

Lord of the Oasis

Chapter 19: Burial Below the Dunes

“System, construct the watchtower.”

Kant willed it in his mind and connected to the system.

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At the same time, the location of the construction was placed on the eastern side of the Council Hall. If anything were to happen, the ones above on sentry duty could report to Kant in time, enabling him to make decisions as early as possible.

[100 Denars spent]

[Watchtower: Under construction]

[Completion: Seven days]

The system’s dialog box appeared and briefed him on everything.

Kant suddenly heard some noise outside.

Many people seemed to be moving a lot of things. Someone was shouting orders. However, none of it sounded like his Swadian infantry units. It seemed more like the sounds of the peasants.

What the hell is happening? Kant frowned.

He approached the window and peered outside. Sunlight was subtly dispelling the dark of night.

Dawn arrived in mere moments.

I better get up now. That night sure passed quickly.

He took a deep breath and got up from his bed.

Besides, he did not feel like sleeping at all.

After fighting such a bloody battle the previous night, Kant still felt rather excited. He had never actually felt like sleeping anyway.

He pushed the door of his room open and went downstairs.

“Good morning, My Lord.”

A thick voice greeted him as soon as he walked out of the council hall.

Kant turned around and saw a stout peasant wearing simple linen clothing. The peasant bowed respectfully and said, “We are a team of builders who came from Praven. We are here to construct your watchtower.”

“Huh? Oh, right.” Kant was slightly baffled. He quickly nodded in reply.

It seemed logical that the system would have assigned a construction team for the new building.

He turned around to look at the side of the council hall. Next to it were stacks of stone and wooden materials.

Kant was certain that the place was empty before he walked out of the council hall.

However, as the builders began to move the stones and hammer the wooden materials together, emitting loud clangs as they went, he knew those construction materials also came from the system.

The system had provided 15 builders.

All of them were stout, middle-aged men. They wore deadpan expression and seemed as if they were men of few words.

The foreman was the exception.

“My Lord, there are a few things I wish to make clear to you.”

He humbled himself in a manner unbecoming of his appearance and said, “We will be at your service for seven days, ensuring the completion of the watchtower. During that time, we request that you ensure we get ample food and water, as well as a reasonable amount of rest.”

Kant nodded. "It is imperative that I do so."

The foreman of the builders awkwardly smiled and added, "And, we don't participate in battles."

"You will have no part in any."

Kant shook his head. He felt that the foreman's cowardly and meticulous temperament was rather ridiculous.

5

"Very well, very well then." The foreman nodded a few times. His expression suggested that he felt rather lucky.

Kant understood all that from briefing he had received.

This was probably a rule laid down by the system. Besides, a builder's only job was to construct buildings.

Combat was something that Kant needed to take care of.

"Carry on," Kant said to the building foreman before heading elsewhere. He arrived at the battlefield from the previous night. The stench of blood lingered throughout the area. Bloodstains were scattered about on the sand.

These were the signs of an intense and bloody battle.

The Swadian infantry units had gathered the bodies, which had been sprawled everywhere.

The Jackalan bodies continued to burn in a hole the peasants had dug during the night.

Several new holes in the ground were dug not far away from a dune. Two Desert Bandits were lighting the clothes beneath the bodies with a torch. The smell of burned meat wafted throughout the place as the intense flames consumed the hole.

Burning was an efficient way to deal with dead bodies.

When the bodies of the Jackalans were reduced to ashes, they would bury the ashes in the sand, leaving practically no trace behind.

As for the 15 dead Swadian Peasants, they deserved better treatment.

After all, they had all been brave subjects who died for Kant's sake.

"May they rest in peace."

Kant came to another dune. He saw 15 graves being dug.

3

The Swadian Recruits and Swadian Militias, as well as the six Desert Bandits, were gathered there.

All of them wore somber expression.

Although they hardly knew each other, and, truth to be told, they only knew each other for two days, all of them still shared a connected sentiment as Swadians. The people attending the funeral behaved respectfully toward their dead compatriots.

Yet, it was still a funeral.

It was hardly ceremonious, but they did everything they were able to given the current circumstances.

"This is truly a pity."

Kant's expression was full of regret.

He was almost always calm. Now, hints of emotions could be seen.

He knew that more troops would be lost in the wars that were to come. Nonetheless, this was the first time some of his people had died. That served as a warning for Kant.

If he neglected the development of his fief, he would die frustrated and a nobody just like that.

2

The attendees still wore serious expressions despite the funeral being soon over.

Kant asked for cremation to prevent contaminating any underground water sources.

However, all the peasants who perished had individual graves. They each had a grave marker carved from wood, which was placed right beneath the dune. The markers were thoughtfully placed as a symbol of watching over the Oasis Lookout to the west, as well as Dronnheim, which they fought bravely to defend.

“If you can hear us, then please watch over us.”

Kant watched the fires in the graves burn and was unable to help but sigh.

Despite having only arrived at the Oasis Lookout two days ago, they had already gone through two brutal battles. He quickly learned just how merciless the Nahrin Desert could be. The desert was a world of difference compared to the peace in the Dukedom of Leo.

1

The number of humans and Jackalans who ended up dead in just two days probably amounted to the total number of executed criminals for the past five years in the dukedom.

Then again, they had to move on.

When the funeral was over, Kant returned to the council hall.

The recruits and militia members scattered and organized patrols and guard duty among themselves, continuing to protect their village and the oasis.

“All of you, come with me.”

Kant waved at the six Desert Bandits, telling them to go to the Council Hall.

He had assignments for them.

“My Lord.”

The six Desert Bandits walked briskly inside and stood respectfully before him.

“At ease.” Kant extended his hand, telling them to lose the ceremonial attitude.

He sat on a wooden chair in the council hall. He put his arms on the table and said, “I plan to have you all search the depths of the Nahrin Desert. I want you to find the possible location of the alkali soil and see if there are any Jackalan Tribes around.”

“There is definitely alkali soil somewhere out there.” One of the Desert Bandits nodded and said, “We will find it.”

However, another bandit frowned and added, “As for the Jackalan Tribes, there are definitely some around us. Maybe the two are connected.”

“Do you mean with the alkali soil?” Kant asked with a frown.

“Indeed.” That Desert Bandit spoke in a serious tone. “More than 500 Jackalan warriors appeared during the ambush in the night. Not only does that mean that there are Jackalan Tribes around, but it also means that their tribes are more powerful than the one that previously took over the Oasis Lookout.”

“I figured as much.”

Kant nodded. He had speculated the same thing deep down.

Kant was silent for a brief moment before frowning and saying, “That is also why I need you all to go deep into the desert and find out the cause in the north.”

The six Desert Bandits stood up solemnly, awaiting further words.

Kant’s eyes were grim as he said, “We are in the light while the Jackalans hide in the shadows. We don’t know where their tribes are, and we have no idea if there are any oasis deep in the desert. Things are not in our favor.”

“We lack intel on our side.”

The six Desert Bandits nodded in agreement.

They were people used to blackmailing and robbing people in the dunes, so they knew just how important intelligence was.

“No, I should head out with all of you.”

Kant suddenly spoke such words.

“Huh?” That line messed up the plans the Desert Bandits had. One of them quickly said, “My Lord, there are a lot of unknown dangers lurking in the desert. It’s far too dangerous for you to head out with us.”

Kant shook his head. His eyes shone with determination. “I’ve made up my mind.”

His warhorse was still in the stable, which was one of the thoroughbred steeds available to knights and squires of the dukedom.

His horse was comparable to the desert horses rode by the Desert Bandits. It was almost comparable to a third-level horse in the system. Furthermore, it was the best among those third-level horses. Even if they were to meet any Jackalans, the horses would leave them in the dust without any problems.

The mobility of cavalry units was several times higher than that of infantries.

Seeing how determined their lord was, the six bandits had no choice but to nod. “We shall do everything we can to protect you.”

“Well, get food and water ready.”

Kant nodded and added, “We ride at once.”

The Desert Bandits nodded and left. They went out to prepare the supplies needed for treading the desert, especially fresh water. More than a dozen water sacks were filled, ensuring that all seven of them had enough to last for two days.

More than 500 Jackalans had assaulted them the previous night.

There were still about 400 of them left when they scattered and fled.

Kant and the Desert Bandits aimed to track the Jackalans footsteps to the tribe from which they came.

1

To know one’s strength, as well as that of the enemy, was required for victory.

By then, whether it involved arranging for further defense or striking out proactively, they would know who they were about to hit.

At the very least, they no longer needed to do so while being kept in the dark about everything. As long as Kant was able to amass his forces to a sufficient strength, he could crush the Jackalan Tribe outright and take the oasis, which had once allowed the Jackalans to survive.

A desert oasis, which was capable of sustaining crops, was good something treasured in a desert.

The Jackalans had hit him, so he deemed it only fair to hit them back.

Everything he planned to do could only be possible if he could secure the location of the Jackalan Tribe.

It created the potential for Kant's forces to rush them at a determined time, such as the dark of night right before dawn. That also happened to be the time when people were at their drowsiest. It was best to hit those Jackalans hard at such an optimal time.

He was out to make sure that his attacks would cripple them for good.