

# Chosen Mate Of The Beastmen Empire

## Of The Bea 381

### Chapter 381

With those words, Erik stood frozen, his Achilles' heel struck.

It was true. He and Nyx had never held a formal wedding ceremony.

Now, he could hardly remember what he was thinking back then. All he remembered was that he hadn't wanted to get married, not truly viewing the woman the Voss family sent as his wife.

He had looked at her coldly, thinking that if she was part of some scheme with the Voss family, he would find a reason to dispose of her. If she was innocent, he would just let her go when the dust settled. But he never expected to fall so deeply in love with her.

Everything was beyond his control. His decision at that time had been wrong.

Bitter regret crept into his heart, spreading across Erik's brow.

On the other side, Emperor Aurelius seemed to have won the battle. A faint pleasure flickered across his usually stoic, handsome face. If he were in his beast form, his tail would probably be standing high, full of pride.

Aurelius had originally planned to move slowly, thick-skinned, and cling to Nyx without any title or recognition, slowly making his way into her life. But Nyx had figured out his identity.

In that urgent moment, she had called Aurelius by his name so naturally, as if they were the closest of couples.

Aurelius thought, 'She must like me!'

Even the calmest and most composed person would find it difficult to keep their composure in such a situation.

From the moment Nyx uttered the name "Aurelius," it was as though Aurelius had fallen into a honey jar, savoring its sweetness repeatedly. His confidence swelled to unprecedented levels.

He could no longer tolerate it. He wanted a title. He thought the only person who could stand by Nyx's side with a rightful position was him.

Born into royalty, no one understood competition better than he did. He had never been someone to follow the virtue of patience and humility.

After dinner, Nyx reviewed the accounts again. Outside, the sky gradually darkened. Arlong bowed as he entered and lit candles around the room. "What time is it?"

"It's already midnight, Madam," Arlong answered quietly.

"So late." Nyx stretched lazily, massaging her neck and tossing the account book aside. "Has Pale Wolf not returned yet?"

The matter regarding Banon had taken longer than expected, but that was normal. Nyx wasn't well-versed in such so she hadn't been able to help much and hadn't disturbed her mates who were discussing the important matter eaten dinner alone.

But now, as it was nearing bedtime, Pale Wolf still hadn't shown up, which was truly unexpected.

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Ever since his leg injury had healed, Erik had been unusually clingy. Even during his recovery, he had secretly snuck into her room every night to warm her bed.

She thought, 'Could it be that the matter with Banon is particularly difficult?'

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After pondering for a moment, Nyx instructed Arlong, "Go and find out when Pale Wolf will be back."

If he wasn't coming back tonight, she wouldn't wait for him and wouldn't leave a light on for him. She would wash up, read for a while, and then go to bed.

Arlong accepted the order and moved swiftly, heading straight to the study.

As he got closer, he noticed the two men guarding the door had strange expressions, as though they wanted to say something but found it difficult to speak. Their eyes seemed to ask for help.

Arlong grew suspicious. He knocked on the door twice and, receiving no response, hesitantly pushed the door open.

A strong smell of alcohol immediately hit him.

"Master?" Arlong was greatly shocked, hardly able to believe that the man slumped drunkenly at the desk was his usually sober master.

The table and floor were littered with empty wine jars, and it was impossible to count how many had been consumed.

Erik's large frame slumped over the table, his eyes bloodshot and clearly intoxicated, with an air of heavy, suffocating tension surrounding him.

With a long arm, he reached for another jar of wine, carelessly tossing aside the cup and pouring it directly into his mouth. His movements were unsteady, spilling half of the wine onto his clothes.

"Master, stop drinking." Arlong rushed forward to stop him, worried he might choke.

The wine jar was taken from his hand, and Erik, annoyed, tried to shake him off, squinting to look at him. Fortunately, it seemed he could still recognize him, not mistaking him for an assassin, but he didn't seem to care enough to speak.

Arlong wiped the cold sweat from his forehead and cautiously suggested, "It's getting late. Let me help you back to your room. The madam is still waiting for you."

Unable to reason with Erik, Arlong had no choice but to rely on Nyx.

Whatever had happened, the most important thing now was for Erik to rest with Nyx.

Arlong, thinking he had found the perfect solution by mentioning Nyx, was startled to see Erik's eyes redden upon hearing

her name.

At once, Arlong was flustered, not knowing what to do. He had never seen Erik in such a vulnerable state.

Erik was a tough and resilient general, the kind of man who didn't shed tears even when severely injured. When his leg was hurt, he was diagnosed as disabled, but not a single tear had been shed.

He thought, 'So what's going on today? The madam hasn't argued with him, and everything seems fine earlier in the day.

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Arlong thought about it from every angle, but couldn't make sense of it. He quietly stepped outside to ask the two guards for more information.

The guards replied, "We don't know... After His Majesty left, the master's mood worsened. He locked himself in his room and drank more and more wine..."

They had been guarding outside, unable to hear anything from within, and didn't dare to spy or guess whether there had been a disagreement between Aurelius and Erik.

Based on this scant information, Arlong guessed that the problem was emotional.

If it was a rivalry with another lover, Erik would likely have the upper hand.

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On one hand, he had gained the case of the frustra and on the other, his relationship with Nyx was also quite good. But for real problems was that the rond was an ordinary person-it was Aurelius.

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Moreover, it seemed that fyx won't completely different to Aurelius.

Arlong ribbed his forehead, feeling frustrated on Eriks betul.

Looking at Erik's depender s  r, hing couldn't help but feel a surge of courage, and dared to suggest, "The second danger of the Minister of the Warehouse, the youngest sister of the Minister of Justice, and the daughter of the Grand Schcher all are virtuous young ladies who admire you and are willing to serve by your side."

Erik came from a noble family, was handsome, young, with military achievements, and held a title waiting to be inherited. For many years, he had been the object of admiration for many young ladies of the capital

Although his leg injury had scared off some of the less sincere admirers, there were still many women whose feelings for him hadn't changed. Some were even willing to become concubines.

Arlong, rifled through his memories and could easily name a long list of candidates.

Ladies from respectable families with a modest status would be most suitable to enter the household

As he listed names, he observed Erik's expression but saw no trace of interest. Erik's cold, sharp eyes were half-closed, as though he wasn't listening to Arlong at all, treating his words like the wind.

Arlong, scratching his head, gathered his courage to continue, "If you're interested, the daughters of merchant families are also acceptable. As for the brothels... visiting them occasionally isn't a big deal, but bringing them into the household might not be appropriate...

His words became increasingly blunt, and Erik, who was drunk, finally grasped what he was saying. His anger surged, and he waved his hand violently, almost

knocking over the table. "Get out!"

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A book was thrown at Arlong's shoulder, causing him to stagger and collapse to the ground in a flurry of apologies

The alcohol surged in Erik's veins, and the frustration inside him twisted like a knot of tangled ropes. Erik's anger flared. "Who gave you the courage to speak such nonsense?"

He thought, 'If he dared say such things in front of me today, would he also dare to gossip in front of Nyx tomorrow?

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If Nyx misunderstood that he had the intention of taking a concubine, Erik would not only punish Arlong severely, but he might even castrate him and send him to the eunuchs.

Arlong's forehead hit the floor, and he suddenly felt a chill between his legs, an indescribable sense of fear creeping in.

He said, "I just thought it wasn't fair for you. Now that the lady has caught Aurelius's eye, why should you remain celibate? Isn't that unfair?"

These heartfelt words had been buried in his chest for a long time. Even if Erik punished him severely, he couldn't help but speak them now.

The room fell into silence.

Erik looked down at his subordinate, who had spoken out of turn, with a mix of mockery and thoughtfulness in his eyes. Slowly, his mind cleared.

"Unfair." He shook his head as if to mock himself, then sat back down, his tone softening. "Get up."

Erik continued, "According to your reasoning, aren't the men with many wives and concubines also being treated unfairly?"

Arlong was stunned by the question. "T-That's different..."

It was common for men to have multiple wives, but women were expected to follow the rules of womanhood in that Even a princess from a royal family would be disgraced for keeping a lover.

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Arlong had always thought this way, never considering whether it was truly fair. But now, confronted with Erik's question, he felt his past beliefs beginning to unravel.

"When it comes to matters of the heart, there's no such thing as fairness," Erik sighed deeply.

The one who loved more deeply was the one who was more humble.

He gently rubbed the sachet at his waist, holding it in his palm and caressing it softly, his voice almost inaudible. "I only wish for her to love me..."

After getting drunk, he had finally come to understand.

Aurelius had pursued Nyx with all his might, and it was perfectly normal for her to be unable to resist him. At least she still held a place for Aurelius in her heart.

As for who could take a more prominent place in her heart and sit on the main seat of the household, it would all depend on their abilities.

"Don't bring up such nonsense again, and never speak of it in front of the lady," Erik warned, pointing at Arlong

Arlong looked up at his suddenly determined master in confusion and lowered his head, meekly agreeing.

The small courtyard still had lamps burning brightly.

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Although Erik had bathed carefully, the lingering scent of alcohol was still wafted, and Nyx's dress was wet

Nyx didn't ask further and assumed he had been celebrating with Aurelius for capturing Arlong, the process.

They sat quietly across from each other, and under the warm glow of the flickering candles

Nyx's beautiful brows and eyes, looking serious as he spoke, 'Shall we begin our banquet and formally off

for a slice of

Nyx laughed softly, thinking the drunkard was talking nonsense. She pulled his hand away and out the door to the kitchen to prepare some hangover soup"

After all, they had already raised their children and were an old married couple. She saw so get in booking wit banquet.

Nyx thought it was just a joke, laughing it off and assuming the matter was settled.

However, as soon as the lights were extinguished, hot breath brushed against the back of thy's neck

The night was deep and quiet, and a low, earnest voice whispered in her ear, "Nyx, please, let have a wetens

"Alright. Let's do it." Nyx nodded uncontrollably, feeling as though she was being coerced into this

She swore in her heart, 'No more alcohol. Starting today, alcohol is strictly prohibited in the mansion to one is allowed to

drink.

It wasn't until the preparations for the wedding ceremony began in earnest that Nyx finally realized this was to fries whim from Pale Wolf; he was serious about it.

Though she didn't understand why he was so eager to have a wedding ceremony all of a sudden, since she had already agreed, she wasn't about to back out.

Having gained some weight, Nyx was no longer as frail as before, so the seamstresses in the mansion were beasy making a new wedding dress for her.

After breakfast, Nyx was having her measurements taken while a servant assisted her with fitting in from of the mirror whe a small white kitten, braving the snow, slipped through the window and sat on the table, tilting its head to observe her with a look of deep grievance.

Seeing the kitten hesitate to approach and nudge her, Nyx was slightly taken aback and turned to look at him, teasing

"Come here."

Aurelius went speechless.

There was no one else in the world who dared to tease him like this other than Nyx

Though his identity had been revealed to Nyx, Aurelius, with his thick skin, still walked over with restrained steps and sat next to her, curling up against her legs.



Nyx smiled and gently stroked the kitten's head, motioning for the other servants to leave the room.

The room was left with just the two of them-one person and one cat.

Aurelius dropped the act and immediately jumped into Nyx's arms. "Nyx"

This was the first time he spoke to her in his beast form. He looked up cautiously, observing Nyx's expression, yet he saw no surprise or fear on her face.

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She seemed to have naturally accepted that he could transform into beast form and didn't view him as a fairy or a monster,

Aurelius felt a lime pleased, his tail flicking back and forth, lightly swaying However, when he glanced at the golden hairpins and ornaments on the vanity, his tail stiffened, drooping, and his mood darkened again.

He thought, "Why is she agreeing to marry Erik? That guy treats her with such disdain- does she really not resent him at all? Is she really forgiving him so easily?"

The little white cat, puffing up in frustration, raised its paw and flicked at the tassels on Nyx's dress. "The jade pendant I gave you why aren't you wearing it?"

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Nyx paused, then remembered the special jade pendant she had tucked away,

Her expression shifted slightly as she pinched the little cat's paw, "That's not something I can wear casually?"

It was Queen's exclusive property. She could accept it, but wearing it out in public would be too ostentatious.

Aurelius, however, looked up at her with a solemn gaze, "Nyx, you can wear it,

"I've been on the throne for many years, but I've never had a consort because I've never found the right person," he said directly, almost hinting at something, his blue eyes reflecting Nyx's image. "Now, I've finally found you. Come with me to the palace, Nyx"

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Upon hearing that Erik was going to marry Nyx again, Aurelius could no longer sit still and rushed over without delay. The thought that the loophole it could exploit was about to be closed made the little white cat anxious, pacing back and forth

around Nyx.

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Having known each other for years and lived together for so long, Nyx had never seen him so unstable before. She found it quite amusing and couldn't help but secretly watch him for a while before pulling him into her arms, soothing him by stroking his fur.

After all, he was still young-an emperor in his teens. His emotions weren't as controlled as those of older rulers.

Nyx kissed his soft cheek, making the little kitten dizzy with joy. However, she then calmly rejected his request, "No. My identity is not suitable for the palace; it would only attract gossip."

A ruler taking the wife of a subject was hard to explain, and such rumors would be harmful to all three of them. It was better to keep things as they were.

Aurelius's beast form was perfect for sneaking into Duke's Mansion, where he could secretly visit Nyx from time to time for a tryst.

But Aurelius was not satisfied. Given the chance to go further, he would surely seize it.

Unfortunately, Nyx was determined. No matter how much he pouted, begged, and tried to coax her, she would not relent.

After being rejected several times, the little white cat lay dejectedly in Nyx's lap, as though it had lost all its strength and tactics.

"Be good." Nyx, knowing this was all part of the little scheming cat's performance, still couldn't help but feel a bit of sympathy. She spoke softly, "We need to think about the bigger picture."

If Aurelius's reign were stable, with no internal or external threats, she wouldn't mind how their reputation looked. She could go to the palace with him.

But with Banon's situation still unresolved, and enemies eyeing the throne, she didn't want her mate to become the subject of rumors or suffer bad reputations. She didn't want them to be blamed for the downfall of a regime or for losing the people's trust.

Nyx appealed to reason and emotion, and after spending some intimate moments with Aurelius, who had reverted to his human form, she finally persuaded him to give up his intention of taking her to the palace.

The cat who had tasted the forbidden fruit couldn't forget Nyx's intimacy, so he began frequenting Duke's Mansion more often, as if trying to compensate for the unspoken grievances in a different way.

Erik naturally noticed the blatant signs.

The two young males, both full of youthful energy, began to compete with each other in bed, using Nyx as the battleground, each trying to prove they were stronger than the other.

Nyx suffered greatly because of this.

She was even beginning to feel anxious. Whenever she heard the familiar meow outside the window, her legs would instinctively weaken.

Morning arrived.

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A few small snowflakes floated down from the sky, weaving a cold, white blanket over the world.

A thin layer of snow had accumulated on the ground. The maids were busy sweeping the courtyard, chatting quietly as they exhaled puff's of mist with each breath.

By midday, the snow finally stopped. When sounds came from inside the house, several maids paused their chores. "The madam has woken up."

Nyx was attended to by her maids, washing up and having her hair styled into a neat bun, her head still a little fuzzy.

She had slept in quite late today. Without the little cat's meowing to wake her up, she felt strangely unsettled. "Has Cotton Candy not come today?"

The maids were also puzzled by this. "No. Maybe because of the snow."

This reason seemed rather flimsy, since the cat had always braved all kinds of weather to come see her, and a bit of snow wouldn't have stopped it. However, they couldn't think of any other reason.

Without the little cat's playful mewling as background noise, Nyx found herself eating her meal absentmindedly.

Even as she looked over the account books, she felt distracted. She stared at one number for a long time, unaware that the ink had already soaked through the paper.

With her efficiency at an all-time low, she procrastinated further, sighed, and put the account book down, rubbing her forehead. She decided to take a walk instead.

However, as soon as she stepped out the door, someone came to inform her that someone from the palace had arrived. Aron, Aurelius's personal attendant, was asking to see her and was waiting in the front yard.

Nyx froze for a moment.

After so many secret meetings with Aurelius, this was the first time someone had come to her through official channels.

Not wanting to keep the little cat waiting too long, she wasted no time, changed into more suitable attire to meet guests, and made her way to the front yard.

As expected, she saw Aron, but not the familiar little white cat.

The front yard was empty, with no one else around. It seemed the other servants had been cleared out.

Aron, dressed in palace attire, stood formally, speaking to Arlong. As soon as he saw Nyx, he immediately bowed and greeted her.

"Madam." He knelt down, his face showing a mix of sorrow and anger. "His Majesty was attacked last night..."

Nyx's pupils contracted sharply, her heart pounding.

Just those words were enough to send a wave of dizziness through Nyx. She almost couldn't stand.

She disregarded her image and hurriedly stepped forward, grabbing Aron to interrogate him, "How is he? Where was he injured? Is he-"

"Calm down, Madam; please calm down." Aron was startled by her urgency and quickly supported her, trying to steady her shaking form. "His Majesty's injury is not severe. He's fine."

Aurelius, both cultured and martial, was agile and skilled. The assassins didn't even get a chance to strike before he had already fought back and subdued them.

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One of the assassins was killed on the spot, and the rest, unable to commit suicide, were now being interrogated for their masterminds.

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Aurelius himself had dealt with the attackers. Although he wasn't completely unscathed, he only had a half-inch long cut on his left arm.

Of course, Aron couldn't tell Nyx the full truth. He had come on Aurelius's orders, to bring Nyx to the palace.

Naturally, the story of the attack had been embellished, with Aron using exaggerated language and dramatic flair to describe how Aurelius fought off the assassins.

Nyx's heart raced, her brow furrowed tightly.

Even Arlong was shaken, his face darkening. "Such bold rebels. I'll report this to my master immediately."

Aron secretly wiped his brow. "Yes, it's important to inform Duke Read as well."

Though the assassins had been captured, the matter was far from over.

To root out the mastermind, Aurelius would need to work closely with Erik. But Aron wasn't here for that. He said, "The assassination disturbed His Majesty so much that he

couldn't sleep, restless all night," Aron knelt and said, "So, I humbly ask the Madam to come to the palace."

Arlong's mind immediately cooled. He had a feeling something was wrong. Such a major event as the assassination attempt, and yet instead of informing Erik first, seeking an audience with Nyx- clearly, the intentions weren't pure.

He thought, 'If you're feeling unwell, you go see a physician; the lady isn't a healer.'

Nyx, however, didn't think too much about it and immediately agreed, "Alright, let's go quickly."

Her mind was completely preoccupied with worry, her thoughts consumed by the image of the little white cat with tear-filled eyes. She even forgot to pack her things, walking hurriedly and faster than Aron.

Aron jogged behind her, barely managing to keep up. Just as they reached the carriage and he was about to kneel to let Nyx step on him to get in, Nyx had already scrambled up by herself using both hands and feet.

Aron was a step too late and could only awkwardly smile. He thought, 'What if the lady finds out she's been deceived? What would happen to His Majesty?'

He dared not think too deeply about it, silently praying in his heart that she wouldn't place the blame on him. He was an old man, not fit to bear the consequences.

The Duke's Mansion was deeply trusted by Aurelius, and the residence was just a short distance from the Palace. But Nyx, worrying for her mate, felt restless. She complained that the journey was too long, and the carriage too slow. Once inside the imperial city, they would have to switch to palanquins.

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Seeing her hesitation, Aron stepped forward and waved the person away, scolding, "Go away! Who do you think you are, to serve the lady?"

He thought, 'Where did this young, naive boy come from, trying to climb up the social ladder and serve someone so important?'

Given Nyx's position with Aurelius, only Aurelius's personal eunuch, like him, was fit to serve her. Anything less would be disrespectful.

As Aron bent his knee to prepare to kneel, the "little eunuch" he had just dismissed suddenly looked up, revealing a face Aron never expected to see.

Immediately, Aron nearly gasped in shock, "His... Majesty?"

The people around them all looked straight ahead, pretending they didn't see anything.

Aurelius, dressed in palace attire, knelt beside the carriage, his broad back straight as he acted as a footstool, allowing others to step on him to get out of the carriage.

This absurd scene made anyone who caught a glimpse of it nervous for their own safety, and no one dared to look any longer.

Aron felt his head spinning.

Every time he thought he had prepared himself, Aurelius would surprise him with something even more shocking.

In the past, the empress had been deeply favored by the late emperor, so much so that he even disbanded the six palaces for her, treating her like his sole wife.

That was the extent of what he could imagine for a favored concubine.

But no matter how much a husband might pamper his wife, Aron had never heard of one kneeling so humbly for her.

In the heavy silence, Nyx stared at Aurelius for a moment, then, without hesitation, stepped onto his solid back.

As soon as she landed, she was immediately lifted into the air, cradled horizontally in Aurelius's arms.

Aurelius had a joyful smile on his handsome face, his eyes full of warmth and happiness.

Nyx in his arms felt soft and light, yet she seemed as heavy as a thousand pounds. She was his most precious treasure.

Nyx had finally come to the palace to be with him.

Aurelius, immersed in his happiness, walked steadily, each step firm and confident, ensuring that the precious cargo in his arms remained secure, filling her with an overwhelming sense of safety.

Nyx wrapped her arms around his neck, her eyes scanning him from top to bottom. She observed him closely suddenly asking, "Where are you hurt?"

She couldn't find any visible injuries.

At her question, Aurelius's steps faltered slightly, but his expression remained perfectly calm, without a hint of guilt. "Left

arm."

A scratch was still an injury.

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In the end, he was hurt, and Nyx needed to pamper him with kisses and comforting touches to make him feel better.

His acting was flawless, leaving Nyx unsure of the situation. She furrowed her brow in confusion.

It wasn't until they entered the inner palace chambers and dismissed the attendants that Nyx saw for herself the tiny, already scabbed-over scratch, and she couldn't help but feel both angry and amused. She finally realized she had been completely fooled.



Grinding her teeth, she placed both hands on Aurelius's face, one on each side, and squeezed hard.

No matter how much she pinched his already handsome face, it couldn't hide his beauty, and those deep blue eyes seemed to speak to her, their lashes fluttering in a way that made him look even more endearing.

Faced with such an intense attack, Nyx soon found herself giving in, unable to keep her heart hardened.

She released him, resting her forehead against his chest and sinking into his embrace and slowly exhaling a sigh of relief. "As long as you're alright." Compared to him being truly injured, she would rather he had just lied to her. Even though he wasn't injured, the assassin had undoubtedly come for his life. Though Nyx hadn't seen the situation firsthand, she could easily imagine how dangerous it must have been.

To others, the wise and mighty Emperor was a towering figure, but to her, he was simply a little cat who loved to be pampered.

When the little kitty faced an assassination attempt and suffered in such a way, of course, she needed to comfort him properly.

Nyx softened her tone, her concern evident. "Have you applied medicine to the wound?"

Sensing the shift in her demeanor, Aurelius felt a sense of relief and nodded obediently. "Yes, I have."

He cautiously lowered himself and gently rested, his eyes carefully observing Nyx's expression.

Nyx didn't push him away. Instead, she stroked his back as if smoothing his fur, allowing him to rest his head on her soft lap.

The faint sweet fragrance of his beloved filled her senses. All the anger and frustration from the court and the assassination plot melted away. In that moment, Aurelius felt an overwhelming sense of peace.

Nyx's touch was gentle as she ran her fingers through his hair and along his back. She was still worried. "Was there poison on the assassin's weapon?"

"The dagger that scratched me is poison-free." Aurelius closed his eyes, enjoying her soothing touch. "The imperial physician checked it carefully."

Nyx understood what he meant.

of fear

The dagger that had scratched him was poison-free, but the assassin's other weapons had poison on them. A w washed over her, her face paling slightly. If Aurelius had made even the slightest mistake, she would probably be crying for him now.

Hearing her slightly labored breathing, Aurelius quickly realized that she was scared. He reached out and gently held her cold fingers in his warm hands.

"I'm fine, Nyx, don't be afraid." He suddenly regretted telling her about the assassination.

He had wanted to test how much she cared for him. But now that he had won the bet, he regretted not being more considerate, unnecessarily adding to her worries.

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Aurelius fidgeted with guilt, becoming more restless. He propped himself up and kneeled in front of Nyx, then suddenly stretched out his arms, tightly pulling her into an embrace.

His emotions were transferred through the hug. Nyx was momentarily stunned, then revealed a helpless, shallow smile.

She had seen enough of his petty jealousy and tricks over the years to be angry about such a small thing.

Watching her mate sink deeper into self-reproach, Nyx's mind suddenly lit up. She pushed him away with some force.

"Where did this servant come from, so bold as to lay hands on His Majesty's woman?" Nyx raised an eyebrow and gave his leg a light kick with her toes. "Do you not want your head anymore?"

"But, even if you have treacherous intentions, do you have the ability to do it?" Her gaze was filled with scrutiny, as she carefully looked him up and down, then let out a meaningful laugh.

Aurelius froze.

After a long pause, he looked down at himself and suddenly realized he hadn't changed out of his eunuch clothes.

The "little eunuch" stiffened, his handsome face quickly flushing bright red.

"I do." He did have the ability.

With just a few words of teasing, he bit.

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Under Nyx's condescending gaze, Aurelius felt as if he had truly become a humble servant, daring to covet the noble Queen.

A strange sense of excitement surged through him, filling every inch of his body.

"You do?" Nyx seemed taken aback but still maintained her lofty posture, sneering, "The palace doesn't have room for such a servant. His Majesty should have your head cut off."

Before she could finish her sentence, a hot, large hand suddenly grasped her ankle.

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Disguised as a little eunuch risking his head, Aurelius took advantage of the Queen in bed.

He did all fierce things possible until late into the night, only stopping when both were exhausted.

Aurelius, now in his bright nightwear, pulled the exhausted Nyx tightly into his arms, his expression one of contentment. After being so bold and reckless, he felt every bone in his body relax, his energy renewed as if he could draft hundreds of official documents in one night.

But with Nyx here, he had no intention of mindlessly writing any memorials.

It was past midnight already.

The Duke's Mansion was still brightly lit, with lights glowing throughout the courtyard. Arlong, his mood complex, stood by the window and softly reminded, "Master, it's time to rest.

There was no response.

Erik sat silently by the bed, wiping the sharp blade of his sword repeatedly, as if he hadn't heard Arlong's words.

After cleaning the blade for what felt like the umpteenth time, he finally tossed aside the silk handkerchief, his wrist flicking, and the warm yellow candlelight reflected off the sword's edge, casting a blinding cold gleam.

"Master?" Arlong's voice trembled slightly.

He thought, 'Calm. You must stay calm. Even if you are angry, you shouldn't commit regicide, right?'

In the blink of an eye, Erik drew his sword back into its sheath and blew out the candle.

He lowered his head slightly, hiding in the darkness, making it impossible to read his expression, then lay down on the bed fully clothed.

Seeing this, Arlong let out a long breath, his heart, which had been in his throat, finally settled back in place. Erik was finally going to rest.

Arlong found a place to rest as well, quickly falling into a deep sleep. Unbeknownst to him, Erik, lying on the bed, had no intention of sleeping. His eyes, bloodshot, stared at the sachet with a wolf on it, gently stroking it with his palm until dawn.

The moment he closed his eyes, scenes from the time of his marriage to Nyx came vividly to mind.

He could clearly recall how cold and indifferent he had been toward Nyx at that time.

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Nyx didn't mind the incomplete wedding ceremony. She forgave his neglect and scrutiny, caring for him even though he had a limp, while he only pretended to be indifferent, wearing a deadpan expression and never saying a kind word.

The more he recalled, the clearer the details became. Erik grew angry and regretful, wishing he could go back in time, pull out his freshly sharpened sword, and stab the ungrateful version of himself.

Tossing and turning all night, as dawn broke and the sound of rooster crowing reached his ears, Erik, his eyes swollen and dark, got up quietly and slipped out of the house.

Even Arlong, ever vigilant, didn't notice when Erik left. It wasn't until he saw Erik returning, drenched in dew and looking travel-worn, that he rubbed his eyes in surprise. "So early, where did you go? And... is that a dog?"

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A small, gray, fluffy head popped out from under the man's arm, baring its teeth at Arlong.

The tiny creature, no bigger than a palm, somehow looked fierce.

"It's not a dog," Erik said expressionlessly, pinching its neck with two fingers. "It's a wolf cub."

90%

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He had spent quite a while in the mountains, seeking out several packs of wild wolves. After picking through them, he had chosen the best-looking, most obedient little gray wolf, kidnapping it from its den.

But wolves were still wolves-wild and hard to tame, filled with aggression. While it had behaved obediently on the way back, its wild nature was beginning to show.

Erik rubbed his forehead, feeling a headache coming on, realizing he might not be thinking clearly after staying up all night.

He thought, 'How could he possibly give such a wild wolf cub as a gift to the madam? What if it hurt her?'

After pondering for a while, he quietly ordered Arlong, "Go find a few people who are good at training dogs."

Since he had brought it back, he might as well try.

The little wolf cub shook its ears vigorously, growling menacingly, unaware of what was to come.

After several snowstorms, the year's end approached.

Since being tricked into entering the palace, Nyx had been kept busy by the clingy little kitten. Several times, she had planned to leave the palace and return home, but each time the little white cat rolled around and acted spoiled, refusing to let her go. She could only agree to stay a few more days.

One thing led to another, and she had stayed on and off until the year's end.

As usual, Aurelius needed to go to the Temple on the outskirts of the capital to worship the gods and ancestors, praying for peace in the world.

Nyx had planned to use this opportunity to say goodbye, but the little kitten clung to her skirt, unwilling to let her go. It rubbed its soft belly against her and tried every method to charm her.

In the end, Nyx couldn't stay firm in the face of its fluffiness. They both ended up traveling to the outskirts of the capital together.

The Temple was solemn and majestic, sitting atop a towering mountain, a place of serenity for Buddhist practitioners.

As soon as they entered the area and heard the vast sound of bells, Nyx felt a surge of respect in her heart. When meeting the abbot and several elder monks who had come to greet them, she felt a little nervous.

Though her identity had not been publicly revealed, there were still many people in the know, and these monks were likely among them.

She wondered how these monks viewed her, as she thought, 'Would they think I am a danger, a temptress whos bewitched the ruler?'

Nyx hesitated and pondered, finally daring to lift her eyes.

To her surprise, the abbot's attitude was exceedingly kind. He smiled and greeted her with a gesture of prayer, like a benevolent elder greeting a beloved younger generation, showing no signs of disdain.

"Lady, do not worry too much," he suddenly spoke reassuringly, with a meaningful look. "Let everything happen according

to fate and heart."

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90%

58

Afterward, he muttered a few Buddhist chants that Nyx couldn't understand and left with the elder monks, smiling as they hurried away. They didn't even linger despite the presence of Aurelius.

Nyx was filled with questions, watching the elderly figures fade into the distance, but her heart felt much lighter.

The worship ceremony would last for several days, and during this time, the group would stay in the temple.

Though Aurelius wanted to stay with Nyx, he couldn't act so recklessly in such a solemn setting. He compromised and arranged for her to stay in a room next to

his.

Servants quickly packed Nyx's things and set up her sleeping arrangements. Nyx, standing by, felt a little out of place, unable to help.

She stood by the window, gazing outside for a while. Then, she threw on her cloak and decided to go out for a stroll.

A group of guards from the Imperial Army followed her closely, keeping watch from a safe distance, fully alert.

Nyx, on the other hand, felt relaxed and at ease.

The assassin's mouth had been pried open, and Erikmind had been executed. The remaining conspirators had been imprisoned. After such a show of strength, any remaining forces that had unrest in mind were forced to quiet down and dared not cause any further disturbances for the time being.

If there was any danger during this ceremony, Aurelius would never insist on bringing her along.

Just as she was peacefully zoning out, a small, gray "stone" in the distance suddenly moved, making rustling sounds.

Nyx was rendered speechless. She thought, 'He went back on his words so quickly?'

She immediately stiffened her expression and stood up straight.

The guards grew tense, each gripping their weapons tightly in hand. Several pairs of eyes converged into a single focus.

Nyx narrowed her eyes, focused for a few seconds, and finally saw the true form of the object.

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For a moment, Nyx was slightly stunned.

The gray bundle was round and chubby. When curled up, it looked like a small stone, but now two furry ears were sticking out, and four short, stout legs appeared with a tail that swayed back and forth, making her see things.

"Ash," she called out

She thought, "Where did this little fat wolf come from? It really looks too much like my cub

The real Ash had already grown up. This soft and chubby juvenile stage was only left in photos, videos, and her distant

memories.

Nyx pressed her heart, which was beating wildly, and her eyes lit up. Without thinking, she stepped in the direction of the

creature.



"Your Highness, don't... it's dangerous... The guards behind her cautioned against it.  
"That's a wolf

Even if it was small, it was still a wild beast, and wolves were pack animals. If a wolf pup was playing here, the pack was surely nearby.

Nyx, however, felt that this was probably not a wild wolf.

In the harsh winter snow, wild wolf packs didn't have an easy time, and it was unlikely they would raise a pup to be this round and plump. It was so fat and cute, it seemed more likely to be raised by humans.

The guards had considered this too, but remained cautious. A domesticated wolf didn't mean it posed no danger; in fact, it might hide an even greater conspiracy.

The news of Aurelius visiting the Temple was not a secret, and this unknown wolf pup showing up here might have been deliberately orchestrated by someone with ill intentions.

They reasoned, and Nyx thought there was some truth to it, so she hesitated and stopped walking.

Seeing that she had stopped, the gray-furred pup tilted its head in confusion and made a "woof" sound, urging her on.

Their eyes met, and after waiting a few more seconds, it couldn't hold back anymore and started running toward Nyx with its short legs, charging like a gust of wind.

Hearing the clash of weapons behind her, Nyx hurriedly spoke to stop the approaching soldiers, "No, don't attack."

She slightly bent her knees and squatted down, expertly opening her arms to easily catch the charging wolf pup.

The fluffy, warm sensation immediately overwhelmed her.

Time seemed to rewind to many years ago, as Nyx held the pup in her arms, just like she had held the younger Ash. A nostalgic expression appeared in her eyes.

The wolf pup, now in the warm and fragrant embrace, was so excited that it didn't know what to do, continuously making soft cooing sounds, its tail wagging so fast it almost seemed ready to fly off. Anyone who saw it would think it was a small dog, not a wolf.

The guards fell into silence, looking at each other, and all simultaneously lowered their weapons.

There really didn't seem to be any need to treat such a playful little pup like this.

Although they didn't know who its owner was, the fact that someone had raised the wolf to be this docile meant they

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probably weren't someone with malicious intentions.

While they were thinking, the sound of galloping hooves grew louder.

From a distance, the soldiers caught a glimpse of a tall and sturdy figure on horseback, and they immediately sensed the powerful aura of the rider, making them even more nervous than before. A trained fighter he seemed.

They realized they might not be able to handle this person, but there was no room to retreat. With heavy hearts, they quickly formed ranks to protect Nyx and stood between her and this unexpected guest.

The wind howled, and Nyx's heart also tightened. Instinctively, she held the wolf pup tighter.

"Woof" The chubby wolf pup remained calm, not panicking at all, and licked her hand.

The wet sensation caught Nyx's attention, and she looked down and poked the pup's little nose.

58)

When she looked up again, she saw that the guards, who had been ready for battle, were now kneeling on one knee, saluting the newcomer, "General"

The situation changed too quickly.

Nyx, a bit dazed, looked up at the general on horseback, only to realize it was her mate, whom she hadn't seen in a while.

A bright smile immediately appeared on her face, which, in Erik's eyes, was like the first ray of light at dawn, the only beautiful scene in the pure white winter.

"Look what I found." Nyx waved at him and proudly showed him. "A little Pale Wolf."

Even without her saying a word, Erik had already noticed the dog-like wolf in her arms. His expression was a mix of joy and anger, impossible to decipher, filled with complexity.

From the moment Erik caught this little wolf cub, it was the first time he saw it like this, and he found it extremely unfamiliar.

In just over a month, this creature had already gone through eighteen different dog trainers. Every one of them was experienced, yet none could handle it. Each one, claiming they weren't skilled enough, left in shame and resignation. Despite being just a young pup, the wolf was wild and stubborn. No matter what methods the trainers tried, it simply refused to cooperate.

Its appetite, however, was excellent. Chicken, duck, fish, meat-everything was devoured in large quantities. It quickly grew into a sleek and shiny creature.

But no amount of delicious food could ever tame this little wolf with a superiority complex.

Today, after yet another failed training session, Erik, in a fit of anger, decided to bring it up the mountain and abandon it. However, halfway down the mountain, he found himself hesitating and turned back, deciding to search for it again.

Meeting Nyx like this was a complete stroke of luck.

And the gift he had been preparing for Nyx for so long-the one he had yet to present-had been unintentionally offered by the wolf cub itself...

Erik's emotions were in turmoil, and he felt a surge of excitement, as if fate itself were on his side.

He took several deep breaths to calm himself, realizing he couldn't rely on luck. He dismounted quickly and reached out to take the wolf cub from Nyx's arms. "Nyx, it's not very well-behaved, and it might hurt someone..."

He needed to train it for a while longer, to smooth out its wild nature before he could safely hand it over to her.

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The little wolf cub seemed to understand that it was being talked about in a negative way. it coldly stared at Krikslund, silently bared its teeth, and readied itself to bite at any moment.

"No way?" Nyx was taken aback, squeezing the little wolf's ear in surprise, "It's really well-behaved?"

To prove it, she even rubbed its round belly.

The belly of a beast was its weak point, and it shouldn't be touched lightly, as it would trigger a vicious attack.

Erik's eyes widened in shock. He hurriedly took a step forward, trying to stop her, but it was too late,

Then, he witnessed a complete transformation.

The fierce little wolf cub, which had looked so menacing moments ago, rolled over onto its back, its bared teeth instantly retracting. It opened its mouth slightly, blinking its innocent round eyes, and gave Nyx a pure, slightly silly smile, "Hook"

"So cute," Nyx couldn't help but smile, her eyes curving with joy. A blush spread across her cheeks, and her gaze toward Eri was filled with affection. "This is your gift to me, right?"

She didn't say "thank you" aloud but instead moved the little wolf closer and leaned against Erik's chest.

The three of them together, in peaceful harmony-this was the picture of contentment,

Erik felt warm in an instant. He lowered his gaze to the curve of Nyx's profile, feeling an overwhelming sense of love.

He reached up to gently pull her close by the shoulder, but just as he touched her, the wolf cub's ears suddenly perked up. Its body went stiff, and it stared ahead, growling lowly in warning.

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90%

+58)

At first, Erik thought the wolf cub's agitation was directed at him, his brow furrowing as he cursed the rebellious wolf. But soon, he realized the little wolf's target wasn't him at all.

A figure dressed in a bright robe slowly approached. The guards knelt in unison, greeting Aurelius.

On this vast mountaintop, no one spoke. Only the little wolf cub, with its tail tucked and a continuous low growl, seemed intent on driving away the approaching figure heading toward Nyx.

Most of the guards kept their heads down, not daring to look at the tense

situation, though a few bolder ones secretly glanced up, eager to watch the rare spectacle.

In common households, when a young man competes for a woman's favor, it often leads to some physical confrontation, with sharp words exchanged until one side wins and leaves with the prize, while the other is left dejected. Only after the dust settles does the tension subside.

But looking at the current situation, it seemed neither Aurelius nor Erik had yet reached a conclusion.

One could only wonder what methods such high-ranking individuals might use when competing for a woman. Would they resort to fists and brawls?' they wondered.

Most of the people, heads lowered, were considering the seriousness of the situation, realizing how much more dangerous it might be.

When Aurelius was angry, millions might die.

Though Erik had earned Aurelius's favor, he was still a subject.

Throughout history, those who defied the emperor while relying on royal favor rarely ended up well.

But Erik was no ordinary man. He held military power and had a high reputation in the army.

Aurelius had overstepped when trying to take a minister's wife. If Erik grew angry and rebelled, it made sense.

As the crowd either tensed in nervousness or quietly relished the unfolding drama, Aurelius and Erik exchanged a calm glance. Neither attacked nor insulted the other, instead choosing to act as if the other were invisible.

They positioned themselves on either side of Nyx, surrounding her, each trying to get as close as possible.

"Nyx, where did this little dog come from? It's so ill-behaved," Aurelius said, feigning extreme shock and leaning toward Nyx for comfort. "It bared its teeth at me just now."

Nyx helplessly petted the cat. "Then I'll teach it a lesson for you."

But as soon as she looked down and met the little wolf's innocent, pleading eyes, she couldn't bring herself to scold it. She awkwardly cleared her throat. "It's just a little one. I'll teach it slowly in the future."

Aurelius was left in disbelief.

His usual methods had always worked without fail, but this time, they suddenly didn't.

He stared at the wolf cub in Nyx's arms, which had once been the exclusive spot for his beast form, and now that position had been taken.

Their eyes met, and he seemed to see a smug, sly expression on the little wolf's round, chubby face.

Watching his rival suffer, Erik felt a sense of satisfaction, even starting to find the wolf cub—who never listened to his

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commands-surprisingly endearing.

The tension he'd been holding onto lately evaporated, and he instinctively straightened his back.

When he thought back to Nyx's confession about her reincarnated identity, and how she had openly said she chose this path just to be with him, he was even more convinced that his rival was simply taking advantage of an opportunity. Nyx must still prefer him.

Back at the temple, the room on the other side of Nyx's quarters was now occupied.

Erik personally cleaned and tidied the room, happily moving in.

The scene was so unusual that even the accompanying guards and servants didn't know how to describe it.

They just thought, 'Well, it's surprisingly harmonious...'

The two males even joined Nyx for meals, one serving the dishes and the other replenishing the soup.

Forget the status-if the genders were reversed, Nyx would be just like a high-ranking nobleman enjoying the company of two lovers.

Such disrespectful thoughts weren't openly discussed, but they all understood, their gazes toward Nyx filled with awe.

They thought, 'What kind of divine power could train the most respected person in the world to be so docile?'

If Nyx could hear their thoughts, she would undoubtedly cry out in injustice.

After all, outsiders only saw the surface. They couldn't witness the chaos in her private bed.

At night, with no one around, a shadow quietly appeared outside Nyx's window. Its fluffy paws skillfully pried open a small gap in the window.

The kitten was so soft, it seemed boneless, slipping through the gap like a fluid, quickly scaling the bed with light, nimble

movements.

Nyx, still asleep, was completely unaware. Her breathing remained steady, her hands resting on her stomach, chest rising and falling in a regular rhythm.

The darkness didn't affect the cat's vision.

Aurelius looked down at his lover's peaceful, gentle sleeping face, gradually unable to resist drawing closer.

But just as he was about to kiss Nyx's cheek, the covers shifted, and a pair of glowing green beast eyes suddenly emerged.

Awooo!" The young yet fierce wolf's howl pierced the air. Even with Nyx's deep sleep, the sound was enough to stir her awake.

She jolted up, startled by the sight of a cat-dog battle unfolding before her. Rubbing her eyes to adjust to the dark scene became clearer. "Aurelius?"

After some effort to break up the fight, Nyx grabbed the scruff of each animal, holding them down. She paused for a while before finally believing that the one causing the commotion was Aurelius, who usually handled things so calmly and properly.

The teenage emperor was indeed different from the more mature Male Beastman.

Nyx found it both strange and amusing, patting the kitten's head. "Why are you fighting with a baby?"

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But the kitten was the one who charged at him first.

The little white cat's fur was standing on end in anger. "Why is it on your bed?"

This wolf cub was so thoughtless, its temper too wild, constantly showing its teeth and biting. He thought, 'How could it share a bed with Nyx?'

"It's still small, so it's a little clumsy. Maybe it mistook you for a bad person," Nyx coughed awkwardly. "I prepared a little bed for it, but it doesn't like it. It just took a bath and is very clean, so I let it sleep with me?"



In truth, she hadn't slept with her own cub in a long time and was a bit nostalgic, hoping to relive those old memories,

Though Nyx tried to mediate the situation, Aurelius still silently held a grudge, and he placed the blame on Erik.

He thought Erik was definitely doing this on purpose, bringing in an obnoxious little fat wolf just to make things difficult for him.

Erik didn't mind taking the blame. When he learned that his rival had failed in his attempt to sneak into Nyx's bed and ended up embarrassing himself, a mocking smile appeared on his cold face.

He thought, 'Well, at least the wolf cub wasn't raised in vain.'

Relying on his beast form, Aurelius had taken advantage of countless situations before. Now, he finally had a worthy

opponent.

The ritual continued smoothly for a few more days, and Aurelius was preparing to return to the palace.

Nyx planned to take the opportunity to say goodbye to the clingy little kitten and return to Duke's Mansion with Erik.

The night before they left, the light in the room next door remained on until the early hours, showing no sign of going out.

Though she suspected it might be another scheme by the scheming little kitten to keep her around, Nyx couldn't ignore her worry. She donned her outer robe and went to check.

The door was left slightly ajar, and a gentle push made it swing open.

Inside, there was only a charcoal brazier almost burnt out, offering little warmth. The air was so cold that she could see her breath as mist.

Aurelius was hunched over the desk, a thick stack of documents beside him. With

his eyes closed, he massaged his temples, looking troubled,

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## Of The Bea 388

The sound of Nyx pushing open the door was light, but it let in a cold breeze, making its presence known.

But Aurelius seemed too tired, and his senses had dulled. He didn't notice her arrival at all.

He rubbed his aching temples for a while, tilted his head back, and drank a cup of bitter tea before forcing himself to continue reading the memorials.

Whether true or not, such actions successfully tugged at Nyx's heart.

She furrowed her brows and stood behind him. "Why are there suddenly so many things to handle?"

At the turn of the year, even the most diligent Emperor needed a break. He couldn't stay tense all the time.

Even though Aurelius had been resting for the past few days, he shouldn't have accumulated so many memorials. Besides, he wasn't the type to push work off until the next day.

Hearing the movement, Aurelius swayed slightly, raised his face to look at Nyx, and his voice was hoarse. "Nyx... you're here? Why aren't you asleep yet?" He glanced out at the dark sky. "What time is it now?"

"It's already past midnight," Nyx said, lifting the kettle from the stove to pour him a cup of hot water to soothe his throat. Her tone was a little reproachful. "So you know you should be sleeping."

If it were in modern times, staying up at this hour might be common. But for people in this era, it completely went against their natural biological rhythm.

She lifted her eyelids and spoke softly, "I've heard that staying up late not only harms your health, but it also damages your appearance and causes your hair to thin..."

Aurelius's face stiffened imperceptibly for a moment before he quickly composed himself, showing a helpless expression. "Since it's harmful, Nyx, go to bed. I'll try to rest early too."

He said he would try to rest early, but it was clearly an excuse. He wouldn't rest until he had dealt with this pile of

memorials.

Nyx didn't press him further. She simply placed her hands on his shoulders and gently massaged his stiff muscles. "It's okay. I'll stay here with you."

The harem couldn't interfere with state affairs, but she had never been one to follow many rules.

Nyx sat beside Aurelius, naturally picking up one of the memorials and started flipping through it, her expression growing increasingly serious.

She thought, 'No, wonder the memorials have piled up so high.

An urgent report had come from Kellingtown-several barbarian tribes had formed an alliance and started a rebellion.

The barbarians attacked the local government office, decapitated the governor, and hung his head on the city wall. They also rampaged through the streets, burning, killing, and looting.

The local garrison commander tried to lead his troops to suppress the rebellion, but the rebels avoided direct confrontation, abandoning the city and retreating back to their tribes.

Kellingtown was surrounded by mountains and water, with a complicated terrain and toxic miasma. The barbarians hid in the deep mountains and forests, making it impossible for the officials to do anything.

After the main forces withdrew due to a lack of supplies, the barbarians returned and once again attacked the city.

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After several back-and-forth skirmishes, the local civilians were suffering unbearably, with countless deaths and injuries, leaving almost every household empty.

The gruesome news made Nyx's heart tighten. She could almost smell the bloodshed behind the words on the memorial.

"Have you decided how to handle this?" She flipped through the rest of the memorials on the table, quickly scanning them and noticing there were both pro-war and pro-peace factions among the courtiers.

Perhaps because the previous expeditions had yielded no significant benefits, there were more voices advocating for peace.

Money, food... these were all considered bargaining chips to appease the barbarians. Some even suggested handing over the city and relocating the people who had lived in Kellingtown.

Seeing Aurelius mark a large X on this memorial with his red pen, Nyx knew he would never accept such a ridiculous proposal.

Sure enough, Aurelius furrowed his brows and shook his head. "We can't seek peace."

Simply trying to appease them would only encourage the barbarians, making them believe that this great nation was nothing more than a piece of tender meat to chew on.

The barbarians had committed monstrous crimes in his territory, and he couldn't retreat even an inch. He needed to repay them in kind, using the rebels' heads and blood to soothe the souls of the fallen.

As for who would lead the suppression, after a long silence, Aurelius hesitated before speaking, "The barbarians in Kellingtown only surrendered a few years ago. They were subdued by Erik's forces. Now they've rebelled, probably because they heard Erik was injured and crippled, which emboldened them."

But Erik's injury had fully healed, and he was back to normal, ready to fight at any time.

Most people in the capital were unaware of this, and the barbarians in Kellingtown, with their poor communication, knew nothing about it either.

"I plan to send him to suppress the rebellion." He raised his eyes and carefully observed Nyx's expression. "Nyx, will you

resent me?"

Even though he didn't want to admit it, Nyx was Erik's wife. They had been married for less than a year, and now he was sending Erik to fight in a distant land. The dangers were self-evident.

Thinking of the barbarian savagery, Nyx couldn't help but worry. But when she met Aurelius's cautious gaze, she comforted him by shaking her head. "He's a general. He has his own duties. There's nothing to resent."

Her mates were all strong men; the more capable they were, the greater their responsibilities. If Pale Wolf was the best candidate to suppress the rebellion, it was only right for him to go personally. The sooner the problem was solved, the fewer innocent lives would be lost.

You're not sending him for personal revenge, are you?" she joked, trying to lighten the heavy vibe.

"Though we don't get along well, I would never harm him on something like this," Aurelius swore, as if he were raising both hands.

He could be clear-minded when it came to matters of public and private. After all,

he and Erik were not true enemies, but trusted allies who could watch each other's backs.

No matter how fierce their usual squabbles were, it was all just petty competition for favor.

For this expedition, he would do everything in his power to provide Erik with soldiers, supplies, and weapons. The current late-night planning was all about preparing for these.

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Chapter 888

1 know Nyx embed

They were family, having lived together to decades. They had always been through thick and thin, and that wouldn't change even if they were in a different world.

She put down the memorial, slowly stood up, and embraced Aurelius, gently stroking his head with a tender touch, feeling a bit heartbroken

Even though they had entered a new world, her mate had still been working hard since his teenage years, bearing a heavier burden than anyone else. Aurelius buried his head in her chest, wrapping his arms around her waist, raking a deep sniff, losing himself in the gentle comfort, and gradually feeling the weight of drowsiness, which came rushing in like a tidal wave,

"It's getting late, let's sleep firer, Nyx advised, "We'll discuss things further when we return to the palace tomorrow"

The matter of sending troops to quell the rebellion was no small task, with too many things to coordinate, and it couldn't be settled in just one day

The man mumbled a response, and his tall figure shrank, turning into a soft, little white cat in the blink of an eye, curling up in her arms.

Kellingtown descended into chaos, and Aurelius was furious, appointing Erik as Expedition General to lead 300,000 troops and fight the rebellion on his behalf.

Nyx had originally intended to go with the army and join Pale Wolf in suppressing the rebels. However, the two males firmly opposed it, their opinions unified like never before.

She took a moment to calm herself and realized she wasn't suited to go. It would likely distract Pale Wolf, so she decided to abandon the idea.

Before the army left, she spent a few days with her mate, who was about to leave for a long trip, at the Duke's Mansion. On the day of his departure, she personally saw him off from the city.

As the morning light bathed the sky in hues of dawn, she rode a pure white horse, with a fluffy, gray wolf cub tucked into her

arms.

She whispered some private words to the general, who was dressed in full battle gear. Just before the bell tolled, they held each other tightly for a few moments before she finally let go, "Go"

After they left the city gate and had walked a good distance, the adjutants and others teased, jokingly wondering if the general was reluctant to leave his beautiful wife at home.

Erik's serious face remained, but his ears turned red. He was just shy, not ashamed, and didn't think it was dishonorable to be attached to his spouse.

Of course, he didn't want to leave Nyx.

Leading an army into battle was for the peace of the world, so that he could be with Nyx for a long time and give her a more stable life. Those teasing him were secretly envious, if truth be told.

After all, a strong marital bond was not a bad thing.

Moreover, despite her humble background, the general's wife was incredibly beautiful. A glance from afar, and they thought they saw a fairy.

"I also have a virtuous wife," said one of the adjutants, as he thought of his family

back home, stroking his beard and sighing,

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"I just hope she can take care of our family well"

90%

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The Duke's Mansion was large, but the elderly were away, and the children were nowhere to be seen. All that was left was a greedy, playful wolf cub.

Erik lowered his eyes and thought for a moment. Nyx didn't need to take care of anyone; she just needed to take care of herself.

Besides, there were others who would look after Nyx for him.

Though he was jealous, he was confident in Aurelius.

By noon, a carriage arrived to take Nyx into the palace.

Just after settling into the palace chambers, several attendants brought boxes

upon boxes of items to her. When they were opened, the contents almost dazzled her eyes.

Nyx held the little chubby wolf cub, which was crying and squirming, and looked at Aron with uncertainty.

"His Majesty has been busy with state affairs recently," Aron explained with a smile, his face wrinkling into numerous folds. "He feared you'd be bored, so he had me find something to entertain you."

Everything that could be found in the palace was brought to her, as if afraid she would be dissatisfied or feel disheartened.

Nyx felt helpless. "I don't need any of these; put them back."

The boxes were full of jewelry, ornaments, and rare treasures. She had no interest in such amusements. While Pale Wolf was out fighting, she didn't want to be playing with these things every day.

As she waved her hand to dismiss Aron, the little wolf cub in her arms suddenly became restless. It seemed to have seen something of great interest. With its rear end raised, it leapt into the box with a thud.

The room immediately erupted in gasps of surprise and sharp intakes of breath.

Thankfully, it was just a false alarm.

The little wolf cub, unharmed, was grabbed by the scruff of its neck. Its tail wagged happily as it held a ball in its mouth.

Nyx couldn't help but laugh, her lips pressed together as she placed her hands on her hips, feeling it was time for some education.

She couldn't let the little one grow into a mischievous brat just because it was young. Without hesitation, she reached out to take the ball from the cub's mouth.

The cub, however, eagerly handed the ball to her, as if offering it to her as a treasure, almost hoping she would play with it.

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Seeing her gaze fixed on the object in her hands, Aron kindly explained, "This is white crystal from the Eastern Sea"

Such a large, flawless crystal was rare. It could be carved into anything, but instead, it had been made into a ball. Aron had previously voiced his displeasure, thinking it a waste. But if Nyx liked it, that was another matter.

Nyx silently weighed the crystal ball in her hands, took out a handkerchief to wipe it clean, squinted one eye, and held it up to the light. She saw that it was perfect, like a piece of glass.

Some chemical formulas suddenly appeared in her mind, and as she thought about the raw materials, it seemed like she could find them all.

"Are there any craftsmen in the palace who can make vessels?" she asked Aron, while smiling and kissing the mischievous little wolf pup that had accidentally helped.

The little wolf pup could now bark very clearly. Whatever the dog trainer taught it, it wasn't that it couldn't learn; it just didn't want to perform on command.

It grinned at Nyx, wagging its tail energetically, leaving a blur behind as it moved. Seeing it like a lapdog, Aron secretly clicked his tongue.

In front of the princess, even a wild wolf had to be obedient, and had to learn to wag its tail and beg.

Nyx's demands had to be met as much as possible.

"Your Highness, what exactly are you trying to make?" Aron asked respectfully. "I'll go speak to the Ministry of Works officials."

Nyx paused for a moment. Sometimes, she felt like she really had the qualities of a national troublemaker or a seductive

empress.

Although what she wanted to do was a serious matter, it didn't look that way to others. If she were to ask the Ministry of Works to help her make glass, rumors of a foolish emperor and a seductive empress might spread.

"Forget it. I'll leave the Ministry of Works out of this." Nyx thought for a moment. "I remember the Read family has some

craftsmen?"

The wheelchair from before left a deep impression on her. The work was quick and well done.

She hadn't thought of it earlier, but now that she remembered, she thought it would be better to leave the glass-making work to them.

The glass could be very useful, and it was best to keep the process secret, in the hands of her own people.

Those craftsmen had been loyal to the Read family for generations, and were more trustworthy than the mixed-up Ministry of Works. She didn't need to worry about managing them.

Setting aside other factors, glass-making itself was a delicate task. Shaping it through blowing required dexterity, and there would be many attempts at first. The craftsmen would certainly have more patience than the Ministry of Works officials.

Aron didn't know much about the craftsmen raised by the Read family, but he made a quick trip to Duke's Mansion and brought them smoothly to Nyx.

The two men, an old man and a young man, were a grandfather-grandson pair, serving as house servants of Duke's Mansion. The Read family had granted them their surname for generations.

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Upon hearing that Nyx wanted them to make something, they didn't dare to slack off, though they were unwilling in their hearts. Most of the craftsmen who hadn't come showed the same attitude.

They thought that Erik had just led troops into battle, and now Nyx was brought into the palace and still had time to think

about leisure.

The old man could still hide his displeasure.

feelings, but the young man couldn't. Even his kneeling and saluting showed his stubborn.

Aron saw all this clearly and flicked his fan, feeling like he wanted to chase the young fool out.

He thought, 'When Her Highness asks them to do something, it is a blessing for them. Even beasts are more sensible than them, at least they'd wag their tails.'

Nyx, however, didn't mind. She waved her hand generously. "No need for formalities."

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Her voice reminded them of clear streams, and both grandfather and grandson were stunned. The young man instinctively looked up, and his surprise deepened.

At this point, Aron couldn't hold back any longer and snapped, "What are you looking at?"

It was like waking from a dream. The young man's face turned red.

Nyx acted as though she hadn't seen it, and directly got down to business,

handing Aron a drawing she had just made, which Aron then passed to them. "Please take a look."

Upon seeing it, both males were shaken, their expressions immediately changing.

"Ro!" the young man exclaimed in admiration, "Is this drawn by Ro?"

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The young man's emnational sluit was on fast, it started Nye

Before the could react. Aron impatiently said, "What Ro! This was drawn by Her Highness herself?

The grandfather and grandson took a moment to realize that "Her Highness referred to Hyx. Their faces immediately turned a myriad of colors, like a spilled palene.

It seemed the rumors were true. The one sitting on the throne really didn't care about the relationship between Erik and Nyx. He had actually engaged in the absurd act of stealing another's wife.

The old craftsman's beard trembled in anger. He wanted to curse the foolish emperor, but no matter how hard he thought, he couldn't come up with any other foolish deeds of Aurelius.

Setting aside Nyx's involvement, Aurelius was truly a wise and mighty ruler.

With this in mind, it seemed the problem lay with this woman.

The young craftsman looked skeptical and eyed Aron. "Is that true?"

He thought, 'Such an exquisite drawing was really done by a woman? How could that be?

Given her status and experience, she shouldn't have had the opportunity to access such techniques.

If there was any ability she had... it would probably be her skill in seduction.

As for anything else, he didn't believe it.

The grandson didn't believe it, and neither did the grandfather. They stared at the blueprints in silence for a while, the old man stroking his beard. "I have some things I don't understand. May I ask madam to enlighten me?"

As he asked, he looked up at Nyx, trying to find any signs of weakness on her beautiful face.

However, Nyx sitting high and composed showed no sign of panic. She calmly nodded. "Of course."

The old man said, "These symbols, I don't understand their meaning."

Aron played the role of the assistant, passing the thin blueprints back and forth. Nyx leaned in for a look and realized that she had neglected to standardize the units of measurement. She had casually written a few Earth and interstellar symbols.

Feeling a bit embarrassed, she cleared her throat and asked Aron to bring her a pen, quickly correcting the errors right there.

Several pairs of eyes quietly watched her. Every move she made left no room for manipulation.

The old craftsman skeptically took the blueprint again, and as he lowered his head to examine it, his eyes widen and his breathing became quicker, filled with disbelief.

He thought, "The handwriting matches Ro's."

He carefully examined the contents again, his heart filled with waves of emotions.

He thought, 'Could it be that Ro and the madam are the same person?'

"Madam, please look here. Should this part be altered slightly?" His hands trembled as he held the blueprint, refusing Aron's offer to relay the message, stepping forward to discuss his thoughts with Nyx.

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Nyx patiently listened, thought for a moment, and shook her head. "It would indeed be foolish, be truck to collapse under high temperatures"

"Then, please look at this part.."

After back-and-forth discussion for a while, the old craftsman's excitement grew, his eyes brightening, and he bowels hemby in admiration. "Madam, you are truly talented"

Finally, he realized with a jolt that "Ho" was Nyx

No wonder that boy Arlong had been so evasive about introducing them-it turned out the identity was special

Nyx reached out to steady the old man, knowing that he had taken her task to heart and would put great effort into it, which made her feel much more relaxed,

Cautiously, she reminded him, "The materials, processes, and this blueprint must be kept confidential, do not share them

She still hoped to use the final products to profit from wealthy noble families and make a big profit to fund military

expenses.

So, at least for now, she had to protect the intellectual property, monopolize production, and maintain control over pricing

in the market.

"Madam, rest assured," the old craftsman said seriously. "We will keep it a secret"

"But, I am curious about one thing," Before leaving, he couldn't hold back anymore, his curiosity at its peak. "Madam, what is it that you are going to burn?" Having lived to this age, he considered himself well-informed, but he had never heard of anyone casually burning sand and stones, and couldn't imagine what it could become.

The process even involved a complex and meticulous procedure, needing to control the temperature and add alkaline and lime in specific proportions... It didn't seem like some idle whim, but rather a very clear purpose.

Nyx smiled and asked Aron to bring the little Pale Wolf cub over.

The wolf cub struggled restlessly in Aron's hands, but as soon as it saw its mother, it calmed down a little, tilting its small face to act cute and offering Nyx the ball it was holding.

The crystal ball was wiped clean, and under the sunlight, it reflected a mesmerizing glow.

Both grandfather and grandson were drawn to it, and they noticed it wasn't a dog toy but a rare treasure.

Nyx handed it to the old craftsman.

"Th-this..." The old man was startled, thinking it was a reward. He felt it was too precious for him to accept since he hadn't done enough to deserve it.

However, seeing Nyx's gaze, he suddenly understood her intention. "You mean... crystal?"

Overcome with emotion, his voice cracked, and his shocked exclamation echoed throughout the hall.

"Not crystal." Nyx waved her hand. "It's glass. If the technique is good enough, the glass made could be as transparent as this crystal, indistinguishable from the real thing."

The grandfather and grandson left, full of excitement, holding the precious blueprint and a fragrant pancake drawn by Nyx. Their steps felt light and floating.

After solving a major issue, Nyx stretched and laid back in the rocking chair, zoning out. Her mind began to burst with ideas,

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one after another.

After a while, she suddenly sprang up, returned to the desk, and began pondering and biting the pen.

Aron stood by, serving her with ink and brushes. He glanced at the drawings on the paper and couldn't help but show an expression of distress.

He thought, 'What on earth is the madam drawing? I can't understand a single thing!

Over the next few days, the family artisans were frequently summoned. At first, they were thrilled, but later they became more and more overwhelmed.

Nyx trusted them and had given them so many tasks, but their efficiency was so low that they still hadn't produced any

results.

Nyx noticed the tiredness in their eyes and realized that she hadn't considered all aspects. She had only given directions and drawn blueprints, but there were countless small details that these artisans had to handle.

"There's no need to rush, and perfection isn't necessary," she smiled apologetically. "If there's any progress, report it to me. If the results aren't good enough, I'll continue adjusting it."

It was late at night, and everything was quiet.

The surroundings were completely dark, but the Read family's artisan workshop was still brightly lit.

The craftsmen moved back and forth with serious expressions, each focused on their task, too absorbed to speak.

Then, a sharp scream of excitement pierced the air. "It's done!"

The craftsmen, hearing the noise, looked at each other, then followed the sound.

They found the young master beaming with joy, holding a wooden tube in his hand.

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The seemingly ordinary object made the young man tremble with excitement. "I... I made it... It's a telescope..."



He had tried many times with the blueprint given by Nyx and finally managed to grind the crystal pieces to the right thickness and curvature, placing them in the correct position.

Nyx had said the telescope would be very useful, but hadn't explained exactly how, until he had made the finished product and tried it out for himself.

The others watched as he held up the wooden tube and put his eye to one end, his expression a mix of dazed joy and laughter. They couldn't help but wonder what he saw that made him lose composure like this.

"Let me see..."

"What? What?"

"I want to see too."

"Don't crowd. It's

my turn..."

"All-seeing Eyes. This is All-seeing Eyes..."

Everyone who looked through the telescope was deeply shocked, as though they had witnessed a miracle.

Through such an unremarkable tube, their vision was enhanced several times. They thought, 'Isn't this just like the mythical All-seeing Eyes?'

Coming back to their senses, they rushed back to their workstations with renewed energy, vowing to make even more progress on the other tasks Nyx had assigned.

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The next morning, the items were delivered to Nyx, who also showed a look of surprise.

Given the limited production conditions, with no mechanical tools to assist and everything being hand-polished by the craftsmen, making a telescope was indeed a troublesome task.

She never expected the finished product to come out so quickly. And the results were even better than she had imagined.

Nyx tried the telescope and nodded in approval.

Catching Aron's curious gaze nearby, she smiled and said, "Do you want to try?"

Aron lowered his head shyly but was reluctant to refuse. He took it with both hands. "Thank you, Your Highness."

The palace eunuchs were trained to remain calm no matter what happened, never losing their composure in front of Aurelius.

As a long-time attendant to Aurelius, Aron had always maintained this principle very well.

But when he mimicked Nyx's actions and put his eye to the wooden tube, his breath caught when he clearly saw what was in front of him. He lost his composure.

The old eunuch was so shocked that the skin on his face seemed to stretch. He thought he was just seeing things due to his old age, so he rubbed his eyes and cautiously checked again, only to confirm it wasn't an illusion. "Oh my..."

He stood at one end of the hall and could clearly see the carved patterns on the beams at the other end.

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He spent a long time switching his eyes back and forth, reluctant to return the item. Finally, he returned the telescope, still in disbelief.

Nyx smiled as she took the telescope back and turned to the young artisan, who was eagerly awaiting feedback. She praised him sincerely and gave him a reward.

"There are a few adjustments that can be made." After the praise, she took up a pen and paper, signaling him to come closer and take a look.

Aron stood beside them in a daze, not understanding what they were saying. He only felt that the All-seeing Eyes was already so impressive. He thought, 'Could it really be improved further? How is it possible? How does the lady possess such incredible skills? It must be some divine technique.'

'Could she be an immortal descended from heaven? No wonder she has such a divine appearance..... Her calm and composed demeanor is far beyond what the other two daughters of the Voss family could compare to.

The young artisan took a few steps forward and caught a whiff of a fragrant breeze as Nyx raised her hand. His face turned red, and his eyes became dazed.

Then Nyx spoke, using a string of professional technical terms. He was jolted back to reality, and his thoughts finally returned to focus.

As Nyx guided him through the process, his young face shifted from secretive daydreaming to genuine admiration.

After carefully fine-tuning a few versions, a relatively polished telescope was finally completed.

In the imperial court, the ministers were arranged according to their seniority, taking turns to observe the new treasures Aurelius had acquired.

Aurelius sat high on the throne, looking down at the courtiers, watching their every expression.

They were amazed, respectful, excited, calculating, etc.

The telescope passed from one courtier to the next before finally returning to Aurelius's desk.

Aurelius reached out and picked it up, rubbing it between his fingers, and asked, "What do you all think?"

"I believe this is indeed a rare treasure, the legendary 'All-seeing Eyes. To have such a treasure is a blessing for the country. I congratulate Your Majesty," said the white-bearded Grand Tutor, who was the first to step forward after a brief silence, bowing respectfully.

He buttered up Aurelius so smoothly it seemed like he had pressed a start button. Soon after, several other ministers began speaking one by one, showering the 'All-seeing Eyes' with extravagant praise.

Most of Aurelius's face was hidden behind his crown. He sat in silence, neither responding nor interrupting, his expression unreadable.

Then, a low-ranking fifth-grade military official, who had been waiting at the back, could not hold back and eagerly stepped forward, saying, "Your Majesty, in my humble

opinion, this object could be used to spy on enemy movements on the battlefield. It should be sent to the Expedition General, where it could work wonders."

As soon as the words left his mouth, the once lively court suddenly fell silent. Everyone froze, the court was dead quiet.

They thought, 'Who is this foolish young man? How could he say such things?'

Such a mystical object held more symbolic meaning than practical value. Aurelius didn't know where it had come from, but showing it off so grandly to them likely had the purpose of warning them, calming the unrest that followed the assassination and rebellion,

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And that Erik, even though he was trusted by Aurelius, was still a subject. They thought, 'How could he possibly be worthy of using the All-seeing Eyes?'

In the midst of this strange silence, Aurelius suddenly clapped his hands and laughed, "Good. I'll assign you five thousand light cavalry to escort a batch of supplies to Kellingtown. Among these supplies are ten telescopes. You must make sure they are delivered intact to the Expedition General"

They thought, "What? There are more than one All-seeing Eyes?'

At this point, anyone could understand the truth now.

Everyone began to sweat nervously. They hadn't guessed Aurelius's intentions, yet they revealed their own petty thoughts in front of him.

Aurelius had indeed been testing them, but not in the simple way they had assumed.

"This is Nyx's telescope,' not the 'All-seeing Eyes,'" Aurelius said with a smile, gently stroking the telescope in his hand with affection. "Although it's not divine magic, it's still rare. We've only made eleven. I'll keep one, and the rest will be sent to the Expedition General

This was Nyx's intention, and he would naturally follow it to the letter.

The unfamiliar name Nyx echoed in the ears of the courtiers, most of them looking confused, not knowing whose name it

was.

Suddenly, someone thought of an unbelievable answer, and they blurted out in shock, "Isn't... isn't she the General's wife?"

At the sound of this, a few courtiers who were closer to the Duke's Mansion also remembered, realizing the truth.

Everyone's expression was subtle.

If before, the relationship between Nyx and Aurelius had been a little-known secret, then after Erik led the army into battle, the fact that Aurelius had brought the General's wife into the palace had become common knowledge.

For a ruler to take a subject's wife was truly absurd.

But having just been rebuked, even the Censor was shrinking his neck, playing dead and not daring to challenge Aurelius's authority, let alone the other slick

ministers.

Everyone, without exception, chose to pretend they hadn't heard anything, as if they didn't know a thing, and no one dared to speak out to advise Aurelius. Aurelius waited expectantly for a while, hoping to hear the ministers praise Nyx, but when no one spoke, his displeasure became evident. He coldly declared the court session over.

They praised recklessly when it wasn't needed, but now that praise was in order, they turned mute like a bunch of idiots.

At Nevaton in Kellingtown, the army was stationed in the city. Since there was no General's residence and no new governor had arrived, Erik temporarily took up residence in the former governor's office.

A few days ago, the barbarians had detected the 300,000 soldiers sent by the court and, without hesitation, chose to retreat tactically, leaving behind a city that had almost become a hollow shell.

After Erik took command, he ordered the soldiers to cultivate the land and help

the people restore production, and gradually, the city began to regain some life and order.

Meanwhile, rumors began circulating in the city that Aurelius had not sent the troops to fight to the death but merely to

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intimidate.

Since most of the ministers in court favored peace, Aurelius planned to pacify the barbarians.

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These rumors spread widely, and even the soldiers almost believed them. The spies hidden in the city were also misled.

Seeing that the time was right, Erik sent an eloquent envoy to the barbarian village at the foot of the mountain to negotiate.

The plan was set, and the big shot indeed took the bait.

Last night, Erik held a banquet at the governor's mansion. Several chieftains of the barbarian tribes entered the city to attend the feast, discussing terms of surrender.

After three rounds of drinks, all the useful information had been extracted. The soldiers drew their swords and swiftly killed the chieftains along with their guards.

Though the number of enemies slain was not large, those who perished at the banquet were elite leaders of the barbarian tribes. Killing them was like cutting off most of the barbarian's power.

The only flaw in the plan was that the chief leader of the barbarian alliance, too cautious, did not come in person, and so he survived.

"The barbarian leader, King Monka, has no real talent. He lacks strategy and courage, but he is extremely cautious." Arlong analyzed for Erik.

"The barbarian tribe refuses to face us directly, and every time there is any movement, they retreat into the mountains. This is his strategy. Now, he's terrified

and will most likely stay hidden in those mountains, no matter how we tempt him. He won't leave.

"That's fine." Erik calmly nodded. "If he won't leave the mountains, we'll go into the mountains and capture him."

Going into the mountains to capture someone sounded easy, but in reality, it was extremely difficult.

Arlong looked troubled.

There were no proper roads in the mountains, or rather, no roads at all. Not only was it impossible to ride a horse, but one could also easily be struck by poisonous mists or fall off a cliff.

The barbarian tribes had lived in these mountains for countless generations, adapting to this environment, which gave them a natural advantage. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been able to outmaneuver the Kellingtown garrison. This matter certainly required further deliberation.

Erik lowered his gaze, quietly thinking, unable to come up with a solid plan. His thoughts began to wander, and he started dreaming unrealistic dreams. "If only the scouts had better eyesight..."

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As evening approached, fog began to rise in the mountains, making it impossible to see more than ten steps ahead.

After navigating countless strange peaks and boulders, they finally reached the secluded village where the highest-ranking members of the barbarian tribe lived. Just the day before, the village had been lively and peaceful, but now it was desolate, with tattered white linen hanging from every home.

An old man hurriedly walked into the highest building in the village and found Monka sitting motionlessly on a bed, his thin figure showing signs of despair.

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"My king." The old man took a deep breath and strode forward. "Why haven't you even lit a lamp? You must take care of your eyes.

"You've come?" Monka reacted sluggishly, eventually setting down the book in his hands and giving a bitter smile. "Eyes... it's not important."

Whether he could survive or for how long was still unknown. He had no time to worry about his eyes.

The chieftains of all the tribes, his most trusted aides and warriors, had all perished overnight.

They had trusted the wrong person, coveting the peaceful picture painted by the enemy, and had fallen into the trap.

"The imperial court has sent an army to exterminate us. It's a fight to the death." Monka had come to this realization.

It made sense. They had killed the governor and many commoners. Any emperor with some backbone would never let them off.

The so-called terms of surrender had always been a trap. The 300,000-strong army had come to wipe them out.

"\*Erik... I heard the general leading the army is Erik." Monka's face turned pale at the mention of the name. The old man's expression also darkened.

That name was a nightmare for them.



They thought, Wasn't he crippled? Wasn't he disabled? How could he still be a general?'

Monka couldn't understand this and dared not think about it too much. He rubbed his aching forehead, his voice trembling. "I can't close my eyes. Every time I do, I see Erik pulling his sword to strike me. I can't even light a lamp, I'm afraid he'll

lead his troops here, following the candlelight." That's impossible," before he could finish, the old man interrupted him in a firm voice. "He may have some skill, but he's just one man. He can be injured, and he

can die. Don't glorify him too much."

Years ago, they had been too reckless and left the mountains, trying to confront the imperial court head-on. They were crushed by Erik and were forced to surrender.

But now, they had enough experience to resist the imperial court. The Kellingtown garrison had suffered many defeats at their hands. He thought, 'So what if Erik came?'

"The mountains will protect their people." The old man firmly grabbed Monka's wrist, pulling him from the bed, and made him straighten his back. "As long as we don't leave the mountains, neither the imperial army nor Erik can do anything to us."

Even if they lit dozens or hundreds of lamps, they would never expose themselves in these vast mountains, unless Erik grew All-seeing Eyes.

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The 5,000 light cavalry marched day and night, and within just ten days, they reached Kellingtown, looking worn out and tired. Only when they witnessed the delivery and ensured that the supplies had safely reached the army did they finally breathe a sigh of relief.

After resting for a night, the next day, Erik personally met with the fifth-rank officer leading the troops, Jax Shaw.

Jax, overjoyed by this honor, turned red in the face. His eyes were full of admiration and respect for Erik, almost speechless.

Although Jax was a few years older than Erik, he genuinely admired this young general.

A couple of years ago, he had questioned whether Aurelius favored his relatives by letting such a young man lead an army into battle, but after witnessing the countless victories and being continually amazed by his brilliant strategies, Erik had become for Jax the embodiment of the star of war.

Jax was a straightforward military officer, always simple-minded with little to no complexity in his thoughts. When someone

capable impressed him, he would genuinely admire them, no matter their age or status.

Last year, Erik injured his leg, and Jax also wallowed in depression and sorrow for a long time.

But unexpectedly, fate smiled upon him. Now, Erik had returned to the battlefield, and Jax had caught Aurelius's eye, gaining favor and even the chance to fight alongside his idol.

Tilting his head back, he drank a full cup of wine, and the more he thought about it, the more excited he became, causing his scalp to tingle.

He knelt and loudly declared, "His Majesty has commanded that there is

something in the supplies that must be delivered to General intact, to be managed and disposed of as the General sees fit."

Ten telescopes filled a box that he had carried with him throughout the journey, never letting it out of his sight, fearing something might go wrong.

With just a glance, Erik would know that the box came from his own craftsmen.

He reached out, took it, weighed it, couldn't guess what was inside, but didn't rush to open it. He helped Jax up and said, "Thank you for your hard work."

"N-No trouble," Jax stammered, scratching his head and hesitating for a long time before adding, "His Majesty said... this... this was designed by your wife."

Erik's cold face revealed no emotion, but if Jax had been a little more observant, he might have noticed his ears turning slightly red and that he held the box even tighter.

Back in his room, he closed the door and dismissed everyone. He quickly pressed a few buttons on the mechanism, and with a "click," the box popped open slightly.

The contents inside were revealed, and they were nothing like what he had imagined.

They were not delicate little items for women, but rather a few unremarkable iron cylinders, which made a cold, clinking sound when they collided.

No matter how much Erik imagined, he couldn't see how his wife would attach any sentimental value to these.

He pressed his thin lips together and turned the small box upside down. He didn't

even find a note from Nyx, and finally, he was defeated,

With no one else around, the young man's handsome face showed an undisguised expression of frustration.

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He stood there for a moment before casually picking up one of the iron cylinders. He studied it from all angles, far and near, and finally, by accident, aligned his eyes with one end.

In an instant, Erik's face changed dramatically.

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His mood shifted drastically in a short time, and Erik put in some effort to calm himself, his expression barely composed.

He picked up every iron cylinder in the box and looked at them one by one, his heart pounding harder in his chest, thumping loudly.

This was simply the most timely help in adversity.

He had always dreamed of enhancing his scouts' vision to help him survey the mountain terrain, and now, someone had actually delivered these extraordinary items to him, which could even be called All-seeing Eyes.

Staring at the iron cylinders in the box, Erik counted them repeatedly, and his gaze was suddenly drawn to one that was slightly different from the others.

He held his breath, eagerly reached out to grab it, then carefully picked it up, his fingertips slowly rubbing over the inconspicuous wolf-shaped pattern carved on it, along with the two neat and familiar words "Pale Wolf." His eyes immediately rekindled with light, a near-drunken gleam appearing in them.

The craftsmen from the family had remarkable skills, but they had never made something as fascinating as this.

Erik knew it was Nyx. She had designed these All-seeing Eyes to solve his urgent problem.

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When the good news from Kellingtown reached Hilltop City, Nyx was in the workshop, covered in soot and watching people burn glass.

Despite her disheveled appearance, with the corner of her clothing even accidentally burned through, her eyes were sparkling as she stared at the delicate glass cups, as if she saw countless shining silver coins waving at her.

Ancient craftsmen's hands were truly skilled, achieving such a level of artistry with nothing but manual labor.

Nyx held the glass cup, which could be called a piece of art, in her hands and marveled at it, constantly praising it.

The craftsmen, embarrassed by her praise, blushed and scratched their heads but couldn't help standing a little taller, reporting to her, "The glass can now be burned steadily, though the output is still small. The young master has set up two more furnaces, and after they're ready, we'll be able to produce more every day..."

"Hmm, no rush." Nyx listened patiently, nodding.

There was no need to increase the output too much. Things that were rare were valuable, and if they became too common, they would lose their worth. She had to find the right balance.

"You know better than I what kind of things the nobles like, so make it the way they like," Nyx smiled with a hint of mischief in her eyes.

Since they were going to target the wealthy, it only made sense to cater to their tastes.

Over the past few days, the family's craftsmen had become deeply enamored with this young, beautiful, and extraordinarily capable lady, almost worshipping her like a fairy. When they heard her orders, they immediately agreed, eager to meet her expectations.

The old master, being more thoughtful than the younger ones, stroked his long beard and pondered. "The glass has been made, but have you thought about how to open the market, madam?"

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No matter how exquisite something was, it needed marketing if they wanted to sell it at a high price.

The family owned many shops, but none of them sold luxury or high-value goods.

If the glass were displayed in those shops, it would probably gather dust, attracting no interest from the right customers.

Nyx smiled, "There's no need to worry about that."

Seeing her confidence, the old master relaxed.

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The next day, at the court meeting, the long-stalled battle in Kellingtown finally had a breakthrough.

With a telescope in hand, Erik seemed to have divine assistance. He led his troops into the mountains and swiftly destroyed six or seven of the barbarian tribes' strongholds.

When the matter was discussed, everyone in court was overjoyed.

Aurelius sat on the throne, his brows and eyes unusually gentle.

"The Expedition General has earned merit, and Nyx's gift of the telescope was also invaluable," he spoke softly.

Upon hearing this, the court fell silent for a moment, and soon there was a unified chorus of agreement.

The ministers lowered their heads, though their eyes were constantly shifting, occasionally locking with others.

Erik had earned merit, but he already held a title waiting to be inherited, a general's rank over his head, and military power in his hands-he had already been highly favored, with no further titles to bestow.

If Nyx were just his wife, Aurelius would grant her a noble title, which would serve a dual purpose-rewarding both of them for their merits. But Nyx happened to be a woman Aurelius had taken a special interest in.

The ministers couldn't understand Aurelius' thoughts, and they all speculated in their minds about what decision Aurelius would make.

"The battle in Kellingtown is ongoing, and once the Expedition General returns victorious, I will reward him accordingly," Aurelius finally said after a long pause.

"As for Nyx-"

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He seemed to be thinking, slowing his speech, causing the courtiers to hold their breath. "I plan to give her a rare treasure."

With those words, the dust finally settled.

No noble title was given, but any minister with a sharp mind understood-Aurelius was not willing to let go; he had made up his mind to claim Nyx.

For a moment, everyone's expression varied, their feelings quite complex.

Aurelius seemed unaware of this, continuing, "Since she contributed a treasure to me, I will give her a rare treasure in return."

He raised his hand, and several attendants, bowing and half-asleep, carried an item forward, carefully presenting it.

When the silk covering was removed, the dazzling light shone brightly.

"This, this..." The ministers' eyes widened in disbelief. Forget about noble titles, schemes, and power struggles-all their minds were consumed by the stunning sight before them.

It was a crystal ornament in the shape of an orchid, set upon a lotus bowl.

The orchid was crystal-clear and flawless, with petals as thin as cicada wings, slightly curled, and the stamen delicate and beautiful. What was most remarkable were the leaves-they were meticulously carved with intricate veins, appearing elegant and expansive, as if full of resilience and life.

The light shone down, and the ornament reflected a dazzling, dreamlike glow, something not of this world.

"Gulp..." Someone couldn't help but swallow.

Setting aside the craftsmanship, the sheer size of the flawless white crystal alone was enough to fetch a sky-high price.

The "rare treasure" Aurelius spoke of was truly rare; it was unlikely that anything like it could be found in the world. To give it away as a reward was too much.

As if seeing through the ministers' thoughts, Aurelius smiled and said, "This glass ornament is the treasure I am giving to Nyx."

Of course, this was not the treasure he truly intended for Nyx. What he truly wanted to give her was the highest honor-the title of marquis and a position as a minister, so the world would sing her praises.

But the timing wasn't right. Even if he used his imperial power to do so, the fame falling upon Nyx wouldn't be a good one.

There was nothing he could do. He had to follow Nyx's plan, rewarding her publicly for what she had contributed, making sure she garnered attention and influence.

The ministers didn't know what was in Aurelius's heart; they only focused on the important word. "Glass?"

They thought, 'Isn't this crystal?'

Aurelius clearly had no intention of clearing up their confusion.

After mentioning a few official matters, he announced the court session was over.

The crystal orchid ornament was taken away and sent to Duke's Mansion, under the gaze of ministers who were either in shock or greedily eyeing it.

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## Chapter 393

A brief glimpse in the court had whetted their appetites, and murmurs of discussion began, ceaseless and eager.

Nyx left the palace and patiently stayed at home, waiting for the flood of invitations, which, as expected, came pouring in like snowflakes.

The officials, curious about the glass ornament, were eager to get a closer look and admire it, but since both Matay and Erik were away from the estate, it would be



inappropriate for them to visit Nyx themselves. Instead, they sent their female relatives to represent them.

With so many invitations, it became quite exhausting to entertain them all. Nyx had already made preparations, so she decided to hold a flower appreciation party, inviting the ladies of the capital to join her for a feast.

Since it was a flower appreciation party, there had to be a variety of fresh flowers to decorate.

Jinx and Jules were still working in the estate's greenhouse. Nyx had once casually suggested they build a warm shelter for flowers, and though she hadn't expected much, they turned out to be quite clever, making it incredibly successful. The flowers they grew in winter were just as beautiful as those in summer.

Before the banquet, many of the invited ladies secretly looked forward to the spectacle.

They thought, 'With such cold weather, where could they find fresh flowers? Even if they were brought from the south, they would lose their freshness, and who knows how much money it would cost?'

After all, Nyx came from humble beginnings. Even if she had somehow secured a good marriage, she would never truly belong to the upper echelons of society.

After waiting for three days, the women arrived as scheduled, eager to see how Nyx would try to bluff her way through.

However, as soon as they stepped into Duke's Mansion, their eyes widened, and they were stunned by the vibrant, colorful

scene.

The peonies were as red as fire and pink like the morning sky, while various orchids bloomed quietly. Though they weren't the most eye-catching, their fragrance filled the air. The climbing roses covered the trellises, decorating the pavilions and

towers.

But no matter how lively the other flowers bloomed, they couldn't overshadow the peony, the queen of flowers. Even those who weren't familiar with flowers could tell that these had an air of nobility.

Of course, the women present knew much more, and with a single glance, they could recognize several varieties from the palace. They became more cautious and respectful, hiding any disdain they had.

No matter what, Nyx was now the lady of Duke's Mansion and had Aurelius's favor. Her humble origins no longer mattered, as they were a thing of the past.

When Nyx appeared to greet the guests, all she saw were smiling faces, and the compliments and praises filling her ears were endless.

Socializing among the noble families was often full of insincerity.

Nyx didn't like it, but she didn't flinch either.

Having been in high positions in the star system for so many years, she was no stranger to formal occasions. She was well-versed in how to handle them.

This was the first time Nyx had mingled with the ladies of other families since marrying into Duke's Mansion. Before this, even tasks like sending New Year gifts were handled by Enzo on her behalf.

To avoid any mistakes, she had studied thoroughly these past few days, getting the details of everyone attending the banquet.

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After some casual exchanges, the women began to look at Nyx very differently than before.

They had underestimated Nyx.

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The compliments grew even more enthusiastic, and when someone mentioned Nyx's contribution to Kellingtown's suppression, the conversation turned toward the telescope.

Nyx smiled, nodding occasionally in response, but remained vague, skillfully deflecting all their probing questions. Then she brought up the main event. "His Majesty has gifted us a glass ornament, and I'd like to share it with all of you today."

It was about admiring flowers, but the glass flower was the main attraction for today. The guests nodded in agreement.

The telescope, such a military piece, was something they couldn't get information about, and that was perfectly normal. The glass ornament, however, was the real reason they had come to the banquet.

Though they had heard much about the grandeur of imperial gifts, when Nyx revealed the silk covering and let the sunlight hit the glass ornament, the courtyard was filled with gasps of awe.

Seeing the poised noblewomen lose their composure, staring in shock with wide eyes, Nyx was sure of her success.

The business was secured.

"May I come closer to take a look?" after a while, one woman carefully asked.

She examined the ornament closely, and it seemed different from crystal, though she wasn't entirely sure and wanted to get even closer to inspect it.

If Nyx hadn't allowed it, they would have understood, since precious items could be fragile and easily damaged.

But Nyx was far more generous than they expected, waving her hand. "Please feel free."

These noblewomen, who were always taught to maintain proper etiquette, would hardly handle the ornament carelessly, even if given free rein to inspect it.

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The flower-viewing banquet lasted for several hours, and by the time it ended, the sky had darkened.

Aron quietly escorted Nyx back to the palace. Seeing her in a cheerful mood, he asked, "Was everything smooth, Your Grace?"

Nyx smiled and nodded.

If all went as expected, these noble families would soon start probing into what "glass" really was, and the information they discovered would, of course, be the fabricated details she had already planted, hoping they would uncover it.

# The Bea 394

## Chapter 394

Recently, a nearly fanatical trend had swept through the capital.

In the east of the city, a small shop quietly opened. The store wasn't large, just a two-story building, but its decorations were particularly unique and eye-catching- a huge window made of a single piece of transparent crystal.

When sunlight shone through, the whole room brightened, creating a strange and wondrous scene never seen before.

Although the shopkeeper claimed it wasn't crystal but glass, the common folk had never heard of glass. But they all knew that something shiny had to be good, especially since the high-ranking ladies and noblewomen were flocking into the shop like bees to honey.

The shop sold a wide variety of goods, from large items like folding screens and cabinets to small items like earrings and bead necklaces, but they all shared one thing in common: they were made of glass.

Since these were fine items, their prices were no different from what the public thought of as jewels. Moreover, since only this store sold them, their rarity made them even more valuable, and the prices soared.

The larger, more expensive items on the second floor were out of reach for anyone except high-ranking officials. Many wealthy young heirs, arrogant when they arrived, demanded to see only the best.

However, once they heard the price, they immediately deflated and, though embarrassed to leave empty-handed, reluctantly spent vast sums on smaller ornaments before leaving in a huff.

Not everything, however, was so expensive. The smaller items on the first floor were reasonably priced. The delicate hairpins and bead flowers were striking, and though the price was low, ordinary families could still afford them and buy one to please the women at home for a long time.

As for the more intricately crafted jewelry, it was displayed on the second floor, where only the wealthiest could afford them.

This careful division ensured that people of all financial backgrounds could browse.

The shopkeeper was kind-hearted, greeting everyone with a smile. Even if someone didn't buy anything, they would still be offered a warm cup of tea, so hardly anyone left empty-handed.

Part of the reason was that it felt awkward not to buy something, but also because the items were so exquisite that anyone with extra money would find it hard not to part with it.

Since the opening of this shop, even though it didn't have a sign, the whole street in the east of the city had benefited, and the formerly struggling restaurant across the street had experienced a revival. By mealtime, it was always packed with people, doing brisk business.

In the restaurant's top-floor private room, the window was half-open, letting in a cool breeze. Luckily, the room had a heater, so it wasn't uncomfortable.

Nyx sat cross-legged by the window, her posture relaxed. One hand propped up her cheek, and the other gently stroked a cat, enjoying the sight of the glass shop's busy flow of people with her mate.

The shop was making money hand over fist, and it was no exaggeration.

She was calculating how much the earnings could buy in terms of food, armor, and supplies, and when she got excited, she couldn't help but grab the little cat lying on her lap and take a deep breath.

The kitten's cry was soft, its tail wrapping around her arm. Every movement seemed carefully designed to be irresistibly tempting.

Nyx had recently been obsessed with making money, so tired at night that she would fall asleep as soon as her head hit the pillow. He couldn't bear to wake her, and the pent-up energy inside him was burning.

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He thought, 'Now that the business is stable, it's time for her to pamper me, right?'

Nyx and the cat locked eyes.

From those deep blue animal eyes, Nyx could read desire and expectation. Her face flushed red, and she was initially a bit annoyed, thinking that males only ever had those kinds of thoughts. But the irritation quickly faded.

At the peak of adolescence, full of vigor and energy, it would be odd not to crave such things.

Her mate was not a womanizer. He had feelings for her, and that was what made him desire her.

If it weren't for that, with their current status and identity, they could get any woman they wanted. But they poured all their energy into her, pitifully waiting for her to show affection.

It was her who had been so preoccupied with the distant Pale Wolf that she neglected the one beside her, Aurelius.

Nyx deeply reflected on herself, lowered her head, and kissed the kitten on its little head. Feeling its four fluffy paws starting to lift her skirt, she immediately blushed and grabbed it. "This is in broad daylight, though."

Even if they were to do sex, it would have to wait until they returned to the palace.

The window was still open, the guards were still outside, and there might even be hidden bodyguards nearby.

The soundproofing of the restaurant wasn't very good, and she could clearly hear the voices of a few people next door playing drinking games.

Nyx instinctively pricked up her ears, concentrating to listen. A few sharp clinks sounded, followed by the sound of liquid flowing, as if someone had knocked over a cup in their drunken stupor.

"Master Lewis, be careful- Ouch... Did I hurt myself?" asked one voice.

"It's fine. It's just a shame about this fine wine glass," replied another.

"Hah, what's so special about that?" The drunk man, a young gentleman, was clearly the highest-ranking among the He seemed utterly dismissive of his friends' concern. "It's just a jade cup, why are you all making such a fuss over it?"

"I recently acquired a set of glass cups. I'll show you sometime. Now that is something."

Before he could finish his sentence, flattery came pouring in.

"Glass cups?"

"Hiss-Now that is a rare item."

"We'll just have to wait for Master Lewis to show us, then."

Lewis Anders, flattered to the point of feeling elated, burped and said, "Do you all know the origin of glass?"

group.

Regardless of whether they knew, everyone around him saw his tone and unanimously shook their heads, signaling that they didn't know.

Since they were so ignorant, Lewis saw it as a chance to show off. Excited, he started, "I heard the owner of the glass shop used to be an ordinary merchant from the northern lands.

"His family had been trading with the northern nomads for generations, dealing in cheap jewelry and gemstones. Then one day, the family elder dreamt of being guided by the mountain god and discovered a way to turn sand into treasure. The mountain god even bestowed the name 'glass."

Nyx couldn't help but laugh as she listened.

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This Lewis gave off the impression of a wastrel, but he actually summarized the story she made up quite well, concise yet to the point.

Lewis continued, "Last year, the elder passed away and left behind a batch of glass he had made. But his miraculous ability didn't get passed down. The family is full of timid and cautious people, afraid that their treasure would be coveted, so they never dared to show it to anyone.

"It wasn't until they connected with an imperial merchant that they sent most of the glass pieces to the palace, finally feeling

at ease."

He thought, "When the poor suddenly become rich, they can't handle the weight of such treasures. It's like holding a hot potato, and the slightest mistake can result in powerful people devouring it without leaving a trace.

'But once the treasure caught Aurelius's eye, things changed dramatically. Under Aurelius's gaze, who would dare be

reckless?'

The rest of his story was as follows: Not long ago, Aurelius rewarded Lady Nyx the merchant for offering the glass treasure with a beautiful plain crown lotus- glass ornament.

The merchant then held a flower-viewing banquet for the ladies of the capital, and after that, so many nobles started asking about the glass that the merchant simply opened a shop to sell the remaining pieces. He said the stock was limited and would sell out soon.

Once they heard that the treasure was in limited supply, no one could resist the temptation of scarcity marketing. Anyone with some capital rushed to buy before everything sold out, and even though it was an expensive luxury item, the rich families scrambled to get it.

Listening to the chatter next door, Nyx shook her head and sipped her tea, not feeling guilty at all. She thought, "These wealthy families, with all their money, who among them have clean hands?"

She had no qualms about taking some silver from these people to donate for military funds.

As for whether the true method of making glass would ever be revealed, that was no longer her concern. At least not until two generations later.

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Turning sand into treasure-her story might have been a bit of a stretch, but it wasn't entirely a lie.

Just as she was happily petting the cat, the conversation next door suddenly shifted and turned toward her.

"Speaking of rare items, glass is indeed rare, but it's still just a decoration. It's not as practical as the telescope that Lady Nyx presented. I heard that thing is like the legendary All-seeing Eye, very mystical."

"Is that true? It's not a scam, is it?"

"None of us have seen it in person. Have you, Master Lewis?"



Lewis hadn't seen it either. Facing the eager eyes of his followers, his expression was somewhat awkward, but he quickly straightened up. "My father played with the telescope at a court meeting. He said it's truly powerful. It can enhance vision a hundred times."

He could boast about this, but Nyx couldn't even bear to listen.

A handmade telescope from ancient times was barely usable. A hundred times more powerful? Where would that come from? she thought.

The others didn't understand all that, and since they followed Lewis's lead, they believed whatever he said, all expressing their awe.

"I'd love to see it with my own eyes."

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"Lady Nyx actually has such skills. If she were a man, I would definitely want to befriend her

"As expected of the wife of the Expedition General, a woman who doesn't fall behind men"

"Teh." Lewis suddenly laughed, "Do you really believe that the telescope was her achievement?"

He thought, "These guys are really foolish. Not many of the ministers believe it. A woman from humble origins, unnoticed, rarely leaving her house, and hardly reading any books-where would she get the ability and skills to create a telescope?"

"You might not know," he added with a more ambiguous and lecherous smile, chuckling a few times, "As soon as Duke Read went on his expedition, Aurelius couldn't wait to bring Lady Nyx into the palace to take care of her.

"In fact, the two of them were already involved before, and Aurelius even took her along when he went to the Temple for the New Year..."

He thought, 'No matter how close you are to a brother, you still have to be careful about taking care of his woman. Clearly, there is something more than just friendship between Aurelius and the general's wife

"Aurelius probably credited the telescope to her to flatter her, huh?" Lewis laughed

loudly, but then suddenly froze, hearing a deep growl of fury, which startled him. "What was that noise?"

It sounded like a tiger's roar.

Those around also heard it, exchanging nervous glances, fear written across their faces.

But when they quieted down and listened carefully, the noise was gone, as though it had been a brief illusion.

"What tiger could be in a small tavern like this? It's probably just a street performer doing sound tricks." Lewis wiped the sweat off his forehead, trying to keep calm.

Although he'd never heard of any street performer who could imitate a wild beast's roar so perfectly, there was no way it was an actual tiger nearby.

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## Of The Bea 395

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Next door, Nyx tightly covered the kitten's mouth with one hand, using the other to gently groom its fur.

The one who was truly angry wasn't the dismissed principal, but Emperor. His fur stood up, and he couldn't smooth it down, his paw striking the table and leaving a deep crack, nearly splitting it in half.

In his anger, he didn't forget to soothe Nyx. "That guy is the only son of Marquis Anders Bafford, just a spoiled fool. Don't believe what he says."

Lewis was a good-for-nothing, but his father, Anders Bafford, had some ability and held a prominent position in the court.

The gossip the son picked up from his father represented the general views of the ministers.

Nyx understood this very well.

It was impossible to have no feelings at all. She wasn't a saint. Being dismissed so casually and insulted like that didn't sit with her.

But the ministers' doubts weren't entirely without reason. She really hadn't read many books, and she did have a relationship with Aurelius. From an outsider's point of view, it was understandable that they misunderstood her.

"Shh, it's okay... don't worry," Nyx whispered to the fuming little kitten, "I have a way to fix it."

Whether getting the artisans from the clan to testify for her or having Aurelius clear things up, both options would be ineffective, as they would just be saying what she wanted. Outsiders wouldn't find them credible.

The only way was to show those who doubted her what she could do, and have them accept it wholeheartedly.

"After we go back, I need to meet with the Ministry of Works." She scratched the kitten's chin. "Some things need to be handed over to them."

She had struggled for a long time before deciding to bring out gunpowder, this powerful weapon of mass destruction. It wasn't to make a name for herself, but to get Pale Wolf home sooner.

This stalemate had dragged on for too long. Although the court had the upper hand, battles were dangerous, and as long as Pale Wolf hadn't returned, she couldn't help but worry every day, fearing for his safety.

The military threat of gunpowder was incomparable to that of a telescope, and giving it to Read family artisans was inappropriate. If anything happened, it could easily be misconstrued as the Duke's Mansion having rebellious intentions, causing unnecessary trouble. It was better left to the Ministry of Works.

Nyx was deep in her thoughts, her mind wandering.

The little white cat licked her fingers, as though comforted, but before leaving the tavern, it shot Aron a look.

When the door to the private room was knocked on, a group of spoiled noblemen were still laughing and drinking. Annoyed by the noise, one of them threw his wine cup at the door, shouting, "Get out."

The knocking paused for a moment, and then a slightly sharp voice came through. "You've disturbed my master's meal." This rude remark seemed to light a fire in the drunken men's

anger.

"Who does this person think he is, talking to me like that?" Lewis shoved the person next to him. "You, go open the door. I want to see who this master of theirs thinks they are..."

When the door opened, and they saw the familiar face with a half-smile, Lewis shuddered, sobering up immediately. No

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matter how drunk or confused he was, he knew Aurelius's people.

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The others might not have met Aurelius or recognized the palace's chief eunuch, but they could tell from Lewis's reaction and Aron's smooth face that something wasn't right, and they all lowered their heads, their spines chilled.

The silence in the air felt heavy, making it hard to breathe.

Lewis staggered to his feet, almost falling back down, as he forced a smile that was even worse than crying. "Your Ma-"

"My master has already gone," Aron interrupted him, then said nothing more, turning to leave.

The group of men lost all interest in continuing their drinking, and quickly scattered, each leaving the tavern.

Not far from the carriage, Lewis heard applause from outside. Peering through the curtain, he saw an outdoor performance set up by a troupe, performing a well-known classic play summed up in five words-trouble came from the mouth.

His face turned as pale as death. There were no shortages of coincidences in this world, but he was sure this was no coincidence.

The carriage stopped at the Marquis' residence, and he stumbled inside, shouting, "Father..."

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It was the afternoon, the weather was still clear and sunny, yet, inexplicably, some small snowflakes drifted down, forming a thin layer on the ground. In an instant, it melted, leaving the ground wet and muddy.

Anders knelt outside the palace, requesting an audience with Aurelius, feeling the cold seep through his clothes, drilling straight into his bones, making him shiver uncontrollably.

He gritted his teeth and forced himself to straighten his back, cursing his son a thousand times in his mind.

There were countless young ruffians in the capital, and he had never considered his son the worst of them. He never expected his son would cause such a big trouble today.

The gate suddenly opened, and Anders immediately composed himself, bowed, but then heard a puzzled voice from above. "What's this about, Marquis?"

He looked up and saw Minister Andy from the Ministry of Works walking out, his face flushed with excitement. Immediately, he felt embarrassed and stammered for a long time, finally sighing deeply. "My son is unruly. He got drunk outside and said disrespectful things about the Expedition General's wife..."

He carefully omitted the details, intentionally emphasizing Nyx's identity.

However, to his surprise, upon hearing "Expedition General's wife," Andy did not share his anger. Instead, there was a hint of excitement and enthusiasm. Anders was momentarily confused, staring blankly at Andy, watching his expression change several times in a short span, his emotions too complicated for him to understand.

Finally, Andy snapped out of his thoughts and shook his head at him. "That was indeed too unruly.

"The General's wife has given the nation the gift of a telescope; she is a national hero. How could she be insulted for no

reason?

"A pampered fool with no contributions to the country has the audacity to speak ill of her?"

"You've worked hard for the country, Marquis, but don't neglect your family. If your children grow into monsters, you may regret it too late."

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Anders could scold his own son, but if others did it, it felt like an insult.

What was more, Anders was a father who doted on his son. Hearing Andy's words made him furious, his nose nearly crinkling with anger.

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He thought, 'This old man Andy, who used to despise the women who disturbed Aurelius's peace. How could he suddenly speak in favor of Nyx?'

"Marquis," Aron suddenly appeared quietly, interrupting Anders' grinding teeth, as he raised his hand to gesture him inside.

"Please."

Immediately, Anders tensed, clearing all thoughts from his mind, focusing only on how to apologize and how to weep before Aurelius.

When he entered the hall and saw the woman sitting next to Aurelius on the high seat, he nearly lost control of his expression.

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## Of The Bea 396

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### Chapter 396

Even though this was their first meeting, Anders immediately recognized her identity. She was Nyx. There wasn't anyone else who could sit beside the emperor.

It didn't look like a mere concubine attending to him, but rather as if Aurelius had given her half his seat.

In front of Aurelius, Anders dared not show any inappropriate emotion. He could only silently grumble, then wipe his face, tears streaming down. "Your Majesty, I am guilty..."

Anders who commanded respect in the outside world was now crying in front of Aurelius, kowtowing to beg for forgiveness on behalf of his son, claiming that he had already punished the boy with a severe beating.

No matter how much he loved his son, the punishment was inevitable. Only by taking action himself and showing his attitude could he hope for Aurelius's mercy.

Aurelius' face showed a moment of sympathy. "Your son is in poor health. He should be spoken to kindly, not beaten."

At over sixty years old, Anders only had this one son, who was frail and had almost died from several severe illnesses. Later, he sought a master to treat him, pretending the boy was his sixth son to deceive the grim reaper..

Although the story sounded mysterious, it was what helped him raise his only child.

Unfortunately, due to his indulgence, the boy turned out to be a good-for-nothing, spending his days drinking and carousing with bad mates, and when drunk, he became uncontrollable.

Nyx lowered her gaze to the desk, where a stack of evidence against Lewis had been placed. Fortunately, it wasn't too bad- mostly disputes involving damaged property-but there were no serious crimes like bullying or harassment.

Lewis needed discipline, but it wasn't beyond saving.

Aurelius called for two imperial physicians and instructed, "Go with the Marquis and treat his son well."

Anders went speechless.

He knelt and thanked Aurelius, but inwardly gritted his teeth.

He thought, 'These aren't physicians being sent to treat my son. They are clearly spies sent to assess his injuries.'

He truly didn't want to beat his son. What he said about nearly beating him to death was just an exaggeration.

After a few refusals, since Aurelius's order could not be ignored, he had no choice but to sweat coldly as he led the two physicians home, his heart heavy with worry.

When he returned to the mansion, the gate opened, and his foolish son rushed toward him, nimble as ever. "Father." With the physicians' subtle glances, Anders' headache deepened.

Seeing his face turn pale, Lewis paused in his steps and belatedly realized that something was wrong.

Two imperial doctors stepped forward, introduced themselves, and explained their purpose. His face turned even paler, his heart sinking.

He thought, 'It's over. This time, it isn't just my life at risk; it seems I have also dragged my father into it.'

Anders and Lewis waited anxiously as the imperial doctors finished their diagnosis and packed away their medical boxes. One of them shrank back, as if trying to reduce his presence to the minimum, while the other steeled himself and stepped forward, trying to salvage the situation. "Please, Your Excellency, stay a moment..."

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"The young lord's disrespect towards the Express aged His Majesty the Enures vilter  
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The imperial doctors had occational extrages with by in the palace and deeply redece te  
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When she was slandered by outsiders, they felt sympathy for her and stock fer heats  
sing Time as a resurs heart. Marquis, you will come to understand the Express's  
character in de finure and then you will realize huw v current prejudice

is

After the shock and consolation, Anders fel guilty. Whether genuine or not he had  
already sumened his anne and performed a deep bow. Please convey my thanks to the  
Empress”

After sending the two doctors out, he turned to face his son, who was exhaling in red.  
He called up his sleeves and with a deep breath, grabbed the family punishment tool  
shouting angry, Unnial son, knee?"

Whether it was to explain things to Aurelius and Nyx, or to vent his anger over being  
betrayed by his foolish son, he was truly going to punish his son this time. He wouldn't  
spare his son from this beating.

He would make sure his son stayed in bed for at least half a month.

From across the courtyard, the two imperial doctors heard the sounds of chaos inside. After carefully distinguishing the noise of sticks hitting flesh, they exchanged a knowing glance, nodded in satisfaction, and returned to the palace to report. Aurelius was actually quite dissatisfied with this outcome, thinking it was too light. Nyx, on the other hand, thought it was just right. It had served as a warning to Anders and his son, without making too much of a spectacle and inciting public dissatisfaction.

"This is a time of peace; we should use less harsh punishment," Nyx said, stroking the belly of the little cat. "You're not a tyrant. You understand the principles, no need for me to say more."

Aurelius, in his teens, had already managed the throne well. It was only because she had been wronged that he had lost his

composure.

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"The son of Anders is certainly at fault. A beating was sufficient; his crime doesn't warrant beheading," she recalled the man's storytelling skills. Drunk, he was still coherent. He wasn't completely useless, so she smiled slightly and added, "Keeping his head might still come in handy..."

The little cat's soft, warm belly was a delight to pet. It rose and fell with each breath, not resisting at all.

Nyx spoke while rubbing the cat, losing herself in the sensation.

Until the feeling suddenly changed, and she was taken aback. Before she could react, the cat had turned the tables on her.

There was no one else in the bedchamber, with Aron guarding outside, so no one would interrupt them.

Aurelius grabbed her slender waist, and with a playful gesture, rubbed her belly. Her face immediately turned red.

The same action, when she was petting the cat, felt harmless, but with Aurelius doing it, the vibe shifted completely.

The size difference was too great. His piercing blue eyes looked down at her with unmistakable aggression.

At that moment, Nyx felt completely controlled, her hairs standing on end.

## Of The Bea 397

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They had been together for many years, so she shouldn't have been nervous.

But the mature and steady male mate was completely different from this young, reckless boy before her.

Setting aside other technical issues, just in terms of service awareness and self-control, the young male was far behind. When he got serious, he didn't show any mercy.

Moreover, recently, he had been neglected by her, and he had probably built up plenty of energy.

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Nyx was so nervous that her fingers trembled slightly. Knowing she couldn't escape this, she still tried to delay. "Don't mess around, I have to go to the Ministry of Works tomorrow..."

She had promised the Minister of Works a big favor and arranged to begin some important tasks tomorrow. She had a lot to do, so she would be very busy.

Aurelius wanted to be considerate of her. But with his beloved right in front of him, seeing her in such a vulnerable state, he couldn't control himself.

He simply hugged her, and his breathing grew heavy.

You promised me, Nyx," he whispered as he kissed her neck and murmured in her ear, "You said you'd return to the palace."

"And," his tone took on a hint of grievance, "you were the one who started it..."

He had been holding back for so long.

Hearing him accuse her like this, Nyx felt guilty. She gave up struggling and raised her hand to cover her face.

If she had known that petting cats was a paid activity, she would have gone to pet the little wolf cub.

Although the little guy had grown a lot recently, and his fur wasn't as soft and smooth as the kitten's, he'd still happily let her pet him as long as she gave him a piece of jerky. At least she wouldn't have ended up losing herself.

It was as if Aurelius had seen through her thoughts. His jealousy flared up as he cupped her face, not letting her dodge. "Nyx, do you think that wolf is better than me? If you had to choose just one, who would you pick?"

He was asking about the wolf, but really, he was asking about the man.

Even though Erik was far away, he could still stir Nyx's heart, making his rival feel a sense of crisis.

Nyx thought this felt like a form of torture.

Under pressure, she finally gave in and repeatedly assured him that the kitten was the best in the world. "I'll choose you. I'll definitely choose you."

The sweet words came easily, but she had come to realize that she was just naturally a soft-hearted person. She couldn't let go of one thing and couldn't discard another.

Petting a cat was indeed one of life's greatest pleasures, but riding a lion and walking a wolf wasn't bad either. On a scorching summer day, some cool scales were just what she needed to beat the heat.

Aurelius could easily tell that Nyx was just soothing him.

He narrowed his eyes, ultimately unable to bring himself to force her to make a choice. He clenched his teeth and shifted to another field to regain some ground, releasing his frustration.

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In the setting sun, the half-grown wolf cub named Grayball took off, its four legs running wildly, like a gust of wind weaving through the palace pathways, heading straight for the Golden Hall.

As it approached, it slowed its pace, holding a rabbit it had caught in its mouth. Though it was a wild beast with a face full of fur, there was a hint of pride in its expression.

"Oh dear..." Aron laughed with squinting eyes and stepped forward to greet it. "Grayball can catch rabbits now? Oh-alive,

too."

He reached out to take the rabbit, but Grayball turned its head away to avoid him. The wolf cub happily trotted along with its prize, wanting to deliver it to its favorite person.

However, after running a few steps toward the bedroom, it suddenly froze, perked up its ears, and released the rabbit, letting it hop away. Its sharp teeth bared as it growled viciously.

Aron was too slow to react and watched helplessly as the wolf cub charged toward the bedroom in an aggressive stance.

"Don't, don't run around!" With danger imminent, Aron felt a chill run through his body. His adrenaline surged as he dashed forward, rolling and scrambling, and finally managed to pin Grayball down.

"My gosh." He sat on the floor, wiping his face in disbelief. "Don't worry, no one is hurting your master."

He thought, 'His Majesty loves the Empress dearly, so much so that she is held close to his heart, cherished and treated with

utmost care.

'But sometimes, he could be rather thoughtless... Otherwise, how would this protective wolf cub have heard the noise and mistakenly thought its master was suffering?'

Aron covered Grayball's ears with his hands, coaxing and reassuring it as he dragged it further away. Then he had someone bring a bowl of beef bones for it to chew on, trying to distract it.

He washed his hands and wiped his face with a handkerchief. Looking down at Grayball, who was half-heartedly gnawing on the bones, Aron decided he'd talk to Aurelius tomorrow.

Nyx was weak and couldn't handle rough treatment in bed.

Besides, if only one party found enjoyment while the other reluctantly endured, it would eventually affect their relationship over time.

Before Aron could find the right moment to give advice, the next morning, he received a task from Nyx first.

Nyx said, "Move my things out. Just find any palace; you can handle it."

Aron looked at her, her eyes red and her face full of anger, then glanced at Aurelius, who was lowering his head and pretending to be obedient but was secretly eyeing him warily. He swallowed nervously.

He thought, I'm just a weak, pitiful eunuch. This is a tough situation... Aurelius didn't make it difficult for his servant. He squatted down, transformed into

a kitten, and used all his charm to wear her down. Eventually, Nyx agreed not to move out.

As a result, for at least a month, he'd be kept away from the dragon bed.

If he didn't want to sleep outside, he'd have to settle for the small couch nearby.

After teaching her wayward mate a lesson, Nyx changed into a neat outfit and gracefully left.

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Her back looked elegant, but her slightly weary steps betrayed her.

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In a hurry, Nyx didn't even stop to eat in the palace. She just grabbed a meat pie from the imperial kitchen and ate it on her way. But when she arrived at the Ministry of Works, the officials were already at work.

Eyes followed her, either blatantly or subtly, making her the center of attention in an instant.

Minister Andy personally stepped forward to greet her.

Officially, Nyx was still just the general's wife, not a palace concubine, so Andy didn't perform the full kneeling ceremony, but he hesitated slightly in his choice of address.

"Just call me Nyx." Nyx noticed his hesitation and offered the suggestion. When doing official business, she didn't want to be known as someone's woman.

Rather than saying she was the general's wife or Aurelius's woman, it was more accurate to say that both the general and Aurelius were her males.

The surrounding gazes were full of curiosity, many hiding hostility. Nyx remained calm, "Yesterday, regarding what we discussed, have you decided on the personnel for research and development?"

Those who could be involved in gunpowder research had to undergo strict selection to minimize the risk of the formula leaking. Each person's responsibilities would be limited to only part of the process, not the whole.

Andy nodded, signaling that a decision had been made.

But there was a hint of doubt on his face. "After thinking it over last night, I still feel

it's unreal... Is there really such a powerful thing in the world, like thunder and earth-shattering, capable of splitting mountains?"

These words caused a stir.

The officials at the Ministry of Works, who had been observing coldly, could no longer remain seated. Right in front of Nyx, they began whispering among themselves.

"What's this? My ears can't be that bad, right?"

"What a big mouth."

"This isn't a teahouse; if you want a story, go find a storyteller."

"Tsk..."

"Are you going to invite a priest to perform a ritual?"

"Absurd. The Ministry of Works would never allow women to cause such a

ruckus."

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## Of The Bea 398

Chapter 398A buzzing sound filled the air, annoying everyone. Andy glanced at Nyx but didn't immediately intervene, seemingly wanting to see how she would respond..

Nyx's usual calm smile disappeared from her face.

When her expression went blank, her presence was so powerful it felt like facing an emperor, exuding a heavy aura of

pressure.

She scanned the room from left to right. As her gaze swept across, the noise immediately quieted down. People instinctively averted their eyes, afraid to meet

her gaze.

In the profound silence, Nyx looked at Andy.

"Is this how the Ministry of Works officials behave?" Her tone was light, not exactly a question, but it felt like a slap, leaving Andy's face burning with embarrassment. He quickly bowed and apologized.

As the department head knelt, the others followed suit, their arrogance deflating, and they lowered their heads, remaining

silent.

Nyx didn't bother with empty words of forgiveness. Seeing that they had all quieted down and behaved properly, she waved toward the door.

At her signal, a group of guards filed in, carrying strange items none of the people had seen before. They placed everything down in an orderly manner and left without a sound.



The comparison made the Ministry of Works officials appear all the more frivolous and rude.

Everyone's face displayed a hint of embarrassment. Some were too ashamed to look up but couldn't resist the curiosity and stole glances at the peculiar items.

There was a large black board, white strips, several oddly-shaped glass bottles, and some liquids and solids that were hard to identify.

Nyx bent down and picked up a homemade chalk, writing the word "chemistry" on the blackboard.

With a couple of taps, she drew everyone's attention. "What we call chemistry can be simply understood as the study of change and creation. Everything in the world has its composition, structure, properties, and transformations. What we aim to do is understand its laws and apply them.

"Saltpeter for ice-making, verdigris for copper smelting-those so-called alchemists' methods are all based on this science. If we master this, we can naturally gain the power to split mountains and break stones..."

Her voice and pace were perfect. After all, she had once worked as a tutor on Earth and later raised a group of children, so she was very experienced in teaching.

In just a few sentences, everyone's eyes, including Andy's, were brightened.

Whether splitting mountains and breaking stones was real or not, Nyx's insight alone was enough to show she wasn't just a pretty face with no brains.

Eyes full of thirst for knowledge locked onto her, their gazes intense, as though they were trying to burn a hole in her.

Even the laziest people, who usually just coasted along, were suddenly intrigued.

But Nyx suddenly stopped, scanning the crowd. "Of course, some of you might think this is nonsense. If you're unwilling to waste time with me, you can go about your own business."

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Not everyone had an interest or talent for chemistry. Even if she forced them, it would be useless. It was better to let them stay or leave voluntarily.

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She simply asked calmly, as most officials in the Ministry of Works were humanities-oriented and had never been exposed to the sciences. It was likely they wouldn't accept new theories right away.

The officials panicked, thinking she was angry about their previous offense. Fearing that she might leave in a fit of rage and refuse to teach them again, they quickly apologized and even had some kneel down and beg for forgiveness.

After a flurry of loyalty displays, no one left.

After all, even if they weren't interested, no one wanted to fall behind their colleagues. If they missed the opportunity, it would be hard to catch up later.

A young and quick-witted official eagerly fetched a chair for Nyx and tried to serve her tea.

Andy, with his serious face, sent the young official away and took over, making Nyx a cup of fragrant tea.

Nyx thanked him silently, remembering the young face as she settled into a chair cushioned with soft pads, letting out a quiet sigh of relief.

Her back ached.

She thought she was definitely going to give the kitten's head a good massage when she returned tonight, or she wouldn't be able to calm the frustration in her heart.

With her exhausted body, Nyx pulled herself together, gathering the last of her energy. She lectured from early morning until the lunch break, explaining chemistry in the simplest way possible. By noon, she had lunch with the Ministry of Works officials, trying their cafeteria food, which she found rather plain.

As expected, the taste of cafeteria food was always hard to describe, no matter the era.

Officials who were more particular about food sent someone to deliver meals or brought their own lunch to work. Some of the bolder ones quietly observed Nyx's expression and offered to share their meals with her.

In the morning, such friendly gestures would have been impossible. However, after a morning of lectures, they had begun to feel a sense of admiration for Nyx, and the nonsense about her being a seductive disaster was long forgotten.

Nyx politely declined all of their offers.

She looked down at the half-eaten meal in front of her, rubbing her temples in slight worry.

Suddenly, an eerie silence fell over the room.

Then, in unison, they all kneeled and loudly called, "We pay our respects to Your Majesty."

Nyx's eyes snapped open, and when she looked up, a bright yellow robe was already before her.

"Nyx." Under everyone's gaze, Aurelius placed the food box in front of Nyx and, acting like a dutiful wife, stood aside, carefully unpacking the contents of the box with an air of subtle flattery.

Nyx shot him a glance.

Aurelius, seemingly oblivious, shamelessly cleaned his hands and dried them with a cloth before starting to arrange the

dishes.

"Ahem." Nyx looked toward Aron for help.

The moment their gazes met, the old eunuch immediately understood and quickly approached to take the task from

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Emperor's hands. "Let me assist Your Majesty."

In the palace, once the door is closed, Aurelius can do whatever he pleases. Outside, however, he must maintain his noble image.

Aurelius didn't argue, instead, he found himself a chair and sat closely beside Nyx. He found a small pillow from somewhere. and placed it behind her waist to provide support. Then, he brought the difficult-to-eat cafeteria food to himself.

Emperor ate the leftover food with elegance and composure. No matter how elegant or composed, leftovers are still leftovers.

The officials were left speechless, stunned into silence by this scene.

Nyx took a deep breath and reached under the table to pinch his thigh. The male's muscles were hard as a rock and didn't budge, it was futile.

Only after finishing the food did Aurelius wipe his mouth and give a rather dignified reason. "Every meal is hard-earned and shouldn't be wasted." Seeing the mighty Emperor so frugal and economical, the officials could never dare waste food.

Immediately, they all had tears in their eyes, shouting "Your Majesty is wise" while diligently cleaning their plates. Those who couldn't eat more packed their food to take home and promised to finish it later.

Nyx went speechless.

Everyone worked so hard, and she became the odd one out. No matter how good the palace chefs were, her appetite was limited, and she was full after eating a little.

Aurelius, however, had an insatiable appetite, so Nyx didn't need to worry about wasting food.

She stared at his sharp but somewhat youthful profile for a while, her mood slowly calming. The small pillow supporting her waist relieved the soreness, and her anger dissipated.

She thought, 'Why bother arguing with a male in his teens? At this age, it's when one's hunger is insatiable, both for food and sexual desires. I have kept him waiting for so long; shouldn't I allow him to indulge a bit? Moreover, I don't feel any sensation after all:

After the meal, once everything was tidied up, Aurelius gently touched Nyx's fingertips.

Nyx lowered her eyes and trembled her lashes, but didn't pull away. However, with so many watching, she still felt a little uncomfortable. She allowed him to hold her hand under the table for a while, but when he tried to bring it into the open, she withdrew her hand, which had grown warm from his grip. Some of the officials pretended not to see, glancing around, while others looked at her with a complex, even sympathetic gaze. When their eyes met, they gave her an "I understand" look.

Before, they had fallen for it, thinking the seductive concubine was bewitching Aurelius. But now, seeing it with their own eyes, it was clear that Nyx had an attitude of disdain toward Aurelius. She looked at him coldly, pulling her hand away and avoiding intimacy.

They felt that Aurelius was forcing her.

Nyx was confused. Something seemed off about their reactions, but she couldn't figure it out. Deciding to stop thinking about it, she focused on the afternoon's content, tapped the chalkboard, and continued the lesson.

The figure dressed in bright yellow stuck closely to her side, not leaving.

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Listening to the lecture with Aurelius present was rather stressful. The officials didn't dare make any moves, and the vibe was much heavier than in the morning.

But when Nyx performed a small experiment, they gradually became more lively, their minds filled with questions, eager for Nyx to clarify them.

Aurelius observed the officials' attitudes for a while, feeling satisfied. He withdrew

his gaze and fixed it on Nyx's slender form, as though she were glowing, unable to look away.

By evening, when it was time to leave, the officials were reluctant to part. They had never been so enamored with the Ministry of Works before.

Upon hearing that Nyx would start guiding the personnel responsible for gunpowder research tomorrow and would no longer be giving lectures, a collective sigh filled the room.

"Can you really not stay a few more days?"

"I am still inexperienced, not suitable for dealing with gunpowder production,

but..."

In their several decades of life, even serving as officials for many years, they had never encountered such profound and mysterious knowledge of the world. One day was enough to touch only the surface.

They thought, With such talent, why couldn't she stay at the Ministry of Works?

Now she has no official title, hidden away in Aurelius's palace, bearing the name of a troublemaker. It is truly unfortunate.'

The officials didn't dare to speak out loud but secretly shot daggers at Aurelius with their eyes.

Aurelius remained calm, unaffected, and even secretly delighted.

After only one day's teaching, the officials had completely changed their attitudes, completely forgetting how disdainful they had been toward Nyx before. It was clear now, Nyx was truly the most capable.

He would never stop Nyx from doing what she wanted. As for what she would do,

Nyx had her own plans. He wouldn't interfere, and neither would the Ministry of Works' people change her mind.

Despite the Ministry of Works' officials pleading, Nyx remained firm. "All I can teach you are these basic principles."

Everyone must explore the path themselves. Her purpose wasn't to spoon-feed

them useful knowledge, but to plant a seed. The further development would be up to them to complete.

That night, the officials from the Ministry of Works dreamed of experiments, their minds filled with various elements, chaotic yet beautiful. Meanwhile, Nyx, holding the list handed to her by Andy, reviewed each person's performance today, analyzing their chemical talents and interests, then assigning different tasks for a reasonable division of labor.

Aurelius clung to her side, wrapping his arms around her waist from behind, feeling the soft curve of her body, and couldn't help but feel restless.

His heart raced wildly, but the person in his arms remained calm, her expression focused.

After a brief silence, he sighed with some resentment, "Nyx, you are more suited to be Aurelius than I am."

If anyone else had heard these words, they would have been alarmed and immediately knelt to pledge their loyalty, swearing they did not harbor such rebellious ambitions.

Nyx, however, simply snorted nonchalantly, "I can't be bothered to be the emperor."

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She finished writing the last word, dropped the pen, blew the ink dry, then turned and hooked her arm around his neck. "Don't belittle yourself. You're perfect for being the emperor, and so is our child."

Although Sera could be a little troublemaker, she was born smart and capable of taking on responsibility. She was the crown princess, supported by the entire empire.

Having been away from home for so long, Nyx missed her other mates and children at home.

Thinking about Sera, Nyx felt a little melancholic. Sera was the little kitten she had personally raised, and Nyx hadn't had the chance to cuddle her soft fur or hear her little mews for a long time. She missed her dearly. Upon hearing the word "child," Aurelius felt excited. He glanced at Nyx's face, which seemed a little troubled, and his excitement gradually waned.

Her health had never been good. She had been mistreated for years, even struggling in cold water once, making it difficult for her to conceive. The imperial doctors had tried their best to care for her, but they couldn't guarantee full

recovery.

"It's my fault for not trying hard in bed enough, Nyx," he murmured, trying to soothe her. "I will try harder in the future and give you a child."

Nyx was stunned. She thought, 'Not trying hard enough? What else does he want to try?'

Seizing the opportunity while Nyx was too stunned to resist, Aurelius lifted her over his shoulder and marched briskly toward the bedroom, letting her feel his greater efforts.

The consequences of trying too hard meant that Nyx didn't get out of bed until afternoon to go to the Ministry of Works.

Luckily, although Andy had suspected the authenticity of the grand ideas she had painted, he had still selected elites for her. She could easily delegate her tasks, and her subordinates would naturally carry them out without issue. Nyx didn't need to stay at the Ministry of Works to supervise the progress; she

had so much free time that she could even think about other small projects. Not long after, the glass shop in the east of the city had received new stock- Mercury mirrors, available in sizes ranging from palm-sized to as tall as a person, were sold in the shop. The reflection was so clear it was terrifying, far superior to copper mirrors.

When the new products appeared, they immediately caused a stir among the noblewomen in the capital, and the young masters eagerly rushed to buy them. Nyx counted the coins until her hands were sore, in a great mood. When she went

to the Ministry of Works to check the progress, she unexpectedly received a gift-a full-length mirror.

The mirror was as tall as a person, smooth and bright, reflecting Nyx's dazed expression.

"The Ministry of Works and all its people are grateful for your guidance. We pooled some money together to present this gift to you," Andy explained on behalf of everyone.



The others bowed and expressed their sincere thanks.

If Nyx wanted to make gunpowder, she didn't really need to exert any effort to convince them. With Aurelius's support, no one could stop her from doing whatever she wanted.

But instead, she spent time and effort teaching them "chemistry," guiding them like a teacher leading ignorant children, pointing out a path no one had walked before, giving them new directions for research and thinking.

Such intelligence and such a broad mind were truly admirable. Behind the scenes, some people even secretly discussed

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whether Nyx was an incarnation of a fairy, since she knew so much and was willing to teach others.

Faced with the sparkling eyes of everyone, Nyx couldn't help but laugh and accepted the gift.

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A mirror this large was top-tier in her shop and could fetch an astronomical price.

Even though there were many officials at the Ministry of Works, when the cost was divided, each person's purse would still suffer.

After returning, she thought it over and decided to make a batch of high-proof distilled liquor as a return gift.

Considering it wasn't suitable to drink during working hours, she had someone deliver it to their homes.

The officials of the Ministry of Works were deeply grateful for the return gift, and

some even composed poems in praise of her after drinking.

The heartfelt poems quickly spread among the other court officials, sparking sarcastic laughter.

"What's going on with the Ministry of Works? Have they been bewitched by that woman?"

"I heard they even gave her a large mercury mirror."

"Flattering and fawning, the same old routine...tsk"

"Andy used to be a man of integrity; when did he become such a petty man?"

"It doesn't seem right... Maybe there's more to the story..." Curious minds investigated but only found that Nyx had been teaching the

Ministry of Works how to make a weapon capable of "shaking the heavens and splitting the earth," called gunpowder, but no one could uncover the specifics of its production.

It sounded more like a ridiculous tale.

In the capital, rumors of Aurelius's erratic behavior spread widely, and the officials were planning to advise Aurelius not to let women interfere with the Ministry of Works' affairs.

However, before they could finalize their plans, Aurelius preemptively announced during court that the Ministry of Works had created a new weapon, and that in five

days, there would be a test in the outskirts of the city, with all court officials invited to witness it.

They thought, 'Did they actually create it? Huh? Something as loud as thunder?

Able to split mountains and stones? Huh?"

In the court, everyone fell silent, perplexed by the absurdity of the situation.

The news spread rapidly, and in just five days, it reached every corner of Hilltop

City. Even the simplest teahouses in the city were abuzz with the story. "I once saw a general's long sword when I was in the army. It's really long and can

chop stones. It makes a lot of noise, but splitting mountains like thunder? That's just nonsense."

"Unless the general's wife is a fairy from heaven and knows some magic." "You must be kidding..."

On the day of the test, crowds of people eager to see the spectacle flooded the outskirts of the city. However, the court officials stood at the front, blocking their view. So, the people began climbing up the hills for a better vantage point. Some got halfway up the hill but were stopped by armored guards, who warned

them to stay away from the northern hill to avoid injury or even death.

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"What? Are they really going to split the mountain?" Naturally, the people were skeptical, but out of fear of the soldiers' sharp spears, they reluctantly moved to another hill.

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The crowd had grown large, and while the court officials mocked the spectacle, they too had gathered, waiting to see the show.

Lewis also arrived. Wrapped in a thick fur coat, still recovering from the wounds

inflicted by his father, he couldn't wait to see the foolish emperor and his alluring consort make fools of themselves.

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From a distance, Lewis immediately spotted Aurelius's towering figure, and the pain from his wounds flared up again, making him involuntarily shrink back.

But when he saw the slender woman beside Aurelius, his anger surged, overriding his fear.

He cursed inwardly, "That bitchy witch. A woman of low birth, the daughter of a treacherous minister, who has lucked into marrying into the Duke's family.

'But instead of serving her husband Erik properly, she has seduced Aurelius, who was once a wise and powerful emperor, now turned into a foolish monarch because of her. She makes him do whatever she wants. It's clear she is nothing but a seductive disaster.

Nyx, unaware of the derogatory thoughts behind her, gazed at the countryside scenery for a moment before turning her face slightly and whispering to her mate..

The soft pale yellow cloak framed her small face, her skin so smooth that it seemed as if it were made of fine material. Her delicate features had no trace of seductive allure, but instead, a clear and graceful beauty.

The moment Lewis saw her profile, he was immediately choked by his own saliva, his eyes quickly darting away as if burned.

He thought, 'A seductress... a disaster... Truly, one cannot judge a book by its cover... How could she look like that?'

Hearing his son's cough, Anders glanced at him. Though often enraged by his unworthy son, he still cared for him and reached over to adjust the fur coat, tightening it around him. He quietly reminded, "No matter what you see today, keep your mouth shut."

It was one thing to watch the spectacle, but

anyone who dared to laugh in front of Aurelius would ruin their own future.

Lewis, understanding the importance of this, nodded readily.

After a brief moment of hesitation, he looked chest.

at

Nyx again. For some reason, he felt an odd sense of worry rising in his

He thought, 'If the gunpowder experiment fails and Aurelius loses face in front of

his ministers and the people, could he take out his anger on her?'

I have been beaten by my father and still need half a month to recover. How could someone as frail and delicate as her withstand Aurelius's wrath?'

As his thoughts drifted, Lewis got lost in his own mind and didn't hear the

eunuch's shrill voice announce that the time had come, and the test was about to begin.

Suddenly, a deafening explosion rang in his ears, causing his heart to tremble violently. His mind went blank, and his ears rang, before he was thrown onto his back from the shock.

The ground trembled, and dust flew in all directions.

The usually composed court officials lost all semblance of grace. Some screamed in fear, others crawled on the ground, and some shouted, "It's an earthquake..."

The more ignorant citizens believed the sky had fallen, screaming and kneeling, begging the gods for mercy.

Even those who had been mentally prepared, such as Aron and the Ministry of Works officials, turned pale in fear.

Aurelius appeared calm, his expression unchanged, but instinctively, he pulled Nyx into his embrace, his muscles tensing like a tiger ready to pounce.

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"It's okay," Nyx gently patted his hand, soothing him with a soft voice. "It's not an earthquake; it's a gunpowder explosion. It's far from us."

To ensure safety, the explosive test site was set on the mountain to the north, so no matter what mistakes happened, they wouldn't affect this area.

The chaos continued for a while, the smoke gradually dissipating, and the officials slowly regained their composure, only to see the mountain peak in the distance missing a section, with countless stones rolling down.

It was like thunder, shaking the mountains and splitting the rocks.

Everyone's hearts were racing, as if still lingering in the aftermath of the

explosion. When they looked at Nyx, there was no trace of contempt in their eyes, only fear of the unknown.

One by one, they became disheveled and covered in dirt, while she stood firmly in front, unshaken.

Even though she was just a woman, not tall and slender in stature, her composure at this moment was still awe-inspiring.

Without any mental preparation, Anders was stunned by the sudden explosion. He huddled in the crowd, trembling for a long time before remembering that his son had fallen beside him. He quickly helped him up, brushing off the dust and checking him carefully.

Thankfully, there was no wound on his head.

Although there were no external injuries, it seemed that Lewis had become somewhat dazed, his eyes vacant, and his features expressionless. He didn't react to his father's concerned inquiries, staring unblinkingly at Nyx's back.

Anders was his only son, and fearing he had become mentally impaired, he frowned bitterly, apologized to Aurelius, and quickly left with his son to see a doctor.

Seeing that he had already acted, others also started to move. Some congratulated Aurelius on acquiring such a marvelous weapon, while others praised Nyx for another great achievement. The officials from the Ministry of Works had beaming faces, eager to speak to Nyx.

Nyx didn't stop them from celebrating, but she had to remind them, "This is just the first trial; further improvements are necessary."

The fact that it exploded successfully and had enough destructive power was just the basic requirements for gunpowder.

To turn it into a weapon that could be officially used, its stability had to be ensured to avoid explosions during transport, which would result in killing enemies at the deaths of their own soldiers.

Upon hearing this, the Ministry of Works officials became serious, nodding and responding solemnly.

The other court officials looked at them so seriously, their hearts pounding, their eyes filled with both respect and fear toward Nyx.

They thought, 'Further improvements? It can still be improved further?'

What they had just seen was already terrifying enough.

To speak heretically, if Nyx harbored ill intentions, with this kind of weapon, Aurelius's throne would no longer be secure.

Thinking about the unclear relationship between her and Aurelius, the officials no longer cared about propriety and decency, but rather felt a subtle sense of relief.

Fortunately, Aurelius was young, strong, and handsome, and knew how to cherish beauty, holding Nyx's heart firmly.

Of course, the Expedition General was also indispensable. He was generous enough to handle Nyx and persuade her not to

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abandon him. Nyx probably made these telescopes and gunpowder for him.

A few officials who had been planning to offer advice later burned their memorials in the middle of the night.

In the court, there was a wave of praise, and no one brought up any criticisms about Nyx's questionable moral conduct in dealing with both sides.

Aurelius was in a great mood, but Nyx couldn't bring herself to smile.

Originally, she could leave the palace at will, occasionally going out to visit the family workshops and her glass shop.

However, since the gunpowder explosion test, her face had become recognizable wherever she went.

The court officials were still somewhat reserved, holding to etiquette, and did not stare at her too openly or display any overt flattery,

The common people, however, didn't care for such subtleties. When they saw her, they immediately called her "Goddess" and bowed to her.

After a few scares, Nyx was forced to stay within the palace, temporarily shutting herself off from the outside world.

After being cooped up for several days, the Ministry of Works suddenly sent word that there had been progress in perfecting the weapon. Unable to contain herself any longer, Nyx donned a veil and a face mask, sneaking out of the palace.

The current era was much more open than the previous one, but most noblewomen still preferred to keep their faces hidden when out in public. Nyx blended in with them, attracting little attention.

She went to the Ministry of Works' office and saw everything proceeding smoothly. Feeling braver, she decided to visit her glass shop, stopping by a nearby tavern for a break.

This tavern actually belonged to the Read family, and they had always kept a private room reserved for her on the top floor.

Without needing any orders from Nyx, a pot of fine hot tea and a few of her favorite snacks were immediately served.

After closing the door and opening the window, Nyx inhaled the familiar fragrance of tea, and the long-lost sense of relaxation filled her body. She raised her hand, intending to remove the bothersome veil and mask.

However, just then, an untimely knock on the door interrupted her.

Nyx froze. She lowered her gaze in contemplation. She didn't get up immediately but instead remained silent, creating the illusion that no one was inside.



The person outside was persistent, seemingly certain that she was inside. They knocked politely but continued at intervals, not stopping.

After a moment of hesitation, Nyx took a deep breath, clenched her fist, and walked over. She suddenly pushed open the door.

"Uh... Ah!" The person outside was caught off guard, stumbling and sitting down on the ground. They looked up angrily, but when their eyes met Nyx's, all their anger dissipated at once.

Looking at this unfamiliar male face, Nyx was momentarily confused, but then she recalled where she had heard his voice before. She asked, "Master Lewis?"

"No, no, not Master Lewis." Lewis blushed, hurriedly waving his hands. "Please, don't call me that..."

His friends, who flattered him as "Master," often received his careless responses, but he could never accept that title from Nyx.

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"Call me Lewis instead." He stood up from the ground, cupped his hands, and bowed to Nyx.

Nyx sidestepped, avoiding him.

"What is the meaning of this, young master?" Her expression was inquisitive, her tone indifferent.

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It seemed his usual buddies weren't around. The way he had knocked earlier made it seem like he had come specifically to see her.

Given their past unpleasant interactions, the likelihood of him seeking revenge seemed higher.

Nyx wasn't scared at all.

This Lewis was a pathetic man, more fragile than she was, completely useless, and could be easily pushed over by her. Even if she were out alone, she still wouldn't be afraid of him.

Moreover, there were at least three to five shadow guards in the corner, likely keeping an eye on this uninvited guest. If anything went wrong, they would act immediately.

The vibe had grown tense.

Under Nyx's scrutinizing gaze, Lewis hesitated, took two steps back, and suddenly knelt down with a thud. "I am here to apologize."

This was an unexpected turn of events for Nyx. She lowered her gaze, examining him for a few seconds, unable to discern his intentions.

She thought, 'Perhaps it's due to the command of his father, Anders, or perhaps it's out of ingratiation. Of course, there's a very slim chance it is a genuine apology.

"It's not a big deal; it's been a long time, and I've already forgotten about it," she said, "Young master, please get up and speak."

Although they were on the top floor of a restaurant where no one would witness the commotion, it still wasn't right for him to stay kneeling.

It seemed he was grateful for her magnanimity, as Lewis's eyes reddened, yet he still refused to rise, stammering for a long time before speaking in a low voice, "I have another, uh, request..."

"I... I want to be involved in gunpowder production," he held his breath, closed his eyes, and blurted it all out.

She was momentarily stunned and then, with a complex expression, touched the tip of her nose, unsure of how to respond.

After a brief silence, she invited. "Young master, please come inside, and we will talk further."

At her words, Lewis's eyes immediately lit up, as though he had found hope, and

he took small, quick steps to follow her. into the private room. To avoid suspicion, he deliberately left the door open.

However, as soon as they sat down and tea was served, Nyx directly spoke, "Gunpowder production is no small matter, and confidentiality is crucial. Besides me, only a few officials from the Ministry of Works are involved; no outsiders are allowed."

Anyone with common sense could tell that this was a clear rejection.

Lewis's eyes, which had just brightened, quickly dimmed again, "I... I understand..."

He, of course, knew that gunpowder production was a crucial task. Ever since he witnessed the gunpowder explosion test, it had been on his mind, or else he wouldn't have shamelessly come to Nyx to ask.

If he had worked in the Ministry of Works, perhaps he would have had a glimmer of hope. In his lifetime, he had never

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hated being unskilled more than he did now,

Nyx observed his expression, finally confirming that he was serious, and gave him a slightly higher opinion.

"Actually, aside from gunpowder production, young master, there are other areas where you can make a contribution, she spoke softly, her tone unhurried, yet to Lewis, her words were full of temptation. "I have another important matter here,

one that is perfectly suited for you to showcase your talents and fulfill your ambitions"

"What is it?" Lewis eagerly perked up.

He thought, 'A useless person like me, even my father had scolded me for being good for nothing, but Nyx actually thought I could be useful?'

Nyx smiled, not immediately explaining what the task was. Instead, she ordered a waiter to bring pen and paper and handed it to the confused Lewis,

Then she began to teach him pinyin, spending some time guiding him, and then

assigned him a task. "Write down what I just explained to you on the paper, and make sure it's clear and easy to understand."

Lewis, immersed in the excitement of learning something new, picked up the pen without hesitation, his thoughts flowing smoothly.

In the evening, when a white cat with some dark hair on its forehead sneaked through the open window, meowing pitifully and curling up in Nyx's lap. The sudden cat meow startled Lewis, making him jump.

At that moment, he had just finished his task, writing a thick stack of paper. His wrist was sore, and he nervously presented it to Nyx with both hands, full of anticipation. Nyx took the papers, and the white cat leaned over to inspect, giving it a cold meowing.

He thought, 'Such ugly handwriting. As expected, Lewis is the spoiled son of Anders.'

Nyx smiled, running her hands through the soft cat fur from start to finish, then grabbed one of the cat's paws and squeezed its meat pads.

Rather than the ugliness of the handwriting, she was more focused on the content. After testing him, she was now sure that Lewis was the right person for the job.

Without needing to say a word, Lewis, not being a complete fool, had already guessed what she wanted him to do. His tone was subtly excited. "You want me to

go and repair the book?"

Nyx nodded.

To be more specific, she wanted him to be responsible for writing the textbooks.

Of course, this is not a job one person can complete; it requires assembling a

team, and Lewis was one of the key people she selected to lead it. This was not only because of his talent but also because of his status. What she aimed to do was to allow commoners and children from poor families to

receive education. Naturally, this would infringe upon the interests of noble families.

Bringing Lewis onboard was the same as bringing Anders along in the same boat.

For the sake of his only son, Anders would have no choice but to join her and negotiate with the noble families.

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With his position among the noble families, there was no doubt that he could handle this task well.

"To enlighten the people and benefit the nation, the achievements will last

forever," Nyx smiled slightly, skillfully drawing a picture of a large, tempting pic. Dazzled by the prospect, Anders swears an oath to wholeheartedly dedicate himself, eager to begin immediately, willing to brave mountains and seas-even if it means facing death a hundred times.

He thought, 'A real man is one who creates something grand. My father would never call me a rebellious son again.

At Nevaton in Kellingtown, the Pacification Army began training early in the

morning, with the sounds of shouting and spears slicing through the air, forming a neat rhythm.

It had been nearly a week since they were ordered to quell the rebellion in Kellingtown. The barbarian tribes were cunning! hiding in the deep mountains, difficult to eradicate, and occasionally sent death squads to harass, which left the army frustrated and on edge.

However, the soldiers still maintained a good appearance, standing tall, with high spirits, their faces flushed and glowing. As soon as the training ended, the commanders led their respective teams to the mess hall, where smoke was rising high from the camp, and the air was filled with the aroma of rice, wheat, and meat,

making people's stomachs growl.

"Today we have roasted lamb."

"And fried flatbreads."

"I love flatbreads. I want eight of them."

From a distance, the soldiers couldn't wait to talk about it. Once they tasted the

greasy flatbreads, biting into them and wrapping a piece of hot roasted lamb, they were so moved that tears welled up, both tears and saliva flowing freely. "Master Voss is really a great person..."

"If it weren't for Master Voss' generosity, where would we get these flatbreads and

lamb? We'd be lucky to have some cold

rations."

When marching, having enough rations to fill the stomach was already a generous treatment. They were grateful to the imperial court, and the generals always ate with them, never having special treatment, so no one complained.

Now, the reason they could eat so well was all thanks to a donation from a wealthy merchant from the capital.

The general did not hide this, and the news had already spread throughout the army. "Master Voss," with the title of "great benefactor," was widely praised. Since Master Voss appeared, not only on days like today when meals were improved, but even on normal days, there was meat oatmeal every meal, thick and greasy, so rich that fork could stand up in it. Not only the regular soldiers but even the commanders who ate it, would wipe

their mouths and wish they could serve the imperial court for another hundred

years.

The imperial army, well-fed and strong, trained with all their might, shouting with

such force that it reverberated through the mountains, disturbing those hiding in the deep forests. Compared to two or three months ago, the great barbarian leader Monka had

visibly lost weight, his cheekbones jutting out, dark rings under his eyes, and his whole body looked haggard.

"We should surrender," Monka hoarsely spoke.

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The scouts from the tribe had been to Nevaton several times, and after returning, they appeared disoriented, with two even defecting on the spot.

They had heard that the imperial army ate hot meals every day, with meat, had warm clothes to protect them from the cold and charcoal to burn for warmth. Monka couldn't bear to calculate how much silver had been spent. With such quantities of supplies, just the transportation was a terrifying cost. With such an investment, it seemed the imperial court was truly determined not to

let them go. Rather than living in fear with a blade hanging over their heads, they might as well surrender.

"We cannot surrender," the elder sharply refuted.

He stared at the king, whom he had raised, with a disappointed gaze.

Monka was fine in many ways, but he had always been timid and easily frightened.

As his stepfather, the elder knew exactly how to persuade him. After scolding him, he softened his tone, reasoning with him "The imperial court hates our tribe to the bone. If we deliver ourselves to them, we will truly be doomed."

These words were half true, half false.

Aurelius and Erik were not bloodthirsty people, and no matter what, they wouldn't slaughter women and children.

However, as the great leader Monka and a trusted confidant of the chief, if they fell into the hands of the imperial court, there would only be one outcome-death. Monka was immediately intimidated, shivering, grabbing the elder's sleeve, his eyes filled with helplessness. "Then what can we do?" "At this point, we have no choice but to hide deep in the mountains, the higher

and further the better," the elder said, his eyes flashing with brilliance.

"The peaks are treacherous, and we hold the advantage of the terrain. Only narrow paths can be climbed. Even if they find our village, they won't be able to attack us."

He thought, 'Manpower is always limited. No matter how strong Erik is, no matter how powerful the imperial army is, they can't possibly dig through the mountains, right?'

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"The longer the court holds out against us, the more silver it will cost them. They won't drag this on forever," the elder said confidently, patting Monka on the shoulder to reassure him.

As long as they could hold out until Erik left and the army retreated, they would be safe and could return to live in the village at the foot of the mountain.

Monka seemed to find his resolve and, with a slight boost to his spirits, climbed out of his chair. "I'll follow your advice, Father," he said.

After being relentlessly pursued by Erik's army for over three months, the barbarian tribe's village had been almost completely destroyed. The leaders of the various tribes were nearly all captured.



The remaining people merged into a larger village and, under the leadership of the great leader Monka, moved deep into the Misty Ridge.

The area was strategically rugged, filled with poisonous miasma and thick trees that blocked out the sun. Even without farmland, they wouldn't starve in the short term by foraging from nature's bounty.

The barbarians' movements quickly reached Nevaton.

When the military leaders learned that they had moved their entire tribe deeper into the mountains, they grew increasingly frustrated, feeling like the barbarians were hiding in their shells like turtles or burrowing like rats.

Erik reviewed the intelligence and summoned several of the barbarians who had previously surrendered. "Are you familiar with the Misty Ridge?" he asked.

The barbarians, eager to prove themselves and earn redemption, wore excited expressions when they were called in, but upon hearing "Misty Ridge," their smiles instantly froze.

Hesitating for a long time, one of them finally gathered the courage to speak. "That place is cursed; we're not sure we know the way. No one goes there unless they have to, and only the elders in the tribe know it well..."

He nervously observed Erik's expression and bowed. "If the general needs, I am willing to try and guide you."

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The others quickly followed, pledging their loyalty and offering to do whatever they could to help.

Erik didn't say whether or not he would use them, but asked them to explain the geography and conditions of Misty Ridge in more detail before dismissing them.

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Ten days passed in a flash.

While the leaders were growing increasingly troubled, the ordinary soldiers were unaffected by the barbarians' movements.

The Pacification Army still trained diligently every day, eating heartily, and waking up each morning full of hope for another day.

Life in Misty Ridge, however, was not easy for the barbarians.

The village had already run out of food. Apart from the great leader and his father, everyone else had to forage for wild fruits and vegetables around the village. They couldn't venture far for fear of wild animals, and occasionally finding a bird's nest with eggs was a rare treat.

Such days seemed endless, with everyone growing pale and emaciated, constantly praying that the imperial army would retreat and stop dragging things

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But no matter how much they prayed, the imperial army showed no signs of retreating.

Instead, the village received an unexpected visitor: In the dead of night, the village was in complete darkness, and the night watchmen were napping in their posts when they suddenly heard a disturbance near the gate.

"Who's there?" one of them asked, jumping up and drawing his bow toward the sound.

Other patrolmen rushed to his side, gripping their weapons tightly as if facing a great threat.

They thought, 'Is it the imperial soldiers sneaking up on them? Or perhaps a wild beast from the mountains?'

The vibe was tense when, from the dark shadows of the trees, a few figures emerged, whistling in rhythm-a familiar tune that only the villagers knew.

"Drew and Draven?" The patrolling soldier squinted, focusing his gaze. He recognized two of the figures as the brothers who had once served by the great leader's side.

Despite the familiarity, their wariness didn't lessen. They quickly surrounded the uninvited guests, their eyes filled with scrutiny. "Aren't you supposed to be in Nevaton?"

Truth be told, these men were traitors.

"It's a long story," Drew said, avoiding mentioning their betrayal. Instead, he sighed and shook his head, pointing behind him. "We've brought some food and cloth to the village."

Food?

What?

Upon hearing the word "food," the patrolmen's eyes immediately lit up, and they couldn't take their eyes off the bags. Their grip on their weapons loosened considerably.

Drew and the others seized the opportunity and carried the bags into the village without resistance.

After walking a few steps, a fire suddenly lit up ahead, and hurried footsteps approached. It turned out that King Monka and his father had heard the commotion and came to check on the situation.

Upon seeing the faces of the traitors, King Monka's face darkened with fury.

"King," before he could speak, Drew and the others knelt, tears streaming down their faces. "We are guilty... We regret it...."

The group wept bitterly, speaking in between sobs, condemning Erik for his inhumane actions. He had forced them to stay, but treated them like animals, humiliating them, even using the excuse of 'different races' to trample them.

"Ah Rong was beaten to death, hung up... beaten to death... We just couldn't take it anymore. When we heard about the tribe moving to Misty Ridge, we began planning our escape..."

Seeing their disheveled appearance, covered in injuries, and hearing their heart-wrenching cries, Monka couldn't help but empathize and furrowed his brow.

While traitors were detestable, they should not have been treated so cruelly simply because they were barbarians.

Angry voices rose all around as the barbarians expressed their deep sympathy for the suffering of their fellow tribe

members.

The old man beside Monka stood still, his face full of wrinkles making it difficult to read his expression, his eyes hiding suspicion and curiosity.

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"How did you escape?"

It's not that he was overly suspicious-after all, these people were all traitors. No matter how sweet their words sounded, they may not be telling the truth. It might all be a conspiracy.

When talking about their escape, the group spoke in a chaotic manner, each trying to explain in their own way.

They didn't live together in Nevaton, and their plans were all different. They had agreed beforehand to act tonight, to escape through the city gates at the appointed time, then meet up outside the city and head into the mountains together.

There was a buzzing noise, and the old man's head felt as though it would explode from the chaos. He couldn't discern any contradictions in their story. "Time was tight, the journey dangerous. We could only manage to sneak some food and cloth that we could get our hands on," Drew said, his tears suddenly flowing again, his voice choked with emotion. He trembled and pulled out a cylindrical object from his chest. "And... and this..."

The object still had blood on it, half-dried. Draven, standing nearby, let out a heart-wrenching cry upon seeing it.

The sight of them left the elder in shock. "What... is this?"

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