Empress 156

Chapter 156: Slaughter Feast (Part 2)

Cowards should be destroyed.

The sharp arrow shot through the air like lightning, hitting Munina precisely in the chest.

Munina looked down in shock, seeing only the quivering fletching of the arrow.

Pain tore through her body and soul; her vision went black as she fell into a dark abyss.

She couldn’t speak, but her soul screamed, Why was it you, sister?!

She knew well the risks her people were taking to rescue them.

As a high-value target, she was very important.

The risk of being silenced after a failed rescue was out of fear she would join humans and harm her people.

The danger of a traitor was truly terrifying.

She understood, completely understood.

But she couldn’t accept Munina taking action herself; why was it you, sister?!

If it was Luther beside her or anyone else, she would have been relieved—anyone but her dear sister Munina.

That arrow tore apart not only her innocence but also her last attachment to her people.

She fell heavily, like a dead fish.

The red line gradually approached.

Slowly, but like a blood-soaked scythe offering a suffocating invitation from the Grim Reaper.

The Sussex Army was not the best in the world, but they never shied away from anyone on the front lines.

Some always thought Sussex people would lose their combat power without firearms, only to be overrun by bayonet-wielding infantry in a charge to incapacitate them.

One male Sea Demon was stronger than a human soldier, but the combat power of five hundred male Sea Demons was far less than that of five hundred well-trained Human Race soldiers.

And tonight's participating force was five full infantry battalions, along with auxiliary units, totaling 2,376 people.

With superiority in numbers, weapons, organization, and combat power, the Sea Demons stood no chance.

Roland's combat style was such that he would never engage four against one if he could engage five against one.

If it weren't for fear of being too conspicuous with a larger number, he would have mobilized thousands more to ambush.

The more than two thousand people looked like a dense mass.

Knowing his own commanding abilities, Roland did not take over command but instead delegated power to Brigadier General Dailong, leader of the 37th Brigade.

Dailong was little-known in the Sussex military realm, but Roland believed he was capable.

Even a merely adequate commander would suffice for tonight’s battle.

In truth, it was not a battle, but a one-sided massacre.

Some might force a fifty-fifty balance in a crushing situation, but definitely not Roland.

Besides the 2,000 visible infantry, he had a contingency plan.

At the moment the red line appeared, Munina knew the mission had failed and decisively killed her sister, then commanded a retreat.

Less than a kilometer remained to the canal; as long as they reached it, they could still escape in the rainy night.

The losses would be significant, but better than being completely wiped out.

This was land, a core human domain; once day broke or the rain ceased, the Sea Demons’ slight advantages would be gone.

"Rear guard to the front, maintain formation, orderly retreat!"

The right command, the wrong army.

Rear guard to front, maintaining formation, an accurate strategy, but only the elite could execute it among major human nations.

Without strict training and a steadfast will, maintaining formation in a rout, let alone shifting formation for retreat, was impossible.

Munina imagined the retreat: every Sea Demon with a determined gaze, braving a rain of arrows without fear of sacrifice, paving a path to survival for their kin.

Reality's retreat: trampling, shoving, fleeing, wielding giant halberds against comrades to reach the canal faster.

"XXX, you're blocking my way, damnit!"

"Move it, I'm a Five Scallop Warrior, who are you to block me?"

"Five Scallops, so what? You're running with us!"

...

The vast chasm between reality and ideals, the weak response of her wasteful sister, the guilt from failed mission planning, almost broke Munina, who had grown up privileged, rarely facing setbacks.

The lightning illuminating the sky and the deafening thunder like a deadly melody rapidly shattered the Sea Demon rescue troops.

Even before frontline contact with humans, their morale eroded.

Though they were the Sea Demons' elite, their organization and discipline were no match for secondary human forces.

Munina stood stupefied, unable to think of any command to rally the soldiers.

Instead, bold yet blunt Luther grasped the situation.

"Munina, stop daydreaming, sing!"

Luther's thunderous roar snapped Munina out of her stupor.

That's right, she still had a trump card. As long as she sang the Siren's Song, it wouldn't make these human soldiers leap into the sea, but it could at least postpone the assault, covering her people's retreat.

It was only later she discovered that the human who had foiled her plan that day was the Empress of the Sussex Empire and the Knight Order Leader.

They were the Empire's sovereign and guards.

They were certainly enjoying a beautiful night in the castle, not braving the cold rain tonight.

Without them, she was invincible.

Munina began to sing.

Her voice filled with resentment and anger, clear and resonant.

Last time, she sang the First Overture of the Deep Sea, Charm.

Most female Sea Demons could do it, but she did it best.

Now she chanted the unknowable Second Overture of the Deep Sea, Chaos.

The Chaos Song's effect was to cast enemy soldiers into confusion.

The effect was excellent.

The Song of Enchantment was fine, but the human army was prepared.

Before tonight's action, participating soldiers drank considerable alcohol.

In a half-drunken state, Charm's effect was greatly reduced.

Coupled with Roland and Sif's duet, the Siren's Song broke itself.

Munina's Chaos Song surprised Roland a bit.

But he did not worry.

It's just a Chaos Song; invigorating music would counter it.

Standing beside Roland, Sif gracefully stood in the amplification magic array, starting to sing back.

Sif's voice was gentle, lingering, and beautifully melodious.

Encouraged by her, some soldiers gradually regained their senses.

Unfortunately, her song was too lyrical and soft, capable for countering the First Overture, but found inadequate for the Second Overture.

Only thirty percent of the soldiers awoke from chaos, far from enough.

These soldiers, disrupted by their chaotic comrades, failed to form an effective formation.

Without a cohesive battle array, fighting individually, they weren't Sea Demon opponents.

Yet they resolutely continued pursuit bravely.

Delaying the enemy's actions was worthwhile.

Seeing a soldier collapse under a Sea Demon warrior's halberd, Sif anxiously glanced at Roland.

Think of something, Roland.

But this time, Roland couldn't open his mouth.

His song would only wreak more chaos, indiscriminately.

Fortunately, he had an emergency plan.

An excellent commander must have adequate plans for various emergencies.

He snapped his fingers into a whistle, signaling.

Across the canal came the sound of hooves as the Knight Order mobilized.

The retreating Luther froze for a moment, almost laughing.

The Knights were very mobile, but they were ground troops; did they intend to jump into the canal and battle the Sea Demons?

With the aid of the Chaos Overture, the Sea Demon rescue team restored their morale; their formation still dispersed, but their movements were not significantly delayed.

Knights galloped to the canal's opposite bank, retrieving dark alchemy potion bottles from saddle packs, throwing them into the water.

The bottles hit the water, making a "hiss" as a pungent smell and light engulfed the canal.

Munina and Luther's faces dramatically changed.

Though they didn't know what humans threw into the canal, it was not possible to enter it now.

Their minds blanked, eyes full of despair.

Over a hundred kilometers lay between them and the sea; without the canal, what would they do?

The Chaos Overture's effects gradually weakened, and the human soldiers steadily regained their wits, regrouping, surrounding the Sea Demons, and closing in.

Three-meter-long spears, like a forest of death, made the Sea Demons shudder.

Terrified, Sea Demons leapt into the canal, only to emit piercing screams.

Lightning slashed the sky; Sea Demons who just dived clutch their eyes, rolling in the water, unable to climb ashore.

Munina looked to the sky, suddenly pulling out a dagger to cut her throat.

She lacked the courage to face grim reality.

As she drew her blade, Roland flung his Flying Knife.

"Ding!"

The dagger fell.

Want to die? Ask my opinion first.

Roland raised his right hand, signaling an all-out assault.

Thick lightning streaked across the heavens, thunder roared, seemingly drumming for this slaughter feast.