

Lord of the Oasis

Chapter 13: Sarrandan Wisdom

The Desert Bandits served as Kant's backing.

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He was very confident about being able to finish that Side Quest assigned by the system.

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It was mostly because the Desert Bandits were from the desert nation of Sarrand Sultanate, so they were more than familiar with the brutal environment of a desert. Their skills were honed in the vast sea of sand, so they could all be considered desert survival experts.

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The six Desert Bandits had the potential to help get into the deeper reaches of the Nahrin Desert.

As for that alkali soil, which was rich in natural salt, Kant had long made up his mind about it.

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He would take it by all means.

1

Kant hailed from the Dukedom of Leo and was the youngest son of Duke Cameron, who was the top leader of the entire nation. Although Kant was not a favorite due to his mother dying young, all the mandatory aristocratic education he received from his youth enabled him to be quite knowledgeable.

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He was also a Transported. Having lived two lives, there was no doubt that his learning ability was extremely formidable. He had indeed learned a great deal.

4

It was just like how things were at the moment.

Kant was able to tell how much of a commotion he would cause back in the dukedom, which was a nation filled with flatlands and hills, just from the fact that he had acquired intelligence regarding table salt resources.

That was because the Dukedom of Leo was not a salt-producing nation.

Furthermore, none of all the other dukedoms, which were human territories, neighboring the Dukedom of Leo, were salt-producing nations either.

If they wanted to have saltiness in their food, they could only satisfy such needs by importing salt.

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According to the books Kant read in the tower of mages back in the castle, merchants needed to venture into faraway mountains, which were territories that belonged to non-human races. Those were territories belonging to dwarfs, who were versed in the art of tunneling and smithing. Table salt was bought from those stout, earthy dwarfs, who were usually around 4-feet-5-inches tall, before ferrying them back thousands of miles to be sold in the human nations.

The dwarfs owned a salt mine 984 feet underground. Mining operations were conducted all day long, satisfying the salt needs of many nations. They were the greatest exporter of salt in the entire continent.

As such, the price of salt in human nations had always been high. Also, salt was not the usual type of seasoning available to commoners.

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One pound of high-grade fine salt was of equal value to a strong, healthy horse.

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That was the testament to just how pricey such a seasoning could be.

During the years that saw trade routes hindered by war or spice shortages, spices of even higher value, such as top-grade black pepper, were almost worth their weight in gold. They were also luxuries that greater nobles held in high regard and greatly valued.

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Kant had ample experiences regarding such facts.

He had been in that world for 16 years and attended all manners of feasts and banquets, regardless of size.

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However, he had never been able to feast on foods that were heavily seasoned with many different spices, not even once.

While this world had swords and magic, as well as numerous mystical items and fantastical races, it was still one that fundamentally resembled Earth during the European middle ages. It vastly lacked material supplies, and things were simple and backward. It was a feudal age that many found to be exasperating.

Huff.

Kant took a deep breath.

He quelled all that excitement deep down, returning to his usual calm self.

He still had to deal with reality.

Without ample strength, there was no way he could initiate contact with the Dukedom of Leo personally.

That place was filled with hyenas.

It was where eternally insatiable monsters thrived.

The concept of vast wealth eventually getting one into major trouble was something that had been abhorrently apparent back in his past life on Earth. If the image of the Nahrin Desert being a destitute, barren place was broken, and the fact that there was a salt mine that represented massive profit presented before the eyes of the nobles of the Dukedom of Leo, there might just be some bandits from somewhere out to make that baron of the Oasis Lookout disappear from the world forever.

Kant never held the safety and security of that world in high regard.

It was a world in which might made right. If a child were to carry gold pieces while getting near thugs, one could easily imagine what awaited that child.

I still need to become powerful myself.

Kant shook his head somewhat, but he still wore a joyful smile.

He was able to feel that joy because he was confident.

He was born with the essence of the Kingdom of Swadia, which was inherent within the system.

It was a cheat that belonged only to Kant.

“Go back and get busy.”

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Kant gave orders to the Swadian Peasant who was waiting by his side.

“Yes, My Lord.” The peasant nodded respectfully.

As the peasant was about to leave, he seemed to have recalled something. While still cradling that tattered urn, he asked, “My Lord, what should I do about the coarse salt in the urn?”

That salt was raw and coarse and had yet to be filtered. Not only was there sand mixed in it, but there were also a number of potentially harmful substances.

The coarse salt had been scraped directly from the alkali soil. The Jackalans had no problem eating it like that. For human digestive systems, which were more delicate, eating things like that was a challenge. After eating this kind of coarse salt, a human would have quickly displayed signs of food poisoning, such as vomiting and diarrhea. In the worst-case scenario, it had the potential to be life-threatening.

“Well...” Kant was rather baffled. He turned his eyes toward the six Desert Bandits.

“My Lord, we know how to cook the salt to run coarse salt into table salt.”

The six Desert Bandits were living up to their expectations. They nodded affirmatively and said, “Doing so is actually quite simple.”

“Very well.” Kant nodded with satisfaction.

The desert where the Sarrand Sultanate was located also had alkali soils. Sarrandans, who lived in the desert, knew how to make the inedible raw coarse salt into edible seasoning through some ancient methods passed down through the generations.

A furnace, two large pots, and a huge amount of charcoal were all that was required to refine salt.

All of that was easily found inside the Council Hall.

Kant looked at the Desert Bandits with curious eyes. He paid close attention to how they turned harmful raw coarse salt into edible table salt.

“So, do you people filter the salt using charcoal?”

Kant had a general concept of how the process worked. All the mandatory education he received in his past life did not go to waste.

The furnace was lit.

The water in the huge pot quickly came to a boil. The Desert Bandits poured all the coarse salt from the old, tattered urn into the pot.

As the steam rose, the white coarse salt began to dissolve in the boiling water.

However, that huge pot of clear spring water seemed to have grey impurities seen in it. There were so many that bits of granules could almost be seen in all that boiling water with the naked eye.

It was all dirt.

“Keep the fire low. We shall lower the heat afterward,” a Desert Bandit said.

Another Desert Bandit, who was waiting at the side, immediately turned the fire in the furnace to low.

2

The boiling saltwater gradually settled. A layer of fine sand could be seen at the bottom of the pot.

While the salt was water-soluble, any other solids fell to the bottom.

“This is interesting.” Kant nodded. This was a piece of useful knowledge that could be applicable to daily life.

After a while, the saltwater became clear while the sediment at the bottom was packed together. One would have found it hard to imagine just how dirty the seemingly clean, white coarse salt had actually just been.

“Get ready.”

The Desert Bandit in charge of the operation had spoken.

Another Desert Bandit quickly fetched a second big pot, which was packed with charcoal on the inside.

It served as the key to filtering out the impurities.

That Desert Bandit took a large wooden spatula and began to dump saltwater into the pot filled with charcoal. His moves were fast and adept. There was only a thin layer of saltwater and a layer of dirt left at the bottom of the pot.

“We’re basically done.”

The Desert Bandit told the others, “Dump the garbage away and scrub the pot clean.”

He hastily wiped the sweat off of his face and turned around to face Kant with a smile. He said, “My Lord, we shall let it sit for an hour before repeating the process with a new pot and fresh charcoal four times. After we’re done with the filtering, we will boil the water until it dries up. We will then be able to sift good, edible fine salt from the finished product.”

“Very well.” Kant nodded.

He looked at the steaming iron pot with salt water being mixed within the charcoal. These natural filters easily filtered out most of the impurities. The only steps left were to repeat the process several times, leaving only pure saltwater behind.

After that, they would have to continue to heat the iron pot with fire and sift the salt from the end product. Eventually, the process resulted in edible table salt.

“My Lord.”

The Desert Bandit said with full surety, “This will become high-grade white salt.”

“Splendid. Splendid indeed.”

Kant nodded as he wore a brimming smile on his face. This was definitely something to be happy about.

He fully understood what white salt really meant.

He knew the value of such things better than most.

The eventual fine, snow-white salt was capable of fetching very high prices back in the Dukedom of Leo, especially since such an item was only available to great nobles and very wealthy merchants. It was possible that every pound could be sold for at least 50 Great Silvers.

It was a luxury that only nobles had access to.

This salt was definitely different from the coarser salt, which was obtained through wells, usually eaten by wealthier commoners and lesser lords.

This fine, high-grade salt was not only expensive, but it also came with a symbol of status.

“I really can’t wait.”

Kant was already smiling from ear to ear.

Within just half a day, inedible coarse salt from alkali soil was turned into fine white salt that could fetch exorbitant prices.

As long as Kant was able to seize that natural salt mine in the form of alkali soil, he could easily earn massive profits from the monopoly.

As such, he was very eager to see the finished product.

While he was currently incapable of organizing trade caravans in broad daylight and selling the salt in huge batches in the dukedom, he could still sell small amounts of the fine, white salt on the black market. He believed that many would likely kill to get their hands on the salt.

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This salt was much more than just a seasoning.

It was an essential material for the mages in the towers to cast spells, as well as a symbol of status flaunted by the nobles.

One way or another, Kant would have no problem selling the precious salt.