Empress 481

Chapter 481: To Save or Not to Save?_3

According to the intelligence sent by the messenger, the situation at the Franks frontline is quite dire.

The garrison stationed at Frank Castle is commanded by General Dailong, consisting of a reinforced division and local defense units.

The reinforced division is 1.5 times the size of a regular division, with nearly eighteen thousand men, equipped with over ten thousand firearms, more than three thousand warhorses, and seventy-five cannons, making it a formidable mobile unit.

The local defense forces at Frank Castle number about seven thousand, with more than thirty cannons.

With the addition of outer works, trenches, and bastions, the probability of Frank Castle being taken head-on is quite low.

Unless over a hundred thousand troops and three times the amount of artillery are deployed.

The Prudon Kingdom...

Deployed the 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 6th organized armies, with the 1st and 6th armies being elite units awarded the black cross on a silver flag.

From the moment the messenger broke through, the war has been ongoing for three days.

Organizing reinforcements to set out and rushing to Frank Castle would take at least ten days.

The speed of an army’s march is not comparable to the speed of a messenger moving at full speed.

To provide aid, an army of equivalent size is required, and mobilizing a hundred thousand troops is very time-consuming; sending too few would be futile.

Can General Dailong hold out for nearly half a month?

The command hall was utterly silent, as if enveloped by deathly stillness.

Present were professionals who held little hope for this defense battle.

According to the messenger’s intelligence, even as he broke through, the perimeter’s bastions and defensive works had already fallen, leaving the situation perilous.

During this military meeting, it was very likely that Frank Castle had already fallen.

Although nobody likes defeatism, reality, as always, must be confronted.

An experienced general spoke gravely:

"I’ve known General Dailong for many years; I know him very well. As long as there’s hope, he would certainly seek support, rather than require us to fortify the rear in a letter, saying support wasn’t needed."

"Although it’s cruel to say, Frank Castle probably couldn’t be held."

The old general sighed, said somewhat helplessly:

"From Hansa to Frank Castle is about three hundred miles. If the support troops march swiftly to Frank Castle, they might confront an enemy lying in wait, ready to ambush them."

After saying this, the old general seemed to have exhausted all his strength and sank back into his seat.

The Prudon Kingdom’s mobilization of all its mobile forces for a sudden attack indeed exceeded many expectations.

But the war is long, abandoning a fortress to preserve valuable living forces is better than having them ambushed.

Subsequently, several generals spoke in turn.

Rational ones suggested abandoning the rescue and laying out a new defense line.

Those with fiery spirits demanded immediate assistance.

Their reasoning was simple: what if Frank Castle was still holding on?

Abandoning them would chill everyone’s hearts, and morale would collapse.

Even if destined to fail, there must be an attempt to save them.

Christine silently listened to the generals’ arguments, her gaze turning to Roland.

"Lord Governor, what do you think?"

"I support your decision." Roland unhesitatingly passed the responsibility back.

If he could handle this complex situation, why would he need Christine?

"Any decision?" Christine continued to ask.

Roland’s heart tightened, he roughly guessed what Christine would choose.

She was always so cold-blooded when it came to giving up.

Looking into Christine’s deep eyes, Roland’s words changed at the tip of his tongue.

"Yes, any decision."

Christine’s expression remained calm, but her lips curved slightly into a barely noticeable arc.

She abruptly stood, raising the Golden Short Sword representing the Emperor’s authority.

"Generals, I have decided."

"Frank Castle must be reinforced, but the army cannot be recklessly deployed. I will personally lead seven thousand cavalry to set out, using harassment tactics and the like to relieve pressure on General Dailong."

"Bordeaux, you must reorganize the army at the fastest speed, advancing at a normal pace to ensure the army’s combat strength and morale, preparing for both rescue and decisive battle."

...

With one command after another issued, Christine’s rescue deployment was swiftly completed.

She glanced back at Roland, with a calm gaze holding a hint of mockery.

As if she were silently communicating something to Roland.

Chapter 482: Shameless Ambush

Border City Frank Castle.

This is a large city with a population of 140,000.

The city is peculiar, sometimes a trade city, sometimes a military fortress, seamlessly switching without the slightest stagnation.

In the past years when the continental treaty was still in place, this was the forefront of international trade between Sussex and Prudon.

Now, it has become the frontline of confrontation between the two major camps.

Frank Castle and Hansa are both located on the northern plains of Rodinia, the terrain is flat and undulating, can be described as a vast plain, a high-quality agricultural zone.

Precisely because it has no natural defences, this fortress appears especially important.

If this fortress is lost, the few cities in the middle cannot be defended, and the enemy can quickly reach the city of Hansa.

The first battle is the decisive battle; war is so cruel.

The special geographical conditions of Frank Castle determine that it’s impossible to build a super fortress here, and it is difficult for the stationed soldiers to exceed thirty thousand.

As early as when the continental treaty was abolished, Roland ordered a rush to build this fortress.

Solid and thick permanent fortifications, intricate trenches, and elite troops, all possible defensive measures have been taken, and taken very seriously.

Stationed here is the newly-formed 1st Army, 1st Division.

It is well known that the number of the 1st Division is not randomly assigned, it must have real strength.

The configuration of the 1st Division lives up to this number.

They have the most people, the toughest training, the best equipment, and the highest bonuses.

Not only that, but the commander of the 1st Division is Vice Admiral Baron Dailong, who is deeply trusted by Roland.

Dailong is an old member who followed Roland since he first went overseas, his loyalty and ability are impeccable, letting him guard here shows Roland's emphasis on Frank Castle.

As long as the enemies are not so crazy as to dispatch more than a hundred thousand troops and hundreds of cannons for a strong attack, this fortress is almost invincible.

However, the Prudon Kingdom indeed came with tens of thousands of people.

When the Prudon people invaded armed without declaration of war, Dailong was completely stunned.

The two major camps had been on edge, preparing for war, and he wasn't surprised by the outbreak of war, but he did not expect it in this form.

No declaration of war, no prelude, sudden and unexpected.

A few days ago, senior military officers from both sides were still exchanging routine communication, and trade convoys passed through the fortress, bringing thousands of freshly produced fabrics from Hansa City.

Although they had sensed the approaching smell of gunpowder for a long time, the war still came too suddenly.

What irritated Dailong even more was that over a hundred thousand troops gathered and moved quietly to surround the fortress, and he was completely kept in the dark, it was laughable if told.

Dailong wanted to laugh at himself, but he couldn’t.

Because he is the one facing the pressure.

Hundreds of heavy cannons bombarded like they cost nothing, paving the way for the army.

The lives of these Prudon people seemed more like they were picked up, advancing with the artillery fire.

Shells whizzed overhead, and there were even quite a few explosion shells filled with magic elements, the saturated firepower strike blasted the positions into a cloud of dust.

The Sussex soldiers, after being stunned, skillfully rushed into the defensive works to avoid the shells, while the Prudon people continued to advance with the artillery fire.

Hiding in cover can indeed avoid artillery fire, but it also cannot focus fire, except for a few elite hunters equipped with rifles with scopes to block the enemy, ordinary infantry can only shoot randomly using the "Uncle Black" shooting technique.

The fearless charge of the Prudon people darkened Dailong’s face.

What is this barbaric combat technique?

The Prudon soldiers killed by shells were several times more than the Sussex people, but they forcefully used artillery cover to breach the outer positions.

On the first day of conflict, the Prudon Army suffered 3,700 casualties, while the Sussex Army suffered 900 casulaties.

Just looking at the exchange ratio, the Sussex people had a great advantage, but they lost their outer positions, all three trenches were breached.

The next day, General Jacobs, who was in charge of commanding the operations on the outskirts, gritted his teeth and issued cold-blooded orders, demanding the soldiers to leave cover for frontal resistance.

The soldiers were very brave, forming ranks under artillery fire and stray bullets to face the enemy, only to be stunned by the furious artillery volleys.

On the second day, the 1st Division lost over 2,500 men.

Although the Prudon Kingdom Army also suffered heavy losses, the exchange ratio on the second day was unfavorable to the Sussex people.

Even more fatal was that morale was almost collapsing under the bombardment.

No one wants to stand and be bombarded by artillery.

This combat technique not only caused the outer troops to be bombed and collapsed, but also hurt the morale of the defenders inside the city.

The soldiers refused to obey orders, refusing to line up for a certain death.

Dailong was helpless, he also knew this order was absurd, he could understand the soldiers but could not understand the other side.

Are their soldiers not human? How can they not fear death?

Fortunately, the city defense of Frank Castle was solid, it did not fall on the third day, but held on in a tragic manner.

In probing attacks, the elite teams of the Prudon Kingdom climbed the walls three times, only to be forcefully beaten back by the heavy infantry of the 1st Division.

The casualty ratio on the third day was favorable to the Sussex people.

After the failure of the strong attack, the Prudon Kingdom Army was also somewhat overwhelmed, they gave up the frontal assault, switched to digging trenches outside, planning for a long-term battle.

They occupied the high ground outside the city, starting to transport cannons up the mountain, intending to bombard the fortress from above.

Dailong coldly observed the battlefield, continuously sending elite troops out of the city, trying to retake the high ground outside, but all his attempts failed.

To be fair, there was nothing wrong with his command.

He did not lose the fortress because of the surprise attack and unequal troop numbers, nor did he abandon the troops to escape, he steadfastly defended the fortress, also finding ways to dispatch elite scouts to the rear to request reinforcements.

Chapter 483: Shameless Ambush (Part 2)

The garrison did everything it could.

However, Frank Castle remained perilous and was on the verge of falling.

There was no choice, the disparity in military strength between the two sides was too great.

He could only watch as the Prudon people opened up mountain roads and slowly, yet unstoppably, transported cannons to the mountaintop positions.

As soon as these hundreds of cannons were mounted, the fall of Frank Castle was only a matter of time.

More despairingly, he had no power to stop it.

Sending out small forces was useless, and deploying large troops outside the city would be tantamount to falling into the enemy's trap.

Positioning cannons on the mountain wasn't an uncommon tactic. Back in the battle of Helentz Castle, the Oden Kingdom Army did the same.

However, the firepower levels of the Oden Kingdom Army paled in comparison to the Prudon, without blast damage bullets infused with magic elements, they could only rely on inertial force to smash.

Moreover, Helentz had a complete dungeon system, capable of holding out even after the surface had fallen.

More importantly, back then, there was Her Majesty the Empress and Governor Roland leading a group of masters to retake the mountaintop; how could we achieve that now?

The Prudon people were not second-rate opponents like the Oden Kingdom, their defenses on the mountaintop were close to perfection.

The garrison in the city could only stand by helplessly as they carried the cannons up, set them up, and mercilessly blasted into the city without any counter.

Perhaps there was only one way left: a breakout.

But this was nothing short of a dead end.

The Prudon cavalry was merely absent, not decimated.

Over a vast three-hundred-mile stretch of plain, letting infantry race against cavalry... any general commanding such would rightly face a military tribunal.

Unable to fight, unable to retreat, with no escape route, Dailong's mood was understandably bleak.

He stood atop the watchtower, observing the opposing mountaintop, where the artillery positions were under heated construction, his eyes too troubled to keep open.

Just as he was at a loss, footsteps sounded from behind.

At moments like this, only one person could approach the watchtower without notification; his deputy, the hero of the Helentz Castle defense, Jacobs.

Hope surged within Dailong's heart.

Jacobs had performed miracles before, maybe he truly had a method?

He abruptly turned around and caught a glance of his deputy, momentarily stupefied.

Was this still the high-spirited newcomer Vice Admiral aiming for a hereditary baronship or even a countship?

Jacobs' beard hadn't been shaved for at least three days, his eyes were sunken, his face was haggard, and although his uniform was tidy, it couldn't conceal the faint scent of gunpowder.

His left hand was further wrapped in thick bandages.

Jacobs' hoarse voice was filled with fatigue, "I'm sorry, though it's difficult to say, but the outer positions couldn't be held and have already entirely fallen."

Jacobs led over six thousand in the defense outside the city; he was courageous and steadfastly executed Dailong's commands, yet still crumbled under the immense pressure of the Prudon.

War follows objective laws; courage and will are certainly useful, but relying solely on them is far from sufficient.

After reporting the situation of the final position’s struggle and the casualty ratios, Jacobs asked in a low voice:

"General Dailong, what should we do?"

Though he sympathized with Jacobs, the question left Dailong somewhat speechless; if he had a plan, would he still be standing here dazed?

Even if Lord Governor himself were to come and micromanage, this battle couldn’t be fought.

"You are the hero of the Helentz Castle defense battle; you have experience in such defensive battles, do you think we still have a chance, if there’s..."

"No."

Jacobs straightforwardly interrupted before he could finish.

Dailong: "..."

Couldn’t you let me finish before interrupting?

Though directly interrupted, he couldn’t bring himself to be angry, after all, they were comrades fighting side by side, cooperating excellently these past days.

Constructing the defense system was the result of their collaboration.

Dailong mockingly smiled, responding with Sussex-style humor: "No way out, huh? Perhaps we should learn from you several years ago and dig frantically downward; maybe we’ll find the Alamanni Empire’s old arsenal."

"Sorry, there isn’t one of those either."

Jacobs calmly said, "Dailong, you only came here two months ago, while I organized a team to dig a year ago, digging for a full three months, going down two hundred meters, finding nothing."

"Well, not completely nothing, at least we gained a few bills and a reprimand from headquarters."

Though he tried to keep it humorous, Dailong couldn’t laugh.

Helentz Castle was defendable; certainly, subterranean structures were important, but it was the unearthed arsenal that was crucial.

In this era where technology relies mainly on archaeology, finding relics of the Alamanni Empire basically meant hitting the jackpot.

After all, the Alamanni people were inherently meticulous; their armaments were carefully preserved by wrapping in oilcloth, never rusting or rotting, regardless of duration.

Seeing Dailong’s disappointed expression, Jacobs couldn’t help jokingly remark, "Such good fortune only happens about once, yet you hope for a second?"

After a brief pause, he couldn’t help but complain, "However, that kid Tom refuses to accept it; he’s led another excavation team down."

"The young man who performed outstandingly in the Helentz Castle defense battle?"

"Yes, I heard he’s on next month’s promotion list, he’ll soon be a Lieutenant Colonel."

Lieutenant Colonel, barely eighteen, truly young and promising; a batch of young officers is also on the promotion list alongside Tom.

These individuals are the future of the Empire; they are young, promising, and full of spirit.

Bringing up this name, Jacobs couldn’t help but feel aged.

Although not yet forty, faced with the youngsters’ ingenious ideas, he truly struggled to keep pace.

If not for being their old leader, perhaps these young people wouldn’t choose to associate with him.

Chapter 484: Shameless Ambush (Part 3)

Just as the two middle-aged generals were lamenting their aging, a lieutenant hurriedly arrived, saluted General Dailong, and reported, "General, Lieutenant Colonel Jerry has something to discuss with you. He’s just outside."

"Let him in."

Lieutenant Colonel Jerry was in charge of the east wall defenses of the fortress, and after all the outer positions fell, his position was directly in contact with the enemy.

If he came at this time, it must be important.

Dailong glanced at Jacobs and softly advised, "Don’t mention what we were discussing earlier in front of the young ones."

Jacobs nodded but said nothing.

Old fellows can talk about discouraging things together, but they shouldn’t spread it to the young ones.

Dailong sighed, shaking his head, "I still can’t figure it out. The Holy Alliance hasn’t even completely defeated the Wende Empire, yet they dare to attack us."

Jacobs did not answer, remaining silent.

Yes, why indeed?

"Because everyone thought it would take them a few more months to launch an attack."

The resounding young voice came with the sound of military boots hitting the ground; Jerry walked very quickly and in a flash was in front of the two generals.

He saluted the two generals sequentially and did not continue the previous topic, instead reporting on the status of the east wall.

Sporadic fighting continued, but large-scale attacks had ceased.

"From my observation, in at most three days, the mountaintop fortifications will be completed. Do the two generals have any solutions?"

Dailong and Jacobs exchanged a look, silently lamenting that what was bound to come had indeed come.

Old hands are prudent, young people are full of fighting spirit. Jerry likely came to propose an offensive move to them.

Since the young man asked, it would be impolite for Dailong not to respond; he gave a muffled grunt, his voice carrying a hint of fatigue.

"If the construction of the mountaintop continues unchecked, the fortress definitely can’t be defended. I’m considering organizing a mobile force to disrupt the mountaintop fortifications."

"There are ample reserves of magic bombs inside the fortress, and a large stock of explosives for making bombs. If there are brave warriors unafraid of death, there is hope."

Jerry frowned slightly but couldn’t resist reminding, "General, a dare-to-die squad is not a suicide squad. No one is willing to undertake such a meaningless, mindless charge."

"In fact, during the outer position defensive battles, we attempted such foolishness, and what happened? We couldn’t even delay the enemy’s advance, ended up losing a few thousand men for nothing."

What Jerry said was true, but the truth is often the hardest to hear.

These were words Dailong did not like to hear.

He frowned, angrily scolding, "Jerry, you are just a lieutenant colonel commander, responsible for the outer defenses — those were your old superior’s orders. If you have good suggestions, speak frankly. Don’t be sarcastic."

Jerry glanced at the disheveled Jacobs with some sympathy, but he unceremoniously pointed out the various errors in the outer defensive battles.

Pitiful Jacobs, but who pities the soldiers who died because of flawed tactics?

Since becoming a Vice Admiral, Jacobs had become the backbone of the overseas corps, and with the heroic halo from the Helentz Castle defense battle, people daring to criticize him openly were becoming fewer.

In this campaign, Jacobs had fully exposed his shortcomings in commanding operations.

Slow response, dogmatic stubbornness, weak adaptability.

In fact, this type of leader is quite common in the middle and high levels of the Empire.

They have mostly received good military education, are familiar with military theory, and can recite historical famous battles by heart, talking animatedly about war.

However, in real warfare, their performance is far weaker than their imagined selves.

In Jerry’s eyes, the raid on the mountaintop artillery positions was doomed to fail; their only chance was to seize the timing and attack the artillery positions still on the plains before the enemy’s cannons were transported up the mountain.

Getting cannons up the mountain is difficult, so stop them from going up. There are many ways to prevent them from ascending; not all have to occur on the mountain.

Jerry’s proposal was bold, targeting the enemy’s blind spot in thinking.

After elaborating on his ideas, he brought up the Prudon Kingdom’s sudden assault again.

"The Prudon people’s surprise attack hit our blind spot in thinking; my raid plan is the same."

Dailong and Jacobs exchanged a glance, seeing hope and surprise in each other’s eyes.

Jerry was right; no one would expect them to dare initiate a raid again, and not on the mountaintop position, but by directly attacking the central army of the Prudon forces, targeting their artillery positions.

Very reckless, beyond most people’s comprehension.

This is the premise of a sneak attack: the victim doesn’t expect it.

"Can you elaborate?"

While a brilliant idea is precious, it’s more important to turn the idea into reality. If it’s just theorizing, this grand raid could likely cost them the entire battle.

Jerry knew this was a critical moment. He cleared his throat and began to outline the combat plan.

By multiple small unit feint attacks to mislead the enemy into thinking their target remained the high ground outside the city, then mobilizing the only cavalry force.

"Deliver a fatal blow to their artillery!"

Jerry’s tone rose a bit, his eyes filled with fervor, his voice slightly trembling.

"We have few cavalry, only five hundred, but they are the highest-paid warriors, their loyalty and fighting prowess are impeccable, ready to sacrifice for their country at any time!"

Dailong pondered for a moment before slowly asking, "Who will command this unit?"

Five hundred cavalry charging the artillery positions at night, using various magic bombs and homemade explosives to bombard the positions, the chance of survival was obvious.

The officer commanding this cavalry unit must possess extremely strong military qualities, able to find the enemy’s weak points amidst chaos, quickly complete the mission, then return.

Of course, they are most likely to die in the charge, surviving even a third would be a miracle.

Dailong squinted at Jerry, waiting for his answer.

Jerry met his gaze without flinching and calmly replied, "I will."

"You can’t!"

Jacobs loudly interrupted Jerry’s self-indulgence, "Jerry, I think you’ve been getting a bit too confident lately. In terms of military capability and prestige, can you compare with me?"

"General!" Jerry’s expression changed slightly; he hadn’t expected Jacobs to volunteer for such a near-suicide mission.

In this kind of raid, the leader’s chance of death is much higher than that of ordinary soldiers.

Ordinary soldiers only need to follow the general’s charge, but the leading officer not only needs to charge ahead under a hail of bullets but must also accurately assess the situation, a task impossible without strong military skills and extraordinary luck.

Jerry was about to say something, but Jacobs had already raised his hand to stop him from speaking.

Jacobs lowered his voice and said, "Jerry, the future is yours; I am already old. This is my last chance for advancement. Don’t compete with me."

Jerry’s words were all swallowed back down.

This is the power of the military merit system.

Even if Jacobs dies in battle, as long as they can turn the tide and hold the fortress until reinforcements arrive, he will still be the top hero.

He will be posthumously promoted to Lieutenant General and conferred the title of Count, stepping into the ranks of high tier Nobles.

Although he would not enjoy it, he still has family.

"Jerry, you’re not married yet. Even if you get a posthumous title, there’s no one to inherit it. But it’s different for me; I have a son who’s almost of age, the title should go to him."

"Do not compete with the old father eager for merits."

Jacobs patted Jerry’s shoulder and smiled as if relieved.

There’s another reason he didn’t articulate, one he didn’t plan to share with anyone.

Among the thousands of soldiers who died in the outer ground battles, there were a dozen or so young men from his hometown.

He had promised to lead them in gaining merit, to enjoy a prosperous life, yet they all perished.

He couldn’t imagine facing their parents back home.

But he still has a chance for redemption; on the road to the Netherworld, these young kids need an elder to lead the way.

This is his inescapable duty.

Seeing the resolute look in Jacobs’s eyes, Jerry was stunned, then relieved.

He couldn’t fathom the old superior’s gaze, but he could understand the other’s resolve.

He said no more, standing straight and saluting the old superior whom he somewhat privately criticized in his heart.

Dailong looked at the old friend ready to die, sighed softly, but said nothing.

His gaze swept toward the artillery positions a few miles away, his eyes narrowing slightly.

The enemy surely thinks Frank Castle is indefensible.

Tonight, they are going to give the Prudon people a huge surprise.

Chapter 485: War or Performance Art?

Everyone who fights often knows how difficult it is to defend an isolated fortress against an enemy five times larger and with hundreds of heavy artillery.

Christine chose to rescue, but internally accepted that Frank Castle could not hold.

She slowed her pace, dispatching scouts to expand the reconnaissance area, fearing that the few thousand elite knights brought for rescue might also fall into the encirclement.

When the scouts told her the fortress was still holding, she suspected it was an auditory hallucination.

Upon rushing to Frank Castle day and night, the fortress was not only solid as a rock but seemed like it could hold out for much longer.

She felt puzzled, even thinking it was a trap.

Until she saw several familiar faces and flags appear on the walls.

She had imagined Frank Castle would fall or be severely defended, but never expected the defenders could guard it so calmly.

The drawbridge facing Sussex slowly lowered, and the city gates opened.

A small portion of Christine's six thousand knights were stationed outside the city, while most entered inside.

With twelvefold doubt, Christine walked toward the command center of the town hall, surrounded by officers who had come to meet her.

She sternly refused General Dailong's welcome banquet arrangement, heading straight to the command room to convene a military meeting.

This had always been her style. General Dailong, familiar with her, was not too surprised, but the young officers were not yet acquainted with this commander.

They were awestruck by Miss Saintess's beauty and decisiveness, eager to display their valor and distinction before the beautiful lady.

Dailong glimpsed these young men's looks out of the corner of his eye, gaining a few reflections in his mind.

These young fellows indeed don't understand Saintess Christine.

Her faith is firm, and she is a cold-blooded, ruthless leader.

The beautiful frame only adds affinity during her preaching, besides that, it's even a burden.

Heaven knows how many nobility and knights in the Wende Empire are her suitors, but in her eyes, these people are just annoying flies.

In this era where the Divine Court Saintess is often equated with political prostitutes, she is indeed an anomaly.

The enthusiasm of these young men is destined to receive no return.

"General Dailong, how is the recent battle situation?"

Christine's cold voice pulled the somewhat distracted Dailong back to reality.

He slightly composed his thoughts, reporting the battle situation to Christine in a slightly low voice.

Christine's expression showed no change at all.

Whether hearing about thousands dying on the outer battlefield, assault teams destroying hundreds of artillery, or General Jacobs heroically dying in a surprise attack, her face showed little emotion.

She remained calm as if an observer.

This has always been her commanding style—never allowing personal feelings to affect judgment and always viewing the battle from a high aerial perspective.

Dailong was not surprised by this, but he still had to say a few words for Jacobs.

After all, they were old comrades, and he would not be able to move past this himself if he didn't speak.

"Your Highness Saintess..."

"Please call me General Christine, or Commander." Christine corrected Dailong's address expressionlessly.

Address indicates stance.

If she identifies as the Holy Daughter of Light, it would certainly help her establish prestige within the Divine Court, but it would also create alienation from the allied generals.

Saintess is a guest, commander is a comrade.

Dailong naturally understood this difference.

Eyes again on Christine, she was enveloped in a pale silver Light Armor, her cold face appearing even more petite under the raised metal collar.

Though too pretty to resemble a military figure, her chilly, cutting aura still carried a hint of grimness.

Just a moment’s surprise left, Dailong internally accepted this newly appointed commander.

"Yes, Lord Commander."

"I think I must particularly recount the achievements of General Jacobs and the five hundred warriors to you."

With Christine’s approval, Dailong quickly narrated the process of Jacobs and others sacrificing themselves in exchange for ninety-five percent of the enemy’s artillery.

Even with Christine’s indifference, she was somewhat moved.

"Did all five hundred perish?"

Though she had used commandos to target the enemy’s high-value objectives, and not just once, this time was different—the people were genuinely volunteering.

After a long silence, Christine softly asked, "Were the wills left behind?"

"All wills have been properly preserved." Dailong breathed a sigh of relief, sensing a slight change in Christine’s tone.

Although her face remained stern, her voice held a barely perceptible warmth.

"Compile them, I’ll help fulfill their wishes as much as possible."

Dailong hurriedly stood up to salute Christine on behalf of the five hundred warriors.

Christine stood up in return, nodding to indicate Dailong continued the report.

The report that followed was long and all related to the city’s defense, but Christine’s expression showed no further ripples.

After hearing the report, Christine didn’t hurry to give important instructions, merely requested everyone hold their positions.

"Meeting adjourned, keep General Dailong."

...

Standing on the lookout tower behind the east section of the city wall, Christine could clearly see the deployment of the Prudon Kingdom Army even without binoculars.

Dailong stood a half-step behind her, his expression calm and very patiently waiting.

Although he was a Vice Admiral, his status was far below Allied Commander Christine.

When Christine didn’t need him to speak, it was best to stay silent.

After an unknown duration, Christine finally broke the silence, softly asking, "How long do you think the fortress can still hold?"

Chapter 486: War or Performance Art? (Part 2)

Dailong’s heart sank with a bit of hesitation.

Was this just a simple inquiry or a test for him?

"No need to have concerns, we’re just discussing military matters," Christine added.

Dailong felt somewhat relieved and answered without hesitation, "Unless the enemy can bring in several hundred more heavy cannons or gather more troops, we can continue to hold strong."

Christine nodded with satisfaction, calmly saying, "Very well, begin evacuating the residents as soon as possible."

"Huh?"

Dailong was stunned, never expecting Christine's train of thought to be so unpredictable.

Wasn't it agreed that we could hold the line, so why start evacuating the residents now?

He couldn't help but ask, "Why?"

"Because Frank Castle is destined to fall. The enemy will eventually bring in more cannons and soldiers, and there is no point in continuing to hold the castle."

Dailong felt a bit defiant inside, stubbornly looking at Christine, sticking to his viewpoint.

"Lord Commander, there are no defensible barriers between Frank Castle and Hansa. If we do not stop the enemy here, the gateway to Hansa will open, and the enemy could advance swiftly, reaching Hansa within half a month."

"Do you intend to confront the enemy at Hansa? That place is our nation's second capital overseas. If the battleground is there, it will be too passive."

Dailong couldn't help complaining, "Lord Commander, I have repeatedly urged for the past two months to strengthen the fortress defense system, build military camps around the fortress, and deploy at least fifty thousand elites and more heavy artillery. However, these proposals were shelved by the command. I must complain to you that someone is obstructing the communication between you and the grassroots."

Though he said that, Dailong knew no one dared to conceal the truth. The lack of reinforcement in fortress construction was most likely because Christine herself did not value it.

He didn’t dare to blame Christine, but he would not avoid saying what needed to be said.

If Christine didn’t take notice, he even planned to bypass this Commander and report directly to the Governor.

Facing Dailong’s almost accusatory suggestion, Christine was not angry and merely smiled.

"Hansa is situated on a plain, and although it has the Rodinia River nearby, the river flows gently and is behind the city, its defense is not even as strong as Frank Castle."

Dailong breathed a sigh of relief, glad Christine acknowledged it, so he could continue to persuade her.

He certainly did not want to abandon Frank Castle.

The military importance of this fortress is self-evident, and it holds significant meaning to him personally.

If this fortress is lost, even if it was Christine’s deployment, it would be difficult for him to escape the stigma of losing the fortress.

If deciding to turn this fortress into a meat grinder, both sides would have to commit more forces, and his power and prestige would increase dramatically.

Holding the fortress is the optimal choice for both the country and him personally.

If not for Flower Sea, if not for Roland’s chosen final battleground, this would indeed be the best choice.

Christine fully understood Dailong’s plans.

In fact, she originally intended to turn Frank Castle into a meat grinder, constantly draining the enemy's morale and resources, making it a hell to break the enemy.

However, a few months ago, a word from Roland changed her deployment.

The decisive battle point was set at Val City and White Mountain; only at White Mountain would there be a chance to defeat Sofia; all other cities could be abandoned.

Since Roland requested, Christine naturally had to implement it.

The Frank meat grinder plan was canceled.

The first battle at Frank Castle was a feint, the second at Hansa would show weakness, leading to the decisive battle at White Mountain.

This was her overall arrangement.

After all, Hansa is a political and economic center overseas; directly abandoning it would be too suspicious, so a defense of Hansa must be fought, and it should appear authentic and robust.

Since Hansa was to be the meat grinder, Frank Castle had no value.

Such deployments she could not reveal to Dailong.

She believed Dailong could keep a secret because she could too.

Seeing Christine acknowledge the importance of Frank Castle, Dailong's confidence rekindled, continuing his persuasion.

He ardently explained the dangers of abandoning Frank Castle and the necessity of defending it.

If they could inflict pain on the enemy, they could even force them to accept a peace with no victor, agreeing to govern half the continent with Frank Castle as the boundary.

This was the result he desired.

"War is not for slaughter; it's to win peace through strength. Frank Castle's existence can help your motherland Wende ease its pressure. Please reconsider."

Dailong truly could not comprehend what good could come from abandoning Frank Castle, why Christine was so stubborn.

He even brought up the precarious Wende Empire to persuade Christine to change her mind.

"As long as we can eliminate the enemy's effective forces at Frank Castle, the Wende Empire will have time and space to reorganize their troops. Once they recover, the course of the war will change."

Dailong became more and more excited, his passionate gaze fixed on Christine, unable to hide his hopeful anticipation.

However, Christine's expression remained unchanged.

The name of the Wende Empire could not even stir her emotions.

Silence sometimes means acquiescence, sometimes refusal.

Dailong's ardor gradually cooled; he reluctantly asked, "Are we to let the sacrifices of these thousands be in vain?"

"Winning this war is the only way to ensure they have not died in vain."

Christine spoke calmly.

This sentence was almost a direct refusal; Dailong’s expression turned somewhat sour, but he managed to control his emotions well, refraining from continuing the topic, but he held onto his own principles.

Chapter 487: War or Performance Art? (Part 3)

"I respect your decision, but I reserve my opinion, and I will express my viewpoint to Lord Governor."

Dailong is not an ordinary Vice Admiral; he is a close confidant of Roland, responsible not only for the fortress but also for the defense of the Eastern Defense Zone.

He has the authority to report directly to Roland.

Christine didn’t say anything, just nodded.

She had no issues with Dailong, who was a slightly rigid but highly dedicated professional soldier, and the future wars would still require his efforts.

If he knew the overall layout of the war, he certainly wouldn’t question it.

But the knowledge of the overall layout is highly restricted, known only to a few, which is why Dailong made an incorrect judgment.

Watching Dailong leave, Christine continued to stand on the watchtower, observing the battlefield situation.

She completely understood Dailong.

He is a professional soldier, but not a Transcendent, so he naturally could not comprehend the imminent Return Day War.

A battlefield with millions of people, yet a few strong individuals dictate the war's direction, sounds truly absurd.

Even if she told Dailong, could he understand?

He didn't know the terror of Sofia at all.

Roland's target from the beginning was solely Sofia, but what about Sofia?

Christine was a bit puzzled.

Initially, she thought Sofia needed to use Sylph as a stepping stone to ascend to Tier Six, but as her power grew, she increasingly understood Sofia's might.

If even she needs to step on others to ascend, what about the others?

As long as the Return Day arrives, Sofia can ascend on the spot, no doubt about it.

She truly couldn't understand why Sofia was so determined to wage war.

Does she really want to unify the visible world?

Christine only found it absurd.

The Wende People and the Rurik People once had the same ancestors, yet they split up hundreds of years ago, evolving into different ethnic groups.

To unify them is a fool's dream, let alone other races.

The Odin Empire of old was so prosperous, now it has split into several countries like Prudon, Tirol, Weimar, and Val, with many differences in language, writing, and customs.

To say they are one nation is somewhat far-fetched.

Even if they were the same, Sofia could not integrate the Odin People into her own country.

Even by the principle of proximity, the Rodinia Continent has more than a dozen completely different nations, making unification impossible.

Roland described a future blueprint to Christine.

In the future, with industrial development and civilization progressing, the connection between countries would be tighter, the entire world linked by trade, embracing each other, and developing peacefully.

The future world would be like a town, with countries as the town's residents.

Whether poor or wealthy, strong or weak, each would possess fundamentally similar sovereignty, interacting through international organizations and treaties.

According to Roland, no matter how this war is fought, the Sussex Empire doesn't need to annex those small nations, nor can it swallow a giant like the Vladimir Empire.

Roland wants to defeat Sofia, let other nations accept a new order, and progress together under the new order's framework.

The blueprint he described is grand and forward-thinking, and Christine is deeply convinced.

The Great Goddess once described a similar peaceful world in the Divine Oracle.

Unfortunately, the Great Goddess didn’t say how to achieve this ideal world.

However, Roland provided her with a rough direction.

Comprehensive industrial development, constructing an international system.

Thinking about this beautiful blueprint, Christine’s mood improved significantly.

If Dailong and the others don’t understand now, they will surely understand in the future.

While Christine was observing the battlefield situation alone, footsteps sounded behind her.

The brisk footsteps stopped about a dozen meters away, "Lord Commander, I am Tom, commander of the First Division, Third Regiment. Some intelligence was overlooked by General Dailong, and I’d like to report it to you personally."

Christine turned back to glance at the young officer in front of her and nodded.

She had a good memory and remembered this young man.

A hero of the Helentz Castle battle, he had received the Medal of Courage and the Second class White Rose Medal, and was an outstanding officer among the younger generation.

Moreover, he was skilled at excavating ruins and always had good luck.

Could it be a discovery in that area?

Christine guessed right; Tom indeed discovered a ruin, to be precise, a warehouse of the Alamanni Empire.

This warehouse stored five thousand tons of black gunpowder, clearly an armory.

Unfortunately, it contained no firearms or any immediately usable explosive bombs.

Though black gunpowder is good, converting it into combat power requires a lot of time, and it isn't useful in the current war.

After reporting the discovery in the ruin, Tom seized the opportunity to ask Christine a fundamental question.

"Lord Commander, can the fortress truly not be held? If this black gunpowder is arranged properly, it's enough to blow up half of a city. If we could find a way to get the black gunpowder under the enemy's feet..."

As he spoke, Tom's voice gradually diminished.

Indeed, it didn't seem realistic.

The enemy isn't foolish; they surely understand the power of tunnels in siege warfare and will be on guard.

Digging a long tunnel to plant thousands of tons of black gunpowder is more an art performance than a tactical miracle.

Just when Tom was feeling frustrated, Christine's eyes lit up.

She didn't want to leave the fortress intact for the enemy, serving as an obstacle for a future counterattack.

However, destroying this magnificent fortress was truly difficult, and proactively demolishing the city walls in the face of over a hundred thousand enemies outside was more an act of suicidal artistry.

Even with thousands of tons of black gunpowder, it’s not easy to go out and blow up the enemy.

But what if the situation was reversed?

Allow the enemy to enter the city, then detonate the pre-planted black gunpowder, sending half the city skyward along with the enemy.

Christine’s lips slightly curled into a smile as she asked, "If you could distribute the black gunpowder reasonably, could you send the fortress skyward?"

"Yes, but only half the city," Tom answered honestly, but he still felt a bit puzzled. The fortress belonged to the Empire; why ask such a question?

No, no, the Lord Commander is a famed general and certainly wouldn’t do such a thing. He was overthinking.

Christine nodded in satisfaction, smiling as she said, "Tom, you’ll be responsible for this and properly hide the black gunpowder. I want to send the Prudon people flying. Tom, what’s the matter, Tom?"

Chapter 488: Franks, Take Off!

The Blue Moon hangs in the sky, with a red accompanying satellite by its side.

The cold blue light interweaves with the equally cold red glow on the ground, resembling the eerie glimmer in the corner of a dead fish’s eye.

On the west side of Frank Castle, in a nameless dense forest, two young men are holding binoculars, observing the sporadic lights within the fortress.

Moments later, the younger man, with a few scruffy whiskers at the corners of his mouth, puts down his binoculars and says softly:

"As expected of the Prudon Kingdom’s elite. Even after such a major victory—’seizing Frank Castle and opening the gateway to Hansa’—they haven’t relaxed. I thought they’d be celebrating all night."

The young man, who looks in his twenties, pats the boy on the shoulder and teases him with a smile:

"They’re indeed alert, but they can’t even dream that the real trump card is underground. Tom, you’ve done it again this time."

The young man called Tom shows no hint of a smile, only endless regret.

"What a pity, if I had just three more days, I’m sure I could have dug out more things. Damn it, the situation this time is almost identical to the last relic shipment. I dare say the relics below are a big catch, no, a deep-sea giant shark!"

Jerry seems indifferent.

More than five thousand tons of gunpowder and high explosives aren’t enough; this kid wants to send the whole fortress sky-high?

Tom unbuttons his collar, takes a breath, and suddenly remembers something. He turns sharply to Jerry, his face changing slightly.

"Have all the residents in the city been evacuated?"

He’s been busy setting up explosive devices and bombs underground these days, so he had to entrust the evacuation to his closest friend, Jerry.

"Don’t worry, even if you don’t trust me, you should trust General Dailong and the Saintess."

"I reported immediately, and they have made proper arrangements."

Jerry avoids eye contact with Tom, instead raising his binoculars again to observe the city.

Tom still feels a bit uneasy in his heart, but doesn’t dwell on it.

General Dailong is a confidant of Lord Governor, known for his prudence. Even if he did nothing, Miss Saintess wouldn’t let him go.

Miss Saintess is beautiful, with a divine and solemn aura, the embodiment of the Goddess of Light on earth. She is practically the personification of goodness and beauty.

"Since Miss Saintess is aware, I can rest assured."

Tom says with a cheerful smile.

Jerry inwardly flinches, puts down the binoculars, and squints at Tom.

He once suspected Tom’s words were sarcastic, but upon closer observation, the kid seems genuine.

Well, alright, only a few know about how Saintess Christine sacrificed pawns for overall victory on the battlefield, but her feat of not abandoning the garrison at Helentz Castle and launching a massive counterattack is deeply engraved in the hearts of all survivors of the Helentz Castle battle.

Jerry sighs quietly and decides to bury the harsh truth in his heart.

In all fairness, he doesn’t find Christine’s command in the Wende civil war problematic.

No benevolent person should lead soldiers.

A military commander can be kind-hearted in ordinary times and should care for their subordinates, but on the battlefield, they must be a strategic player.

Miss Christine is undoubtedly a wise and calm strategist, which is why Roland appointed her as the Allied Commander-in-Chief.

He completely understands and greatly respects Miss Christine.

But respect aside, he does not wish to be involved with such a cold and ruthless person.

Even if her beauty is like a goddess descending to earth, it doesn’t matter.

He originally thought Tom’s feelings for Christine were merely gratitude and admiration, but now it seems there’s a troublesome spark.

He couldn’t help but ask, "Tom, we are best friends, right?"

"Best friends, we’re more like siblings from different parents!" Tom corrects loudly, widening his eyes.

"Haha, I misspoke. We are indeed brothers who can entrust our lives to each other. Since we’re good brothers, we should be honest with each other, shouldn’t we?"

Tom looks alertly at Jerry, his eyes shining under the night sky, completely clear.

"Of course, even if big brother wants to trick me, I would never hide anything."

Though he speaks firmly, he’s reminding Jerry, I consider you a brother, don’t manipulate me.

Jerry bites his lip and softly asks, "Tom, be honest with your brother, do you like Miss Saintess?"

"That’s right; she is the untouchable goddess in my heart." Tom answers instantly.

Jerry, annoyed, punches him. "That’s not the kind of liking I meant. I mean, have you ever thought of marrying the Saintess as your wife, even if it’s just a fantasy?"

"Ah?!"

Tom nearly falls to the ground.

He finally manages to steady himself, touches his own head, and then Jerry’s, confirming that he didn’t mishear.

After a brief silence, he covers his mouth to suppress his laughter but ends up laughing uncontrollably.

"Jerry, Miss Christine’s position is higher than that of an ordinary Cardinal, right?"

"Yes." Jerry nods.

Although she must become an official Saintess to surpass those Cardinals with core power, even if she fails to be selected, Governor Roland wouldn’t mistreat her.

Whether she formally becomes a Saintess or is settled after not being chosen, she indeed surpasses most Cardinals.

"I’m considered outstanding among people our age, right?"

"Of course, my good brother is the best." Jerry boasts, puffing out his chest with pride.

Tom spreads his hands and sighs softly, "Even under the most absurd assumption, with us as divine beings leading these three thousand cavalrymen to recapture Franks and destroy a hundred thousand enemies, I’d at most be a Count, right?"

"Right." The rules for elevating a title are structured, and being directly granted a Count is the limit. Even Governor Roland, excluding the Caesar title, is merely a Count, and they can’t possibly arrogantly surpass Roland no matter how confident they are.

"Even so, my status is still far away from hers, not to mention she’s the Goddess of Light’s favored."

"So..."

Tom gently clapped his hands, his tone calm, his smile sincere, "Don’t worry, Jerry. I’m not a clueless fool. I know Saintess and I are from two different worlds."

"She is the Goddess’s favored. Even if she’s out of favor, she is the Governor’s woman. I only respect and admire her."

"Huh?"

This time it was Jerry’s turn to be surprised.

He didn’t expect Tom to be so calm, even less that he could accept Christine and the Governor’s rumors so peacefully.

For some reason, Tom’s calmness made him somewhat uneasy.

But Tom kept avoiding a question; he didn’t say whether he liked the Saintess or not.

Jerry was about to ask again, but was intimidated by Tom’s gaze. Beneath the extreme calm, there was an even deeper sadness.

Jerry opened his mouth but said nothing, just patted his good friend’s shoulder.

This is the romance unique to teens.

Liking someone without a reason, even knowing it’s an unattainable and unrequited love.

Jerry’s heart stirred, and he squinted his eyes.

He didn’t care about the Saintess, but he couldn’t stand by and watch his good friend get hurt!

In a moment of inspiration, he smiled and said, "The Saintess and the Governor aren’t in that kind of relationship."

"How do you know? The Sun reported on their rumors, it’s very accurate."

Tom was trying hard to conceal something, but the trembling in his voice betrayed him.

"It’s simple, she’s still a virgin. Don’t ask why; my father is a promiscuous noble, and he knows some special observation techniques."

"The Saintess won’t love anyone; her body and soul are dedicated to the Goddess."

"Really?" Tom’s eyes suddenly shone brightly, like stars in the night sky.

"Absolutely, you can’t imagine the fanaticism of these zealots."

"Don’t call her a zealot!"

Tom laughed like a delighted cat; he almost wanted to do some backflips if not afraid of being noticed.

Haha, he didn’t lose love.

No, he certainly lost love, but along with him, there’s also this world!

No, in the whole world, only he didn’t lose love because he knows the Saintess is a devoted follower, which some fools still don’t know.

Watching Tom’s excited eyes, Jerry pouted but said nothing.

Tom, this little virgin, he’s clearly in his first love.

Women’s faith isn’t all that devout. If Christine really fails in the Saintess selection, she might marry immediately.

He certainly wouldn’t say such boorish things.

This war is extremely brutal; no one dares to assure they will survive till the end, so why shatter a good friend’s fantasy of a perfect girl?

There are two Saintess Christine in this world.

One is a perfect and holy girl conjured up by a good friend’s imagination.

Another is a cold-hearted war machine.

Watching Tom’s complacent appearance, he couldn’t help but pat his good friend’s head to remind him:

"Stop being so excited, the serious matters are important."

He wasn’t angry at Tom’s excitement; in this tense battlefield, appropriately getting excited is also a way to relieve stress.

But they were truly on a mission.

Explosive mission.

Operation "Little Boy".

Though he had no idea why this action was named so oddly, it was named by the Governor, and he wouldn't have any objections.

Over five thousand tons of black gunpowder and high explosives, enough to make these Prudon people feel the heat.

Christine also gave them a hidden task.

If the Prudon Army falls into total chaos, then lead three thousand cavalry to raid amid the chaos and expand the battle results.

If the Prudon Army is only heavily damaged and order isn't chaotic, then quickly withdraw.

Jerry didn't feel like the Prudon Army will give them the opportunity.

The Prudon General responsible for this battle is Army General Hoffman.

This is a renowned general known for his prudence.

Judging by the orderly manner after the Prudon Army occupied the fortress, this general indeed lives up to his reputation.

It's too tough to take advantage of him.

Unless there are a hundred thousand tons of explosives to send the whole city sky-high.

But how is that possible?

Jerry smirked at his own thoughts.

Even exhausting the strength of the Sussex Empire, it’s hard to gather so much explosive. Precious explosives must be used to make various weapons, not wasted like this.

Two-thirds of the Prudon Army entered the city, another third remained outside, sending half the fortress skyward might only cause tens of thousands of casualties, not really harm the root.

This is just a warning.

As Jerry was lost in thought, Tom took out a pocket watch, carefully wiped it, reluctantly opened the case, and looked at the time.

This was a gift from the Empress after the last Helentz Castle battle, and he intended to keep it as a family heirloom.

The hands slowly rotated, soon marking four o’clock in the morning.

Dawn is the valley of human alertness and physical function. This is a law of nature, unavoidable by anyone.

At four o’clock in the morning, Franks was as dead as an abyss, only a few military key locations like watchtowers had their lights on.

Even the strictly disciplined Prudon Army needs rest.

Action time.

A glint of coldness flashed in Tom’s eyes, softly murmuring, "Little Boy, initiate!"

He pressed the button, issuing a command, activating through special facilities the chain explosion devices dozens of meters below the Franks fortress.

The ground subtly trembled.

Jerry thought of the topic he and Tom initially discussed, sighing internally.

This feast was bound to cost countless lives, including those Franks residents who hadn’t evacuated.

Chapter 490: Franks, Take Off! (Part 3)

Perhaps General Dailong was ineffective and did not take advantage of the time.

Perhaps the city’s residents didn’t want to leave their homes and even wanted to accept the new rulers.

Or maybe Miss Saintess thought leaving some residents would be more realistic and not expose them prematurely.

In any case, there are still thirty thousand residents staying in the city without evacuating.

They are now the enemy!

Jerry thought fiercely, dispelling distractions from his mind.

This is a brutal war between two major factions. At times like these, if they don’t comply with arrangements to evacuate the city and stay to welcome the enemy, what else can they be but the enemy?!

He should not doubt General Dailong’s ability, nor should he doubt Miss Saintess’s compassion!

"Boom!"

Just as Jerry was desperately brainwashing himself, [Little Boy] exploded.

The ground was torn apart amidst violent tremors, and flames shot into the sky, resembling the wail of the earth.

A gigantic explosion reverberated deafeningly, and the scorching shockwave swept mercilessly, affecting the dense forest where Tom and Jerry were hiding.

Withered branches and leaves flew everywhere in the violent shockwave, and a sturdy branch hit Jerry on the head, snapping him out of his stupor.

He could hardly believe his eyes.

This wasn't an explosion; it was clearly the gates of Hell being opened.

He trembled all over, too shocked to speak for a long time.

Where did Frank Castle go? Such a big fortress, gone?

He grabbed the binoculars, his face exceptionally grim.

Through the binoculars, he clearly saw the castle in the center of the fortress soaring into the sky with the explosion and shattering to pieces.

Jerry could even clearly see General Prudon and others desperately waving their arms.

Although he didn't understand the Prudon language, nor lip-read, he knew these people were clueless about what happened, even in death.

Despite them being the enemy, Jerry still felt a bit uncomfortable.

Tom was really too ruthless, wasn’t it agreed to only blow up part of the city?

He turned to look at Tom, about to crack a few jokes, only to find Tom more shocked than him.

"Tom?"

"No way, it’s absolutely impossible! I didn’t set up that much explosive!"

Tom’s face was deathly pale, shaking his head and muttering incoherently.

Jerry was also a bit bewildered, he quickly realized something was definitely wrong with the explosion.

Tom mentioned that there were certainly deeper ruins underground, if they could dig a few more days they might have unexpected gains.

There were indeed unexpected gains, just a bit too unexpected.

He patted Tom on the shoulder, about to speak, but Tom’s gaze had already regained firmness.

"I got it, this is divine wrath!"

"Huh?" Jerry was dumbfounded, what do you even know, you idiot! It’s not the final doomsday yet, where does the divine wrath come from, you think divine wrath is as frequent as a thunderstorm?

He was about to refute Tom but suddenly understood everything.

Tom just didn’t want to face reality.

His good brother, despite being naive, was smart enough to guess some residents remained in the city.

When setting up the explosives, Tom deliberately avoided the western zone where residents would last evacuate and concentrated on the city center and east side, hoping to minimize casualties.

However, the unexpected event made all these designs a joke.

No matter how many people were in the city, their chances of survival were slim.

Watching Tom’s gradually dimming eyes, Jerry fiercely patted his shoulder, shouting loudly:

"You’re right, this is the mildest divine wrath!"

"Miss Saintess represents the Goddess of Light, and among these enemies, some are defiling the Light, some have betrayed the Light, they have enraged the Goddess of Light, so the Great Goddess sent down divine wrath."

"Think carefully, wasn’t the explosion just now divided into two phases, the first phase was your layout of five thousand tons of explosives, and the second blast obliterated the entire city."

Tom stared blankly at Jerry, nodding subconsciously, "Yes, yes it was."

Jerry raised his voice, shouting loudly, "That’s right, it means the Great Goddess thought our punishment was insufficient, so she took action herself!"

"To be against the Saintess is to be against the Goddess, so what we did wasn’t wrong, just not enough!"

Tom’s eyes gradually regained firmness, his hands stopped trembling.

He gently pushed Jerry away, turning towards the ruinous Frank Castle, speaking with a firm voice as if a believer in prayer.

"Divine wrath is the will of the Great Goddess cast upon the world, blasphemers should not escape, those who slipped through the net shall be dealt with by me."

Jerry scratched his head, he certainly knew what Tom was talking about.

Though Frank Castle was blown sky-high, plenty stationed on the outskirts hadn't ascended yet.

Tom intended to send them to the Netherworld.

Since his good brother has such thoughts, as a big brother, he naturally supports him.

Anyway, the enemies were already scared out of their wits, and without unified command, they were nothing more than a flock of sheep despite their numbers.

Then charge!

Jerry stuffed the whistle into his mouth and blew hard.

The shrill whistle sounded piercing even amidst the already clamorous hellish night.

The prolonged whistle called the three thousand cavalry to battle.

Charge! Kill the enemy!

The cavalry led their horses swiftly out of the dense forest, orderly forming up on the plains, raising their long spears to launch an attack towards the west side of Frank Castle where the Prudon Military Camp was located.

Under the night, three thousand black-clad cavalry moved like three thousand specters, silently.

Under usual circumstances, they would need to be cautious not to make noise and alert the enemy, but on this hellish night, such small sounds were insignificant.

The cavalry urged their horses into a trot, rapidly approaching the enemy camp.

They would launch their charge from about five hundred meters.

This well-equipped guard cavalry was entirely different from traditional cavalry.