

Release that Witch... and Wizard?!

Disclaimer: All characters here are at least 18. Hogwarts starts later, so by the time Harry arrives, he's 19. Cheng Yen (陈嫣) was in her mid-20s before waking up in the 21-year-old body of Garcia Wimbledon. Witches gain their first awakening upon adulthood, at 18 years of age.

Story Starts

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Chapter 1.1 -

The Witch and the Wizard

For a period, Garcia locked herself in her study, where she thoroughly reviewed the memories she had gained of this new world, and had snacks sent directly to her—courtesy of Tyre.

Granted a second chance, she now had a strong desire to live on—smothering her fear and discomfort in this unfamiliar world, one stripped of nearly all the comforts of the modern era.

She knew well that if she wished to blend in and avoid suspicion, she needed information—and quickly. Yet aside from scattered memories of idle play and debauchery, her inherited recollections offered little of real substance.

The Garcia whose body she now wore had spent her youth in games and petty rebellions—after the series of failures in trying to curry favour from her three elder brothers. Childhood tutors had attempted to instil lessons of court and kingdom: the aristocracy, the kingdom's politics, their neighbours across its borders, and even its diplomacy.

Garcia pressed her hand to her temples and let out a groan, slumping over. Bleakness seeped into everything—the girl’s disgraced name, the tangled predicament, the grey, lifeless town outside.

How was she supposed to rule Border Town with nothing but an engineering degree?

‘Would my political science electives even help me?’ she wondered, laying her head against the desk, cheek flat on the hardwood as she summoned the interface in her mind.

‘If nothing else, I can at least read Wikipedia while I sort through these memories.’ The interface obliged at once, morphing the screen into the page on feudalism.

“Feudalism, also known as the feudal system, was a combination of legal, economic, military, cultural, and political customs that flourished in medieval Europe from the 9th to 15th centuries. Broadly defined, it was a way of structuring society around relationships derived from the holding of land in exchange for service or labour.

The classic definition, by François Louis Ganshof (1944), describes a set of reciprocal legal and military obligations of the warrior nobility and revolved around...”

‘No, this isn’t the answer.’ Garcia thought, when everything was stacked against her, why should she play by the rules? There was no omniscient moderator to stop her from stacking the deck—especially when she had access to some modern knowledge.

She first thought of offering this knowledge to her elder brothers—after all, they understood politics far better than she did and had the respect of the nobles—but dismissed the thought. She had never got along with them, and teaming with her younger sister was out of the question, too. This body’s past self had treated her poorly.

She recalled more about them: the First Prince, a formidable fighter; the second, sinister and scheming; the third, aggressive and savage; the fifth sister, a genius.

She rose from her desk, a flicker of resolve hardening her gaze. The interface shimmered in response to her intent, flicking to a new page.

She knew nothing of the extent of her siblings' power. From her memories, it was clear that after only three months in Border Town, the nobles had already stopped concealing their disdain. They weren't afraid to flaunt their contempt—some even tried to take liberties with her, confident the disgraced Fourth Princess had no bite.

Fortunately, beyond a few half-hearted attempts to tempt her military aide, Carter Lannis—Mr Handsome-but-has-an-awful-chin-beard—she had not yet unleashed debauchery in Border Town. Still too bitter from her punishment, plus Tyre had been her outlet instead.

On that point, she was fortunate. When she left King's City, her father had assigned her two aides—one for civil matters, one for military—without whom Border Town would be in far worse shape.

Knock, knock.

She sighed, resignation weighing on her shoulders. *'Hmm... I guess it's time to face the music.'* Her voice carried through the door as she called them in.

No surprise—Barov hurried in, restless as he claimed a seat. Tyre slipped in with hot water, while the Chief Knight loomed, choosing to stand.

"Your Highness, why didn't you order the execution?" her military aide asked.

Adapting the princess's tone, she said, "One day earlier or one day later—what difference does it make?"

“Just one day may be enough for other witches to appear, Your Highness! This isn’t like any trivial matter, you cannot act as recklessly as before!” Barov cautioned.

“Why are you also saying this?” Garcia asked while frowning. “I thought you could distinguish between rumours and facts.”

Barov looked bewildered. “What rumours?”

“That witches—and in this case warlocks—are evil and are the Devil’s emissaries,” Garcia replied glibly.

To her side, Tyre laid down some cups as she poured in hot tea, instead of the water she initially thought.

"Isn't this part of the Church's propaganda? If we don't want them to interfere in our affairs, we should do the opposite of what they say. We shall deliberately not hunt down witches, and instead publicise to our citizens that these are all shameless rumours spread by the Church."

Barov was shocked. "But... witches are really..."

"Evil?" Garcia asked, interrupting her Assistant Minister. "How so?"

The Assistant Minister remained silent for a moment, as if he was guessing whether or not Garcia was purposely making fun of him.

Taking a sip of his tea, he said, "Your Highness, this problem can be discussed later. I understand that you don't like the Church, but this way of causing conflict is counterproductive."

Garcia curled her lips. The taboo of witches was deeply ingrained in culture—or perhaps the Church’s grip of fear was simply that strong. Either way, unravelling the myth would not happen overnight.

Coming from a world where popular culture portrayed superheroes with abilities to help humanity, she already knew what to decide amongst the three options given to her.

The door opened to a small procession of maids bearing trays laden with the evening meal. They set them on a side table, arranged three plates, and served the three of them at her desk.

“You haven’t had dinner, right? Let’s eat as we talk.”

Although she had decided to imitate the former princess’s way of life, she’d also intended to change the way people perceived her a little at a time. Though the perk of having a willing personal attendant is something she might not give up—she would simply be less blatant about it.

“Your Highness, we have a problem,” Barov said, between bites of sausage and bread, as Garcia poured them both a glass of wine.

‘Make subordinates feel valued, and they’ll work harder. Initiative is always the most efficient path, isn’t it?’ she thought, watching them eagerly accept their glasses—Carter now seated with her Assistant Minister.

“Three days ago, guards reported that a camp suspected to be inhabited by witches had been discovered in the western forest. They left in a hurry and didn’t clean up their traces. A guard found this in the camp.”

He took out a coin from his pocket and put it in front of Garcia. This was not a common currency seen in the kingdom, at least according to Garcia’s memories.

It didn't even feel like metal when she pinched it. To her surprise, the coin grew warmer—far too hot to have come from Barov's body heat. It must have been over 40°C, reminding her of a heating pad.

"What is this?" Garcia asked.

"I thought it was just some foul trinket that a witch made, but it's actually more serious than that." Barov paused to wipe his forehead.

"The printed pattern is known as the Insignia of the Sacred Mountain and Magic Eye, which is the emblem of the Witch Cooperation Association."

Garcia rubbed the coin's uneven surface and guessed that it was probably made of fired ceramic. Indeed, she saw that in the centre of the coin was carved a mountain-shaped pattern—three juxtaposing triangles formed it, and the image of an eye was placed in the space between the triangles. The pattern's contour lines were very crude, and therefore, she judged that it was polished by hand.

Garcia attempted to recall the two terms "Insignia of the Sacred Mountain and Magic Eye" and "Witch Cooperation Association", but did not discover any relevant information.

It seemed that Princess Garcia knew nothing about occultism. Neither did Barov expect Garcia to have any knowledge about this.

He continued, "Your Highness, you haven't seen a real witch before, so it's understandable that you're unimpressed. Like us, they can be hurt. They bleed, and aren't any harder to kill than the rest of us, but that's only for witches who don't have resistance."

The Assistant Minister explained between sips of wine and bites of torn pieces of bread, "The lifespan of witches who receive the Devil's power would shorten greatly, but they would obtain a terrible amount of power which ordinary people are unable to rival. Once the witches are fully developed, our armies

will suffer greatly. Their appetite for disaster is extremely difficult to restrain or suppress, and they've already degenerated into the devil's minions."

Garcia just sat there amidst the rant of her Assistant Minister, while her military aide sat listening, nodding in agreement with Barov.

"The Church therefore, formed a Punishment Army, which would arrest and execute any woman who was discovered to have the slightest chance of transforming into a witch. The King has approved this decree, and in fact, these measures have been highly effective; the incidents of witches wreaking havoc have declined significantly compared to a hundred years ago. Rumours about the Holy Mountain, or rather, the Gates of Hell, were derived from an ancient book of that era."

Garcia, while gnawing on her bread, sneered in her heart continuously. Although the histories of this world and the one she came from were vastly different, their historical trajectories were surprisingly similar.

The Church was still the Church; she understood that religion was the real Devil's minion and the real source of evil. Executing a person because a small sign was discovered, and using God's name to set laws, and then to arrest, trial and sentence a person, were in themselves a form of degeneration.

The Princess's memories of the Church's misuse of authority corroborated her views. Unaware of Garcia's thoughts, Barov continued, "It's recorded in ancient books that witches can only find real peace in the Holy Mountain. There, they wouldn't be reverse bitten by their magic powers and wouldn't be troubled by burgeoning desires. There's no doubt that the so-called Holy Mountain is the birthplace of evil and an entrance from the human world to Hell. I think that only Hell won't punish this bunch of degenerates."

"How about the Witch Cooperation Association? What's their relationship with the Holy Mountain?" Garcia inquired.

Barov explained with a grimace, "In the past, witches acted solitarily, whether it was to flee or to live in seclusion. However, in recent years, the Witch Cooperation Association emerged and made a significant difference. They wanted to gather all witches and find the Holy Mountain together. For this purpose, the Witch Cooperation Association would even lure other people to become witches. In the Port of Clearwater, there have been many cases of female babies disappearing in the past year, and there are rumors that they were the doings of witches."

After Garcia ate the last piece of sausage and bread, she took a napkin and wiped her mouth before saying, "So, are you saying that you're worried that the Witch Cooperation Association will try to rescue the witch when they hear the news that she did not die?"

"It's as Your Highness says." Barov stamped his feet and exclaimed. "I hear that they're in a hurry and probably on their way to somewhere. Had that prisoner died, and then it can't be helped, but she's still alive! If those witches are crazy enough to steal babies, I'm afraid that they won't forsake a degenerated companion, especially once they hear of the warlock."

Garcia was somewhat confused and could not help but feel that something was amiss about the situation.

Why is it that my Assistant Minister and Chief Knight speak of witches as if they're a forthcoming and formidable enemy? The woman who's to be executed is a witch, right? She's so thin that even the wind seems like it can blow her off her feet. If she truly possessed frightening power, why would she be standing there and awaiting her death? No, she wouldn't even be caught. According to the Church's explanation, she's a Devil incarnate, and therefore, the Punishment Army and other military troops would suffer losses if they fought her.

Yet, she was caught by the normal citizens of Border Town and was tortured by every means possible up until she was led to the gallows, but there was still no sign of her frightening power.

She could understand if it was the warlock, as it looked like he had some strength in him, an indication that he didn't live with poverty.

"How did they get caught?" Garcia queried.

"I heard that when the North Slope Mine Area collapsed, she revealed her identity to escape, and was then captured by angry villagers," Barov answered.

"How did she reveal herself?" The princess asked aloud.

"I, well... I'm not sure." The Assistant Minister shook his head and said, "The situation was very chaotic, and it could be that someone saw her using witchcraft."

Garcia frowned as she asked, "Aren't you able to investigate the situation properly?"

"Your Highness, our priority is to restore the production of the mining area," the Assistant Minister retorted.

"Half of our revenue is derived from the iron mine, and what's more, the guards have confirmed that someone at the scene was killed by witchcraft."

"What kind of witchcraft?" Garcia asked, becoming more interested than before as she leaned in. Carter Lannis blushed at the action as he averted his eyes, looking at the far wall.

"The head and a large part of the body were spread out on the ground, as if they were melted. They reminded people of burnt-out black candles." Barov's

face was filled with disgust. "Your Highness, you wouldn't want to see such a scene."

Her fork tapped idly against the plate as Garcia sank into thought. Historically speaking, most of the victims that the Witch Cooperation Association hunted were innocent people, and thus, the witches bore the brunt of the Church's and the ignorant people's anger.

"And what of the warlock?" Garcia asked.

Still not looking at her, Carter answered her, "He suddenly appeared beside the witch attempting to rescue her, but he was caught in the vicinity of the God's Stone, so they were able to subdue him immediately."

"He wore fabric of great quality, so maybe he's a son of a noble who was hidden to hide their shame?" he said in a questioning tone.

"This, too, was taken from his wrist. I know not the purpose of the moving device, but the workmanship alone speaks of nobility." Carter extended his hand and laid the watch carefully before Garcia.

"...!"

A watch. But according to her memories, this era had no such devices. Time was kept by the sun's position or with simple hourglasses.

Her breath caught. The symbol was unmistakable—a crown of five points, and below it, etched clean and sharp, the name ROLEX.

"Quick, escort me to the witch and warlock." Garcia stood up.

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END

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