Empress 241

Chapter 241: What Are You Lacking?

Just as Sif watched Roland leave with a sigh, Roland suddenly stopped and turned to look at her.

"I bought a little gift at the shop, not sure if you like it..."

"I do."

Sif calmly said, "A true lady does not refuse a sincerely given gift."

She had half a sentence she hadn’t said aloud.

Only from someone she likes.

Roland took a jewelry box out of his pocket, carefully opened it, and a beautiful jade necklace appeared in sight.

Jade can store the power of nature, making it the favorite gemstone of elves who revere nature.

Although Sif wasn’t an elf, she chose the "Elf Princess" as her extraordinary profession, so gifting her jade was quite fitting.

Roland held the necklace and came to stand before Sif.

As he was about to hand the necklace to Sif, Sif raised her head and closed her eyes.

It was obvious that she meant for Roland to put it on her.

Roland, of course, would not be pretentious.

He set the small box down, deftly unclasped the necklace, and approached Sif.

Sif’s light, youthful fragrance wafted over him.

There was not the slightest unpleasant smell, but rather a hint of refreshing herbs.

It seemed she had been bathing with herbs instead of roses recently.

Compared to the fragrance of roses, the herbal scent had its unique appeal.

He could almost hear the faint sound of a heartbeat, rapid as a drumbeat, even like a double beat.

So...she was nervous too.

Looking at Sif’s trembling skin and flushed cheeks, Roland seemed to understand something in an instant.

He smiled as he placed the necklace around her neck, fastened the clasp, and stepped back half a pace.

"Truly beautiful, even a real Elf Empress couldn’t surpass your beauty."

Sif slowly opened her eyes, reached out to caress the jade pendant beneath the necklace, a smile touching her lips.

"That might not be true; I’ve heard that elves are a race of beauty and wisdom. How wonderful it would be to have the chance to see them."

"Perhaps you will."

Roland smiled and said, "As the day of return approaches, those extinct races will also return to the material plane to greet the final day of return."

Sif’s smile gradually faded, her expression becoming somewhat grave.

According to many texts and books of prophecy, the three goddesses would also return to their homeland on the final day of return, to their loyal Theia plane.

Would the goddess tolerate her and Roland?

But she quickly dismissed the worry.

Why think so far ahead, just deal with Sofia first.

After leaving the Governor’s office and escorting Sif to the building entrance, Roland returned to the third-floor bedroom, was about to light a candle when he sensed someone in the room.

No hostility, and appearing at such a time could only mean it was Lisa.

Flames illuminated, the candle was lit.

Lit by Lisa.

"Sister, something on your mind?"

"I, I..."

Lisa knew she couldn’t hide it from Roland, so she said softly, "Roland, I want to go to White Mountain. Right now, there shouldn’t be too many people there, I can sneak there by myself."

Roland slowly shook his head.

Lisa became a little anxious, jumped to her feet, bit her lip, and spoke with a sorrowful tone.

"Roland, I know you worry about my safety. I'm timid by nature and hate taking risks, but I have to try! My talents are far inferior to Sif's. If I don't take risks, I'll only fall farther behind."

"I don't want to drag you down. Don't tell me cooking is a skill too. I can be a chef, but I don't want to be a chef forever!"

The flame danced in Lisa's palm, illuminating her face.

"I want to grow alongside you all."

"I'm not against you going to White Mountain, I'm against you going alone."

"You're willing to go with me?"

Lisa's eyes filled with delight but quickly composed herself.

This was a call she felt, unrelated to Roland, so it would be improper to risk his life.

She smiled and said, "I sense a calling, you don't, so it doesn't concern you. If you insist on going, you might even make things worse."

"Not just me, us."

Roland said calmly, "Including Sif, Christine, and Sura."

The iron triangle of an excellent expedition team is warrior, mage, priest.

Attacking warrior being Sif, defense warrior could be played by his secondary profession as knight.

Christine is, naturally, the priest.

Lisa is fire magic, Sura is also a mage, abilities unknown.

If you are going to a dungeon, you must be fully prepared, not going just to die.

After Roland’s explanation, Lisa’s impulsiveness gradually calmed, and she asked somewhat embarrassedly:

"Sif is the Empress, is it really suitable for her to accompany me on a reckless mission?"

"Why not, it’s perfectly suitable!"

Roland said sternly, "Remember, when everyone goes on an adventure together, we are equals. There is no Empress, only a White Rose Knight."

Lisa smiled brightly.

She knew this was Roland’s way of protecting her.

What was once a slight regret, had now dissipated entirely.

Roland patiently waited for three days, during which he received several news reports and an unexpected visitor.

The first piece of news was a polished article published under the name of the world’s busiest anonymous writer.

The overseas edition of The Sun and several other media outlets reported on it.

The second piece of news was that Stanley, through other channels, cleverly spread the word that Jin Yuan, Wende, and other countries were preparing to emulate the Vladimir Empire in targeting Samaritan merchants. Although not explicitly stated, evidence suggested that the Sussex Empire had shown no inclination to exclude the Samaritans.

The third piece of news involved a summit held by the countries of the continent in Val City to discuss the handling of the White Mountain Magic Crystal Ore Vein, which was sure to be another intense debate.

The fourth piece of news came from the Divine Court of Light. The promised Temple Warriors and High Tier Sanctuaries were in place, all deployed in Val City.

Chapter 242: What Are You Lacking? (Part 2)

This group of five thousand may not seem large in number, but their combat strength is very formidable, making Roland a powerful force in Val City.

After organizing all the information, Roland finally awaited the guests from the Magic Association.

To his surprise, it wasn't Sura who arrived, but the grey-haired Master Anthony.

Seeing the master's rosy complexion and deeply sunken eyes, Roland knew that a joyous event could lift one's spirits, but being too overjoyed could prevent sleep altogether.

He could completely understand.

The Magic Crystal Ore Vein's importance to the Magic Association is comparable to oil in modern industrial countries.

It's practically their lifeline.

Seeing Master Anthony personally arriving, Roland dared not slack off, inviting the elderly gentleman into a secret chamber, offering a pot of fragrant tea, and then closed the room's door.

"Master Anthony, why have you come personally? If there's something, just send a message."

"Could sending a message stop you from publicizing the Magic Crystal Ore Vein?" Anthony said with a chuckle.

"If you had sent someone, they certainly wouldn't have been able to stop me."

"Then could I stop you by coming here myself?" Anthony stroked his grey beard, the smile widening.

Roland seemed to be a creature molded by cunning, yet he was exceptionally honest before his elders.

Anthony was somewhat curious about how Roland would reply.

"If you came personally, you would definitely support my actions. I trust your wisdom."

Roland didn't explain but merely looked at Anthony.

The elder and the youth exchanged glances for a moment and then erupted into hearty laughter simultaneously.

Though they sounded somewhat like flattery and had a hint of coercion, Anthony wasn't offended.

That's because Roland's flattery was spot-on.

If it had been Sura instead, it might have been mistaken for aggression and mockery.

But Anthony was different; he was indeed a thoughtful senior.

Unlike the increasingly muddle-headed old Deng, time had left Anthony with experience and composure.

Anthony didn’t continue to probe but straightforwardly said, "It seems you’re planning on directly confronting the Vladimir Empire."

"Yes, the Theia Plane is vast, with many unexplored areas, but spaces suitable for human survival are limited. With the Return Day nearing, the Theia cannot accommodate two overlords."

Anthony was a bit taken aback, not expecting Roland to think so far ahead.

"Helping that little girl, have you thought about how to interact in the future?"

Roland contemplated inwardly; obviously, he would become a prince.

Otherwise, what could be done—rebellion or become a regent and overshadow the emperor?

That would be exhausting.

Of course, he couldn’t tell Anthony this.

Some matters needed to be kept strictly confidential until they were accomplished.

Seeing Roland not answering yet exuding confidence, Anthony suddenly understood, seemingly realizing something.

He tactfully didn’t continue with the topic and instead asked with a smile, "It’s not easy to wage war against the Vladimir Empire. Without Sofia, I’d certainly trust you. But Sofia does exist; she is Vladimir’s spiritual pillar."

"I have a comprehensive plan," Roland said with a smile.

In reality, his plan was simple: adapt as needed.

He did indeed have numerous plans, but plans could never keep up with changes.

However, he had to maintain a confident demeanor in front of the old man.

Anthony didn’t see through this but saw confidence and resolve in Roland’s eyes.

This was something Sura lacked.

With a silent sigh, Anthony asked with a smile, "Are there any difficulties?"

"Yes, and there are many."

Anthony was somewhat taken aback, having to lift the teacup to mask his expression.

He initially thought Roland would be more polite or conceal somewhat, not expecting this guy to not treat him as an outsider at all.

Aside from confidence and determination, his skin was thick enough as well.

Anthony silently adjusted his evaluation of Roland.

"If I can help, the Magic Association I’m leading will definitely go all out."

"I’m short on everything. Short on funds, short on equipment, short on people, and lacking severely," Roland’s gaze was sincerely direct.

Anthony smiled and said, "I can’t help with manpower, as it’s not easy for the Association’s people to directly assist you, but I can provide funds and equipment."

Roland stood up, placing his hand on his chest, expressing gratitude to Master Anthony.

"Master Anthony, I never make oaths, but I accomplish what I promise. I will treat you and the Magic Association as close kin. If we reach the end, the descendants of the Magic Empire will obtain full equal citizenship and political status."

This promise should come from a national leader, but everyone knows, Roland can decide on behalf of the Empress, and Anthony naturally wouldn’t doubt it.

He asked with a smile, "How much do you need? You can give me a list, and I will try to fulfill it."

Roland didn’t rush to quote, instead gesturing invitingly.

"Master Anthony, before quoting, I’d like to invite you to tour a place."

"Could it be..." Anthony could no longer maintain his composure, finally showing excitement.

"Indeed, it’s that place. Let’s go, we can arrive by afternoon."

Though aging, Anthony’s physical condition was excellent, and riding wasn’t an issue.

Roland didn’t take anyone else, attending to Anthony alone to the Nameless Valley.

"This, this place is..."

Standing outside the Nameless Valley, Anthony's hands trembled with excitement, tears welling up in his eyes.

The air was filled with the enticing aroma of Magic Crystals.

It was a sensation of explosive power.

How many years had it been!

To be precise, ever since he was born, he had only heard of the legendary prosperous Magic Crystal Mines, never witnessing a true prosperous Magic Crystal Mine.

Though the Magic Association insisted that the Magic Crystal Ore Veins were completely exhausted, the reality was some remained.

Five thousand meters underground, there were still a small amount of Magic Crystals yet to be mined.

But there were reasons for these Magic Crystals not being mined: low purity, difficult mining, and extremely low efficiency when mined underground.

The poor-quality Magic Crystal Ore Veins underground in the Magic Association combined were not even a fraction of this prosperous vein.

Unfortunately, there was no time.

If the Sixth Return Day were a thousand years off, he would undoubtedly kill the local barbarian lord without hesitation to claim the Magic Crystal Ore Vein.

Even five hundred years would suffice.

However, it was utterly impossible.

According to divination and calculations, the Sixth Return Day would arrive in five years.

Then, those old hidden ones would crawl out from their holes.

All grievances would be settled at that time.

Following Roland's lead, Anthony walked into the valley.

He carefully observed the surrounding traces of the Magic Crystal Ore Vein, his emotions unable to remain calm.

His eyes reddened, lips trembled, joy permeating his entire being, happy like a starving tiger crashing into a butcher's shop.

Seeing the old mage's excitement, Roland thought he could certainly secure a good price now.

Much higher than directly quoting a price.

While the old mage was thoroughly happy, he suddenly sensed something off with the nearby trees.

Frowning, he wondered if Roland knew about this?

He quickly concluded probably not.

How could humans coexist peacefully with Tree Demons? Humans view trees as resources to be used, while trees are kin to Tree Demons.

It would be surprising if there wasn't a fight.

Seizing the opportunity before these damned trees realized, he intended to take ruthless action, doing Roland a favor and showing him the power of magic.

Of course, Roland didn’t know the old mage’s thoughts, and he smiled while introducing the valley’s various rare plants.

It wasn’t night yet; the Golden Ginkgo was still a Red Pine.

"This Red Pine is special; you’ll know in the future."

I already know!

Anthony roared internally, pushing Roland aside and raising huge house-sized fireballs on his open palms.

Roland’s face changed drastically.

Lisa’s fire control skills gave him a skewed view of the world’s existing magical power.

But Anthony was giving him a lesson.

That house-sized fireball, once hurled, could turn the Golden Tree Demon into a charcoal tree demon.

Roland quickly shouted, "Master Anthony, stop! This is also one of my subordinates."

"Huh?"

Anthony looked incredulously at the Red Pine before him, the enormous fireball did not release with haste but instead, he coldly growled at the Red Pine:

"Demon, reveal yourself!"

He feared Roland might have been bewitched. These damned Tree Demons had plenty of tricks.

If Roland were not in good condition, he would immediately act against the Tree Demon.

This was the Magic Crystal Ore Vein; no mistakes were allowed.

Chapter 243: Teacher, I Want to Learn Magic!

Master Anthony's white hair and beard rose without wind, and his clothes were bulging with surging magic power.

As his magic robe blew up, powerful muscles containing explosive strength suddenly appeared.

Roland sighed inwardly, who says mages have poor physical fitness?

With such physique and strength, the old man could rival knights.

Without sufficient strength, one simply cannot support the physical consumption of casting magic.

With Anthony going berserk, Roland was not in a hurry to intervene.

Although the Tree Demon yielded, what subdued the Golden Tree Demon was the threat of death and the lingering prestige of Elf Sylph, not true submission.

It was just as well to let the master give these blockheads a taste of power, lest they think the human race is powerless.

Under Anthony's overwhelming menace, the Golden Tree Demon reluctantly withdrew its disguise, revealing its Golden Ginkgo Tree form in broad daylight.

"Mage, I am a servant of Lord Roland, what do you intend to do?"

The threatening tone exposed the Golden Tree Demon’s lack of confidence.

Anthony looked at Roland with some confusion.

"They are my forest friends."

Even with a contract, Roland still considered the Tree Demon’s feelings.

Blockheads also have their pride.

The Golden Tree Demon swayed its crown, as if placing hands on hips, exceedingly proud.

"That’s right, we are Roland’s forest friends, willing to give everything for him!"

Although a bit puzzled, Anthony saw that Roland didn’t appear bewitched, so he decided to believe it for now.

However, the large fireball he had prepared could not be taken back, so he found a place free from magic crystal ore veins and hurled it out with a loud shout.

The roar was enough to shake leaves off the surrounding trees.

Roland regretted not covering his ears.

Anthony’s voice alone was terrifying.

This is a man who doesn’t need a magic amplification array to sing with a Sea Demon.

While the Tree Demon was in pain and Roland had a headache, the enormous fireball struck the nearby rock, as if hit by a powerful bomb, scattering rocks all around, damaging many flowers and plants.

Roland smiled and praised, "Though I've never seen a Tier Seven's full power, I feel like they wouldn't stand a chance against the master."

Anthony was quite pleased with Roland's sincere flattery but when he thought of someone, his expression turned a bit unnatural.

"Roland, this world is vast, don't be arrogant. You will meet truly strong individuals in time. However, you weren't wrong in saying that a hundred years ago, I indeed was not inferior to other Tier Seven strong individuals, but now..."

Now there's Sofia.

Roland completed the thought inwardly for him.

Given Master Anthony's strength, confronting two to three thousand people head-on was not a problem, and he could do so very flexibly.

This is the normal peak of Tier Seven.

A powerful mortal.

However, Sofia's existence broke traditional perceptions.

Her displayed combat power is essentially at the peak of Tier Six or even Tier Five.

Though the world is full of wonders, Sofia still seems somewhat beyond the norm.

Such a person should be discovered and retrieved by the Supreme Law, she's clearly a bug!

Complaints aside, Roland still agreed with Anthony's statement.

The world is vast, not just the Rodinia Continent and Sussex.

The magic-filled South Continent, the new continent full of ancient relics, the mysterious islands overseas rumored to hide mystical creatures, the enigmatic Sea of Death Nemo, and the deep oceans are all places unexplored by the self-proclaimed civilized Rodinians.

The world is large, and exploring it is not easy.

After Anthony's intimidation, the Golden Tree Demon became much more compliant.

It obediently accepted Anthony's arrangements, expressing willingness to help.

After a careful survey, Anthony marked coordinates in the Nameless Valley and temporarily set up a teleportation magic array for easy access.

Roland certainly didn't object.

Such top-tier assistance isn't easily hired; having it voluntarily is ideal.

Cheerful with acquiring the magic crystal ore vein, Anthony generously decided to invest in Roland by providing gold that could mint a million pounds of coins.

As long as Sif permits, the Governor's District can mint its own coins.

If bold enough, they could even mint coins with Sif's likeness.

But Roland didn’t like being that audacious.

He also didn’t intend to use the Late Emperor’s likeness for the new coins.

The Late Emperor was limited in ability, a standard mediocre monarch, and it’s unlucky to use him on coinage. Thinking it over, Roland decided on the founding monarch, the first recognized Great Emperor’s likeness.

Both in remembrance of the Empire’s glory and expressing aspiration.

The Governor’s Territory has special minting rights, avoiding bureaucracy with the Cabinet.

As long as the minted gold coins are of good quality and weight, they will be accepted.

Issuing paper money requires a complete credit system and strong central government, not yet suitable for nationwide promotion.

Only a few bonds are playing the role of paper money.

Paper money is easier to use and store than metal currency, but the reform cannot be hurried.

Roland was not in a rush.

Compared to monetary reform, dealing with Sofia’s threat was more urgent.

Taking advantage of Master Anthony’s good mood, Roland inquired about the current Tier Seven strong individuals on the journey back to Hansa City.

After pondering for a moment, Anthony slowly said, "From my experience, there are about thirty Tier Seven Transcendents on the Rodinia Continent. As Return Day approaches, some will leave, and others

will advance, increasing the total to over a hundred. Those who miss the comfort before Return Day will likely be eliminated."

Curious, Roland asked, "Master Anthony, do you know the exact date of Return Day?"

"I know, before December 31st, 1795 in the New Calendar, it will be sooner rather than later."

Chapter 244: Teacher, I Want to Learn Magic! (Part 2)

"So accurate?" This time it was Roland's turn to be surprised.

Anthony smiled without answering, a hint of pride at the corner of his mouth.

Seeing his happy expression, Roland also smiled. If he doesn't want to say, then I'll just plan according to the timeline he mentioned.

Alina's calculations also pointed to three to five years later, so it should be this time frame.

He thought of someone and asked softly, "Do you know Macbeth?"

"I know him; he's a disgusting, vile, and shameless waste, but not without power. Why are you asking about him?" Anthony was a bit curious.

"If nothing goes wrong, he's my enemy."

"What kind of grudge..." Anthony stopped mid-sentence.

With Macbeth's ability, it's unlikely he will ever truly become a Tier Six. He can only try to hunt his fellow star path travelers, a grudge that allows no coexistence.

Glancing at Roland, Anthony probed once again, "Do you want to switch to studying magic? I can take you as my last disciple, teaching you carefully to the standards of a personal disciple. With your talent, you'll definitely reach Intermediate Mage in under three years."

"Can I beat Macbeth?"

"Depends on your learning speed; the chances are high. If you're really not confident, I can handle him for you." Anthony's tone was full of confidence, not taking Macbeth seriously at all.

Roland originally intended to remind Anthony that Macbeth was a sly old fox, but considering Anthony and Macbeth must've had interactions, he'd know his capabilities, so Roland decided not to mention it.

He did not rush to respond, casually asking, "What about Sofia?"

Anthony nearly choked, glaring at Roland with irritation. "None of the Tier Sevens I know can match her. She shouldn't even be here!"

Thinking of Sofia, Anthony also felt a bit dejected.

He was already close to two hundred years old, with his potential clearly capped.

Perhaps he could hold on until the fourth return day, but after that?

Tier Three/Mage is respectfully known as a Holy Sanctuary powerhouse, capable of single-handedly breaking armies, using magic to flatten a city.

Holy Sanctuary powerhouses typically avoid mundane conflicts, striving for a spot in the Divine Domain.

The limit of his life would be standing at the gate of the Holy Sanctuary, gazing at the sky.

Whether he could ascend to the Holy Sanctuary, he dared not even imagine.

Seeing Anthony’s contemplative expression, Roland quickly changed the topic, asking softly, "Master Anthony, with your vast knowledge, could you tell me about the powers of higher tiers?"

"Tiers Nine to Tier Seven along with corresponding beginner and intermediate mages are still mundane; although powerful, they can still be harmed by guns and ordinary weapons."

"Only above Tier Six does one enter the truly extraordinary realms. Between Tier Six and Tier Five, there’s no qualitative change, just a constant increase in power. Sofia exhibits strength around the peak of Tier Six to the threshold of Tier Five."

Roland felt somewhat exasperated.

He suddenly had the illusion that Sofia was the protagonist, and he was the evil minor character.

Having such a supermodel enemy, as if created haphazardly by the Creator, was truly a headache.

Though every day he put on a brave face, constantly indoctrinating Sif, he knew well enough that even if he and his friends all reached Tier Seven, they might still not be Sofia’s match.

A battle of attrition might work, but that would require Sofia’s cooperation, fighting to the death without retreating.

Sofia isn’t a fool; if things don’t go her way, she’ll turn and leave, and who can stop her?

Anyone normal facing this situation would lose appetite, unable to sleep, but Roland wasn’t normal.

Even losing wouldn’t mean not trying.

At the very least, he had to fight to demonstrate value in alliance, making it hard for Sofia to bite, forcing her to bargain.

If he couldn’t even present that value, it was naturally a dead end.

Roland’s bottom line was to ensure the survival of himself and Sif. Any grand ambitions or empire-building were concerns for the living; the dead have nothing.

Seeing Roland’s calm expression, Anthony was a bit surprised, teasingly saying:

"Aren’t you afraid?"

Afraid? I’m completely numb, Roland screamed silently in his heart. Others transmigrated to become unbeatable geniuses right from the start; why was he a mere backdrop character, where could he argue this point?

Facing Anthony’s teasing, he smiled, spread his hands, and mocked himself softly, "Even if I can’t win, I have to think of a plan, at least to fight with style."

"And after fighting with style?" Anthony curiously asked.

"If it doesn’t work, surrender," Roland replied as if discussing a game’s outcome.

Anthony: "..."

He couldn’t tell if Roland was joking or serious, but he knew there was no point in asking more from Roland.

Laughing heartily, Anthony didn’t continue the topic.

No matter how strong Sofia was, she was at most comparable to the threshold of Tier Five; there were always ways.

But when the three Goddesses descended upon the world, that would be true despair.

The bad news: he had no idea how to counter the returning Goddesses.

The good news: he was certain he wouldn't live to see that day.

The worries of the future belonged to the youth; he was too lazy to think about it.

Even at its peak, the Magic Empire could only barely defeat the Divine Punishment Legion with the help of the Barbarian Transcendents.

If they had achieved a sweeping victory back then and used that momentum to unify the entire plane, consolidating all resources and constantly trial and error, there might have been a chance.

Unfortunately, they missed it.

Opportunities come only once.

The First Era had no intelligent life, dismissed.

The Second Era's self-proclaimed Divine Race created a glorious civilization and succeeded, from which the three Goddesses were born.

The Third Era saw attempts by Elves and Earth Spirits, which ended in failure and extinction.

The Fourth Era's Dragon Race, Phoenix, Primordial Beasts, and others, along with the Fifth Era's Beastmen, also attempted and failed, nearly facing extinction.

The Sixth Era, the Magic Empire, tried and failed, nearly facing extinction.

Now, the relay baton is in the hands of the Barbarians...

Chapter 245: Teacher, I Want to Learn Magic! (3)

Anthony was inexplicably somewhat frustrated.

Compared to those powerful races that once challenged the Divine Domain, humans are lacking in everything.

In terms of magical talent, they don't compare to elves; in terms of strength, they're not as good as beastmen; in terms of noble bloodlines, they're inferior to the Dragon Race and the Phoenix; when it comes to technology and comprehensive strength, they can't even touch the Divine Race.

In the Theia Plane of the Sixth Era, resources were consumed by half, and intelligent life was also declining.

There seems to be no hope.

Although humans are the most creative race, is there really a chance?

The dejected Anthony sighed, catching a glimpse of Roland's calm and confident expression.

He paused, suddenly realizing he was getting old.

The future indeed belongs to the young.

Although Roland's strength is not yet formidable, he hasn't been beaten down to the point of losing confidence; he remains a vibrant young man.

Under Roland's expectant gaze, Anthony sighed once more.

"Above Tier Three, I'm not sure either. The books only have vague records, and all I found was that footage which you've seen."

Roland nodded.

The threshold of the Holy Sanctuary was still far for him, and when the time came, he would naturally find ways to know.

Seeing Anthony’s dejected and sinking expression, Roland thought he was saddened by not having an apprentice and said with a smile:

"Master Anthony, your specialty is Fire Magic, right?"

"Nonsense, I’m a rare All Powerful Mage! It’s just that I’m better at Fire Element."

Anthony, somewhat dissatisfied with Roland’s suggestion he was biased, sternly corrected him.

"I have a friend who specializes in manipulating flames and is very young. Could you see if she’s fit to become your disciple?"

"Really?" Anthony’s eyes lit up.

The Magic Association was severely understaffed.

If there were good seedlings, they could nurture more mages.

However, the Barbarian Race guarded them fiercely, refusing to release the top-tier talents to them.

Occasionally, some youths were sent to study magic only as part of unfair deals.

These youths were subjected to strict indoctrination and would not actively work for the Magic Association even after receiving magical training.

As usual, when nurturing four mages, the Barbarians would only leave one to the Magic Association, taking the other three away.

It was challenging for the Magic Association to expand the recruitment scope.

If Roland considered her a friend, her talent probably wouldn't be bad.

When Anthony was brought before Lisa, his cloudy eyes instantly brightened.

This was no mere rough gemstone, she was a walking fire attribute Red Jade!

Although not tested, Anthony could already confirm that Lisa was a genius in learning magic.

Excitedly, he took out the Magic Crystal Ball and asked Lisa to put her hand on it.

Lisa, a bit puzzled, looked at Roland.

The old man's eyes seemed ablaze, making her a bit uneasy.

Seeing Roland nod with a smile, Lisa felt a bit more at ease and obediently placed her hand on it.

As soon as her slender palm touched it, the transparent crystal ball erupted with a blazing red light.

Lisa was startled.

Roland was dumbfounded.

Anthony was so delighted he nearly jumped up, his smile wide and uncontainable.

Who is Roland? Barely acquaintances.

Lisa was truly the best magical talent, her potential even surpassing Sura.

Gazing at Anthony’s volcano-like burning eyes, Lisa instinctively shrank behind Roland.

Roland said with a smile, "Don’t be afraid, Master Anthony is our partner, his power is outstanding, and he’s an excellent mentor."

Outstanding power, excellent mentor?

Lisa’s eyes also brightened.

Of course, she wouldn’t doubt Roland’s words.

The old gentleman, when happy, seemed like a moving live volcano. Though a bit fearful, she could also see his extraordinary nature.

As Lisa’s mind raced, Anthony grinningly asked:

"Lisa, would you like to learn magic with me?"

"I..."

She cautiously glanced at Roland, worried that he might object.

Fortunately, Roland’s expression was full of encouragement.

She bit her lip, hesitating, and Anthony grew a bit anxious.

His profound knowledge and understanding of magic stood as the pinnacle of current standards for the Magic Association, and he didn't want to be forgotten by future generations.

At his age, wealth, power, and beauty were fleeting; he only sought fame after death.

Without disciples to carry on his legacy, his heritage would be lost.

Seeing Anthony's burning gaze, Lisa softly said, "Master Anthony, may I speak with you alone?"

Understanding she had conditions to suggest, Roland thoughtfully found an excuse to leave.

He had never seen Master Anthony so out of sorts; obviously, Sister Lisa indeed had talent.

He could only be happy for her.

He understood Lisa's mindset well; due to differences in talent and status, she often felt inferior in front of Roland and Sif.

Using culinary skills to maintain a presence was, of course, a characteristic of Extraordinary Professions, but could also be seen as a form of modesty.

Confirming Roland had gone, Lisa cautiously looked at Anthony, softly saying:

"Master Anthony, I want to stay by Roland's side and don't wish to part from him. Is that possible?"

"Well..."

Anthony hesitated, gently attempting to persuade, "Since it’s about learning magic, going to the Magic Association would undoubtedly be more suitable. There, you have extensive collections of books, peers to discuss with, and can receive my guidance anytime..."

"Then I won’t learn."

Though regretful, Lisa resolutely refused.

Sure, learning magic was a great opportunity to become stronger, but the thought of being away from Roland without knowing when she’d see him again was unbearable.

Anthony was momentarily speechless.

Even if you refuse, at least hesitate a bit; there’s no need to be so decisive, right?

Before he could persuade further, Lisa candidly confessed, "Master Anthony, I’ve never been apart from Roland for long. Being too far from him makes me uneasy, unable to learn at all."

Chapter 246: Teacher, I Want to Learn Magic! (4)

"Alright, I understand. For young ones in love, being apart for a minute feels like a century."

"Master Anthony, I’m just Roland’s sister!" Lisa blushed, correcting softly.

Anthony chuckled, looking at Lisa, not exposing her on the spot, but his worldly-wise eyes had seen through everything.

If these two were ordinary siblings, he’d pull out all his beard right then.

He’s just old, not blind.

He was young once too, enjoying those honey-sweet romances.

Though feeling a bit headache-y, compared to the pain of losing a disciple, Anthony decisively changed his mind.

"Don’t be so quick to refuse. I’ve reached a cooperation agreement with Roland, so I’ll be around often. I can guide you over here, but for some special training you’ll have to come with me to the association."

"Will it take long?"

"Rest assured, it won’t exceed a week each time."

"Three days." Lisa firmly insisted.

Anthony was annoyed, this is magic learning, what do you take this for?

Faced with Lisa’s determined gaze, he backed down not an inch, saying loudly, "Three days then three days!"

He’s a wise and loving elder, how could he argue with young folks.

Looks like he also needs to study the reform of teaching models.

In the future, Roland’s zone might have more magic geniuses, perhaps they could set up a school on the ground for concentrated teaching.

A master is a master, he changed his mind instantly, even beginning to envision the future.

Seeing Anthony concession, Lisa felt a bit embarrassed as she held her skirt hem and bowed to him.

"Master Anthony, please forgive my stubbornness, I just..."

"Alright, I've been young too, I understand. Still calling me master now?" Anthony deliberately put on a serious face.

Lisa, with social intelligence level ten, surely knew Anthony's meaning, and she immediately switched to charming and sweet mode.

"Disciple Lisa, thank you, teacher, for your kindness."

Anthony laughed heartily, his wrinkled old face gaining a touch more color.

He chuckled and said, "Good, good, good. Didn't expect to meet my best disciple this time."

"Teacher, please don't say that, I don't understand anything, can't compare to your other disciples."

Seeing Lisa so obedient, Anthony became even more satisfied.

Observing Lisa's expectant gaze, he suddenly realized this was him voluntarily recruiting a final disciple, of course there should be a meeting gift.

He thought for a moment, then took out a fiery red ring from his pocket, handing it to Lisa.

Looking at this ring's antique design, Lisa felt an inexplicably familiar power within.

Without thinking much, she took the ring with both hands, repeatedly thanking the teacher.

Holding the ring, she tried it on her finger and found it fit perfectly on the ring finger, so she slipped it on without much thought.

Anthony was about to remind her that according to the Magic Empire’s tradition, wearing it there signifies an upcoming marriage, but the words stopped on his lips.

The Magic Empire had fallen.

Besides them—the remnants—no one remembers these traditions.

Thinking again of Lisa’s attitude towards Roland, wearing it there is just a matter of time.

Since wearing the ring there was most fitting, it must be fate.

Anthony nodded in satisfaction, and softly said, "This ring contains rich fire element, very suitable for you, you must take good care of it."

There was half a sentence he left unsaid: A drop of phoenix blood was sealed within this ruby.

Anthony was unrelated to this ring and hadn’t found a suitable person; he’d kept it till now.

Since Lisa wore it without any counter-reaction, she must be the destined owner of this ring.

Caressing the warm ring, Lisa felt very happy, and seeing Teacher Anthony in good spirits, she boldly asked:

"Teacher, when I explored the volcano, I felt a mysterious power calling me, but Roland and I lack strength..."

"I’ll take you."

Anthony calmly said, "Lisa, you are my disciple, speak up if you need anything in the future."

Chapter 247: The Power of the Giant Bear!

Back in the study, Roland felt a bit bored. He thought of Master Anthony's introduction of level divisions just now and decided to summon his Soul Card to take another look.

As soon as he summoned the Soul Card, he fell into deep thought.

The base of the card had already turned a pale gold, yet he was still able to grow quickly. It seemed there was a better level above gold.

Upon closer inspection, he noticed a badge in the area representing inherited achievements.

A fiery red Magic Crystal Ball badge.

Could it be Lisa?

It's not surprising for Lisa to learn magic from Anthony; after all, she also wanted to become stronger.

They discussed the details of the teaching in private, and the result was affirmative.

Roland just couldn't figure out how the inheritance badge was counted under his name.

He wasn't being modest; this time, he truly did not do even the smallest work, merely introducing Lisa to Anthony.

That Anthony was willing to take on a disciple was due to his appreciation of Lisa's talent; what did it have to do with him...

It really did have something to do with him.

Without his approval, the matter couldn't have happened.

He roughly understood the trait of the inheritor.

As long as you help with the inheritance of civilization and skills and have connections with Transcendents or other system powerhouses, there's a chance to earn a badge.

He now had two inheritance badges in total.

He racked his brains thinking if there were any other strong figures he could cozy up to.

After thinking it over, the more reliable ones seemed to be Alina, Norton, Munina, and Christine.

There were so many potential clients.

Roland felt pretty good.

The threat of survival was objective, and he had to seek ways to become stronger.

The initial combat power of an inheritor was not strong, but the advantage lay in a high ceiling and significant growth space.

He silently complained, this wasn't inheriting; it was clearly freeloading.

He had to think of a way to help the strong figures around him find inheritances.

Roland opened the library, searching patiently.

Unfortunately, the good thing about getting stronger while lying down wasn't that easy; he couldn't find any suitable tomes for the time being.

The Elf Race does not divine; they predict the future with prayer and prophecy.

In Roland’s view, the prophets of the Elf Race were the standard guise of charlatans.

Helping companions find inheritances could wait; someone was coming.

Roland’s lips slightly curved up, perceiving that his perception of footsteps’ distances had increased again.

As expected of an inheritor, each badge obtained brought a direct improvement.

If he could collect more badges and help more people, maybe he could unlock the level above gold.

If only he had a bit more time.

A knocking sound came at the door.

The slightly hurried knocks were filled with joy, without doubt, it was Lisa.

Roland opened the room door, smiling as he said, "Congratulations, sister."

Lisa was surprised, her small mouth open, "Eh, you knew?"

"Your joy is written all over your face."

Lisa shyly stuck out her tongue and raised her left hand, showing a fiery red ring.

"Look, this is the Phoenix Blood Ring, it’s awesome."

Roland nodded with a smile, "After all, it’s Master Anthony; he makes extraordinary things."

"Not only that, the teacher also agreed to accompany us to White Mountain."

"That’s wonderful." Roland’s lips curled in a smile, sharing in Lisa’s joy.

Originally, it was expected that Sura would be part of the long-range firepower group; unexpectedly, with the change, Sura’s teacher was personally coming.

The feeling was akin to receiving a self-propelled artillery while fetching a mortar, with automatic reloading even.

Roland quickly found Sif; originally he planned to bring Sif along, but with Master Anthony there, it wasn’t necessary.

Letting Sif stay and handle political affairs would be good too.

After all, she is the Empress; it would be unwise for her to go into battle.

Upon seeing Roland, Sif, who was reviewing documents, casually put down her quill, her lips full of a smile.

"Ready? Then let’s set off."

Roland: "..."

"What’s wrong?" Sif asked, surprised.

"The plan has changed; Sura is replaced by Master Anthony now."

Upon hearing that strong support was joining, Sif was delighted too, "That’s great, let’s set off now!"

Seeing Roland’s slight hesitation, Sif suspiciously asked, "You’re not going to tell me not to go, are you?"

"What nonsense are you thinking? You’re the main assault, not going isn’t an option."

The moment he saw Sif’s eyes, he knew he couldn’t persuade her otherwise, so he simply changed his mind.

Being adaptable is important, don’t be too rigid.

Sif smiled broadly, pointing at the nearby armor stand, "Help me change armor!"

Although it was only the Governor’s Territory of the Three Provinces, administratively the structure was demoted by one level from the Cabinet configuration, and the various complex affairs were not necessarily less than those of the Empire.

After all, the Empire’s order was stable, and many things did not require dealing. The construction of the Three Provinces had just begun, with plenty to do.

With Roland, the laid-back officer there, she was quite busy these days.

Pressure pushes one forward, and also easily makes one go bald.

Last night Sif felt distressed for half a day after seeing a few strands on her pillow.

Since Roland could be the laid-back officer, she could learn.

These days she started researching and analyzing the governance she must control, separating the less important for Governor’s Mansion officials to handle.

Officials directly responsible to her decreased from over thirty people to fifteen.

According to Roland, no more than twenty-five people should be directly led by officials at each level.

For her, fifteen people were her limit.

Add more once she gets familiar with political affairs.

Although the Governor's Mansion could configure officials like the Cabinet, some officials couldn't be configured.

For instance, the Heraldry Institute, foreign affairs department, and the Imperial Guard.

If these were established, it would truly be "What reason does Your Majesty have for rebellion" farce.

Sif positioned herself appropriately.

The Three Overseas Provinces were a training ground Roland had chosen for her, not for establishing a second government outside.

Upon returning to the Imperial Capital, the Cabinet Minister could only process a batch, retire a batch, and keep a batch.

Total dismissal would lead the Empire into chaos.

Chapter 248: The Power of the Great Bear! (Part 2)

In summary, it's quite troublesome.

With a heavy mind, Sif decided to go on an adventure to clear her head.

As for political affairs...

"Magic Mirror, continue handling the affairs for me while I'm away. Don't rush important decisions; consult with the ministers for anything needing immediate judgment."

"Got it." the Magic Mirror replied lazily.

Seeing the lackluster appearance of the Magic Mirror, Sif felt a bit angry.

But she soon remembered this had been herself a few months back, and her anger dissipated.

After all, the Magic Mirror is just a magic tool with some divine artifact characteristics, it can only stand guard for her, nothing more expected.

After putting on her armor, she patiently briefed the Magic Mirror once more before leaving with Roland.

Though she vaguely worried about the Magic Mirror not holding up well, she never intended to synchronize her latest behavioral logic with it.

Roland had warned her several times.

She understood clearly.

Even if something happened to the Magic Mirror, it would just be that politically naive Sif, no need to panic.

With her and Roland around, the Magic Mirror could not mobilize even a single troop overseas.

Although it was strange to guard against one's own divine artifact this way, Sif still firmly executed the plan.

As Roland said, this was a drill.

If an unexpected situation occurred, the drill would become an actual battle.

To save time, they didn’t take a boat but set off on horseback.

Anthony cast a basic Floating Skill on the horses to lighten their weight.

At first, the horses were scared and couldn’t release their hooves properly when they started running.

Once they got used to the weightless state caused by the Floating Skill, they immediately began to gallop joyfully.

Ah, the body feels so light, running so fast, it’s wonderful!

The horses couldn’t speak, but their expressions conveyed joy.

It took them just over half a day, reaching Val City before evening.

Roland immediately went to the Light Chapel, finding Christine who was in prayer.

"We must head to White Mountain immediately; I need your help."

"As you command."

Christine, without further ado, picked up her scepter and prepared to get up.

"Aren’t you worried about the danger of entering White Mountain at night?" Roland asked in surprise.

"Would you change your decision?" Christine’s eyes glimmered with a sacred light, giving Roland the illusion of being watched by the Goddess of Light.

He avoided Christine’s gaze and softly said, "Let’s go."

Indeed, he wouldn’t change his mind, so why ask, wasting time.

Christine wore a loose-fitting priest’s robe externally, but inside, she was wrapped in specially made hard leather armor.

The white rhino leather armor offered defensive capabilities not inferior to plate armor, yet was much lighter and didn’t impede spellcasting.

More remarkable than the rhino leather armor was the scepter in her hand.

Noticing Roland constantly glancing at her scepter, Christine simply handed it over to him, softly explaining:

"The Resurrection Staff, after receiving the blessing of the Holy Spring Revival, can revive those in a near-death state."

"It can only revive false death, cannot bring back the truly dead, so please be careful, don’t be reckless."

Christine seemed worried Roland might charge in recklessly upon hearing about revival, hurriedly reminding.

Roland smiled silently.

Miss Saintess didn’t understand him at all.

If he could stay stable, he would never go reckless.

After all, life is but one, no resurrection coins available.

After meeting up with the Priest, the group of five departed overnight.

Sif volunteered to take the lead but was refused by Anthony.

"I will go first." insisted the Old Mage.

"I am the White Rose Knight!" Sif protested softly.

"Are you stronger than me?" Anthony ended the argument with one sentence.

Looking at Anthony’s still mountain-like sturdy build despite his age, Sif obediently quieted down.

What kind of Mage is this, strong like a bear.

Sif silently mocked within.

Anthony’s image was completely different from what the books she’d read described Mages to be.

What happened to the weak-bodied Magicians?

Sif had no doubt that even if she used body techniques, she might not be Master Anthony’s match.

After all, combat had levels, and before Tier Seven, physical fitness greatly influenced the outcome.

Since someone was willing to lead, she certainly wouldn’t contest.

Lisa and Christine walked at the center.

With the fragile Mage and Priest needing protection, it made sense.

Roland and Sif followed behind.

"He is a Civil Servant, I am the White Rose Knight, I must protect him!"

"She is the Empress, I am her Guardian, I must protect her!"

Both thought silently without speaking, fearing inadvertently exposing their true thoughts would hurt the other's pride.

Under Lisa's guidance, the group leisurely walked the path leading into White Mountain's interior.

The volcano was still erupting.

The burning volcanic ash and spewing lava stained the skyline red.

Though it was just night, there was still a bit of light, making the surroundings visible.

After some distance, Sif and Roland suddenly raised their heads, simultaneously warning: "Be careful!"

They almost simultaneously sensed the unsettling atmosphere emanating from the forest.

The Elf Race are friends of the forest; choosing [Elf Princess] and [Inheritor] as extraordinary professions, they possessed some Elf traits and had a stronger sense of forest dangers than ordinary people.

Elves were favored children of the night, possessing the ability to see in the dark.

Though not fully inherited, their abilities still far exceeded those of ordinary people.

Actually, their reminder wasn't even needed, others also reacted quickly.

There were demonized beasts approaching.

Their weight far exceeded normal beasts, exposing their whereabouts through the subtle trembling of the ground.

The demonization amplified strength remarkably but also deprived rationality.

A pack of demonized snow wolves approached.

The snow wolf is a gray wolf subspecies highly adapted to the White Mountain environment; after replacing its fur in autumn, their coats blend into the snow, hence called white wolves.

Come summer, their fur turns light gray, suiting the re-vegetated White Mountain.

The combat power of white wolves wasn't considerable.

If the average combat power of a medium-sized sheepdog is set to 1 dog, the combat power of a white wolf is approximately equal to 1.2 dogs.

They fell within the range that could be torn by a human adult male at the cost of minor injury.

However, white wolves never acted alone, usually appearing in dozens, making them formidable for ordinary people.

The surroundings of White Mountain teemed with white wolves, making it a restricted zone for ordinary people within a twenty-mile radius, also a hunting ground for hunters.

Though demonized white wolves weren't Roland and the others' objective, refusing their self-delivery made no sense.

Among the wolves, a few with pure bloodlines had entirely white coats.

Such pure-white wolf pelts were quite precious.

Making a fur coat for Roland/Sif as a gift seemed fitting.

Sif and Roland drew their swords simultaneously, focusing their gaze on the leading solid-colored white wolf.

There it was!

Sadly a bit small, only enough for a vest.

As they inwardly regretted, basin-sized fireballs rained down like raindrops.

Anthony had made his move.

Actually, fist-sized fireballs were sufficient to kill white wolves, but small fireballs didn't look cool enough.

To showcase in front of his new apprentice, Master Anthony unhesitatingly used his ultimate move.

To let Lisa witness the power of magic.

"Ha! Ah!"

Anthony disliked chanting when casting spells; his style was to forcibly drive with immense spiritual power.

Commonly known as the great force brick throwing.

His fighting style left Roland and Sif in silence.

They didn’t even have time to intervene when their ears started buzzing from the angry roars shaking the woods.

Next time, they must cover their ears in time.

Sif rubbed her slightly ringing ears, silently mocking, is this a human Mage or a war machine?

But this was good; with Anthony around, this journey promised to be easy and fun.

Stealing a sideways glance at Roland, Sif chuckled secretly.

This time there’d be no need to worry about Roland attracting monsters.

Roland looked at the pure-white wolf turned to charred black, at a loss for words.

A second ago, it was the whitest wolf on the mountain, now it’s definitively the blackest.

After showcasing a big fireball, Anthony turned back triumphantly towards the young ones, saying nothing.

He knew these youngsters were well-behaved and would definitely know how to compliment him.

However, Roland and Sif remained silent, Christine didn’t love to speak, so was also mute.

Only Lisa came forward, eyes filled with admiration towards her teacher.

A disciple’s sincere gaze was the best recognition.

Anthony breathed a long sigh, adjusted his breathing, then laughed heartily:

"Let’s go to the volcano crater!"

Chapter 249: Have You Ever Gone Crazy for Yourself?

The intimidating presence of Roland’s extraordinary ability to attract creatures clashed with Anthony’s bear-like burly physique, quickly calming the surrounding area.

Though the demonized beasts lacked clear minds, they still adhered to the jungle law, where the strong were supreme.

They sensed a new bear king in the forest.

Wolves feared bears, so they avoided them.

Bears feared kings, so they avoided them too.

The five-member group thus proceeded unobstructed to the volcano’s mouth.

This was the source of the sensation Lisa spoke of.

Lisa walked step by step towards the volcano’s mouth, her eyes a bit dazed.

Seeing that she was about to walk towards the mouth, Roland noticed something was wrong, dashed over like lightning, and grabbed her wrist, loudly reprimanding, "Are you thinking of jumping down?"

Lisa did not speak.

Roland was almost infuriated.

"Do you know how high the temperature of the lava is?"

"I know, it’s similar to the burning temperature of coal," Lisa said calmly.

Roland laughed in exasperation.

Is that how you’re supposed to answer this question?

Lisa looked at Roland gently and softly said, "I’ve tried, I can skillfully control the flames of burning coal, letting them dance in my palm."

To verify her words, she squatted down and placed her hand over the flowing lava.

The scorching lava lay obediently in her palm like a kitten.

Is this the special ability of a Temperature Control Apprentice?

Such precise temperature control, coupled with Master Anthony’s flame magic teaching, Lisa’s future is limitless.

If so, there’s even less need to take risks.

Roland still tried to persuade her, but Lisa shook her head resolutely and looked towards Anthony.

"Teacher, do you oppose it too?"

"I oppose... I oppose you jumping in directly. We must proceed with gradual practice."

Anthony stepped over, smiling as he proposed this plan, "There's ready-made lava here, I can control the lava to simulate the internal environment of the volcano, gradually increasing the temperature to help you adapt."

Sif and Christine also came over.

Sif, sharing Roland's stance, gently urged Lisa not to be impulsive.

However, her persuasion was quite ineffective, even strengthening Lisa's determination.

Lisa's eyes shone with a determination to succeed or die trying.

The compromise she accepted was to practice for one night and jump into the volcano early in the morning.

Whatever Roland said about the internal lava temperature being higher, she didn't hear a word.

Watching Lisa's stubborn attitude, Roland felt helpless.

He knew Lisa too well; she was rarely stubborn, but once determined, she was beyond cure.

Facing Roland's questioning gaze, Christine only said, "I can provide treatment and protection, but I can't bring you back from ashes."

Lisa nodded gently, "Thank you."

After saying this, Christine took her scepter and found a not-too-hot place to wait.

She understood Lisa.

Everyone was racing against time; who would willingly give up if given a chance?

She wasn't qualified to say Lisa was taking a risk. The risk she took hosting the Holy Spring Resurrection ceremony was no less than Lisa's.

This was an era for madmen and fools.

A normal person could never witness the glorious moment of the three Goddesses descending.

Thankfully, she wasn't normal; she was a madwoman.

Since persuasion failed, Roland could only prepare everything.

He took off the ring Sura gave him, which could offset fatal damage, and forcibly pressed it onto Lisa.

"No refusal allowed!"

"I'm not refusing, but this is a one-time item. If I really can't bear it, the ring can only protect me for one second at most."

"One second is one second!"

Roland said sulkily, "You look at me in that last second and cry for me."

Lisa received the ring with a smile.

Roland might talk tough, but he couldn’t bear to see her get hurt.

But she had to take the risk.

In this era of racing against others and the heavens, slowing down meant death.

Anthony took Lisa aside to practice, while Roland and Christine stayed nearby, ready to rescue, and Sif took the role of outer guard duty.

Anthony’s teaching method revolved around aggression.

He immediately used magic to further heat the flowing lava and let Lisa try to control it.

The scorching heat made the air restless.

Sweat rolled continuously down Lisa’s cheeks; although prepared, the lava’s scalding heat exceeded her expectations.

She instinctively wanted to retreat, but out of the corner of her eye, she saw Sif standing guard not far away.

Courage reconquered her body, and she focused her spirit on one point, her palm surging with the same intense heat as she pressed forward.

"Boom!"

The lava clashed with the flames, sparking countless fire stars, lighting up White Mountain under the night.

But merely clashing with the lava wasn't enough; to retrieve something from the lava, one had to create a shield that completely isolates the temperature.

This was the ultimate test for Lisa.

After at least half an hour of struggle, the shield Lisa supported finally could protect her.

Next came temperature control and cooling down.

Roland and the others waited very patiently.

Around them, only Master Anthony's deep voice echoed.

His voice had the grandeur of a giant dragon's roar, causing demonized and ordinary beasts to feel inexplicable fear and actively avoid the area.

It was Roland's first time seeing White Mountain at four in the morning.

And the volcano, still in motion.

Under the tense gaze of everyone, Lisa took a deep breath and, holding up the shield, walked towards the volcano.

Before she set off, Christine called out to her, casting a blessing.

Lisa's petite figure appeared tiny against the gigantic volcano, as the lava rapidly cooled beneath her feet, turning into steaming volcanic rock.

Roland and Christine stood above the volcano’s mouth, staring at her intently, ready to rescue at any moment.

Chapter 250: Have You Ever Gone Crazy for Yourself? (Part 2)

Although they all knew that once something went wrong, the chance of rescue would be almost zero.

The temperature of volcanic magma ranges from several hundred to several thousand degrees, and the hottest magma can melt steel in a short time.

If things got out of control, Lisa’s fate would inevitably be cremated on the spot.

To ease the tense atmosphere, Roland gently asked Christine, "Miss Saintess, the blessing you bestowed on her just now was?"

"Life Mark."

Christine calmly explained, "The Life Mark won’t save her, but it can detect whether her life is still continuing."

Roland nodded, saying nothing.

Christine didn’t approve of Lisa’s adventurous act, but she did not say it outright.

Under everyone’s gaze, Lisa walked towards the depths of the magma.

She took out the prepared iron shovel, intending to carve a new path through the magma, yet the shovel quickly twisted and deformed.

Fortunately, she anticipated the difficulties and had prepared more than one shovel.

After several shovels were rendered useless, Roland tossed over the last shovel.

This was a specially made Auric Shovel. Ultra heat-resistant, it won't deform below three thousand degrees.

If the Auric Shovel deforms, it also means she cannot continue forward, which was Roland's warning device to Lisa.

Before she ventured into the magma, Roland repeatedly admonished her to act within her capabilities.

There are plenty of opportunities to become stronger, but once dead, there's nothing left.

Lisa kept her head down, continuously digging, constantly replenishing energy for the pale-red protection shield.

She didn't have time to wipe sweat away, as it evaporated almost as soon as it was produced.

She was very sure she hadn't found the wrong place.

The summoning feeling grew stronger and stronger.

No doubt, it's here!

She clearly felt that this was the only opportunity equivalent to Sif's level.

If she missed this opportunity, she could only be a vine clinging to Roland, the big tree.

She didn't want to be the vine.

If one day she became a burden to Roland, she would rather leave quietly.

But she understood Roland; despite his carefree demeanor, he actually cared deeply about those around him.

He would never abandon her, even if taking her along would only slow him down.

If unsuccessful, she'd rather turn into a burst of fireworks and burn out in the depths of the volcano.

"Bang!"

A scorching stone spurted up from the bottom of the magma, spinning towards Lisa.

She swung the Auric Shovel to deflect the stone.

Volcanic activity was intensifying.

Roland saw the volcanic disturbance and called out Lisa's name loudly from above.

"Lisa, come up quickly, the volcano is about to erupt!"

"I know, it's moving! I found it!"

Roland's expression changed slightly.

Damn it, Lisa lied; it was the first time in all these years.

Before going down, she promised to leave in case of danger, but she broke her word after going down.

Roland understood very well the reason for Lisa's stubbornness.

She simply refused to admit defeat.

Lisa, who never had the heart of a strong person, was extraordinarily stubborn this time.

Roland rushed towards the volcano, but the heat wave pushed him back.

He didn't understand flame manipulation and couldn't get close to the volcano at all.

Now, no one could save Lisa except herself.

And Roland knew very well that if she couldn't find the sensed Divine Artifact, she'd rather die in there than voluntarily come out.

Roland turned his gaze to Anthony.

Watching Anthony, who was so tense that he didn't bother to wipe away his sweat, Roland already knew the outcome.

The mage was good at manipulating flames, which didn't mean he could withstand flame erosion.

The transcendent's fire attack power was not as powerful as the mage's, but they could move freely within flames.

The mage was powerful, the transcendent was precise.

That was their difference.

Roland looked towards Christine as if searching for a lifeline in the ocean, but she slowly shook her head.

The magma spread relentlessly, engulfing Lisa, her entire being trapped in the magma. She gripped the shovel tightly, watching the tip of the Auric Shovel twist and deform, making her heart tremble.

Going deeper, the temperature of the magma would surpass her limit of endurance.

With immense heat, there was no place to dissipate, and she could only rely on the protection shield to endure for a short time.

Could she fish treasures out of the magma in such a short time?

Could she return alive after retrieving the treasure? She didn’t know either.

Her eyes flickered with resolve, and she suddenly looked back.

Amidst the scorching flames and thick smoke, Roland saw her mouthing clearly.

"Lisa!"

He couldn’t help but cry out, and then he saw the Lisa who used to feel pain for half a day from touching hot food disappearing into the magma like a butterfly into the sea of fire.

Gathering his strength, he uttered a light shout to sustain the Divine Protection.

Under the Divine Protection’s shelter, he could approach the volcano further but couldn’t protect Lisa, who headed towards certain death.

"Whoosh!"

The long spear pierced through the night sky, landing accurately three meters in front of Roland, its tail still trembling.

This was the long spear thrown by Sif.

The spot where the long spear landed was the border between life and death.

Cross this line, even with Divine Protection, and one would still die sooner or later.

Golden light enveloped Roland as he continued forward.

Christine didn’t stop him.

Adults have the right to make choices, and all she could do was respect them.

Of course, she only respected Lisa, who would risk her life in search of breakthrough.

If Roland was crazy enough to walk into the crater, that would be foolish.

Sif, standing guard not far away, felt her heart leap to her throat and almost exclaimed but held back.

She respected Lisa’s choice and also respected Roland’s will.

If Lisa were to die here, she would mourn for this brave girl. If Roland...

Roland had a brain, he wouldn’t do anything stupid...

Right?

Sif’s heart was racing.

No one is perfectly rational; if Roland really lost control, perhaps he would jump in.

If he jumped, what would she do? Sif's mind went blank.

Anthony stood on high ground, staring intently at the spot where Lisa vanished, his large hand tightly clenched, sweat beads continuously trickling down.