar, the sound wave mixed with the air flow blowing in the face. It was like a hammer beating on the chest of the Cat's Claw, making his blood boil. He could feel the ground below his feet started to tremble under the activation of the huge recoil.

"This is power," Cat's Claw thought to himself, "Longsong Cannon is the weapon that's more suitable for the men to operate, comparing to the 12 pounds small metal pipe."

The only regret was that he was not able to see the scene when the shell landed.

Acting boldly, Cat's Claw came close to the Magic Stone in Leaf's hand and said, "Uh... Miss Lightning, did we hit the target?"

"Ah ha... Nicely hit," the little girl replied.

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Comparing to the rear cannon operator, Lightning and Maggie could observe the enemy's movements and strikes taken more directly.

Lightning was floating at an absolute safe height and looking down with the telescope in her hand. She realized that the howitzer launched just now fell on the west area of the ninth zone about four meters deviated from the estimated falling point. It was probably due to the change of wind. However the actual effect was not too bad. The mighty army of the church had filled the entire mountain path. Given that, a scarlet flower would instantly blossom as long as the shell fell on top of the army.

It was just like the previous hit.

She could not see the entire process of the flight of the shell until the landing. The first thing that came into her eyes was the dark red light, following by the highly-sprung dust and gravel and a fleeting ripple spreading from the light, leaving a trail of dust. The sound of the explosion would not be heard until a while later as if both did not happen at the same time.

When the smoke was blown away, the shell's point of fall was left with a burned black mark, and around it was a hideous mess of dead bodies; the residual limbs could be seen everywhere, and the sticky blood and organs had dyed the shiny armors with a touch of bright red color. The Judgement Warriors at a further distance looked totally different, and there were no obvious wounds on their bodies, but they

were still spitting out blood and fell on the floor. Some of them could still walk for a few meters before falling, and the crooked way they walked made them look as if they were drunk.

Only one shelling could cause the church to lose nearly 50 men.

Lightning was waving her fist happily and said, "You deserve it!"

And she shifted her gaze to the next shelling zone.

"Attention, the enemy is passing through the twelfth zone, please fire, repeat, please fire!"

Chapter 623: Battle to the death

Under the artillery bombardment, the church disorganized and gradually separated, while the God's Punishment Warriors, who were unaffected, hastened their advance and left the Judgement Army behind.

Suddenly, Lightning noticed a strange scene.

A rider dressed as a priest, shining with yellow light, quickly traversed the rugged hill road from behind and stabilized the scattered army again. The army proceeded along with the rider's guidance. This time, instead of being lined up in orderly rows, they were dispersed so that the later grenades failed to achieve the first significant results.

That was a pure witch.

She was preparing to arrange two cannons to attack the area where the pure witch of the church would soon pass, when she heard Maggie screaming.

"Careful!"

Lightning suddenly pulled her figure more than 10 meters upward, before a swarm of locusts passed beneath her feet like a brown cloud.

After failing to attack, they twisted together to form the vague appearance of a man. "Rotten bastards, how dare you to go against the church? Go to hell!"

"Maggie, continue to guide the cannons!" Lightning pulled down the windbreak, pointed a pistol at the swarm and said, "Killing compatriots make you feel so glorious? Go die!"

...

Enemies entered Danny's vision. This time they had many more warriors than previously. The misty mountains were covered by the sheen of armors. The God's Punishment Warriors did not use the tactic of a slow forward covered by shields, but rather charged right from the beginning.

Looking at the ocean of rushing enemies, he could feel their great momentum. His sweaty palms made his gun sticky. He had only seen this scene on the wall when the Months of Demons came, thousands of demonic beasts, regardless of death, insanely charged at the walls. Anything in their way would be

ruthlessly torn apart. But now, the First Army was facing enemies more powerful than the demonic beasts.

But Danny did not fear it. The demonic beasts could not break that low stone wall that the Militia was fighting atop of, and now the corps of the church would be barricaded by the First Army's defense in flesh!

What was more, the woman he wanted to protect was just behind their position.

When Danny stepped into the trenches in the morning, he saw a familiar figure in green that turned around and smiled at him. Despite knowing that it was out of courtesy, that smiling face was still like a blooming flower bud rooted in his heart.

He had never thought that she would come with Roland to this battleground.

Anyway, he would not allow the enemy to break through the line of defense.

It was a pity that Lord Iron Axe expelled him from the precision shooting team after he violated military discipline. If his weapon had not been replaced with a revolving rifle or he would have taught the God's Punishment Army a lesson.

"They just crossed the 300-meter line!" Malt reported the distance of the enemies. "Spear throwers!"

"I see it." Danny patted the little man on the head. "Take care of yourself."

Malt, who was the victim of his own actions, after his injuries had healed, was demoted back down to normal flintlocks. However since he was an accomplice, rather than confinement, the commander-in-chief was lenient and only docked him a month's salary.

The truth was that this time the enemy's offensive charge was so rapid that four machine gun forts failed to completely suppress the God's Punishment Army. As dust in the wake of the God's Punishment Army and smoke from the field artilleries filled the air, several loopholes in the interlaced fire network appeared.

The God's Punishment Army soldiers that rushed ahead crossed the musketeers' red warning line.

"200-meter line, throwing spear!"

"Lie down!"

"Lie yourself down!"

Continuous cries came from the trenches. Danny shot all five bullets in a round at a stretch and then fell down to the ground. At the same time, he reloaded the gun. After the attack of the spears, he got up and pulled the trigger, firing toward the nearest enemy.

At that distance, revolving rifles were as powerful as the new weapons. Danny could almost see the stony faces of the God's Punishment Warriors which looked as if the surrounding artillery and gunfire had nothing to do with them. Until a bullet penetrated the God's Punishment Warrior's chest and neck and blew his head, did he tremble to stop and spray the blue blood.

As more and more enemies crossed the line of fire, Danny quickly used up three preloaded cartridges. According to the predetermined plan, he quickly brought a gun to the second trench.

Just as he got into the trench and saw his team-mates, a black shadow fell from the sky. Suddenly a God's Punishment Warrior jumped up and crossed the barbed wire in front of the trench waving a big sword to split him apart!

"Run!!!" He caught Malt behind him and pulled him to his bosom.

There was a loud noise!

Danny suddenly felt that his hand was numb and fell down.

When he opened his eyes, Malt, who was in his arms, was cut off at the waist.

Malt watched him, with his mouth open. He spat blood but could not speak anymore.

Danny felt a buzz in his brain and shouted, but the God's Punishment Warrior had already rushed over him. Danny's arms were sliced off and his face was nearly split by the God's Punishment Warriors.

Suddenly Danny could even see the rough blade, stained with his blood.

Just as he thought he was going to die, another cold light flashed in his eyes. The two swords rubbed burst into flame and the God's Punishment Warrior's weapon was dropped to the ground!

A woman with a long black ponytail that hung down to her waist and eyes flashing with a golden light appeared above the tunnel like an insurmountable mountain.

The God's Punishment Warrior that lost his swords did not flinch at all and punched to at her.

In an instant, he fell to the ground dead. Without any resistance, his head was crushed.

The blue-white mixture splashed on Danny's face.

"Let's go."

She glanced at the frightened soldiers and spat out her words coldly before engaging the other two God's Punishment Warriors that had rushed over.

"This guy is hurt!"

"Get him out of here!"

"With Malt," Danny said in a hoarse voice, hugging the little man in what was left of his arms.

"He's dead!" Someone shouted. "Do you want to kill us all?"

The teammates behind him grabbed his severed arms and pulled him towards the back of the trench as the lifeless Malt gradually disappeared from Danny's vision.

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Lightning flew to the back of the swarm at full speed and pulled the trigger.

She had figured out the details of the enemy. Killing every insect in the swarm would be an arduous task, and the pure witch had already lost some magic, especially given that Maggie metamorphosed into the natural enemy of the locusts, a swallow. Maggie kept herding the swarm over and forced it into a ball before pulling out a pistol shooting it. Finally a vicious curse and then a roar entered her ears.

The pure witch could not survive for too long.

When Lightning was to about to withdraw and reload, the locusts suddenly turned around and rushed toward the ground.

"Maggie!"

Cried the little girl.

"Owh!"

Goshawk folded her eagle wings and swooped down to the swarm below with her ferocious mouth.

"What's this? It's... impossible!" The sound of the locusts turned into a cry. It wanted to turn around to escape but it was too late.

Maggie swallowed the swarm effortlessly and chewed twice. "Terrible!"

Lightning shrugged and stuck her pistol in her belt. "Because they aren't roasted or seasoned."

Until then, she had not noticed that there were more bloodstains on her body. During the first explorations, she came into contact with the swarm several times and the teeth of these locusts were like hard rasps. If they were ordinary people maybe they would not easily avoid this flexible attack.

Looking at the camp covered with craters and corpses, Lightning took a deep breath. "We don't need artillery guidance here. Let's support His Majesty."

"Awh!"

Chapter 624: Devastation

"This is an absolute slaughter."

Nail thought sitting on the top of the tower, hands on his machine gun grip.

As long as the trigger was depressed, this steel weapon would keep spouting out the flames and shoot bullets toward the enemies. The position targeted by this weapon would be covered by the death of the network; where all lives would become fragmented like fallen bowls from the table.

Being able to dominate the battlefield from such a high position left him feeling passionate.

So did his comrades in his team.

"The 66th! Look, that poor guy has been disintegrated."

"What're you counting? That's obviously the 68th!"

"Look over there, a guy is still rolling on the ground. Just kill him."

"His intestines have already spilled out, save your ammunition and let him slowly struggle!"

With a click, the fabric tape slipped down and another box of bullets had come to its end.

"Cover the third trench. I'm going to reload!" Nail cried to a machine gun team in the tower.

"Don't worry, and just leave it to us."

His teammates quickly brought over a box full of bullets. He put on a single thick glove and gripped the smoking barrel of the machine gun with a special caliper. He held the pipe with one hand, disassembled it easily, and placed it lightly in the open space.

According to the requirements of training, soldiers could not fire continuously except under extraordinary conditions. So the barrel must be replaced after a box of bullets was shot to avoid barrel deformation with overheating. It was said that this kind of black steel pipe which could fit the thread of the gun chamber perfectly was made by the witch, Miss Anna. Every pipe cost about 50 gold royals, which made the team members treat their guns like their children.

After they installed the cooled barrels, the jarring percussive sound once again rang out from the tower.

"Look, there's a witch in the east of the first trench!"

Suddenly a cry rang out around him.

"That's not a witch, idiot! That's a pure witch, Miss Nana's enemies!"

Nail also saw the target his teammate pointed out.

The woman in a red robe might have been hit on the leg by a flying bullet. She was on the ground and slowly crawling forward. The robe behind her dragged a light blood stain.

He aimed the gun at the pure witch but a feeling left him feeling a little overwhelmed and he did not pull the trigger.

From her figure, she looked as though she may have not yet grown up.

"Shoot, what're you waiting for?"

"I..."

A string of sand quickly swept over her body the moment he hesitated.

She stopped struggling and blood spread from her belly, like a small red flower.

"Hell, we just lost a result!"

"Stop saying that." Another one interrupted him while patting Nail on the shoulder. "You're tired, leave it to me."

He took a deep breath and said, "No, I'm fine."

Nail recomposed himself.

This was a war with the church. Regardless of age, the enemy was the enemy and they were still not strong enough. Nail secretly clenched his teeth and left his compassion behind him.

"Wait, what happened in the middle of the third trench?" The observer in another team suddenly exclaimed. "The ground collapsed?"

"My god, what's that?"

"Damn... pure witches! More than one, just kill them!"

Nail quickly turned the gun and saw a square pit suddenly appear in the middle of the third trench. Its walls were flat as though they had been cut by a knife. A woman in a black veil jumped out of the trench and stood straight with her hands behind her back.

When he fired, he faintly heard a sharp sound of wind.

The moment he turned his head, the butt of a rifle hit him in the face.

Nail suddenly felt everything go black and fell to the ground. Before losing consciousness, the last scene he saw was that his teammate raised a rifle toward him.

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Roland stood on the command platform with a telescope, watching the defense line where the situation gradually became clear.

Some of the enemies had crossed the first three trenches and were making their way to the fourth. However, soldiers retreating from the front line made the subsequent defensive firepower more and more concentrated. Under the continuous fire of two machine guns that were occupying the high spot on the towers, the God's Punishment Army's offensive momentum obviously showed a decline.

By such a trend, they were not likely to make it to the remaining five trenches and artillery positions. The fire on the ground was too fierce and many church corps had been bogged down into a trench. The First Army would inevitably set up a blocking point at each exit of all longitudinal grooves, the advancing speed of the enemy would be drastically reduced and the speed advantage of the God's Punishment Army would no longer be obvious.

At this moment, the Judgement Army gradually stepped onto the battlefield. This army suffered heavy losses under the attack of the Longsong Cannon, but had not yet been totally routed, which this was out of Roland's expectations. It was due to the pills of madness that made the soldiers berserk. But compared with that of the God's Punishment Army, their threat was clearly much lower. The pills of madness could not make people immune to fear. When the Judgement Army soldiers were subjected to the double attack of field artillery and machine guns, the will of Gods could not save them.

In fact, the greatest contributor to this battle was the bunkers on both sides and the eight Mark I type heavy machine guns in the tower. In order to ensure that they could fire continuously, not only did they need enough bullets but each team was equipped with nearly 10 barrels.

The only problem was that in order to employ this strategy, they had emptied their reserve of bullets. Of course, it was extremely economical to eliminate all the main forces of the church here.

During this time, Sylvie sometimes observed their magic reaction. But those pure witches had not played a significant role in the war. They followed the God's Punishment Army marching forward, but soon disappeared into smoke and artillery fire.

The outcome had been set!

Church of Hermes would soon become the dust of history.

Just as Roland thought that, suddenly there was an emergency!

"Pure witches ahead of us!" Sylvie, who also stood on the high platform, warned. "Four, no, five!"

The surface of the third trench suddenly rose, as if something was lifted up, and then it quickly fell down pulling the surrounding barbed wire and stakes together into the ground.

A woman in black veil appeared in the collapsed position. She did not take any action, she just looked straightforward.

A strange scene then occurred.

Numerous soldiers in the trenches turned their guns, aimed at their chin and then pulled the trigger.

A mass of mist burst from the trenches like a red fountain.

Four machine guns forts misfired at the same time.

Soldiers who were not affected shot her as if they just woke up.

Suddenly there were several shots in her body and she fell into the pit on her back.

Seizing this chance, the Judgement Army, under the effect of the pills of madness, rushed toward the defense line.

Chapter 625: The Decisive Battle

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"Lady Zero, Margie appears to be worn out."

Vanilla turned around and said with an anxious look.

"Hold on."

Zero watched overhead with a grim expression. Although she was underground, she found a beam of light shone on the dome. The God's Punishment Army was moving forwards along the rampant trenches, encroaching on the enemy's position gradually. They, obviously, progressed slower and slower.

They could only choose to attack in a roundabout manner as each strategic pass was heavily-guarded. Therefore, they would be inevitably shot down by the snow powder weapons while throwing the spears. The gap between trenches could only be filled with the bodies of the soldiers, and the blue blood overflowed in the pit bottom.

It was even harder to march atop the ground.

Although the God's Punishment Warriors could leap over the wire entanglements which could not be destroyed, they would be likely exposed to the enemy's firepower. The flame was blazing all the way, in particular, in four towers in the rear of the defensive lines, which blazed as if it would kill people at any time.

The third trench would probably be the ultimate limit that the God's Punishment Warriors could march to.

Dame it! She did not ever expect that things would actually come to such a deadlock.

She thought that she had prepared well for the arrival of this day,

Such as locating the accurate position of where Roland Wimbledon was.

The mission of the messengers was nothing more than a pretext to meet Roland, but it did not matter if they did not meet him. The letter written in the name of the pope revealed the secrets of the church and the Battle of Divine Will. People would not take it seriously when hearing such impossible information, but it would be much more convincing if the letter was written in the name of the pope.

Besides, what she wrote was true. Roland could still not make out her real intentions from the letter, even though he had witches skilled at handwriting recognition.

A special powder was daubed on the letter. It was an alchemic product developed by Pivotal Secret Authority that emitted a smell that ordinary people could not detect. Each time a person touched the letter, the smell would accumulate and be imbibed into the skin, making it hard to remove, even with water.

Zero firmly believed that the letter would be delivered to Roland as no rulers would not be interested in these kinds of shocking secrets. Other people had no chances to read the letter and so in this case, Roland would have the strongest smell on his body. Although there were no differences between Roland and other people, Vanilla could easily sniff it out by virtue of the smell.

Vanilla could sniff out various unimaginable smells when she cast her ability. In her opinion, bloodstains after a month would still emit a faint stench and there would be a strange odor on furs when animals were in the rut.

At the moment, Roland was just a thousand steps away from them.

Zero even took all costs to use the God's Punishment Army and Judgement Army to divert the attention of the Graycastle's defensive line. Some Pure Witches of less importance even became the sacrificial lambs in consideration that there were witches who might perceive magic power in Roland's Camp. However, she, the evil backstage, was hiding underground and moving between the rocks by means of Margie's Magic Ark.

Blackveil was the real game-changer to win this war.

As one of three pure witches of the highest rank in Holy City, valued by His Holiness O'Brien, her ability was extremely terrible for common people who had no defensive abilities. The people that had seen her would feel the inner feeling of dread when she was young. Her power was further strengthened when

she was in adulthood. The strong sense of fear would occupy people's minds as long as they saw her eyes, and thus they would kill themselves or hurt people around due to their maniac surmises.

At the same time, the derivative ability was also powerful after Blackveil's awakening. The simple eye-to-eye contact could cause not only fear but also unclear illusions. Although her ability could only impact one person at a time, it would also play a vital role at a critical juncture. That was also why Archbishop Tayfun did not doubt the pope's orders.

At the gaze of the Eyes of Death, Zero took it for granted that Roland's troops would be defeated instantly.

Everything seemed to go smoothly, and Zero did not realize that she had the wrong idea until the war begun.

She did not expect that she had still underestimated the power of snow powder weapons.

Dense smoke and fire enveloped the mountain pass. With the help of snow powder weapons, Roland launched attacks from 5 kilometers away, and the troops of the church were heavily hit before touching the defensive lines.

She changed the battle tactics at once to attack the position but found that the God's Punishment Army was also in difficulty.

The seemingly shallow trenches were much harder to seize than the towering walls. The warriors wrested the transverse trenches from the flying bullets. However, they had never expected that the enemies did not care about the loss of the battle line and just retreated in order. They left the pass to the God's Punishment Army that had suffered a heavy cost and then continued to intercept them, relying on the following passes. During this period of time, Zero even saw an extraordinary witch.

Margie's Magic Ark could not be operated all the way to her target as her magic power had declined along with the combat capability of the God's Punishment Army. However, the current situation was still a far cry from her expectation.

Isabella perceived that less than half of enemies were wearing God's Stones. Under such circumstances, she had to gather them together if she wanted more people to see her. The God's Punishment Army was now marching forwards to the third entrenchment and the enemies were too sparse in the rest of entrenchments.

Once Blackveil was exposed to the enemies, she could only have a limited time to cast her power. How many enemies would notice her in an instant? She would be hit by the snow powder weapon before they came back to their minds.

"Your Holiness, the ark... will be torn apart soon..." Huge sweat had emerged from Margie's face, her voice slightly trembling. Obviously, the excessive use of her magic power was a heavy burden on her. At the same time, there were cracks in the walls and the dome became dim. Zero realized that she had to make a choice.

Or rather, she had no other choice at all.

"Go up! Take action as scheduled!"

Margie took a breath and started to operate the ark to draw close to the ground. In a second the ark rushed out of the earth's surface, her magic power dissipated at once. A pungent smoke taste, boring and continuous roars along with a bloody smell, suddenly filled all around.

Blackveil turned around and glanced at Zero profoundly, and then leaped over the square-shaped pit left by the ark.

Foreseeably, it was the last time that she would serve the church.

The battlefield quietened down unexpectedly as if an invisible giant hand nipped people's throats.

"Isabella! Start using 'Infinite'!" Zero ordered.

After several ringing peals, a bunch of bloody flowers appeared on the back of Blackveil, and then she dropped down into the pit like a rootless fallen leaf.

Grinding her teeth, Isabella took the sigil in her hands.

The black and bright magic stone turned dark and gloomy at once as if it absorbed the sunshine around. Under the function of 'Infinite', an invisible ripple spread out and extended all over the battlefield. The amplitude of the fluctuation of the ripple was exactly the same as the God's Stone Roland wore but in an opposite direction. Under the influence of the ripple, the black hole formed by the God's Stone of premium quality vanished into the air.

Almost at the same time, Zero magically changed into a beam of light and flew towards the King of the Kingdom of Graycastle a thousand steps afar.

In a second flying out of the pit, she overlooked the whole battlefield from the sky.

There were hundreds of soldiers, who were also common people, lying down in the trenches,

Looks of shock and panic on their faces.

The Extraordinary was galloping fast.

While the Judgement Army was charging forward.

Everything seemed to come to a standstill until the lethal fire on the tower appeared again. And the whole battlefield returned to its normality. The yell of fighting, howls and explosive sounds mixed together, forming a thrilling ode.

She saw the prince with gray hair and felt the smiles from God upon her as she got closer and closer to the platform.

...

Nightingale witnessed the quirky change. In the misty world of white and black colors, the magic power of the beam of light was extremely expressive, like a mass of blurry cyclones coming towards the rear of their position at a tremendous speed.

She knew that it was the last and the most critical strike that the pure witch had launched.

"Protect His Majesty!"

Shavi stretched her hands to prop up a wide magic barrier, large enough to cover the whole platform.

Andrea summoned the Magical Longbow to shoot at the beam of light with arrows of light, bright as the sun.

In a bid to withdraw, Nightingale grabbed Roland who had lost the protection of the God's Stone as she had realized that the beam of light was targeted at His Majesty, Roland.

But it indeed moved too fast.

Instantly, the beam of light passed through the arrow of light and the magic barrier and easily caught up with Nightingale and Roland, even the Mist could not block its tracking.

Nightingale pushed Roland away without any hesitations and turned around to crash straight into the beam of light.

However, all of her efforts did not work. It all happened in a split second. The beam of light pierced through her body and went into the body of Roland.

"No..." Nightingale cried out, heartbroken.

With his eyes widened, Roland's body shook hopelessly and fell backward feebly.

Chapter 626: Battle of Fate (I)

Was everything... a dream?

Roland blinked his eyes as he walked step-by-step to the fence in order to look down at the school's panorama against the sunset.

No one was in the spacious playground. Under the orange sunset, the goal looked lonely and its very long shadow was reflected on the ground. Far away were the familiar library and dormitory and the sunset painted the luminous windows with a ray of gold.

Roland had studied here for almost seven years so that he had been familiar with everything. He knew that he was standing on the rooftop of a teaching building and that this was his favorite place to spend his spare time.

Roland had many memories here.

Such as that iron gate behind him that was driven by the warm wind to open and close constantly.

This iron gate was billed as a unique view of the teaching building's rooftop, and its cover looked as ancient as a cultural relic excavated by archaeologists. When he had come to this school, the gate had already been torn and tattered. As long as it was pushed lightly, it would make noise continuously as if it were out of breath. Yet it was extremely quiet after it was opened and then closed. As far as Roland was concerned, the gate would fall apart soon, but still, at the time of his graduation, it stood still on the rooftop.

"But since this was a dream, why did I look the same as Prince Roland?" thought Roland.

Roland lowered his head to see his slender hands, and then touched his gray hair on his shoulders. Apparently, the height and shape were different from what they were when he indulged himself in his studies.

"So... What had happened?" thought Roland.

Roland frowned, after a while he remembered that the last scene he had seen was that Nightingale had pushed him away, and then after a flash, he had only seen her panicking and despairing face.

"Who on earth... are you?"

A tactful and intangible female voice suddenly appeared beside him.

Roland was scared and abruptly turned around only to find that a lady with long white hair was walking toward him. She had a pair of ruby-like eyes and her red and white robe dropped down to the ground with a golden pattern embroidered on its bottom, which obviously did not belong to this era. Besides, the golden throne of her head showed her identity.

"You're a pure witch of the church?"

"Yes. But I'm also the 15th Pope of Holy City of Hermes." She paused and continued to say, "I'm Zero, while you're definitely not Roland Wimbledon."

Well, Roland frowned and said, "So did you create this place?"

Everything made sense. The flash should be Zero's ability that Nightingale had wanted to help him to escape from. And the scenery before him should be an illusion or a virtual space, something like that. The moment he opened his eyes, Roland thought that he had come back to the modern world again.

Even though Roland knew that perhaps the church was originally the Union, it never occurred to him that the pope was a pure witch. Therefore, it was so incredible to see that these witches boldly turned other witches into inhumane monsters.

"No, you created this place." Zero walked toward him step-by-step and said in an exciting tone, "The place is hidden deeply in your memories and appears frequently in most of your daily life. But I'm curious as to where this is. We both know that Prince Roland of the Graycastle would have never lived in such a place."

"Why should I tell you?" Roland moved to the other side of the fence and kept a distance from her.

What could he do to shake off the illusion? Roland thought of many ideas in his mind. Maybe he could jump off here? Based on his experiences of nightmares, he would instantly wake up from a nightmare if he jumped off of a high place.

Zero smiled and said in a sweet tone, "It's okay that you won't tell me. I'll spend a little of time finally figuring out that who you're, where you're from and why you've become Prince Roland."

Would she finally find out? "You mean to tell me that you'll read my memories?" Roland asked in a very cold tone, "Don't flatter yourself."

Zero suddenly stopped and said, "You know what? I would explain to each one trapped in the illusion the effects, rules, and the impact of my ability. Everyone except for you."

"What?"

The moment Roland asked, he found that Zero had appeared in front of him. And a sudden pain made him lose his hearing.

Roland trembled and lowered his head to only find that a knife was inserted into his chest. Roland wanted to shout, but he could not make any sound. His chest was destroyed completely and the opening and closing of his thoracic cavity could not squeeze even a little air into his throat.

Just like an electrical current, the strong pain spread over his body. Roland would rather die immediately than suffer one more second.

"Because I don't like anything that's confusing."

At the other end of the knife was Zero's calm face. Half of her body was splashed and wet by Roland's gushing blood. Due to hypoxia and the self-protective syncope of his brain, he quickly became unconscious.

But the next second, Roland stood still beside the fence, his body intact. In addition, Zero also stood far away from him, like she had never left that spot.

"What had happened?" Roland took deep breathes. "Was it just an illusion?" He covered his chest that was moving up and down fiercely, and the wound still hurt. Looking down, he saw the shape of a pool of blood.

"Damn, what had happened just now was true," thought Roland.

Staring at the knife held by Zero, Roland was quite surprised in his heart because there had been nothing in her hand before.

"Could she create something out of nothing?"

Just at the moment, Zero rushed toward him again. She was so quick that Roland could not see her clearly.

Roland instantly turned around to escape, but just after a step, he felt a pain in his abdomen.

Then, Roland experienced death again. Zero wielded her long knife to cut him into two halves. The pain this time lasted longer than last time and he fell down into his own blood and outflowing guts. The lasting pain made him shout so miserably that even he was frightened by his own voice.

After his second resurrection, Roland had realized something.

This is a nightmare that can't be broken by jumping off of a high place or from feeling fierce pain. It's like a cyclical arena.

Damn it. What're conditions of escaping from this? What about defeating the white-haired witch in front me?

"Zero can create weapons out of nothing, but what about me?" Roland gritted his teeth and started to concentrate his spirit. "If I had had a shield, I would be able to fight against her."

A blue light flashed.

A transparent anti-explosive shield appeared in Roland's hand. He had stopped her attack, but there was a deep scar left on the shield. What was worse, Roland was blown away by the huge clash.

"Well, this was what had happened," Roland said a dirty word in his heart.

When rolling over, Roland dropped the shield and manifested an automatic rifle.

When Roland raised the rifle to shoot, Zero disappeared.

"What was going on?" thought Roland.

"I'm right here."

Her voice emerged next to his ears.

After a white light flashed, his arms dropped to the ground, so did the rifle.

Chapter 627: The Intertwined Battle of Fate (II)

"I must admit that I'm surprised by your ability to comprehend," Zero walked to him and said while squatting down, "You're the first one who can comprehend this and counterattack without being given any explanation."

The Pure Witch picked up the rifle on the ground, carefully explored it for a moment and said, "Rare materials, exquisite processing techniques... Is this a snow powder weapon as well? The items you created are really scary, however, they do not pose much threat to me. I've been watching the entire battle closely. Most of the slender tubes in the tunnel and the thick iron tubes behind the camp rely on the operators and you could not even see my movements." She shook her head and said, "It's impossible for you to defeat me, I've devoured over a thousand warriors and even an Extraordinary over the years."

Suddenly, a green plastic box appeared between them.

A loud explosion suddenly rang through the roof. The glass in the classroom crunched and even the entire floor of the building was blown up with a hole in it. The air current swept the old iron stairwell door to the ground.

"It's not because I have a strong ability to comprehend, but your stage setting is too lousy!" Roland reappeared in the corner of the rooftop. He was gasping for air as the sharp pain was still fresh in his memory. He could now understand the feeling of those who were amputated before they died. He 'made' an explosive to bomb both Zero and himself into pieces at the same time as he could not tolerate it anymore.

"Lousy?" Zero who was newly born raised her eyebrows and said, "It's in your memory."

"However, it's created through your ability. It's six o'clock in the evening, the busiest time on the campus! How is it possible that there's no one on the field? It seems exquisite but it's just a setting full of loopholes." He was thinking of a countermeasure while delaying for time. "Is this the way you devour your opponent? Force them into despair so that they'll give up and obediently dedicate their knowledge and skills to you?"

The skills of the Pure Witch were somewhat similar to the Extraordinary, or at least Roland had only seen such power and speed on Ashes. The Pure Witch could only be hurt by powerful explosives from which he could not escape either as it was difficult to hit her with only a normal firearm.

However, was it really that simple? After three resurrections, Roland could already feel his sweaty back. His heart was pounding faster than before as if he just ran around the field and he was physically weaker.

Perhaps the number of the resurrections was limited.

In this case, it was not a good idea to bomb an entire building with high explosives... The score was already three to one now and he must quickly regain the position.

There was no doubt that what he needed was a weapon that could both attack and defend.

"Although I don't quite understand what you're talking about, however, isn't it good to surrender?" Zero said with her head tilted to one side, "It's a wise choice even if it means that you have to give up as death is a torture to anyone."

"You can keep those words to yourself." Roland loudly shouted. "Ironman!"

A red metal armor suddenly appeared in front of him and he quietly recited "Start the program" in his heart after walking into the armor from behind.

A narrow display screen appeared at the front of the helmet, however, the armor did not close up by itself and no artificial intelligence responded to his command.

The armor fell to the ground straight away, even before he managed to move forward.

Zero's blade had already cut into Roland's neck when he got up.

The entire world suddenly turned upside down and he could see his body helplessly kneeling down before he passed out.

"You should at least give it some joints if you're trying to create a plate armor," the Pure Witch knocked on the empty armor and said, "However, I don't think that a hollow and thin iron sheet has much effect."

Roland's heart quickly sank after his fourth resurrection.

Although the death was not painful, Roland had realized a harsh truth, the thing he created without understanding its principle was just an empty shell. For example, the display screen on the helmet was simply a camera.

"Damn, I can only use the stupid method now."

While Zero was still pondering on the metal armor, a few pieces of steel plates as thick as 10 centimeters appeared out of nowhere and fell beside him, forming into a blockhouse that could hide only one person. A protected weapon control station rose on the top of the blockhouse and it was carrying 40 millimeters grenade machine gun. Roland quickly plunged into it and locked the entrance while controlling the weapon station to fire at the Pure Witch.

This attempt had finally worked.

Zero could not avoid the destruction scope of the grenade machine gun even when she approached the blockhouse again. Roland continuously shot the grenades around the blockhouse and the flying fragments had pierced through her body while making a banging noise as they hit the thick steel plate.

Unfortunately, Roland was unable to find Zero's resurrection position at once and she had quickly retracted to hide in the corner of the stairwell to avoid the explosive grenade that was coming towards her.

A radiant splendor appeared in the darkening sky when he was just about to 'create' another weapon. A golden light was swirling above the clouds and the dazzling tassels had replaced the sunset which was cast into the shade.

The scene was familiar to him.

Suddenly, a myriad of golden thunder fell on top of the building and Roland was instantly engulfed!

...

After the fifth death, Roland was drenched in cold sweat as if he just came out of the water and his calves and arms were uncontrollably twitching.

The blockhouse was completely melted by the Sigil of God's Will. However, it had not caused much damage to the ground other than the ground was charred. The unreasonable magic power was still working in this battle.

"Just give up." Unexpectedly, Zero did not closely pursue. "Your energy has already reached the limit. Any additional battle is meaningless as you'll not get anything other than endless pain."

Roland clenched his teeth and strongly held on to himself. "Why does she keep asking me to surrender when she can obviously win this battle if she continues to pursue and attack? Is the output going to be different for her if I surrender myself instead of being killed after exhaustion?"

"You should now understand that both creation and death consume energy. The exhaustion of energy means failure. Everyone has a different energy level and it's beyond my expectation that you can last until now." She stretched out her arms and said, "By the way, I have an over 200 years of experience. That will be doubled if it includes the time I spent in the soul battle. In other words, my energy is enough to endure hundreds of deaths and your efforts will only make you more desperate."

"Hundreds... Is it a boast or the truth?" However, Roland felt that Zero was not lying as she looked relaxed.

And, Roland did not have much energy left to consume.

Chapter 628: The Intertwined Battle of Fate (III)

Roland's experience from dying five times led him to realize that the biggest difference between the two lies in them themselves. The powerful weapons could easily affect himself and the fixed bunker would become the target of the Sigil of God's Will. Not to mention, in all likelihood, Zero knew the recipe for snow powder, if she became desperate to perish with him or the roof directly collapsed, he was not confident of the outcome as he did not have many lives to consume.

He would lose this battle for sure if he could not control the Pure Witch.

"What should I do now?" thought Roland.

"A cage? An oriented mine? A power grid? A laser fence?" Roland had rejected all the answers that were constantly appearing in his mind as none of them could really confine Zero. The position after death could not be defined as it could be at the original spot or any corner of the roof. His energy had obviously hit bottom and constantly creating consumables was just wasting his remaining resurrections. The next failure might be his real death.

"I have to deprive her of her mobility."

"And, I have to also keep the roof intact."

"I have to also kill her hundreds of times in a shot..."

"Is it... Is it possible?"

Roland took a deep breath and asked, "During these 200 years, how many times have you fought such a battle?"

"Over 1000 times or more, however, only a few that really impressed me," Zero answered, "They had a stronger will than you do, however, they were still defeated by the endless deaths. There are only a few people who'll choose to continue being tortured while facing a hopeless ending." She paused and said, "Are you still going to stick to your previous approach?"

"I indeed don't have much hope, however, I simply want to fulfill my curiosity before everything comes to an end. You've never failed in over 1000 battles?"

"I would not be standing here if I failed."

"How come?" Roland slowly sat down to save the little energy he had left. "Did no one think of creating lava or a deep sea to defeat you before you attained such great power?"

"This isn't a new idea, but unfortunately, no one can do it." Zero walked in front of him. "Just changing the place that we're standing in consumes no lesser energy than death. Changing the world is just a delusion and only God can do it."

"There's no God in my world," he said lamentably.

"So, have you decided to give up?" The Pure Witch Zero bent down to lift up his chin and she said, "In this case, submit to me and follow me."

"Sorry." Roland smiled while holding on to both her shoulders and gently pushed her away. "I still want to try again."

Zero arose and pulled out her weapon, however, she found that the distance between both of them was constantly growing larger.

Her expression quickly changed as she realized that she was unable to move any closer to Roland. Her body was still sliding backward even when she was running at full speed! Zero looked down and noticed that the floor beneath her feet had become as smooth as a mirror without her knowing.

However, she would not slip even if the ground was so smooth which was contrary to her common sense. Her body remained relatively still as if it was nailed to the ground regardless of what she was doing.

"Your amazing mobility doesn't seem to work anymore," Roland said, "Even a monster like you can't move a step closer without the support of friction."

"What did you do?" Zero bent down and tried to slow down or change the direction using both her arms and her legs. However, it was futile.

"I simply made a small change to the battlefield." He changed into a more comfortable sitting position and said, "It seems that the energy consumed for changing the environment won't be too far off as long as the changes aren't too big. Have you ever heard of the law of inertia?"

"Inertia...?"

"When an object is not subject to external forces, it will either stay still or be in constant linear motion. Of course, you can also call it Newton's First Law." The ground dramatically changed as soon as Roland hit the railing of the roof and stopped!

The steel frame grew out of the ground and continuously extended into the sky followed by the metal sheet cover which was wrapping up the black frames. Soon, a monument with glowing cold light appeared behind Roland. Each layer of the monument was evenly divided into around 10 rectangular units which looked like an elongated Rubik's cube. There was a black hollow steel tube coming out from the center of each of the rectangular units which were pointing towards Zero who was still sliding at a constant speed.

"It's my turn now."

Zero noticed something was wrong. She held up her longsword and the golden light appeared again.

However, this time Roland was faster than her.

The nearly 100 steel tubes roared at the same time. The burning gunpowder instantly heated up the air to over 1,000 degrees and the rapid expansion of the air generated by the high pressure pushed the shells out of the tube towards the Pure Witch, Zero with a speed of 1,900 meters per second. The loud roar was deafening and the campus which had just fallen into the night was instantly lit up as if the sun just rose from the roof.

There were a hundred billion turrets and trillions of starlights!

The night sky was lit up by the fireflies which just flew in. The densely-gathered light spots drew a dazzling track in the night sky and poured onto the ground in a crisscrossing motion one by one. The fireflies were making a shrilling noise while struggling to flap their wings as if they were announcing their arrival to the world.

Then, they crashed to the ground.

The light of the fireflies was magnified by tens of thousands of times at that moment, their bodies turned into broiling broken pieces which splattered all around... A roaring explosion noise was followed by the dazzling light which was combined with the echoes of a whistling sound in the sky. However, Roland was no longer able to hear the sonata formed by the intertwined metal and gunpowder as his eardrums were already broken by the high-pitched sound of the first flame that was emitted by the black monument. The gigantic barrel was roaring below him and the boiling hot air had hurt his cheek. However, he was very happy.

The world had become quite different as he was standing on top of the square monument.

The entire roof was divided into equal parts, like a chessboard. Each block was pouring with cannon. He could see that Zero was being thrown up and down by the explosive air currents, like the falling leaves in a storm. Nothing could live under the coverage of gunfire. The deadly fireflies would follow and devour her again once she was reborn. She was unable to avoid this as she could not even change her direction on the non-friction ground but helplessly she watched the numerous light spots with a long flame tail landed in front of her with a whistle.

"It's impossible!"

Zero shouted incredulously. "You can't create things that don't exist out of nowhere, this... doesn't exist!"

The ground was still as clean as new without a trace of scratch after the wash of gunfire as if it had nothing to do with the flying fireflies in the sky. "It's smoother than a mirror and stronger than steel. It's impossible for such thing to exist!" The Pure Witch Zero hysterically screamed.

Although Roland could not hear her, he could guess what she felt. He could not turn himself into Superman, but he could create a power that was no less than a superman.

He changed the distance between atoms within the ground surface.

Atoms were closely attached to each other with a strong interaction, like the soldiers who neatly lined up. This surface was almost absolutely smooth and incredibly strong. The tetrahedron carbide was as soft as water in front of it.

Zero was completely confined as she could not run or hide and was surging up and down with the gunfire. It was nothing to do with will but the great disparity of knowledge.

She had tried to activate the Sigil of God's Will several times. However, the continuous gunfire would not give her any respite and she gradually lost the sustainability of her appearance.

"Please, let me go!" Her voice was ringing in Roland's heart.

"Are you going to kill your sister?" It became Garcia's plea after a moment.

"Stop, you're such a monster. You're killing your family member!" Followed by the reproach of King Wimbledon III.

However, Roland remained unmoved.

"It's time to end it all," he answered in his heart, "I'll defeat the demons on behalf of you. Rest in peace!"

"No, I won't let you go!"

A dazzling blue light lit up the entire night sky along with Zero's scream.

After that, the entire world fell apart.

Chapter 629: After the Decisive Battle

There was clamor outside of the tent. Nail, who lay on the ground in a daze, turned his head to see that the thick curtain had been lifted by a corner and that His Excellency Iron Axe was bending down into the tent.

"Co-commander." He had never expected that the commander of the First Army would come to visit him. He quickly sat up straight and saluted.

"No need for etiquette." Iron Axe walked to his bedside and sat down, crossing his legs. "How's your injury?"

"It doesn't matter. Only two teeth were broken." Nail touched his swollen cheek. "I'm not that hurt."

"All right." Iron Axe then added, "Miss Nana has been so busy these days that, and since your wound wasn't too severe, you'll be recovering on your own. When the rescue is over, you can inquire and see Baron Pine to repair your teeth, and the First Army will pay for it."

"I can fully understand, and there's no need to bother her with such a little injury. After all, Miss Nana is very tired..." Nail hesitated for a moment before continuing. "How about Hound? He..."

Hound was the one who had grabbed a teammate's spear and hit Nail to the ground, stunning him with the butt. Nail could still remember the moment that the other side had aimed a gun at Hound.

"Don't worry. He's alright," Iron Axe said to comfort him, "He was pulled down by the guards the moment the other side raised their gun. He attacked you because of the pure witch's magic. So he won't be punished and has returned to the team to train."

"Really?..." Nail was a bit relieved. "I thought I was dead at that moment. What about the other teams?"

According to the arrangement before the war, each bunker had been arranged with two machine gun teams and a five-man guarding platoon. So, even if the enemies approached a bunker, they had the ability to defend on site. In addition to the two or three soldiers in charge of carrying ammunition on the team, all the others wore God's Stones of Retaliation. The seemingly perfect action appeared flawless.

"These accidents happen," Iron Axe said with his hands outstretched, "but, it didn't cause much harm, or we wouldn't be standing here."

"Was the church forced back...?" The minute he asked, Nail realized that it was an idiot's question. "Um, I want to know what happened after."

"The enemies launched their final charge but failed to cross the fourth trench. Both the God's Punishment Army and the Judgement Army were completely defeated, leaving more than two thousand bodies at the front of their position. They fled in haste... We won the battle."

What confused Nail was that Iron Axe was not very excited, and instead, he said all this in a neutral tone. Iron Axe did not offer the reason, and Nail was not bold enough to ask.

Then there was a long silence.

After a long while, Iron Axe sighed and clapped him on the shoulder. "Since you're alright, have a good rest, and I'll go visit the other wounded guys."

Seeing that Iron Axe was about to leave, Nail gathered his courage and stopped him. "Your Excellency..."

"What's up?"

"I, I want to leave the First Army." He whispered.

Iron Axe frowned. "Why?"

"Maybe, I can't be a machine gunner anymore." Nail lowered his head in shame. Every time he closed his eyes, he would see the scene where that young woman in the red cape was sprayed by a machine gun. "I wasn't able to immediately shoot at the enemy..."

"Your target was an underage pure witch, right?" Iron Axe interrupted him. "Your team already reported that to me in their postwar summary. I don't think that your idea is correct, but it can't be wrong. So, I'll just ask you one thing, are you going to betray His Majesty?"

"No! Your Excellency, of course not." Nail quickly denied. "My life belongs to His Majesty."

"So, I'm not going to approve your request," Iron Axe said without hesitation, "This is currently the most critical moment for the First Army and even City of Neverwinter. I demand that everyone in the army abide by his duty and guard His Majesty Roland Wimbleton at all cost. And, we have to spare no effort to do it! You can't be a gunner. Well, you can be an observer or a protector, but you're absolutely not allowed to leave the army, understand?"

That last sentence from the commander was in an authoritative tone.

"Ye-yes! Your Excellency!" Nail said, punctuating with a military salute.

"That's all." After Iron Axe left, without looking back, Nail felt deeply startled.

"Were we not victorious? Why is the most critical moment now? And, why did His Excellency Iron Axe so solemnly command the First Army to protect His Majesty Roland at all cost..." A terrible thought suddenly occurred to him. "Did his? Did his majesty have an accident during the battle?"

As soon as he thought this, he shuddered.

"How's it going?" Calvin Kant walked into his daughter's bedroom to see that she was picking up clothes.

"The First Army and the witches have surrounded the castle tightly, and even I can't get in." Edith curled her lip. "But, if he gets better, the news will leak, so... I guess, he was the same as before."

"What about you? Are you ready for a long journey?" Duke Calvin Kant picked up a black veil evening dress from a mountain of dresses on the bed and looked at it carefully. "Is this one too revealing?"

Edith rolled her eyes. "I didn't say that I was going to pick it, and wasn't that a gift from you? At the time, you intended to let me wear it to attend Timothy's dinner party."

"Ahem... really." Calvin put down the gown sheepishly. "Do you think that His Majesty's troops will withdraw to City of Neverwinter?"

"Probably." Edith stuffed several coats into the open suitcase. "Although the church has been totally defeated, much of the First Army's supply was consumed. Adviser's Department will take about a month to regain operational ability. If His Majesty Roland is fine, there's no reason for him not to stay in the Northern Region for a while. But, if he's unconscious, no one can guarantee the overall morale. Under this condition, Iron Axe absolutely wouldn't dare to continue attacking Holy City, so what he'll do shouldn't be difficult to guess. "

"Are you determined to follow them back?" Calvin asked with concern, "If something terrible happens... to His Majesty, the kingdom may fall into civil strife, so it'll be safer for you to stay in the Northern Region."

"That's why I'm going to City of Neverwinter." Edith stood up and slipped her long hair over her shoulder and onto her back. "It has become the new starting point for the kingdom there—whether Roland is there or not makes no difference. And, his coma presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the Kant family."

Duke Calvin Kant could not help inhaling a cold breath. "Are you going to..."

"Your thoughts are too simple." Edith shrugged. "The only one who can replace Roland is his sister Tilly Wimbledon, and I'm afraid that no one can connect the ordinary people with the witches except her. But, there's the problem that she's also a witch herself, so when dealing with the affairs of nobles, she needs greater help from the ordinary people." She paused. "That person will undoubtedly be me. Dad, this is the best shortcut to climb that pinnacle of power and I don't want to miss it."

Chapter 630: The Captive Pure Witch

Never before in her life had Nightingale felt so remorseful and regretful.

She thought that as long as she stayed with Roland, no one could hurt him.

However, without any bruises on her body, Nightingale stood in the bedroom of the castle in Deepvalley Town while Roland lay unconscious on the bed.

There was not any magic reaction inside Roland's body and his internal organs were all intact. Therefore, Roland was neither cursed by a Seed of Peaceful Death or something like that nor hurt by a powerful ability capable of destroying organs. Even though Agatha was knowledgeable, she could not distinguish this ability, let alone its breaking method.

The witches had used all of the regular wake-up means they could think of, but they were all useless. Roland did not respond to any outside stimulus. If he was not breathing, Roland would have been considered dead.

Now, Nightingale finally understood the warning from Agatha.

There was no absolutely safe defense, even in front of the witches' abilities.

But her understanding was too late.

At this moment, hurried footsteps came from behind the door. Then Lightning opened the door and shouted. "The pure witch has woken up!"

The witches in the room all instantly got excited.

"Everyone stay calm. It's useless for us all to go and investigate her," Wendy said, "besides, we're not clear about her ability. For the sake of safety, Miss Agatha and Nightingale can go and figure this out for us."

Respected deeply by the other witches, they all quietened at Wendy's calm tone.

Nightingale took a deep breath and nodded to Wendy. "I'll handle it."

Based on her experience from being a runaway for several years, Nightingale was fully aware that her negative mood would not help to change the existing situation. She could not shirk her responsibilities because of a mistake she had made, no matter how big and especially at such a critical juncture.

She must bring His Majesty, Roland back.

"Let's go," Agatha sighed and said.

When leaving the room, Nightingale could not help but look back to see that Anna was sat motionless on the bed with her eyes staring at Roland, as if no other things could draw her attention.

Nightingale felt even guiltier in her heart.

...

A servant room on the first floor of the castle that had been altered into a special detention room. Dozens of God's Stone of Retaliation were embedded behind the four walls forming a black hole, and thus, an anti-ability prison had been readied. Only by standing in the center of the room could a witch cast her ability.

Nightingale was very clear about the target she was about to investigate.

After the battle, the First Army found three pure witches that were still alive in a square-shaped pit within the third trench. One was detached, one was in a coma and the last one was conscious but trembling. According to the last one, there were five pure witches hidden underground, Zero, Isabella, Blackveil, Margie and herself, Vanilla.

According to Vanilla's intelligence, she and Margie were only responsible for identifying the location of His Majesty, Roland and sneakily escorting the other three to the battle. Thus they knew little about other arrangements. As for Zero, Isabella and Blackveil, they all were directly affiliated with the pope and had the same status as an archbishop. Besides, their abilities were hidden by the Holy Church so that few knew the details. Blackveil was already dead and Zero had disappeared, so they could only get the breaking method from Isabelle.

After an examination, they had found out that the reason that Isabella was in a coma was that she had used all of her magic power. Therefore, Isabella would fully recover in one or two days. In addition, Agatha got a strange sigil on her hand, but she could not identify it because the magic stone was completely ruined.

Unexpectedly, Isabella had been in a coma for five days and so Nightingale had been quite anxious, even wanting to forcibly wake her up with a knife. Lest for Wendy, she would have done so.

"Was she woken up?" Agatha asked Lightning.

Lightning shook her head and said, "She woke up by herself. When it was Ashes' turn to examine her, Isabella sat on the head of the bed and told us that the prison was useless for her."

Nightingale's face became dark, asking, "Is she challenging us now?"

"We'll find out," Agatha said calmly.

Having passed through the layers of the strict guards of the First Army, Nightingale and Agatha walked into a narrow room where there were no windows. A rosined torch was hung high above their heads which gave off a dim light. There was nothing in this room other than a vertical wooden bed and a short table.

Isabella sat motionlessly on the head of the bed. Her curled hair dropped naturally on her shoulders and became golden-red under the firelight. She was still dressed in that bloody robe of priests with dust on her face that had solidified into yellow spots.

"It seems that Zero has completely failed," before Nightingale asked her, Isabella took the initiative to say, "Finally, she isn't blessed by God."

"Blessed by God?" Nightingale smiled coldly.

"Don't worry and I'll tell you everything I know," as if she did not hear the sarcasm, Isabella sighed and said, "then, I'll be at your disposal."

Nightingale was stunned by Isabella's attitude because she knew that Isabella was telling the truth.

But it was a little too late to be a lamb. "You've claimed that this prison can't hold you, haven't you? But now you choose to submit to fate?"

"I'm capable of making the God's Stone of Retaliation lose effect. As long as I have a platform, God's Stone would be useless, even if there are as many stones as you have here," Isabella said slowly, "Except for that, I can neither walk through a wall nor escape away underground, so it's a waste to arrange such a room for me."

"You're capable of influencing the God's Stone?" Agatha was very surprised and asked.

Isabella said frankly, "They indeed look like bottomless black holes... but I can make them lose effect."

"You mean that it was you who made the God's Stone worn by His Majesty, Roland lose effect?"

Nightingale clenched her hands into fists.

"I had no other choice at that moment. Zero had become blinded by God. She believed that only one of the two can be blessed by God."

Agatha covered Nightingale's hand and calmly asked, "Is it Zero who made His Majesty unconscious? What's her ability?"

Isabella frowned and said, "Unconscious? There should be a winner and loser instantly when a Soul Battlefield begins. If Roland didn't become Zero instantly, it means that Zero failed. Is he unconscious because he can't accept the huge volume of memories?"

Nightingale and Agatha looked at each other. "Soul Battlefield?"

"Yes," Isabella said with her voice down, "that's a battle about spirit and will. The winner gets everything, while the loser loses everything. Since Zero was awakened to be a witch, she's never failed in the Battle of Souls. She's engulfed numberless commoners and witches and absorbed their memories, knowledge and longevity. So for the time being, Zero has lived for over 200 years." Speaking of which, Isabella closed her eyes sadly, saying, "I never thought that she would be defeated by a common prince."