

Another World 141

Chapter 141 - Opportunity

While Zhao was busy, an earthshaking situation unfolded in the Ica Plains. For the first time in the history of the Purcell clan, their pest control army wasn't able to stop the infestation, rather, they just realized that this plague was the worst among all the pest infestation recorded.

Since this was already the case, and having been sent all available forces from Fort Benniu, a clan elder from Casa City, Shirvan, was ordered to lead a team to go on the east side of the Ica plains.

Zhao and green cast the pest on over ten thousand acres of land, coincidentally, they were all in the eastern part of the Ica Plains. This was the reason why the elder was sent towards the eastern area hoping that they can exterminate the pests the shortest possible time.

When they arrived, they were surprised, what they saw was really beyond their imagination.

There was a large number of pests infesting the fields. They saw that the buffer zones formed weren't able to block the pests. They also observed that these pests reproduce really fast and easily broke through the buffer zones.

Due to this, the army's five magician were tasked to handle atleast a thousand hectare each, which was simply impossible. Even accounting the rest of the warriors and slaves, there's no way it can work. And upon the arrival of Shirvan, the pest control army from Fort Benniu was still forming another buffer zone, which would be quite useless now.

Truth is, they don't even know that these pests wouldn't be gone until their predetermined lifespan was over.

In reality, Zhao's space was an existence different from all the magic in the Ark Continent. The logic behind the laws it contained were different as compared to what this world has. Thus, everyone assumed that the pests dies after they stomped them down or attacked with their magic skills. They concluded that their reproductive ability was simply astonishing that even if they kill them, they still maintained their numbers. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Those bugs really die, but amazingly, they immediately revive after, and when they do, they turn into a young bug again and would move really fast to another wheat plant and start infesting. Due to their number, Purcell clan's army weren't able to notice this occurrence.

Aside from an elder from Casa City and the army that was previously sent by Fort Benniu, everyone in Fort Benniu, the clan members and their slaves, were now mobilized. Remember, there's a total of five million people in the fort, and almost all were now in the Ica plains.

Only around five thousand were left in Fort Benniu, which includes the guards and old, weak people.

With a large movement like this, each and every merchant in the Purcell Duchy were alerted. They sent spies to monitor what the Purcell clan's been doing.

Earlier, when Fort Benniu sent a pest control army, merchants who has a relation to any member of the Purcell clan already sent letters asking about the situation. After inquiring, they were informed that there's a pest infestation occurring in the Eastern Ica plains.

These merchants really didn't mind it that much, after all, we're talking about the Purcell clan. They knew this issue would be resolved soon.

But then, when the news of the massive movement in Fort Benniu were known by them, they concluded that things weren't as simple as they thought it was.

Unfortunately, now, they don't have anyone to ask about the situation, after all, most of their contacts were already deployed towards Eastern Ica plains.

However, these merchants knew, with the massive damage brought about by the pest infestation, there will surely be food shortage, which means, prices for food will go up significantly.

This is a big opportunity!

For merchants, the disastrous infestation was not within their priorities, they actually don't care. What they care about was the impact it will bring, thus, this news spread like wildfire among the merchants in the Purcell Duchy, Laura's Markey clan included.

The Markey clan's merchant firm in the City of Casa was controlled by Laura. They had been training wind falcons for relaying messages. Laura decided to give Nier the responsibility of raising them after she saw that Nier really loves beasts, and surprisingly, she was loved by the beasts as well.

Recently, Nier was very happy. Her life was simple. If Laura was happy, she was happy too.

Nier was feeding the wind falcon. Wind falcons were actually not picky about their food, but they prefer meat. Altogether, there's a total of two hundred wind falcons in Laura's shop, one hundred of which were still growing up. Everyday they need to provide a large amount of feeds for them to eat.

Usually, a dozen of people would be needed to take care of two hundred wind falcons. After all, these birds are to be taught, thus, they should also be fed carefully, otherwise, they'll be aggressive and even attack and injure their trainers.

In Laura's case, Nier was the only trainer taking care of all the wind falcons. As long as she delivered food, the birds would happily eat them. Sometimes, Nier brings live prey to let the falcons experience predated. This was the reason why their wind falcons really looked better than other falcons raised and trained by the other families and clans.

Suddenly, while Nier was feeding the falcons, she heard a falcon's cry. The falcon approached her and quickly landed on her shoulders. She froze for a moment, after looking at the falcon, she saw a letter tied to the legs.

Nier immediately took the letter and said: "Little Thirteen, good work, now go inside and eat, otherwise, your brothers will take your share." Nier named the wind falcon using numbers. She can recognize them instantly, even though the birds didn't have any mark on them. This was her special ability.

The wind falcon rubbed its beak towards Nier's face a few times before flying towards its nest to eat. Nier then took the letter to the study.

Laura was reading the accounting book in the study. Zhao's raddish sold easily and were really popular among the commoners. Even some mercenaries buy from them. The high magic content was the reason why, and was also the reason why Laura's chain of shops got the name "Higanbana".

Due to the popularity and high sales of Zhao's magic radishes in all Higanbana shops throughout the Purcell Duchy, Laura was happy.

Just then, Nier came and said: "Miss, Little Thirteen just brought back a letter, possibly related to the situation in Fort Benniu."

Laura was startled for a moment before taking the letter. The letter was really related to Fort Benniu's situation. It was the report sent by the spy they placed in Fort Benniu. Laura's complexion changed after reading just a few words from the letter. She turned around and excitedly said: "Nier, immediately call Granpa Kun, quickly!"

Nier doesn't know why Laura was excited and immediately complied. Before long, Kun came, and saw how Laura's been acting. He had been with her ever since she was young, so he knew that something significant happened, causing her to act this way. He immediately said: "Laura, what's the matter?"

Laura turned around and said while handing out the letter to Kun: "Grandpa Kun, a massive pest infestation occurred in the Ica plains, grain production are sure to be reduced greatly."

Kun's facial expression immediately went serious, then quickly read the content of the letter. The letter stated everything happening in the Ica plains, including the movement of the Purcell clan. Kun now knew, that the Ica plains has met a disastrous calamity.

After carefully reading the letter twice, Kun put the letter down and looked at Laura saying: "Laura, what do you think?"

Laura responded: "This is a great opportunity. Since there's a problem in the Ica plains, surely, food prices will go up. Right now, we should start hoarding food and grains, this way we can earn a lot."

Kun did not speak and nodded, when suddenly, a clear and cool voice said: "Laura, that is not good."

A pale-looking middle-aged man wearing a magic robe was standing outside the door while the three of them were in discussion. This blond and handsome gentleman was in fact Laura's father, Karen.

Karen usually doesn't care about anything aside from his magic studies. Today, after finishing an experiment, he went to get some fresh air. Unintentionally, he heard what Laura said and stopped by.

Laura looked at Karen. Seeing her kindhearted father, with his awfully sweet and spineless demeanor, she can't help but think that if not for his character, he won't be looked-down upon in the Aksu Empire.

Because of Karen's disposition, he won't allow Laura do dirty business, specially if it'll affect the commoners.

Even though Karen doesn't like to do business since childhood, since he grew up in the Markey Clan, he understood where Laura was coming from.

Laura immediately ran over towards her father and said: "Father, have you finished your experiment?"

Karen shook his head and said: "I almost succeeded. Probably, I only need to adjust one or two magic. I'm not talking about my experiment though, what I'm saying here is that you shouldn't hoard food, that matter is simply disagreeable, even if it gives us great profit."

Laura smiled bitterly and said: "All right father, reset assured, we won't do it. My only fear is that because we didn't made that move, others will do so, and soon, we will lose our standing here in the Purcell Duchy."

Karen replied firmly saying: "No matter if the others do it, we won't do it."

Disappointed, Laura grumbles silently, apparently, she still wants to pursue this business strategy. Right then, Kun said: "Laura, your father is right, doing business like this is disagreeable."

Shocked for a moment, Laura couldn't believe that even Kun opposed her idea. For businessmen, getting the maximum benefit out of this situation was obviously what they should do, so how come Kun was opposed to the idea too.

Kun was watching Laura's puzzled appearance, smiled and said: "Karen, Laura, please sit." They sat opposite of Kun, just like how students were in front of their teacher.

Kun was looking at the two, slightly chuckled, then said: "Laura, for businessmen, maximizing profits is of outmost importance. That's what I had always told you, and probably the reason why you insist on pursuing the business strategy you proposed, right?"

Laura nodded, Kun then said: "Laura, you have to remember, a businessmen shouldn't just focus on maximizing profits, they should have a long-term vision and not be blinded by immediate interests. Right now, the effects of the infestation in the Ica plains would surely place the Purcell Duchy in a state of crisis, and as long as we sell the hoarded food supply, we'll make a small fortune out of this situation. But this strategy actually lacks a long term vision."

Karen was not interested in this kind of topic, thus, while sitting there, he was actually not listening. On the other hand, Laura listened with great interest, but wasn't able to comprehend what Kun said.

Kun had given up on Karen, then told Laura: "Laura, the Purcell clan is a powerful force in the empire, and would be able to withstand this crisis. If we hoard food while they are experiencing this hardships, it is tantamount to adding insult to their injuries. This is already offending the Purcell clan, so even if we earned some today, in the future, we won't be able to smoothly cooperate with them."

Laura was a smart woman and not a greedy merchant, unlike most, thus she understood what Kun said as she nodded in agreement.

Even though the Markey clan was strong, the real power in this world were those great old aristocratic families, wherein the Purcell clan belongs. Once they were offended, in the future, doing business in the Purcell Duchy would be difficult. Even after considering the relationship of the Markey clan to the Purcell clan, they will still be suppressed. This will directly hit the Higanbana store, after all, they were based in the Purcell Duchy.

After Laura nodded, Kun continued: "All these years of building our store's reputation, Higanbana, here in the Purcell Duchy, will go to waste. Establishing it wasn't easy, much more recovering it once lost. Right now, if we follow your suggestion, we might earn a little, but soon, it won't be possible to do business anymore."

Laura was scared out of her wits upon hearing what Kun said. If the reputation of the Higanbana really would be tarnished, that would be tantamount to the loss of cooperation to both the Purcell clan and Zhao, which means they will lose everything in an instant.

Laura knew clearly, once she loses the business in the Purcell Duchy, her worst fear would come true, which was, being sent off by the clan to be married.

Kun was looking at the terrified Laura, then comforted her by saying: "Laura, you have to remember, pursuing the interest of being a businessman doesn't mean you'll do everything to get high profits. Some things are possible, some are not. So this time, we can hoard grains, but we should sell it at the normal price."

As Kun said this, Laura nodded and replied: "Alright, we'll just do what you suggested, Grandpa Kun. Though even if we stock lots of supplies, the other merchants would also do the same. When the time comes, we won't be able to make the price stable once we sold all our stocks."

Kun nodded and said: "For the meantime, let's immediately contact the suppliers and ask for at least four weeks worth of food supply. Even if we buy at a higher price, we will still sell them at the normal price." Laura nodded and immediately wrote a letter which she passed to Nier to be sent out.

Although Karen was distracted, he has a background on being a merchant, that's why this time, what Kun said made him feel that it was the right decision. After all, Laura's decision as the head of the Higanbana chain of stores in the Purcell Duchy would affect a lot of people.

After sending out the letter, Laura walked in front of Kun and said: "Grandpa Kun, it seems like we must do something before the other merchants affect the price of grains. If the price increases by much, we'll be in trouble as we will have a hard time procuring grains."

Kun agreed, nodding as he said: "The effect of the Ica plains infestation will definitely give trouble to the Purcell clan, and even if they want to solve it in a short time, it won't be possible. Once this happens, some greedy merchants would hoard the supply of food and spread the news to make the food shortage crisis bigger, increasing the burden to the commoners."

Laura frowned, she wasn't sure of what to do next if that happens. Right now, what they can do was to stock as much food supplies as they can, so when the time comes that the prices of food increase, they can sell it at the normal rate.

After two days, contrary to what they believed, they were surprised to know that the other merchants didn't spread the news, as if they didn't know of what's happening in the Ica plains.

However, Laura received a letter from her people stating that the surrounding grain-producing areas had begun to increase their prices. Even after bargaining, they weren't able to get some supplies as the bids of the other merchants were higher.

Sadly, Laura has no way to resolve this issue. Even if she really wanted to buy lots of grains, her funds were limited. Compared to the big firms who had the backing of some aristocratic families, she has none. Even the Markey clan won't give her help, thus she was no match for the other big firms.

Laura thought that she can just buy other grains that are cheaper, like the bamboo rice. Unfortunately, she couldn't even buy a single grain. Those big firms were very thorough that they even bought the bamboo rice at a high price.

Laura tried to talk to those big firms to discuss the stabilization of the price of food in the market, but as soon as she mentioned the issue, she was immediately ignored. Obviously, these firms would not miss this great opportunity to amass wealth. In the end, even if Laura tried her best to talk to other merchants, she wasn't able to as they were avoiding her.

Seeing the situation, Laura felt hopeless. She wasn't worried about what the commoners would eat, but rather, she was afraid that once their stocks ran out, the Higanbana store will lose its reputation.

Kun was really shocked to see that the big firms would act ruthlessly and stocked tons of grains, totally not caring of whether the commoners would live or die.

Now Kun understood why the firms didn't spread the news. It was so that they can prepare and stock tons of grains, thus increasing the price. Then, once the news gets out, they will profit greatly.

Chapter 143 - Late

As a businessman, grabbing every opportunity to profit was very important. At the same time, one must know what opportunities to take and which matters had precedence over others. It simply meant taking the right opportunity at the right time while also using the appropriate means to make a profit. Otherwise, the desired result would not be met.

Furthermore, seizing these opportunities was the most important part of the process. Else, how would merchants ever find enough success in order to earn money? One must find out what people needed first, and which were opportunities. Then by offering some means of assistance, you can maximize the benefits.

This is what those big firms were waiting for. They will release the news of infestation as soon as the time was right, then greatly increase the price of food which will allow them to earn a huge profit.

What bothered Kun and Laura was that the Purcell clan had not made any decision to avoid this problem. Did they have enough food to deal with this? Or have they already stopped the infestation?

These days, the letters that were sent by the spies in Fort Benniu stated that there was no progress in the extermination. Rather, the infestation had already destroyed around ten square kilometers of wheat fields and the Purcell clan seemed to have no idea about how to resolve this crisis.

Kun and Laura were in the library, discussing about how to deal with the situation. Suddenly, a servant entered the room, bowed, and said, "Miss, the Purcell clan's Foreign Affairs elder has asked to see you."

Laura and Kun glanced at each other. They hadn't expected the reaction of the Purcell clan to be this slow. Although it was slow, it wasn't too late.

The Purcell clan had thought that they would be able to easily stop the infestation, so they weren't that worried. Soon they discovered they were wrong. After mobilizing every force they could, they were still unable to stop this insect infestation. What's more, the infestation has now spiraled out of control.

Their next move was to begin stocking up on food to cope with the reduced food production. They had encountered such problems in the past, and immediately moved to start up discussions with the

Chamber of Commerce. The discussion would aim to see if they would be able to prepare more food to cope with the oncoming food crisis.

But, the Purcell clan didn't think that the large Chamber of Commerce would actually be unable to give them a clear answer. Instead, they seemed to avoid the issue which did anything except cause worry for the Purcell clan.

At the moment, the Purcell clan didn't have any other means. They had already experienced food shortages several times in the past, but those situations were not as serious as what was happening now. This time it greatly affected the production in Ica Plains. Such a thing had never before been encountered.

It was precisely because of this that the large business firms acted a beat slower. Those groups were ready to make a killing in the Purcell Duchy, so how could they possibly let this opportunity slip by.

The Purcell clan took a step back and began to place restrictions on everything. At this time, the Purcell clan sent a contact to Laura, the clan's only Foreign Affairs elder. As the Foreign Affairs elder was responsible for external affairs, he had a relatively high status. This was Stern Purcell.

Laura naturally understood why the other side had was coming and knew she had to receive him due to Stern's high position. Thus, she welcomed him into the parlour.

As Laura and Kun arrived, they saw Stern in the parlour, drinking tea. Although the Purcell clan faced a very difficult situation, given Stern's position as a clan elder, his ability to remain calm wasn't bad.

Before, he had already met with different merchants of various large firms. Unfortunately, the results were unsatisfactory. While they seemed very concerned, Stern had a lot of experience and knew this was all sophistry.

It was clear that they were delaying their efforts to help. This time, to them, the Purcell clan was a large fish they needed to catch.

Although Stern was angered by the actions of those firms, he remained silent about it due to their strength. He didn't say anything, but he believed the Purcell clan would be able to survive this crisis. One must know that the Purcell clan had a thousand years of history, which wasn't a joke.

These merchants wanted to take advantage of the situation and make a small fortune. While the Purcell clan would lose a lot, if those firms wanted to shake the Purcell clan's roots, it would be impossible. As long as the Purcell clan's foundation survived, they could easily bounce back.

Don't forget, the Purcell clan territory was now a duchy. If they wanted to do business here, they would have to deal with the Purcell clan's taxes. While the large firms would be able to make a lot of money, they would still have future businesses within the Purcell Duchy. In the future, the Purcell clan could impose high taxes on them and sooner or later make up what they lost now.

Stern could not understand the reason why these merchants were acting like this towards the Purcell clan. Was it just for the money? He did not believe it.

These large firms had been on the mainland for many years, and not without reason. They shouldn't have committed such an error, right?

Did they really want to destroy the Purcell clan?

Even while Stern had been thinking about these things, his face still looked as calm as usual. He was responsible for the external affairs of the Purcell clan. He had been trained from early on to never change his expression for anything, not even if Mt. Tai collapsed.

Just then, the sounds of footsteps could be heard. Stern looked up and saw Laura and Kun. He naturally knew them as they were the leaders of the Higanbana firm within the Purcell Duchy, which could be regarded as a large firm.

Stern also understood that Laura would know what the Purcell Duchy's current business was for. The status of the firm wasn't very high and even the large businesses looked down on them. In the Purcell Duchy however, the influence of the Higanbana firm was not small.

Laura walked in from the door to the right. She gave her courtesies to Stern and then said, "Laura greets Stern elder. I have kept the elder waiting and ask the elder for forgiveness."

Stern didn't dare to put on a big act. He quickly stood up, turned to Laura, and returned the courtesy. "Miss Laura is too kind. Today, I have taken the liberty to visit. I hope the lady can forgive me."

Kun and Stern also mutually greeted one another. Here, in the Purcell Duchy, almost everyone was aware of Kun's status. Stern naturally did not slight Kun.

After the small group sat down, Laura looked at Stern and said, "Stern elder, I know why you have come, but to be honest, there's nothing I can really do to help."

Stern did not expect Laura to be so direct. It was the first time it happened. When dealing with those others of the large firms, if they weren't spouting sophistry, then they first spoke for half the day before the talk turned to questions. He didn't expect Laura to be the first to speak about the main subject.

Stern looked at Laura, puzzled, and asked "I don't know what Miss Laura means?"

Laura watched Stern and smiled. "To be honest Stern elder, we already knew about the calamity that has befallen the Ica plains beforehand. I was ready to collect grains in order to help stabilize the Purcell clan's future food shortage. Unfortunately, we didn't think about the paws of others. I wanted to collect food, but the price has already risen greatly. Even if I wanted to receive food cheaply, I won't be able to. Currently, Higanbana firm has enough stock to sell for seven days. After seven days, Higanbana firm will have no more food available for sale."

Stern looked at Laura. He wanted to see if she was speaking truth or lies. Actually, he had already believed what she said. If nothing else, it was because she went straight to the issue. He didn't voice these thoughts.

Looking at Laura, Stern said, "Do you really mean it, Miss Laura?"

Laura gave a bitter smile and said, "True or not true, Stern elder knows what kind of person my father is. This time, my father wanted me to stabilize the prices. It is unfortunate. While my hands have the capital, there is no way to do anything against those who are so reckless. Some time ago I tried to look

for them to discuss this matter and try to stabilize Purcell's public grain prices. Nevertheless, in the end I was refused. There really is no way."

Stern had a gloomy expression. Then he coldly snorted and said, "They want to take advantage of the Purcell clan, do they think we are that simple? This time, as long as Miss Laura won't be involved in driving up the food prices, in the future, the Purcell clan will remember and will not treat you unjustly."

Laura gave a wry smile and said, "I thank Stern elder. To be honest, I couldn't help much for this current matter. But I will try and find a source of grains. If there is any progress, I will certainly meet with the Purcell clan. Please, Stern elder can rest assured."

Stern looked at Laura. "Then I will represent the Purcell clan in thanking Miss Laura. If Miss Laura does find a source of grains, then the Purcell clan will support you financially."

Laura sternly said, "Please rest assured Stern elder. If we do find another source of food, we will surely help stabilize the prices in the market. This isn't just for the Purcell clan, but for the citizens of the Purcell Duchy."

Stern stood up and said, "Alright, I'll say goodbye. I hope Miss Laura will do as promised."

After taking care to say his farewells to the two, he turned and walked out.

Laura and Kun didn't send him off. Now they had to worry about the food problem. As Laura had said, the Higanbana store only had seven days worth of food stock. After seven days, one will not be able to find any such words like 'cheap food'. You would only be able to find high-priced products and, as a result, the prices will begin to rise.

Sadly, they don't have any way to procure more supplies. The surrounding areas were owned by other large firms, so collecting cheap food from them was not possible. If they decided to buy from far away places, the costs of transporting the goods would be too costly and would just be priced almost the same as local high-priced food.

After two days, Laura still wasn't able to find any other sources of food. As she began to handwrite a letter, she turned to look at Kun and gave a wry smile as she said, "Grandpa Kun, it seems like this time, food prices would inevitably rise."

Chapter 144 - Green Enters the City

Quinn John¹ was helpless. In the past few days, they had tried to think of a way, but in the end they weren't able to find affordable grains. It seemed that these prices that shouldn't rise would eventually be risen.

Laura placed the letter down and forced a smile. "The price of food is rising. If we do not increase our own prices, then we can only lose money. Although we had gotten some cheap food the last few days, the amount is too few. It can only last for ten days or so. After that, I fear we won't be able to get even a grain of rice. When the news of the Ica plain incident gets out, I fear that those merchants will also begin."

Quinn John gave a forced smile and said, "This is not the most fearful part. If there's no production from the Ica plains, then the entire Purcell Duchy's food requirements will be massive. Moreover, they need a minimum amount of grains stored for the next year. Food prices will fall for the next few months, but how much grain could the Purcell Duchy obtain? Such a large food deficit is enough to severely damage the Purcell clan. By the time that happens, how many commoners won't be able to eat?²"

Laura also smiled wryly. They were now in a situation where they could not help and could only hope that the Purcell clan will survive this hurdle.

At this time, a servant walked in and said to Laura, "Miss, the warrior follower of Mr. Zhao Hai has asked to meet with you."

Laura and Quinn John stared for a bit, then Laura immediately said, "Invite him in, quickly." Laura had attached greater importance to Zhao Hai now. Before, when Laura arrived back from Stony Mountain, she immediately went to see the scaled wildebeest Green had kept here...

Laura's observation made something clear; when Zhao Hai had said his scaled wildebeests were the best, he actually meant it. Zhao Hai's scaled wildebeest were really good. Even though their appearance

seemed the same as normal scaled wildebeests, their endurance, speed, and even defenses were distinctly better. Even those level two magic beasts wouldn't necessarily compare to the scaled wildebeest.

It was precisely because of this that Laura attached greater importance to Zhao Hai. She really didn't understand clearly how Zhao Hai was able to make such ordinary things so much better when they passed through his hands.

Soon, Green entered.

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This time, Green was here to first deliver the oil to Laura. His second task was to buy sacks to load the corn. Lastly, he was also there to speak to Laura about the food issue.

Before coming, Green had gone to the Ica plains with Zhao Hai to observe the situation there. This time, they confirmed Ica plain's inability to produce, something that was quite contrary to their expectations.

Zhao Hai had used Cast Pest around seven million square meters. He had thought that the damage would only spread to around seventy million square meters after considering the Purcell clan's ability to combat the infestation.³

When they came to observe the Ica plains however, they found out that the infestation was uncontrollable. Since they didn't dare to move closer, they couldn't fully understand why the pests had not already been exterminated. But what they were certain of was that the Purcell clan probably did not have a good method to oppose the insects.

Seeing the situation, Zhao Hai did not dare to be negligent. He went back into the space and didn't plant corn, but instead began planting bamboo rice.

Bamboo rice yields were higher than corn, but the problem was that bamboo rice could not be made into rice bran. Thus, their only output would be bamboo rice and some rice shells. The rice shells were not really useful either. Therefore, Zhao Hai hadn't planted much bamboo rice. Now with the situation

in the Ica plains, Zhao Hai started to plant bamboo rice on all fields in the space. Not even the Oil Nut trees were allowed to take up room.

The production speed of bamboo rice was very high. On a mu of land, over five thousand kilograms could be produced. Moreover, the space had unexpectedly given it a value of a level five crop and it matured in about ten hours. It was a single season crop. After maturing, you could only harvest it once and would need to plant another crop. In one day, you could harvest twice. In other words, Zhao Hai could get at least over ten thousand kilograms of bamboo rice per mu of land a day.

An output of ten thousand kilograms of food per mu was a lot, but Zhao Hai didn't intend to profit from it. This time, the situation in the Ica plains was all due to his actions. It had gotten out of hand, thus making his conscience feel restless.

Zhao Hai had saved around one million kilograms of corn and nearly half a million kilograms of bamboo rice. At this time, he made Green go to Casa City to handle the three matters. In addition, he was to observe the situation within Casa City.

Green, was currently rushing along with five scaled wildebeests pulling his carriages. Alongside him were several Zombies that drove the other carts. These Zombies really did look like any ordinary person. Only a high rank warrior or magician would be able to see through their presence. That was why Green dared to take them with him.

The carriage was full of nut oil that they would then sell to Laura. The nut oil Zhao Hai produced was much better than other nut oil, but Zhao haven't thought to increase its price. At least, now wasn't the time.

Green was surprised when he saw the situation in Casa City. He thought that there would be people snatching away the grains, but that didn't seem to be the case. Everybody were living their normal lives and there didn't appear to be any appearance of disorder.

Green also looked at the price list in the Higanbana firm and saw that the price hadn't increased. This made him puzzled. Within his heart, he secretly thought, 'Does the Purcell clan really have enough grains in their stores? How strange.'

After Green revealed his identity and asked to see Laura, the servant did not dare to be neglectful. The servant immediately went to notify Laura, who then quickly invited Green to the backyard parlour room.

Green was guided by the servant and soon arrived at the door of the parlour. He found Laura, Quinn John, and Near already standing in the parlour, ready to greet him. Green didn't put on any airs and stepped up to give his courtesies to Laura. "This one greets Miss Laura."

Laura quickly smiled and said, "Sir is too polite. As sir has come to see me, I feel greatly honored. Sir, please come in." As she said this, she directed Green to enter the parlour room.

After they sat in the parlour, Laura wasn't polite and directly asked Green, "Sir, I don't know what matter has made you come here to Casa City. Is there anything I can do to help?"

Green smiled and said, "Miss Laura is too polite. This time, we came to trouble you a bit. We had bought the oil press some time ago and have formally begun extraction. This time, I have with me ten thousand kilograms of oil and would like to ask Miss Laura to help sell them. I do not know if Miss Laura would agree?"

Laura was surprised for a moment and curiously said, "You have already begun producing! Sir's movements really are fast. But please forgive me for being rude, I would like to check the quality of the nut oil first."

Green smiled and said, "This is normal. The nut oil is something we have produced and I am very confident with it. Please, Miss Laura, go inspect the nut oil outside." After he said this, he stood and directed them towards the outside.

Laura and Quinn John stood up and walked out the door with Green. By this time, Green had the undead move the carriages to the backyard and properly park them within the yard.

Laura looked at the coachmen zombies. She felt that they looked somewhat spiritless, but hadn't felt anything unusual. Quinn John, on the other hand, identified them with just a glance. He knew that these warriors coachman that looked like 'people' were actually undead, and evidently zombies.

Laura was walking in front and Quinn John couldn't help but pull her hand. Laura looked puzzled at Quinn John, while Quinn John actually had a vigilant expression directed towards the zombies.

Quinn John, before seeing these zombies, knew that normal zombies weren't like these coachmen. Normal zombies had rotting bodies. On the other hand, these coachmen zombies looked like an average person, which meant that they were high ranked. High rank zombies were usually poisonous, and even just a little of this poison was very potent if it was touched by a human.

Quinn John definitely wasn't afraid of Green harming them, but he was worried that Laura might get infected by these zombies if she bumped into them. Since the corpse was poisonous, it made for a troublesome situation.

Green noticed their reaction, chuckled, and said, "Mister Quinn John doesn't need to worry. They are my servants. They went through a special refinement, so their bodies won't release poison naturally. Only when they fight will they do so. Please don't worry."

Quinn John relaxed, loosening his grip on Laura. Laura looked curiously at the coachmen. Then she turned her head towards Green and asked, "Sir, are you saying that these people are Mr. Zhao's servants? Are they undead?"

Green nodded his head and said, "They are. Master recently subdued them. With an arcane zombie refining method, they look just like a normal human being. In actuality, they are, in fact, undead."

Laura didn't have suspicions about what Green said. There were a lot of black magicians that used such mysterious black magic. There were even black magics that could refine undead. Although it couldn't increase the rank of the undead, it could still make them easier to use.

In fact, black magicians on the continent have been seeking various ways to increase the rank of their undead. A lot of black magicians studied pharmacy and alchemy for this very reason, but without success. This undead refining method that could be used to enhance the level of undead through alchemy had, after so many failed products, made the many black magicians on the continent give up.

These zombies were not as scary as skeletons, so Laura couldn't help herself in glancing at them curiously. Presently, these people were just standing there blankly after senselessly arriving with the carriage.

Green immediately brought down a big wooden barrel and placed it on the ground. Then he pried open the lid. Laura and Quinn John looked into the barrel and couldn't help but nod.

Both of them were experts in this area. One look and they could see that the quality of the nut oil was great. Zhao Hai's nut oil was crystal clear, with no impurities and no odor. It clearly was a top quality oil.

Laura nodded and told Green, "Sir can place the lid back on the barrel. Please wait a little while as I get the payments ready. Please, come back inside the room."

Green nodded, covered the barrel, and followed Laura back inside the room.

Chapter 145 - Possessing Food

After they returned to the room, Laura turned and said to Green, "The quality of Sir's nut oil is really beyond my expectations. I hope that the oil you produce in the future could again be sold to me. I don't know if this is possible?"

Green smiled and said, "Of course. We had such a prior agreement already. Miss Laura shouldn't be worried, the nut oil that we produce will be sold to you."

Laura nodded her head. "That's good. After Sir goes back, please give my thanks to Mr. Zhao Hai."

Green faintly smiled and said, "Miss Laura is really too polite. There is also another matter that I want to talk about that includes some business..."

Laura was surprised for a moment. "Sir, please go ahead and tell me."

Green slightly chuckled. "My master recently heard rumors that the Ica plains had been under a pest infestation, and that the Ica plains won't be able to produce any grains this year. Do you know if that is true or false?"

Laura was surprised for a moment. She didn't think that Zhao Hai could even find out about this information. She nodded and said, "It's true, we have also received the message. This time, the infestation happening in the Ica plains is very severe. The type of pest is not known, and it has a very strong reproductive capability. For this year, Ica plains won't be able to produce grains."

Hearing Laura's words, Green relaxed. He just asked Laura to see how she would answer and felt she was unreserved. This made him feel relieved as he said, "So have the prices of food here in Casa City gone up?"

Laura forced a smile. "It will. Sir, when I received the news we immediately moved to stock up on food. This was done in order to stabilize the food prices in Casa City, but the other firms were faster than us. They had started stocking up on grains ahead of time. The price will soon increase here in Casa City and I worry about this. If we follow the the rise and increase our prices, then we can indeed earn a large money for ourselves. But as a result, a lot of people in Casa City will suffer. If we don't raise our prices, then we won't be able to sell more grains."

Then she eyed Green. "Why does Sir ask this?" Laura couldn't help but feel a bit excited. She almost stood up. With shining eyes, she continued, "Does Mr. Zhao Hai have food?"

Quinn John also looked firmly at Green.

Green showed a faint smile. "We have, in our hands, some food."

After saying that, he ordered forward two undead who had followed holding two bags.

Green picked up the two bags and opened them, exposing the corn kernels in one and the cornmeal in the other. "Miss Laura, this is the food in our possession. The continent hasn't seen this type before. This is corn, and that is cornmeal. You can directly add water to the corn kernels and boil it like rice, while the cornmeal can be used to make bread. Master has written down the procedures to do so." He passed Laura a piece of paper.

Laura and Quinn John looked at the corn kernels and cornmeal in the bags. They were curious about how Zhao Hai was able to produce something they hadn't seen before.

Laura immediately recovered, took the paper Green was handing out to her, and carefully read. The corn kernel approach was simple, but also a little more difficult than bamboo rice. Cornmeal was even more simple. Laura understood how to eat the two.

Laura placed the paper down and turned to Green to ask, "How much corn does Sir have?"

Green stretched out a finger and said, "Nearly one million kilograms, but unprocessed. Only a couple hundred thousand were processed."

Laura paced while muttering, "God helps me too, God helps me too."

Quinn John was calmer than Laura at this time. He turned to Green and asked, "How much would the price of these grains be?"

Laura heard Quinn John's question and stopped, turning around to look at Green. She was also afraid that the price might be too high, and that it couldn't be used to help alleviating the food crisis.

Green smiled slightly while saying, "Master said he doesn't want to see Casa City suffer and does not wish to see the people starving to death. Although the taste might not be very good, Master intends to sell it at the same price as bamboo rice. Of course, if you desire to sell it that low, we will also sell it to you at a lower price."

After listening to what Green said, Laura bowed. She then stood up straight and said, "On behalf of the people of Casa City, I, Laura, would like to thank Mr. Zhao Hai. This time, our Higanbana stores do not want to make money, but only to sell the products of Sir, and to thank Mr. Zhao Hai for being righteous."

Green forced a smile with a heavy heart. If they told Laura that it was them who started that insect infestation, it could be possible that Laura herself might pick up a weapon and try to kill him.

Green waved his hand. "Miss Laura is too kind. Along with this, after you sell all of the million kilograms of corn, we can provide one hundred seventy-five thousand kilograms of bamboo rice everyday, until the food crisis gets resolved."

Laura and Quinn John were dumbfounded. They hadn't thought that Zhao Hai would actually provide one hundred seventy-five thousand kilograms of bamboo rice per day. This was not just one hundred seventy-five. With this amount of food, the Purcell Duchy would be able to survive through the food crisis.

Looking blankly at Green, Laura asked, "Sir, you are not joking, right? One hundred seventy-five thousand kilograms a day?"

Green nodded. "Yes, one hundred seventy-five thousand kilograms per day to help relieve the food crisis."

Laura moved several steps forward. "This matter is very important. Before, I had an agreement with the Purcell clan that if I can find a grain source, I would immediately let them know in order to help them through this difficult time. Now that Sir is here to help, I believe that this crisis will be resolved. But I cannot take all the credit for it, so it would be better if I explained the situation to the Purcell clan."

Green shook his head and said, "Miss Laura, please do not tell the Purcell clan about this. If you tell them, they will surely go to the Stony Mountain, and Master is not very fond of contacting others. Especially the Purcell clan."

Laura had forgotten that before, the Purcell clan collaborated with several groups and sent an army to deal with Zhao Hai. She was aware that the best way to deal with Zhao Hai was to be frank and honest. It was unexpected that Zhao Hai would actually still wish to sell to the Purcell clan. That Zhao Hai wouldn't like to meet the Purcell clan, however, was understandable.

Laura nodded her head and said, "Yes. Sir can rest assured, I will not let the Purcell clan disturb Mr. Zhao Hai. But this matter, I'll still have to tell them so that they won't find future trouble for Mr. Zhao Hai. Although Mr. Zhao Hai does not fear them, he'll still be annoyed if he's disturbed."

Green nodded his head. "That's alright then. Also, I would like to ask Miss Laura to help us prepare some sacks since, as you know, we have none. In regards to this, I ask for Miss Laura's help."

Laura nodded. "Don't worry about that. My warehouse has a lot of sacks, I'll just order for some to load onto the carriage immediately."

Green stood up and said, "Sorry to bother Miss Laura. But rest assured, three days later you may come to get the grains."

Laura nodded, also standing. "Then, I will not take up your time any longer. Since the city is still in this situation, I am too busy to leave. As soon as the matter gets resolved, I will immediately visit and personally thank Mr. Zhao Hai."

Green smiled lightly. "Although Master is a black magician, he doesn't want to see the commoners suffer. To be honest, for the food crisis this time, the impact on the nobles and the rich won't be that big. We know that the Purcell Duchy has its own grain reserve, but because of those big firms, the price of food will inevitably rise. This will cause difficulty for the commoners, and many will become slaves. At this time, Master has used almost all the fields for planting bamboo rice, hoping that the commoners will be able to survive this difficult period."

Laura sighed and said, "Yes. Ah, those civilians now live with the difficulties of the present. In the face of such a thing, and even harsher times, other firms will only be a machine that just know how to make money. They do not care about the life and death of those civilians."

Green looked at Laura, saying, "Miss Laura, if ever the time really comes that the commoners were willing to sell themselves and become slaves, please do pay attention to it. Find those that have skills. No matter what kind of craftsmanship, as long as they are slaves, you must leave them to their fates. Right now, Master does not have enough manpower and urgently needs such craftsmen."

Laura didn't think that Green would make such a request. She quickly nodded her head and agreed, "Well, that is not a problem. I will help Mr. Zhao Hai and pay attention."

After talking, they walked out of the room. Outside, they saw Higanbana employees loading the sacks onto Green's carriages.

As soon as the sacks were loaded, Green turned to Laura. "Miss Laura, I will now take my leave. Three days later, Miss can come get the food."

Looking at Green's back, Laura could not help but take a deep breath. She turned to Quinn John and said, "I did not think that Mr. Zhao Hai had such large capabilities. He can actually produce this much food which has solved our urgent matter."

Quinn John nodded. "It looks like Mr. Zhao Hai may have a mysterious power of his own. Just like the elves, he could probably accelerate a crop's maturity. Otherwise, it is impossible for Mr. Zhao Hai to obtain that much food. Laura, remember, this matter must not be made known by anyone. If others learned that he has such a mysterious ability, it'll be dangerous. Even if Mr. Zhao Hai has a Rank Eight expert warrior along with him, Rank Eight does not mean invincible. In this world, Rank Nine is the strongest presence. With his method of speeding up plant maturity, it would be more than enough to make those big clans ask a Rank Nine expert to get rid of him2."

Chapter 146 - Arriving at the Grand Duke's Mansion

Rank Nine experts weren't easy to please. Even if they were their own clan's Rank Nine expert, it would not be an easy task. It depended on whether the benefits were big enough to make them act. If they could be enticed, then the Rank Nine expert could be asked to move.

On the continent, apart from the life magic of the elves, one wouldn't hear of any such abilities related to simulating the growth of plants and animals. If one really did have this kind of magic, those large clans would try to rob it.

Although this mysterious magic looked common, the effect wasn't small. Zhao Hai's current use was for some low end agricultural products, which was a wrong way to examine it. If the large clans had this mysterious magic, it would be used to grow a lot of advanced magical plants which they would then refine into a massive number of medicinal drugs. These medicinal drugs were very expensive and could even promote an expert's ranking. If a large clan mastered this mysterious magic, it would be possible that within a short amount of time they could obtain a large number of masters. The strength of the clan would increase sharply. Such a temptation was really too much.

According to Quinn John, who had many years of experience, as he listened to Green's various explanations he had inferred boldly that Zhao Hai possibly mastered such a method that could accelerate a plant's maturity.

It was impossible for Quinn John to think of such a thing as the space.

Green had also said that Zhao Hai refined the undead with a mysterious refining magic which made Quinn John have that misconception. He thought that Zhao Hai had possibly mastered making medicinal drugs, and that most likely Zhao Hai had his own refining technique.

Pharmacy and Alchemy, in the eyes of the ordinary people, were very mysterious. Even a master like Quinn John still thought they were mysterious. In his eyes, these master pharmacists and alchemists were a group of crazy people, a crowd that thought of everything and dared to do anything.

And a black magician that could do alchemy or pharmacy would be the craziest. These people could make anything happen, so you'll never know.

Alchemists and Pharmacists made all sorts of strange and unusual things. Also, a lot of medicinal drugs were quite popular in the continent. Pharmacists inadvertently made discoveries, or a result could stem from experimental failures. If so, then there might be a medical drug that Zhao Hai made which could accelerate a plant's maturity. He did not feel that was strange.

Quinn John didn't think that Zhao Hai might be an elf. One must know that an elf was nature's beloved. They were born with Life magic, and as such they loved life. Precisely because of this, they hated black magicians, although they didn't actively attack them. On the other hand, they would not have any contact with them and wouldn't learn any kind of black magic. Zhao Hai was a black magician; that in itself proved that he was not an elf.

Laura also knew of the importance of this matter, so she nodded and said, "Rest assured Grandpa Quinn. I won't speak of it, but Mr. Zhao Hai is really quite different from the average black magician. If he didn't have so many undead, I wouldn't have believed he could be a black magician. Black magicians don't have any regard for life, right? Why is Mr. Zhao Hai different from others?"

Quinn John was still smiling. "Not all black magicians disregard life, and light magicians also aren't necessarily bright. A light magician's misdemeanor is not any different from that of black magicians, but they are covered in a layer of bright light."

Laura nodded. He was right; before when Garan had discriminated against Zhao Hai, she thought he was disgusting. After listening to what Quinn John said, she naturally did not feel it was wrong.

Faith in the Ark Continent is very free. Some people believed in the god of light, some believed in the goddess of life, and magicians had their own, different beliefs. Many people even believed in the demon, Diablo. Laura's own faith was in the god of knights. Naturally, this meant that the light magicians could not always be good.

Quinn John turned to Laura and said, "Laura, you go to the Purcell clan right now. Tell them of this matter — only us knowing about this is bad. As soon as some people release the news that the Ica plains won't produce anything, it will then cause enormous panic. Everyone will begin to buy grain to save for themselves, creating a large demand for grains. Even if Mr. Zhao Hai supports us, it'll be futile. When that time comes, the Purcell clan should come forward. In the name of an aristocrat, they should make everyone feel more emotionally stable. That will be the only way to stabilize the market."

Laura nodded. She turned to Near and said, "Near, tell them to prepare the carriage. We'll immediately go to the Purcell clan. If this thing goes well, the Purcell family will avoid heavy losses and we'll become the largest firm in the Purcell Duchy."

Near complied, turned around, and ran. Quinn John showed a faint smile. He was very clear; Laura had always wanted the Higanbana firm to be the largest firm in the Purcell Duchy. Only then would she have the qualifications to talk to her Markey Dell clan about conditions. Now, the opportunity to be the biggest firm in the Purcell Duchy was here.

Quinn John also knew that it was very dangerous this time. The big firms had been very prepared, investing a lot of funds. If at this time, Laura could really get cheap food, then it was a big threat to them. In order to ensure that they would succeed, the big firms could resort to using some underhanded means.

This was exactly why Quinn John made Laura go and immediately contact the Purcell clan. This current situation involved the Purcell clan who were now out of danger. If Laura provides them such an opportunity at this time, they will certainly place more importance on them. They would surely provide Laura with protection and not allow her to get injured.

The strength of those large firms was certainly formidable. Within Purcell Duchy, however, Laura would be protected by the Purcell clan. This was a clan with a great heritage, and Rank Nine experts. Even if those firms were unsatisfied, they wouldn't dare make a move.

Laura's posture was straight as she sat in the carriage that was headed towards the Grand Duke's Mansion of the Purcell clan. The Grand Duke's Mansion was situated in the northern part of Casa City, a

very wide area. This place was the location of the clan's core area. Naturally, Laura also brought the corn and cornmeal that Green had sent them, to make her findings more convincing.

The Purcell clan's Grand Duke's Mansion was magnificent. The exterior wall were nearly ten meters high with a huge gate similar to a city's gate. On both sides of the gate were rows of armored warriors. Each of them had a minimum strength of Rank Six along with tall, strong, combative bodies.

They wore helmet and armor in a style similar with Green's. The helmet had two curved horns pointed towards the sky, giving off a powerful appearance. Their hands held onto long handled, double edged axes. Each of those weapons had a weight around a fifty kilograms, an absolute heavy weapon. These soldiers seemed war-ready, their appearance similar to an iron-steel fortress.

A giant Benniu emblem hung above the gatehouse. This emblem was silver. Emblems on the continent followed a very specific color scheme. Golden-colored emblems represented the Royal clan...Silver emblems were for the large aristocratic clan's usage. Azure emblems were for the common nobles, and black emblems for the quasi-aristocrats.

Laura's carriage stopped in front of the Grand Duke's Mansion. A servant immediately ran out of the door from the Grand Duke's Mansion. These warriors were responsible for security, so receiving guests was not their job.

The servant stopped in front of Laura's carriage and immediately bowed. "Welcome, Miss Laura, to the Grand Duke's Mansion. May I know what your ladyship is here for?"

Searle, who was beside the carriage, jumped down from his horse. He said to the servant, "The young lady has an immediate matter and needs to speak with your Stern elder. Is the elder here right now?"

Whether it was Laura of the Markey Dell clan, or the Purcell clan within the Duchy, both were regarded as a major power. Both sides were also very familiar with one another and Laura had long since been recognized by the servants. Thus, Searle didn't say too many pleasantries.

The servant immediately nodded his head and said, "The elder just came back. Miss Laura, please come in."

Having said that, Laura's carriage was directed towards the Grand Duke's Mansion.

Upon entering the Grand Duke's Mansion, there was a military practice field which was a common sight among the large aristocratic mansions. From this point, one could see that the people of the continent really esteemed the military and its warriors.

Laura did not stop at the military practice field, but went straight inside the Grand Duke's Mansion. This military practice field wasn't just a military practice field, but had its own strategic purpose. When war comes, this military practice field could turn into the staging ground for soldiers. In an instant, it could be converted into a battlefield.

The second gate, the palace gate, was the parking area. Searle stopped with the carriage. Laura and Nier went down from the carriage and followed the servant who led them towards the parlour room. Searle followed behind.

Guests that were allowed to come in from the second gate were close to the Purcell clan. After the second gate and past the third gate was the inner chamber where the Purcell clan members lived. This was an area no average person could enter.

Laura arrived in the parlour room and seated herself. The servant then immediately called for the master. Stern came in from the outside and Laura quickly stood up as they greeted each other.

Laura said to Stern, "Laura takes the liberty to visit and has disturbed you. But there was an important matter, so I ask the elder to forgive me."

Stern smiled and said, "Miss Laura is too polite. You can come whenever you please. What has Miss Laura come here for? Is it about the matter of the grains?"

Laura smiled then said, "Elder really is fierce and has actually guessed it correctly. There has been progress on the issue."

Stern, who had just sat down, was stunned for a moment. The day before yesterday, he had gone to see Laura and she said she could not help. After just two days, Laura now said there was progress, which was really unexpected.

Chapter 147 - The First Move

Stern looked at Laura and said, "You're not kidding, right, Miss Laura?"

Laura smiled slightly. "This matter, I really cannot joke about it. I have truly found a food source, except that these grains are quite different.

Laura clapped her hands and Searle immediately took out two sacks. Laura opened the sacks and explained to Stern, "This is the grain I have found. The method to make it edible is very simple."

Stern took the paper from Laura's hand, his sight not leaving the sacks of corn kernels and cornmeal as this was the first time he had seen such grains.

It took a moment before Stern completely recovered and then he carefully read the paper in his hand. There weren't many words and the method seemed quite simple as Stern finished reading.

After reading, Stern placed the paper down and looked at Laura, asking, "Miss Laura, how much would these grains be?"

Laura lightly smiled and said, "These grains were from my friend and he stated that he doesn't want to see the citizens of the Purcell Duchy suffer. Therefore, he took out one million kilograms and placed the price at the same as the common bamboo rice."

Stern began to breathe rapidly as he became excited. He immediately said, "Miss Laura, can I have the pleasure of seeing your friend?"

Laura looked at Stern and understood what he meant, but shook her head. "I'm sorry Stern elder. My friend does not like dealing with people. But rest assured, I can guarantee that he has the food."

Stern also knew that this request was somewhat impolite and immediately moved on. "Alright, but this thing will be quite laborious. May I know what help Miss Laura requires?"

Laura nodded and said, "Stern elder has possibly already known that once the news of the Ica plains infestation comes out, everyone in the Purcell Duchy will surely panic. When this happens, our Higanbana firm can do nothing about it, so we're asking the Purcell clan to act first."

Stern nodded his head, saying, "That's not a problem. Please don't worry about it Miss Laura. But to be honest, Miss Laura, a million kilograms of these grains won't be sufficient."

Laura smiled. "Please don't worry Stern elder, after the million kilograms are sold, my friend said that he will provide one hundred seventy five thousand kilograms of grains to us every day. That should be sufficient, right?"

Stern laughed and said, "Enough, it's enough. Miss Laura, please do send my thanks to your friend."

Laura smiled slightly saying, "Elder, worry not, Laura will definitely do so. We set three days in the future as the time for when I shall leave to get the grains. I would like to ask the elder to help us with security."

Stern understood what Laura meant. A coldness flashed in his eyes as he said, "Miss Laura, please do not worry. In the Purcell Duchy, no one can defy the Purcell clan."

Laura nodded, stood up, and said, "Then Laura bids farewell and asks the elder not to worry. Although my friend and the Purcell clan has a little friction between them, he will not lie in regards to this matter. I will stake my own life as guarantee."

Stern was surprised for a moment as he didn't quite understand what she meant. This friend of Laura, who had a very good relationship with her, actually had a small grudge with the Purcell clan?

The words here made Stern's complexion change as he thought of someone. Sometime ago, this person who lived outside Casa City made the Purcell clan face defeat.

Now more convinced, that person who had a grudge with the Purcell clan was also the same person that had a very good relationship with Laura...Some time ago, Laura had contacted that person, and that person had also produced a particularly good magic radish. Since that man also saved Laura's life, Stern hadn't cared if they did have some contact.

It now appeared that Laura's source of grains was that man. After making these conclusions, Stern couldn't sit still and immediately stood up while shouting, "Send someone to investigate all of the people that Laura had recently contacted, quickly!"

Soon, servants reported their findings to Stern. Among Laura's most recent contacts, only Zhao Hai and his warrior follower stood out. Stern understood that Laura's grains surely came from Zhao Hai.

After determining this point, Stern's face couldn't help but get ugly. Now that he knew what Laura meant before, he understood that Laura knew he would soon find out where she obtained the grains. She even told him he couldn't speak to the source. Except, would saying this make Stern feel more relieved?

Definitely not!

This time, how could Stern possibly believe it when the grains came from a personal enemy of the clan. He immediately told the Purcell clan's elders assembly, since this matter was beyond his capabilities.

Laura had already perceived that the Purcell family would investigate the source of the grains, but she wasn't worried. Right now, if the Purcell clan won't work with her, then they could only watch as the other large firms tear the meat from their bodies. This would be intolerable for the Purcell clan.

Great and large aristocratic nobility had their own pride. This time, the chamber of commerce's large firms had joined together against them. Although the Purcell clan couldn't use force, they wouldn't just stand around and face this shame. Seeing the chance to fight back, how could they miss it?

The decision of the Purcell clan wasn't out of Laura's expectations. Even though they had a relatively large hatred towards Zhao Hai, the large firms were far more excessive at the moment. So, the Purcell clan decided to solve the issue with the large firms first, then with Zhao Hai later.

Like any other large clan, in the eyes of the Purcell clan, there were no permanent enemies, only permanent interests. They would sacrifice everything just to meet the interests of the clan. Even if Zhao Hai exterminated a hundred of their own people, or even if it were a thousand, as long as the benefits were greater they would immediately become friends with Zhao Hai. Such is the survival principles of the large clans.

So when Laura went to the Purcell clan the next day, Stern, this time, discussed the cooperation matter with Laura.

Seeing how Stern reacted made Laura understand what the Purcell clan planned to do. She ignored that topic and only discussed the terms and details of their cooperation.

After the discussion, Laura immediately left for Stony Mountain to gather the grains. This time, while they were delivering the grains, experts from the Purcell family were there to protect them.

After Laura's caravan left, the Purcell clan announced that the infestation in the Ica plains never happened and that the production of grains was still ongoing.

When this news came out, it shook the world. Not only within the Purcell Duchy, but also in the surrounding areas. People in the surrounding areas had surely understood why the price of the grain had gone up. It was because some time ago, the large firms began hoarding that grain.

But then the Purcell clan announced their news. Although they knew that the Ica plains won't have any grains being produced, they said that their supply of food would have no problems and they guaranteed a steady supply.

Even though they announced it, the food consumption in the Purcell Duchy was still quite big. Thus, the price of grains slowly rose, but not very high. It was due to the Purcell clan and Higanbana firm's efforts in simultaneously selling grains at a fair price. The Purcell clan placed a limit on all the Higanbana shops and Purcell clan's food stores. Only those who held proof of residence in the Purcell Duchy could buy from there, and they could only buy a limited amount.

This was the method Laura and the Purcell clan had thought out. They spread the news of the Ica plain situation first, then started selling grains at a fair price. For fear that the large merchants might buy tons and resell them, they could only use this certification and limitation method.

This method really caught the large firms unprepared. These firms hadn't expected the Purcell clan to still say they could produce grains. This play of cards didn't fit what they had expected, placing them in chaos.

These firms had even thought the Purcell clan had begun to dip into their stockpiled wartime provisions. When they wanted to increase the price of grains, the Purcell clan could immediately move to control it.

The wartime provisions in every territory, whether large or small, would not be less than ten thousand kilograms. One wouldn't usually use this reserve because it was meant for war and combat preparations. If you easily used up the reserves, then soldiers would not have access to food when war came. Thus, the soldiers would be weakened and it would be easy to subjugate the territory.

Although recently there hadn't been any wars, the Purcell Duchy shouldn't just use their wartime provisions. The duchy was situated in the northern area of the Aksu empire. To the east it faced the Black Wastes which had no risk of conflict. The west and south were the areas of two other nobles, the Kousa and Polanton clans, which as a rule won't have any conflicts. At the northern boundary, however, was the Beastfolk Prairies which were not so peaceful.

The beastfolk were militant. Although they could get along well with the Terrans, the condition in the Beastfolk Prairies were harsh. Beastfolk primarily grazed, but also had to encounter disasters. Their way of life was difficult, which was why they plundered the south.

The Purcell clan, like any other noble clan, made rapid development when having a great relationship with the beastfolk. At the same time they raised massive armies as defense against beastfolk raids.

In the past few years, however, the situation in the Beastfolk Prairies was very good. Meaning, there were less raids towards the south. Due to this, the Purcell clan enjoyed very lucrative business with the beastfolk.

Even so, the Purcell clan should not spend their wartime provisions. This meant risking the Purcell clan's safety. If it was just to save some gold, then it wasn't worth it.

Chapter 148 - Lively Stony Mountain

The large firms didn't know why the Purcell clan had to do this. This was just too risky, and in their evaluations, the Purcell clan wouldn't dare take such a risk just because the large firms wanted to increase the price of food. Unexpectedly though, the Purcell clan did do it.

Two days later however, these large firms finally knew why the Purcell clan dared to take the risk of selling cheaply. They really did have the grains. Furthermore, it was around at least several hundred thousand kilograms. Even though it wasn't a lot compared to the food requirements of the Purcell Duchy, it was able to stabilize the mood of the citizens.

The grains that the Purcell clan brought out was naturally the corn that Zhao Hai produced. Zhao Hai wouldn't give Laura the unprocessed corn. Otherwise, the amount transported to Laura would have been more. Zhao Hai wouldn't have this so he only gave Laura the corn that was processed.

This was also due to Zhao Hai's personal selfishness. There was no corn on the Ark Continent, so if Zhao Hai gave Laura unprocessed corn, Laura might try planting them herself. By that time, Zhao Hai wouldn't be the only one who could produce corn, which would depreciate its value in the end.

Zhao Hai, however, didn't process the cornmeal. Instead, he just skinned the corn to the navel, and then processed it into corn kernels and let Laura use it however she wanted. If Laura wanted to get cornmeal, then she could just grind it on her own.

With the addition of these new grains, the price for food stabilized within the Purcell Duchy. But these large firms didn't try to be patient. They moved to buy these new grains for themselves. This officially began the food war within the Purcell Duchy.

These days, Zhao Hai had been very attentive about the situation in Casa City. He also observed the Ica plains for several days. His observations showed that the pests he summoned really made it so that nothing could be produced. The entirety of the Ica plains, nearly 700 square kilometers, were infested and nothing was spared.

Zhao Hai really didn't think that such a small insect could have so much destructive power. This destructive power was just too astonishing. For about two weeks, the entire Ica plains were infested and none of the crops remained. But these insects actually hadn't died yet since the space had set their

lifespan for a specific time. They began to attack the windbreak zones that the Purcell clan painstakingly built.

These pests could even devour a tree. Though the speed of doing so could not compare with their speed of eating the crops, the damage to the trees wasn't small.

Zhao Hai was, in fact, not in control of these insects. He found out that he could only kill them with his pesticide and that his pesticide was quite formidable when used on those insects. This was unlike in the game where you couldn't kill the insect that you placed. Zhao Hai wasn't in the mood to help the Purcell clan in exterminating them however, since the crops had already been thoroughly eaten and killing them wouldn't make any difference.

After the matter in the Ica plains had been solved, Zhao Hai placed all his attention on Casa City. He looked after the bamboo rice everyday, and even though he was not ready to process it himself, he let Laura take it and process them in his stead. This was because the bamboo rice was not something only he had, so he wasn't worried about the issue of it being leaked out.

After calculating the time when he had used Cast Pests on the Ica plains till now, it had already been half a month. It was now the time to let Green visit the Purcell clan to break off the engagement.

While he thought about this, Green came in from the outside and told Zhao Hai, "Master, the army is gone. Today's bamboo rice has been transported away."

Zhao Hai nodded his head. Several days earlier, the corn had been completely sold out by Laura. Now, Laura's caravan would have to come here everyday to take away the bamboo rice.

However, Zhao Hai would never let them go into the Stony Mountains. He would just let them wait at the foot of the mountain and, under the cover of the Fog of Darkness, place the grains. Then he'd pull back the fog towards the mountain, allowing the people there to take the food and transfer them into the sacks and carriages that were provided by Laura.

Nowadays, the caravan would go from Casa City to the Stony Mountain everyday. It carried back a massive amount of grains to each of the cities within the Purcell Duchy while being guarded by the cavalry.

The foot of the Stony Mountain had almost become a small town. There was a temporary shelter that the Purcell clan built which allowed the slaves to eat, live, and work there in order to continue their job of loading the grains. Everyday there would be almost a couple hundred thousand kilograms of grain that had to be loaded. This wasn't something that fewer slaves would be able to do.

The slaves were the slaves from the Ica plains that the Purcell clan then transferred here. All of the crops had been infested in the Ica plains, and even spread so they attacked the woods. Even if they want to plant new crops there, they wouldn't dare. So the Purcell clan transferred the slaves here, making them load the grains.

Zhao Hai didn't manage them, but had laid a strict rule that no one should go to the west side of Stony Mountain. Since the Purcell clan needed Zhao Hai's cooperation now, no one dared to disobey.

Zhao Hai had to do this in order to create an illusion for the Purcell clan that hinted that side as the passage used to transfer the grains within Stony Mountain. If he didn't do this, he would have had no way to explain how Stony Mountain could continuously provide food.

Leaving behind such a channel, the Purcell clan could not see how the grains were transported to Stony Mountain. But there was a kind of explanation; on the continent, there was something called a 'space' being used.

Green looked at Zhao Hai and said, "Master, the price of grains are now stable in Casa City, but those big firms aren't honest. They are probably still trying to find a solution, and I heard recently that they're going to deal with us first."

Zhao Hai shook his head. "Nevermind that. Now the Purcell clan is more nervous than us. If they believe that those people will come at us, then the Purcell clan will tidy them up. Right, Grandpa Green. Tomorrow, you should go to Casa City and withdraw the engagement."

Green nodded and said, "Yes Master. Don't worry, I'll go tomorrow. And Master, you said that we shouldn't be in Casa City. Aren't you establishing a transfer point?"

"It is a good idea," Zhao Hai said, nodding, "but I do not want to place a transfer point in Casa City now. I think in the coming two days, we should make a trip to Casa City and select a transfer point then."

“That’s good,” Green said. “As long as we got a transfer point in Casa City, we can directly place the grain there. The people here would then be able to withdraw. Right now, there’s a lot of people around here in Stony Mountain. I’m afraid that they’ll find something.”

Zhao Hai nodded. “Alright, I’ll do that. Tomorrow, you should go break off the engagement, then we will go to Casa City. I just don’t know if this engagement can be so easily withdrawn.”

Green smiled and said, “It should be really easy to withdraw it. Although right now we’re providing food to the Purcell clan, their issues have increased greatly. Furthermore, it is them that wanted to withdraw this engagement in the first place, so they shouldn’t make things complicated.”

Zhao Hai sighed. “I hope everything goes well. I fear the Purcell clan will embarrass you, so it should be convenient to let Grandma Meirin to go with you. Right now I don’t want to make a move just yet. If there is nothing else, I just want you to take care.”

Green shook his head. “No, if Meirin came with me, then the Purcell clan would be suspicious. Let’s leave behind Meirin. They would think Meirin is protecting you. Moreover, even if Meirin didn’t come, they would still think twice before they attack me.”

Zhao Hai nodded and said, “Tomorrow, I’ll let a few of the Night Shades accompany you. I believe that with their current strength, they could sneak inside Casa City without anyone knowing with ease. If the Purcell clan wants to attack you, they can lend a hand. ”

This time, Green didn’t refuse. Green also knew that the Purcell clan was not a good bird. Once he breaks the engagement, the Purcell clan might reason that they lost face and attack him. Since Meirin wouldn’t be present, they wouldn’t dare to kill him, maybe just injure him.

For the Purcell clan, it was a very good opportunity to do so once Green broke the engagement. They could just use it as a pretext to attack the Buda clan. In any case, there wasn’t anyone who would speak up for the Buda clan. Moreover, the Buda clan only had Rank Eight experts, no Rank Nines. Even if the Buda clan gets mad, they weren’t afraid.

In the eyes of the Purcell clan, the Buda clan was the same as the commoners that they could bully. There was no proper successor to the Buda clan head. Though their power was a little strong, one would only have to use a little strength in order to bully them.

The next morning, Green went out of the Stony Mountain. Although the outside of Stony Mountain was still lively, Green wasn't afraid since he was a peak Rank Eight expert warrior. It can be said that as long as there were no Rank Nine experts used to get rid of him, there would be few who could match him here on the continent.

Fearing that Green might get into an accident, Zhao Hai deliberately let Green go out with his Ghost Cane. Regardless of what happens to Green, Zhao Hai would be the first to know and he could easily send Green back into the space.

Moreover, Green bringing the Ghost Staff was tantamount to bringing the space into Casa City. As long as the marriage proposal was withdrawn, they could later change their identity and find a warehouse within Casa City. Later on they could use the transfer point to directly send grains to Casa City, thus avoiding the liveliness around Stony Mountain that resembled a marketplace.

From Stony Mountain, Green walked towards Black Mountain Fortress via the Casa City Official Road. Then he went back into the space and quickly changed his clothing. He took off his helmet, armor, and warrior clothes and put on a butler suit. He combed his hair meticulously, and then left a very fine sword attached to his waist.

This was a rapier. Although it looked like the kind that the aristocrats used for etiquette, those were designed for decoration and were useless as a sword. But people who knew Green also knew clearly that this sword was not as simple. Instead, this sword was a rare weapon that the Buda clan owned.

The whole sword was made of a very special metal. Moreover, it had passed through some magic refining and was of use for wind element warriors. If a magic crystal stone was embedded on the sword's hilt, then one could use the wind magic Wind Bladedge technique, thus making it a magic weapon. This was Green's famous weapon, named the Spiritwind Sword. Green was nicknamed the Spiritwind Battle General.

Chapter 149 - The Buda Clan Visits

Obtaining the nickname Spiritwind Battle General was not only because Green was a wind type warrior, or that he used the Spiritwind Sword, but rather because he had actually been in the army. He fought

bravely in battles, and thus was called the Spiritwind Battle General. From this name, one can sense that deep military flavor.

Not to mention, after Green changed his clothing, he gave off a very different feeling. He became a serious and rigid old housekeeper. Adding his straight physique and posture when seated, these well-mannered ways gave off a heavy military feeling that radiated off his body.

Zhao Hai looked at Green and couldn't help but smile. He said, "Grandpa Green, this is just like your original image. Ha ha ha."

Green looked at his outfit. "It has been quite a long time and since I haven't worn these clothes, I really might not be used to it. Ha ha."

Because of the 'space', Green had now seen some hope in their futures. Unlike when Zhao Hai had just awoken, Green was much happier now, even when he seemed serious.

Zhao Hai smiled and said, "I think the warrior clothes looked better on you, Grandpa Green. Soon, we'll buy a horse for you to ride instead."

Green shook his head and said, "Master, I do not need it. I will go now."

"Grandpa Green, be careful," Zhao Hai said with a shake of his head.

Green nodded back and Zhao Hai sent him out of the space. Green, using an agility movement, departed straight for Casa City.

Zhao Hai went from the space to Fort Iron Mountain. Here at Fort Iron Mountain, the past few days hadn't been that busy. Corn processing had been completed while the bamboo rice didn't need to be processed. Zhao Hai placed most of his attention into oil extraction.

Now that the fort's restoration had been completed, the slaves could relax a little. The castle, however, was obviously a bit overcrowded. This wasn't because of anything else but that the castle now had a large number of rollers and millstones used for corn processing.

But those slaves also had other things to do, such as help with the valley's land renovations that needed to be completed. Zhao Hai only took twenty slaves for the work. Since Zhao Hai hadn't completely restored the status of the slaves back into commoners, he selected two among them to manage the slaves. These two were good sentries here at Fort Iron Mountain. They were the first to find out about the attack by the Magic Beasts. The two were a man named Leen, and another called Set.

The twenty slaves were all male, no female. Since the valley was relatively close, Zhao Hai intended to let the slaves work in shifts. This made the work not so difficult as it was just checking on the corn crops that were planted in the valley.

The rest of the slaves usually took care of the blue-eyed rabbits in the mine tunnels. In order to ensure that the blue-eyed rabbits lived healthily, the water that the blue-eyed rabbits drank was the kind that Zhao Hai provided, which was the water from the space. What they ate was space produced radish leaves, and also a mixture of rice bran and oil that was added to their feed.

Zhao Hai now had a total of fifty thousand blue-eyed rabbits in the mine tunnels along with six thousand matured blue-eyed rabbits that were saved in the space. The blue-eyed rabbits in the space weren't being taken care of by the slaves, but those in the mine tunnel were.

Those fifty thousand blue-eyed rabbits did not occupy a small area, but they were relatively clean Magic Beasts. They frequently cleaned their own nests. Thus, the eighty slaves weren't that busy.

Zhao Hai could trade the blue-eyed rabbits that he had, but Laura had been too busy as of late. Thus, he hadn't contacted her about the processing of the meat, which meant the rabbits weren't sold. Zhao Hai wasn't anxious; even if those blue-eyed rabbits couldn't be traded, he could still make the slaves improve their cooking by using the rabbits up.

In fact, the standard of living of these slaves were even better than some of those commoners on the continent. Zhao Hai's Cooked Food Rules set aside a little meat every week for them to eat, which was something rarely seen for the continent's commoners. Moreover, everyone was guaranteed something to eat, and they could even eat however much they wanted.

Now that the slaves' standard of living had improved a lot, Zhao Hai had begun to give a lot of other commodities to these slaves. This allowed the slaves to have their own room, own clothes, own quilt,

and to even have their own tableware. These insignificant things, in the heart of the slaves, were very important. This was because those items became their very first properties.

Yes, in the eyes of these slaves, those insignificant things, their new personal properties, were their very first personal items. It was obvious that they would show importance to these things

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Two flowers blooming, each table can only have one!

Speaking of Green, he moved with a feeling of urgency all the way. This time he didn't need to be careful and even had to appear with great fanfare. Anyways, since he was using his own identity, there was no need to hide.

Green's Peak Rank Eight strength was now being completely revealed. All that the pedestrians would be able to see is smoke drifting from side to side. They didn't actually see who the person was. From this point, one could see how fast Green was.

On the Ark Continent, everyone had some level of martial talent, even an ordinary farmer. Upon meeting an expert, even if one were a slave who couldn't learn martial arts, they wouldn't feel any fear from the expert. This showed that such an experience was common. Although all they saw was smoke drifting from side to side, no one was scared. They knew it was an expert on their way, and they could only feel envious.

Green was quick. Evening of that same day, he had arrived in Casa City. Unfortunately, the city was closed now, so Green didn't enter. He found a place outside the city and then entered the space. Then he slept the night away in the space before entering Casa City the next morning.

Green entered Casa City and didn't go anywhere else but directly to the Grand Duke's Mansion. The Grand Duke's Mansion was the same one where Laura had gone to. There hadn't been any changes.

Green's outfit was very appealing. People on the continent had seen nobility before, and naturally, knew this outfit of Green's. He was a legitimate aristocratic steward, but everyone was curious since they didn't know who Green was.

It was common that an aristocratic steward, when going out, would generally bring the Clan's Emblem. Green hadn't even ridden in a carriage. Instead, he was walking which was rare.

When Green reached the gates of the Purcell clan, he took out an emblem from his pocket. This emblem wasn't large, but it was azure colored and marked with an angry dragon baring its teeth.

The guard who was in front of Green saw it and was stunned for a moment. He looked strangely at Green. This Clan Emblem was known throughout the continent as it was the emblem of the Buda clan. Before, the Buda clan and the Purcell clan had a good relationship. They also had a number of exchanges and these guards had also already seen and knew of the Buda clan's dragon emblem.

But a calamity had befallen the Buda clan. They had been exiled to the wilderness of the Black Waste, so there was no further contact. The Purcell clan was a large aristocratic clan within the Aksu Empire. Their title of Grand Duke was hereditary, so they had a silver emblem.

Previously, the Buda clan was of the Marquis rank. Therefore, they could also use a silver badge. Now, however, they were reduced to the title of Baron and therefore could only use the azure badge.

The complexion of the guards was strange for a reason. They knew Green's identity, and they also knew that the Purcell clan was prepared to break off the engagement with the Buda clan. But this time, the Buda clan came and they had no idea why the Buda clan did so.

As two porters saw Green, the two welcomed him immediately. Then one of them quickly ran inside.

The porter quickly walked in front of Green and bowed, then asked, "I don't know which member of the Buda clan this is. What matters do you have that would bring you to the Purcell clan?"

Green looked at the guard and said, "Myself is the Buda clan's head servant, Green Buda. This time, I represent the current head of the clan and am looking for the Grand Duke of the Purcell clan to discuss an important matter."

The porter did not dare to be neglectful and immediately said, "Sir, please sit inside. Others have already gone to inform the elders."

Green nodded and entered the mansion's lounge along with the porter.

Here within the Grand Duke's Mansion, not everyone was eligible to directly go through the second gate. Those with insufficient status needed to rest in the lounge and wait for the elders' summons. The reason why the porter was so polite towards Green was because of customs. A large clan attached great importance to their face. Thus, they didn't want to be seen as overwhelming towards the weaker side. That was why they were so polite here in the lounge.

The porter in the lounge gave Green one bowl of water. This bowl was an ordinary crude pottery bowl and the water was also ordinary plain boiled water. While they couldn't apply pressure, from this treatment, everyone could see that the Purcell clan didn't give any importance to Green. Such treatment was similar to treating commoners. Even those who were known as quasi-aristocratic Lords wouldn't be given this treatment.

Green didn't say anything. He just sat there with his eyes closed. Seeing how Green reacted, the porter couldn't help but curl his lips in disdain.

Around the same time, the other porter had gone past the second gate and was now in front of the Foreign Affairs Office. The porter gently knocked on the door and said, "Elder, the Buda clan is here."

His voice was just heard when the door to the Foreign Affairs Office opened. Stern looked at the porter and asked, "Who did you say it was?"

The porter said, "Elder, the Buda clan member who came was probably a main clan member and should now be resting in the lounge."

Stern frowned, muttering, "Why did they come, and around this time?"

Stern was really busy at this time as he was currently teamed up with Laura to battle the other big firms. But right at this time, the Buda clan came unexpectedly.

Stern was a lot more familiar with the Buda clan than the porter, so upon hearing that it was from the Buda main clan, he knew it must be Green.

If it was someone else, he could ignore them, but he could not ignore Green. Green's identity, aside from being a member of the Buda clan, was a Rank Eight expert. With regards to these experts, they should still show respect which made it so awkward for Stern.

Chapter 150 - Gonna Get Married?

This was exactly what Stern was worried about. He was very clear that they couldn't possibly marry into the Buda clan. Especially now that the Buda clan had fallen. It was even more of an impossibility.

Since this was the case, he didn't want to give the Buda clan any face. But, Green was a Rank Eight expert; offending such an expert wouldn't be good.

As an elder of the Purcell clan, Stern clearly knew why they haven't already renounced the engagement with the Buda clan. First was because of face. Second was because the Buda clan had two Rank Eight experts.

Rank Eight experts on the continent could preserve a small clan with no problem. Unfortunately, the Buda clan took part in a major matter, so even if they had Rank Eight experts they couldn't help preserve the clan.

Stern was tangled for a moment. Then he decided to let the Elder's Assembly decide on this matter. He turned to the porter and said, "Tell Mister Green to please come in, and remember to be polite."

The porter complied at once and turned back.

Before long, Green entered the yard along with the porter. Stern didn't dare to put on any airs. He quickly went over and said, "Butler Green, long time no see. How are you?"

Stern was the Elder of Foreign Affairs for the Purcell clan. He was specialized in dealing with people and, naturally, had a good understanding of Green, of whom he had some interactions with in the past.

Green nodded his head and said, "So it is Stern elder. I took the liberty to visit and was too abrupt about it which was presumptuous of me."

Stern quickly replied, "Head servant Green is too polite. Quick, please come in."

After letting Green inside the room, the two men sat down while being served by servants.

As Green looked at Stern, Stern said, "I would like to know what matter head servant Green would like to talk about."

Green looked at Stern, chuckled and said, "Just a little matter. A few days ago, there were several small insects that had flown into the Black Wastes and, accidentally, I shot down those insects."

"Oh, also about the prior engagement of my Master. He said that since the Buda clan is in such trouble, he really wouldn't be able to bear to let the Young Miss follow us in our suffering. So, he let me come to cancel the engagement. What does the Purcell clan think of this?"

Stern was listening to Green's words and naturally understood what Green spoke of. When he talked about those insects, after thinking about it, he realized it was obviously just satire from Green. But Green had clearly said that, this time, he was here to break off the engagement.

Break the engagement! This was what the Purcell clan earnestly wished for, but now the initiative came from Green and not from the Purcell clan. This made Stern feel very uncomfortable.

Stern couldn't help his face from sinking and he said, "Mister Green, is it really true that the Buda clan wants to break off the engagement?"

Green looked ironically at Stern. With a cold voice, he said, "No, ah, I take it back, I take it back. Always having insects run towards our family, I'm afraid that I will just have to beat them."

Stern looked angrily at Green. With a cold snort he said, "This matter is important and I have no right to decide. I would like to ask Green to rest first as I report this matter to the Clan Lord. Someone, come help head servant Green down to take a rest."

Green didn't get angry and slightly chuckled as he told Stern, "No need to trouble Stern elder, I have some money on me and will stay at an inn. Goodbye."

Having said that, he turned around and walked out as Stern looked at him with anger, pounding the table.

Green naturally heard the sound and sneered as he walked away from the Grand Duke's Mansion. He went outside to find a hotel to live in.

He found a hotel around midnight. Green entered the hotel room and immediately went into the space where Zhao Hai and Meirin were waiting to welcome him. Zhao Hai couldn't help but smile. "Grandpa Green, they really spat out blood. Ha ha, I think that guy's complexion turned green."

Green coldly snorted and said, "They dare act like that. They don't want to look afraid of what other people will say. Well, what's so amazing about that. Right now the Purcell clan is depending on us to rescue them from their food crisis."

Zhao Hai slightly chuckled. "Grandpa Green, don't get angry. As long as we break the marriage proposal, there won't be a need to offend them to the death. Anyways, recently the Purcell clan have been anxious about the Black Wastes and sent forces to harass us daily. We already have enough trouble."

Green nodded his head and said, "Don't worry Master, I know that in my heart. But if we don't show them our power a little, then more of those types of guys will think of bullying us. They can't just send Rank Nine experts against us. As long as they're Rank Eight, we won't be afraid and can extinguish several of them."

Zhao Hai smiled. Turning around, he said, "I just sent the Night Shades to monitor the Grand Duke's Mansion. When there's movement, they'll report it. I believe there's no need to make a matter about it."

Green nodded. Then Meirin opened her mouth and said, "Master, after cancelling the marriage engagement to the Purcell clan, you should set a new marriage soon. After all, the Buda clan's heritage depends on you "

Zhao Hai didn't expect that Meirin would say this. He scratched his head and said, "We shouldn't worry about this matter yet. The Buda clan has only had a small improvement. And besides, the space is a secret that we cannot let others know about. The time is not right for marriage."

Meirin would have liked to respond, but Green interrupted her. "Master is right, our Buda clan is just starting. We shouldn't talk about this issue until after resolving the problem of the toxin from the Water of Nothingness. Then the matter of marriage can be discussed. This is so that even if Master has a child, we wouldn't have to worry about the detoxification."

Meirin couldn't help but smile as she stared at Green. "I didn't mean to let the Master marry now. What I meant was to let Master find someone in advance, to avoid losing good girls later. Right, what about Miss Laura? She's beautiful and talented. Moreover, her mind is good."

Zhao Hai hadn't expected Meirin to be able to find a target already. He couldn't help but smile bitterly, knowing that he couldn't avoid it this time. Sighing, he said, "Grandma Meirin, I will go up first and rest. Wake me up when it's time to eat."

After saying that, he turned around and went upstairs. He hadn't seen the look on Meg's face, which had a trace of love and crisis.

Meg liked him, but she didn't want to be excessive in her performance. Now that she heard Zhao Hai should be married, Meg couldn't help but feel some panic. She was afraid that Zhao Hai would not want her.

She met Laura a few times already, and to be honest, Meg felt somewhat inferior to Laura. With regards to beauty, body, and life experiences, she could say Laura was like the bright moon while she was just a humble little star. She couldn't see any advantage she had over Laura, and she was really afraid that Zhao Hai would marry Laura and not her.

Zhao Hai hadn't thought so much about it. Since Laura looked like Taylor Swift, when he was in front of her, Zhao Hai felt pressured. He never thought that one day, he may live together with Laura.

Meirin just looked at Zhao who had ran away and didn't say anything more about this matter. She looked at the time and found that it was time to prepare Zhao Hai's lunch.

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After Stern watched Green leave, he quickly went to the depths of the Grand Duke's Mansion where the core of the Purcell clan was. Past the third gate, there was a high-rise, five-story building made of white stone. At the top hung a plaque with two words, "Elders Court."

Right. This was the real core of the Purcell clan, the Elders Court. This was where most of the offices of the elders were located. Only a handful had their offices elsewhere.

There were two warriors standing in front of the building. The ages of these warriors was not too young, about fifty years old. They were defending the left and the right sides of the building. If others saw them, they'd be surprised because both of them were Rank Seven experts.

Stern stood in front of the two men and nodded. He then went straight into the building. With regards to the guarding warriors, Stern would not neglect them as they were strong experts. Having many years of experience in dealing with people, he was very clear that even the humblest of people must not be offended.

Upon entering the Elders Court, Stern directly went to the fifth floor which only had three rooms. There was an elder in each of these rooms. These three rooms were where the actual control of the Purcell clan came from. The First, Second and Third elders were here.

Stern walked with a lighter pace. He arrived in front of the First Elder's room and knocked at the door. The door opened to show a young girl standing in the door.

The girl looked to be about twenty years old, tall, and attractive. She wore a magic robe and saw Stern standing outside the door. She couldn't help but smile and said, "Ah, it's Stern elder. Please come and sit down."

Stern ceremoniously replied, "Thank you Lani." He then carefully entered the room.

Inside the room was a desk and chair placed opposite the door. The left side had a sofa and a small coffee table while the right side had a pair of doors carved ornately with patterns.

Stern didn't dare sit down and asked Lani, "Please inform the First Elder that Stern has asked to see him immediately." Stern was afraid of neglecting Lani, who was a Rank Five water magician herself and whom the First elder favored. Her status within the clan also didn't fare badly compared to some of the other young ladies.

Lani looked at the stiff Stern. She smiled lightly and said, "Stern elder, please sit down. I don't know why you are so hurried in order to find the First Elder, but right now he is reviewing a large pile of documents. He told me earlier that if the matter wasn't important, then he wasn't to be bothered."

Stern thanked Lani and went to sit down on the sofa. He then said, "The Buda clan's Green came. Last time, we had sent some people to the Black Wastes to observe their situation. I fear that they won't be coming back. This time, he said that he wanted to break the engagement. For this matter, I don't have the power to call the shots. That's why I'm asking for the First Elder to decide."