

Trump Card

— 《 Tales of Tarsylia 》

吴淼作品

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In the fifteenth year of Tarsylia's third age, the Age of Heroes, the Jesper Empire invaded the Rainbow Kingdom. The two armies clashed just outside Rainbow City...



Nor were they to be found anywhere on the tumultuous battlefield.



Instead, they were trapped atop a small hill nearby.



These four mages (in truth, they were all apprentices) and a cavalry unit had already been besieged for 18 hours!



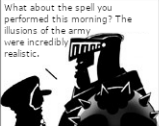
Are you sure it's impossible?



We cannot do anything, sorry.



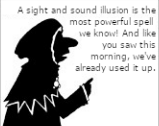
What about the spell you performed this morning? The illusions of the army were incredibly realistic.



The issue is that we're all still apprentices. There are limits to any spells that we do.



A sight and sound illusion is the most powerful spell we know! And like you saw this morning, we've already used it up.



Also, maintaining such a large illusion requires all four of us to be casting, but Parker got hurt and is still in a coma.



So you're saying that you are no different from any ordinary person now?



That's right, sir.



I see. Well, there is another way for you to trick the enemy. As you know, General Erica's main army is at the foot of this hill...



That's right. Our teacher is there as well.



I want the four of you to ride back to the city.



Wait a moment, sir, you want us to act as decoys and draw away the enemy?



I am just trying to get you all home sooner.



Sir, when we cast that illusion to hold off the enemies this morning, we completed our mission.



If we tried to leave now, when the mountain is surrounded by enemy soldiers, we'd be dead meat! Let us go with your troop to break the siege together.



Together? You useless, limp-fisted weaklings are only going to hold us back.



We already fulfilled our mission. Your duty now is to protect us! General Erica is counting on our safety.



Everyone knows how much the general values our teacher.



Hey hunchback! You don't seem to understand. Soldiers don't respond to threats.



We only obey orders. And my orders when we left this morning were this:



"These four wizards will help you confuse the enemy and control their movements." There was no mention of keeping you safe!



Doesn't your esteemed teacher just wave his hand and open a portal to anywhere? He didn't teach you that spell?



Opening dimensional gates is a ridiculously high level spell. How would us apprentices learn it?



And what about your teacher's infamous Holy Light Armor? The one that is rumored to stop any sword or bullet.



Doesn't your teacher give that coward Erica the armor any time she leads a charge?



That blasted good-for-nothing became a hero with that armor. But what about the rest of us who are out there actually putting our lives at stake?



We're forced to run around playing nursemaid to you piles of trash. Now I'm going to teach you what war really is.



S...sir!



You wizards are despicable, toadying to those nobles for mere scraps of power and prestige. Yet you still dare to threaten me?



And now look! Those nobles aren't around, your teacher is too busy, and you are out of spells.



How pathetic! What are you going to do now, little lamb? ... I'll give you two choices.



Ride down that hill yourself like a real man...



...or let my men tie you up on those horses and let the horses take you out of here.



Aide! Assemble the men. If the wizards aren't on those horses in five minutes...



Sir, you can't do this!



Once they're gone, we'll charge down the other path and reunite with Erica's royal guard at the bottom.

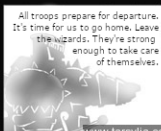
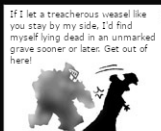
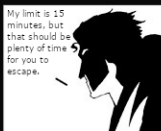
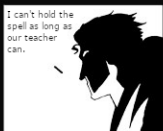
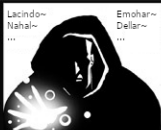


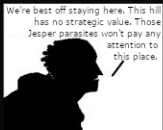
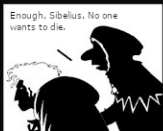
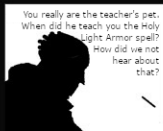
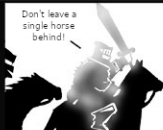
Stop getting in the way. Scram!

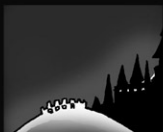
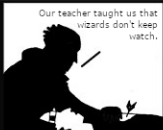


Sir.









But before we left, Teacher clearly prohibited us from bringing any scroll spells.



He examined all of us before we left, said we couldn't let those spells end up in enemy hands.



Iago, you're too naive. I thought through all that already.



Teacher assigned us to teams of four and sent us to different cavalry units.

But he left us no scrolls and never checked in. Why do you think that is?



His motive wasn't to win the battle for the duke. It was to test our survival skills!



You're saying the reason Teacher put 200 apprentices on this treacherous battlefield was to...



We're just low-level apprentices though. We haven't even been acknowledged by the Wizards Guild.



Also, Parker is the teacher's son! This...



Well said, you're starting to see the light.



So Parker and Aimerdar the Almighty are placed in the same team.



And Aimerdar is given the scroll spell for Holy Light Armor.



It all comes together.



Then...the teacher gave him that scroll to protect Parker, right? But he...



Exactly. We must report this as soon as we get back, and then it'll be the end for him!



You...you can't! You know what Teacher is like. He would...



His kind of backstabber needs to be taught a lesson!



But if you report him, how are you any different?



You...how dare you?!



Just pretend I didn't hear, okay? We will all eventually have to get our hands dirty to survive.



I'm sure he's also beating himself up about this. Just leave it be.



If I were the one with the scroll, I might have done the same thing.



Don't be absurd! Say, Iago, how do you think people like us, with no talent or background, can ever garner respect?



I'm just grateful I can stand side-by-side with these geniuses...



The next morning



You're awake?



Shouldn't I be asking you that?



Those two kept me up all night with how loud they were talking.



They really kept watch the whole night?



Of course! Only you could fall asleep in this kind of situation.



I was really tired.



I put together most of what happened yesterday from their conversation. Thank you for taking care of me.

I'll report back to my father exactly what happened. But there's still one thing I don't understand.

What?

There's no way you had the spell scroll for Holy Light Armor.

Oh?

Father guards that spell so closely he's never written down a copy of it.

And he definitely wouldn't teach it to you, no matter how much he respects you.

Then you must have cast it with some third method. I just can't figure it out!

You're overthinking this.

I'm positive you used the illusion spell yesterday. Because you're Aimerdar..

You've probably got another basic spell up your sleeve. I don't think it was a group illusion, right?

That would have taken way too long.

I'd also guess that you wouldn't prepare two illusion spells, right?

I've said it before of all the apprentices, you are the one who understands me best!

If I truly understood you, I wouldn't have failed to come up with an answer for three straight hours.

Adosinafa~ Hatilasa~
Summon the war horses!



Alright, the fatty probably drew
away the enemy. Let's head
home.



Exactly how many spells have
you been hiding?



Enough. This horse
is for you and Iago.



By my calculations, we
should be fairly safe going
down the back of the
mountain.



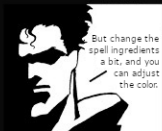
I'm not leaving until
you tell me!



You know the
flash spell.
Normally it
produces a
white light.



But change the
spell ingredients
a bit, and you
can adjust
the color.



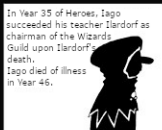
Like this!



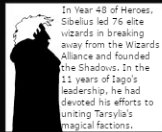
I can produce the 3 primary
colors and two other colors, but
you know blue has always been
my favorite color..
Can we get going now?



In Year 35 of Heroes, Iago
succeeded his teacher Ilardorf as
chairman of the Wizards
Guild upon Ilardorf's
death.
Iago died of illness
in Year 46.



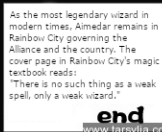
In Year 48 of Heroes, Sibelius led 76 elite
wizards in breaking
away from the Wizards
Alliance and founded
the Shadows. In the
11 years of Iago's
leadership, he had
devoted his efforts to
uniting Tarsylia's
magical factions.



In Year 47, Aimedar
returned to Rainbow
City after 19 years of
travel, and took up the
mantle of chairman of
the Guild. The following
year, he changed
its name to the
Wizards Alliance.



As the most legendary wizard in
modern times, Aimedar remains in
Rainbow City governing the
Alliance and the country. The
cover page in Rainbow City's magic
textbook reads:
"There is no such thing as a weak
spell, only a weak wizard."



end