

The Herb King

The Herb King #Chapter 231 – 240

**Fifty Thousand Soldiers?! - Read The Herb King
Chapter 231 - 231 Fifty Thousand Soldiers?!**

Zachary and Albert arrived to deliver some information to Aethelwolf. Both men were investigating the movements of the Dustin Empire and the Ford Empire. Aethelwolf sent them to monitor the two empires.

“Greetings, Sir Aethelwolf.” They greeted respectfully.

Aethelwolf waved his hand and said with a smile. “How are you two? You did a great job in sending us valuable information. By the way, how’s your wife, Zachary?”

Zachary let out a smile as he replied. “She’s been doing well lately, Sir Aethelwolf. She even said that she wants to join our missions.”

“That’s good to hear. Anyway, how’s the investigation this time?” Aethelwolf changed the topic as he put on a serious expression.

Zachary was the first one to report. “I was responsible for tracking the movements of the Ford Empire. Their army has already retreated, but I noticed a small elite unit going in the direction of the Zion Empire. This unit has eight members and all of them are Level 4 Espers. I believe their motive is to send the information of the Two Lion Sword to the Zion Empire.”

The Zion Empire is one of the biggest empires in the Regalis Continent. Its entire territory was four times larger than the Leone Empire and they even had two Level 5 Espers!

Hearing this, Aethelwolf furrowed his eyebrows. He then turned his head to Albert.

Albert cleared his throat before he started speaking. “The Dustin Empire’s army has also retreated to their capital. They are now preparing to compensate the Leone Empire as what they had agreed upon with Prince Renz. They are also hinting our envoys about an alliance. I think the Dustin Imperial Family wants to form an alliance with the Leone Empire.”

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Aethelwolf frowned as he pondered deeply. He didn’t know why the Dustin Empire wanted to form an alliance with the Leone Empire even though it was still in a

precarious situation. Now that the true power of the Two Lion Sword was exposed, many big empires would be interested in it and they might even send their armies to attack the Leone Empire.

“How many days would it take the Zion Empire to rally their troops?” Aethelwolf asked Zachary.

Zachary narrowed his eyes as he thought for a moment. He then replied in a solemn tone. “The Zion Empire’s territory is huge so it would take them some time to gather enough force to attack us. It should take them about a month to prepare their army and if they send a total force of one million soldiers, it would take them another two months before they could reach our borders.”

“So we only have three months, huh?” Aethelwolf leaned on his chair as he massaged his temples.

With the current strength of the Leone Empire, they would be decimated the moment the Zion Empire’s army arrives. However, the thing that made Aethelwolf more worried was if there are more large empires that would attack them. If that happens, they would become the epicenter of a large-scale war!

“Zachary, Albert, I want you two to increase the number of personnel in our intelligence force, but don’t lower the requirements. I don’t want some random riffraff to ruin our force.” Aethelwolf suddenly said. With the current number of members in their intelligence force, they would have some trouble gathering information from larger empires.

“Sir Aethelwolf, how many members should we add?” Albert asked in a low voice.

“I want our intelligence force to reach five thousand members within two months.” Aethelwolf answered in a calm tone, but when the two men heard that he wants to add five thousand personnel, their eyes widened in shock.

Albert and Zachary glanced at each other. They wanted to ask Aethelwolf a few more questions, but when they noticed his calm and cold gaze, they decided to remain silent.

“This is just the beginning.” Aethelwolf muttered. “You two may leave. Tell Ramiel to come here quickly.”

The two men bowed as they said. “Yes, Sir Aethelwolf!” They felt their blood boil in excitement. They could sense Aethelwolf’s huge ambition from his words. From the looks of it, he has huge plans in his mind...

After the two men left, Aethelwolf waited for Ramiel to come.

Soon, Ramiel entered his study.

“Greetings, Sir Aethelwolf.” At this moment, Ramiel was no longer an ordinary person. From an obscure hunter of the Hunter Association, he had already become a top figure in the Leone Empire’s military force! With his merits in the war, it was certain that he would receive a high position in the army!

Aethelwolf pointed at the chair in front of him as he said. “Take your seat first.”

Ramiel nodded his head and sat down. For some reason, he felt nervous when he saw Aethelwolf’s serious expression.

“Ramiel, the army of our Lassiter Household has shown their might in the war. It’s thanks to your leadership that they were able to accomplish that. However, the Leone Empire is now under a huge threat so we need to strengthen our own force. The Leone Empire only has a little more than one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers and half of that amount are just ordinary soldiers. Soon, the Leone Empire would face much stronger enemies and it wouldn’t even have the power to defend itself. I want you to increase the size of our Lassiter Household’s army to fifty thousand!” Aethelwolf said as he stood up from his seat.

Hearing this, Ramiel was dumbfounded. “Sir Aethelwolf, the Leone Imperial Family wouldn’t allow us to build an army of that size. And if the Noble Faction hears about this, they would use all sorts of reasons to make things difficult for us. Furthermore, His Majesty might even think of it as an act of rebellion!” He said worriedly.

“I know. That’s why I want you to keep this matter under wraps.” Aethelwolf said as he took out a map from his storage space. He then pointed at a forested area near Barden City before he continued speaking. “Build a secret base here and the new troops must be trained there as well. I will purchase the piece of land surrounding that area to ensure that no one will pry. I will make the arrangements so you don’t have to be worried about anything. Just do your best in finding another fifty thousand soldiers for me. Can you do it?” Aethelwolf glanced at Ramiel as he waited for him to speak.

Ramiel was silent for a moment before he asked. “Sir Aethelwolf, please pardon my bluntness, but what do you plan to do with an army of that size?” Training an army that was a third of the Leone Empire’s force was something that he never thought that Aethelwolf would do. If the Leone Imperial Family learns about it, the entire Lassiter Household would face severe punishment!

“Ramiel, in this chaotic world, you need to be strong if you want to stay alive. I just want to stay alive.” Aethelwolf gave him a simple answer. He was telling him the truth. Aethelwolf merely wanted to live a peaceful life, but since they were now at the center of a storm, he could only do his best to stay alive.

Ramiel remained silent when he heard those words. After a moment, he stared at Aethelwolf with determination as he muttered. “I will do it! I will create a strong army for you, Sir Aethelwolf!”

“Good! Prioritize the marginalized people when you are looking for soldiers. There are a lot of people with strong potential among them. They are gems buried in the sand, waiting for someone to see their splendor.” Aethelwolf smiled at him. “Don’t cause a commotion and make sure that no one will know about our plans. I don’t want our relationship with the Leone Empire to turn sour because of this.”

Ramiel nodded his head seriously. This was a huge matter so he didn’t want to make any mistakes. “Yes, Sir Aethelwolf! I will be careful.”

“Good! I want everything to be ready in three months. I will send you all the resources that you need to train our men next week. It will be enough to promote all fifty thousand soldiers into Level 2 Espers!” Aethelwolf handed him a piece of paper with a list of herbs. “These are the ingredients I need to concoct the pills needed by our army. Send this to Hyacinth and tell her to get everything on that list before midnight.”

Ramiel glanced at the paper briefly before keeping it inside his storage ring.

“You may leave.” Aethelwolf said as he waved his hand.

Ramiel bowed to him before leaving the room.

After Ramiel left, a seductive figure appeared beside him. “Do you plan to overthrow the Leone Imperial Family?”

The only person who dared to ask him this was Aenwyn.

Aethelwolf stared at the elf and shook his head as he chuckled lightly. “Of course not. I don’t want to become an emperor. That’s such a chore. I already have my hands full from being the headmaster of an academy.”

232 Sixteenth Company

After receiving Aethelwolf’s command, Ramiel exited his room with a stern look on his face. From the gravity of Aethelwolf’s tone, he could tell that something earthshaking was about to happen.

He went down to the ground floor and searched for Hyacinth. He then found her in the kitchen talking with some maids.

Ramiel walked up to them and because of his loud footsteps, everyone in the kitchen immediately noticed his arrival.

“Greetings, Miss Hyacinth.” Ramiel calmly greeted her.

“Sir Ramiel, what can I do for you?” Hyacinth smiled gently as she looked at the ferocious-looking soldier.

The other maids didn't dare linger upon seeing his frightening presence. Ramiel was so tall that all of them looked like tiny children compared to him and his stern and cold look made him seem like an unapproachable man.

Ramiel handed her the piece of paper he got from Aethelwolf as he said. "Sir Aethelwolf wants me to give this to you. He said that everything on the list must be sent to him before midnight."

Hyacinth read the list of herbs written on the paper and she couldn't help but furrow her eyebrows for a moment. She was responsible for the purchases of materials needed in their businesses so she was familiar with the herbs on the list. Some of them were rare and it would be difficult to purchase them in such a short amount of time. However, since Aethelwolf has already given his command, she could only do her best.

"Thanks for letting me know, Sir Ramiel." Hyacinth kept the paper as she glanced gratefully at Ramiel.

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Ramiel shook his head and replied. "I'm only doing my task. If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave first." He turned around and left without looking back. He was given a deadline of three months to accomplish something ridiculous so he had to move fast in order to complete his mission.

After getting out of the mansion, Ramiel headed to the resting area of the guards to look for some extra hands. When he arrived, the guards who were idling immediately stood up and greeted him.

"Greetings, Sir Ramiel!"

"Greetings, Sir Ramiel!"

With his exploits in the recent war, the guards of the Lassiter Household gained a newfound respect for their scary-looking commander.

Ramiel nodded his head at them. "How many of you are not doing any task?" He asked as he scanned the soldiers.

They thought that Ramiel was going to scold them for being lazy so they immediately lowered their heads when they met his gaze.

"Sir Ramiel, the sixteenth company under me has just completed their training. We are ready to do any task!" The voice of a woman suddenly echoed.

Ramiel turned his head and stared at the woman who had just spoken. It was a woman with bob-cut hair. She looked to be in her late thirties because of her darker skin tone,

but he could tell that this woman was still quite young when he saw her clear and pure eyes. "What's your name?" He asked.

The woman was nervous under his direct stare, but she managed to reply without stuttering. "Sir, my name is Ana, Company Commander of the sixteenth company!"

"How many soldiers do you have under your command, Ana?" Ramiel only needed two hundred to three hundred soldiers to make things more discreet. Having more would only complicate things and there was even a risk of leaking information.

"I have three hundred soldiers under my command, Sir Ramiel!" Ana replied.

Hearing this, Ramiel nodded his head. "That's good. Gather your troops and tell them to wait for me outside."

"Yes, Sir Ramiel!"

Now that he has some soldiers, he could finally start planning how to complete Aethelwolf's task without being discovered.

Ten hours later inside Aethelwolf's study, there was a gentle knocking on the door.

"You may enter." Aethelwolf said.

Hyacinth entered the room and bowed to him. "Sir Aethelwolf, I have gathered all the herbs you listed." She reported to him.

"That was quite fast. Alright. Show them to me." Aethelwolf was satisfied with her efficiency.

Hyacinth smiled upon hearing this. She then took out more than ten wooden crates from her storage ring and piled them neatly on the floor.

Aethelwolf opened the crates and inspected the herbs. "Not bad. Although some of these herbs are low quality, they can still be of use. Good job, Hyacinth." Aethelwolf smiled.

"I wanted to look for more high-quality herbs, but because of the lack of time, I can only choose to purchase the lower quality ones. I hope you don't mind, Sir Aethelwolf." Hyacinth muttered apologetically.

"It's fine. My refining method will make up for the quality of the herbs." He chuckled as he replied confidently. "I will be refining pills in the next few days so don't let anyone disturb me. You may inform me if there's anything urgent. Also, please tell Rendell to purchase this entire plot of land." Aethelwolf said as he pointed at the forested area near Barden City. It was the same location that he told Ramiel earlier.

Hyacinth grabbed the map and kept it inside her storage ring. "I'll inform him right away." She said.

"Good. You may take your leave." Aethelwolf said as he dismissed her.

Hyacinth bowed to Aethelwolf before leaving the room.

Not long after she left, a small figure suddenly appeared on the balcony.

"Olivia?" He looked at her with a smile.

Olivia pouted and ran towards him. "Papa, Kerrin, and Alba are getting impatient. They kept on pestering me about my necklace. They want to ask when are you planning to make one for them." The little girl muttered as she pursed her lips.

Aethelwolf rubbed his temples when he heard this. He still didn't have the complete materials to make the Transformation Rune and he had also forgotten about this matter. "We still lack materials right now so I still can't make one. How about this? I will visit Sir Brian and buy the remaining materials from him." He could only look for Brian to get the rest of the materials.

Hearing this, Olivia pouted, but she still nodded her head. "Okay."

Since he had already promised Olivia, he could only postpone the refinement of the pills for the time being.

"Let's go." Aethelwolf rubbed the little girl's head as he smiled gently.

"Do you want me to come with you?" Aenwyn asked him in a low voice.

Aethelwolf hesitated for a moment as he looked at Aenwyn. She tried to hide it well, but he could sense the fury brewing in her from the light of coldness in her eyes. Only someone with acute senses like him could sense it. "You should stay here and continue studying the human language." He muttered as he shook his head lightly.

Aenwyn stared at him silently before she nodded her head with a calm look. "Alright." She answered.

Aethelwolf grabbed Olivia's small hand and went out of the mansion with her.

"Papa, Kerrin, and Alba are waiting for us outside. They were very excited when they heard that we are going to buy the remaining materials for their necklace." Olivia giggled as she pointed at the carriage in front of the mansion. There were two Equuses looking at them while eagerly wagging their tails.

Seeing their behavior, Aethelwolf laughed lightly. 'These guys are acting like the pet dogs in my past life...' He thought to himself.

"Einar, take us to Brian Linaza's mansion." Aethelwolf said to the old man.

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Einar had now become a full-time bodyguard for Olivia and Aethelwolf, but the old man didn't seem to mind this. In fact, he felt proud about his current job for his boss was a man of mystery. Even at this moment, Einar could still not fathom the depths of his power...

"Yes, Sir Aethelwolf." Einar nodded his head respectfully.

Aethelwolf carried Olivia inside the carriage and made her sit on his lap.

"Papa, Aenwyn seems to be angry about that person named Brian." Olivia suddenly said. She was a Level 3 magical beast and her senses is a lot stronger than the human Espers at the same level as her. She immediately noticed the changes in Aenwyn's expression when they talked about Brian earlier.

Hearing this, Aethelwolf patted her head as he replied. "That's because Brian was the man who captured Aenwyn. Don't you remember? He was the one who auctioned her off."

Olivia thought for a moment before she exclaimed in surprise, making her eyes look bigger. "Oh, so it's that person?"

Aethelwolf nodded his head.

"So he is not a good person!" Olivia pouted as she crossed her arms.

"He is a businessman and people like him only seek profit. However, we must not provoke him for now. We still need his help to gather all the remaining materials that we don't have." Aethelwolf warned her.

Olivia snorted, but she still nodded her head. "For the sake of Kerrin and Alba, I'll let him be for now. Hmph!"

Olivia's mood was sour so she remained silent throughout the whole journey.

Soon, they arrived in front of a huge estate.

"We're here." Aethelwolf lifted the pouting little girl and alighted the carriage while carrying her in his arms.

He then put her down and let her walk on her own.

Not long later, a well-dressed middle-aged man arrived to meet them. "Greetings, Sir Aethelwolf. We didn't know that you would visit us. I hope that you would forgive us for not receiving you at the gate." The middle-aged man smiled with a flattering look. He had seen Aethelwolf during the banquet of the upper echelons hosted by Brian. He only caught a glimpse of Aethelwolf at that time, but his peerless image and mysterious aura left a deep impression on him.

"Do you know me?" Aethelwolf was a bit surprised as he looked at the middle-aged man. He tried to remember all the people he met, but he didn't recall meeting this person.

The middle-aged man smiled bitterly. "Of course! I've seen Sir Aethelwolf at the banquet hosted by our Linaza Household. It's just that I'm only a steward, so I could only look at you from afar." He muttered helplessly.

Aethelwolf merely smiled when he heard this.

Seeing that Aethelwolf didn't seem to be interested in having a conversation with him, the middle-aged man let out a dry laugh as he said. "I'll take you to Sir Brian immediately. Please follow me, Sir Aethelwolf."

Aethelwolf nodded his head and followed him.

The middle-aged man brought them to the topmost floor of the mansion.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

"You may enter." There was a stern voice coming inside the room.

"Sir Aethelwolf, I won't go inside with you. You may enter with your daughter." The middle-aged man said as he opened the door for them.

"Thanks." Aethelwolf thanked the man before he entered the room with Olivia.

As soon as he entered, he saw Brian seated on his chair. He was buried in a pile of documents.

Brian lifted his head and when he saw that it was Aethelwolf, he revealed a look of surprise before he hurriedly stood up from his seat. "Sir Aethelwolf, it's good to see you again! I didn't know that you were coming to see me. If I had known, I would have received you in person." He said as they shook hands with smiles on their faces.

"It's fine, Sir Brian. I came here uninvited so it doesn't matter." Aethelwolf said.

“Take your seat first.” He said before turning his gaze to Olivia. “Isn’t this your daughter? She looks cute and beautiful. Hi, little girl. I’m your father’s friend. You can call me Uncle Brian.” He beamed as he said those words to the little girl.

Olivia didn’t like this person, but she promised that she wouldn’t cause trouble so she put on a cute smile as she greeted him in a lovable voice. “Hello, Uncle Brian.”

Hearing this, Brian laughed heartily. “What a smart little girl!” He praised.

“By the way, why did you come here to visit me in person, Sir Aethelwolf?” He asked while looking at Aethelwolf.

“Actually, I’m looking for some materials. I can find them by myself, but it would take me a long time to do that so I could only come here and shamelessly ask for your help, Sir Brian.” Aethelwolf smiled helplessly.

“This is just a small matter. I’ll take care of it. Just give me the list of materials and I’ll gather them all for you.” Brian said confidently.

234 Probing Brian

“I have the list here with me. Give me a second.” Aethelwolf grabbed a piece of paper inside his storage space. It contains the list of materials he needed to make Kerrin and Alba’s necklace. He also added some surplus materials that he would need in the future.

“I listed everything I need in this paper.” Aethelwolf muttered as he handed it to Brian.

“Let me see...” Brian took the paper from his hand and scanned the list in silence. Some of the materials were rare, but with his connections, he could find everything on the list in just a few hours. “These are rare smithing materials and you actually need more Soul Jade?” Brian couldn’t help but stare at Aethelwolf in surprise. If he remembered correctly, Aethelwolf asked him for a Soul Jade before so why is he asking for another one?

Aethelwolf chuckled awkwardly. Soul Jade is a very valuable item and it could be used for multiple purposes. In fact, after Aethelwolf was promoted to Level 4 Engraver, he learned of a method that could create an artificial soul for a Divine-Rated weapon. The only issue was that it requires a fist-size Soul Jade and the soul of a Level 5 magical beast. Even if he knew the method, it was almost impossible to have these two materials. Just looking for a fist-size Soul Jade alone was already difficult. As for the soul of a Level 5 magical beast, it was even more outrageous. Creatures at this level are so terrifying that they could decimate an entire empire on their own!

“Well, I just find Soul Jades fascinating and they are great materials for making jewelry and artifacts.” Aethelwolf answered vaguely. He didn’t want to disclose anything to Brian since this man was so hard to predict.

Brian’s eyes narrowed for a moment but they returned to normal right away. He then smiled at Aethelwolf as he said. “It looks like Sir Aethelwolf also loves jewelry. You can rest assured. I’ll gather all the materials and send them to your estate before midnight.”

“That’s great! I’ve already prepared the payment for all the items. I added a small amount as thanks for helping me. You can check it.” Aethelwolf grabbed a box filled with gold cards from his storage space and placed it on an empty spot on the table.

“There is no need for that. I trust you, Sir Aethelwolf.” Brian said with a face full of smiles, but he secretly sent a stream of world essence to check the contents of the box.

His action was very discreet, but Aethelwolf was able to notice it immediately. ‘This guy is really a two-faced bastard. He says he trusts me, but he still checked the contents of the box.’ Aethelwolf sneered in his mind after seeing Brian’s hidden action.

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Brian was still unaware that Aethelwolf had already noticed what he did. His mind was occupied by the contents of the box. Aethelwolf said that he only added a small amount, but the gold coins inside the box were almost twice the value of the materials he listed in the paper. ‘How generous!’ He thought to himself.

Brian happily kept the box inside his storage ring. “By the way, Sir Aethelwolf. I heard that the elven woman you got from our auction house can now speak our language. Is this matter true? I heard it from the soldiers.” He said as he looked at Aethelwolf’s reaction.

‘Heard my ass! I bet you investigated this! You think I’m an idiot?!’ Aethelwolf was now certain that Brian has an ulterior motive when he auctioned Aenwyn in the Golden Dragon Auction House.

Aethelwolf didn’t reveal his true feelings to Brian as he put on a smiling facade. “It’s true. At first, I was having trouble trying to communicate with her so I decided to teach her the basics of our language. Who would have thought that she would actually learn them in such a short period of time? She is a very smart girl. I really have to thank you, Sir Brian. Now, I have another capable subordinate under me. I’m even planning to remove the Slave Rune from her to make her feel more comfortable.” He replied. This was his way of probing for more information from Brian. He wanted to know what the guy was up to.

After hearing Aethelwolf’s words, Brian was shocked. “No, you can’t do that! I mean... it would be difficult for you to do that, Sir Aethelwolf. You would need the help of a Level 4

Engraver to remove the Slave Rune. The Engraver who placed the rune on her has already left and his whereabouts are unknown. He could have helped you remove it.” Brian said as he sighed.

‘Dammit! If this guy removes the Slave Rune, that elf might say something about the Holy Spring! No! It should be impossible for him to remove it... What should I do?’ Brian was racking his brain on how to prevent Aethelwolf from removing the Slave Rune, but he didn’t know that Aethelwolf had long since removed it.

The Holy Spring is the ultimate treasure of the elves and it has many names. The Fountain of Youth, the Spring of Eternity, and so on.

Aethelwolf felt contempt in his heart. This guy couldn’t even control his emotions. Aethelwolf wanted to beat him up, but he had to postpone that until he gets the items he needed.

“Sir Brian, it’s almost past noon so we’ll take our leave first. Goodbye.” Aethelwolf stood up and put on an amiable expression while extending his right arm.

Brian stared at his outstretched arm and shook it reluctantly as he forced out a smile. “Have a safe trip back home, Sir Aethelwolf.”

Aethelwolf nodded his head. “Thanks.” He muttered before he lifted Olivia into his arms. He then calmly left the room with his daughter.

They saw Einar waiting for them outside the mansion.

“Let’s go back home.”

Einar nodded his head before he jumped into the coachman’s seat. He then waited for Aethelwolf and Olivia to enter the carriage before urging the Equuses to move.

Meanwhile, inside Brian’s study, Brian had a dark expression on his face as he recalled his interaction with Aethelwolf. For some reason, he felt that Aethelwolf was probing him earlier, but he couldn’t accurately tell if that was really Aethelwolf’s intention.

After a short time of thinking, Brian crossed his fingers as he muttered in a cold voice. “You’ve really done me a huge favor Aethelwolf. Now that the elven woman knows how to speak our language, I just have to ask her the whereabouts of the Holy Spring! Hmm... How should I do this?”

He entered into deep silence as he pondered. Suddenly, his eyes flashed with radiance as he smiled coldly. “I’ll see you again tonight, Aethelwolf...”

Aethelwolf's group soon arrived at the Lassiter Household's estate.

When Aethelwolf and Olivia entered their room, they noticed that Aenwyn was already waiting for them. She was seated on a chair with a serious look on her face. "Did you meet him?" She asked in a calm voice.

Aethelwolf put down Olivia before nodding his head at Aenwyn. "Brian is in his mansion. I needed his help to look for some items so we had a short discussion."

"Did he say anything else?"

Aethelwolf grabbed a chair and pulled it beside Aenwyn's seat. "The guy was asking about you. It looks like our initial guess was right. Brian is indeed interested in the Holy Spring of your Aracan Kingdom. Perhaps that guy is already scheming on how to get the details from you since he already knows that you can speak the human language. If my guess is right, he will personally deliver the items I requested earlier." He said as he leaned on his chair.

Aenwyn still looked calm on the surface, but a towering rage was brewing in her heart.

She absolutely despised Brian to his core and she even wanted to eliminate him for good, but that guy is a peak stage Level 4. She was only a late stage Level 4 Esper so her chances of winning against that man were small. However, if Aethelwolf offers assistance, that would be different... The only issue was if Aethelwolf would agree to this.

"I want to kill him!" She muttered coldly while looking at Aethelwolf.

Aethelwolf narrowed his eyes into slits when he saw her expression. Eliminating Brian would cause a major commotion in the Leone Empire especially now that it just went through a tough war against two neighboring empires.

Aethelwolf massaged his temples as he entered into deep thinking.

Not long later, his eyes brightened as he thought of the best solution for this matter. "We can't kill him at this moment since his death would cause turmoil in the Leone Empire. However, we can place a Slave Rune on him. Something a lot stronger than the one he made for you. That way, we can control him and turn him into our puppet! I guarantee that he wouldn't be able to escape our grasp!"

235 Brian's Visit

"Only the best Level 4 Engravers could make runes at that level. Even in our Aracan Kingdom, only a few capable Engravers could achieve it." Aenwyn muttered.

Hearing this, Aethelwolf chuckled lightly. "Have you forgotten who removed the Slave Rune placed on you?"

Aenwyn saw Aethelwolf giving him a strange smile. She then recalled how easily Aethelwolf managed to remove the Slave Rune that was placed on her. That's right! This guy is also a Level 4 Engraver! How could I forget about it?

"I can make a Slave Rune that even Level 4 Engravers couldn't dismantle or decode. The only problem with this is that we would need a bunch of materials. I'll send some people to look out for these materials and once we gather all of them, I will make the rune right away so that we can proceed with our plans." Aethelwolf muttered.

Aenwyn nodded her head upon hearing his words. "Alright."

"There is a high chance that Brian will visit us tonight. Don't let him agitate you, okay?" Aethelwolf stared deeply at the elven princess.

"Don't worry." Aenwyn answered calmly.

And just like that, evening arrived and the Lassiter Household received an unexpected visitor. The only ones who weren't surprised about his arrival were Aethelwolf and Aenwyn.

"Good evening, Sir Aethelwolf." Brian smiled warmly when he saw Aethelwolf getting out of the mansion to receive him personally.

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"Sir Brian, I'm surprised that you came here in person! Come inside! The sky is getting darker, I believe that there would be a heavy rain soon." Aethelwolf shook hands with Brian. He then cordially dragged the man inside the mansion.

Brian allowed Aethelwolf to drag him inside. He didn't want his identity as an Esper to be exposed so he could only act as if he was a normal human. However, he didn't know that Aethelwolf had long since learned about his true power...

"Bring a specially brewed coffee to my study." Aethelwolf told the servants as soon as they entered the mansion.

"Yes, Sir Aethelwolf." The maids bowed their heads before they left.

Aethelwolf turned his head to Brian and muttered with a smile. "Recently, I created a special mix of coffee and I taught them how to make it. Drinking hot coffee in this kind of cold weather is good."

In truth, Brian didn't want to drink coffee, but since Aethelwolf had already told his subordinates to brew for them, he could only smile helplessly. "Sir Aethelwolf is truly talented! You even know how to brew coffee!" He praised Aethelwolf with a sincere tone.

Aethelwolf chuckled and shook his head. "It's just a hobby of mine to create things."

They chatted idly as they headed to Aethelwolf's study and when they entered the room, Brian noticed an expressionless elven woman standing motionless inside.

"Aenwyn, our hot coffee will arrive soon. Please pour some for me and Sir Brian later." Aethelwolf said to Aenwyn in human language.

"Alright." Aenwyn replied as she nodded her head.

Hearing the interaction between them, Brian's heart jolted in agitation. 'It's actually true! She can indeed speak in the human language!' He exclaimed in his heart. Although he already heard from Aethelwolf about this, he still had some doubts in his heart. Now, all his doubts vanished after that short interaction.

"Sir Brian, take your seat first." Aethelwolf sat on the sofa as he pointed to an adjacent seat.

"Thanks." Brian sat down and inspected the room. He noticed that there were all sorts of books neatly piled on the bookshelves. From the number of books, there should be about three thousand to five thousand books in total. It wasn't much to a true book collector, but it created a nice intellectual touch to the room. "I didn't know that Sir Aethelwolf is actually a book lover." He muttered with a smile.

When Aethelwolf heard this, he laughed lightly as he responded. "Well, I read some of them before I became the headmaster of the academy, but now, I don't have much free time anymore. They could only sit on the bookshelves and collect dust."

While they were chatting, there was a soft knocking on the door.

"You may enter." Aethelwolf said.

A maid entered the room, pushing a small cart with a thermos flask filled with freshly brewed coffee on top of it. There were also two small ceramic mugs and a small glass box filled with sugar cubes on top of the cart.

"I'll take it from here." Aenwyn said to the maid.

Meanwhile, Aethelwolf and Brian were already talking about the materials.

“I gathered all the materials in your list, Sir Aethelwolf. You can check it.” Brian said as he took out a huge jade box. He then placed it on the table and pushed it towards Aethelwolf.

Aethelwolf opened the cover of the jade box and saw a bunch of materials lying inside. After seeing that everything was there, Aethelwolf smiled happily. “I’ve really troubled you, Sir Brian.”

Brian laughed as he shook his head. “Not at all! Not at all! The payment you gave me was more than twice their market value so I’ll add that jade box as a gift. Please accept it, Sir Aethelwolf.” He said.

Aenwyn poured coffee for both men as they chatted cordially. She almost thought that they were best buddies from the way they conversed.

“You even gave me such a valuable jade box! Since it’s a gift from you, I’ll accept it shamelessly.” Aethelwolf grabbed the jade box and covered it before he kept it inside his storage space.

“Try our coffee, Sir Brian. I believe that you’ll like it.” Aethelwolf confidently said while pointing at Brian’s ceramic mug that was already filled with coffee.

Brian forced out a smile after seeing his enthusiasm. He could only bite the bullet since he still had something to ask from this guy.

Brian grabbed one piece of a sugar cube and mixed it into his coffee. He then lifted the mug and lightly inhaled the dense aroma. When the fragrance of the coffee entered his system, he silently nodded in his heart. It was indeed different than the normal coffee in the market.

After a moment of hesitation, Brian took a light sip.

“Mn. Not bad!” He praised after tasting the coffee’s delicious flavor. “Can I ask for some of this coffee?” He looked at Aethelwolf expectantly.

“Of course!” Aethelwolf smiled gently. He then turned his head to Aenwyn and said to her. “Tell the servants to prepare five hundred grams of this special coffee for Sir Brian.”

Aenwyn nodded her head and left the room to deliver his commands to the servants.

“I apologize that I can only give you a small amount, Sir Brian. I just created this mixture so I didn’t have the chance to make another batch.” Aethelwolf muttered apologetically.

Brian smiled as he waved his hands. “No, it’s alright. I’m fine with it. Sir Aethelwolf, to tell you the truth, I didn’t visit you here just to deliver the materials to you. In fact, I have another objective.”

Here it comes!

Hearing this, Aethelwolf squinted his eyes as he adjusted his sitting posture. His expression also turned serious as he looked at Brian. "What is it, Sir Brian? As long as it's something I can do, I'll help you as best as I can." He said.

"There's no need to be serious. It's just a small matter. Actually, I only want to have a small talk with Aenwyn. I just want to ask her a few things. Are you fine with this?" Brian stared at Aethelwolf deeply to see his reaction.

"Oh? You want to talk with her? That's fine, but please bear in mind that Aenwyn could still not speak our language fluently so she might not be able to converse with you properly." Aethelwolf reminded him.

"It's good as long as I can speak with her."

Knock! Knock! Knock!

"Speak of the devil. It must be her." Aethelwolf smiled as he turned his gaze to the door. "Come in."

Aenwyn entered with a calm look on her face.

"Aenwyn, Sir Brian wants to speak with you." Aethelwolf said.

"Sir Aethelwolf, I'd like to speak with her privately." Brian muttered at the side.

The corner of Aethelwolf's lips curved upwards upon hearing this. "Sure. I'll go to the balcony for a smoke. Just call me if you guys are done."

"Thanks." Brian muttered gratefully. 'At least this guy is sensible.' He muttered in his heart.

"Remember your promise." Aethelwolf whispered discreetly to Aenwyn before he headed to the balcony for a quick smoking session.

As soon as Aethelwolf left, Brian inspected Aenwyn from head to foot. He could still see the Slave Rune on her neck so he heaved a sigh of relief. "Hello, Miss Aenwyn. Please sit down first." Aethelwolf was just nearby so he put on a smile as he looked at Aenwyn.

Since she was still bound by the Slave Rune, she was still under his control, but what he didn't know was that the Slave Rune he was seeing was just a fake created by Aethelwolf to fool him.

Aenwyn stared at Brian with a calm expression, but she was seething with fury in her heart. She really wanted to rip apart his smiling face, but she chose to hold back herself for she had already promised Aethelwolf to pretend that she was still under the Slave Rune's control.

Brian took a quick glance at the balcony and found that Aethelwolf wasn't looking at them. He then turned his gaze back to Aenwyn and wiped off the fake smile on his face as he studied the elven woman from head to foot. "I never thought that you would actually learn the human language." He muttered coldly.

Aenwyn remained silent and just looked at Brian with an emotionless gaze.

"It seems like Aethelwolf values you a lot. Tell me, did he ask you about the Holy Spring?" Brian narrowed his eyes into slits while looking at Aenwyn.

The elven princess calmly shook her head as she replied in a detached voice. "No."

Brian's face eased up after hearing this. Aenwyn was still under the Slave Rune's control so all her words should be true. "Does the Holy Spring truly exist?" He asked in a low voice.

Aenwyn was silent for a moment, but she still nodded her head. "Yes, the Holy Spring is a closely protected treasure of the elves." She answered.

Hearing this, a smile formed on Brian's lips. "Do you know where is it? Tell me the exact location."

There was a look of struggle on Aenwyn's face as she said with great difficulty. "O-Only the Queen knows the exact location... O-Our kingdom, you will reach its borders by following the G-Great Noxus River... Argh!"

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Seeing this, Brian cursed in his mind. 'Dammit! This elven woman's mind is actually so strong! She could even escape the Slave Rune's control for a short time!'

"What happened here?" Aethelwolf suddenly appeared and looked at Brian with a questioning gaze.

Brian acted as if he didn't know anything and stood up from his seat as he muttered in a distressed tone. "Miss Aenwyn is trying to escape the Slave Rune's control and it backfired on her."

Aethelwolf ignored him and pretended to check Aenwyn's pulse. "She is fine, but her heartbeat is weak. I'll let her recuperate first." He muttered with a frown.

"I'm so sorry, Sir Aethelwolf. I must have agitated her with my questions." Brian put on an apologetic look.

Aethelwolf sighed and shook his head. "It's fine, Sir Brian, but it seems like we'll have to postpone our discussion."

Brian nodded his head. "In that case, I won't trouble you anymore. Just tell me if you need my help, Sir Aethelwolf. I'll take my leave now."

"Alright. I'll take you outside."

"There's no need for that. I'll go out by myself. Take care of Miss Aenwyn first." Brian shook his head and walked out of the room without waiting for Aethelwolf's reply.

After exiting the room, he smiled coldly as he walked through the hallway. "Great Noxus River, huh?" He muttered.

Meanwhile, Aethelwolf and Aenwyn stared at each other as soon as Brian left the room and they saw a cold glint in each other's eyes.

"He is looking for the Holy Spring!" Aenwyn said in a cold voice.

Aethelwolf patted her shoulders. "Don't worry. I won't let him escape. Now that he has ascertained the Holy Spring's existence, Brian will definitely make his move."

"I told him that he will find our kingdom if he follows the Great Noxus River. We must prepare a trap for him before he finds out that it's a lie."

Hearing this, Aethelwolf gave her a thumbs up. "Good! I'll make the Slave Rune and you'll take care of the traps. Don't let anyone else know about this to prevent us from trouble."

"I know."

While they were discussing how to trap Brian, the victim of their plot was now heading back to his mansion in a carriage. He couldn't wait to find the elves' secret territory, but he had to make some preparations before going into that place. He didn't know the elves' power and he had no idea how strong their strongest experts were.

"I'll gather an army to find the elven kingdom. Hopefully, I can contact the elves and have a peaceful talk with them. If not, then..." There was a flash of killing intent in his eyes, but it soon vanished.

However, Brian felt that there was an invisible force manipulating him from behind the scenes. It was an instinctual feeling and it made him feel a bit worried. "Why am I feeling restless?" He muttered in confusion.

Another day passed by and the sun illuminated the world.

Aethelwolf whose eyes were tired and sleepy abruptly stood up. "It's finally done! I've made the Slave Rune as well as Kerrin and Alba's necklaces! I'll give the Slave Rune to Aenwyn later." He laughed lightly as he kept the Slave Rune inside his storage space.

Aenwyn was not in the mansion at the moment. Aethelwolf believed that she was still working on the trap meant for Brian.

Despite the weariness he felt, Aethelwolf was still in a good mood. He jumped down from the balcony and searched for Kerrin and Alba. He was looking forward to the transformation of the two magical beasts. They were Equuses with the King-Grade bloodline and their potential was only slightly weaker than Olivia's. If he trained them well, they would become a fearsome force in the future!

Soon, he found the two horses resting under the shade of a tall tree.

Aethelwolf didn't conceal his footsteps so Kerrin and Alba woke up from their deep sleep.

"Sir Aethelwolf!" The two magical horses greeted him respectfully. This human was strong and he was capable of speaking the language of beasts so they were full of admiration towards him.

Aethelwolf smiled gently at the two. "You two must have waited a long time for this." He showed them a pair of beautiful necklaces. One was embellished with white gems, while the other one was decorated with dark magical stones.

Kerrin and Alba stared at the necklaces in Aethelwolf's hand with anticipation. They knew that they would be able to transform into humans once they wear it. They had been patiently waiting for this after they had seen Olivia turn into a human. They envied the change in her life and they also wanted to experience it themselves.

"Take it." Aethelwolf smiled at them as he helped them wear their necklace. These artifacts are capable of adjusting their sizes according to their wearer's body.

Aethelwolf gave the white necklace to Alba while he gave the black one to Kerrin.

Soon, the two transformed into their human forms, and this time, Aethelwolf quickly noticed them because of their large stature.

Alba turned into a six-foot-tall man with elegant long white hair. His muscles were lean and full of strength, showing off a body full of vitality. On the other hand, Kerrin morphed into a man who seemed to be in his late twenties. He was more muscular than Alba with

a height of six foot and two inches. He has a long wavy black hair that extended to his shoulder. Both magical beasts transformed into fine men with model-like bodies!

“Wear this first. Luckily, you two almost have the same build as me or you would have to stand here naked for quite some time.” Aethelwolf chuckled as he threw them a set of clothes. He had a lot of clothes stocked inside his storage space so he didn’t mind giving them something to wear.

Kerrin and Alba caught them and they started clumsily changing.

After more than ten minutes of struggle, the two finally changed into their clothes.

“Good. You two have the King-Grade bloodline so you can quickly adapt to your new bodies like Olivia. You guys should start learning how to control your bodies first and once you’ve finally adapted, I’ll train you two in using human weapons.” Aethelwolf said. These two were only Level 2 magical beasts and their strength was nowhere close to Olivia’s. He could give them enhancement pills, but that would have to wait since he didn’t have one in his hands at this moment.

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Kerrin and Alba nodded their heads. “Yes, Sir Aethelwolf.”

“I’ll inform Hyacinth about you two so that you won’t be kicked out of the estate. Just practice here. You can go to my study after your training.” Aethelwolf said before leaving the two men.

He then went back to his room and saw that Olivia was still sleeping. Seeing this, Aethelwolf smiled and kissed her forehead.

He hasn’t rested yet, but there were still a lot of things to do so he headed to the Alchemy room to start refining the pills for their new batch of soldiers. He needed to refine thousands of pills so it might take him a week or two to complete everything. He could pass this responsibility to Johann or Jade Kristine, but those two might not be able to efficiently refine the enhancement pills so he could only make them himself.

Meanwhile, Aenwyn led a small unit of Aethelwolf’s most trusted subordinates. They were setting up a Confinement Rune in the rough pathway beside the Great Noxus River. She was a Level 3 Engraver and the people she brought with her were soldiers skilled in laying down traps. They were here since last night, but they weren’t even halfway close to setting up the traps.

Aenwyn might be a skilled Engraver, but she didn’t have Aethelwolf’s cheats and his array of skills so it was taking her a long time to create a perfect trap for Brian.

At this moment, Aenwyn was drawing the magic symbols of the Confinement Rune.

Beads of sweat covered her face as she stared at the symbols she had drawn on the ground. She had to make sure that there were no mistakes in her drawings or all her efforts would go down the drain. Drawing the magic symbols is an important part of making runes so a slight mistake would make the rune ineffective.

The soldiers were already done setting up the traps and they were now observing Aenwyn with sparkling eyes. It was only yesterday that they knew about her identity as an Engraver.

In the Leone Empire, Engravers were respected individuals and only a few of them could be found in the entire empire. Because of this, the Leone Imperial Family places great importance on the few Engravers who were working for them. They could only do this to prevent the Engravers from working for another empire.

After a few more hours, Aenwyn took out a bottle of water from her storage ring and drank several mouthfuls.

The engraving process almost drained all her world essence so she felt very tired.

“Are you alright, Miss Aenwyn?”

“Miss Aenwyn, I have a Recovery Pellet here.”

Aenwyn waved her hand as she responded in a calm tone. “I’m fine. You guys should take a rest. We’ll return to the mansion later and give a report to Sir Aethelwolf.”

Looking at her expressionless face, the soldiers nodded their heads. “Yes, Miss Aenwyn!”

Aenwyn took out a Recovery Pellet from her storage ring. This was something given to her by Aethelwolf. In fact, Aethelwolf gave her a lot of it and they are the original version so their effectiveness is a lot stronger.

After eating the pill, Aenwyn was a bit surprised by the speed at which her world essence was recovering. Even the precious panaceas in her Aracan Kingdom were not as good as the Recovery Pellet. She then recalled the scene when Aethelwolf took out a giant jade box that was filled with such valuable pills.

Aenwyn rested for a moment and when she recovered about two-fifths of her world essence, she got up and said. “Let’s go back to the mansion. Remember to remove all our traces here.”

“Yes, Miss Aenwyn!” The soldiers responded in unison.

They spent another ten minutes removing all their traces before they headed back to the mansion.

“Sir Aethelwolf, we’ve already set up the traps in the Great Noxus River.” Aenwyn reported.

Hearing this, Aethelwolf nodded his head. “It seems like I’ve underestimated your attainments as an Engraver. I want to check the runes you inscribed, but as you can see, I am in the middle of refining pills so that would have to wait.” He said as he turned his head back to his cauldron. He was refining pills when Aenwyn arrived and the elven woman was incredibly surprised by how he could still casually chat in his situation. In their Aracan Kingdom, the Alchemists wouldn’t allow anyone to disturb them while they are in the middle of refinement, but this guy didn’t seem to care about such things.

“I’ll send some men to monitor the area around the Great Noxus River and also near the vicinity of the Linaza Household’s estate. I’ll notify you if we see movement from Brian’s side.” Aenwyn said.

“Alright. I’ll let you handle this thing. By the way, I’ve already made the Slave Rune. You can take it.” Aethelwolf grabbed the Slave Rune from his storage space and handed it to Aenwyn.

The elven princess stared at the rune in amazement. This was a Level 4 rune and Aethelwolf actually managed to make it in just one night!

Looking at the shocked expression on her face, Aethelwolf chuckled as he said. “You know how to activate that, right? You just have to send a stream of world essence into the rune and place this on your target’s neck. Make sure that your target is in a weakened state to increase the success rate of enslavement.”

“I’ll remember your words.” Aenwyn nodded her head and looked at him in awe. She only admired a few people in her life and now, Aethelwolf was one of them. Disregarding his mysterious power, just his attainment as an Engraver alone was enough to rank at the top in any empire.

“You may leave. I’ll wait for your good news.” Aethelwold waved his hand and focused his attention back on his cauldron. The pills he was refining this time require a high degree of control so a slight mistake would damage the resulting pills. Initially, he planned to accompany Aenwyn in capturing Brian, but he could only let her do it on her own since there are still a mountain of pills to refine. ‘With the Slave Rune in her possession, it shouldn’t be a problem for her to take down Brian...’ He thought to himself.

Aenwyn looked at him deeply before she left the Alchemy room. She then headed straight downstairs to look for some people. When she arrived at the training area of the soldiers, she saw Olivia playing with two unfamiliar guys. “Who are those men?” She frowned as she looked at them.

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As if noticing her arrival, Olivia waved her hand at Aenwyn as she excitedly ran towards her. "Aenwyn! Look! Those two are Kerrin and Alba!" The little girl eagerly said while pointing at the black-haired man and the white-haired man.

"Kerrin, Alba?" Aenwyn knitted her eyebrows as she inspected both men. She found their names so familiar and after a moment of thinking, she finally recalled that those are the names of the two Equuses who always played with Olivia. "Wait... You mean those two are..."

"Greetings, Miss Aenwyn." Kerrin and Alba greeted her.

Suddenly, Olivia frowned and placed her hands on her hips as she scolded them. "Didn't I tell you guys that if you are greeting someone of higher status than you, one should at least lightly bow their head to show them respect? Do it again!"

After hearing her words, Kerrin and Alba seriously nodded their heads. They then looked at Aenwyn and bowed their heads. "Greetings, Miss Aenwyn!"

Aenwyn calmly nodded her head as she stared at the necklaces tied to their necks. She could sense that those items had runes inscribed on them and they were not just any ordinary runes. She then came to the conclusion that Aethelwolf was capable of making Transformation Runes! Furthermore, magical beasts shouldn't be capable of speaking the language of humans, but these two could speak with her fluently. That means there was a Translation Rune inscribed on their necklace.

At this moment, she finally caught a glimpse of the difference between her and Aethelwolf. She felt like she was looking at an unscalable mountain!

It was very difficult to make Translation Runes since the Engraver has to be proficient in both languages added to the magical formula of the rune. To make it more shocking, no human could speak the Language of Beasts so Aethelwolf was the only one capable of making this specific type of Translation Rune!

"Aenwyn, why are you here?" Olivia blinked her eyes as she looked at the elven princess. It was so rare to see Aenwyn all by herself since she was always at Aethelwolf's side.

Aenwyn stared at Olivia as she muttered. "I'm looking for some people. You are more familiar with the soldiers here, who among them could be trusted?"

Olivia gave her a weird look as she replied. "Everyone here can be trusted. They are loyal to papa so you can rest assured. If you want some skilled people, then you have to ask Grandpa Einar. He knows more about the soldiers than me." She then pointed at an old man who was looking in their direction with a stern look.

“Alright.” Aenwyn nodded her head and walked towards the old man. Olivia immediately followed her, while Kerrin and Alba trailed behind the little girl with straight faces.

“Sir Einar, I heard that you are familiar with the soldiers in the Household. Can you tell me who among them is good in scouting and reconnaissance?” Aenwyn asked.

Einar was a bit surprised that Aenwyn came to ask him this, but he still answered her query. “If you are looking for such people, those men right there fit your criteria. I give you my word.” He was confident about those men since they are among the soldiers under him during the recent war against the Dustin Empire and the Ford Empire.

239 Failure

While Aenwyn was preparing to lead a group of soldiers to closely monitor Brian’s movements, Aethelwolf was busy refining some pills. Most of the pills he was refining this time were enhancing pills that could increase the level of the consumer. He needed a large amount of this pill since he was planning to make enough pills for fifty thousand people!

This time, Aethelwolf wanted nothing more than to strengthen his own force. The threat that the Zion Empire posed was huge and this made him feel a sense of anxiety in his heart. The only respite was that he still have some time to nurture his force before the army of the Zion Empire arrives.

“I should make some life-preserving skills while I’m at it...” He muttered to himself as he took a moment of rest. He had just refined a batch of pills and it had consumed a bit of his world essence.

Aethelwolf contemplated deeply into which skill he would make. “I should try making a revival skill...” He muttered as he willed his thoughts, but when he tried to form the idea of the revival skill into his mind, he suddenly felt a sharp prickling pain that almost made him fall from his seat.

“W-What was that?! It actually failed...” He muttered in disbelief.

Aethelwolf grabbed a Recovery Pellet and threw it into his mouth. The stinging sensation in his head slowly subsided after a short moment of ingesting the pill.

“I’ll try one more time...” He said as he slowly gathered his thoughts. This time, he was seriously visualizing the skill in his mind.

However, when he was about to reach the final step of visualizing the skill, he felt a sharp pain.

“Argh!” He clutched his head with both hands. It was so painful that it felt like his head was being stabbed by thousands of needles.

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He ingested another Recovery Pellet and it took a much longer time before the pain subsided.

Aethelwolf realized that there was a limit to the skills he could make. He thought that he could create overpowered skills now that he was a Level 4 Esper, but from the looks of it, skills that go against the balance of this world couldn't be created. This made his face turn sour.

After a long time of resting, Aethelwolf propped himself up. He was hasty and he paid a painful price for it. "I'll focus on the pills first." He said with a wry smile.

Aenwyn chose to strongest soldiers among the people suggested by Einar. After filtering them, there were about fifty men who were chosen by her.

"I want half of you to observe the movements in the Linaza Household." Aenwyn said while looking at the soldiers with a calm gaze.

The soldiers glanced at each other before they divided into two groups.

Seeing this, Aenwyn nodded her head in satisfaction. She then pointed at one group and said. "You guys will be heading to the territory of the Linaza Household, but make sure that no one would sense your presence. Don't underestimate this force just because they are a merchant family. We only recently discovered that the Linaza Household's strength is not any weaker than the top noble households especially their family head, Brian Linaza. That man is only hiding his power and Sir Aethelwolf told me that he is a peak stage Level 4 Esper! You guys have to be careful once you enter his domain."

The soldiers were shocked when they heard this. They only knew that Brian Linaza was a rich merchant with businesses scattered in the Leone Empire. They never knew that he was actually a terrifying expert! This information was hard to believe, but since Aenwyn said that she learned it from Sir Aethelwolf, their doubts disappeared right away. For them, Aethelwolf was a mighty figure and they treat his words like gold.

"If you notice any strange movements from their side or if you see Brian Linaza exiting his domain, inform me immediately. Use this rune to communicate with me." Aenwyn said as she handed a Communication Rune to the group.

"Go!"

Half of the soldiers immediately left after hearing her command.

Soon, there were only twenty-five soldiers left.

Aenwyn stared at the remaining soldiers calmly and said. "The rest of you will follow me to the Great Noxus River. We might be staying there for a few days so you guys better prepare yourself."

"Yes, Miss Aenwyn!" The soldiers said in unison.

"Let's go!"

One day later, in the estate of the Linaza Household.

Brian was facing a hundred soldiers with a stern look on his face. This was the elite force he nurtured and all of them were Level 2 Espers. There were also five Level 3 Espers among them. He still had more soldiers at his disposal, but bringing more would only make things conspicuous. He didn't want anyone else to know his actions so he could only bring a small unit with him.

"All of you are the elites of the Linaza Household. This time, we will be heading to the Great Noxus River to find the traces of an elven kingdom. The elves possess something that I desire and our goal is to take it from them. This mission will be dangerous since the elves are very strong beings. However, once we've completed the mission, I will grant all of you the most luxurious treatment!" Brian Linaza said as he scanned the soldiers in front of him. When they heard his words, their expressions suddenly brightened.

Brian Linaza was a very generous leader so when he said that he would give them the most luxurious treatment, they became excited.

"Boss, what are we taking from the elves?" One of the soldiers asked. His question attracted everyone's attention and they all stared at Brian in anticipation. No one wanted to miss this opportunity.

The corner of Brian's lips curved upwards as he replied. "I'll tell you once we arrive in the Great Noxus River. You guys get ready. We will leave at night!"

"Yes, Boss!"

240 Capture

The sky was already and Aenwyn was hiding in the spot where she had inscribed a Confinement Rune. The elite soldiers of the Lassiter Household were scattered in the Great Noxus River, waiting for their prey to arrive.

Earlier, Aenwyn received a report from the group she sent to the Linaza Household's territory. According to them, they saw a hundred battle steeds just right outside the Linaza Household's estate. There were also a lot of supplies and weapons tied to each of the steeds. She knew right away that Brian Linaza had finally taken the bait.

After she got the report, Aenwyn commanded the scouts to regroup with them in the Great Noxus River to prepare an ambush.

At this moment, she had fifty soldiers lying in wait, while Brian was coming with one hundred soldiers. Although the soldiers under her command were only less than half of Brian's, she was confident that she could trap them in her Confinement Rune.

Suddenly, Aenwyn's Communication Rune lit up and she hurriedly activated it.

"Miss Aenwyn, there is movement up ahead." One of her soldiers reported.

"Verify their identity. If it's Brian and his men, retreat immediately and head to the ambush point." Aenwyn quickly responded.

"Roger!" The call was disconnected after that.

Not long later, her Communication Rune lit up once again.

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"Miss Aenwyn, it's them. I'm now moving to the ambush point. I've already informed the others to gather. We will be there in five minutes. From the speed enemies' mounts, they will arrive in approximately seven minutes."

"Alright. You guys move silently and make sure that they won't notice your presence." Aenwyn replied.

"Yes, Miss Aenwyn!"

Aenwyn issued a whistling sound similar to the sound of birds. It was a signal to all the hiding soldiers that the enemies has arrived.

Everyone grabbed their weapons as they stared intently into the distance.

Soon, their comrades arrived and they quickly blended into the darkness.

Aenwyn's eyes suddenly narrowed as she stared in a certain direction. She could faintly feel the ground trembling. 'They're here...' She thought to herself.

Meanwhile, Brian who was leading his soldiers didn't notice anything amiss. He coldly stared ahead as he urged his mount to move faster.

Hm?

Brian furrowed his eyebrows as he swept his gaze in the surroundings. He raised his fist as he pulled the reins of his mount. He sensed a fluctuation of aura in the area and it wasn't weak at all! "Come out! I know that you are hiding somewhere!" He shouted in a cold voice.

'That was the aura of a Level 4 Esper!' He muttered in his heart as he scanned the place with a wary look.

Aenwyn who was hiding behind the bushes smirked when she heard his words, but she was also surprised by Brian's keen senses. A small amount of her aura leaked out when she released a stream of world essence into the Confinement Rune. She never would have thought that Brian would actually notice it.

She wasn't foolish enough to reveal herself just like that. She was only waiting for the Confinement Rune to activate.

A few seconds later, the Confinement Rune she inscribed on the ground abruptly lit up.

"Attack!" Aenwyn roared as she swiftly dashed towards Brian.

"Kill!" The soldiers hidden in the area immediately revealed themselves and pounced at the stunned enemies.

When the Confinement Rune was activated, thousands of illusionary vines suddenly appeared and trapped Brian and his men, making them unable to move.

"Shit! It's a trap! Dammit!" Brian cursed under his breath when he saw Aenwyn swiftly moving in his direction.

His men were also panicking when they heard the loud shouts. They became even more anxious when they realized that they couldn't move a muscle.

Brian's veins protruded as he tried to break the vines that bound him. The vines snapped under his intense power, but Aenwyn was already in front of him and he couldn't block her sword.

Puchi!

Aenwyn's sword penetrated his chest!

Brian's eyes turned bloodshot as he grabbed the sword's blade. "You're no longer affected by the Slave Rune! How did Aethelwolf remove the Slave Rune without activating the alarm I set up?" He muttered grimly as he glared at the elven princess.

Aenwyn tightly grabbed her sword as she coldly glanced at Brian. "Sir Aethelwolf is a Level 4 Engraver and he removed the Slave Rune right after the auction you organized. It didn't even take him a day to remove it. He knew that you were planning something right from the start and we have been preparing for this moment!"

Brian spat out a mouthful of blood when he heard this. "H-He is actually a Level 4 Engraver?! How could this be?!" He stared at Aenwyn in disbelief. His world essence suddenly ran amok because of a major change in his mood.

Aenwyn no longer said anything. She took out the Slave Rune that was handed to her by Aethelwolf and threw it toward Brian.

The man was already in a state of disarray and he no longer had the chance to dodge the Slave Rune. It was only when he felt coldness in his neck that he realized that something was wrong.

"T-This is..." He grabbed the Slave Rune and tried to remove it, but Aenwyn abruptly pulled out the sword off his chest, making him stagger and lose his footing.

Thud!

He fell to the ground with an indignant look on his face. He was a peak stage Level 4 Esper, but he actually fell into someone's trap without even having the chance to fight back!

"That is a Slave Rune personally crafted by Sir Aethelwolf! I would have killed you, but you are still useful to us so I could only spare your dog life!" Aenwyn's cold words made him feel despair.

The Slave Rune attached to his neck slowly activated and his eyes turned dim as he fainted on the spot.

Aenwyn retracted her gaze from him and watched the slaughter happening in front of her.

The elites brought by Brian were effortlessly killed by her soldiers. They couldn't even defend themselves and all they could do was wait for their deaths.

"Don't kill their mounts! We will take them back with us to the mansion!" Aenwyn commanded.

Soon, the one hundred elites who came with Brian were all killed.

"Burn their bodies and remove our traces."

After getting Aenwyn's command, her soldiers quickly moved into action. They retrieved the corpses of their enemies and piled them in one place before burning them collectively.

Looking at the burning pile of corpses, Aenwyn's eyes remained calm.

The bodies were engulfed by the roaring blaze and everything slowly turned into ashes.

"Let's go back!" Aenwyn muttered as she grabbed the fainted Brian. She then tied Brian to a mount before jumping on its back.

The soldiers tied the mounts and brought them back home with them.

Aethelwolf was in the middle of refining pills when he felt his Communication Rune vibrating. He took it out of his trouser's pocket and turned it on. "What's up?" He asked.

"We've captured Brian and we are now moving back to the mansion. We also captured a hundred battle steeds." Aenwyn's cold voice entered his ears.

"That's fast! Cover Brian's body and don't let anyone see his face. By the way, what about the men he brought with him?" Aethelwolf asked tentatively. From the tone of her voice, he had a feeling that those men must have met a gruesome end, but he still wanted her to confirm it.

"They are all dead. They are death soldiers trained by Brian. It would be difficult to make them submit to us and using a Slave Rune on them isn't worth it." Aenwyn replied.

"Is that so?" Aethelwolf senses the cruelty in her voice. Perhaps those men were the same people who captured her back then so she took revenge by ordering her soldiers to kill them. "Bring Brian back to the mansion and make sure that he doesn't die. We need him alive if we want to acquire all his assets."

"Alright." Aenwyn replied.

Aethelwolf disconnected the call and kept his Communication Rune inside his pocket. "I was worried for nothing. Aenwyn is a skilled elven warrior." He could only admit that the elven princess wasn't just an ordinary elf. He was even prepared to hunt Brian by himself, but Aenwyn accomplished the task on her own.

Aethelwolf thought about the assets owned by the Linaza Household and he couldn't help but grin. Now that they had control of Brian, the entire assets under his name were already as good as their own.

Brian Linaza was in control of a huge network and it would be a great help to strengthen the intelligence force of the Lassiter Household.

Inside the Alchemy room, Aethelwolf laughed joyfully as he continued refining pills. He even took out a bottle of wine and a piece of rare tobacco to celebrate Aenwyn's success.