

The Herb King

The Herb King #Chapter 221 – 230

Dustin Empire Attacks - Read The Herb King Chapter 221 - 221 Dustin Empire Attacks

“Is Aethelwolf here?” Julie Irish asked Duke Baron.

The Duke was a bit surprised when Julie Irish called Aethelwolf by his name in such familiarity. Looking at the veiled woman in front of him, he shook his head and said. “You missed him, Miss Julie, Sir Aethelwolf isn’t here anymore. He left a few days ago.” He then paused and put on a grave look as he muttered. “I suggest you stay inside the capital for now, Miss Julie. There will be a huge battle soon and this place would be dangerous for you two.” He noticed that Julie Irish brought her younger sister with her and found the matter troublesome. These two weren’t part of the army, but he couldn’t tell them to fuck off because of their important status so he could only politely ask for them to leave.

Julie Irish noticed the solemnity in his voice so she didn’t make things difficult for the Duke. She only came here to look for Aethelwolf anyway and since he wasn’t here, there was no need for her to linger. “In that case, I hope that your army will emerge victorious, Sir Baron. I shall take my leave now. Farewell.” She elegantly curtsied to the Duke before she left with her younger sister, Grace.

Duke Baron stared at their figure with narrowed eyes.

Julie was only in her early twenties according to what he knows, but he sensed danger from her, but the more mysterious thing about this woman was her power. He couldn’t discern it at all. “She must be in possession of a tool that hides her power.” He muttered to himself. He was already a late stage Level 4 Esper and he was only a breath away from the peak stage. It was impossible for him not to see through someone’s power unless they were much stronger than him or they were in possession of an item that hides one’s power.

After ruminating for a moment, he turned around and headed back to his tent. He still had more important matters to take care of and he didn’t have the time to ponder about the secret of Julie Irish.

Meanwhile, outside the army camp, Julie Irish stared into the distance. Suddenly, her eyes, the only ones visible on her face, flashed with a cold glint. “It looks like Sir Baron will have a tough battle today...” She muttered silently. She then grabbed her sister and said. “Let’s go back home.”

Grace nodded her head right away when she noticed the grave look in her sister's eyes.

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George Dustin received the news from Lexter that Lion City had already sent more than half of their soldiers to Vale City.

When he heard this, he was ecstatic and he immediately led his army to charge straight to Lion City and they arrived late in the afternoon.

Soon, the sound of the war horns echoed when the Dustin Empire's army reached the capital. They could already see the tall walls of Lion City and the fearsome weapons installed on top of the walls.

George Dustin stared at the figure standing on top of the wall. He had a buff figure and was wearing a full set of black armor. "Baron, the General of the Black Lion Army and the man they call the Shield Duke." He muttered in a cold voice.

He then turned his head to his soldiers and shouted. "Don't move closer and stay out of the range of their catapults and ballistas! Watch out for their arrows!"

He organized his soldiers according to a preplanned strategy. He didn't want to make a mistake or he would be a laughingstock in the whole continent. Although they hold a huge advantage in numbers, he didn't underestimate the defensive abilities of Lion City. The Leone Empire stood strong after numerous wars because their capital, Lion City, was never breached.

After organizing his troops, George Dustin told his subordinates. "Send twenty thousand infantry soldiers to wear off the enemies! Let them use a battering ram to destroy the main gate!"

"Yes, Sir!"

His subordinates quickly disseminated his orders to the troops and not long later, the war drums and war horns echoed in all directions as the infantry troops of the Dustin Empire started their attack.

Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu!

Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu!

Duke Baron immediately commanded his subordinates to fire the catapults and the ballistas after seeing that the enemies were within their range. "Fire at the areas with

more enemies! Don't let them get near the walls! Archers, ready! Release your arrows as soon as they enter your range!" He shouted at the top of his lungs.

The moment his words fell, the archers on top of the walls quickly nocked their arrows while eyeing the advancing troops with cold and tense gazes.

Most of the soldiers under the Duke were elite veterans so they weren't nervous in the face of so many enemies. However, there were some new soldiers who recently joined the main army and they felt anxious as they stared at the army charging toward them.

At the top of the wall, a young soldier was shakingly holding his bow and he had trouble getting his arrow nocked because of the intense shaking of his hands.

Smack!

He felt a strong slap to his back which immediately made him regain his senses. When he turned his head, he saw a middle-aged soldier with numerous scars on the exposed portion of his arms. "Pull yourself together, boy! We are at war! One mistake and it will cost you your life! Think about the family and friends you've sworn to protect!" The veteran shouted in his face. He could even feel the other party's spittle, but the veteran's words made him forget his fear.

Seeing that the young soldier had somehow recovered, the veteran grinned before he shouted. "Now, nock your arrow and aim at the bastards below us!"

The new soldiers quickly adapted to the battlefield because of the help of the veterans. They were still a bit nervous, but it didn't affect their judgment.

Soon, a rain of arrows and stones blotted the skies.

Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu!

Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu!

Most of the infantry soldiers sent by the Dustin Empire were only normal soldiers so they quickly succumbed to the fierce bombardment of range weapons. The others who managed to somehow get away with their lives, charge straight into the main gate to set up the battering ram.

"Throw boulders and molten iron at those guys! Don't let them breach the gate!" Duke Baron shouted. They had to act like they were in a tough fight so he shouted with more urgency. The low-ranking soldiers were unaware of the plan so they were feeling tense. They were severely outnumbered by the two hundred thousand enemy soldiers and it was only a matter of time before the main gate would be breached. They even had to place soldiers in the gates in case the Dustin Empire decided to attack them in all directions.

At this moment, Lion City only had ten thousand soldiers protecting the main gate and it was proving to be tough for them. Even after the fierce barrage of their ranged weapons, the enemies showed no signs of stopping their charge. They were also trying to break the main gate with a huge battering ram.

Seeing that the main gate was about to break apart, Duke Baron sent a Level 4 Esper to destroy the battering ram. The person he sent was quite brave and he even went down the wall with a jump.

Bang!

He jumped straight into the battering ram, immediately breaking it into pieces with his downward momentum. He wasn't even injured after such a fall. The Level 4 Esper then took out his weapon and killed the soldiers who got in his way. After slaying those soldiers, he entered the partially opened main gate to take a quick break. The main gate was then hurriedly closed the moment he entered.

In the distance, George Dustin still looked calm after seeing this. "Send two more battering rams and tell our cavalry to charge as soon as the main gate is breached!"

"Yes, Sir!" The messenger left right away.

George Dustin then shifted his gaze to his close aide and said. "Tell our Ice Wyvern Battalion to attack the eastern gate. That area is the least protected part of Lion City. They shouldn't have any problems breaching that side. Once they enter the capital city, let them head straight into the imperial castle and abduct the members of the Leone Imperial Family!"

"Yes, Sir!"

After his subordinates left, George Dustin turned his gaze in the direction of Baron. He could still see the lofty figure of the man on top of the walls. "That guy would be a good slave warrior..." He chuckled coldly.

He coveted Baron's strength and he wanted to get his hands on this powerful fighter.

In the valley outside Vale City, the battle was becoming more fearsome as the Ford Empire sent their Iron Elephant Army which was led by Gustavo himself. They had a total number of ten thousand and all of them were Espers!

The Iron Elephants they used as mounts were all Level 2 magical beasts and the one that Gustavo was mounting was even a peak stage Level 3 Iron Elephant!

The towering presence of these magical beasts made the soldiers of the Leone Empire feel nervous. Just one stomp from these creatures could smash them into meat paste!

The ground shook intensely the moment the Iron Elephant Army joined the battlefield and Ramiel's army was slowly losing momentum.

Seeing the arrival of the terrifying army of beasts, Ramiel turned his head to Einar and asked. "Sir Einar, can you hold back that army?"

Einar furrowed his eyebrows as he looked at the beasts in the distance. They were wreaking havoc wherever they go, causing chaos on the battlefield.

After a moment of silence, Einar shook his head. "It would be difficult. Even if I can handle those guys, our cavalry wouldn't be able to survive against them."

The Iron Elephant Army was just too strong!

Hearing his words, Ramiel and the other commanders frowned.

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"Sir Ramiel, I will lead a force to support our cavalry. We should be able to hold them back for some time." The old man, Aurus said in a lighthearted tone.

"In that case, let me offer support as well!" Harold stepped forward.

Ramiel nodded his head when he saw this. With Einar, Aurus, and Harold leading their cavalry, they should be able to somehow hold back the Iron Elephant Army. "Good! I need five more Level 4 Espers to go with us! The rest will support the infantry!"

"Sir Ramiel, are you also joining the cavalry?"

Ramiel nodded his head. "I have to be there." He answered calmly.

"Then let me join you guys!"

"Me too."

"So do I!"

Looking at the people who decided to join him, Ramiel said. "Let's move out!" He then jumped up to his mount, a Level 2 Equus.

Ramiel, together with the other commanders, led their cavalry with an approximate amount of ten thousand soldiers. Their arrival made the infantry heave a sigh of relief.

Ramiel stared coldly at the man leading the Iron Elephant Army. The guy was a late stage Level 4 Esper which was a lot stronger than the man he fought before.

“Isn’t that Gustavo?!” Harold exclaimed in surprise.

“That is indeed Gustavo, the leader of the Northern Viper Group. It looks like he is an important member of the Ford Empire’s army.”

“The bastard has been plotting all this time!”

“Enough with the chitchat! Sir Einar, Sir Aurus, let’s go! The rest of you, lead the cavalry to attack the leaders of this beast army!” Ramiel raised his giant mace as he urged his mount to move faster.

Einar and Aurus quickly moved to his left and right after hearing his commands.

Meanwhile, Gustavo smirked coldly when he saw three Level 4 Espers leading a thousand cavalry to charge in his direction. He raised his weapon as he shouted. “Iron Elephant Army, let’s carve a path of blood! Charge!”

When the two armies were about to collide, Ramiel rushed forward and raised his shield to block the charge of Gustavo’s mount. His actions looked reckless in the eyes of others. Who in their right mind would try to block a raging Iron Elephant? However, they soon found out that Ramiel was able to stop Gustavo’s mount from moving forward.

Bang!

A violent explosion rang out as the Iron Elephant collided with Ramiel’s shield.

The Level 2 Equus under Ramiel was turned into meat paste, but he was still standing motionless as he blocked the giant beast!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The two armies collided and a bloody battle followed.

The Iron Elephant Army was dominating the field, but the Leone Empire’s cavalry didn’t back down! They fought back with all their might even if they were at a disadvantage!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Aurus was like a phantom as he moved around. He had already abandoned his mount as he jumped towards the enemies, directly killing the riders of the Iron Elephants.

Einar was still riding his mount and to everyone's surprise, he was able to control his Level 2 Equus to evade the deadly attacks of the Iron Elephants. He even managed to kill some of the enemies with his quick sword strikes!

Bang!

Ramiel pushed his shield, forcing Gustavo's mount to take a step back.

It must be noted that Gustavo's mount was a peak stage Level 3 magical beast and its physical prowess alone was already comparable to Level 4 human Espers. However, Ramiel was actually able to push back such a strong creature!

Gustavo was shocked when he saw this and he couldn't help but take a careful look at the heavily armored expert in front of him. The man was covered from head to foot and he had a giant mace and a huge shield. "An early stage Level 4 Esper?" He muttered in surprise. This man was a lot weaker than him in terms of level so how was he able to produce such power?

Gustavo soon noticed that the weapons and the armor in this guy's possession were all Unique-Rated weapons! He was green with envy at this man's wealth. Even a late stage Level 4 Esper like himself only possessed one Unique-Rated weapon.

Gustavo's eyes flashed with greed and he immediately urged his Iron Elephant to stomp Ramiel to death! "Kill him!"

The Iron Elephant was strictly trained and it was able to understand signals. The beast pounced towards Ramiel with heavy strides, causing the earth to shake violently.

Rumble!

Ramiel remained calm as he lowered his shield, he then waited for the Iron Elephant to get near him. When the beast was just five meters away from him, he suddenly jumped straight into Gustavo's position and struck him with his giant mace!

Gustavo already anticipated his action and he swiftly evaded the attack. He then countered by thrusting his sword forward.

Clang!

Ramiel managed to block the sword with his shield, but Gustavo didn't make things easy for him. His hands moved like a mirage as he executed a series of quick sword slashes that produced violent tearing sounds.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Ramiel was hit a few times, but because of the defense of his armor and shield, he only received minor wounds.

“Let me help you, Sir Ramiel!” An aged voice echoed behind him and a hunched figure suddenly appeared at the side of Gustavo.

Aurus struck Gustavo with his dagger!

Gustavo’s pupils dilated and he quickly raised his sword.

Clang!

Soon, one more figure appeared, carrying a pair of broadswords. It was Einar who was still riding his Equus.

“Sir Einar!” Ramiel was pleasantly surprised.

With three Level 4 Espers fighting against him, Gustavo found it hard to block their strikes. Luckily for him, his subordinates saw his predicament and they immediately provided him with timely support.

“Are you alright, Boss?” Vhincet asked as he looked at the panting Gustavo.

Gustavo shook his head. “These guys are not easy to deal with. You guys should be careful!” He said.

Vhincet nodded his head. He identified Ramiel as soon as he saw his full body armor. “That’s the guy who killed one of our Level 4 Espers.” He said while pointing his chin to Ramiel.

“That guy? It seems like I have underestimated him. He is using three Unique-Rated items so fighting him will be tricky. I’ll handle that man and you guys take care of the other two.” Gustavo said. He then gave a signal to the other experts.

“Yes, Boss!” Vhincet nodded his head. He didn’t want to fight the heavily armored Ramiel so he agreed right away. He then turned his gaze to the other two. One was a hunched old man holding a dagger, while the other one was a stern-looking old man holding a pair of broadswords.

The stern-looking old man looked dangerous so he decided to rush toward the dagger-wielding old man. “Die, old fart!”

The other experts also rushed towards Einar and Aurus.

“Now, it’s just the two of us! You can’t defeat me all by yourself!” Gustavo laughed coldly as he looked at Ramiel with a condescending gaze.

Ramiel didn't say anything and he just charge straight at Gustavo.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

While these experts were fighting, Harold led the cavalry to hold back the Iron Elephant Army. With his leadership, they managed to in some way stop the beast army from causing chaos on the battlefield. However, there were major casualties on their side and it was only a matter of time before could hold them back.

"Dammit! I won't die this easily!" Harold who was covered in wounds bellowed, igniting the morale of his troops.

Looking at the struggling soldiers, Aenwyn turned her gaze to Aethelwolf and asked. "Are you not going to make a move?"

Aethelwolf shook his head as he answered. "This is a good learning experience for the troops. Most of them are new recruits so this war is a valuable opportunity for them to learn a lot of things. Besides, I can't do everything myself, right? I would be exhausted to death if I do that."

"Some of the soldiers you sent would die and there might only be a little more than half of them who would survive the war. Are you sure about that?" Aenwyn stared at his face.

Aethelwolf's eyes were calm as he replied. "I sent them here to gain experience. I don't mind some casualties as long as I see results."

Hearing this, Aenwyn no longer asked him anything.

On the battlefield, Ramiel could barely block Gustavo's fearsome attacks. Without his Unique-Rated armor, he would have already been seriously injured. 'He has a major advantage in terms of speed. My world essence would soon be depleted. By then, I would be at the mercy of this guy...' Ramiel thought to himself.

As he thought of this, he decided to keep his shield inside his storage ring. This thing was too heavy and it would only be a hindrance to his fight against Gustavo who was a lot faster than him.

Gustavo smiled mockingly when he saw his opponent discarding his shield. "Did you really think that you can gain the upper hand just because you have discarded your shield? Foolish! Since you want to die that badly, then let me help you!" He tapped his foot and dashed towards Ramiel. He left afterimages in his path and it was difficult to pinpoint his exact location.

Ramiel remained calm when he saw this. He lifted his giant mace with both hands and spun like a twister. This created a violent gust of wind around him which sent invisible wind blades in all directions!

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CLANG!

Gustavo's position was revealed and he couldn't help but look at Ramiel in surprise. This man actually attacked in all directions just to locate him. He was also shocked by the power behind those wind blades. Although he managed to block it, Gustavo felt that his arms were starting to feel numb. 'Dammit! This guy is like a magical beast!'

After a moment of astonishment, Gustavo launched another attack. This time, he carefully maneuvered in a way that Ramiel wouldn't be able to easily hit him.

However, Ramiel remained motionless as if he didn't plan to block the other party's strike.

Seeing this, Gustavo smirked coldly. "You asked for this! Die!"

Suddenly, Ramiel lifted his left hand and clutched the blade of Gustavo's sword that was about to cleave his head! His hand bled profusely, but he showed no signs of releasing his grip. "You fell for it!" He muttered coldly to Gustavo as he swung his giant mace to the man.

Gustavo's eyes constricted and he decisively abandoned his weapon.

BANG!

The spot where he last stood now had a deep crater! The power behind Ramiel's mace was enough to kill him on the spot! He was lucky that the man was a lot slower than him or he would have been done for!

Meanwhile, Aurus was fighting against three experts. One of them was Vhincet, the only surviving Vice Leader of the Northern Viper Group.

At this moment, Vhincet had a vicious look on his face as he stared at Aurus' defenseless back. However, the old man's figure suddenly disappeared right in front of his eyes.

"Are you looking for me?" He heard a disdainful voice before he felt a sharp pain in his neck. He then felt all the strength in his body gradually leaving.

Vhincant clutched his neck as he stared at the smirking old man in disbelief. 'How did he...' He couldn't even finish his thoughts before he collapsed on the ground with his eyes wide open.

The two experts who were fighting alongside Vhincant were surprised to see their comrade suddenly dying. They wanted to call for help, but the others were still fighting so they could only do their best to hold back the old man.

"Now, you guys are the ones retreating." Aurus muttered coldly when he saw the futile attempts of the two experts. "You people are still too green to face this old man!"

Aurus ended the lives of the two experts in just a few minutes! He was like a killing machine!

Aurus looked around him. He saw that Einar was slowly overwhelming his enemies so he decided to lend him a hand. "Sir Einar, let's kill these bastards and support Sir Ramiel!"

Einar nodded his head. He was a bit surprised by the old man's efficiency. He actually managed to kill his enemies in just a short amount of time!

Seeing the appearance of the old man, their enemies felt anxious. His presence here means that their comrades were dead! They thought that they could kill these guys, but they were the ones who ended up dying.

"Let's retreat and regroup with the others!" They quickly withdrew the moment they noticed their disadvantage.

Gustavo saw them retreating, making him furrow his eyebrows in frustration. 'These guys are so useless! They can't even hold back two old men! Dammit!'

Despite his anger, Gustavo still commanded them to retreat. It wasn't wise to stay when his comrades had already lost their morale. "Regroup with the soldiers!" He shouted.

Before he left with the others, Gustavo gave Ramiel a hard look.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Two figures suddenly appeared before him.

"Are you alright, Sir Ramiel?" Aurus asked while observing his body.

Einar was silent, but he was also secretly observing him.

Ramiel nodded his head. "I'm fine. Let's go and support Harold. He wouldn't be able to hold back the Iron Elephant Army all by himself!"

The two old men nodded their heads when they heard this. They then followed behind him.

On top of the walls of Lion City, Baron narrowed his eyes into slits. He could see from where he stood that there was a separate force moving in the direction of the eastern gate. "Sir Aethelwolf really has foresight. It's good that we had prepared some traps there. Even the Ice Wyvern Battalion would have trouble trying to infiltrate that area." He smiled coldly.

It was part of their plan to make the enemies believe that the eastern gate was the least protected part of Lion City, but the Dustin Empire didn't know that there were traps waiting for them there.

Duke Baron took out his Communication Rune and when it lit up, he could hear Prince Renz' voice on the other side. "Are they coming in this direction?"

"Yes, Your Highness. It happened as Sir Aethelwolf has predicted. Their Ice Wyvern Battalion is now moving in the eastern gate. You guys should be ready." The Duke muttered.

"Alright. Be careful on your side, Sir Baron."

"You too, Your Highness."

Meanwhile, Prince Renz who was hiding at the eastern gate with his troops kept his Communication Rune. He then gave a hand signal to his men.

When they saw his signal, the soldiers discreetly moved to their designated spots. Each of them was holding silver-colored nets. These nets were used by hunters to capture strong magical beasts. It was made using tough materials and it could even trap a Level 2 magical beast!

Not long later, they could already hear the sharp cries of the Ice Wyverns.

Prince Renz slowly raised his head and saw a huge number of Ice Wyverns moving in their direction. Each Ice Wyvern had a Level 3 Esper riding them.

He waited for them to get nearer and when the Ice Wyverns reached their range, Prince Renz stood up and shouted. "Release the nets!"

As soon as his voice fell, thousands of soldiers suddenly appeared and cast the silver nets to the Ice Wyverns.

The riders of the Ice Wyverns were late to notice their presence and some of them were immediately bound by the nets.

“Light the javelins! Release!” Prince Renz didn’t stop commanding his troops.

The soldiers took out their javelins and lit them up with flammable materials. They then threw the javelins to the bound Ice Wyverns.

The silver nets could only hold a Level 2 magical beast so they had to be fast in the execution of their attacks since the Ice Wyverns were all Level 3 beasts and even their riders were all Level 3 Espers!

“It’s a trap! Move further away and don’t get caught up in their nets!” The commander of the Ice Wyvern Battalion quickly issued a command when he saw the situation. However, it was already too late. More than a thousand Ice Wyverns were impaled by the burning javelins and they soon plummeted to the ground along with their riders.

“These bastards didn’t go to Vale City! They intentionally lured us here! Dammit!” The commander cursed under his breath.

“What did you say?! Say that again!” George Dustin had a grim look as he roared at the Communication Rune.

He received a report that Prince Renz and his army were actually hiding in the eastern gate and they intentionally lured them to attack that area and ambush them!

The moment George heard that more than a thousand Ice Wyverns died in that ambush, he almost vomited blood. Those magical beasts were carefully trained by them and they even used up a lot of resources to nurture those creatures, but they died just like that.

As the chief commander of the Dustin Empire’s army, he would have to bear the consequences of their deaths! How could he not be angry when he heard about it?

“Those damnable bastards! They actually planned this from the start!” George slammed the table in front of him, breaking it into pieces. His closest aides didn’t dare breathe loudly when they witnessed their raging commander.

George angrily threw the Communication Rune before grabbing his spear. He then muttered with a dark look. “Get me my Ice Wyvern! Do they think that I’m a pushover? I’ll show them why everyone calls me the ‘Spear God!’”

His closest aides glanced at each other. They looked like they had something to say, but when they saw their commander’s hideous expression, they immediately saluted as they said in unison. “Yes, Commander! We will prepare your mount immediately!”

George Dustin walked out of his tent, his eyes filled with killing intent.

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His aides hastily prepared his Ice Wyvern.

It was way larger than the normal Ice Wyverns. It had a pair of icy blue horns that were pointing at the sky. The beast's dark blue scales looked majestic and coupled with its intimidating image, it seemed to possess the aura of a dragon!

George Dustin jumped on top of the Ice Wyvern with his hands behind his back. He then urged the creature to fly by tapping his foot gently.

Before they rose into the sky, he turned his gaze to his subordinates and said. "I want the main gate to be breached today!"

"Yes, Commander!"

Soon, the Level 4 Ice Wyvern flapped its wings and flew above the clouds.

Meanwhile, Prince Renz and his troops were now fighting against the Ice Wyvern Battalion. Even after their successful ambush, his group was still struggling against the aerial unit. Now that their positions were exposed, the riders of the Ice Wyverns skillfully controlled their mounts, evading the javelins thrown at them.

The commander of the Ice Wyvern Battalion raised his arm and gave his troop a hand signal. They then regrouped and formed a formation above the sky.

Seeing this, Prince Renz' troops tensed up as they gripped their shields tightly.

Suddenly, the commander of the Ice Wyvern Battalion shouted. "Attack!"

As soon as his voice fell, all the Ice Wyverns summoned ice bullets toward the soldiers on top of the eastern gate!

Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu! Suu!

Thousands of ice bullets were shot.

"Raise your shields!" Prince Renz shouted right away. However, the ice bullets were so fast that many of his soldiers were turned into sieves!

"Aaarghh!"

"Aahhh!!!"

Seeing the miserable deaths of his soldiers, Prince Renz' face darkened. He grabbed the Two Lion Sword and jumped straight toward the commander of the Ice Wyvern Battalion. "Die!" He bellowed.

Prince Renz moved so fast that the air produced a keening sound. As soon as he slashed the Two Lion Sword, two incorporeal lions suddenly emerged behind him and roared mightily, scaring the enemy troops.

ROOARR!!

ROOARR!!

"What the hell is-" The commander of the Ice Wyvern Battalion stared at Prince Renz in horror, but before he could continue his words, the Two Lion Sword had already cut off his head, sending it flying!

"Commander!"

"Commander!!"

The Ice Wycern Battalion were shocked by the abrupt death of their commander. They then stared fearfully at Prince Renz who had stolen the mount of their commander. Was this still the person known as the Lazy Drunkard Prince? They finally knew that it was all a ruse! He was actually a terrifying expert!

Prince Renz held the reins of the Ice Wyvern he had stolen as he glared at the enemies. "All of you will die here today!" He shouted with rage.

The Ice Wyvern he was controlling struggled under him, but Prince Renz wasn't bothered by this. He tightly held the Two Lion Sword and jumped from one Ice Wyvern to another, and just like that, he managed to kill more than twenty riders!

Prince Renz' troops were also shocked by his sudden display of power. They were unaware that the prince they once disdained was actually hiding an earth-shattering power! He was moving like a phantom, ending the lives of their enemies with sheer ease! He could even wield the Divine-Rated artifact, the Two Lion Sword, without difficulty!

Prince Renz who was covered in blood returned to the top of the walls. His troops cheered for him, but the prince frowned as he looked in a certain direction. He could sense a strong aura moving toward the eastern gate. "A peak stage Level 4 Esper? Is their commander taking the initiative to attack us?" He muttered to himself with a serious expression on his face.

In the most brutal part of the battlefield, the Ward Household's unit was engaged in fierce combat together with the frontline force of the Leone Empire. Because of the cruel fighting, they lost many of their comrades. This time, only a small portion of their soldiers were alive. Among them was their young master, Alec Ward.

Alec Ward was slowly losing his youthful features. His cheeks looked sunken and his once energetic eyes now seemed incredibly evil.

He was already an early stage Level 2 Esper and his proficiency with the sword was steadily evolving as the war continued.

With a pair of calm eyes, Alec brandished his sword skillfully, culling the lives of the enemies that got on his way!

He even intentionally headed into the most dangerous areas, but it seemed as if the gods were helping him because he would always be able to escape death.

"Why couldn't I die?"

"Kill me!"

"Kill me!!!"

Alec shouted as he charged madly toward the clustered enemy soldiers.

"Young Lord! Don't move far away from us!"

"Young Lord!"

The loyal servants of the Ward Household hastily followed their young master. He was the remaining heir of the Ward Household and if he dies, no one would continue their bloodline. They didn't want their patriarch's sacrifice to be in vain so they followed Alec in the middle of the enemy troops.

Because of their young master's recklessness, many servants of the Ward Household died. However, none of them retreated. They bravely fought alongside Alec, disregarding the danger that surrounded them.

When the soldiers of the Leone Empire saw their bravery, their morale was ignited.

A Level 4 commander who was leading the infantry also saw this scene and he immediately commanded his troops to support the Ward Household's small unit. "Soldiers, on me! Support Alec Ward and help them retreat!" He saw a huge potential in Alec. Although the kid was the son of a traitor, he believed in second chances so he wanted to save Alec.

The battle between Gustavo's advanced force and Ramiel's army was slowly reaching its climax.

The two sides regrouped their forces before engaging in frontal combat.

This time, the advantage of the Iron Elephant Army became evident. Their huge size and overwhelming power caused major casualties to the cavalry of the Leone Empire. Even with Harold holding leading them, they could only barely contend against the behemoths.

"Sir Harold, we're here!" Aurus shouted when he saw a bloodied Harold riding his Equus.

"Are you alright?" Ramiel scanned the man from head to foot. The guy was covered in wounds all over his body and even his Equus was on the verge of collapsing.

Harold wiped off the blood that covered his line of sight and laughed heartily at them as he said. "As you can see, I look like hammered shit. You guys came just right on time!"

Ramiel nodded his head. "Leave the rest to us. Go to the medical room and take a rest."

"No way! They have a lot of experts on their side, you won't be able to handle them!" Harold rejected it without hesitation. He was severely wounded, but he could still fight!

Ramiel frowned when he heard this. "Sir Harold, we don't want you to sacrifice yourself here! Their Grand General hasn't even moved yet. We would need your power when shows up on the battlefield. Just take this chance to have a rest. You can join us once you've rested enough."

Harold still wanted to reject him, but he swallowed back his words when he saw Ramiel's solemn look. "Fine, but I'll return right away! You guys, be careful!" He muttered before urging his Equus to retreat.

They stared at his figure as he retreated.

"Let's go." Ramiel muttered as he led the group to the front.

Alec Ward was surrounded by enemies on all sides, but he showed no fear. He had a malevolent look on his face as he gripped his sword tightly.

Like a crazed madman, Alec brandished his sword toward the enemies, disregarding the wounds on his body. He didn't even bother to put up a defense, earning him more sword cuts.

“Young Master, be careful!” His servants cried out when they noticed a Level 3 Esper charging toward Alec.

“Young Master, behind you! Escape quickly!”

Their warnings fell on deaf ears as Alec continued waving his sword around.

A bald soldier smirked derisively as he slashed his sword at Alec. “Die, idiot!” He shouted.

Alec felt goosebumps all over his body and he instinctively evaded to the side. However, the enemy’s sword still managed to cut off one of his arms, sending it flying into the air!

“Aargh!” Alec grunted as soon as the pain was registered in his system. Sweat covered his face and his left shoulder was bleeding profusely.

The pain made him regain his senses. He looked around and noticed that everything around him seemed to be moving in slow motion. He could see the enemy soldiers moving in his direction with ruthless expressions on their faces. He also saw the worried faces of his servants.

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Suddenly, a small unit led by an infantry commander came to aid them, giving him the chance to escape death.

“Are you alright, kid?” The commander asked as he dragged Alec out of the danger zone.

Alec weakly nodded his head. “I’m fine. Just that my arm...” He looked at the empty space on his left shoulder. He was putting pressure on the wounded part to prevent it from bleeding excessively.

The commander sighed when he saw this. The kid was too brave that he even went into the area with the densest number of enemies. He was lucky that he only lost an arm. In fact, it was a miracle that he survived from that place. “Don’t close your eyes. Stay awake. Understood?”

Alec nodded his head. “Yes, Sir.”

The commander turned his head to his subordinates and said. “Bring this kid back to be treated.”

“Yes, Sir!” The soldiers saluted the commander before they left with the severely injured Alec.

Seeing that their young master was being carried back to the camp, the servants of the Ward Household heaved sighs of relief.

Meanwhile, in the eastern gate, Prince Renz stared at the figure who was riding on top of a huge Ice Wyvern. It was a man dressed in light armor and he was holding a spear in his right hand. He had a menacing look on his face as he glared at the soldiers on top of the walls. The man then moved his gaze to Prince Renz and when he saw the prince's face, his eyes flashed with a hint of surprise.

"So you're responsible for this. Who would have thought that the useless prince of the Leone Empire is actually hiding his true power? You have hidden yourself well!" George muttered coldly.

Prince Renz pointed the Two Lion Sword to George as he said. "You must be Arch-Duke George Dustin, the Grand General of the Dustin Empire! To think that the Dustin Empire would actually collaborate with the Ford Empire to attack us! Speak! What do you want from us?!"

"I have no time to chat with you. Let's end this today!" George shouted as he urged his mount to attack Prince Renz. He then held his spear tightly, prepared to strike the final blow.

The first prince furrowed his eyebrows when he realized that there was no chance for peace. "Stand back!" He commanded his troops as he glared at the incoming George.

Not long later, the huge Ice Wyvern summoned a barrage of ice spikes and sent them flying toward the prince.

Prince Renz lifted his sword and deflected all the ice spikes, melting them into snow the moment they touched the Two Lion Sword's blade.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The prince then parried the spear that was aimed at his neck before taking a few steps back. He sensed the power behind George's spear. This guy was too strong!

Clang!

George could not help but look at the prince in shock. He actually managed to block his spear after dealing with the ice spikes! This prince wasn't just fast, he was also skillful!

George didn't stop attacking after failing once. He gave a signal to his Ice Wyvern, telling it to attack the prince. He then thrust his spear dozens of times, sealing Prince Renz' escape route.

However, Prince Renz immediately activated the inscriptions on the Two Lion Sword when he saw this scene.

An overwhelming power burst out from the sword, instilling fear in everyone!

George Dustin decisively retracted his spear when he saw an incorporeal two-headed lion appearing behind the prince. It looked majestic with its long golden fur and its pair of gigantic wings. "How is this possible?! You actually gained the recognition of that Divine-Rated artifact?!" He stared at the incorporeal figure in horror.

Some Divine-Rated artifacts develop their own intelligence and spirit after years of constant usage and accumulation of power. These artifacts are a lot stronger than the other Divine-Rated artifacts that didn't possess their own spirit. However, only those who received the recognition of the artifacts could bring out their true power, while the others could only control a fraction of the weapon's power.

Prince Renz smiled coldly as he pointed his sword at George. "Because I am someone destined to become a Level 5 Esper!" He then swung his sword as he channeled his world essence, sending a violent sword wind that cleaved through the skies!

The air trembled as soon as the attack was released and Prince Renz even felt that his Hegel was almost emptied out after that one swing. Using the true power of the weapon has a high requirement in world essence and those who couldn't properly control its power would even have their Hegel injured.

George's eyes widened and after a moment of hesitation, he abandoned his mount, jumping towards another Ice Wyvern.

BANG!

George's Ice Wyvern which was a Level 4 magical beast was cut in half. It didn't manage to emit a cry before the two halves of its body plummeted to the ground.

"Dammit! That damned bastard could actually control the Two Lion Sword's spirit! F*ck!" George cursed under his breath as he watched the collapse of his mount. Luckily for him, he managed to retreat on time or he would have died along with the poor creature.

At this moment, Ramiel was fiercely fighting against Gustavo. This was the second time they were fighting today and the two of them were at the center of the battlefield.

Einar, Aurus, and the other experts of the Leone Empire were battling the experts of the Iron Elephant Army and the remaining members of the Northern Viper Group.

Ramiel noticed that some enemy soldiers were trying to attack him from behind so he quickly swung his mace toward them.

Pah! Pah! Pah!

The pitiful soldiers were blasted away by the strong force of his mace and they died on the spot.

Ramiel calmly retracted his bloodied mace. He then moved his gaze back to Gustavo who was eyeing him with a cold look.

“Who are you? An expert like you shouldn’t have remained unknown in the Leone Empire!” Gustavo stayed in the Leone Empire for many years but he never heard of an expert who wields a mace. From how the experts of the Leone Empire treated the man, he looked like a high-ranking commander, but how did he remain unknown all this time?

“Ramiel Sigurd, commander of the Lassiter Household’s armed force! I’ve heard a lot about you, Gustavo, but it seems like your achievements are just all fart!” Ramiel taunted.

The veins on Gustavo’s head bulged from the other party’s mockery. “Ramiel, is it? I’ll make a urinal out of your skull!” He shouted before charging straight towards Ramiel. His feet sunk into the ground because of the massive strength he used. He lifted his sword upwards and swung it with all his might!

CLANG!

Ramiel managed to block his sword with his mace, but he was thrown away because of the impact.

Gustavo was still much stronger than him and he was only able to fight back against the man because of his superior items.

“Weren’t you arrogant?! Is this all you’ve got?! Then go f*cking die!” Gustavo poured his rage into his sword, sending a series of deadly sword strikes to Ramiel.

Left with no choice, Ramiel could only take out his shield to block the attacks.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

“Sir Ramiel! Are you alright?!”

“Sir Ramiel, don’t push yourself too hard! That man is dangerous!”

Ramiel glanced at his comrades and shouted. “Stop worrying about me and focus on your opponents! I can handle this guy!”

George Dustin fearfully stared at the corpse of his mount. He was supposed to overturn the battle with his arrival, but Prince Renz was using him as a stepping stone for his rise in popularity! Thinking about this, he couldn't help but stare at the man who was holding the Two Lion Sword. He was wearing striking red armor with a golden cape that fluttered along with the wind.

At this moment, Prince Renz looked majestic with the bearing of an imperial prince. He glared coldly at George Dustin while pointing his sword forward. "I'll give you the chance to surrender. I can let your army leave here, but you have to give your word that you will compensate us for our losses!" He didn't want to spare this man, but prolonging the battle would only lead to the death of more soldiers. He could only swallow his anger to prevent more casualties on their side. Furthermore, his world essence was almost emptied after he used the power of the Two Lion Sword. He couldn't afford to use it for a second time.

George Dustin hesitated when he heard this. He had seen the overwhelming power of the Two Lion Sword and with Prince Renz getting its recognition, he could summon a power that was beyond the Level 4 Esper! 'Too bad His Majesty didn't let me borrow the Red Dragon Spear...' He sighed in his heart.

The Red Dragon Spear was the Divine-Rated artifact of the Dustin Empire. Although it didn't have its own spirit, it was still a very powerful weapon of mass destruction. It was closely guarded by the Dustin Imperial Family and they would only use it when their empire was threatened.

Seeing his hesitant look, Prince Renz said. "Think about your men. The longer you hesitate, the more of them will die on the battlefield. I promise you that if you retreat now, our Leone Empire will not attack your Dustin Empire. What do you think Sir George? Just think of it as me signing a peace agreement with you."

Hearing this, George's face eased up. He didn't want to return home as a defeated general. Prince Renz was already giving him a good excuse for his retreat. If he didn't agree to his demand, it was certain that they would fall out. There was also the Two Lion Sword that made him feel anxious to confront the prince.

While George Dustin was hesitating, his soldiers were nervously looking at Prince Renz. He was the only person that made them wary to make a move. Without him holding down the fort, they could have effortlessly invaded Lion City.

After a moment of hesitation, George Dustin stared at the prince before he gave a command to his subordinates. "Retreat!"

The soldiers of the Ice Wyvern Battalion were a bit surprised, but they knew that their chances of breaching the eastern gate were very low because of Prince Renz' presence.

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Before the Ice Wyvern Battalion fully retreated, George Dustin gave one last look at Prince Renz as he muttered. "You have to keep your promise. We will send an envoy here once everything is cleared up. I guarantee that our Dustin Empire will give you a good explanation."

Prince Renz nodded his head. "I give you my word. Just prepare compensation and our Leone Empire will forget this matter. I just hope that the Dustin Imperial Family won't go back on their words." He said.

"I'll make sure His Majesty agrees." George muttered before departing with his soldiers.

Soon, George Dustin commanded the Dustin Empire's soldiers to retreat from the battlefield. He then sent a messenger to Prince Renz' camp telling him that they would stay for three more days to let the public think that they were still engaged in battle. George Dustin didn't want the others to think that their Dustin Empire was cowards so he could only resort to this.

When Prince Renz received the message, he sent a reply telling George that he would allow them to stay for three more days, but he added that they should leave after the stipulated time.

The soldiers of the Leone Empire were confused when they saw their enemies retreating, but they soon erupted into joyful cheering.

They were severely outnumbered by the Dustin Empire, but they actually managed to make the enemies fall back! Only the soldiers protecting the eastern gate knew why the Dustin Empire retreated, but the first prince commanded the soldiers not to disclose this information.

Meanwhile, in the infirmary of the Lion City camp, Alec Ward was being treated by the Doctors when he received the news of their victory. He was shocked when he heard this since the fighting was still fierce when he left the battlefield. "What's going on?" He muttered to himself.

Suddenly, a series of footsteps echoed, followed by the arrival of a group of soldiers. "Young Master, we won! We survived!"

Alec Ward stared at the remaining servants of the Ward Household with relief. He was happy to see that many of them were able to survive. 'Father, thank you for giving us the chance to live...'

Gustavo fiercely hacked his sword from various angles, but his opponent was able to block his offensive because of his shield and armor. It was so infuriating that Gustavo was close to becoming crazy. 'Dammit! This guy is like a cockroach! This too f*cking infuriating!'

While the two were at a stalemate, more and more soldiers from both sides were dying. There were even some Level 4 Espers who died.

Meanwhile, some soldiers of the Ford Empire managed to break the encirclement. They then charge to the headquarters of the Leone Empire. Because there was a Level 3 Esper leading them, no one could block their way. It was until they inadvertently entered an area that was heavily protected by the experts of the Leone Empire.

"What is this place? Why are there so many experts here?"

The soldiers of the Ford Empire were fighting with the experts guarding the area and they soon noticed that they were preventing them from entering a certain tent.

"There must be a high-ranking officer inside the tent! Kill them and let's bring the officer's head to the Grand General!"

"Kill!"

Suddenly, an enraged shout from a little girl echoed.

"Why is it so loud outside?! I'm sleeping here!"

Hearing this, the soldiers of the Ford Empire were dumbfounded.

"What is going on? Why is there a little girl here?"

"I must be hearing things..."

Not long later, a small figure emerged from the tent. She was holding a gigantic sword in her hands. It was so huge that it almost looked like she was holding a large chunk of metal.

"Who are you guys?! Why are you disturbing my sleep?!" The little girl glared at them.

"Young Miss Olivia, please go back to the tent. We'll take care of these guys." The leader of Olivia's guard team said to her fawningly.

Olivia ignored his words and walked in between the two sides with arrogant strides. Her footprints left deep marks on the ground because of the immense weight of her weapon. She then pointed at the enemies as she shouted. "I don't eat humans. Leave before I get angry!"

The soldiers of the Ford Empire stared speechlessly at the little girl. Who was this little imp? Why was she so arrogant? Is she the daughter of a high-ranking general?

“She must be a daughter of a high-ranking officer! Let’s take her alive to the Grand General! I heard that the Grand General likes little girls the most.” An ugly middle-aged soldier said while licking his lips.

Olivia’s guard team furrowed their eyebrows angrily when they heard his words. This fellow was too vulgar that it made them repulsed. They wanted to kill him, but before they could even make a move, a small figure suddenly appeared in front of the man.

“Papa told me not to use my powers against the innocent. Luckily, you’re not one.” Olivia muttered before she brandished her gigantic weapon at the man.

Puchi!

The ugly middle-aged man was cut in half in just a blink of an eye! It was so fast that no one at the scene witnessed how Olivia’s giant sword moved.

When everyone regained their senses, they couldn’t help but stare at the innocent-looking little girl in horror. The man she killed was a Level 3 Esper, but the guy wasn’t even able to block one strike from her! They almost thought that they were dreaming, but when they saw the pool of blood in front of them, they could only shiver in trepidation.

Olivia retracted her giant sword. She then turned her gaze at the remaining enemies, making them shake like scared puppies. “Put down your weapons and surrender.” She muttered.

Hearing this, the remaining soldiers quickly threw their weapons without saying a word. They even kneeled to show that they were surrendering.

Seeing this, Olivia nodded her head in satisfaction. She then turned her gaze to the leader of her guard team and warned him. “Don’t tell papa about this.”

227 Agreement

Ramiel could barely hold his mace in exhaustion. He has been fighting with Gustavo for a long time and his world essence was almost depleted. He had already discarded his shield since it was becoming cumbersome for him to hold two heavy weapons.

At this moment, he was supporting himself by putting his weight on his mace. Behind his seemingly impenetrable armor was his bruised body. It wasn’t serious, but the more time passes, the more his mobility decreased.

Gustavo saw through Ramiel's weakness, but he wasn't any better. After trying to penetrate the other party's defenses, he used up a lot of his world essence.

Suddenly, he heard a signal horn from their camp.

"A signal to retreat?" Gustavo muttered in confusion. They were slowly overwhelming the enemies with their numbers so why did the Grand General order them to retreat?

"That's a signal for us to retreat! Fall back! Everyone, retreat!" Gustavo shouted at his subordinates. He then gave one last look at Ramiel before leaving with the soldiers.

Ramiel and the others furrowed their eyebrows as they watched the Ford Empire's soldiers retreating in a hurry.

"What's going on?" Aurus frowned.

Ramiel narrowed his eyes as he muttered. "I have no idea. Something must have happened in the capital. Perhaps our guys managed to defeat the Dustin Empire."

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Hearing this, the others were shocked.

"But didn't the Dustin Empire just attack Lion City recently?" Aurus was dumbfounded by his words.

"If they had followed Sir Aethelwolf's plan, it should be possible. I'll communicate with the chief later and ask him what's going on. Let's put up another barricade for now. Tell the soldiers to watch out for the Ford Empire's sneak attacks." Ramiel issued a series of commands. He had full trust in Aethelwolf. He believed that Aethelwolf was an omnipotent individual and that nothing could stand in his way.

Soon, the two armies halted their battle and had a momentary ceasefire.

Meanwhile, inside the tent of Lexter Ford.

"Grand General, General Gustavo has arrived." A messenger reported to the man seated on the head seat.

Lexter Ford nodded his head. "Tell him to enter."

Not long later, the messenger brought an exhausted-looking Gustavo inside the tent. He has some minor wounds all over his body, but it was nothing serious to an expert like him. However, when the soldiers inside the tent saw him covered in blood wounds, they all gasped in surprise.

“Grand General, I’ve retreated with the army after hearing the signal. Pardon my bluntness, but why did you tell us to retreat?” Gustavo asked while looking at Lexter.

Truthfully, he was also thankful that he received the command. His opponent was so hard to deal with that he was uncertain whether he could win against him.

Lexter’s face turned serious. He then told the other soldiers to leave the tent.

Gustavo realized that it must be serious since their Grand General refused to let anyone hear the details.

After everyone left, Lexter muttered in a solemn tone. “The Dustin Empire’s force attacked Lion City after getting my signal. However, I received a report from our spy that George Dustin suddenly commanded his troops to retreat. That guy isn’t the type of person who would give chance to his opponents so I immediately sent our spy to see what was happening on that side. Do you know what he told me?” Lexter stared at Gustavo with a dark look on his face. After pausing for a moment, he then continued. “Our spy bribed a soldier of the Ice Wyvern Battalion and he heard from that soldier that the first prince of the Leone Empire is actually a peak stage Level 4 Esper and he has gained the recognition of their Divine-Rated artifact! At this moment, the Dustin Empire is showing no signs of aggression. I tried to reach out to George Dustin, but he is not answering my calls. This is a very troubling matter...”

After hearing all this, Gustavo was in disbelief. He stayed in the Leone Empire for many years so he knew who the first prince was. The guy was known to everyone as the Lazy Drunkard Prince. He got this moniker because of his indolent lifestyle. ‘How is that possible?! That guy is actually a peak stage Level 4 Esper! And he even got the recognition of their Divine-Rated artifact!’

“There is a high chance that the Dustin Empire will betray us. Even George Dustin couldn’t handle a Divine-Rated artifact that has its own spirit. Forcing this battle would only be detrimental to us so when I heard about the report, I immediately ordered you guys to retreat. We need to know what’s happening out there before we make a move. I’ll also report this to His Majesty.” Lexter muttered. “Take a rest for now and tell the soldiers on guard duty to be alert.” He dismissed Gustavo after telling him the news.

Gustavo bowed to him and left the tent.

Lexter took out his Communication Rune and called the emperor of the Ford Empire, Ludwig Ford.

“Lexter, why did you call me at this hour?” A stern voice could be heard after the call connected.

Lexter cleared his throat and reported everything to the emperor. “... that’s what happened.”

The other side was silent for a moment. Not long later, Lexter heard a heavy sigh followed by the emperor's voice. "It seems like we had underestimated the Leone Empire. Who would have thought that they actually own such a valuable Divine-Rated artifact? We can't handle this weapon. It would only bring us great disaster even if we manage to get our hands on it. Without a Level 5 Esper to hold down the fort, the big empires would soon make a move against the Leone Empire once they hear this news. After all, the Two Lion Sword is a very tempting item for them."

"What do you want us to do, Your Majesty?" Lexter Ford asked.

"Tell everyone to return and make sure to spread this news to the big empires. Even if we lose this time, we must not let the Leone Empire have an easy time!" Emperor Ludwig replied coldly.

"Yes, Your Majesty!" Lexter Ford acknowledged the command.

A few days later, an envoy from the Dustin Empire came to visit the first prince for a peace talk. However, Prince Renz was surprised when he saw that it was George Dustin himself who came in person.

"Greetings, Your Highness." George greeted the prince.

Baron who was standing behind the prince glared at George. He knew that this man was the Grand General of the Dustin Empire, an expert at the peak stage of Level 4. He was very dangerous so Baron was prepared to make a move once the peace talk fails.

George gave a fleeting glance at Baron before turning his gaze back to Prince Renz.

The prince smiled at him and said. "Please take a seat first, Sir George. I'm surprised that you came here in person. I thought that you will only send a subordinate to finalize our agreement. Anyway, let's begin the negotiations." He was determined to let the Dustin Empire pay a heavy price for attacking them.

George sat down and nodded at the prince. He then took out a document and handed it to Prince Renz. "We are willing to compensate the families of the Leone Empire's soldiers who died in battle. The specific compensation is listed in that document. Other than that, we will also pay for the..."

George Dustin called the emperor of the Dustin Empire recently to report what had happened. Luckily, the emperor has foresight and he agreed to compensate the Leone Empire to avoid their revenge.

The terms that George provided were decent, but Prince Renz didn't show a positive expression. "I will sign this agreement if you add 500,000,000 gold coins."

Hearing this, George frowned and entered into silence. It wasn't a small amount and he had a feeling that Prince Renz was making things difficult for him. He wanted to reject the other party, but when he recalled the prince's power, he could only sigh as he nodded his head weakly. "Alright. I accept your conditions. We will send everything stated in the agreement within a week."

"Great!" Prince Renz beamed as he extended his right hand.

Seeing his outstretched hand, George shook it reluctantly.

"You can send your people to monitor the delivery of the goods. We will also help you in transferring the items to Lion City." George said.

Prince Renz nodded his head. "That would be helpful."

"I won't stay for long, Your Highness. I have to return to the Dustin Empire to report the details of the agreement to His Majesty. Farewell." George stood up from his seat and left with his subordinates.

Prince Renz stared at their departing figures. The smile on his face slowly vanished and it was soon replaced by a cold look. "Sir Baron, follow me back to the imperial castle. We must inform His Majesty about this." He muttered.

Lexter Ford led the retreat of the Ford Empire. Many of their soldiers died in this war and they couldn't even get their hands on the Leone Empire's family heirloom, the Two Lion Sword. It was an unrewarding battle and their relationship with the Dustin Empire might not be as amicable as before. They even had to pay the families of their dead soldiers to appease their discontent. To sum it up, it was a huge blunder for the Ford Empire.

"Commander, the Ford Empire has retreated. Our men are now checking the vantage points to see if there are still some scouts. What are your orders?" The messenger was visibly excited as he reported this. Their army actually managed to make the Ford Empire's two hundred thousand strong soldiers retreat! If this news travels into the ears of the other empires, they would certainly look at them in a different light.

Ramiel nodded his head upon hearing this. "Send a small scout team to follow the Ford Empire's army. Tell them to report back to me if they notice that something is amiss. Inform our men that we will have half day break before we return to Lion City." He said to the messenger.

"Understood. I'll take my leave now, Commander." The messenger bowed to him before he left.

Ramiel then turned his gaze to the people inside the tent. They were the main combatants who fought against the elites of the Ford Empire. Some of them were

covered in bandages, while a few of them even lost their limbs. There were also four Level 4 Espers who died in the battle. Their remains were now placed inside crystal coffins, prepared to be delivered to the capital. As for the ordinary soldiers, they were also placed in coffins.

“Four of our elite fighters died in this war. We may be the victor, but we lost the lives of thousands of our soldiers. We must not forget their sacrifice and we must make sure that their families are properly compensated. I want all of you to make sure that the families they left behind wouldn’t be bullied in the future.” Ramiel muttered in a solemn tone. He was afraid that the bereaved families would be ostracized after losing the main pillars of their household so he had to ensure their future to appease the souls of their fallen comrades.

“Yes, Commander!” Everyone answered in unison.

Seeing their serious faces, Ramiel clapped his hands and said. “Everyone is dismissed.”

Soon Ramiel’s tent became silent after everyone left.

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In the imperial castle of the Leone Empire, Emperor Ragnar sat on his throne with a dignified look on his face, while his most trusted subordinate, Dimitri was standing behind him expressionlessly.

“Greetings, Your Majesty.” Prince Renz bowed his head to his father. He might be the strongest expert in the Leone Empire at this moment, but he still fully respected his origins. His father, Emperor Ragnar, also served as his mentor, shaping him into what he was now. The others might think that the emperor has given up on him, but it was far from the truth. Emperor Ragnar trained him since he was young and he even secretly kept in contact with Prince Renz when he was in Vale City.

Emperor Ragnar nodded his head. “You came here urgently after you negotiated with the Dustin Empire. What happened?” The emperor asked. He kept his hands on the armrest of his throne, tapping his fingers rhythmically.

Prince Renz lifted his head as he answered. “The Dustin Empire has given us satisfactory terms. Their Grand General, Arch-Duke George Dustin said that the items will be sent to us within a week. I will send a trustworthy team to monitor the transfer of the items.” After saying this, he paused for a moment and cleared his throat.

“Your Majesty, although we won the war this time, we are still in a precarious situation. Now that the Two Lion Sword’s power is exposed to the world, the big empires might be

interested in taking it from us. By then, we would be put in a tough spot. The only respite regarding this matter is that there is a great distance between us so it would take them some time before they get here. However, we should make some preparations before that happens. I suggest that we invite all the greatest minds in our empires to hold a strategic meeting.” Prince Renz said in a serious tone.

After hearing his words, the emperor furrowed his eyebrows as he pondered deeply. This was also one of his greatest concerns and it looks like the Leone Empire would be at the center of a huge disaster any time soon.

“Your Majesty, I suggest that we invite Sir Aethelwolf to join this strategic meeting. He was the main reason why we won this war. I believe that he could come up with a solution for us.” Prince Renz added after seeing that the emperor was silent.

Emperor Ragnar glanced at Prince Renz and nodded his head. “Alright. I’ll leave this matter in your hands. Since you’ve already shown your true power, there is no need to hide anymore. You should stay here in Lion City and get to know the local lords. Who knows? Maybe you might find a young lady here who could capture your heart. You’re getting old already so you should consider looking for a wife.”

Prince Renz’ eyes widened when he heard this, but he shook his head as he replied. “I’ll consider it after we get past this predicament.” The empire was still in turmoil and danger was all around them. He had no time to have his own family.

Emperor Ragnar sighed inwardly as he looked at his son. “Fine. You may leave.” He waved his hand as he dismissed the first prince.

Prince Renz bowed to the emperor and left the throne room with Duke Baron.

Looking at his departing figure, the emperor sighed as he leaned on his throne. “When can I hold a grandchild?”

Aethelwolf was now cooking a large meal for the soldiers. Since he didn’t have a specialized wok that was used in cooking gigantic creatures, he could only grill the meat in an open fire. It was a tough process to season the meat he had prepared beforehand. It had a whopping size of twenty-four meters, a large equestrian creature that was covered in armor-like scales. Because of its large size, it was difficult to tame it and only a few beast tamers managed to tame this creature. It was called a Giant Steel Equus.

The one that Aethelwolf was seasoning at this moment was from a Level 4 Giant Steel Equus so it was quite huge. He even had to use a Unique-Rated knife to remove the scales of the creature.

“Papa, what are you cooking?” Olivia sat curiously as she propped her chin with both hands. She was fascinated by the scene of Aethelwolf descaling the Giant Steel Equus.

In truth, it wasn't just her. All the soldiers watching the scene were also mesmerized by Aethelwolf's graceful movements. At first, they came here to get a glimpse of the elven woman who was always with him, but they had soon forgotten about her the moment they witnessed Aethelwolf's skill in using the knife. It was as if they were looking at a grandmaster at work.

The way he wielded the knife wasn't forceful. He looked at ease as he descaled the Giant Steel Equus.

They even thought that they were looking at a professional who was performing a show.

Aenwyn who was initially the center of attraction became a backup character. She wasn't a great chef so she could only help Aethelwolf by controlling the flames that will be used to cook the meat. She was expressionless the whole time which made the soldiers give her the nickname Frost Queen.

“Let's begin.” Aethelwolf cut the meat into several large pieces. He then put them into the giant grill that was haphazardly created by the soldiers. It was made from a tough metal so it should be able to handle intense temperatures. As long as one disregarded its ugliness, it was actually a decent grill.

Aenwyn adjusted the temperature of the flames using her world essence.

The crowd cheered when they witnessed the flames burning intensely. Some weaker soldiers even took a step back because of the heat.

Meanwhile, a little girl could be seen drooling at the side. Her eyes were filled with excitement and impatience as she stared at the large pieces of meat on the grill.

When Olivia noticed that there was a line of drool dripping from her mouth, she hurriedly wiped it with the back of her hand, but soon, another line of drool slowly drip from her mouth.

Seeing her cute appearance, Aethelwolf couldn't help but chuckle lightly. He then put his attention back on the grill. He hoped that this food will help the soldiers recover from their physical wounds and emotional trauma.

Everyone had a hearty meal after the meat was cooked. They even praised Aethelwolf for his supreme cooking skills. The food he made was also the best they had tasted in their lives and they would never forget its divine taste.

While everyone was eating the food he cooked, Aethelwolf was checking the status of the soldiers through his observation skills. He noticed that after eating his food, the rate

of their recovery was increasing rapidly and it even reached the point that their physical injuries were healing at a discernible speed.

“My injuries are almost gone! What’s happening?!”

“I don’t feel pain anymore! What is this!?”

The soldiers were shocked by the changes happening in their bodies. The wounds on their bodies were rapidly healing and even those with internal injuries no longer felt so much pain.

“Is it because of this meat?” Someone muttered in confusion. His words immediately made the crowd look at the delicious meat on their plates.

“I feel so much better after eating this meat! Maybe Sir Aethelwolf used medicinal herbs to season the mear!”

Everyone couldn’t help but stare at the young man who was now feeding a little girl. He had a sweet smile on his face as he rubbed off the stain at the corner of Olivia’s lips.

The faces of the soldiers turned warm as they looked at him. Aethelwolf even used some precious medicinal herbs to season the meat that he cooked for them. He must have done it on purpose knowing that all of them were covered in injuries. He was truly a kind person.

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“Thank you, Sir Aethelwolf!”

“Thank you, Sir Aethelwolf!”

“Thank you, Miss Aenwyn!”

At this moment, the soldiers already knew the name of the elven woman who was always beside Aethelwolf. She could already speak some words of the human language and she had even interacted with the injured soldier when she was in the infirmary. Just that, everyone wants to call her Frost Queen because of her ice-cold temperament.

Aenwyn still had an expressionless face, but there was a ripple in her eyes, and Aethelwolf who was feeding Olivia was surprised by their heartfelt words. He turned his head to them and smiled gently. “It’s just a small matter compared to the sacrifices that you guys made for our Leone Empire.” He said.

Some soldiers sobbed when they heard his words. They then continued eating while crying in silence.

A few days later, Ramiel's army arrived at the main entrance of Lion City. They were warmly received by Duke Baron and a few other Legion Commanders. Prince Renz and Prince Calvin were also there to receive them.

Duke Baron and Ramiel shook hands.

"It's good to see you again, Sir Ramiel!" Duke Baron laughed heartily as he patted Ramiel's shoulder.

"Likewise." Ramiel smiled.

Prince Renz walked slowly toward Aethelwolf and smiled at him. "Sir Aethelwolf, how are you?"

Aethelwolf was now carrying Olivia who was soundly sleeping in his arms. He looked at the first prince and replied. "I'm fine, Your Highness. What about you guys here?"

"We're good. We are now preparing for the funeral of our fallen comrades. I was hoping that you would attend the event, Sir Aethelwolf." Prince Renz muttered.

Aethelwolf nodded his head. "I will be there. Just send someone to notify me about the date and venue later."

"Alright." Prince Renz wanted to say a few more things, but he noticed that Aethelwolf seemed to be in a hurry to leave.

"If there's nothing else, we'll take our leave first, Your Highness. I still have to bring my daughter back home." Aethelwolf muttered apologetically to the prince.

"Sure! See you soon, Sir Aethelwolf." Prince Renz smiled at him. Behind the first prince, Prince Calvin cupped his fists to Aethelwolf.

Aethelwolf then turned his gaze to Ramiel and said. "Ramiel, we'll go back home first. You can stay here and deal with your matters."

Ramiel nodded his head in acknowledgment. "Yes, Sir Aethelwolf."

After getting his reply, Aethelwolf left with Aenwyn and Einar.

Soon, they arrived at the Lassiter Household's estate and they were welcomed by Anton Lassiter and the others.

"Are you guys alright? I heard from Miss Julie that you guys were on the battlefield. Everyone was worried about your safety." Anton said as he looked at Aethelwolf's group. He had experienced the harshness of war and the battle he experienced was nothing compared to what Aethelwolf and the others had been through. According to

Julie Irish, the main army was at war against the Ford Empire and Dustin Empire. Just from this alone, he could already imagine the dangers that they had faced.

“Julie? She came here?” Aethelwolf stared at Anton. ‘She must have been here to tell me about the news related to Chris Maynard. I wonder if that guy is still alive...’ He thought.

Anton nodded his head as he replied. “Yes. Miss Julie came here a few days ago and she was even looking for you. Do you want me to send someone to inform her of your return?”

Hearing this, Aethelwolf shook his head. “There is no need for that. She will be here soon.” He said. He knew that Julie Irish had already received the news about their arrival since the Urgel Household has a strong sphere of influence.

“Alright. You should take Olivia to her room first.” Anton said as she looked at the sleeping Olivia in his arms.

Aethelwolf chuckled and nodded his head. “We’ll talk later.”

The evening arrived, and just like what Aethelwolf said, Julie Irish came to visit them.

She was personally received by Hyacinth.

At this moment, Hyacinth was already a Level 2 Esper. After she had eaten the Awakening Pellet, she was taking the advancing pills that Aethelwolf gave them. This increased her level by one in such a short period of time! She never would have thought that she would one day become an Esper and she was even a Level 2 Esper now!

Of course, because of the Concealing Rune that Aethelwolf gave her, Julie Irish didn’t notice anything abnormal about Hyacinth. She just thought that she was a skilled servant under Aethelwolf. After all, Hyacinth was the person in charge of almost all the businesses of the Lassiter Household. Even in her Urgel Household, a talent like her would be valued highly.

“Miss Julie, Sir Aethelwolf is waiting for you in his study.” Hyacinth said as she bowed to Julie Irish.

“Alright. Take me there.” Julie replied calmly.

Hyacinth nodded her head and brought her to Aethelwolf’s study.

“We’re here. You may enter, Miss Julie.” Hyacinth opened the door after knocking on it gently.

“Thanks.” Julie Irish said to her before she entered.

Upon entering, she saw Aethelwolf seated on his chair. There was an elven woman standing at his side, pouring tea into the two empty cups on the table.

“You’re here. Take your seat.” Aethelwolf said as he looked at Julie Irish.

Julie took her eyes off Aenwyn and sat down opposite Aethelwolf. She then glanced at him up and down before she asked. “You went to Vale City to join the army, right?”

Aethelwolf didn’t answer her right away. He took a cup filled with tea and handed it to Julie. He then muttered. “Yes and no.”

Julie Irish frowned when she heard this. “What do you mean?”

“I indeed went to Vale City, but I didn’t join the army. I only offered them some pointers and help them treat the injured soldiers.” Aethelwolf answered calmly before taking a light sip of his tea.

“I see. Anyway, I came here to tell you some news about Chris Maynard.” Julie Irish quickly changed the subject lest the other party might misunderstand her.

“I’m listening.”

“Chris Maynard is still alive. He is currently locked up inside the Maynard Household’s prison. According to the spies I sent there, the prison is heavily guarded to prevent the news about Enrique’s death from spreading. What do you plan to do now?” Julie Irish asked. She then grabbed her tea cup and took a small sip. ‘Good tea.’ She thought to herself. This tea was even better than the ones they had in their estate. ‘I’ll ask for some tea leaves from him...’ She muttered in her heart.

Aethelwolf heaved a sigh of relief after hearing that Chris Maynard was still alive.

“That’s good to hear. I’ll send a rescue party to the Maynard Household. As long as we have him, the truth about Enrique’s death would soon come to light. I just want the true perpetrators behind this to be punished. If the Maynard Household makes things difficult for us, I don’t mind punishing them a bit!” He muttered coldly.

“Just tell me if you need me to do something.” Julie Irish said right away. As an ally of the Lassiter Household, the Urgel Household was willing to help them.

“I’ll tell you the details soon. For now, let’s wait until the funeral is over.” Aethelwolf leaned on his chair as he tapped his fingers on the table.

Chapter 230 Brian’s Motive

In a concealed location of the Maynard Household’s estate, there was an underground prison that was heavily guarded by top Espers. It was said that the Maynard Household would imprison violent criminals who violated the rules in their territory in this place, but

there were also a few who were only here because they had provoked the members of the Maynard Household.

At this moment, more than ten guards were tightly guarding this underground prison and all of them were Level 2 Espers. There was even a Level 4 Esper monitoring the situation!

Inside the prison cell, the inmates were emaciated and their faces were sunken from the constant beating and malnutrition. Even the most violent criminal inside this cell no longer had the fierceness in his eyes.

The place was so dirty and there was even a putrid stench in the surrounding, but the people inside seemed oblivious to the terrible conditions as they sat lifelessly on the cold ground.

“How did it come to this?” A thin and sickly man muttered with a remorseful look on his face. If Aethelwolf was here, he would have been able to tell that this guy was Chris Maynard, the former manager of Enrique Maynard’s weapon shop in Vale City. After being tortured repeatedly and being deprived of food, Chris who was once a fat person had turned into a thin and sickly man.

Because of the succession of the Maynard Household, his cousin, Enrique Maynard, was killed after being plotted against. He didn’t even know that it was his own brother who killed him. Even Chris only found out the true culprit after he was captured.

“Dogs, your food is ready! Line up properly or you won’t get anything!” A condescending voice echoed, making the lifeless eyes of the inmates glow in anticipation.

A group of guards armed to the teeth came and one of them opened the cell. The inmates weakly got up and lined up obediently in front of the guards.

As for Chris, he could only lift his head with great difficulty as he stared at the emaciated inmates going out of the cell. His limbs were tied in chains so he couldn’t line up with the rest. It has been more than a week since they last fed him and the last meal they gave him was the leftover food from the Maynard Household’s cattle.

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“I-I’m hungry... G-Give m-me food...” He said in a pleading voice to the nearest guard.

The guard turned his head and smirked as he gazed up and down at Chris. He then entered the cell as he muttered in a disdainful tone. “Didn’t you hear what we said?” He deliberately paused as he moved his mouth close to Chris’ ears. “Only dogs can eat. Insects like you can just wait for your death! Do you understand?!”

Pa!

The guard gave him a crisp slap that left a red handprint on his face.

Chris groaned in pain. He glared at the guard, but he only received another tight slap on the other side of his face.

Pa!

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Chris coughed up blood violently and his face bulged as if he was stung by a bee. He could no longer raise his head because moving it increased the pain he was feeling. In the end, he could only whimper from the maltreatment.

The other guards and the inmates witnessed this scene, but they were already used to it.

“You son of a b*tch! Who do you think you are to glare at me like that?! Ptui!” The guard grabbed Chris’ hair and spat a mouthful of saliva on his face.

Chris struggled from his grasp, but this only further infuriated the guard.

“You’re quite lively, aren’t you?!”

Pa! Pa! Pa! Pa!

The guard gave him the ultimate beating of his life which made him pass out.

The guard rubbed off the dirt and blood from his hands before he exited the cell with a satisfied look.

Two days later, a messenger arrived at the estate of the Lassiter Household to inform Aethelwolf about the date and the venue of the fallen soldiers’ funeral. The messenger also stated that the emperor would give generous rewards to those who contributed so much to the war.

“Sir Aethelwolf, His Highness Prince Renz specifically told me that he will be expecting your presence.” The messenger said.

“Is that so? Please tell His Highness that I will be there on time.” Aethelwolf said as he took out a small pouch filled with shiny gold coins. He then handed it to the messenger who immediately beamed after getting the pouch.

“Don’t worry, Sir Aethelwolf! I will tell His Highness of your words.” The messenger patted his chest confidently. Aethelwolf was so generous that he even gave him a lot of

money for sending a simple message. From the weight of the pouch, he believed that there were at least ten coins inside! With his meager salary, this amount of money was already equivalent to a few months of hard work and all he needed to do was deliver a reply to Prince Renz!

Aethelwolf smiled as he nodded his head. "Good." He muttered in satisfaction.

The messenger then left the estate in high spirits after bidding farewell to Aethelwolf.

Aethelwolf returned to his study and a figure suddenly appeared behind him.

"Are you really going there?"

Aethelwolf turned his head and looked at the expressionless elven woman as he replied. "I have to. His Highness wants to see me so I have to be there."

Aenwyn sat on a sofa with one leg on top of the other. This action caused her long white legs to be exposed. "I'll go with you."

Aethelwolf took a quick glance at her legs before hurriedly retracting his gaze. "Of course, you have to be there as well. You were a great help to the injured soldiers in the Vale City camp. I believe that His Majesty will reward you for that." He muttered as he busied himself by brewing his own coffee.

Aenwyn changed her sitting position when she heard this. "It was nothing. I was only following what you told me to do." She muttered in a calm voice. If it wasn't for Aethelwolf telling her to use her healing spell, she wouldn't even offer any form of assistance to those humans. After all, she still had an inborn repulsion toward humans.

"Yes. Yes. Yes. You're just following my commands." Aethelwolf muttered halfheartedly as he handed her a cup of coffee.

In a mansion owned by the Linaza Household, Brian sat on his office chair as he listened to the report of his subordinates.

"Boss, according to our informant, the elven woman can now converse in our language. He got this information from a few soldiers who came from the Vale City camp."

After hearing the report, Brian's eyes shone with a mysterious glint. "Did that really happen?"

The man nodded his head. "Many soldiers witnessed this and I have already investigated the matter."

“Good! Good! Good!” Brian Linaza revealed a strange smile. He tried to interact with the elven woman after capturing her, but she was speaking in a language that he couldn’t understand. He tried to seek the help of various scholars, but none of them understood the elf. Left with no choice, Brian decided to sell her at a high price in his Golden Dragon Auction House. He also placed numerous restrictions on the Slave Rune that was tied to her neck to ensure that she wouldn’t be able to escape his grasp. He was only waiting for the right opportunity to gain more information about the language of the elves and who would have thought that Aethelwolf actually managed to teach her the human language? ‘You are giving me a lot of surprises, Aethelwolf...’ He smirked as he muttered in his heart.

“You are dismissed. Take this.” Brian handed a bag filled with coins to his subordinate.

“Thank you, boss! Thank you!” The man immediately left after thanking him.

Brian stood up from his seat and stared at the scenery outside through the glass window. “Aethelwolf, oh Aethelwolf. It seems like I have to visit you in person soon. Hopefully, you won’t go against me or I wouldn’t have a choice but to eliminate you. The treasure of the elves can only be mine! I wouldn’t allow it to land in the hands of other people!” He muttered coldly. His strength was already at the peak of the Leone Empire and even his wealth had surpassed the imperial family’s wealth! The only thing that makes him worried was his age. No matter how strong he was, the human body would still reach a certain limit before dying. He didn’t want to die just like that. He wanted to live for hundreds of years more and the only thing that could help him achieve this was the treasure of the elves!

Brian’s narrowed into slits as he dissected a plan in his mind.