

Global CM 481

Chapter 481: The Tricky Prime Minister! (Five Thousand Words)_2

Returning to the Ruthless Army's quarters in high spirits after receiving ten precious gifts from Larseis, Randy found his mood in stark contrast to the somber faces that awaited him. He curiously asked, "What's wrong with all of you? I was only gone for a moment, why does everyone look so upset?"

"Damn that Prime Minister Larseis! He's truly ruined everything!" one of them grumbled immediately.

"Larseis? What about him?" Randy, having just returned from Larseis's place without noticing anything amiss, asked curiously.

"It's about luring the Grand Marshal into action! Didn't we already set things up? Those people we tricked into thinking they'd joined the Rebel Army have already carried out several operations within the Empire. The Grand Marshal was supposed to be able to wrap things up quickly. But who would have thought that damned Larseis would get wind of it a step ahead of us, capture them, and have them all killed!"

"How did he get the news? Didn't I tell you to only leak their movements to the Grand Marshal's people? We were supposed to keep it hidden from the Prime Minister's side, right?" After hearing this, Randy was speechless.

Good heavens! My plan was laid out perfectly, we were all set to close the net, and then this Larseis just had to show up and ruin everything! Isn't this just infuriating?

"It was a gambler. A gambler discovered them and sold the information to the Prime Minister for a reward."

"Damn it!" Randy slammed his fist on the table beside him, shattering it. "We had the Grand Marshal practically hooked, and now this idiot Prime Minister has meddled and completely let him get away!"

"Captain, we can always try again."

"Try again, my ass! If you were the Grand Marshal, and you were investigating a group of people, only to find out that the Prime Minister's men had already taken them away and killed them, leaving no witnesses, what would you think?" Randy retorted.

At his words, everyone immediately understood.

Clearly, the assassin's actions were now completely disconnected from the Rebel Army.

Under such coincidental circumstances, the Grand Marshal would naturally assume the Prime Minister had done these things secretly. Seeing that he himself was investigating, the Prime Minister must have cleaned up the traces beforehand to leave no evidence.

With this precedent, even if they sent more assassins and again impersonated the Rebel Army, the Grand Marshal wouldn't easily believe it was the Rebel Army. This time, he would likely investigate thoroughly, leaving no stone unturned.

It wouldn't be so easy to fool him then.

"Damn it, that stupid pig! Always more of a hindrance than a help! We'll have to think of something else. But, even without the Grand Marshal participating, I did manage to get ten good helpers from the Prime Minister's Mansion earlier."

Randy then told them about the ten assassins with lethal attack capabilities, which offered some consolation to his brothers.

At the same time, he hadn't completely given up on luring the Grand Marshal into action.

Since the first plan had failed, and it would still be some time before the Rebel Army attacked, they still had the opportunity to consider other methods.

Back in the Prime Minister's Mansion, Larseis, who had just spoken with Randy and returned to frolicking with a bevy of beauties, was suddenly startled by a loud BANG as his door was kicked flying open.

This gave Larseis, who was in the midst of his 'efforts,' quite a shock. Before he could even utter a curse, a stunningly beautiful figure was already standing before him.

No matter how debauched and lecherous Larseis was, faced with the Empire's foremost beauty, he dared not harbor a single lustful thought.

After all, she was the most transcendent figure in the entire nation.

Even if she were to strike him, the Prime Minister, dead today, no one would dare utter a word of protest.

How could Larseis possibly dare to offend someone who held his life and death in her hands?

"So, the Grand Marshal herself graces us with her presence. My deepest apologies for not greeting you properly," Larseis said.

Initially startled and somewhat angered by Grand Marshal Erice's arrival, Larseis immediately stood up when he saw it was her. An embarrassed smile touched his lips as he quickly adjusted his attire, straightened his collar, and smoothed the creases in his robe, hoping to present himself in the best possible light before the Grand Marshal.

Larseis was known for his unrestrained debauchery. To satisfy his desires and ambitions, he lived a life of luxury and indulgence. However, now that he was before the transcendent Grand Marshal, he dared not continue his licentious behavior.

Taking a deep breath, he displayed the true demeanor befitting a Prime Minister.

Larseis adjusted his expression, his face morphing from frivolous to solemn.

He straightened his posture, his gaze becoming serious and focused, devoid of any trace of obscenity or lewdness. He looked at Erice, demonstrating the wisdom and depth of a statesman.

His words conveyed humility, a far cry from his previous flippancy and grinning demeanor.

His transformation was remarkably swift.

Seeing his transformation, Erice snorted coldly. "Prime Minister, I usually couldn't care less about what you think or do. But if you ever dare to make a move against His Majesty or take any action detrimental to him, I will show you the consequences!"

Chapter 482: The Damned Prime Minister! (Five Thousand Words) _3

The moment her words landed, the temperature in the entire Prime Minister's Mansion suddenly plummeted, as if it were the dead of winter. The chill caused goosebumps to erupt on everyone, and they found it hard to adapt.

"Grand Marshal, what is the meaning of this? I don't quite understand. His Majesty is my own nephew. I owe my current position entirely to him. How could I possibly dare to act against him?"

Larseis was bewildered by Erice's unprovoked threat, his mind a whirl of questions. He truly didn't understand what was happening.

"Hmph! It's best you understand that. Don't assume that just because you've grasped some authority, you can start disrespecting your superiors! Thinking of taking his place? I'm not dead yet!"

Erice's slender, fair hand suddenly clenched empty air. With a deafening RUMBLE, the massive wrought iron statue within the Prime Minister's Mansion—a life-sized replica of Larseis—was crushed as if it were cotton. Erice remotely squeezed it into a small, dense ball.

The sheer power required to compress such a massive wrought iron statue into so small a ball was terrifyingly immense, truly beyond the imagination of an ordinary person. If Erice were to apply such force to a human body, it would likely be crushed into a pulp of flesh and blood in an instant.

Larseis gazed at the wrought iron statue, now a small, compressed ball, his heart filled with shock and terror. This was the first time he had clearly witnessed Grand Marshal Erice's power. Previously, he had

only heard tales of Erice's glorious and formidable achievements. Now, having witnessed it firsthand, he had a much clearer perception: the power Erice possessed was indeed far beyond his imagination; her capabilities were simply beyond comparison for an ordinary person.

The atmosphere in the Prime Minister's Mansion fell deathly silent. Everyone felt this immense pressure, as if the very air had solidified. Fear and unease flickered across everyone's faces; no one dared to look directly at the formidable Grand Marshal.

Having delivered her warning, Erice departed. She hadn't come to seek confirmation or listen to Larseis's explanations. Knowing that the truth of the matter was now unverifiable, pursuing it further would merely be a waste of time. She only needed to deliver the warning.

Only after Erice had left did the temperature in the Prime Minister's Mansion finally return to normal. Larseis collapsed onto the soft chaise behind him, taking several deep breaths. He pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and frantically wiped the sweat from his forehead.

Just moments ago, he had truly felt as if he could be killed at any second.

Once he had caught his breath, he immediately roared, "Guards!"

The Grand Marshal's sudden appearance was clearly for a reason. He naturally had to investigate the cause immediately...

「Outside the Imperial City.」

Chen Mo and his group, now bolstered by the addition of two Imperial Marshals and eight Imperial Generals, were making exceptionally smooth progress. Along the way, any Imperial Army units daring to obstruct them were swiftly handled whenever these eight Imperial Generals stepped forward. Not only did they avoid further battles en route, but their contingent actually grew larger as they advanced. Their ranks had now swelled to double their original size.

However, despite their smooth progress, a significant obstacle still lay ahead. This was the checkpoint guarded by the Young Marshal—the last of the four Imperial Marshals yet to reveal himself!

This checkpoint was strategically located between the three major cities and the Imperial City, serving as a crucial defensive bastion. It was also the greatest impediment for any enemy force that had breached the empire's borders and was advancing towards the Imperial City. The checkpoint's garrison wasn't particularly large, yet it remained impregnable—easy to defend but incredibly difficult to assault. This was primarily due to the various powerful restrictive Arrays and enchantments surrounding the checkpoint. Even the structures within the checkpoint itself had been heavily fortified.

Combined with the personal guard of the extraordinary Young Marshal, who possessed profound mastery over Formations and enchantment abilities, breaching this pass would be incredibly difficult, likely costing them dearly.

Moreover, rumor had it that this Young Marshal was no ordinary Formation Mage; he was exceptionally talented and possessed astonishing Magic talent. It was said he could single-handedly cast world-destroying Spells of matchless power. Aina's minor forbidden curse, when compared to his genuine forbidden curse, was simply not in the same league.

His name was Essien. Though young in age, he wielded immeasurable power. His appearance was not much different from that of an ordinary youth: hair as black as night and eyes that glinted with a sharp light. His handsome face bore a trace of coldness and pride. When he stood upon the checkpoint, his black robe fluttering, Magic Wand in hand, exuding an air of dominance, his very presence seemed to envelop the entire checkpoint.

A sense of awe arose in the hearts of all who beheld him. Even the most valiant warriors felt a profound sense of pressure when facing this Young Marshal. Anyone familiar with this Young Marshal knew the terrifying combat power he could unleash single-handedly. Especially when positioned within the various amplifying Formations he himself had arranged, the true extent of his strength was simply unimaginable! His presence alone could evoke the intimidating pressure of a million-strong army!

This checkpoint would not be breached easily, and any confrontation with Essien was destined to be a heart-stopping battle!

Albert and Michael turned to Chen Mo and Lilith and said, "When Essien is within the Formations he has set, he is undoubtedly the most powerful individual in the empire, second only to the Grand Marshal! Launching a strong attack on this checkpoint will be exceedingly difficult! Please allow us to try negotiating with him first."

Ryan and Lilith listened to Albert and Michael, then exchanged a look, a hint of solemnity on their faces. They, too, had heard of this formidable Young Marshal and the Formations he commanded. They agreed that attempting to negotiate first was the best approach.

However, Katerina, the silver-armored and valiant Holy Knight General, suddenly stepped forward. "Essien may be young, but he's incredibly stubborn," she said. "Moreover, he has a peculiar trait: the stronger his opponent, the more excited he becomes. Trying to persuade him to grant us passage directly is likely impossible!"

Chapter 483: Fast Breakthrough! (Two in One)_1

Both Albert and Michael knew Essien's character. Nevertheless, they decided to go and try to talk to him. The others could only watch as the two of them advanced towards the Dark Canyon checkpoint, their hearts filled with tension and anticipation.

The Dark Canyon was a place filled with dense Dark Power. It was the strongest line of defense Essien had established.

Looking at the Dark Canyon ahead, Chen Mo was indeed tempted to try and breach it himself. However, if Albert and Michael could successfully negotiate, it would certainly save some effort.

As soon as Albert and Michael entered the 10,000-meter range of the Dark Canyon, they immediately felt an intense dark aura. The surroundings were filled with a bizarre atmosphere, and the daylight suddenly turned pitch black. Within the darkness, faint, eerie glimmers shimmered, causing unease.

"Essien, it's us. Dispel your enchanted maze."

Though both were Marshals of the same rank as Essien, everyone had their specialties. Neither Albert nor Michael excelled at dealing with enchanted mazes. Naturally, they had to ask Essien to dispel it himself.

As their voices faded, although the Array was not dispersed, faintly glowing will-o'-the-wisps emerged from the darkness to guide them.

They cautiously followed the ghostly flames through the mist-shrouded path, advancing along a winding mountain trail toward the checkpoint's core area. The closer they got, the stronger the Dark Power became. Indeed, if not for their own considerable strength, this Dark Power alone would have been enough to halt their advance.

Eventually, they arrived before a gigantic Dark Tower. It soared into the clouds, shrouded in dense darkness. This was where Essien's Formation was located. He was waiting for them inside.

Albert and Michael entered the tower together. A spiral staircase led upwards to Essien's room. Each step was accompanied by a profound sense of pressure, as if the entire tower were silently warning them.

Finally, they reached Essien's room. It was filled with an aura of darkness, with only faint light filtering in through a window.

Essien sat on a black throne, his gaze as sharp as a knife. Seeing Albert and Michael enter, he offered a faint smile.

"It's been a while, gentlemen. Please, sit."

Seeing that Essien was still cordial, they promptly sat down before him.

"You two are Marshals of whom the Empire is proud," Essien began, his voice tinged with doubt. "Why have you suddenly sullied yourselves by associating with the Rebel Army? If only one of you had done this, I might have understood it as betrayal. But for both of you to do so, and even bring eight Generals along—that, I am very curious about."

Though he was a prodigy and had become an Imperial Marshal at a young age, on equal footing with seasoned Marshals like Albert and Michael, he was, after all, still just a naive youth. He spent most of his time engrossed in his own world, studying Arrays and Magic, largely unaware of worldly changes. This time, if not for the message from the Imperial City, he wouldn't even have known about the Rebel Army's existence within the Empire.

Seeing Essien's youthful inexperience, Albert and Michael exchanged a glance, and Albert promptly clarified the current situation for him.

Albert explained with a smile, "Essien, we haven't associated with the Rebel Army. We are striving to find a better solution. There are many injustices and much corruption within the Empire, leading to dissatisfaction and resistance among the people. We do not wish to see the Empire plunged into civil strife and war. We hope to resolve these problems through reform and dialogue, thereby achieving peace and prosperity for the Empire."

Michael continued, "We have seen the people's suffering and their aspirations. We wish to use our strength and fulfill our duty to be catalysts for change. Our actions with the eight Generals are not out of blind betrayal. Rather, they are intended to make the Empire take notice, to compel the corrupt individuals in power to recognize their mistakes, and to work together to resolve the issues plaguing the Empire. We want to protect the people and the future of the Empire."

Essien listened in silence, his gaze gradually deepening. He pondered for a moment, then looked at the two Marshals.

"Your thoughts and determination have moved me," Essien said. "Perhaps I have been too engrossed in my own world, neglecting the problems within the Empire. You've given me a new perspective on how I can contribute to this country."

He stood up, walked to the window, and gazed into the distance. In Albert and Michael's eyes, only boundless darkness lay beyond the window, but to Essien, everything outside appeared normal. He was gazing at the distant armies. Among them was a woman he admired. His gaze settled on a dashing figure dressed in silver.

Sister Katerina, if I perform well, will you acknowledge me then? he mused.

Although his talent in Magic was outstanding and his talent in Formations astonishing, allowing him to become an Imperial Marshal at a young age, the woman he admired had never truly seen him as a man.

You always see me as a younger brother. When I can stand on my own and make a significant contribution to this country, surely you will understand that I am a man who can be trusted and relied upon.

Although his heart's true desire was merely to earn the acknowledgment of the woman he admired, the words he was about to speak would be entirely different.

Chapter 484: Fast Breakthrough! (Two in One)_2

"Albert, Michael, I am willing to join you in seeking the reform and peace of the Empire. Let us work together for the people, for the future of the Empire."

Albert and Michael exchanged a look of complete surprise. Was Essien really convinced so easily? Katerina said he was hard to deal with!

"Thank you very much for your decision, Essien. We will work closely together for the Empire's tomorrow. Let's face the challenges and create a better future together!"

The three Marshals stood united. Their alliance was poised to become a new Chapter in the Empire's history, bringing new hope and change to the entire continent.

However, Albert and Michael's joy was premature. Essien's tone shifted as he said, "I've agreed to cooperate with you, but I haven't agreed to cooperate with the Rebel Army. If they want to pass through here, they need to demonstrate sufficient capability. Otherwise, how can I acknowledge them?"

In Essien's mind, it was simple, he thought. Since this group managed to earn the recognition of two Marshals, they must possess something extraordinary. The prospect of a challenge excited him, and he wanted to test them.

Seeing this, Albert and Michael shared a helpless smile. "Alright then, what do you propose?"

"It's simple. If they can break my Dark Night Ultimate Formation, I will acknowledge them," Essien stated with a faint smile.

"Fine, I'll let them try."

Although Albert agreed, he felt that while Essien's Formation might be effective against others, it probably won't have any effect on Chen Mo. How could those countless Skeleton Monsters possibly be trapped?

Soon, Essien personally teleported Albert and Michael out of the Dark Night Ultimate Formation.

Seeing the two return safe and sound, Lilith immediately asked, "How did the talks go?"

"This young man is quite reasonable. He expressed his willingness to join us."

"Oh?" Hearing this, Lilith and the others broke into smiles, surprised it had been so easy.

However, Katerina, who knew Essien best, smiled and said, "I'm afraid it's not that simple."

"As expected of someone from the same village, you truly understand this young man. He does have a condition: the Rebel Army must break the Dark Night Ultimate Formation he has set up."

"Dark Night Ultimate Formation?" The crowd looked at the vast, empty green expanse before the Dark Canyon, wondering where this so-called Dark Night Ultimate Formation was located.

"Don't bother looking. Only when you enter the Array's range will you be affected by it and see its location."

"So that's how it is." At this, everyone instinctively turned to look at Chen Mo, seemingly in unanimous agreement that he was the strongest among them.

Alina, standing beside Chen Mo, smiled and said, "It seems everyone is pinning their hopes on you."

"Since everyone has chosen me, I'll go and give it a try."

As Chen Mo stepped out from the group and approached the Dark Canyon, after only a few dozen meters, the sky around him instantly changed, plunging the world into darkness.

Seeing this, Chen Mo immediately closed his eyes, preparing to move by relying on his Pioneer perception ability.

But before he could act, he received a notification from the Heavenly Dao.

[The Heavenly Path's Hint: You have entered the range of the Dark Night Ultimate Formation and triggered the conditions to accept the hidden mission "Rapid Array Break!" Please rely on your own strength to break the Dark Night Ultimate Formation! Time limit: 10 minutes! If you request Essien to actively dismantle it for you, you will not receive any rewards. The countdown begins now. Please be mindful of the time!]

As The Heavenly Path's Hint concluded, Chen Mo's Pioneer perception ability also began to take effect.

Unfortunately, the Dark Night Ultimate Formation was indeed formidable. Even with his Pioneer perception ability, which could sense everything around him, his surroundings remained pitch black. It seemed the Dark Night Ultimate Formation didn't just block normal senses; Mental Viewing and Soul Sensing abilities were also nullified by the Dark Power.

In an environment so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face, let alone determine direction, there was little one could do. This demonstrated the Array's extreme restrictiveness. If an unsuspecting team were to fall into this Array, they would instantly lose all combat capability, left to stumble about like headless flies, taking hits from all sides.

However, Chen Mo was no ordinary person. Since he could neither see nor perceive, he summoned millions of Skeleton Monsters with a thought. Although the Dark Night Ultimate Formation covered a vast area, it wouldn't take long for millions of Skeleton Monsters to explore it. Moreover, Skeleton Monsters were creatures of darkness and likely unaffected by the Dark Night Ultimate Formation.

Upon summoning the millions of Skeleton Monsters, Chen Mo indeed found that they were not suppressed within the Formation. He could now, through his Unity ability with the Skeleton Monsters, effortlessly perceive everything around him.

Essien's original intention was merely to see if there was anyone outstanding within the Rebel Army. He hadn't expected the Rebel Army to send out someone as young as himself. He felt somewhat slighted, even a little indignant. Seeing Chen Mo appear completely disoriented after entering the Array only intensified his indignation.

However, what happened next astounded him. As a Genius Mage, he too was capable of summoning Skeleton Monsters, but he had never summoned them in such terrifying numbers. Not only were these Skeleton Monsters numerous, but their attributes were also shockingly high. This astounded him even more.

What shocked him further was that as soon as the Skeleton Monsters appeared, Chen Mo—who had seemed as lost as a headless fly within the Array—suddenly dashed with great speed towards the Dark Tower, the Dark Night Ultimate Formation Core. After all, with only 10 minutes, Chen Mo didn't want to waste any time.

Impossible! Can he suddenly see? How can he be running towards the Dark Tower with such precision and speed? Essien immediately began to chant, waving his Magic Wand and altering the Formation to increase the difficulty for Chen Mo. As he manipulated the Formation, numerous Dark Creatures and plumes of eerie mist, carrying negative status effects, appeared within the Dark Night Ultimate Formation. Simultaneously, the single Dark Tower instantly seemed to employ a clone technique, splitting into dozens of identical towers, making it difficult to discern the real one.

Essien had thought these changes would frustrate Chen Mo and make it difficult for him to find the real tower. However, Chen Mo didn't play by the rules; he simply commanded his Skeleton Monsters to attack all the Dark Towers. Instantly, the Skeleton Monsters' attacks pierced through all the illusory Dark Towers. Only the true Dark Tower withstood the barrage, though it swayed precariously.

Having identified the true tower, Chen Mo ignored the attacking Dark Creatures and the eerie mist, accelerating once more towards his target.

The distant onlookers only saw Chen Mo rapidly approaching the Dark Canyon, a clear sign he was about to break through the Formation.

"Impossible! How long has he even been inside the Dark Night Ultimate Formation?" Katerina exclaimed in disbelief.

The Marshals, Albert and Michael, who had been keeping time, exchanged glances. "Less than a minute," they said in disbelief.

Chen Mo's speed in approaching the Dark Canyon left everyone who had experienced the Dark Night Ultimate Formation utterly incredulous.

"How is it possible? Break the Formation in less than a minute? Can he see inside the Dark Night Ultimate Formation? I remember it can even block perception abilities and Mental Viewing!"

"Looks like Essien has finally met his match. This young man never gives up. I wonder how terrible Essien's expression must be right now!"

As they chuckled and chatted, Essien indeed wore a very sour look.

Chapter 485: Confronting Capital! (Two in One)_1

Although Essien had proposed the test, being young and fiercely competitive, he had hoped to see others struggle to break the Array, only to eventually give up. Then, he would generously compliment their performance before allowing them to pass.

This would make him appear magnanimous and unfathomably profound.

The script had already been written; he was prepared to play his part.

But now, he had encountered an unexpectedly tough opponent. This person could breach the Array single-handedly at a heaven-defying speed and was on the verge of barging into the Dark Tower to forcibly destroy his Array!

Essien immediately activated his contingency plan, casting aside all pretense of fairness.

He hadn't intended to resort to this. After all, he had only stipulated that the challenger break the Dark Night Ultimate Formation, not that he would completely alter the Array.

But he couldn't bear the thought of losing, especially so quickly. So, he cheated!

Even as an Imperial Marshal, he was still young. His temperament was clearly different from that of veteran Marshals like Albert.

That fellow's Skeleton Monsters are dark-type creatures, so they aren't naturally suppressed by the Dark Extreme Array! That's practically cheating! Humph! If he can cheat, then I can change the test. Let's see how he handles my reversal!

Hailed as an Array genius, Essien's proficiency in Formations was naturally exceptional.

He had long prepared a contingency within the Dark Night Ultimate Formation precisely for such a situation.

Since the Dark Night Ultimate Formation was ineffective, he immediately activated his prepared countermeasure, using an Attribute Reversal Tool to forcibly convert the Dark Night Ultimate Formation into the Holy Light Extreme Array!

With the successful reversal, the pitch-black environment around Chen Mo instantly became blindingly bright. Yet, this brilliance was no blessing, as the intensity of the surrounding holy light was enough to sear one's eyes.

Excessive light, ultimately, was no different from excessive darkness.

Both rendered one unable to discern their surroundings.

Once the transformation into the Holy Light Extreme Array was complete, Essien immediately unleashed its ultimate attack: the Holy Light Coming Kill Move!

He would annihilate these troublesome Skeleton Monsters!

Instantly, myriad beams of holy light assailed the Skeleton Monsters from all directions, forming potent light curtains that enveloped the entire area.

Essien had initially assumed that Chen Mo's Skeleton Monsters would dissipate completely within this torrent of holy light.

However, contrary to his expectations, the holy light had no effect whatsoever on these Skeleton Monsters.

All the Skeleton Monsters continued to move freely within the Array's confines.

Chen Mo, likewise, remained unaffected, swiftly charging into the tower.

It seems choosing the holy feature was indeed the right decision. Most people, upon seeing Skeleton Monsters, would instinctively resort to holy light, only to find their efforts futile.

Upon entering the tower, Chen Mo immediately scanned its interior with his perception ability.

His perception ability, now restored within the tower, pinpointed Essien and the Array's core at the summit. Chen Mo instantly took to the air, flying directly to the top floor.

"You truly are full of surprises," Essien said, looking at Chen Mo with a wry smile.

He hadn't imagined that nothing could hinder Chen Mo, allowing him to enter the tower so smoothly.

Although he still had other tactics he could employ now that the enemy was inside the tower, Essien dismissed the idea. When he thought about the sheer number of Skeleton Monsters Chen Mo could summon, what was the point? Those Skeleton Monsters alone could probably pile up and burst the tower apart; any other tactic would be useless.

Though disconcerted, the outcome was undeniably clear. Essien was willing to admit he was outmatched.

"Since I'm already here, I suppose there's no need to destroy the Array core, right?" Chen Mo asked.

"You've passed," Essien conceded. "However, the Dark Night Ultimate Formation is merely the first trial in the Dark Canyon. Don't assume that clearing it means you've easily conquered the Dark Canyon."

Chen Mo smiled. "Naturally. I've long heard of your accomplishments in Formations, Young Marshal. I'd imagine such a critical location wouldn't be guarded by just a single Array. However, our agreement pertained only to the Dark Night Ultimate Formation. You wouldn't impose further difficulties, would you?"

Essien gave a helpless smile. "Of course, I keep my word. I've already sent someone to inform them you've passed."

As Essien finished speaking, the scene around Chen Mo underwent a dramatic transformation.

The Dark Tower, the oppressive darkness, and the blinding holy light—all vanished without a trace. Chen Mo now stood upon the battlements of a fortress in the Dark Canyon, with endless plains stretching out around him.

Evidently, Essien had dispelled all the Array's effects on him.

"Chen Mo is inside the Dark Canyon!"

"Incredible speed! He entered the Dark Canyon in less than a minute! With his capabilities, once he's inside, breaking the Array is merely a matter of time."

"All our Generals and Marshals have tried to crack the Dark Night Ultimate Formation. Besides Kahn, it seems no one else has ever succeeded. Yet, Chen Mo not only broke Essien's Dark Night Ultimate Formation, he did it incredibly fast! This fellow's power is terrifying!"

"Breaking the Dark Night Ultimate Formation depends more on specific abilities than raw power. This young man's capabilities are truly astounding."

As the crowd marveled, Chen Mo received a notification: The Heavenly Path's Hint.

Chapter 486: Confronting Capital! (Two in One)_2

[The Heavenly Path's Hint: Congratulations on successfully completing the hidden mission "Fast Breakthrough", you have received a reward of 500 dungeon points.]

[The Heavenly Path's Hint: Since your ally succeeded in persuading Marshal-level figure "Essien" to defect, persuading one Marshal-level figure earns you an additional 2,000 dungeon points.]

[The Heavenly Path's Hint: Your current dungeon points total 12,200 points; at settlement, the points will be tripled.]

I already have over 30,000 dungeon points; an SSS-level reward is a sure thing. I just don't know what other benefits these extra points will bring, besides increased experience points and eternal coin earnings. Chen Mo was still looking forward to the final reward. Recalling the Heavenly Path's initial hints, he knew that following the Rebel Army's path could lead to five hidden missions. So far, he had only encountered two. Persuading the Imperial Marshal and Generals didn't seem to count as a hidden mission, which meant there were still three more he hadn't found. Thinking of this, Chen Mo felt that the rewards from this dungeon instance should be quite substantial, especially if he could find and complete all three remaining hidden missions.

By now, Lilith, Alina, Albert, and the others were already leading their teams over. Since Essien hadn't activated the Array this time, they had an unobstructed path directly to the front of the Dark Canyon.

Once we're past the Dark Canyon, the Imperial City won't be far. I just wonder how the Grand Marshal will react. Albert's greatest concern was still Erice. She was the Empire's undisputed strongest individual, an object of aspiration and awe for all other powerful figures. No one dared to even think of defeating her; merely mentioning her name often elicited a response that could be described as reverence.

"As long as we don't appear to threaten His Majesty the Emperor, the Grand Marshal probably won't get involved in this battle," Lilith suddenly said.

This remark would have been understandable coming from someone in the Imperial Army, but for a member of the Rebel Army to say it was peculiar. Several people nearby immediately looked at her curiously. "Why do you think so?" they asked.

Apart from Lilith, no one else knew the Emperor was actively trying to stop the Grand Marshal from joining the war. Everyone else was unsure if the Grand Marshal would participate, so they were naturally curious about Lilith's statement. Realizing she had let something slip, Lilith quickly laughed it off. "Just a guess," she said. "After all, we've fought our way this far, and the Grand Marshal still hasn't appeared. With her power, it wouldn't take her long to reach here from the Imperial City, right?"

Her explanation was met with nods of agreement. Indeed, with the Grand Marshal's strength, if she truly intended to deal with them, she could have arrived from the Imperial City very quickly. Since she hadn't come, she probably didn't plan to intervene. It appeared the Grand Marshal had discerned their motives for cooperating with the Rebel Army.

In reality, Erice hadn't figured anything out. She knew nothing about these developments; the Emperor had kept her tightly restricted these past few days, and very little information had reached her. If the Emperor hadn't just been assassinated, she would still be in her own mansion, carrying out the tasks he had assigned her. An event of this magnitude was something Emperor Cy couldn't possibly hide completely; the Emperor's subordinates would undoubtedly report it to the Grand Marshal.

Fortunately, due to the foolish actions of the Prime Minister's underlings, the Grand Marshal didn't turn her suspicions towards the Rebel Army. Instead, she intensified her surveillance of the various factions within the Imperial City, wanting to see how many would seize this period of unrest to act against the royal family's interests.

Seeing Erice shift her focus to the Imperial City was precisely what Cy had hoped for. Now, all Cy needed to do was continue to keep the Grand Marshal occupied and wait for the Rebel Army to attack the Imperial City. However, the Queen Mother and the Prime Minister's faction were indeed troublesome, and unfortunately, Cy had no loyal personnel of her own to deploy. She had already utilized all the power and made all the arrangements she possibly could.

Lilith, you mustn't disappoint me! Cy murmured to herself, standing on the balcony of her palace chambers and gazing out over the entire Imperial City.

Meanwhile, the Ruthless Legion received news as soon as Chen Mo's group had passed through the Dark Canyon. Prime Minister Larseis ordered them to mobilize immediately. They had initially believed

the Dark Canyon would be enough to halt the rebels' advance. Their plan was then to dispatch a few operatives to support assassination efforts, which they thought would be sufficient to repel the Rebel Army. However, no one had anticipated that this band of rebels would breach the Dark Canyon with such ease; it was a development that caught most people in the Imperial City completely off guard.

「In the Grand Marshal's Mansion」

Due to the recent assassination of the Emperor, Erice was now being kept informed of every single detail. Naturally, she had also heard about the situation at the Dark Canyon.

The Empire's three Marshals and eight Generals have all defected?

Upon hearing this news, Erice, far from becoming angry, actually chuckled. "Interesting!"

Seeing the composed smile on Erice's delicate face, her attendant grew somewhat curious. "Ma'am, all of our Empire's Marshals and Generals have joined the Rebel Army. How can you still be smiling?"

Erice had always been very humble and friendly towards her subordinates. Consequently, they spoke to her with respect rather than fear, and felt comfortable asking questions if they had any.

Chapter 487: Confronting Capital! (Two in One)_3

Erice laughed and said, "If one marshal surrenders, it's betrayal. If two marshals surrender, there's a hidden story involved. But when three Marshals and eight Generals all join the Rebel Army, there's much more to this than a simple rebellion. I'm quite curious about what they are up to."

With absolute power comes absolute confidence. No matter how strong the enemy alliance, in Erice's eyes, everything was still under her control, so she was indifferent to how powerful her opponents might be.

Hearing her, one of her subordinates spoke up, "I suspect they're rallying to cause trouble for the Queen Mother and the Prime Minister. Hasn't the Emperor always prevented you from intervening? It seems he must have tacitly given his consent."

"I thought so too, initially," Erice replied. "However, the sudden appearance of rebels attempting to assassinate the Emperor made me think my speculation was wrong. But now, the identity of those people is difficult to discern, making things even more confusing. Anyway, a grand show is clearly unfolding. Since the Emperor doesn't want me to intervene, let's just sit back and watch from the Imperial City.

"As long as they don't pose a threat to the Emperor, I can't be bothered to interfere."

At this moment, Erice was entirely in the mood to watch the unfolding drama.

「In the Dark Canyon」

After everyone gathered, they began to discuss what other forces the Queen Mother and the Prime Minister might have at their disposal. Their journey so far had been too smooth, with hardly any obstacles. This was highly unusual, as it was said that the Queen Mother and the Prime Minister had many measures at their disposal. They had the powerful Ruthless Legion under their command and ten deadly Assassins, none of whom had yet made a move. More importantly, it was rumored that the Queen Mother practiced demonic arts and could summon some evil creatures, but none had appeared.

It is always calm before the storm.

Everyone was now getting that feeling.

After they had all consolidated the current information, listing the potential tactics the Queen Mother and Prime Minister might employ along with countermeasures, they regrouped their forces and marched swiftly towards the Imperial City!

As Chen Mo and his group departed.

「Meanwhile, in the Yongming Star System.」

Randy and his team had initially planned to wait until Chen Mo and his comrades reached the Imperial City before taking action. Doing so would have given them a chance to drag the Grand Marshal into the

fray, but now that the Prime Minister's envoys were urgently pushing them, Randy and his team were quite annoyed.

"So, is the Array completely set up?"

"It's completely done, Captain. It took a lot of effort, and now it covers the entire Imperial City."

"Good. The more measures we have against that Solar System Monster, the more secure we are. We're thoroughly familiar with coordinating our various abilities, the Array is in place, and apart from failing to drag the Grand Marshal in, everything else we could prepare has been perfected. Now, all we can do is wait for the actual results!"

"But Captain, the way the Prime Minister is pushing us, it's as if the Heavenly Dao itself is urging us on. If we continue to hide in the Imperial City, I'm afraid the Prime Minister will deal with us first."

"Hmph, then we'll march out as he wishes. But whether we'll encounter some situation that forces us back, who knows," Randy sneered, his meaning already clear.

Everyone immediately understood. "That makes sense, Captain," one of them voiced. "We can fight as we retreat and allow ourselves to be forced back to the Imperial City. Even if we can't really get the Grand Marshal to join the fray, at least we can use the pre-set Array to increase our leverage."

Chapter 488: The Demonic Queen Shows Her Power! (Two in One)_1

The Rebel Army advanced swiftly, led by three Marshals and eight Generals. With such a lineup, no one dared to obstruct their path.

The Demonic Queen Nylia, a woman of unparalleled beauty, lounged lazily on a couch within her chamber. She possessed a charm that could bewitch a person's soul. Her figure was graceful and dance-like, her body soft and elegantly contoured. Her skin was snow-white, emanating a magnolia-like fragrance. Her deep, sparkling eyes seemed to hold an irresistible allure. Her slightly arched eyebrows conveyed a hint of pride and mystery, making it impossible not to be drawn in. Her rosy lips, slightly upturned, oozed a captivating charm, as if recounting endless desires. Her long black hair was lazily spread over her pale shoulders, its slightly wavy locks swaying gently with her movements, adding to her nonchalant elegance. She wore a magnificent, luxurious purple robe adorned with gemstones and gold threads that flashed with a mysterious and dazzling aura. Delicate bracelets graced her wrists, and her

fingers were studded with gemstones shimmering with mysterious Magic Power. She emanated an irresistible allure and magnetism. Her presence was so captivating and bewitching that even her own brother, Larseis, had to suppress his rapidly beating heart whenever he saw her.

Upon seeing Larseis arrive, the Demonic Queen Nylia gracefully stretched out her slender arm and lightly picked up a cup of fine wine, saying, "Brother, the recent situation is not good."

Watching the liquor sway with a tempting color in the cup, Larseis replied, "Don't worry, they are just a bunch of rabble. The Savage Ancient Forest will be their final resting place! I just didn't expect so many traitors within our Imperial Army!"

Nylia gently placed the cup to her red lips, took a sip of the crystal-clear wine, then licked the rim of the glass with her tongue, a suggestive smile spreading across her face. "Although the betrayal of the Imperial Army was unexpected, it does provide us with an opportunity. Their internal factions are divided; we can use their conflicts and distrust to sow discord among them.

"The more suspicion and distrust there is, the more effective my Mind Demon Technique will be. I've already sent my illusion avatar into the Savage Ancient Forest in advance."

"Very good, Nylia. I've also made preparations," Larseis said. "I have mobilized my most elite guard, who are loyal to me and willing to give their lives for me.

"I have also secretly gathered some special talents from all over the Kingdom who possess remarkable abilities. I've dispatched some of them to the Savage Ancient Forest as well."

The Demonic Queen gently swirled her wine glass and elegantly savored the liquor, a spark of strategy in her eyes. "Perfect. With your manpower and my Demon Art, this time, we'll ensure none of them return alive!"

"However, I wonder what's going on with the Ruthless Legion. They only set off after being urged several times," Larseis said, recalling their peculiar behavior.

"The Ruthless Legion has handled so many things carefully; they shouldn't have any problems," Nylia remarked, unconcerned.

"By the way, how has Her Majesty reacted recently?"

"How could she react? She stays in her palace all day long. Apart from meeting the Grand Marshal after an assassination attempt, she has shown no unusual behavior at other times. She's behaving quite well."

"Good. But I heard that she has been stopping Erice from confronting the Rebel Army. Do you think she might be planning something?"

"She told me about this. She said there's a person in the Rebel Army who is a relative of a former attendant of hers who deserted. This person might know her true gender. She's afraid that if the Grand Marshal encounters that person and if she finds out about this, all three of us might not be able to handle the situation."

"So that's her reasoning," Larseis mused. "In that case, it indeed makes sense to keep the Grand Marshal confined to the Imperial City."

"If we truly reach a point where we can't resist these guys, it wouldn't be too late to ask the Grand Marshal to intervene. After all, she never disobeys Her Majesty's orders."

While Larseis was complaining about the Ruthless Legion, Randy and his allies had already geared up and set off. They had also received a lot of information before leaving, including the preparations made by the Demonic Queen and the traitorous minister. Now, they were heading to the key location before the final showdown: the Savage Ancient Forest!

On the side of the Rebel Army and the Imperial Army, before they entered this forest, Albert had already warned everyone that it was the most likely place for unexpected events to occur before reaching the Imperial City, reminding them all to be extremely careful.

The Savage Ancient Forest was an ancient and dangerous place, shrouded in dense trees and lush vegetation. Ancient trees, like giants, stood tall, their thick trunks intertwining to form an impassable green labyrinth. Dense branches and vines intertwined, forming layers of natural barriers that completely obscured one's line of sight. Entering this ancient forest was like stepping into another world. Sunlight was heavily filtered by the leaves, with only weak threads of light reaching the ground to cast mottled shadows. The gaps between the tree canopies were filled with dense ferns and climbing

plants, making it difficult for sunlight to penetrate, which filled the forest with a dim and mysterious atmosphere.

Chapter 489: Demonic Queen Shows Her Power! (Two in One)_2

In this dense vegetation, countless creatures dwelled. Some were predators, fierce and cruel, hidden among the trees and shrubs, waiting for their prey to approach.

Poisonous plants were scattered on the ground and tree trunks. Their flowers and leaves were bright and beautiful, yet they hid deadly toxins.

The paths in the forest were winding and complex. The ground was covered with a thick layer of decayed leaves and weeds, and careless footsteps would produce rustling sounds, attracting the attention of hidden creatures.

In this Savage Ancient Forest, ambushes and traps were everywhere.

Slim vines, like nimble tentacles, quietly extended, waiting for prey to stumble.

Pits on the ground hid sharp spikes and bottomless traps. Anyone careless enough to fall in would be unable to extricate themselves.

Chen Mo initially planned to use the Divine Stealth Box to make everyone enter invisible mode and sneak past. However, as soon as they entered the forest, Heavenly Dao reminded him that this forest had been specially fortified, and invisible units would also be rendered visible upon entering.

Chen Mo thus refrained from activating the invisible state. He then tried to have his people destroy trees and push forward, but to no avail. The trees in this Savage Ancient Forest possessed a strange vitality, making them very difficult to destroy. Furthermore, any damaged sections instantly regrew.

Thus, they could only pass through normally.

In this perilous Savage Ancient Forest, every step had to be taken carefully, as deadly traps and ambushes could be hidden everywhere. Whether it was the Rebel Army, unfamiliar with this forest, or

the Imperial Army, who knew it well, all had to tread cautiously, ready at any moment to confront the unknown threats within.

And those were only the dangers inherent to the Savage Ancient Forest itself. In such a prime environment, how could Nylia and Larseis resist causing trouble?

Within the Savage Ancient Forest, Nylia and Larseis dispatched carefully chosen subordinates to execute their plans. These subordinates not only hid many assassins in the forest but also set up numerous traps.

These individuals were proficient in ambush assassination tactics and trap placement, adding further mystery and danger to the already perilous Savage Ancient Forest.

Ambushers nestled between the trees, dressed in forest camouflage that allowed them to blend seamlessly into the environment.

They were highly trained and adept at using the forest's terrain and vegetation for concealment, making their presence very difficult to detect.

They were positioned at key locations in the forest, poised to ambush and halt the advancing Rebel Army.

Traps appeared in various forms, both physical and magical, and were ubiquitous.

In the dense forest, trees, vines, and shrubs were all cleverly utilized.

Brutal Magic traps lay hidden in the grass, ready to trigger at a touch and release lethal Magic Power.

Some traps could cause substantial damage, as well as confuse, deplete, and weaken the enemy's strength.

Some traps released fog or Illusions, causing those who passed through to lose their direction and wander into complex mazes.

Others were designed to affect their minds, plunging them into chaos.

Other traps were based on Magic Power and could trigger elemental attacks like Flame, Thunder, and Frost, ensnaring advancing forces in perilous assaults.

The Savage Ancient Forest was already notorious for its ancient, mysterious, and perilous nature; now, it had become even more treacherous due to the subordinates dispatched by Nylia and Larseis.

The forest was filled with hidden hostility, and every step needed to be taken with caution.

Only by overcoming the traps and ambushes set by these planners could the Rebel Army continue its advance toward the gates of the Imperial City.

In the dense woods of the Savage Ancient Forest, Demonic Queen Nylia had even used Demon Art to create an illusion avatar, secretly observing the advance of the allied Rebel and Imperial Armies.

Her gaze was filled with cunning and conspiracy.

With a gentle wave of her hand, Nylia signaled the assassins hidden in the forest to stand by.

She knew that this Savage Ancient Forest would be their best opportunity.

When the Rebel Army and Imperial Army entered the Savage Ancient Forest, they were already fully prepared and constantly alert to the dangerous atmosphere around them.

Chen Mo had even dispatched the Skeleton Monster ahead to scout the surroundings.

Normally, Chen Mo's perception ability would have been sufficient, but the Savage Ancient Forest was somewhat special. Similar to the Array previously set by Essien, various detection abilities were rendered useless within it. Interestingly, the inspiration for Essien's Dark Night Ultimate Formation had come from this very Savage Ancient Forest.

Thus, Chen Mo could only rely on the Skeleton Monster to detect nearby dangers.

However, even using the Skeleton Monster to scout ahead proved useless!

When the troops walked past an area the Skeleton Monster had just scouted, they suddenly encountered unexpected trouble!

The traps in the vicinity were actually Demon Art-triggered traps specially designed by Nylia; it made no difference even if scouts had passed through the area earlier.

Nylia deliberately refrained from triggering the traps when the Skeleton Monster passed by. Instead, she waited for the main army to arrive before directly using her Demon Art to manually activate all the traps simultaneously!

In an instant, a large area around the Rebel Army and Imperial Army erupted with brilliant light from the activated Magic traps, as if the punishments of hell had descended.

Explosion Magic Traps erupted in the air, spewing brilliant flames that reduced trees to ash in moments. A roaring fire blazed, engulfing the surroundings in crimson light and dense smoke. The deafening RUMBLE of explosions echoed through the forest.

Chapter 490: Demonic Queen Shows Her Power! (Two in One)_3

Electric arc traps crisscrossed, releasing terrifying Thunder energy. Lightning-like arcs darted between the troops, emitting a sharp BUZZING sound and a deafening crash of current. There was nowhere to hide. Unfortunate Soldiers struck by electricity instantly turned into charcoal, reduced to ashes in the CRACKLING sound.

Frost traps quickly froze over. Ice spikes and pillars rose from the ground, transforming the land beneath into a frigid trap zone. The CRACKLING sound of shattered ice echoed through the forest, sending shivers down the spine. Soldiers who stepped into them were pierced by ice spikes. Yet, before their agonized shrieks could fully escape their lips, they were abruptly silenced, frozen into ice sculptures, lifeless.

The explosions of the traps, the HUMMING of electric arcs, the deafening collision of currents, and the CRACKLING of shattering ice interwove, forming a terrifying audio backdrop. Combined with the horrific deaths of the Soldiers in the forest, it resembled a hellish stage play.

All these fearsome Magic Traps possessed instant-kill effects. Even though Chen Mo had bestowed shields on everyone, it still wasn't enough to save their lives.

Apart from these Magic Traps, Nylia had also intricately designed terrifying Mind Traps using her refined Demon Art!

As the Mind Traps, glowing with a strange purple light, burst, the innermost depths of those ensnared were instantly filled with boundless fear, agony, delusions, and doubt.

The Soldiers felt endless devils gnawing at their souls; their Illusions were filled with cruel scenes and limitless terror. To them, everyone around had transformed into monstrous figures about to rob them of their lives, instantly driving them into insanity and despair.

"What's happening? I see monsters!" shouted someone under the trap's influence.

"No, those are your companions! You've been affected by the trap!" someone still unaffected responded immediately.

"Help! This place is teeming with devils!" More and more people were affected.

"Damn monsters! Stay away from me! Stay away from me!"

...

The crowd let out terrified cries, waving their swords randomly and attacking anything that looked like a monster to them. In reality, they were merely slaughtering each other!

When one Soldier thought he had struck a monster and celebrated jubilantly, to another, it seemed as if a monster with a maniacal laugh had just attacked him. Facing such a "creature," the other Soldier would naturally retaliate. This vicious cycle kept repeating.

In this horrifying Mind Trap, the warriors lost all reason. They had no emotion or humanity left for each other. Their eyes, filled with crazed bloodlust, watched as they swung their weapons irrationally, slaughtering one another. Blood sprayed across the woods. Screams and shouts filled the entire Savage Ancient Forest.

This trap was so terrifying and cruel; it revealed the horrifying limits humans could reach when driven into madness.

The warriors lost themselves, becoming heartless beasts. Their fights no longer had any purpose or reason—only death and chaos.

This ancient, mysterious Savage Ancient Forest had been turned by Nylia's carefully designed traps into a hellish killing field.

Facing the cruel attacks of their own comrades, the Soldiers could not differentiate friend from foe and could only slaughter each other endlessly in the chaos.

This scene revealed the terror and intensity of mind control, horrifying anyone who witnessed it, but most of all, it highlighted the evil and cruelty of Demonic Queen Nylia.

This fiend's Demon Art, once successfully executed, could truly match an army of thousands. Ordinarily, this mental disarray alone would be enough for her to effortlessly annihilate tens of thousands of people. Truly horrific!

Thankfully, these Soldiers still had Chen Mo's Berserker Shield protecting them. Even though they were slaughtering each other, their attacks were too weak to break the shield. Consequently, there were no casualties from the Mind Trap.

However, those fearsome fire, Thunder, and ice Magic Traps had absolute instant-kill effects on the common Soldiers. Any who were caught would die. In contrast, high-ranking individuals like the General

and Marshal, and those of The Leader class such as Chen Mo, Alina, and Lilith, would at most lose some health points if they stepped into such traps.