

Throne of Magical Arcana

871 Arrangemen

“That’s not a problem. You are free to do what you want.” Arnold observed Douglas up and down again, not covering his surprise. He seemed to have never known the archmage who was hundreds of years younger than him until now.

At this moment, Priscilla walked over as attractively as a blooming tulip. She said to Douglas with a smile, “You... How should I put it? You have an amazing perspective in the way you think. It’s true that we are as used to certain phenomena in our life as we are to our hands and eyes, to the extent that we forget to ask why.

“After five hundred years, I’ve sensed the shock when I first touched magic again.”

Douglas could not nod at the warm lady’s praise. “One can never cease to explore magic or the world.”

“Alright, let’s not delay.” Without further ado, Priscilla looked at everybody else with a smile. “The most important thing right now is to kill Alfonsol. Let’s stick to our plan after we are back.”

Plan? Fernando’s lips twitched. Those old guys already made a plan when they talked in private?

Nielson, who was morbidly fat, looked at Douglas with his ruby eyes and sniffed. “Are those the questions that the sorcerers of Antiffler have been working on? No wonder the Church vanquished you...”

Douglas did not argue with him. He remembered clearly that the remnant of the Asso Empire was best at bloodline melting and body modification.

“Sometimes, I wonder what the power of shadows is, and where it is from...” Amanata said in an unpredictable voice, before he vanished in the shadow of the room.

Congus, on the other hand, stared at Arnold and spoke in his usual creepy and coarse tone. “Old fox, I’ll do what you asked, but if anything goes wrong with your plan, hehe...”

After seeing the leaders of the organizations off, Arnold picked his nose, not caring about his image. “It’s much more exhausting to communicate with those guys than to fight them.”

“There isn’t any foundation of trust. We can only go one step at a time.” Douglas smiled.

“This operation will be the first step to build trust. We must thank the Blue Demon. Regardless of whether or not he really wants Alfonsol dead, he’s giving us a chance for a joint operation. It will be much easier to plan more operations if there’s a first one.” Arnold resumed his look of a kind old man.

Fernando said, not in a good mood, “But we have to succeed! If we fail, there won’t be a second operation, unless one party is close to doom! Old man, what exactly is your plan?”

Only Arnold and Douglas were here, so he simply called the president old man.

Arnold did not criticize Fernando's lack of respect. He replied with a smile, "It's simple. As I said before, Tower of Destroyers will attract Alfonsol, and the other organizations will cover and cooperate with us in the attack. The Church does not know that we have reached an agreement."

"How is he going to be attracted? Are you not scared that the Church would see through it and send out 'Heart of Time'? He has been capturing sorcerers of late." Fernando was not satisfied with the plan. Even if the Church did not know that so many magic organizations had secretly forged an alliance, the decoy might be easily seen through.

Arnold looked at Fernando with a smile. "You are only a seventh-circle sorcerer, and you are of little value in such a battle. Why do you care about the plan?"

As Arnold expected, Fernando, who had been overlooked, said angrily, "I... I will become an archmage very soon!"

"Haha." Arnold chuckled. "It's good to be young. However, this operation does need you. Nobody controls storms better than you do. Rest assured. Alfonsol will see nothing wrong."

Fernando glared at the president, feeling that he had been teased. "How exactly are we going to allure Alfonsol to leave Rentato? I won't take part in the operation if I'm not certain about it!"

"Hehe. That's what I've been expecting you to say. Then, you'd better not take part in it. I was scared that you would want to join in your rashness," Arnold said with a cunning smile. He then went on before Fernando roared, "Alright, it's just a joke. The specific way of allurement can only be decided after we figure out Alfonsol's personality, hobbies, styles, and habits, but the core will be the same. The traitor within the Tower of Destroyers will tell the secret to the Inquisition."

“Traitor within? They are aware of the traitor?” Fernando asked in shock. In the meantime, he thought to himself that the old man was truly a natural-born old fox!

Arnold shook his head. “Fernando, you are too young and too naive. We dare not say that we know all the hiding traitors, but we do know some of them, and we have put them in positions that will not cause great losses. Now, it’s time for them to make contributions.”

He then added, “Sometimes, the traitors are more valuable to us than they are to our enemy.”

Douglas listened with a smile, finding it odd that the president explained it in such great detail. Had he always communicated with Fernando in such a way?

Fernando thought for a moment and basically understood what Arnold meant. He cursed again, old fox!

“As a matter of fact, after Sharp proposed the ‘contract’, you were automatically involved in the operation, and there’s no need to sign up for it.” Arnold chuckled. “Right, Douglas, I’m very curious about the questions you talked about. Are you interested in a discussion?”

“With pleasure,” Douglas replied without any hesitation.

The three of them returned to the Land of Thousand Lakes and communicated on the questions that Douglas raised, expressing their unconfirmed ideas.

After they entered the underwater relic and revealed their real bodies, Arnold's smile was already gone. He frowned while being deep in thought. "Odd. Your opinions are very odd. It's not right... It's not right..."

While he mumbled, he did not forget to ask Lauren, who came to greet them, to gather the deputy presidents for a meeting.

By the time League, Ramon, and Veronica came in, Arnold had become normal again. He informed them of the discussion during the meeting and concluded, "We are responsible for the two most important procedures in the operation. If we succeed, we will be leading the future cooperation. Between the two procedures, the second procedure is the actual attack. Douglas and I will be in charge of it, and Fernando, Congus, Nielson, Amanata, and other people will cover us. It's already decided."

He spoke of the second procedure and then looked at League. "The first procedure is to distract Kritonia, so that he won't be following us in secret."

Fernando was greatly enlightened. He was worried that the Heart of Time would also come out when Alfonsol was allured. After all, nobody was certain that the guy was only interested in the sorcerers of the Union. The old fox was truly considerate!

"If we take action alone, two consecutive allurements will definitely be seen as part of a scheme. So, we must count on the help of other organizations. Also, if the gap between the two allurements is too short, it will be seen through too. League, I need you to go south and keep Kritonia occupied for a week. As a deputy president, you deserve his attention."

Arnold stared at League solemnly. "I know that it's very dangerous. One may be killed by Kritonia after a moment of carelessness. Only an archmage who is good at escaping and hiding like you is qualified for the task. Also, you need to pay attention to the way you expose your traces so that Kritonia won't be suspicious. You must mislead him into thinking that he is chasing after you."

The task was so dangerous that even Fernando was more or less scared. He suspected that League would refuse it, but League simply said calmly, "That's not a problem. It's my responsibility."

Douglas knew League too little to feel anything, but Fernando suddenly widened his eyes. This old guy had always been mean and obsessed with power, but he turned out to be reliable and trustworthy at such a critical moment!

For a moment, even League's hawk nose was not as hideous as before.

Arnold sighed. "We can only march in danger. League, do you want to switch our roles so that I'll distract Kritonia and you will work together with Douglas to kill Alfonsol? As the president, I should take the most dangerous task."

League put on a smile. "I don't think so. Your procedure is even more dangerous. If anything happens, it will be barely possible for you to escape. As for my task, at least everything will be under my control."

"It's decided then." Arnold turned around and looked at Fernando. "Fernando, you have one other mission. You will return to Rentato and collect Alfonsol's files, including but not limited to his hobbies, personalities, style, and relationships."

They had never considered assassinating Alfonsol before. So, they only collected the files such as the divine powers that Alfonsol was good at and his previous battle cases. That was certainly not enough for an assassination mission.

“Will a few days be enough?” Fernando asked. League was about to go south and would take action in a couple of days, which gave him five days at most to gather the intelligence.

Arnold smiled. “All you need to do is to collect the side information to confirm the main intelligence that you obtain from the Blue Demon.”

“Huh?” Fernando was stunned again.

“He’s the one who gave the task. He must have a deep understanding of Alfonsol. Do you have a better source?” Arnold asked in a vague smile.

“B-But...” Fernando was full of concerns. At this moment, Douglas interjected, “Go now. There won’t be a problem.”

He seems to understand the president’s meaning between the lines? Fernando looked at Douglas and then at President Arnold. But why did he not understand?

Suddenly, he felt that he was somewhat silly before the two of them...

Before he left, Douglas went to Fernando with a few black books and notebooks. “A kid so interested in mathematics is hard to come by. Here are some files of mine from the past. Please give them to Sharp and ask him to forward them to Hathaway. There isn’t anything about magic in them.”

Fernando nodded. “Right, I need to offer her a few mathematical books too.”

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872 Intelligence

The Roasted Fish Hotel was as old and unpopulated as before in the late night. It seemed unchanged, but Fernando did not have the courage to approach. After leaving a mark in the agreed-upon area, he went into a slum not far away and hid on a tree, staring at the ragged houses down below.

When the moon rose to the apex, a person approached the ragged houses by stepping on the silver brilliance on the ground.

Confirming that nobody followed the guy, Fernando drifted down from the tree and said with a low voice, “Old man, you are not dead yet!”

“I’ll be alive even after you are dead!” The newcomer was Old Green.

As per President Arnold’s order, he stayed in the Roasted Fish Hotel and kept in touch with “Blue Grace” Sharp, but he was no longer involved in the relay and communication of the sorcerers within the Union.

Fernando snorted. “Old man, tell Sharp that we have decided to accept the mission to assassinate Alfonsol. We would like him to provide all the files he has on Alfonsol.”

“What? You’ve truly decided to kill Alfonsol? Has the president contracted your madness?” Old Green couldn’t be more surprised. In his eyes, it would only infuriate the Church, and there was not the slightest chance of success. If anything, the whole Union might be destroyed!

Fernando looked at Old Green in mockery. “Cowards do not understand the significance of risks.”

“You seem confident.” Having lived for almost two hundred years, Old Green had plenty of experience. He noticed the change in the situation from Fernando’s mockery.

“Cowards are also sensitive.” Fernando did not have the virtue of respecting the old at all. However, as a sorcerer who made it out of death and blood alive too many times, he did not forget to remind Old Green. “Don’t let Sharp know that we are kind of confident.”

He stressed “kind of”, not telling the whole truth even though it was Old Green he was speaking to.

Old Green scorned. “Do you think I am as reckless as you? However, why are you asking Sharp for the files? Are you not scared that he’ll set you up or secretly report you to the Church?”

“By the time we allure Alfonsol out, Sharp will have noticed that we’ve accepted the mission and are taking action. He can still report it to the Church by then. So, we might as well show him some trust right now. It is the foundation of cooperation and will save our time in intelligence collection.” At first, Fernando was quite bothered by that himself. He only decided to come because President Arnold and Douglas said it was okay. However, after considering carefully, he felt that he had found the key, although he was still not as confident as the old fox.

Perhaps the old fox kept something to himself, and that was why he trusted Sharp?

Old Green nodded. “Sharp has been staying in the Roasted Fish Hotel recently. He seems to be waiting for your reply. I’ll forward your words to him right now.”

“Right, those mathematical books and notes are the gifts of Douglas and me for Hathaway.” Fernando handed over a dozen books with black covers to Old Green.

“Do you really want Hathaway to embark on the dangerous path of magic?” Because of his relationship with Hathaway’s father, Old Green had never been glad about that.

Fernando chuckled. “Hey, is that something we can control? Old man, just drop your concerns. You should find a lady and have your own children while you are not dead. Don’t devote your redundant love to someone who doesn’t need it.”

He hid his vague caring in mockery.

Old Green was silent at first. He then heaved a long sigh. “I remember that you were such a lovely, vigorous, and stubborn kid when you just came to the magic tower. You even secretly cried when your teacher criticized you. Why is your tongue so rotten nowadays?”

Fernando blushed when his dark history was revealed. A terrible storm brewed in his eyes, but before he roared, Old Green had already vanished into the dark and returned to the Roasted Fish Hotel.

“What a wretched old man!” Eventually, Fernando could only curse in a low voice, fearing that somebody in the neighborhood would be woken up.

About ten minutes later, Old Green returned and said to Fernando solemnly, “Sharp agreed to provide Alfonsol’s files. They will be given to you tomorrow at this hour.”

“What’s his reaction when he learns that we’ve accepted the task?” Fernando asked cautiously.

Old Green couldn’t have neglected such details. He answered quickly without thinking, “He was a little bit surprised, but then he kept a smile of relief. Well, he also cursed, ‘What a bunch of arrogant rats who do not know how weak you are. I’ll watch how you get yourselves killed!’”

Fernando pictured the scene in his mind and noticed no anomaly in Sharp. So, he nodded his head. “I’ll hide in your hotel and secretly observe how he delivers the files.”

One couldn’t be more careful at such a moment. Fernando was not an inexperienced young man.

“Right. Here’s a letter from Hathaway to you and Douglas. It must’ve been written a couple of days ago. Sharp has been carrying it.” Old Green took out a thick envelope from his pocket.

“A letter to us? What did she write?” Fernando did not believe that Douglas and he had become Hathaway’s best friends after only talking with her twice. He was rather stunned.

After examining the letter with magic, he unfolded it carefully. The handwriting was enjoyable and feminine, but there was not a single word other than the copied mathematical questions!

“Hehe...” Fernando could only chuckle dryly about that.

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The next day before sunset, Fernando snuck into the Roasted Fish Hotel and hid in the kitchen behind the counter.

About half an hour after dinnertime, Sharp, who seemed to have a lump on his nose, came alone and threw a sheaf of crinkled paper to Old Green. "All the details I'm aware of are on it."

He was no stranger to assassinations, and he knew what files were useful. After all, it was not uncommon for the knights to work with the clerics to kill sorcerers during the rise of the Church.

He snorted heavily when Old Green stared at him without saying anything. "If you question the veracity of the files, you can test them yourself. I am a customer, not a servant."

Then, he opened his hand. "Where's the letter?"

"What letter?" Old Green was briefly stunned.

"The letter to Hathaway. The odds that they fail are very high. If I don't get a letter back from him one of these days, I will never get a letter from him." Sharp despised Fernando and his colleagues' capabilities just like before. Fernando, who was peeping from the kitchen, clenched his fists in fury.

Old Green took out the letter that was full of answers and gave it to Sharp solemnly. “You really want to kill Alfonsol?”

He keenly sensed the earnestness and the pretended I-don’t-care in Sharp’s attitude because they had known each other for years. Fernando, for one, couldn’t notice it at all.

“What do you think?” Sharp asked back without giving a straight answer. Then, he took out another letter from his pocket. “These are Hathaway’s questions after yesterday’s learning.”

Fernando did not need to read the letter to know what was on it.

After Sharp had a glass of liquor and a roasted fish and was about to leave, he suddenly winked at the wall of the kitchen.

“He discovered me...” After a while, Fernando walked out of the kitchen and said at the darkness where Sharp disappeared.

Old Green chuckled. “When we were on adventures in the past, he was always best at discovering the hidiers. Or maybe he has special tricks. I forgot to tell you earlier.”

Fernando had no time to roar at him. He read the intelligence provided by Sharp carefully.

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“Based on Sharp’s files and other sources of intelligence, it can be seen that Alfonsol is a very tough man who loathes sorcerers. He is rigorous if not ferocious. He’s good at battles, with many famous cases. He’s very unfriendly to the nobles. It is because of his contradictions with the Violet family that the pope dispatched him to our place...” Two days later, in the underwater relic, Fernando briefed Alfonsol’s situation to President Arnold.

Besides them, Douglas was the only person in the heavily guarded chamber. Ramon and Veronica, who were not involved in the operation, had been kept out for the sake of confidentiality.

Arnold browsed through the files and listened to Fernando. In the end, he nodded. “The intelligence is very valuable. The operation will begin probably in a day or two. You should not go out anymore. Optimize your status and wait for my message.”

“Alright. I haven’t noticed anything wrong about Sharp so far.” Fernando tailed and observed Sharp in the past two days. He was rather proud that he was not discovered.

In the next two days, Douglas and Fernando exchanged knowledge and items with other people in the underwater relic like the other sorcerers did, showing no sign that they would take part in an important operation soon. However, when they were free, they did not discuss the exhausting questions anymore but kept themselves ready for battle.

After midnight of the third day, Fernando and Douglas received Arnold’s order through Whispering Wind. They left the relic and entered the woods nearby.

“Mr. President is here.” Douglas discovered Arnold earlier than Fernando did.

Before his voice died down, Arnold walked out of the darkness with a grave face; his usual smile gone. “Alfonsol has left Rentato with at least seven senior-rank red robes and divine knights. He did not ask for the cooperation of the nobles.”

Douglas nodded first, but then he slightly changed his expression. “This is...?”

It was not until then that he realized that a man covered in a black cloak was standing in the shadow next to Arnold. Vague black mist surrounded the man, making him look creepy, and he was holding a long scythe in his hands. Douglas did not sense the man at all previously!

Fernando was even more surprised. He did not realize the mysterious man with the intense air of death until Douglas reminded him!

“It’s my servant of death, a supernatural creature that equals to level nine. It is best at stealth. To be honest, I barely used it before, and few people in the Union know it. However, this operation is too important. I can only bring out my trump card first, hoping that we can finish Alfonsol in one battle...” Arnold’s graveness was gone, and he introduced it with a smile. He also told Douglas and Fernando how to cooperate with himself and the servant of death.

Douglas and Fernando both nodded in relief, glad that the president was trying his best without any reserve.

“Let’s go to Sherwell County in the north.” Arnold turned his eyes to the north.

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873 Everybody’s Trick

In a forest on the border between Sherwell County and Rentato, the bright fog had covered the vast territory, suppressing the sorcerers' spiritual powers and the knights' instincts.

In the last years of the elves' reign, because of the "scheme" of the Will of Abyss, many space gaps appeared on the ground. Some were tiny and disappeared on their own before long, but some further collapsed and connected different floors of the abyss, turning into the channels for the demons' invasion. Later, thanks to the help of the elven tree, the elves sealed most of the similar cracks. However, space disorder still lingered in some places, and this forest was one of such places. So, it became a good shelter for the sorcerers to hide in.

In a valley deep inside the forest, an "invisible" magic tower was enshrouded in the thick fog. This was a very important base of "Tower of Destroyers". Thanks to the environment and its mobility, even though the Church knew that plenty of sorcerers were hiding in the forest and sent many people to search, nobody had ever discovered it.

Of course, it was also because the Church was not doing its best. Right when they were tired of searching and was about to erase the forest, the war in the west broke out, and the main forces were mobilized to the front line in Aalto. So, the plan had to be put on hold.

"Cracking (Advanced), plus your 'Time Stop', will finish the battle quickly." At the edge of the valley, Priscilla, who was in a red magic robe, gave Douglas a scroll and looked at Arnold. She said with a faint smile, "It's very difficult and costly to create the scroll even for me. Old fox, I get to pick the trophies first after the battle."

Then, she paused and said, "Also, I have offered my 'Tower of Destroyers'. If the plan fails and it's destroyed by the Church, hehe..." She had a "you know what I would do" look on her face.

The magic tower, which could move and become invisible, was exactly what Tower of Destroyers was named after. After their headquarters was changed to someplace better and it was no longer useful, it was relocated here.

Fernando couldn't have seconded the way Priscilla called Arnold more. To this moment, he hadn't figured out why President Arnold was confident that Sharp would not betray them. Was it only a wild gamble? What an old fox!

Arnold said with a smile, "Although it's been almost three hundred years since you became an archmage, I am still a senior who watched you grow up. Please show me some respect."

His evasive answer certainly did not satisfy Priscilla, who snorted heavily. "A senior? Who proposed to me at the beginning only to be refused?"

Ha.

Fernando burst into laughter when he learned the president's dark history that he did not know. He knew that Priscilla had a husband who was killed by the Church, but he did not know that she was with someone else before!

Blushing, Arnold said, "I was in my prime years back then, not nearly as old as I am right now..."

Priscilla had prepared her own way of escape. So, instead of further pursuing the question, she looked at the servant of death next to Arnold gravely and asked, "Who is this? I can tell that he is strong, but something is not right..."

“He’s my servant of death, a supernatural creature equal to level nine...” Arnold explained again.

“A servant of death. No wonder it gives me the feeling of the dead.” Priscilla nodded in relief. Congus, who was behind them, said coarsely, “Old fox, after the operation succeeds, you have to lend your servant of death to me for a while. It is not normal. Perhaps it contains the mysteries of death.”

Led by Priscilla, everybody called Arnold “old fox”.

“I’ve noticed it too, but I never know why.” Arnold opened his eyes, neither declining nor accepting Congus’ request.

Congus’ eyes flashed. When he was about to continue asking, fat Nielson opened his mouth and said coldly, “Alfonsol is probably coming, and you are still in the mood of chitchatting? Are all the sorcerers of Sylvanas as unreliable as you? In that case, I would have to reconsider the dangerousness of our cooperation.”

“Hehe.” Congus shut his mouth.

Looking at Amanata who stayed in shadow quietly, Priscilla nodded. “According to the news from the south, Kritonia is still after League. So, we will stick to our plan.”

She turned around and flew back to the Tower of Destroyers. After all, Alfonsol would notice something wrong if no sorcerers were inside it.

Nielson and Congus flew in different directions, so far that it was beyond what Alfonsol could search and notice. It was also out of the range for them to reinforce the Tower of Destroyers immediately.

Amanata had long disappeared from the shadow too.

“Fernando, you set up the magic circle and keep this place in a storm, preferably for two hours.” Arnold led Douglas and Fernando into a crypt nearby and completely melted into the shadow with a weird spell.

He speculated that Alfonsol would arrive in one hour because the traitor was given a wrong location, which would mislead the enemy but eventually bring them to this place.

Boom!

Thanks to Fernando’s arrangement, bolts of lightning struck the trees, setting them on fire.

Hualala.

Clouds were gathered, and rain poured, making the place look like the end of the world. Nobody could sense anything.

Arnold was not scared that Alfonsol might discover that the storm was manipulated. After all, this place was an important base of the Tower of Destroyers. It was perfectly normal that such stealth and interference circles had been established.

Time went by one second after another. The Tower of Destroyers, in the storm and the darkness, was more and more like a monster that was about to swallow the world. Arnold and Douglas both remained absolutely calm with the spells such as Mechanized Mind. Fernando, who did not need to attack, looked at the dark forest anxiously. If anything went wrong in the operation, half of the magic organizations in Holm would be paralyzed.

“The target is here...” The blowing wind brought Amanata’s gloomy, unemotional voice.

Even Douglas couldn’t help but stand straight, clutching the scroll of Cracking (Advanced) in his hands.

BOOM!

Several minutes later, a pillar of light enshrouded in fire descended from the sky, illuminated the darkness, and hit the Tower of Destroyers overwhelmingly.

Symbols and patterns glittered around the transparent magic tower, constructing defense magic circles that blocked the pillar of light.

At this moment, an old man in a red robe appeared in the sky. His wrinkled face was full of hate and satisfaction. Around him, several red robes and divine knights were providing protection in battle formation.

In the forest nearby, bishops, reverends, and night watchers in black gloves emerged, blocking the way and killing the hiding sorcerers.

Arnold and Douglas did not attack immediately but waited for the feedback of the other archmages.

“Hiding gold knights detected...” Congus’ voice came first from the storm.

Nielson gave a feedback very soon too. “Several senior-rank night watchers have set up a divine power circle and are ready to activate it at critical moments.”

“There are enemies in the shadow...” Amanata said simply.

“Alfonsol is rather cautious. He has brought more men than we thought. He must’ve planned to counter-ambush the enemy in case of an accident,” Arnold said to Douglas in the telepathic bond.
“Let’s do it!”

Far away, Congus, in his glamorous black robe, suddenly flew out from below the ground. The skull glistened in coldness under the bolts of lightning, and his teeth opened, letting out invisible howls.

Wu!

Above the trees, behind the rocks, and in the bushes, clerics and night watchers dashed out, screaming. Their skin began to fester, and their eyes were flashing in redness. They lunged at their companions who were struggling to resist!

After only a brief moment, they had been turned into specters!

In the meantime, skulls rose from the softened mud. Zombies and ghouls declared the arrival of the kingdom of death.

Before the hiding gold knight was able to react, he was already surrounded by the undead!

Congus did not decide to fight with his life. Naturally, he chose his spells accordingly.

On the other side, Nielson also flew out of his shelter, but his appearance had greatly changed. His fat was now tightened, filled with the patterns unique to the frost giants; his left eye popped out, turning into a brown Eye Demon with stubs floating around it; his right eye was gray and dim, and whatever it saw became a stone quickly; and pale tentacles grew out of his head and his body, as if he were a dehydrated octopus.

His mouth collapsed, baring his tusks; his right hand was full of maggots, and the incomplete fingers carried the intense stink of death; his left hand was covered in fish scales, which were mixed with electric arcs; his back had a pair of bat wings that were similar to vampires'; and the lower half of his body turned into four furry horse legs...

He looked like a monster from the worst nightmare!

Dragon breath, bolts of lightning, petrification, freezing, death summoning, ray shooting, mind stealing... Even though he was by himself, Nielson charged like a whole army of sorcerers, bringing unimaginable trouble to the night watchers, reverends, bishops, and divine knights. The divine power circle they established in secret was immediately sabotaged.

The clerics and night watchers on other directions were even more intimidated. They heard their companions scream and saw them disappearing into the darkness, but they could not find any enemy!

After Arnold gave the order, Douglas immediately tore apart the scroll of Cracking (Advanced) toward Alfonsol!

Generally speaking, Cracking (Advanced) should be performed after “Time Stop”. However, since Alfonsol was confident to come and destroy the Tower of Destroyers, he was very likely to have brought extraordinary items that could resist the effect of Time Stop. Therefore, Douglas intentionally changed the order.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Under the sudden attack, different lights burst out of Alfonsol’s body, as splendid as fireworks.

He does have items that can resist Time Stop! Douglas keenly sensed it.

At this moment, an enormous shadow appeared before Alfonsol. Arnold’s servant of death, dragging the long scythe, slashed at Alfonsol, forcing him to defend himself with divine power.

The intense fog of death around the servant of death blocked the subconscious attacks of the other red robes and divine knights.

Without any delay, Douglas cast “Time Stop” after the cooldown.

The spell was cast successfully. However, he discovered, to his surprise, that it was not anxiety or panic on Alfonsol's face, but a casual smile!

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874 Unexpected

Time Stop took effect. The brightness of the moon faded, the darkness was gone, the bolts of lightning were frozen in the sky, and the rainwater crystallized into peace. The whole world had nothing but vague grayness left. Alfonsol was like a bug frozen in ice when he was in the range of the spell, keeping the weird posture.

Right then, a crack passed through the stopped time and entered Douglas' ears. Then, the grayness broke inch by inch like shattered glass. The world immediately fell apart.

"Who is it?" Ever since he picked up the ninth-circle spell, Douglas had never met such a situation when he performed Time Stop. An external force had broken the effect of the spell! Even though he was good at controlling himself and had enhanced himself with many spells, he was still quite shocked.

The pieces of ice flew away, and Alfonsol was back to normal. However, the bolts of lightning were still slowed down, and the rainwater was still almost stopped. The only thing new was a glittering river from the sky that ran as unstopably as time.

The overwhelming river of time woke everyone in the effect of Time Stop and broke the ultimate silence. Covering the forest within dozens of kilometers, the ripples made everything hazy as if they were below the water.

Arnold, Douglas, and Fernando, who were near, and Nielson, Congus, and Amanata, who were further away, all seemed to have been thrown into a transparent amber. They moved toward the river of time at the center slowly but surely. Their faces were different, with some angry and some shocked, but none of them could control themselves, just like no intelligent creature could resist the passage of time!

“Kritonia!”

Priscilla, who was in the Tower of Destroyers, was in better condition. She discovered, to her shock, that the source of the river of time was a fuzzy young man. His black hair danced crazily, his hands and his longsword were all watery, and he was looking down below with his blue eyes in mockery and pride. It was exactly “Heart of Time” Kritonia!

But according to the intelligence, Kritonia was still being distracted in the south!

After his sword slashed, the servant of death ahead of the river of time was cut from the middle without a sound, and the rotten pieces of flesh turned into ashes. His skull, hands, and ribs fell apart.

One attack of his sword was already so intimidating!

“Heart of Time?”

“Kritonia!”

“How could this happen?”

“How could he be here?”

Congus, Nielson, Douglas, and the rest of them all looked at Arnold. Hadn’t he sent League to distract the man in the south? Wasn’t he confirmed to be in the south from various sources?

While they looked at Arnold, they were also performing magic to free themselves. However, under the influence of the river of time, their movements and their minds had been slowed. They couldn’t cast any spell quickly!

For a moment, everybody was grasped by fear, confusion, shock, and desperation.

“It’s you?” Priscilla almost heard a long sigh from Arnold.

“It’s me.” Someone showed up behind Kritonia. He was wrinkled with a hawk nose. It was League, the deputy president of the Union of Sorcerers, and the archmage who was dispatched to distract Kritonia!

His face was as gloomy as before, but he now put on a vicious and delightful smile. His voice echoed inside every soul. “I only sold some intelligence for my benefits, and I never thought to destroy the organization. However, you sent me on such a dangerous mission. You are to blame for your situation right now!”

“Haha. Thanks to League’s intelligence, there’s finally a chance to completely destroy your organizations!” Alfonsol laughed cruelly and gloatingly. The red robes and divine knights nearby quickly approached and protected him.

“Goddamn traitor!” It was the first idea that Priscilla, Nielson, Congus, and Amanata had in mind.

Fernando even roared aloud, “Old man, filthy traitor!”

Time saturated the valley and the forest like water. All the sorcerers within the range had so many mistakes casting their spells that they could not escape at all. They were devastated and frustrated. The senior-rank sorcerers like Congus began to prepare to destroy themselves in order to be resurrected in other places.

After chopping Arnold’s servant of death and limiting everyone’s operation, Kritonia raised his long sword again, and everybody heard his clear voice. “It’s a pity that there are only a few archmages...”

Faint pride could be felt in his tone. He did not consider Arnold, Douglas, or any of them to be important at all.

Everybody looked gloomy as if death was at hand, except the lich who only had bones. The intimidation of a level-two legendary knight was not to be underestimated!

Hardly had Kritonia finished his remark when a face suddenly erupted from the darkness behind him. The face was enormous and covered in a black hood. His eyes were two pale fires, and he

opened his mouth letting out syllables that nobody else could hear, as if he were the God of Death reincarnated!

A black swirl emerged from the bottom of Kritonia's feet and enshrouded him and League.

The swirl was as blurry as smoke. Dozens of clerics and night watchers below the senior rank did nothing except to watch it, but their bodies quickly decayed into skeletons at a loss!

The bones of the servant of death that Kritonia minced just now exploded and released pale smoke that instantly consumed the forest and the valley. The skull, on the other hand, sprang and fell at the center of the enormous face, forcing a tall, slim figure with a long black robe behind in midair. The faces of souls surrounded him and cried miserably, as if they were praising and singing for him!

The figure was very similar to the servant of death just now, except that the black scythe had been raised, as if it was ready to reap lives.

"Ahh!!!"

In the pale smoke, a red robe suddenly screamed. His soul was extracted from his shell and melted into the smoke.

The souls of many other reverends, bishops, night watchers, and divine knights also flew out and joined the carnival of spirits in the smoke. Trees withered, and creatures decayed. Except for the sorcerers and few clerics, the place was already a lifeless realm of the dead!

The pale smoke began to constrict, and the fuzzy faces of pain and fear drifted in it, constructing a cage that trapped the black swirl.

A crack suddenly appeared on the black swirl, and the watery ripples spread out. In the meantime, a red robe and a divine knight behind Alfonsol suddenly went on a rampage. One of them summoned a firestorm, and the other destroyed himself. Alfonsol, caught unprepared, was shattered into pieces.

“You?” Alfonsol, who was still gloating, did not see it coming at all. Vague shock was left behind even though he was dead.

Kritonia, with the longsword of time, broke out of the black swirl and happened to catch the scene. League, however, had been transformed into a dry corpse that did not have any water. He fell from the sky, and none of his life-preserving spells proved useful. Disbelief and fright were frozen on his face.

“Brain Scourge, Memory Meddling, Death Storm, Fog of Spirits...” Kritonia mumbled something first before he looked at the mysterious person outside of the mist in solemnity and surprise who was being “admired” by the souls. “Tannanois...”

While he talked, his body became fuzzy, and he flashed forward unpredictably with his longsword, as if he were traveling in different spaces, to avoid the blockage of the Fog of Spirits.

The changes happened so fast that Priscilla, Nielson, and the rest of them did not realize what was happening at all until they heard Kritonia’s words.

“The Liege of Death!”

Nielson couldn't have sounded more delighted.

"The Liege of Death!"

Congus, Priscilla, and Amanata, on the other hand, were so surprised that they found it hard to believe.

Douglas was the first to come back to himself, but he did not intervene a moment ago because he realized he wasn't capable enough to be involved at all!

At this moment, he looked at Arnold in confusion, amusement, and shock. How did his servant of death turn into "Liege of Death" Tannanois, who was the top legend in the past and the last consul of the Asso Empire? How many things had the guy kept a secret?

"Old fox, what is this all about?" Fernando roared, feeling that he had been tricked. His participation in the operation mattered little!

Arnold did not seem surprised at all. He coughed and said, "Let's get out of here first. Or maybe, do you want to be involved in a battle of legends?"

As he spoke, a colorful rainbow flew out of his hands and exploded into brilliant fireworks in the sky.

Having no time to inquire and “beat” Arnold, Priscilla glared at him and let the Tower of Destroyers run. Congus, Nielson, and Amanata turned around and left on their own for the rendezvous that they agreed upon earlier.

Douglas and Fernando followed Arnold to escape through the forest. Suddenly, they sensed something and raised their hands, only to discover that a gap was ripped in the sky of the battle, and a slim old man walked out with his eyes closed. From the north, a cold and beautiful girl who looked like an ice sculpture was also approaching.

“Mental Storm!”

“Aurora Wall!”

Two sophisticated voices came from far away. Fernando glared at Arnold. “So, the real target of the operation is actually ‘Heart of Time’? What was League all about? Has the Liege of Death been restored to level three?”

“Cough. As I said before, sometimes, the traitors are more valuable to us than they are to our enemy.” Arnold looked at him with a smile.

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875 Arnold’s Wish

Fernando felt that he was almost choked and could barely breathe at all. The old fox had deceived them all! To make things worse, he even gave a clue in advance. It seemed that the guy was watching them to be misled as if he were enjoying a play!

No wonder he was not worried at all that “Blue Grace” Sharp would regret and turn them in!

Holding back his fury, Fernando flew out of the forest with Arnold. The aftermath of a battle of legends could very likely destroy this place!

“Has the Liege of Death recovered the strength of level three?” Douglas repeated one of Fernando’s questions. At this moment, he cared about the strengths of the two parties more than anything else, and the details could be left for discussion when it was over.

Light and shadows were changing deep inside the forest, as if countless phantoms were wandering inside. It was most intimidating. Arnold narrowed his eyes and looked back, smiling like a real fox. “The Liege of Death was heavily wounded by the pope. His body, his soul, and his phylactery were all broken, and he almost completely perished. Fortunately, it was not God’s Arrival that the pope used.

“Later, the Liege of Death was revived as an alchemical life through the soul core that he preserved through legendary arts and by melting the soul pieces of other people. Then, he reshaped his body.”

In the telepathic bond, he told them about the Liege of Death unhurriedly, as if he did not have any doubt about the outcome of the battle at all. After all, the Liege of Death used to be a top legend who commanded a legion of the undead. Even though he was not as strong as before, it shouldn’t be a problem for him to deal with the Heart of Time who hadn’t reached level three yet.

“However, the main consciousness was prone to the conflicts of the soul pieces. Most of the magic models were incomplete. As a result, he failed to recover his peak strength for a long time.

“A dozen years ago, based on his research and understanding of the soul, Tannanois finally absorbed the other pieces and regained the strength of level-three legendary. Perhaps he will return to the peak in a few decades.”

“Then the battle shouldn’t be a problem...” Fernando said subconsciously.

The conclusion was based on reality. After the prolonged War of Dawn, everybody knew clearly that sorcerers were stronger than knights and clerics of the same level. However, the time it took for sorcerers to grow was much longer. That was why they were left behind.

Also, necromancers, who represented death, resurrection, and life, were among the sorcerers with the highest combat abilities thanks to their profound understanding of the soul. They were also more fatal and unpredictable!

Therefore, even though Kritonia had the mutated bloodline of the dragons of time, there was no chance for him to defeat a necromancer who was one level higher than him. All it remained to be seen was whether or not he could seize the momentary opportunity to flee.

Arnold smiled and did not respond to Fernando. Instead, he offered to explain the operation to them. “As a matter of fact, when I contacted Red Eye, Supreme Soul, and the other groups, I attempted to greet the three legends and received a satisfactory answer.”

They had already reached the edge of the black forest. So, they turned around and looked at the battlefield of the top legends again.

At this moment, in the middle of the fog where countless souls were struggling, a hazy flickering light dashed out. All the obstacles on its way seemed illusionary and could not stop it at all, as if they were in different spaces.

“The power of space and time is indeed remarkable...” Douglas remarked in the telepathic bond.

Hardly had he concluded his sentence when the sky, which was slightly brightened by the snow, dimmed again. An enormous dragon hovered and descended. All its muscles were rotten, and pus was flowing everywhere. He was also breathing pale fire.

It was a “dragon lich”, a legendary undead creature!

The dragon of death unfolded its wings and covered half of the forest in absolute darkness. The fading light of time was consumed. It could only be vaguely seen that the light was still struggling and falling apart.

In the sky around, two gigantic shadows emerged again. One of them was a mummy that was covered in brown cloth. It was so strong that Douglas and Fernando could perceive it clearly from far away. The other was a monster that had only skeletons left. It was even more gargantuan than the dragon lich, like the bones left by the legendary monsters in the Boundless Ocean.

The two undead creatures that were undoubtedly legendary joined the deep darkness that the dragon lich created. Therefore, the last haziness of the light was eclipsed.

In the forest, zombies, mummies, ghosts, spirits, skinless dogs, and other undead creatures climbed and covered the darkness like a surging tide.

“A legendary necromancer is truly horrifying, particularly one who grasps the tough legion of the undead. Kritonia is doomed...” Knowing a lot about necromancy, Fernando was quite astounded by what he saw.

For the other legendary classes of the school of necromancy, like the Great Master of Paleness or Demigod-lich, although they also had plenty of “helpers”, they could not compare to the Liege of Death. Those two classes were more focused on mysterious skills and soul attacks.

If the pope hadn't destroyed the Liege of Death's main legion, he would have resisted most legends of Holm on his own. It must be noted that he had two level-three servants of death in his prime days!

The forest was absolutely quiet without any noise. It was both weird and terrifying, making it impossible for them to know the progress of the battle. Therefore, Fernando could only move his eyes back and continue, “A satisfactory answer?”

Did the old fox not mention that only by winning the support of nobles could the organizations that had three legendary sorcerers be convinced to join? Was it another lie?

Arnold looked at him and Douglas and said calmly, “Although His Excellency Tannanois is unsatisfied with the empire's decision and unwilling to go to Aalto to help, as one of the top experts in the world, he understands the situation very well and knows that this is the final chance to save himself!

“While the main force of the Church is stalled by Abel, Dracula, Danisos, and the other legends in the west, he has to save himself! After everything is settled, he will be no better than a rat in the gutter!

“This is the last chance. It is either death or a better life. Everybody knows it very well. Even if I did not greet them, they would've taken some action recently.”

Then, Arnold chuckled. “They did not pay much attention to us at the beginning, but Sharp’s contract inspired me to plan this operation. The real target has always been Kritonia since the very beginning.”

“No wonder you were so enthusiastic about Sharp’s random contract without much confirmation!” Fernando felt even more frustrated that he did not see that. In retrospect, he realized that the old fox was too passionate!

Arnold smiled and did not say anything. Douglas, on the other hand, nodded his head. “Even we were convinced that it was meant to kill Alfonsol. How could Kritonia have suspected us?”

“But what if League was not a traitor, and the Heart of Time did not come?” Fernando already knew that Sharp’s contract was only a disguise to cover the real target, but he still had doubts.

Arnold grimaced like a fox that had just stolen a chicken. “Then, our real target would’ve been Alfonsol. By killing him, we will raise the contradictions between the nobles and the Church to win a living space for ourselves.”

Huh? Fernando looked at Arnold in shock, having trouble following his explanation.

Arnold chuckled. “First of all, you need to remember our path—attract the nobles and sow discord between them and the Church. Therefore, either attacking the Heart of Time or killing Alfonsol is for the purpose, although the former is more effective than the latter.

“If the former cannot be accomplished, the latter will be our Plan B. It’s much more than a disguise.”

Fernando listened attentively and felt that he grasped something essential. For the first time, he wanted the old fox to talk.

Arnold turned his eyes to Douglas and smiled. “In order to achieve a purpose, you cannot create a plan that is so delicate that any accident in any procedure will result in failure because there are too many accidents in actual operations.

“The key to any operation is hiding, pretending, and lying. Hide your real purpose and pretend it to be something else that will actually help you accomplish your real purpose. That’s the only way to avoid your failure because the enemy’s sabotage will only indirectly help you. Both pretending and lying will require the support of detailed intelligence...”

Flying out of the forest, he talked eloquently with his hands behind his back with the utmost ease. Fernando was so stunned that he cursed to himself, This is truly an old fox!

However, why was he not so elaborate before?

Douglas listened carefully and shared similar feelings as Fernando. Until the battle of Antiffler, he had been focused on research and rejected by other sorcerers. He barely had any experience of making plans and arranging operations. He picked up something during his escape, but he was still immature. After hearing Arnold’s interpretation, he immediately felt that he understood a lot of new things.

Realizing something, he asked, “Mr. President, are you teaching me a lesson?”

He called the man respectfully.

Arnold turned around and looked at the forest that was still covered in absolute darkness, before he said with mixed feelings. “However strange your questions are, you are the sorcerer with the greatest potential of leadership in the Union. Fernando is smart enough, but he is too impatient and reckless. So, I need to tell you some of my experience before I die.”

“Old fox!”

“Old fox!”

“Mr. President...”

Arnold raised his hands and stopped them before he went on, “In the war that devastates the sorcerers, so many legends have passed away. Why do you think I am safe? Maybe I’ll be killed by grand cardinals, legendary knights, or night watchers at some point. I am not any luckier than other people. Or maybe in another hundred years, I will die of old age. This is a natural law that cannot be broken unless I become a legendary sorcerer.

“My greatest wish right now is to see the sorcerers back to the supreme place of this world and reestablish a glorious magic empire.”

His eyes did not leave the battlefield of legends, and he said in a low voice, “I wonder if I can live long enough to see that...”

My only wish is to watch you return to supremacy when I am still alive!

His back was slightly hunched, and his white hair was so obvious.

At this moment, an unimaginably dazzling light burst out in the darkness and illuminated the world.

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876 Cooperation

The dark curtain was dissolved, and brightness leaked through the sky. Surging ripples spread out as if they came from the ancient times, wiping all the dust on the way.

In front of time, everything was dust!

In the middle of the ripples, a person passed through the wall made of aurora like a slippery fish and broke out of the heavy siege before the fog of spirits regathered.

The power of time was everywhere!

The person was much dimmer than before, and the pride and confidence could no longer be felt. The moment he left the absolute darkness, he hurried to turn into many hazy rays of light and opened the barrier of space and time, teleporting far away.

Right then, a black enormous scythe, carrying the deepest and heaviest death, slashed from the sky abruptly, as if it had been waiting for the opportunity all the time. It hit the hazy light in the center brutally.

“Ahh!!!”

The miserable screams echoed on everybody’s heart as if they were from the future, making their body tremble.

The light was cut from the middle into two parts.

The former half leaped into the space-time gap that was just torn open without considering anything, and the latter half exploded violently, miring the scythe of death in the thick ocean of time. It was slowed to the minimum.

“Hooooooooo!”

A dragon roared, and a pale fire followed the light and shadow into the gap. Then, the gap was closed, and the space and time were back to normal, except that painful moans were still echoing in the sky.

“He’s not dead?” In the place that they agreed upon, Priscilla found it impossible to close her mouth.

During her escape, she had been paying attention to the battle of top legends. She knew what great powers were trying to kill Kritonia. There were one level-three legendary sorcerer, two level-one legendary sorcerers, one undead creature that equaled level-two legendary, and two undead creatures equaled level-one legendary. Even if the saint in the Radiance Church were here, he would’ve also perished. However, Kritonia had successfully escaped!

Even though he was heavily wounded, he should be proud of himself for being able to escape!

Not far away from her, the needle-like redness in Congus' hollow eye sockets was bouncing intensely. "Is the power of time so remarkable?"

He ascribed the result to the space-time tower that was in the highest place in magic. It had to be noted that the former pope did not use God of Truth when he "killed" the Liege of Death. At that time, nobody knew that the Saint Truth had such a terrifying divine power. It was not until Aflora and her partner, Danisos, two primordial dragons of time, attacked Lance at the invitation of the consul of the Sylvanas Magic Empire that the world finally witnessed the godly power that surpassed everything.

The result was that Aflora, who only backed off to the Dark Mountain Range and never gave in even during the heyday of the Magic Empires, completely perished, and Danisos was heavily wounded even though he only took to the aftermath.

The battle demonstrated the power of God's Arrival, but it also proved the formidableness of the power of space and time, which had forced the former pope to perform God's Arrival.

After that, the former pope and the current pope had each used God's Arrival once, and their opponents were the god of the Sun Church and the Light of Stars. Both of them were the experts of space and time. The Light of Stars, in particular, had the help of the defense of Antiffler that was perfected for almost ten thousand years. He was believed to be the most likely person to resist God's Arrival. However, after one attack, he was killed, and the city was destroyed. All the living sorcerers were intimidated from the bottom of their hearts.

Looking at the closed space-time gap in the sky, Amanata suddenly appeared from the shadow, unable to hide perfectly anymore.

“This... This doesn’t make any sense...” Nielson, who was from the Asso Empire, could not believe that the Liege of Death failed to kill a level-two legendary knight with the help of another two legendary sorcerers!

Besides their shock, they were also disappointed. They thought that Kritonia, a nightmare for the sorcerers of Holm, would end here today, but his capabilities were truly beyond imagination!

Douglas, who was not far away from the meeting place, looked at the sky in slight confusion. He also found it more or less unacceptable. Although he was prepared that Kritonia might escape after the battle, he felt that it was rather unreal after it did happen.

Fernando even exclaimed in shock, “He escaped? Which legend started the research on the space-time bloodline?”

He couldn’t have admired the legend more for developing such a cheating blood power.

“It’s said to be Viken, the King of Calamities. He was definitely among the top three legendary sorcerers who studied bloodline melting. Of course, rumors have it that he was not very good at the power of space and time, and it was co-developed by him and Maskelyne. However, the space-time bloodline never distinguished itself until the mutations in Kritonia, which let people know the preciousness of the space-time blood power...” Arnold explained. He was as casual as before. He was not surprised at all that Kritonia broke out of the siege.

“So, it was Viken and Maskelyne...” Fernando repeated. Before he invoked their titles, he looked at Arnold suspiciously. “Old fox, you don’t seem nervous and disappointed, right?”

“I am very disappointed and nervous,” Arnold replied with a smile.

“I don’t see it.” Fernando glared at Arnold and speculated, “Actually, you intentionally let go of him, didn’t you? Or maybe, did something else happen in the darkness?”

“Haha. How would I know? I wasn’t there,” Arnold said with an innocent look on his face.

Douglas nodded, deep in thought. “In any case, Kritonia also belongs to the nobles, and killing him will raise the panic and counterattack of nobles. It may be better to...”

“Hehe.” Arnold smiled but did not say anything. Pointing at Priscilla who was at the entrance of the cave far away, he said, “Let’s go and talk to them first.”

At this moment, Priscilla also saw Arnold. Immediately, scorching fireballs emerged and flew around her before she grimaced. “Old fox, come here and explain what happened. I promise I won’t beat you!”

“We can already talk well over such a distance.” Arnold scratched his beard and took a step back.

“You owe us an explanation.” Congus flew over. Since he only had bones, it was difficult to tell what was on his mind.

Arnold’s smile was gone. He told everybody what he said to Douglas and Fernando earlier solemnly and sincerely.

“Do you mean that the few legends are willing to work with us? To what extent?” As the leader of an organization, Priscilla had already recovered from the fury of being deceived and began to consider the situation carefully.

Arnold looked at them. “It depends on our negotiation and the countermeasures of the Church. However, it shouldn’t be a problem to reach a preliminary agreement.”

“Yes. Now that a level-nine bishop is killed, the Church will definitely hunt harder. The two grand cardinals and the few legendary knights will all be deployed. We have to stay away for now.” For the first time since he came to the party in Allyn, Nielson spoke in a rather friendly tone and attitude.

Since even the Liege of Death was willing to cooperate and forget the unpleasant experience in the past for now, it seemed unnecessary for him to cling to it.

The moment he finished his sentence, the darkness around suddenly split, and a necromancer with an enormous black scythe floating on his head walked out. He was entirely covered in a black robe. The only thing that could be seen was the two red spots in the shadow of his hood.

Behind him, fuzzy souls were screaming, moaning, and crying around him, as if they were expressing fear and submission.

“You are the dominator of death and the will of immortality.” Arnold, Nielson, Priscilla, Douglas, and the other sorcerers all held their chests and their foreheads while they recited the tributes for the Liege of Death.

Remembering the tributes for every legendary sorcerer was a mandatory subject for every magic apprentice. Thankfully, there weren’t too many legendary sorcerers.

“‘Escape’ is better than death...” The voice of the Liege of Death sounded like from a distant past— weary, gloomy, and lifeless. However, before he finished his sentence, he raised his head abruptly and looked at the sky before he vaguely said, “It has begun...”

It has begun? Including old fox Arnold, all the sorcerers looked at the sky after him.

They saw that the sky, which had been dim and starless previously, turned clear and bright at some point. A dazzling, dreamy silver moon struck the sky with a chilly brilliance.

Then, it was drowned by an infinite light.

“That was...?” All the illusions were gone, and the sky became dark and gloomy again. Having vaguely sensed something, Arnold asked half in panic and half in expectation.

Douglas seemed to have returned to the nightmare in the past. He asked at a loss, “God’s Arrival?”

As far as he knew, God’s Arrival couldn’t be seen by people in other places unless it attacked a target who was at very high altitudes. According to the records, the demigods such as the Lord of Hell and the Will of Abyss could not attack across the continent. However, there was one exception. The battle with the demigod could be seen wherever the silver moon could be seen. That was Alterna, the God of Silver Moon.

“Have the demigods finally been involved?” Priscilla felt that so many things had happened tonight that they did not seem like a coincidence at all!

Fat Nielson asked in a hurry, “Mr. Tannanois, has the Silver Moon blocked God’s Arrival?”

The Liege of Death heaved a long and soft sigh. “The moon has fallen...”

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Chapter 877 Reaction

“The moon has fallen?” Both Arnold and Douglas were greatly surprised by the Liege of Death’s sigh. They both raised their heads and looked at the dark sky. Their eyes glittered in different colors with magic, which allowed them to see through the clouds and catch the chilly, hazy moon!

The moon hadn’t really fallen!

The sorcerers were greatly relieved and canceled the vision effect provided by magic. If Demigod Alterna, who allegedly would never die as long as the moon was high, was killed by God’s Arrival, they would not stand a chance at all!

However, according to what the Liege of Death said just now, even the Silver Moon failed to block God’s Arrival?

Even a demigod could not resist an attack of God’s Arrival?

After feeling lucky briefly, they were grasped by intense disappointment and confusion. Priscilla, Nielson, Congus, and the other sorcerers were very frustrated. Was the pope so powerful? Was it possible at all to defeat him? Did the Liege of Death feel frustrated too? In his prime years, the pope never bothered to perform “God’s Arrival” on him, not to mention right now!

“Let’s go back now and discuss other things after the Church’s counterattack is over.” A hazy mist rose before the Liege of Death. After the mist faded, he vanished.

Arnold calmed down and resumed his smile. “Whatever the pope does, we have to do what we have to do. Maybe he has to pay a high price to use God’s Arrival... Doesn’t he? We must lie low and do not take any action for a while. However, we must pay attention to the relationship changes between the nobles and the Church.”

“We aren’t that stupid although we have indeed been fooled once,” Priscilla snorted. “You said that the grand nobles such as the Blue Demon would be inclined to help us. I hope that we can see something soon!”

She was bewildered by the beautiful prospect before!

Looking at the other people who obviously wanted to beat him up, Arnold smiled dryly. “Rest assured. There won’t be a problem. We will observe and contact Sharp closely.”

“We will be on our way.” Priscilla held herself back from throwing a giant fireball at the man. She raised her head and looked at the sky while sighing gloomily. “I don’t know when we can see the dawn...”

“After the dawn, there will be a surging tide...” Nielson’s ruby eyes carried vague depression and sadness. His tone was different from Priscilla’s, as he was concerned about the Church’s retaliation.

Arnold chuckled. “Even Mr. Tannanois is not anxious. Why should we be? He will be the primary target for the Church after all this.”

The Liege of Death’s attitude just now made him feel that things might change, and the Church’s counterattack might not be too strong.

“I hope you are not lying this time,” Priscilla said casually and flew back into the Tower of Destroyers that had already turned transparent.

After the other sorcerers left, Douglas finally opened his mouth. “Could League have revealed the place where Allyn is buried?”

“No!” Arnold replied without any hesitation, as if he had been following League and knew everything.

Sensing his confidence, Fernando was greatly enlightened. “Brain Scourge and Memory Meddling... Since a long time ago, League has... Old fox, you lied to me again!”

He was too young and inexperienced, and his smartness could not make up for his personality flaws yet. So, he could not help but feel he was too naive to believe the old fox’s explanation!

“If you still get tricked by me more often now, few people will be able to trick you in the future.” Arnold looked at him gently. “Look at Douglas. He sensed something earlier, but he pretended that he did not know it because it did not affect him at all. Instead of unveiling me, he asked questions when he needed to.”

After Fernando’s teacher passed away, he had been learning on his own, but he also received a lot of guidance from his teacher’s good friend, President Arnold. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have become a seventh-circle sorcerer at such a young age at all!

Of course, he was only young compared to other senior-rank sorcerers.

“The day will come when I listen to your lies and enjoy them as jokes,” Fernando admitted that the old fox had a point, but he was reluctant to openly acknowledge it.

Douglas smiled warmly. “I’m relieved after confirming that. Mr. President, I will stay in Allyn for the time being. If you have magic questions or any experience in plan-making that you would like to teach me, please come to Allyn. Of course, if I have questions, I will also write to you.”

He had basically figured out Arnold’s personalities. Not as restrained as before, he made fun of the guy.

“The youngsters nowadays have fewer and fewer manners. I have to come to Allyn in person?” Arnold intentionally sighed. Although Douglas was rather old, he was still a young man compared to Arnold who had lived almost a thousand years. “Fine. Just don’t tear Allyn down. I’m planning to study it when I have time.”

Then, he turned around and looked at Fernando. “You keep in touch with Old Green and watch over Sharp. Whether the Church kills him or not, the situation will still be in our favor. Hehe, Fernando, if there’s a chance, you should turn into a girl with that belt and work as Hathaway’s governess.”

“Get lost!” Fernando roared angrily. He vaguely understood why Kritonia was let go of. However, he couldn’t have gotten out of this so easily, could he?

...

In the forest where the fog was lingering, the Liege of Death roamed with the black scythe floating above his head. He had returned to the place.

“How is the Silver Moon?” He suddenly spoke to the dark, rotten forest where nobody was around with his usual voice that sounded like from a grave.

“Based on the blood ties, I sense that the wounds are not fatal, but the recovery will take a long time.” The empty darkness suddenly rolled and gathered into a person. He wore a red shirt and a black jacket with a collar that reached his head. His silver hair dangled to his shoulder. His eyes were as attractive as the moon in the sky. His face was flawless and even more beautiful than the ladies’. One might even say that it was eccentric.

He looked at the Liege of Death with a smile and said regretfully, “Why does every legendary sorcerer of the school of necromancy make themselves so creepy and hideous? What a pure and innocent young man you were when I just met you...”

“How is the pope?” The Liege of Death had long learned to ignore the guy’s meaningless topic.

“After Tria was occupied, he returned to Lance. Maybe we can look forward to certain situations.” The silver-haired man shook his head. “Abel is dead, and I am very sad, but I am even sadder about your current look. What a shame...”

“Abel is dead? Dracula must be very happy...” The Liege of Death was briefly stunned.

...

In the Radiance Church in Rentato...

“The Liege of Death joined hands with the Witch of Iceland and the Eye of Curse? He has recovered to level three?” Same as all the other men of the Gusta Empire, ‘Graceful Angel’ Francois had a thick beard. His face had been worn out by time, but his green eyes did not age at all and remained profound and sacred.

He seized the key of Kritonia’s report very quickly.

Kritonia coughed. “Yes. Without him, neither the Witch of Iceland nor the Eye of Curse would’ve caused any trouble. Most of my current wounds were made by him.”

His body had been cut from the waist, with only half left. The flesh was wriggling and growing, trying to recuperate, but it only decayed into stinky, yellowish pus nonstop.

Francois performed ‘God’s Healing’ while he asked about the details of the battle. In the end, he nodded his head. “You were the only one who could’ve escaped by bursting out the power of space and time. If it were me, I must’ve died already.”

The red robes who were summoned were astounded first and then infuriated. The sorcerers, who were being chased after like stray dogs, were bold enough to set up Alfonsol and attack the Heart of Time?

They were outraged now that their sense of superiority was broken. They shouted, “Lord Francois, we must let the sorcerers know that the world belongs to the Lord now!”

“My lord, order the legendary knights in all countries to take action! All the sorcerers involved in this must be judged!”

“Let’s restore the previous rules. Nobles or not, all the suspects should be captured and burnt!”

“Sharp must be sentenced for betraying the Lord and conspiring with the sorcerers to kill Alfonsol!”

“Lord Francois, please send me to capture Sharp!”

They urged, trying to vent their fury and judge the blasphemous nobles and sorcerers.

Looking at them calmly, Francois did not open his mouth until they all calmed down. “It was only Sharp’s random contract. He hoped that the sorcerers would leave after realizing the gap between them and us. There’s no evidence that he was directly involved in the operation to assassinate Alfonsol.”

“But in any case, it was blasphemy and betrayal that he did not kill the sorcerers on the spot! He deserves to be burnt!” A giant of the Inquisition shouted.

“He’s a noble and one of the Sword of Truth’s most trusted subordinates,” Francois said at ease.

Another red robe said regretfully, “So what? Without us, they would’ve been the sorcerers’ dogs. It is the Lord who gives them a new life and their current position, and this is how they are repaying the Lord? We must let the nobles know that the Lord is supreme and that they have no privileges before the Lord! Lord Francois, ask for the help of His Holiness. Since some of the nobles are untrustworthy, we should purge them at the same time.”

He also knew that they were short of hands to accomplish the mission, so he encouraged Francois to ask for the reinforcement of saints from the pope.

“I can absolutely understand your fury. I want to judge the Liege of Death and Sharp as much as you do,” Francois said peacefully before he suddenly changed the topic. “However, there is something that I have to tell you. Last night, Abel and Dracula, two top legendary vampires, attacked the pope together, and the Silver Moon took action, too...”

Huh?

Everybody was shocked. They looked at Francois in confusion. Had His Holiness died?

His face unchanged, Francois said, “Having no choice, His Holiness used God’s Arrival twice in a row. He killed Abel and heavily wounded the Silver Moon. However, due to his poor conditions, he has returned to Lance, and the war westwards has been stuck in Tria.”

Then, he sighed. “It’s possible that we will have a new pope very soon.”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 878 The Change of the Nobles’ Attitude

Rentato’s night was no different from any other cities’. Except for the cathedrals and the district of nobles that were illuminated by the everlasting light, the other places only had the light of the moon or the stars. Therefore, at such a pitch-dark night, Rentato was particularly cold and gloomy. The only thing that could be seen was the occasional lanterns.

“Blue Grace” Sharp stood next to the window in his bedroom and looked at the darkness outside attentively, as if the darkness that had nothing worth appreciating was the greatest significance of his life.

He raised his right hand and touched the lump on his nose. His vigorous blue eyes carried slight uneasiness. Other people might not know that Alfonsol, a giant of the Inquisition, had already left to hunt the sorcerers of the Tower of Destroyers. However, as the deputy captain of the Sword of Truth’s Knights and one of the king’s most trusted subordinates, he had enough sources for him to learn the fact. Therefore, he was waiting for an outcome.

Dum, dum, dum.

Somebody rushed close fast, with the thudding noises of iron boots and the clinking noises of his armor.

“Captain...” The knight who came to deliver the message breathed heavily. It took him only one minute to reach Lord Sharp’s villa. “The Heart of Time is back, heavily wounded. Alfonsol and all the clerics and night watchers he brought were killed!”

“The Heart of Time?” Unusually, Sharp failed to control his face. He was puzzled why Kritonia was involved in all this.

“The message is from the Radiance Church, but the details are unknown.” The knight said in a hurry, “Captain, Kritonia accuses you of conspiring with the sorcerers to kill Alfonsol. He said that he came late and could only save his own life. He apparently wants you dead!”

The royal family had bribed a lot of bishops of the Holm parish, who were not strong or prominent but could deliver intelligence at the critical moments.

“Alfonsol saw through it. Or maybe somebody sold the operation plan to Kritonia. However, if he was involved, why is Alfonsol still dead, and why was he heavily wounded...” Sharp was in such confusion that he forgot he was in danger himself. He could not figure out the reason at all.

The knight suddenly fell on his knees; his armor bashing into the floor heavily. He cried, “Captain, you should run! The Church won’t let go of you! They need a scapegoat for their failure! They will set you on fire! As long as you hide until His Majesty is back, you will be innocent again!”

After a brief silence, Sharp held back his confusion and worries and said to his subordinate with his usual leadership, “If I run, it will mean that I admit my crimes. I don’t believe that the Church will sentence a duke to death with no evidence except for the jibber-jabber of the sorcerers, which would chill and terrify all the nobles.”

It was one of the scenarios he had in mind in case the operation failed and a sorcerer confessed after being captured. He had been prepared for that and believed nothing would happen to him

under the king's protection. The only thing that bothered him was that the accusation was from Kritonia, another duke and a legendary knight. It was much more powerful than he imagined!

Clang!

The window quivered, and a cluster of fire penetrated through, turning into a brawny, tough-looking man in short hair.

"Captain, run now! Some red robe proposed to capture you!" He was "Demon Igniter" Gourcuff.

Sharp clenched his right fist, but he was still calm. "Don't worry. It's just regular capture and interrogation. They have no evidence. I'll be fine. If I run now, I will never be able to explain myself."

"My lord, you cannot trust the Church. In the past, they judged many nobles that they were only suspicious of and sentenced them to death!" While Gourcuff admired the deputy captain for being so calm and steady in such a dangerous moment, he was still quite anxious because Francois might be on his way!

Sharp shook his head and grabbed the hilt of his longsword. "They are all nobles below the rank of an earl, and I am a duke accoladed by His Majesty in person."

"My lord..." Gourcuff almost decided to drag the deputy captain to flee, but Sharp's determined attitude made him hesitate. "Why don't you hide in the Nekso Palace for now? I don't think the Church dares to break in. You can wait until His Majesty returns."

“About that...” Sharp was tempted.

At this moment, a bolt of lightning struck in the sky, and a young man who had few strands of hair, which were all standing, appeared in his bedroom. He was surrounded by silver electric arcs, and his pupils and his skin were in the unusual silver colors. “My lord, the Radiance Church has decided not to capture you. Instead, a red robe is sent to appease you.”

He was another one of Sharp’s deputies, “Argent Punishment” Cesc.

“What?” It was Gourcuff and the knight who came earliest who exclaimed in shock.

“Did something happen?” Sharp, as their leader, was equally astonished, but he still pretended to be cool on the surface.

Cesc shrugged. “I don’t know. We haven’t received any updates yet. Maybe they just decided to respect the nobles...”

His words were full of intense sarcasm.

Very soon, a red robe indeed came and forwarded Francois’ comfort to Sharp. He was told that the Liege of Death set up a trap, heavily wounding Kritonia and killing the clerics including Alfonsol, and that the evil sorcerer intentionally disseminated that the two of them were in cooperation. It was an attempt to sabotage the relationship between the Church and the nobles, but the Graceful Angel was a saint favored by the Lord. Smart and righteous, he was not affected by the rumors at all. Sharp was asked to trust the justice of the Lord.

After seeing the red robe off with a smile, Sharp went into the bedroom, his face graver than ever. He said to his subordinates, “Something else must’ve happened! Find out what it is!”

He had basically understood that the operation was the sorcerers’ trap and that their target was not Alfonsol at all but the Heart of Time. Even the Liege of Death, a top legend in the past, was involved. It was dozens of times more serious than he anticipated! So, he couldn’t have passed it so easily without the other factors. There must have been something great that was much more important than what happened here last night.

After the three subordinates left, Sharp paced back and forth, not even in the mood to appreciate the dark night anymore. His vague anxiety spread out beyond his control.

The sky suddenly flashed with a flash of lightning, and Cesc appeared in the bedroom.

Holding back his agitation, Sharp tried to maintain his image as a leader. “What have you got?”

“A great battle took place in Tria. His Holiness used God’s Arrival twice in a row. ‘Silver Moon’ Alterna was beaten back and heavily wounded, and Abel was killed...” Cesc said in shock.

“What?” Sharp exclaimed aloud, unable to retain his image. The Silver Moon took action and got defeated?

Having no time to repeat himself, Cesc went on, “However, the pope returned to Lance due to poor conditions. Legendary sorcerers, vampire princes, and primordial dragons flew past Tria and directly launched an attack at Lance. The battle was quite intense.”

It was more detailed than what Francois said because new intelligence had come from Lance.

“That explains a lot...” Sharp said in a low voice. He then comforted Cesc who was in a panic. “Unless a demigod takes action, it is not so easy to break into Lance. After the Excellencies in Tria return, the situation will be steady again, except that it remains to be seen how badly hurt His Holiness is...”

Very soon, Gourcuff also returned. “Captain, The Angel King arrived in the Holy City and resisted the attacks of Danisos, Dracula, the elven queen, the Sun King, and the other legendary experts with... with God’s Guard.”

This “Sun King” was only a level-three legendary expert and wasn’t Thanos.

“Captain, His Majesty, Saint Griffith, Saint Ivan, the Shield of Truth, Rudolf and other people have returned from Tria and beat the sorcerers’ attack.” The first knight came last with the latest news.

“His Holiness did not take action. It seems that he is really in bad condition...” Sharp analyzed in a low voice. Suddenly, he burst into laughter. “No wonder they let go of me so easily. At this moment, this side of the strait is in desperate need of the aid of nobles, and so is the war in the west!”

“Yes, congratulations, captain,” the first knight said in delight.

In a great mood, Sharp looked at his trusted subordinates and said, “Not having to be judged is not the happiest thing for me. Do you know what I’m happiest about?”

“The dilemma in the war of the west?” Gourcuff replied in uncertainty.

“The Silver Moon is heavily wounded?” The first knight still admired the Church, the pope, and God’s Arrival.

After a brief silence, Cesc said, “Captain, are you happy because the two incidents demonstrated the power of nobles that even the grand cardinals have to be wary of and treat carefully?”

“Yes.” Sharp turned back and looked out of the window. Too many secrets were hidden in the darkness. “It is not until today that I know how strong we are. Even though I am really to blame for Alfonsol’s death, there is nothing they can do about me.”

Now that their deputy captain had openly stated his attitude and confessed his crime, the three knights looked at each other and all fell on one of their knees. “Nobles are supreme!”

...

“Abel and Dracula set up a trap and attacked the pope. Then, she used herself as the bait to consume the pope’s ‘God’s Arrival’. In the end, she asked Abel and Dracula to kill the pope who had been weakened. It was a sound plan. However, the Silver Moon’s heart is much softer than I thought. Was she not scared that she would be erased by ‘God’s Arrival’? Or maybe, was she so confident about the demigods’ immortality? Also, why was she so certain that the pope could not perform God’s Arrival twice in a row?” After hearing the simple but effective plan from the Silver-Eyed Count, the Liege of Death asked tentatively with mixed feelings.

The gorgeous vampire known as the Silver-Eyed Count replied with a smile, “Because she knows a thing or two about the power and the sequela of God’s Arrival. The Primordial Ancestor observed the battle of Antiffler the whole time even though she was not involved, and she spent a lot of time there afterward. It’s a pity that she still misjudged a bit.”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 879 Arnold's Arrangemen

In the underwater relic in the Land of Thousand Lakes...

After he returned from the forest, Douglas did not immediately go to where Allyn was buried but stayed with Arnold and Fernando for news from Rentato. Only after he learned the intensity of the Church's counterattack and the ending of Sharp could he study the City in the Sky in peace, knowing that none of the sorcerers who were in the meeting was captured and revealed the location of Allyn. Since the city had crashed, it was barely possible to move it away without causing great noises.

"Mr. President, the Heart of Time has left the Radiance Church and returned to his villa in the city. The Church did not arrest the Blue Demon." A sorcerer reported to Arnold about the situation in Rentato. They had no spies in the Church and among the big nobles, so they could only learn the surface.

Scratching his beard, Arnold nodded. "Kritonia learned everything from League. He must've told it to Francois. However, it is quite weird that the Church did not arrest and interrogate Sharp, or even execute him directly. Something must've happened. Perhaps it's a ramification of the battle between the pope and the Silver Moon..."

He tried to figure out the reason, but this place was too far away from Aalto, Tria, and Lance. Unlike the Church, which had deployed divine power circles that could transmit voices among the important cities, the sorcerers had limited intelligence. So, they could only propose speculations.

“Whatever the reason is, the Church at least made a compromise to the nobles this time. It is important to help their ambitions grow,” Douglas said peacefully and delightedly.

“That’s why I said that we would be benefited whether or not the Church kills Sharp,” Arnold said with a smile. Then, he turned to Fernando. “You should stop going to Old Green’s for now. Sharp must’ve known that we took advantage of him. It’s better to leave him alone while he is angry.”

Then, he grimaced and said, “Fernando, Earl Paphos happens to be in Rentato. You can go ask him if he has figured out where the nobles’ position comes from and how strong they are. Also, you can ask him about the situation in Aalto and figure out the outcome of the battle between the pope and the Silver Moon.”

At such moments, the nobles had much more abundant sources of intelligence. Who could have provided more information than them?

“Earl Paphos?” After a brief stun, Fernando frowned. “Do I need to put on that belt again?”

Arnold laughed. “Why? You don’t like it? I think you were quite interested in it before. You were even studying how to improve the belt.”

Fernando cackled dryly. “Life is so short compared to death. So, why not try different experiences in the finite life?”

“However, even the most interesting experiences will become boring in the end. Only the mysteries of the world and magic are always attractive.” Douglas did not know anything about the gender-transitioning belt and therefore simply offered his view.

Arnold laughed aloud and did not say anything else.

.....

It was the middle of a night, but Earl Paphos' villa was as lively as during the day.

Many knights came and left, taking advantage of the darkness of the night. They exchanged their intelligence and confirmed each other's attitude, not resting at all. It was only because what happened tonight was too appalling for them to take any break. Who could've thought that Duke Sharp would assassinate Alfonsol with sorcerers? Who could've known that Kritonia learned it in advance and attempted to kill all the sorcerers? And who could've foreseen that the formidable "Heart of Time" would be caught in a trap and suffered the most brutal failure since he distinguished himself?

A tornado would definitely be raised after such an incident, and the common nobles like them risked losing everything. So, how could they not be panicked and ask for the attitudes of their lieges and higher nobles?

That was the reason why Earl Paphos' house was so lively.

Fatigue appeared on Earl Paphos' face as he watched a few subordinate nobles leave. For a radiant knight like him, it was nothing to deal with a few sleepless nights. What exhausted him was his mind. He had to adjust his stance according to the latest intelligence, the Church's attitude, and the other grand nobles' response, in case things went bad in the emergency.

"My lord, since the Church sent a red robe to appease Lord Sharp, I don't think anything bad will happen. This is the grace of the Lord. The scheme of the evils won't work out." The last noble in the living room bowed and was ready to leave. He was Earl Paphos' trusted subordinate.

Earl Paphos did not hide his exhaustion before his subordinate. “The outcome would’ve been different if it weren’t for the battles in Tria and Lance. We are strong, but we are also weak.”

The noble, who felt exactly the same, sighed. “Yes, my lord. The Church’s compromise makes us feel strong, but the real reason for their compromise only makes us feel weak. If... If His Majesty and the rest of them indeed crush the army of sorcerers, vampires, dragons, and elves, we...”

He stopped, fearing that night watchers might be hiding around, and bid his farewell.

Looking at the slowly closed gate, Earl Paphos had a lot of mixed feelings. Without the enemies such as sorcerers and vampires, was it necessary for the Church to respect or keep the nobles? The changed attitude of the clerics in the past hundred years had proved everything! It was just like what the hot beautiful sorceress said. Sorcerers were the nobles’ enemy, but the nobles’ status also boiled down to sorcerers!

Suddenly, he turned around and looked at the darkness out of the window. “Come in now that you are here.”

“I can’t without the host’s permission.” A magnetic female voice echoed, and the glass on the window protruded inward, as if someone invisible were crawling out of the bubble.

But very soon, a petite girl in a red magic robe walked out, and the glass was back to normal.

Earl Paphos was not in a great mood, but the girl was as bright as fire. He said solemnly, “Why are you here?”

“Hey, do you not know why I am here? I don’t remember that you are such an idiot, are you?” Fernando felt that his sarcasm had turned milder after he transformed into a female. “We talked before. Now, I would like to know if you have figured out the source of the nobles’ status and how strong you are.”

Earl Paphos’ eyes had the unique gold vertical pupils resembling those of dragons. He looked at Fernando and said slowly, “My answer is not important. What matters is that you are too weak. Even though the Liege of Death recovers, you will still be weak. I will not go after anything that will inevitably fail.”

What happened today completely showed him the position and power of the nobles. However, although he had realized it, he was unwilling to share his answer with the sorcerers, and he pointed out the central issue straightforwardly.

Fernando was quite satisfied with his attitude. It at least showed the Earl Paphos was willing to communicate with him, which was a good sign for cooperation. He smiled. “We are weak, but the coalition army of sorcerers, vampires, dragons, and elves is not. If the nobles drift away, the Church will only be able to preserve itself. Of course, we do not need you to risk working with us for now. We only hope to get a bit of help so that we will have time to grow until you realize that we are not too weak to cooperate with you.”

“It takes much more time for sorcerers to grow than it does for clerics,” Earl Paphos said without giving an answer.

Sensing Earl Paphos’ concerns, Fernando did not pursue the topic further but asked, “I’m told that battles took place in Tria and Lance?”

“Yes, the Silver Moon, Abel, and Dracula attacked the pope together...” After considering briefly, Earl Paphos told him everything he knew.

Fernando was surprised and excited while he mocked in silence. Providing intelligence was exactly what he meant by “a bit of help”. Although the earl did not agree to the cooperation openly, his action showed that he already did.

.....

“The pope did not take action, but the coalition army was still unable to break into Lance. Only one grand cardinal and one legendary knight were killed before they were completely suppressed. The Church is truly appallingly powerful...” Arnold received some intelligence through other sources and confirmed what Fernando had learned. Even so, he was still very shocked, finding it hard to believe that the Church was already so strong!

Except for clerics and nobles, most of the legends in the world had been gathered, but they still could not defeat the Church that had lost the pope, even though the Church had left plenty of grand cardinals and legendary knights in Holm, the Boundless Ocean, and other places in case the remaining sorcerers and ocean legends stir trouble.

It was truly a devastating fact!

“If the pope recovers, or if the new pope is crowned, the coalition army will probably collapse when God’s Arrival is available again,” Douglas said in concern. The Church was insurmountable right now, and the situation would only be worse when the pope was involved.

Arnold nodded. “We can only hope that the Silver Moon recovers before the pope does or the new pope becomes a demigod. Then, a balance will be forged again.”

“It’s not something we can control,” Douglas said with a self-mocking smile. “It seems that the counterattack this time won’t be too strong. Only the remaining legendary knights and grand cardinals will be gathered at most. Mr. President, I’ll go to Allyn now.”

“Alright. Don’t be lazy. Try to figure out something!” Arnold told him as if they had known each other for a long time. Then, he looked at Fernando. “I hope that you can go to Aalto and Tria to figure out the situation and who between Griffith and Ivan is more likely to be the new pope. Also, I would like you to find some talented young sorcerers and convince them to join us. After all, they are not qualified to participate in a war of legends.”

Throne of Magical Arcana

Chapter 88o Different People

The half mountain full of cracks was squeezed by rocks and mud, and almost none of the circuits and symbols on it were complete. The buildings were also broken except for those that were constructed later on.

A dozen sorcerers lived inside the city that seemed to have completely been destroyed. They were so few that they did not bring any liveliness to the place, which was still as quiet and grim as a graveyard.

“Allyn...” Floating in the middle of the mountain, Douglas called it using the Sylvanasian tongue. Even though he had seen it once, he still felt the insuppressible shock, excitement, and eagerness.

He flew to the ground of Allyn. Under the direction of a few respectful sorcerers, he walked to the central magic tower, where only one third of the building still stood now. Through the long pathway, he went deep into the City in the Sky, where the cores of all mysteries and the power source of the flight lay. Of course, they were all too seriously destroyed to show what they looked like at the beginning.

“My research has begun.”

Douglas said to himself when he went to the underground world. One of the important reasons why he came to Holm instead of Aalto was the floating city that he always dreamed about.

The questions that haunted him for years both when he was awake and in his dreams would be best answered here.

Stepping on the gray stone stairs, he went down slowly, and his back disappeared into the darkness at the entrance. Everything fell silent again.

.....

The night before the dawn was particularly dark. There did not seem to be any light.

Kritonia sat in the hall of his villa with the longsword flashing on his legs.

After being treated by Francois, he had already got rid of the lingering curse and recovered his body. However, his blood power was so weak that even the common knights could see it. It would take some time before he returned to his peak state.

“Kritonia, isn’t the Liege of Death old?” A wind passed by, and a mocking voice echoed.

The invisible wind landed and gathered into a tall, slim man. His hair, his skin, and every line on his body gave the feeling of the blowing wind. Both his hair and his pupils were in weird transparency.

“Raymond, he is old, but do you dare to fight him again?” Kritonia replied casually.

The legendary knight was “Ceaseless Wind” Raymond, the grand duke of the Duchy of Calais, which used to be part of the Asso Empire. Therefore, he had the deepest reverence for the Liege of Death. When he was told that the Heart of Time, who hadn’t been close to him, was heavily wounded by the sorcerer, he mocked him on purpose.

“Hehe.” Raymond sat on the couch. “Francois asked us to take action and teach the hiding rats a lesson that they will never forget.”

He came under the instruction of the Graceful Angel. The other few legendary knights were on their way over too.

“He did not ask you to take action; he asked you to work for me.” Kritonia raised his head proudly while a vague disdain appeared on his young face. “I am the one most favored by the Lord and the strongest knight on this side of the straight other than the king. That’s why the Lord adores me and the Church trusts and lets me command you.”

“Are we not favored by the Lord?” Raymond said back. He knew that Kritonia was arrogant, but he never knew that the guy could be so unfriendly.

“This is the Graceful Angel’s order. You have no choice except to obey!” Kritonia was completely on the Church’s side, treating the other legendary knights as his subordinates.

Raymond always considered himself a knight of manners, but he still said angrily, “Who do you think we are? Puppies under your command?”

“Not puppies, but lambs of the Lord. We, the servants, will rein you however we see fit,” Kritonia responded as arrogantly as before.

“Good, very good! Don’t forget that you are a noble knight too!” Enraged, Raymond almost wanted to kill the jackass.

Kritonia scorned at him. “I can become a divine knight at any moment.”

“You!” Raymond decided to defend his dignity and honor with battle.

At this moment, the gate was opened again, and a cluster of darkness that seemed to contain infinite disasters surged in.

“Hehe.” Raymond held back the urge to fight again.

.....

Inside the Radiance Church where the transmission circle was deployed...

Francois had been staying in the place to get the messages from Lance as soon as possible. He was also ready to return to the Holy City.

“They will definitely hide after they kill Alfonsol and heavily wound Kritonia. Therefore, as long as we don’t mess up, the situation will be steady for the time being,” Francois said to Kanunell, the red robe who took over the Inquisition recently.

Kanunell lowered his head and said respectfully, “Yes, your prediction is very accurate. I just received the intelligence from someone important. The order from the Liege of Death to the Union of Sorcerers, the Tower of Destroyers, the Supreme Soul, and the other magic organizations is to lie low until the counterattack of the Church is over.”

“Very good.” Francois nodded his head and kept looking at the transmission circle where holy light was surging out.

.....

Amid a tall magic tower was the black fog where transparent, hideous faces were emerging. The magic tower was pitch black like a tombstone. There was only shimmering light on the top floor.

The light came from a silver candlestick. Tannanois, the Liege of Death who was covered in a cloak, looked at the unopened book before him quietly. The words on the cover suggested that it might be from the Meshkate Empire.

“The Secret Research of Previous Sorcerers on the Original Body”.

.....

After a long journey, Fernando finally landed. He was close to Tria in the northwest of the Holy City. It was the area with the most legendary experts. Therefore, he dared not fly in the sky carelessly.

This was a narrow, long territory. The Holy City lay in the southeast, the North Province of the Holy Heilz Empire lay in the northeast, Aalto—the last camp of the Magic Empire—lay in the southwest, the battlefield of Tria lay in the northwest, and the heresies who worshiped the Mother God of the Earth lay in the north. Further north, it was the Schachran Empire that was completely controlled by the Saint Truth.

“The Angel King, Griffith, Ivan, and Rudolf are four top legends. Plus the Sword of Truth and the Shield of Truth that are as good as top legends, as well as five seraphs and more than eight level-three saints, the Church is terrifyingly powerful to resist all the other forces combined, not to mention that they have the aid of the allies...” Fernando traveled in the area in the form of a mouse and recalled the intelligence he obtained recently, both frustrated and somewhat angry.

He didn’t even count the saints, the grand cardinals, and the legendary knights that did not participate in the war!

“Is it impossible to defeat the Church without letting in the devils from hell and the demons from the abyss?” Fernando thought. His heart was in a mess.

Suddenly, he discovered that the tallest building in the city up ahead was trembling violently. In the places governed by the Church, the tallest building could only be the cathedral!

“What’s going on? Have the legends launched another attack?” The coalition army had been driven back to Tria by the forces of the Church after they were gathered. That was why Fernando speculated as such.

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“You have the intelligence on the headquarters of Red Eye?” Kritonia looked at the night watcher before him solemnly.

The night watcher lowered his head. “Yes. It’s from reliable sources.”

He knew that the legendary knight before him had just been trapped. So, he introduced his sources and the specific content carefully.

Kritonia picked up his longsword and said in a hurry, “They must be evacuating. I’ll go and block them now. Inform Raymond to come with me.”

“Yes, Your Excellency,” the night watcher replied, not surprised at all.

The hazy light moved among the clouds and soon reached a plain-looking city.

Kritonia shouted, “Evil sorcerers, die now!”

He turned into an overwhelming river of time and fell at the center of the city.

Nielson, who had yet to evacuate, thought that he was doomed when he saw the light.

However, after the time washed him like water, he was still living in this world, and so were the senior-rank sorcerers next to him. Only an eighth-circle sorcerer was killed. Of course, the Red Eye sorcerers further away from him had all collapsed to the ground. They seemed to have been dead for years!

“Has the Heart of Time been weakened into a non-legend now?” It was Nielson’s first thought, but very soon, he saw that Kritonia turned around and shouted at the outside of the city, “You can never run away!”

What? Nielson suddenly realized what was going on. He dragged the senior-rank sorcerers next to him to escape in a different direction. That was the Plan B of their evacuation.

Soon after they left, Raymond and the other legendary knights arrived. Kritonia said to them expressionlessly, “We’re late. The leaders have run away. Only the dozens or so low-rank sorcerers failed to escape.”

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The Liege of Death put down the thick book in his hands and took out a mirror that was covered in deep darkness from his magic pouch.

He touched the mirror, and it gradually became clear. The scene on it was a room that had a cross.

In the Radiance Church, where Kritonia was treated, the shadow in the corner was suddenly enlivened. It was dark and twisted, just like the curse on Kritonia's wounds back then.

The Liege of Death extended his right hand and pressed the mirror. His body blurred and melted into it.

The shadow wriggled and stood up. It became the Liege of Death that was fully covered in the cloak.

Red lights flashed on his fuzzy face, and he locked onto Francois who was near the transmission circle.

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After the end of a session of research, Douglas returned to the ground and sat on a rock while watching the sky turn dark.

"The sun rises in the east and sets in the west, but why?" Douglas was still murmuring. He was too fascinated by everything.

In the west, the setting sun dyed the horizon red.