

Lord of the Oasis

Chapter 14: Scrumptious Dinner

Time quickly passed.

The sun could be seen in the western dunes, scattering evening light throughout the oasis.

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The night was about to arrive.

The dazzling stars began to subtly appear in the sky. A crescent moon soon brightly shone white light on the desert.

This was the Oasis Lookout of the Nahrin Desert.

It was where Drondheim was located.

The peasants, who hailed from the Kingdom of Swadia, stayed busy.

With tools in hand, they carefully plowed the land on the northern side of the oasis. They cleared out useless weed and made the place look like a field. Waterways were dug, forming effective irrigation channels for the would-be farm.

The lands that were being worked on would become Drondheim's agricultural area.

While the place was still barren and no crops were currently being planted, it was still a good idea to work the dirt beforehand.

Most importantly, the irrigation channels were dug long enough to reach the Date Palm Trees.

The 20 grown Date Palm Trees served as the only crop-producing plants Drondheim had at the moment. While they were trees and only able to

produce dates, said crops were able to fill the bellies of the people, which slightly eased their food shortage predicament.

At the same time, those Date Palm Trees served as a solid line of defense against the desert's encroachment.

As long as the roots of the trees remained strong and sturdy, capable of reaching huge areas, the sand underneath would remain in place.

By doing so, the oasis was able to maintain its shape, avoiding getting increasingly smaller from the encroachment of the desert. Furthermore, as the fallen leaves piled up, a new layer of soil would begin to form. When coupled with ample water, it set into motion the gradual expansion of the oasis.

Then again, the beneficial cycles that led to the growth of the oasis would take hundreds of years to occur naturally.

“Get dinner ready. We might just be making larger portions tonight.”

Kant looked at the exhausted peasants. He wore a smile on his lips as he said, “Put more dried meat into the meals. We all need better nourishment after a day of hard work.”

The three peasants who served as cooks nodded and began to get the kitchen utensils ready.

Those three were given their orders by Kant beforehand, so they did not participate in the digging of channels or cleanup of the oasis. They needed to prepare dinner at noon since Lord Kant asked for the dinner to be prepared in bigger, loftier portions.

Although they were not all that proficient in cooking, as long as there was meat, the dinner would become an excellent feast regardless.

Furthermore, more than 40 baskets full of dates had been collected in the morning.

Even if everyone were to only eat bread and dates, drinking only spring water from the oasis, that would have lasted them for 15 days. With the addition of the 20 new bags of flour in the storage room, the total amount of food was expected to last for 30 days.

While they still lacked a sustainable food source, they no longer had to immediately worry about food.

The kitchen furnaces in the Council Hall were ignited.

In mere moments, the fragrance of food wafted throughout the oasis along with the wind.

The peasants, who only had some bread and dates at noon, were famished. All of them gulped as they smelled the enticing fragrance. Their eyes were fixed on the kitchen.

The wait before the meal was excruciating for those famished peasants.

However, the Swadian Recruits on guard duty were having an even harder time as they held their spears.

They had not had much to eat at lunchtime.

However, for the sake of the village's safety, they needed to make sacrifices.

The 20 units were divided into two platoons. They stood guard at the eastern and western dunes, respectively. As dusk came, the dazzling stars and bright moonlight enabled them to barely see what was out there over 300 feet away.

They had been on-guard and watching for the Jackalans.

The 10 Swadian Militia in Drondheim were just as careful and alert.

At least for the moment, it was fortunate that things were still safe,

However, their luck was not an excuse to let their guards down. No one knew when those ferocious, brutal Jackalans would retaliate for the earlier slaughter.

“Dinner is ready.”

Three peasants brought pots out of the kitchen.

There were bread slices toasted to golden perfection, as well as thick, hearty vegetable soup made using dried meat, cabbage, and flour.

There was also the freshly plucked dates.

“We thank our Lord for giving us food.” Whispers of gratitude were heard from the mouths of the peasants at dinner.

Kant nodded and raised his hand, saying, “You’ve earned it.”

It was a simple ritual. Kant was their lord and owner of the system, which made him someone equivalent to a king of the Swadians given where they were. As such, it was only a matter of fact that they respected such a figure from the bottom of their hearts.

Kant’s dinner was prepared as well.

His portion had black pepper and sugar, as well as fine, white salt, cooked and filtered by the Desert Bandits, added.

“Not bad at all.”

Kant nodded in satisfaction.

The dried meat had been roasted and given a dash of crushed black pepper, making it exude a mesmerizing fragrance.

When the dried meat was eaten with the clean, white, fine salt on the wooden plate, Kant felt as if he was back at a feast thrown by Cameron, the Duke of the Dukedom of Leo, enjoying tasty roast meat available only to nobles.

He gulped them down and narrowed his gaze. He quipped with a smile, "This is really good."

The dinner had been a very good one.

Kant was not the only one who enjoyed the meal. The peasants, who had been working hard throughout the day, shared the same thoughts.

Even the soldiers who took turns eating dinner expressed heartfelt gratitude for the food that night.

In a barren desert like that, there was no guarantee that every meal could be so hearty. That was even more so given the fact that they were able to enjoy sweet dates and clean water after the meal. Everything truly felt heavenly.

The peasants even thought that they would really be blessed if they were able to sleep on beds instead of holes in the sand.

It was truly a pity.

Drondheim currently only had two buildings—the Council Hall and Desert Bandit Lair.

Before they could acquire better residences, new Side Quests needed to be completed. Also, the location of the salt needed to be discovered before the system provided a reward of five standard Kingdom of Swadia-styled stone and wood houses,

At present, most of them had to sleep in tents and sand holes.

"Stay sharp in the night."

Kant gave a final order before going to bed.

The soldiers answered affirmatively, "Rest assured, My Lord."

Everyone had experienced a long day, so it was a good idea for them to go to bed early.

As for the soldiers, they took turns resting. After all, they were the ones who had taken up guard duty in the night to keep everyone safe.

Before long, everyone had gone to bed.

When the Swadian Peasants returned to their holes and lied down, loud snoring was quickly heard throughout the oasis, which sounded rather irritating.

The night was no longer young. Midnight soon arrived.

Only the snores of the peasants continued to be heard throughout the Oasis Lookout.

There were five Swadian Militia standing guard and staying alert for everyone else.

“Gosh, the snoring is awful.”

One of the militia members shook his head exasperatingly and sighed. “I can’t even sleep even if I want to now.”

“Just bear with it. This is nothing.” The other militia member held onto his heavy spear. He spoke in an unfazed manner. “You have no idea just how awful your snoring was when I was sleeping by your side.”

“What? For real?” That militia member rolled his eyes exasperatedly and asked, “How come I know nothing of it?”

“You were fast asleep just like a dead pig,” the other militia member jested.

The militia member who complained first was just about to retort when he caught sight of something not far away from the dunes. There seemed to be some dark shadows at the dunes, which alerted him.

“Hey, what’s that over there?”

He did not let his guard down. He instead jabbed at the other militia member with his arm.

“Huh?” That other militia member peered toward that direction as he frowned.

The dunes east of the Oasis Lookout had starlight and moonlight shining over them. The sand seemed like it was being blown in the wind in the dark sky, which looked out of place.

That militia member’s expression became serious as he said, “Something is not right.”

“Yeah, I saw shadows just a moment ago,” the other militia member added with a gulp.

He had a bad feeling and was unable to help but mumble, “Are those damned Jackalans really going to sneak up on us in the night?”

“Go and wake the others.”

The other militia member did not respond to him. Instead, he said in a serious tone, “Be quick about it!”

“Will do.” That militia member behaved just as seriously as he ran toward the roof.

Shadows were lurking on top of the dunes at the end of the two militia members’ line of sight. They did not look human under the moonlight. They resembled beasts walking upright. There was no way the militia would not be able to tell that the scattered Jackalans were sneaking up on them in the dark of night.