

The Herb King

The Herb King #Chapter 101 – 110

Read The Herb King Chapter 101

101 Two Thousand?!

“Leave the Merchant Association’s umbrella?” The hunters were stunned when they heard Verson’s words.

Although the Merchant Association has been causing them a lot of trouble lately, the Hunter Association could not do anything about it since they had to rely on the former’s funding. Once they broke off their relationship with the Merchant Association, the Hunter Association might experience a major setback in their daily operations.

“Since we are already discussing this. I’ll tell you guys about it. In truth, my brother has already told me about this idea a long time ago. Just that, he still hasn’t found a suitable time to proceed with this plan. If Sir Aethelwolf is willing to help the Hunter’s Association, my brother would surely consider this idea again.” Verson said, his tone becoming serious. Aethelwolf’s Recovery Pellet might become the breakthrough point of the rise of their Hunter Association. This was merely his estimation about the value of his pills, but Verson was confident that Aethelwolf’s pills would prove to be crucial for them.

Verson rested for another two hours before he decided to look for Aethelwolf.

“Sir Aethelwolf, I’ve rested enough. I still feel a bit weak, but I can walk steadily now.” Verson smiled as he looked at the young man who was sitting casually on a chair.

Leric stood up when he saw Verson and smiled at him. “I’m glad that you can now walk. If you feel that there’s something wrong, you can come back to the clinic at any time. Of course, your next consultation fees will no longer be free.” Leric said in a joking tone.

Verson chuckled and nodded his head. “Don’t worry, Sir Aethelwolf. I may be old, but I can still afford to pay your consultation fees.”

Leric smiled at his words. He then remembered something and asked. “By the way, are you guys free at the moment?”

Verson stared at him curiously. “Actually, I want to discuss the thing I mentioned to you earlier with my brother. Why? Do you need our help, Sir Aethelwolf?”

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Leric nodded his head. "It's like this... I bought a mansion earlier, but I still don't have people to guard it. Other than that, the clinic also needs more guards. Everything might be peaceful now, but there might be trouble in the future."

The guards sent by the Reynolds Household wouldn't be enough to handle the entire clinic on their own. Besides, they were only temporarily stationed here to help him. They still have to return to the Reynolds Household after some time.

"I see. How about this... Once I settle the discussion with my brother, I'll come back with more people. How many guards are you planning to hire, Sir Aethelwolf? Many of our brothers have nothing to do in the association so I can bring as many as you want." Verson eagerly said. The unemployment of some hunters would be resolved because of this.

Leric thought for a moment and answered. "Not that many. I think I need around two thousand. What do you think?" He narrowed his eyes as he looked at Verson. This number was a lot and it would cause a commotion once some people heard about it. Hiring two thousand skilled hunters at once would make the noble households think that he was planning something suspicious. Even the Imperial Family might question him about it.

Verson's eyes widened and he could not help but look at Leric one more time to see if he was joking, but when he saw the guy's serious expression, he realized that Aethelwolf wasn't speaking nonsense. "Ehem!" He glanced to his left and right and after seeing that no one was listening, he moved closer to Aethelwolf and whispered. "Sir Aethelwolf, I can't give you a concrete answer now, but I'll try to persuade my brother to let you hire the number that you want and even if he disagrees, I can at least bring five hundred hunters to you."

He didn't know what Aethelwolf was planning to do with two thousand skilled hunters, but he trusted the man for he had saved his life.

"I have strict requirements for the people I plan to hire, so I might need to discuss this with your brother. How about this? Just inform him that I will visit his place tomorrow morning." Leric didn't plan to just hire some random riffraff. There might be some undesirable characters in the Hunter Association so it was better to be careful.

Verson nodded his head. "Alright. I'll inform my brother about this. If there's nothing else, we'll take our leave now, Sir Aethelwolf." His men have already bought some Recovery Pellets. He needed to present them to his brother later.

"Take care." Leric waved his hand at them and returned to his chair.

"Two thousand is just the start..." Leric muttered to himself. Initially, he didn't plan to create his own force and he only wants to silently live a peaceful life, but circumstances forced him to change his plans.

At this moment, Leric was planning to create his own army!

“How is your side doing, Sir Harold?” Prince Calvin asked the grave-faced Harold.

“My subordinates managed to locate four more outposts of the Northern Viper Group. I didn’t tell them to do anything yet so we still have no idea if we can find something in these four outposts.” Harold answered with furrowed eyebrows. He has been working with the second prince to search for clues related to the Northern Viper Group.

Prince Calvin nodded his head. “My men also located three outposts. We should attack these outposts at the same time to catch them off guard. This way, they would be confused as to where they would send their reinforcements.”

Harold revealed a look of surprise when he heard this idea. “That might work. Tell me more about this plan, Your Highness.”

Prince Calvin nodded his head. “In total, we have located seven outposts. We will tell our subordinates to...” The second prince and Lord Harold started discussing the plan.

102 Rendell

Leric closed the clinic at 6 P.M. He then invited the applicants who applied for the open positions in his clinic and let Skylar and the others interview them one by one. “I’ll settle the matters in the mansion first so I’ll leave the applicants in your care. You can give the contracts after they pass the interview. I will sign them after I return.” Leric said to the ladies before leaving the clinic.

Simon told him that the mansion would be ready at 5 P.M.

“I’m in a hurry. I’ll go there on my own.” He muttered to himself and decided to leave on foot. Riding the carriage would be comfortable, but it would take him about thirty minutes to arrive at the mansion.

Leric is now a Level 4 Esper and with his speed, he can get there in just a few minutes.

“Actually, I can just create a flight skill, but that would be too high profile. I might even be arrested by the guards.” Leric thought in amusement as he jumped into the roof of the clinic. His figure blurred as he blended into the night.

Swoosh!

He skillfully jumped from one roof to another. He was like a phantom with his quick movements.

Soon, he arrived in front of the mansion.

“It’s you. Simon has been waiting for your arrival.” The guard who brought him inside the mansion earlier identified Leric.

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“I’m sorry. My clinic closes at 6 P.M. so I came an hour late.” Leric smiled apologetically.

The guard waved his hand. “It doesn’t matter. Come. I’ll take you to Simon.”

“Alright.” Leric nodded his head and followed the guard. This guard has been acting so casually in front of him even after knowing that he was now the new owner of the mansion. The guy is quite interesting in Leric’s opinion. Most guards would be respectful to their guests, but this person didn’t seem to care about his status.

Leric used his skill [Appraisal] to check the guard’s power. ‘A peak Level 1 Esper. Not bad for someone in his early twenties.’

“Are you working for Simon?” Leric asked calmly.

The guard was a bit surprised by his sudden question. He turned his head at Leric and replied. “No. My job here is only temporary. After you take ownership of the mansion, my contract with Simon will be completed.”

“I see. Do you have any plans after this?”

The guard shook his head. “I don’t know yet. I’ll probably join the Hunter Association. That’s the only place that would accept commoners like me.” There was a hint of indignance in his tone. For someone who comes from a humble background, it would be tough to look for jobs with a high position so the only option left for him was the Hunter Association.

Leric didn’t ask more questions after that and he remained silent along the way.

“Simon, the person who bought the mansion is here.”

“He’s here? Wait! I’ll be there right away!” Simon eagerly opened the door and smiled at Leric.

“You’re finally here, Sir Aethelwolf! I thought that you won’t be coming back tonight.” Simon chuckled as he shook Leric’s hand.

“To tell you the truth, I own a clinic here in Dominion District and it closed at 6 P.M. so I had to wait until the clinic is closed before coming here.” Leric smiled apologetically.

“So that’s the case! I understand. Now that you’re here, I’ll leave the mansion to you. Congratulations on buying your new house.” Simon smiled warmly.

“Thanks. By the way, can you tell me more about the guard who came with me earlier?”

Simon could not help but look at Leric with an odd gaze. Why is this guy suddenly curious about a guard? Could it be that he...

“It’s not what you’re thinking.” Leric immediately shook his head when he saw the weird look Simon was giving him. “I can sense that he is a peak Level 1 Esper and it would be a pity to keep him as a guard.”

Simon had a look of realization after hearing this. “That man’s name is Rendell. He is indeed a promising young man. I even asked him if he was willing to work for me, but the guy rejected my offer. Apparently, he doesn’t want to have his freedom to be tied down.” He shook his head while saying this.

Leric became more interested in the guard after hearing Simon’s words. “Tell him to come and meet me here.” Leric said in a firm tone.

Simon raised his eyebrows in surprise. “Alright, but I can’t promise you that he will agree to work for you.”

“It’s fine. I will take care of that.” Leric smiled mysteriously.

“Okay. Here are the documents for the mansion. I have to return to my boss now, so I’ll take my leave first, Sir Aethelwolf.” Simon handed the documents to Leric and left.

Soon, the young guard, Rendell, came with a confused expression on his face. “Why are you looking for me?” He asked Leric while maintaining his vigilance.

“You don’t have to be nervous. I just think that you are quite talented. How about working for me?” Leric stared at Rendell.

Rendell frowned and immediately shook his head. “I’m not interested.”

“20,000 gold coins.”

Rendell’s eyes widened when he heard the offer. He was only getting 5,000 gold coins by working as a guard in this mansion. Leric’s offer was four times his monthly salary so it was a bit tempting.

Looking at his hesitating expression, Leric extended his palm and summoned a brilliant golden Pill Fire.

“Golden Pill Fire! Level 4 Alchemist!” Rendell stared at Leric in shock when he saw the flickering golden flame on top of his palm.

“I can make you stronger if you’re willing to work for me.” Leric dropped the most tempting offer for an Esper.

Rendell no longer hesitated. He bowed at Leric and said. “Greetings, my lord. I’m willing to work for you!”

This guy is a Level 4 Alchemist!

Since he was young, he has been dreaming about having the chance of consuming high-rank pills. It was the only way for commoners like him to increase his strength faster.

“My name is Aethelwolf. Just call me Sir Aethelwolf like the others.” Leric smiled at him.

103 Generous New Boss

Rendell was still very weak at the moment, but what Leric valued about this guy was his potential and with the help of his pills, Rendell’s strength would only increase by leaps and bounds.

“I’ll be back before midnight. I still have some matters to take care of. Wait for me here.” Leric tossed a pill to Rendell and said. “Consume this first to strengthen your Hegel. Lion City is safe right now so you can consume this pill here without worry.”

Rendell caught the pill between his fingers and before he could say anything, Aethelwolf’s figure has already vanished. “A pill that can strengthen one’s Hegel...” He muttered excitedly while looking at the pill in his hand. Without hesitation, he threw the pill into his mouth and started absorbing its energy.

When the pill touched his tongue, it dissolved immediately and spread warmth throughout his body. He could feel a strong torrent of energy slowly coalescing into his Hegel. The energy started rotating around his Hegel, strengthening it in the process!

Not long later, Rendell opened his eyes and revealed a stunned look. “It actually managed to expand my Hegel by twofold! At this moment, I’m now much stronger compared to other peak Level 1 Espers! Even the young geniuses in the noble households might not be my match anymore! What a terrifying pill!” He exclaimed.

The efficiency of the Vigor Pellet would also depend on the talent of the consumer. The greater one’s talent, the greater the effects will be. However, even those with poor potential would still receive substantial benefits after consuming one Vigor Pellet!

Rendell could hardly contain his excitement. This was merely the first pill that he got from Aethelwolf and it already enhanced his strength to a large degree. Although his level didn't increase, the amount of world essence in his Hegel doubled!

"Luckily, I swallowed my pride and accepted Sir Aethelwolf's offer or I would have regretted it." He muttered to himself.

When Leric returned to the clinic, the interview of the applicants was almost done.

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"Sir Aethelwolf, we've interviewed most of the applicants and there are only two of them left. Do you want to take over?" Skylar asked when she spotted him.

Leric shook his head and smiled. "It's fine. I trust your judgment."

Hearing this, Skylar bowed her head lightly at him. She felt happy that Aethelwolf trusted them. "Thank you for your trust, Sir Aethelwolf."

Leric waved his hand. He then turned his head to Kathlyn and said. "Bring the applicants who passed the interview to me and prepare their contracts."

Kathlyn immediately called the applicants and she also brought their contracts with her. "Follow me."

The applicants obediently followed behind Kathlyn and they all entered Leric's room. It was quite spacious so they didn't feel suffocated despite there being more than ten of them inside the room.

Kathlyn silently handed the documents to Leric before standing behind him.

There were ten contracts in his hands and the applicants have already signed them. Only Leric's signature remained to be filled.

Looking at the nervous expressions of everyone, Leric smiled gently as he said. "Congratulations! You guys passed the interview and the clinic will now officially hire you as our employees. I believe that you have already seen the contract so I won't discuss it anymore. I just want to inform you guys that I only need your loyalty and honesty. As long as you work diligently, you might even get more benefits than what was stipulated in your contracts."

Leric checked the newly hired employees using his [Virtual Map]. All of them were regarded as blue dots. That means none of them were spies.

Among the five hired Sales Representatives, Athena Dublin was among them. She was the girl that made Leric sign his signature on her chest. She was now looking at him with a silly smile on her face.

Leric retracted his gaze from her and observed the hired cashiers. Two of them were single mothers in their thirties, while the remaining three were middle-aged men in their forties or fifties.

Leric was satisfied with the new recruits this time. It seems like Skylar and the others really did their best in choosing from the applicants.

“Do you have any questions for me?” Leric asked while looking at them.

One of the single mothers raised her hand with a hesitating look. “Sir Aethelwolf, in the contract, it is stated that I can live in the accommodation given by the clinic. I’m wondering if I can bring my daughter with me. She’s already eighteen, so she can help in cleaning or laundry.”

Everyone fell silent upon hearing her. They also felt that her situation was pitiful. A mother who single-handedly raised her child is very admirable and she must have suffered a lot in the past few years.

Leric smiled at her. “What’s your name?”

“Janeth Yanez.” She answered nervously. From what she heard, her new boss is a Level 4 Esper! That is someone that she couldn’t afford to offend. Just one word from him and her life would be over.

“You can bring your daughter with you. The mansion that I bought for you guys is big enough to accommodate hundreds of people.” He then turned his head at the others and said. “You guys can also bring your families with you to the mansion. I’ll also pay them if they are willing to work as servants for the mansion.”

The eyes of everyone lit up when they heard his words. They also could not help but be touched by their boss’ generosity. Some of them even started crying when they thought about living with their family inside a big mansion. It was a dream come true for them.

Leric sighed when he saw this. Some people are born into a poor family and their life was fated to be a difficult one.

“Thank you so much, Sir Aethelwolf!”

“Thank you, Sir Aethelwolf!”

Athena Dublin’s impression of Aethelwolf improved drastically because of this. He was a man with high status, but he didn’t put on airs in front of his subordinates.

104 Do You Have More?

Verson and his friends returned to the main headquarters of the Hunter Association to announce the success of their mission. Their mission was only to hunt a Level 2 magical beast Iron Hide Boar, but after killing it, they encountered a Giant Blue Maned Bison on their way home that killed more than half of their team members.

“Isn’t that Verson and his buddies? How come there are only a few of them here?”

“What happened to them?”

Verson and the others ignored the curious hunters and went straight to the Vice Association Leader’s office after claiming their rewards for killing the Iron Hide Boar.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

“Brother, it’s me.” Verson said after knocking on the door.

“Come in.” An aged voice came from inside the room.

Verson turned his head to his friends and muttered. “You guys stay here first and wait for me. I’ll be back after I discuss a few things with my brother.”

His friends nodded their heads at him.

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Verson pushed the door open and saw an old man in his sixties sitting on a wooden chair. His short white hair was combed neatly backward, making him look refined and full of charisma. There were all sorts of scars on his exposed arms and his neck also has a diagonal mark, which was probably caused by a sword wound.

Despite the old man’s advanced age, he didn’t look weak. His eyes are filled with clarity and his penetrating gaze was now looking at Verson. “Brother, you looked like hammered shit! What happened?” The old man smiled when he saw Verson.

Verson sighed and shook his head as he recounted the events that had transpired. After telling him about what happened, the face of the old man turned solemn. “I’m so sorry to hear that, brother. Were you able to retrieve their bodies?”

Verson nodded his head. “I did. They are inside my storage ring.”

The old man nodded. “We can only give them a funeral. The Association will also give compensation to their families.”

“Thanks, brother.”

"This is part of my job as the Vice Leader. Brother, you should take a short rest. It must have been hard on you." The old man glanced at Verson with a worried look.

Verson shook his head. "To tell you the truth, I would have died if my friends didn't bring me to Aethelwolf's clinic." He then told his brother about the Aethelwolf and his miraculous Recovery Pellet. Verson also showed the Recovery Pellets he bought from the clinic to his older brother.

The old man's name is Ryk Misa, a Level 4 Esper.

Ryk scrutinized the Recovery Pellet and he was surprised by the energy inside the pill. "I trust you brother, but I still want to see the effects of this pill with my own eyes." What Verson told him was almost unbelievable and if not for him being his brother, he would have already kicked him out of his office. However, he knew that Verson wasn't the type of person who would joke about something this serious.

"No problem. I also wouldn't believe that such a pill exists if I didn't experience its efficiency myself. How about we go to the Recovery Area? We can give the pills to our injured comrades and you can see its effects. Don't worry. This pill is effective and there are no side effects. You won't lose anything even if it doesn't work." Verson was confident about the Recovery Pellet so he wasn't worried that something will happen.

"Alright. Since you are so confident about this pill. I'll give it a try. And if it's truly as effective as you've said, then I will tell the Leader about it and if he agrees, we can sign a contract with that Aethelwolf. Follow me." Ryk said as he stepped out of the office. Verson followed behind him. When they got out of the room, Verson silently sent a signal to his friends to follow them.

"Are they the survivors in your team?" Ryk asked without looking back.

Verson wasn't surprised that they were discovered. He nodded his head and said. "That's right. They are the only ones left on my team." His tone was rather downcast.

Ryk remained silent on their way to the Recovery Area.

The Recovery Area is a place meant to treat the wounded hunters of the Hunter Association. There are dozens of capable Doctors here monitoring the condition of everyone.

The arrival of the Vice Leader caused a bit of a commotion. The Doctors and the patients who saw him immediately greeted him respectfully.

"Greetings, Vice Leader!"

Ryk turned his head to his brother and asked. "Will this work regardless of the gravity of the injury?"

Verson nodded his head. "According to Sir Aethelwolf, the Recovery Pellet will work as long as it is a physical injury. Even internal wounds could be healed."

The Recovery Pellet that Leric was selling in his clinic is an inferior version of the one he gave to Lord Julius, but it was still much better than the healing pills sold in the market.

"Alright." Ryk said no more and searched for a hunter who has the most serious wound. After looking around, he spotted a hunter who was suffering from various physical injuries and internal hemorrhage. One of the man's arms was also amputated.

"Give this pill to him." Ryk said to the Doctor who was treating the man.

The Doctor was surprised, but he did as he was told and let the severely injured hunter consume the pill.

To their surprise, the pained expression of the hunter slowly eased up and the wounds on his body are recovering at a discernible speed. Although his arm didn't regrow, the wound on his shoulder closed up and stopped bleeding.

The Doctor rose to his feet with an incredulous look on his face. "This! Vice Leader, what kind of pill was that?!"

Ryk was also stunned as he witnessed the entire scene. All it took was just one pill to heal a dying man! He ignored the dumbfounded Doctor and turned his head to his brother. "Do you have more?"

105 Suspicious Old Man

Verson already knew the effects of the pill, but he was also surprised by the speed at which the injured man was recovering. "I have more, but there are only a limited amount of them. Sir Aethelwolf didn't allow his customers to purchase in bulk. You can have my remaining Recovery Pellets, but you should only give them to the gravely injured hunters." He said as he handed the remaining pills to his brother.

Ryk took them from his hands with a serious look on his face. These pills were so effective that the recovery pills in the market would only be rubbish in comparison.

Ryk and Verson quickly handed the remaining pills to the severely wounded hunters and everyone that took the pills healed incredibly fast!

Ryk grabbed his brother and said with a solemn look. "Bring me to this clinic immediately! I want to talk business with that guy Aethelwolf! We have to get our hands on those Recovery Pellets!"

After seeing the effectiveness of the pill with his own eyes, he was able to quickly realize its value.

Verson also knew this, but he shook his head as he answered. "The clinic is now closed. They will be open tomorrow at 9 A.M."

Ryk immediately shook his head. "That won't do! I have to talk to him now! We must not delay this matter! The significance of that pill to our Hunter Association is high! If we have a sufficient supply of the Recovery Pellets, the death rate of our hunters will decrease!"

Verson hesitated when he heard his brother's words. "Alright. I'll bring you there, but I don't know if Sir Aethelwolf is still in the clinic right now."

"Quick! We don't need a carriage! We'll arrive much faster if we leave on foot! Let's go!" Ryk is a Level 4 Esper and with his speed, he was indeed much faster than a carriage.

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"Are you crazy?! The guards will arrest us if we cause a commotion in the city!" Verson began to regret that he agreed to his brother's demand. He might be faster than a carriage, but if he runs at his fastest speed within the city, it might cause panic among the citizens.

"I'll bear the consequences if something happens. I don't believe that the guards will arrest the Vice Leader of the Hunter Association. Enough chitchat!" Ryk grabbed Verson and hoisted him on his shoulder.

It wasn't long until the guards received a report about a suspicious old man kidnapping a middle-aged guy.

After telling the newly hired employees about the address of the mansion, Leric took out a cigar from his storage space and went into the balcony on the third floor. He then lit up the cigarette while enjoying the night sky.

"The nights will no longer be lonely since I already have this guy." He said as he took out his guitar.

A beautiful melody immediately spread into the street as Leric started playing the guitar. He didn't sing this time and just played the guitar while smoking his cigar.

Standing behind the glass door on the third floor, Skylar and the other ladies looked at his smiling face with infatuated looks.

Suddenly, Leric stopped strumming the guitar and furrowed his eyebrows as he looked in a certain direction. He could sense a strong aura moving toward the clinic at high speed. He immediately looked at his [Virtual Map] and he heaved a sigh of relief after seeing that it wasn't an enemy.

There were two blue dots moving in their direction. One was a big blue dot, indicating a Level 4 Esper, while the smaller blue dot is a Level 2 Esper. Closely followed behind the two dots were dozens of blue dots of varying sizes.

Leric was confused when he saw this. "What's happening?" He mumbled as he peered into the distance, activating his perception skills to see what was going on. To his surprise, he saw an old man carrying a person and when he got a clearer look, he realized that it was Verson, the first patient of their clinic!

"Who the hell is that old man and why is he carrying Verson?" Leric had so many questions.

Soon, the old man who was hoisting the dizzy Verson arrived in front of the clinic.

Leric didn't conceal his gaze so the old man raised his head and saw him standing calmly on the balcony.

"Sir Aethelwolf!" Verson immediately greeted when he spotted the young man.

"Strange. I can't sense his strength. Is he an ordinary person?" Ryk mumbled to himself with a perplexed look. 'Isn't he an Alchemist? How come I can't sense his power?'

Verson heard his words so he immediately whispered. "Oh, I forgot to tell you this. Sir Aethelwolf is a Level 4 Alchemist."

Ryk was stunned when he heard his brother's words. Level Alchemist? That means this young man is at least a Level 4 Esper!

Suddenly, dozens of guards dressed in black armor surrounded the entire street. They stared at Ryk with wary looks on their faces.

"Stop right there, old man! We are part of the Black Lion Army under General Baron! Follow us for some questioning!" The one who spoke is a Level 3 Esper and the captain of these guards. He was a bit nervous as he looked at Ryk since he could tell that the old man is a Level 4 Esper. He was hoping that the old man would be deterred by General Baron's name.

Ryk smiled nonchalantly as he stared at the guards. "I apologize for the commotion I've caused. I'm Ryk Misa, the Vice Leader of the Hunter Association. We are in a hurry to go to this clinic so I was forced to run at my full speed. Please give me some face and

forget about this matter. I promise that I will visit General Baron at a later time to apologize in person about this matter.”

When the guards heard his words, they were dumbfounded. This old man is actually the Vice Leader of the Hunter Association.

The captain of the guards was also surprised, but he wouldn't easily believe the other party's words. Who knew if he was just lying to escape the situation? “Can you show us an identification token or document that will prove your words?”

Ryk patiently nodded his head. “Of course!”

Meanwhile, Leric was looking at the scene with an amused look on his face.

106 Huge Transaction

After Ryk proved his identity, the guards decided to give him face and they all left the scene.

“Sir Aethelwolf, we came here to see you. I hope that we didn't disturb you.” Verson smiled in embarrassment as he looked at Leric who was still on the balcony.

Leric shook his head and chuckled. “I'm not doing anything at the moment so you're good. Give me a second. I'll open the door for the two of you.”

He then went downstairs and opened the door of the clinic. “Come inside.”

“Sorry for the intrusion.” Verson said.

“It's fine. Let's go to my room on the third floor.” Leric brought them to his room.

“Sir Aethelwolf, this is my brother, Ryk Misa. He is the Vice Leader of the Hunter Association. We are here to talk business with you.” Verson said as he pointed at his brother.

The old man smiled at Leric and took the initiative to extend his hand for a handshake. “It's nice to see you, Sir Aethelwolf.”

“Likewise, Sir Ryk.” Leric smiled and shook hands with the old man. He knew what they were here for and he already expected this to happen after he met Verson earlier.

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Ryk's expression suddenly turned serious as he said. “I won't beat around the bush, Sir Aethelwolf. On behalf of the Hunter Association, I would like to suggest a collaboration between us. To be specific, we hope that you can supply the Hunter Association with

your Recovery Pellet. I know that it's precious so we won't be asking for an absurd number of the pill. What do you think about this, Sir Aethelwolf?"

Leric pondered for a moment. His Recovery Pellets are sold at the price of five thousand gold coins and the clinic can sell about a thousand pieces per day. Even if he subtracted the cost of ingredients, he would still earn a few million gold coins from selling a thousand Recovery Pellets! That is how popular the pill is after only opening the clinic recently.

"How many Recovery Pellets does the Hunter Association want?" Leric asked with a smile.

Ryk was silent for a few seconds before he answered. "We won't make things difficult for you. How about ten thousand pills every month?"

Ten thousand Recovery Pellets are worth fifty million gold coins!

The amount of pills he asked for is doable so Leric nodded his head. "Alright. That sounds good to me. We have a deal!"

"Great! I'll send you the payment and the contract tomorrow. Can I ask when the pills will be ready?" Ryk and Verson were both ecstatic when Aethelwolf accepted the offer.

"Actually, you can get them now. I trust that the Hunter Association won't cheat me of my money." Leric said as grabbed ten thousand Recovery Pellets from his storage space. His supply was slowly decreasing so he has to refine more pills later.

When Ryk and Verson saw Aethelwolf taking out the pills, they could no longer hide the smiles on their faces.

"It's my pleasure to do business with you, Sir Aethelwolf!" Ryk eagerly shook hands with the young man. He was now one step closer to achieving his plan of making the Hunter Association independent from the Merchant Association.

Leric grinned at the enthusiastic old man.

After keeping the Recovery Pellets inside his storage ring, Ryk stood up and said. "We won't stay for long, Sir Aethelwolf. I still have to prepare the contract and the payment for these pills."

"Alright. I'll see you off." Leric walked them out of the clinic and bid farewell to the two.

When they left, Leric suddenly laughed as he muttered. "Fifty million gold coins... That's not too bad..."

Inside a small house, somewhere in Dominion District.

“Mom, you’re finally here! I managed to advance to the next round and I’m now part of the remaining fifty participants! Even if I end up being eliminated tomorrow, it is guaranteed that I’ll get a high position in the army once the competition is over!” A young girl excitedly ran toward her mother.

This young lady is Janrose Yanez, the girl that grabbed the attention of Lord Julius during the competition.

Her mother is Janeth Yanez, she was one of Leric’s newly hired employees.

Seeing her daughter smiling foolishly, Janeth hugged her and said. “Good job, my daughter! Your mother is also hired by a big shot and I’m now a cashier in his clinic!”

“Really?” Janrose was happy for her mother.

Janeth nodded her head. “Of course! Let me tell you something even more shocking. My salary is five thousand gold coins and the boss also allowed us to live in his mansion for free!”

Janrose was stunned when she heard that. “Five thousand gold coins?!” It was not a small amount and only Espers and skilled professionals received that amount of money as their salaries. It felt a bit suspicious to her and she didn’t believe that someone could be so generous to commoners like them. They had already experienced their fair share of bullying from the nobles.

“Mom, I think your boss has ulterior motives for giving you such a high salary.” Janrose muttered in a serious tone.

Janeth smiled and shook her head. “Don’t speak ill of Sir Aethelwolf. He is not that kind of person. He is a Level 4 Alchemist and I don’t think he wants something from an ordinary mother like me. Help me pack our things. We will go to the mansion right away and I’ll let you judge him yourself.”

Janrose was surprised by this, but she still nodded her head. “Alright. Let me see what kind of person this Sir Aethelwolf is! Since he’s a Level 4 Alchemist, he should be an old man above the age of seventy or eighty, right? Hmph!” She stomped away like an angry kitten.

Janeth chuckled as she stared at her daughter. “I wonder how you will react after you see him... Even your mother is almost charmed by that young man...” She mumbled when she recalled Aethelwolf’s handsome face.

Samira alighted the carriage with a flustered look on her face. She promised Aethelwolf that she would be back quickly, but the matches were so exciting that she had lost track of time. They were also invited by the emperor to his mansion after the match and she was delayed even further.

“Aethelwolf, it’s me!” Samira anxiously shouted outside the clinic. She nervously fiddled the hem of her clothes as she waited.

A few moments later, the door was finally opened and Samira saw Leric and the other employees preparing to leave the clinic.

“How were the matches in the competition?” Leric asked with a smile.

Samira thought that he was angry so she immediately apologized. “Sorry. I lost track of time and His Majesty also invited us to his mansion after the matches so I was delayed.

Leric saw her worried look. He patted her shoulder and shook his head as he said. “It’s fine. Don’t think too much about it. Besides, Skylar and the others handled the interview flawlessly.”

Samira was still worried, but Aethelwolf reassured her.

“Follow us to the mansion. The new employees will be staying with us. I told them to bring their families so the mansion will be lively tonight. I also asked the girls to purchase magical beast meat and other ingredients. We will be having a feast later!” Leric no longer wanted to eat the food in other places since he can make better delicacies than them.

Samira nodded her head. She was excited at the thought of eating Aethelwolf’s food again. His dishes are even more delicious than the ones cooked by their chefs! “I won’t miss it!” She smiled radiantly, showing her pearly white teeth.

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“Let’s go to our house, everyone! We will be living there in the future.” Leric said to the ladies with a beaming smile.

“Yey!”

Rendell patiently waited for Aethelwolf’s arrival. He wanted to know more about his new boss. He almost knew nothing about Aethelwolf other than knowing that he is a Level 4 Esper.

“He seems to have a close relationship with Samira. I wonder what is going on between them...” While he was muttering to himself, he saw a group of people walking towards the gate of the mansion.

Rendell furrowed his eyebrows and immediately headed to them. “Stop! This mansion is a property of Sir Aethelwolf.” He warned them. These guys looked like commoners based on the clothes they are wearing. He was wondering what these people were up to.

Suddenly, Rendell frowned when sensed a strong aura among the commoners. It came from a young girl who has beautiful facial features. From the aura she was exuding, she should be a mid stage Level 1 Esper. She was quite strong for someone at her age. Even Rendell wasn't as talented as her.

Janeth hurriedly stepped forward to avoid matters from escalating. “We are newly hired employees of Sir Aethelwolf's clinic. He said that we can live in the mansion with our families. We can show you the contract we signed earlier to prove this.” She urged everyone to show their signed contracts to the young guard.

Rendell carefully read their contracts and when he saw Aethelwolf's signature, his face eased up. “I apologize. I didn't know that you guys are Sir Aethelwolf's employees. I hope that you'll forgive me.”

Janeth and the others smiled at the young guard. He was merely doing his job so they didn't take it too seriously.

“Follow me inside. I'll take you to the mansion. Sir Aethelwolf isn't here yet so you guys can wait in the guest hall.” Rendell opened the gate for them.

Janeth and the others were stunned when they saw the mansion at a close distance. It was so big that their old houses looked like kennels in comparison.

“Are we really going to live in this mansion starting tonight?”

“What a big house!”

“This is like a castle! Wow!”

The children excitedly ran around while exclaiming with cute voices.

Even Janrose who wasn't in a good mood felt at peace at the sight of the children's smiling faces.

“Come inside, everyone. I'll prepare tea for you and hot chocolate for the kids.” Rendell said as he led them to the guest hall. He has been working in this mansion for several months so he knew his way around.

Looking at the spacious guest hall, everyone was overwhelmed by the sheer luxury of the mansion. They didn't even dare sit on the sofas since they looked very expensive.

"Take your seats, everyone. I'll be back with your drinks." Rendell said before leaving them.

Janeth took the initiative and sat carefully on the sofa. It was very soft and smooth and it felt as if she was sitting on pure cotton.

The others soon followed, but they were still nervous.

"You guys should be careful. Those vases look very expensive." Janeth said as she looked at the precious-looking vases in the guest hall.

The others became even more nervous when they heard that and they didn't even dare to breathe loudly.

Soon, Rendell returned pushing a tray with a pot of tea and a container filled with hot chocolate. There were also tea cups and glasses for everyone.

"I don't know how to make tea so they might taste terrible, but you can rest assured that the kids will like the hot chocolate." Rendell joked as he poured tea into the tea cups.

"Thanks."

Suddenly, both Rendell and Janrose stared in the same direction.

"It must be Sir Aethelwolf. Other than me, only Sir Aethelwolf has the key to open the gates." Rendell excitedly said. He then turned his head to everyone and said. "Please wait here. I'll go out to greet Sir Aethelwolf." He then jogged to the entrance of the mansion.

Rendell saw Aethelwolf with a group of beautiful women surrounding him. They were chatting happily as they walked to the mansion.

"Sir Aethelwolf is living the best life..." He muttered to himself as he looked at Leric with unconcealed admiration.

108 Attacking the Stronghold

"Greetings, Sir Aethelwolf. Some people came here and they told me that they are employees of your clinic. They are now waiting for you in the guest hall." Rendell said respectfully.

"Oh, they're here? Alright. I'll look for them." Leric nodded his head and entered the mansion. He then turned his head to the ladies and said. "You guys have the

ingredients with you so prepare them outside. We will have our feast there. Just take anything you need from the kitchen. You can see the kitchen right there.”

“Yes, Sir Aethelwolf.” The ladies nodded their heads. Skylar and Kathlyn then led them in the direction of the kitchen.

Leric and Samira headed to the guest hall and they saw the newly hired employees and their families sitting nervously on the sofas.

When they saw him entering the hall, they immediately stood up and greeted him respectfully. “Greetings, Sir Aethelwolf!”

Meanwhile, Janrose was looking at Aethelwolf with a stunned expression. ‘What the hell?! This is him?! I thought Level 4 Espers are old codgers...’ She couldn’t believe what she was seeing.

Leric smiled at them and asked. “Have you guys chosen your rooms?”

“We just arrived here, Sir Aethelwolf. We haven’t chosen our rooms yet.”

“Alright. You can do that later. For now, just leave your baggage here. We will be having a feast outside the mansion. Oh, by the way, this young lady right here is Samira. She will be working in the clinic with you guys so just ask her if you have any questions related to your jobs.” Leric said as he introduced Samira to everyone.

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In a dense jungle outside of Lion City, dozens of soldiers were sneakily looking at a stronghold. This place is one of the Northern Viper Group’s hideouts.

“Your Highness, our soldiers are prepared to attack. We are just waiting for your commands.” Harold said to the second prince.

Prince Calvin nodded his head solemnly. “Let’s wait for a perfect opportunity. I don’t want unnecessary casualties on our side.”

This stronghold is protected by a high-ranking member of the bandit group, a Level 4 Esper. He has a thousand Espers under his command and more than ten thousand normal bandits! It is a sizable force with strength that is comparable to a noble household!

A shadow suddenly appeared behind the second prince. “Your Highness, do you want me to make a move?”

It was Dimitri, the strongest fighter of the Imperial Family!

Prince Calvin shook his head. "The attack will be successful even if you don't join the fight, Sir Dimitri. This is also a great opportunity to train our soldiers. I believe Lord Harold is thinking the same thing as me."

Harold was surprised by Dimitri's silent movement, but he still nodded his head at the second prince's words. "Your Highness is right. We want to control our casualties, but this is also a great opportunity for our soldiers to gain battle experience. I can handle their leader on my own." He was confident in his own abilities. Besides, the leader of this stronghold is only an initial stage Level 4 Esper.

Dimitri nodded his head calmly and vanished into the darkness.

"Archers, kill the guards in the watchtowers and have four teams enter the stronghold to open the gates. The rest will wait. Go!" Prince Calvin gave his commands and the archers immediately fired their arrows at the bandits in the watchtowers.

Four teams also started climbing the stronghold silently, while the other soldiers waited for their chance.

Soon, the gates of the stronghold were opened, and only then did the bandits realize that they were under attack.

"Attack!" Prince Calvin shouted as he raised his sword. He then jumped onto his Equus and charged together with the soldiers.

With the second prince joining the charge, the soldiers were stimulated and they fiercely sprinted to the stronghold.

"Stay calm! They are just insects sent by the Leone Empire! With me here! There is nothing to worry about!" A loud booming voice echoed throughout the stronghold. Even Prince Calvin and his soldiers heard this.

"Lord Harold, I'll leave that guy to you." Prince Calvin said.

Harold nodded his head. "Yes, Your Highness." He answered calmly.

Thousands of bandits came to block their path, preventing them from entering the stronghold. Only a few of these bandits were Espers so the soldiers of the Imperial Family and the Reynolds Household killed them effortlessly.

The goal of the bandits was only to buy some time for their main force to assemble. Once they are ready, their leader will lead their army for a counterattack!

“These bandits are quite smart, but they underestimated our soldiers. Everyone, kill them! Prince Calvin urged his Equus to jump toward a group of bandits. He then waved his sword, killing four men in just one move!

The bandits felt fearful as they looked at the valiantly dressed Prince Calvin. He looked like a fierce young general!

“That is Prince Calvin, the second prince of the Leone Empire! Kill him! Bring his head to the leader and you will get ample rewards!” Someone from the bandits’ side shouted and his words immediately roused the greed of the bandits. They all stared at Prince Calvin.

When he sensed their desire to kill, the second prince felt goosebumps all over his body. It would be bad if he was surrounded by a large group of reckless bandits. “Stick with me!” He shouted. The soldiers quickly assembled into a formation with the prince at the center. They didn’t want anything to happen to him.

Harold smiled in admiration. The second prince is quite brave and he even dared to join the frontlines. He has the makings of a great general!

“So it is you, Prince Calvin Leone! To think that someone who has the Imperial Bloodline would actually send himself to my doorstep! Now, die!” A malicious aura suddenly locked onto the second prince, making him shiver.

The soldiers in front of him were also sent flying by a strong force.

Seeing this, Harold moved in front of the prince and blocked the incoming person.

It was a middle-aged man who has a dragon tattoo on his neck. He was grinning at Harold as he pushed his saber.

109 Dimitri Makes A Move

Harold was taken aback by the man’s strength. He realized that he had underestimated this guy so he immediately put more focus on their battle. He then put more force into his strikes, causing the tattooed bandit to furrow his eyebrows in surprise.

“I never thought that the current family head of the Reynolds Household actually joined the Imperial Family to attack me! I feel flattered by this.” This man is an executive of the Northern Viper Group and his strength is only beneath that of Gustavo and their Vice Leader, Vincent. This man’s name is Ricardo.

Ricardo is a serial murderer in the Ford Empire. He was sent here by the Imperial Family since he was getting out of control. Other than Gustavo, no one has ever made him submit.

Harold ignored him. He pounced toward Ricardo and slashed his sword fiercely. His sword is a Unique-Rank weapon, but his opponent's saber is also of a similar rank!

The two exchanged more than a hundred moves, and the area around them was a mess. The ground is covered in cracks and debris of varying sizes scattered all over the place.

No one dared to get near them, afraid that they would be killed by the strong force released by both men.

Meanwhile, Prince Calvin led the soldiers to eradicate the bandits. Although their side has lesser numbers, they had superior fighting prowess and one normal soldier can even fight multiple bandits at once! This was the difference between a professionally trained fighter and someone who is merely hired for money.

"Don't move alone! Stay in groups of more than five! Make sure to watch out for your comrades' safety!" Prince Calvin shouted.

The soldiers roared upon hearing his words. They regrouped and formed smaller teams. Their defense became almost impregnable and the bandits found it hard to penetrate their formation.

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Seeing that their strategy was working, Prince Calvin raised his sword and shouted. "On me!" The soldiers hurriedly towards his side when they heard his command.

"Charge!" Prince Calvin urged his horse forward as he pointed his sword in the direction of the bandits.

ROAR!

The soldiers' bravely followed the second prince.

The sight of their invincible formation scared the bandits and some of them started deserting. Most of them were merely hired for money so they weren't loyal to the bandit group.

Ahhh!

Nooo!

The cries of the bandits echoed throughout the stronghold, making the remaining bandits more fearful as the battle continued. It is only a time before all of them will collapse.

If not for Ricardo's presence, more than half of these bandits would have already escaped, but seeing that their leader was still fiercely fighting against a Level 4 Esper, they chose to stay. This guy was their backbone and as long as he was here, they might still turn the table around.

Harold no longer held back his power. He poured more world essence into his attacks! He knew that he was playing a pivotal role in this battle and that the result of his fight with Ricardo will determine the final winner of the war.

Harold's movements became faster and his strikes doubled in strength. He was expending more world essence, but he wasn't worried about this. He had already taken Aethelwolf's Vigor Pellet which made his Hegel sturdier. He can store more world essence than normal Level 4 Espers!

Ricardo was being pushed back and after forcefully blocking more strikes, he started receiving small wounds and cuts. "This is bad..." He muttered as he swiftly retreated.

Harold was a lot stronger than he had anticipated. 'His strength is probably comparable to Vice Leader Vhincet.'

"Your Highness, this guy is quite strong and I can't kill him on my own! I need Sir Dimitri to intervene!" Harold shouted.

Hearing this, Prince Calvin immediately. "Sir Dimitri, please make your move!" They could no longer waste time. The bandits were proving to be more troublesome so they could only let Dimitri join the fray.

"Reinforcements?! Dammit! I was careless!" Ricardo felt a sense of impending danger and he instinctively raised his saber.

Clang!

He saw a man appearing in front of him like a shadow and he was lucky enough to block the surprise attack. However, he was still sent flying by the strong force!

Ricardo landed pathetically. He suddenly felt that his wrists are becoming numb, but he didn't dare release his grip on his saber. It was the only thing that can keep him safe against the new attacker.

He narrowed his eyes and stared at the man who was dressed in all black. Only the man's eyes were visible.

Ricardo suddenly spat a mouthful of blood. "Huh?" He looked at his chest in confusion and saw that it was bleeding. Although the wound was not deep, it wasn't shallow either. His movements would slow down because of this wound.

'How did he...' He noticed to his horror that the man has vanished and a pair of crescent blades suddenly appeared before his eyes.

Everything is peaceful in Lion City.

Outside Leric's newly bought mansion, he was having a feast with everyone.

He is cooking a large cut of steak which came from a magical beast that looked like a huge cow. It is a Level 3 magical beast so its meat is highly nutritious and eating it would be extremely beneficial to the employees and the others.

The meaty aroma spread through the air, making everyone's stomach rumble in anticipation.

Leric chuckled when he saw their drooling faces. To cook this meat faster, he summoned his golden flame and even used his world essence to make sure that the resulting dish would be great.

Everyone was awestruck when they saw him using his Golden Pill Fire.

Janrose who was still skeptical about Leric's identity as a Level 4 Alchemist was stunned when she saw this. All her suspicion vanished and was replaced with admiration. "Amazing!" She exclaimed.

Leric didn't look much older than her and he is probably in his late twenties, but his talent and power had already exceeded her own by a huge margin!

Chapter 110 Escape Rune

Just when Ricardo thought that he was gonna die, two figures suddenly emerged in front of him and blocked Dimitri's crescent blades.

Clang!

The violent sound of metals colliding echoed.

One of the newcomers is a buff man with scars all over his exposed arms, while the other person is a middle-aged man in dressed in a black shirt with purple sun patterns. These two were Vhinent and Gustavo, the two big bosses of the Northern Viper Group!

"Boss Gustavo, Boss Vhinent!" Ricardo was pleasantly surprised.

Gustavo and Vhinent didn't spare him a glance. The black-clothed man standing before them is very dangerous and one single mistake would be fatal for them. They

could tell that this guy is a peak Level 4 Esper! Even if they joined hands to fight against him, they would still be defeated.

“Ricardo, retreat with us! There is no time to waste! This guy must have been sent here by Ragnar! We are not his match!” Vhincet muttered in a solemn tone. His words made Ricardo shocked because their big boss, Gustavo, didn’t say anything. That means he also agreed with Vhincet’s words!

Dimitri’s eyes narrowed into slits as he glanced at the two. One is a mid Level 4 Esper while the other is a late Level 4 Esper. “Gustavo... You’ve finally shown your face...” He uttered in a cold tone.

Gustavo’s face turned serious when he felt Dimitri’s piercing gaze. “Vhincet, activate the Escape Rune!”

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Vhincet nodded his head gravely and took out something from his storage ring. He then grabbed the injured Ricardo and poured his world essence into the item that looked like a cube.

The cube emitted a powerful wave of world essence that enveloped the three bandit leaders.

Seeing this, Dimitri knew that they were planning to escape. He dashed towards them, but the figure of the three was starting to blur. He frowned and immediately threw his twin crescent blades in their direction.

Gustavo waved his halberd and grunted fiercely. “We’ll meet again.” He muttered with a smile after somehow blocking the two crescent blades.

The figure of the three bandit leaders then vanished into thin air.

Dimitri took his crescent blades that dropped on the ground. He then moved his gaze to the second prince and shook his head as he said. “They used a 4th-Grade Escape Rune. We won’t be able to find them here anymore.” He was also surprised that the bandits actually owned such a high-level rune. Items like that are rare and even if one has money, it would be difficult to find a seller. After all, only Level 4 Engravers can make runes at that level!

Prince Calvin nodded his head. He didn’t blame Dimitri. Anyone would be helpless if their enemies used the same item to escape. “Let’s quickly end things here and return to Lion City to report this matter to His Majesty.” They have already attacked the other hideouts of the Northern Viper Group and the only one left is their main headquarters. However, they still haven’t found it since they always changed locations.

Inside a mansion in another city, three figures suddenly appeared.

Gustavo spat a mouthful of blood and he used his halberd to stabilize his footing. After blocking Dimitri's crescent blades, he realized the massive difference in their power!

"Boss! Are you alright?" Vhincet immediately stepped forward to help Gustavo after seeing him spitting blood. It was the first time he had seen his boss in such a miserable state.

Gustavo waved his hand and sat down on the sofa. He then wiped off the blood at the corner of his lips. "I didn't know that the Leone Empire is actually hiding an expert at that level. Only the guardian of our Ford Empire can fight him." He muttered in a grave tone. The last attack of Dimitri scared him and he even had to use a large portion of his world essence to block the crescent blades. Despite that, he was still injured!

Vhincet agreed with his words. The guardian of their Ford Empire is also peak Level 4 Esper!

"Have someone heal Ricardo's wounds." Gustavo moved his gaze to Ricardo. This man is still useful and they even used one of their Escape Runes to save him. Now, he only has one Escape Rune in his possession.

Vhincet nodded his head and helped the limping Ricardo to walk out of the room.

After they left, Gustavo spat another mouthful of blood. "Dammit! That guy is too strong!" He then took out a healing pill from his storage ring and consumed it. His complexion looked much better after eating the pill.

He grabbed a communication device and hesitated. In the end, he gritted his teeth and activated the device.

"Gustavo, why did you call me?" A deep voice sounded behind the communication device.

"Your Majesty, let's proceed with Plan B. We can no longer afford to wait for those spies to make their move. The Leone Imperial Family has already mobilized their forces and they even sent a peak Level 4 expert to attack one of our strongholds. We can no longer handle the situation here on our own."

The other end of the call was silent for a moment before he answered. "Alright. Regroup your remaining troops and wait for my call. I will look for the emperor of the Dustin Empire and tell him about this. Don't show yourselves for the time being."

Gustavo heaved a sigh of relief after hearing this. "Yes, Your Majesty."

The call ended and Gustavo kept his communication device.

“Let’s see how the Leone Empire would respond after knowing that two empires are attacking them!” He muttered coldly. He believed that the Leone Empire was destined to perish under the combined might of their Ford Empire and the Dustin Empire. And as someone who spearheaded this mission, he was bound to gain a lot of merits. He could already picture out the grand welcoming of his fellow citizens the moment he return to their empire.