

Lord of the Oasis

Chapter 3: Swadian Recruit

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The afternoon sun was scorching hot. The breeze felt more like a heatwave.

But this place was the Nahrin Desert.

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The scorching heat made the stench of blood all around seem even thicker. It was as if a slaughter was being carried out.

The 50 Jackalans, which had long, pointy tusks growing out of their lower jaws and grey fur all over their bodies, held their beast-like heads high and screeched in despair. They swung their spiked clubs at the 20 incoming knights.

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The Dukedom of Leo knights charged from the top of the dunes just as ferociously with their lances thrust forward.

It was a head-on, no-frills clash between the forces on both sides.

The Jackalan Tribes of the Nahrin Desert had always been sworn enemies of the Dukedom of Leo.

Both sides allowed their hatred and enmity to go to their heads, removing all forms of logic and reasoning.

However, as blood was being spilled everywhere, one Jackalan after another was sent flying by the charging warhorses as they screeched. Their chests caved in as blood burst from their fang-filled mouths.

The screeches of insanity quickly turned into whelps of struggle.

“The great Edmund, the God of War, is watching us!”

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Rowan, the captain of the knights, pierced through a Jackalan and nailed the being onto the soft sands, yet he did not stop there. He drew his longsword and began to shout in fierce encouragement, “For the Dukedom of Leo, charge!”

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“Charge!”

The other knights responded to his call and shouted along with him.

The Dukedom of Leo worshipped Edmund, the God of War, and that was the most common prayer of the Warrior Faith.

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However, that single line drove the knights into a frenzy as they charged into the Jackalans, bringing down their longswords left and right at the bestial beings. The stench of blood permeated the place they trod.

The battle was intense but short.

Dead bodies soon littered the place.

Blood spilled from their wounds. It seeped into the sand, staining the area red.

The Dukedom of Leo knights, which clearly emerged as victors, did not stop slaughtering. They went on to split up and chase down all of the scattered Jackalans trying to escape. They wanted to kill them all and prevent further troubles.

Only four or five Jackalans became panicked enough to run into the middle of the Swadian Peasants, intending to make a breakthrough.

They were quickly struck down by the long scythes wielded by the peasants, preventing them from even getting close to escaping.

While the Swadian Peasants were more versed in farming, they still knew basic fighting concepts.

In the game, the Continent of Caradia had been dominated by war for decades. Bandits and marauders were everywhere, forcing the peasants to learn how to craft makeshift weapons with the tools they depended on to make a living.

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Furthermore, the long scythe-wielders were gathered in a tight formation, making even knights reluctant to barge into them head-on.

The battle was over.

The sound of the System Prompt appeared in Kant's mind at the same time.

[Ding... All enemies are downed after the slaughter.]

[Side Quest: Ambush the Jackalans is completed.]

[Reward Acquired: Date Palm Trees x 20 (Ripe)]

[Comment: This was a furious and exhilarating battle. Although the battle was fought by your allies, it was your victory, nonetheless.]

Kant smirked exasperatedly and ignored the system's comment.

There was nothing he could have done about it.

If it had not been for the 20 Dukedom of Leo knights, massive casualties would have been incurred if he had only been able to rely on his 30 Swadian Peasants. Half of them would have died without even being close to annihilating the Jackalans.

20 Date Palm Trees?

A dialog box automatically appeared on Kant's retina with images of the trees on it.

The 32-foot-tall trees were straight and had lush green leaves. Clusters of dates were on the trees, which looked huge and sweet. Being packed tight against one another made them look appetizing.

There was no way conventional crops could have been planted in a desert.

The Date Palm Trees, on the other hand, were known for their hardy resistance to both cold and heat, which made them the most reliable food source in the desert. The months between October and February were the time when the dates ripened. The dates served as a staple food of desert-dwelling races, earning them the title of Desert Bread.

As the lord of the Nahrin Desert, Kant needed those trees more than anyone else.

While he was still savoring their ultimate victory, a dialog box suddenly appeared.

[Ding... Your forces have upgradable units.]

Kant's eyes lit up.

Upgradable units? He quickly opened the system interface.

The interface displayed 30 images representing the 30 Swadian Peasants with the symbol "+," signifying that they were ready to level-up.

It was not an elaboration of the System Quest. It was a reward acquired from the battle.

[Upgradable Troop Class: Swadian Peasants x 10]

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[Spend 10 Denars each to upgrade to Swadian Recruits]

The system showed two dialog boxes after that.

A hundred Denars was still within budget.

Kant muttered without hesitation, “System, level up right away!”

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This was a vital upgrade that was necessary. Only Swadian Recruits gained after the upgrade would truly be able to serve as combatant units. Despite being the weakest troop class there was, they were still noticeably more capable than the Swadian Peasants.

As Kant confirmed his decision, some mystical being instantly shrouded 10 Swadian Peasants by his side.

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Many changes were seen on the 10 peasants after that.

Some type of data chain, which only Kant was able to see, circled them. Their 5-foot-9-inch statures did not change, yet they looked considerably more buff.

The equipment they carried was the most pronounced among the changes.

Their linen robes became leather armor, which sported better defenses, while their hoods became leather hats.

The long scythes they held became standardized spears. All of them were 7.5 feet long, which made them comparable to lances wielded by the Dukedom of Leo knights.

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Shields made of simple wooden materials appeared on their backs. Hand-axes could now be seen on their waists.

The 10 Swadian Recruits finally cast off their peasant-like appearances and became true soldiers.

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I finally got my fighting force.

Kant sighed a breath of relief.

The 10 Swadian Recruits were only the beginning. Troop classes of higher levels awaited.

At present, he no longer needed to depend entirely on the dukedom knights. They would leave right after escorting them to the Oasis Lookout without the slightest thought of staying behind.

“Your Lordship, they are all taken care of.”

Rowan returned with his knights after Kant was done leveling up his troops.

He was rather surprised to find the 10 Swadian Recruits armed with spears. Rowan glanced at their shields and leather armors and asked, “Where did these people come from?”

“The desert is a dangerous place. It’s just sensible to have more weapons just in case.” Kant did not elaborate.

Rowan nodded, showing that he understood. He did not ask any further questions.

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He was able to tell that the soldiers had been the peasants before. Now, they were equipped with leather armors, spears, and shields. They did not actually look all that different from the peasants wielding long scythes.

The other knights only glanced at them in slight surprise before getting off of their horses to rest.

They didn't seem to think any of it was out of place.

The baron assigned to the Nahrin Desert would never have only brought 30 lowly peasants with him. Providing the peasants some weapons and armor to be able to even somewhat fight seemed a normal thing to do.

The knights secretly despised him.

In the forces of the dukedom, the Swadian Recruits would have been little more than conscripted cannon fodder.

"Let's head back to camp."

Kant hardly paid any attention to the sarcastic looks in the eyes of the knights and simply continued to give orders.

The sun was scorching as they stood on the dunes. All of them felt rather dizzy and short of breath after that intense battle. If they delayed resting any further, they would all soon be battling heatstroke.

Even the warhorses began to have foam in their noses and mouths as they restlessly sighed.

"Pack up and give the horses some water," Rowan said to his subordinate knights.

To the knights, their warhorses were their companions.

Everyone headed to the makeshift camp below the dunes. They urgently needed a good rest after the battle.

The knight at the very rear, who was still holding onto his warhorse at the top of the dunes, pointed to the north and shouted in surprise, "Lord Edmund the God of War, look, isn't that the Oasis Lookout?"

"What?"

Everyone looked up with a surprised expression. All their gazes were on the shouting knight, who seemed to have turned into a statue at the top of the dunes.

Kant gulped. He was one of the first to regain his composure.

He quickly climbed up the dunes and traced where the knight pointed. At the end of the horizon, a patch of green could vaguely be seen among all the yellow.

It was a clear sign.

If there was green in the desert, that said green could only be an oasis.

“We’re here.”

Kant was unable to help but mutter to himself. He clenched his teeth and uttered, “The Oasis Lookout.”

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Everyone climbed to the top of the dunes and gazed at the green far away.

All of them were stunned, yet it was excitement like no other seen in their eyes.

They had toiled for six days on their journey and finally reached their destination. The southern side of the Nahrin Desert was the fief and estate belonging to Baron Kant—the Oasis Lookout.

“Hurray!”

The knights excitedly cheered.

The discovery meant that they would finally be able to go home.

They no longer needed to slow down to wait for the carriages and peasants. They could ride home as quickly as possible.

It would only take them three days to get to the territory of the Dukedom of Leo and the comfortable lives they had once taken for granted.

“Alright, alright.”

Kant's voice pulled all those people back from their excitement.

He rested his light crossbow on his shoulders and looked at the dukedom knights. He said, "We should probably settle down in the tents and have a good lunch at such a moment."

"You're right, Your Lordship." Rowan smiled and nodded.

The other knights agreed and took their horses slowly down the dunes.

The Oasis Lookout was not far away, so everyone was in a good mood.

The only exception was Kant.