

Lord of the Oasis

Chapter 31: Scholar Hank's Expedition

In the Nahrin Desert, the sun remained scorching.

Rowan, the captain of the knights, rode on his warhorse, his tired face looking jaded and exasperated.

...

He had finally returned to the castle of the Dukedom of Leo after an arduous journey. However, he had not been able to rest for even a single day before being assigned to new tasks by his superiors. He was told to serve as an escort and guide to that desert that had nothing but sand.

"O' Great Edmund the God of War, may you bestow protection upon your loyal worshippers."

Rowan looked at the sun above. The surrounding temperature, which was comparable to that of an oven, felt intolerable to him. He was tired of this.

He still had not had enough of the lager in the tavern. He had not been able to greet his beautiful wife. He also had yet to get a decent dinner before he'd been summoned and told to escort a renowned scholar who wanted to survey the Nahrin Desert.

2

What could there be in that sh*thole, anyway?

Rowan lamented deep down as he licked his parched lips. He sensed that familiar taste of wind and dust in his mouth.

He felt as if he was on the verge of a breakdown.

From his perspective, those scholars, who enjoyed lofty amounts of allowance from the administration, should have just remained back in their offices in the academy researching what was known in earnest instead of coming out to eat

wind and dust in the desert, as well as being baked by the sun like they currently were.

1

Rowan turned his head around. He felt exasperated.

He had a lot to grumble about deep down, but he dared not voice anything out loud. The man behind him was not someone he could afford to offend.

The scholar rode in a carriage all on his own. The escort knights were no longer those who served under Rowan. All 50 of them were retainer knights from the castle. They wore double-layered mail armor covered with linen robes and carried lances in their hands.

2

They were obviously of high status.

In truth, if it were not for the need of a guide, Rowan would not have been qualified to be in that entourage.

Then again, Rowan had no intention of joining.

This was just sad.

Rowan turned around and looked at the vast sea of sand before him. He grew increasingly frustrated.

Since they were already in the Nahrin Desert, subjected to the harsh temperatures and torturous troubles, thinking about it further served little use. The only thing he was now able to do was to get those people as quickly to the Oasis Lookout as possible.

He sighed heavily.

The face of the young baron, who looked childish yet was actually cold and unfeeling, appeared in his mind.

1

...

Night fell.

The entourage in the desert settled down and set up camp.

The old scholar pulled the drapes on his carriage open. He walked out of the cushioned interior with his cane in hand. He looked at the darkened, winding dune and calmly said, "This is the second day."

Hobson, who had a stout frame, walked behind him.

That man wore double-layered mail armor and a longsword at his hip. While it was easy to tell that the man was tired, his eyes remained spirited and vigilant.

He was the true leader of the entourage on that trip and a knight titled by the dukedom.

"Revered Scholar Hank, please do not worry."

Hobson's voice was thick and mesmerizing. He continued from where the scholar left off. "According to our guide, we should arrive at the Oasis Lookout tomorrow evening."

"That would be splendid." Scholar Hank nodded. "Thank you for your hard work, Sir Hobson."

Hobson smiled and said, "This was an arrangement made by Duke Cameron. I'm just following my orders."

He turned around and looked at the deeper parts of the desert. His eyes gleamed with a hint of curiosity as he said, "Scholar Hank, I'm curious. Is the legendary lost city really there?"

The scholar was silent.

The scholar turned to look at the deeper parts of the desert and the winding dune before them. He softly said, "That is uncertain."

"Uncertain?" Sir Hobson looked rather disappointed.

1

Both men were silent.

Among the folk legends of the Dukedom of Leo, there was one that said something about a lost city.

More accurately put, the folk legendary had been around before the Dukedom of Leo was founded. It was a city built from gold and gemstone, which made it look like a kingdom of gods. It was a great city that was mysteriously lost in history.

“Right. It seems that the Oasis Lookout has a new lord now.”

The scholar seemed to have recalled something and said, “I heard my colleagues talking about that before we came to the Nahrin Desert.”

Hobson nodded and said, “There is indeed a lord claiming the place.”

“Oh.” The scholar’s brow was slightly raised. His eyes looked on with some bit of disbelief as he asked, “Who has taken the place? I thought the greedy nobles would still have some sense in them.”

Hobson pretended as if he was oblivious to the sarcastic jab and replied, “It was Kant.”

“Kant, eh?”

The scholar was slightly surprised. His face, which was filled with wrinkles, looked rather puzzled as he asked, “That hardworking kid?”

“Are you familiar with him?” Hobson felt rather curious.

“Aye. I know the kid. He is a good fellow.”

Scholar Hank nodded. A slight frown appeared on his face as he said, “He once studied in our academy. I remember him to be a kid from a decent family but definitely not one that was considered wealthy.” He paused and asked, “How did he become the lord of the Oasis Lookout?”

Hobson shrugged and answered, “He was the youngest son of Duke Cameron.”

“Youngest son of Duke Cameron?” The scholar’s expression was one of incredible shock.

“Indeed.” Hobson nodded.

Scholar Hank chuckled bitterly. Feeling rather puzzled, he asked, "If he's the youngest son of the duke, why didn't he say anything back then? I always liked that kid. He really was studious."

The scholars were focused on their academic pursuits in the academy. As such, they were not that keen on such news at times.

Sir Hobson was aware of that much, at least.

Hobson looked at the retainer knights around, who were busy with one task or another, and felt rather overwhelmed. He said, "Kant's mother was a princess of the Silver Platter Kingdom."

6

"The hell." Scholar Hank's expression became stiff.

1

It took him quite a while to recompose himself. He looked at Hobson and asked in a solemn tone, "Is that true?"

Sir Hobson nodded. "It is true."

Both men were silent again.

Scholar Hank sighed and held onto his cane. In a rather sad tone, he said, "It's no surprise why that kid has been exiled to become a lord of this place then." He lamented, "He really was a hardworking, studious kid."

"It is a pity," Hobson lamented as well.

Back in the castle, he had liked that young baron, who knew how to respect others.

Hobson turned around to look at Rowan, who was on his horse. Hobson shook his head for a bit and returned to his previous stern demeanor. He said, "Scholar Hank, please get some rest. We will ride at first light."

"Rest well, you people. I'll be in the carriage."

The scholar nodded and smiled.

However, his expression remained serious when he took his cane. He had recalled bits of information from the books he read. He couldn't help but say, "I believe the legendary lost city is more than just a legend." He remembered being ridiculed by his peers when he'd arrived at the academy. He tapped his cane onto the sand and said, "I shall prove this."

Chapter 32: Cultivating Lands of the Oasis

Early the next morning, the Oasis Lookout remained busy.

The Swadian Peasants, who had once been refugees, were very eager to show their appreciation for the village their livelihood depended on. All of them put everything they had into their work.

...

They had suffered enough in their days of drifting about, so they had no intention of remaining as refugees who lost their land.

They were all hardworking people.

After three days of hard work, the spring water pond was finally cleaned.

All the black mud underneath was dredged out and spread over the northern side to make the agricultural area. They were making use of what would have otherwise been trash.

It was much more than just useless mud.

When it came to agricultural development, it was an indispensable high-grade fertilizer.

The mud, which exuded a rotten stench in the sun, was spread out on the land reserved for agricultural development. Using their hoes, the peasants mixed the mud up with the soil, which helped loosen the ground at the same time.

It was soon time to plant the seeds.

The wheat exchanged for 50 Denars was not something to be eaten.

Instead, it was seeds vital for development.

The early stages of agricultural development of the Oasis Lookout depended on them.

However, judging from the land available for farming, the size of the agriculture area appeared rather pitiful.

Even if all the land in the northern part of the oasis, from the pond to the edge where the Date Palm Trees were planted, was to be cultivated, the area for farming was a measly 328 feet long and 164 feet wide.

6

It would have made the area around 339,768 square feet, which was equal to 7.5 acres.

It was a pitiful size for a farming area.

Even the free folk families who owned land back in the Dukedom of Leo had about five acres each.

1

Even the most common and average of villages had farming lands calculated in hundreds of acres. Villages that were more well to do had 500 acres of land for plantation or more.

Despite being a baron, he only had 7.5 acres of farmable land.

That thought was rather depressing.

However, there were even more depressing matters other than that. Not all 7.5 acres of that land had soil suitable for seeding. The three acres where the oasis was connected with the desert were mostly sand.

It was easy to tell from how the soil in that area was whitish. It was a sign of the soil being dry and having more sand.

While it was still farmable, production would have been appalling.

“Damn barren piece of land.”

Kant lightly lamented about the situation.

Yet, that was all the farmable land he had. If it had not been for the 7.5 acres worth of land, there was no way for Drondheim to produce any food crops.

He was not in a position in which he could give up.

When he saw the peasants mixing the sandy soil with the gleaming black and stinking mud, Kant seemed to have thought of something.

He had an idea.

The Oasis Lookout in the Nahrin Desert lacked soil.

Soil, which was easily seen everywhere else, was actually a vital piece and small piece of an oasis in a desert. Other than a water source, it was the other thing that served as a crucial platform for allowing plants to grow.

However, other places did not lack such resources.

“Right.”

Kant’s eyes lit up.

Without thinking, he turned his eyes toward the horizon in the south.

A winding black snake seemed to be vaguely seen on the horizon. That was the end of the southern side of the Nahrin Desert. It was the majestic barrier that kept the sandstorms and sand of the desert from getting into the Dukedom of Leo. It was the Senwaya Range.

Kant’s thoughts had a lot to do with that mountain range.

In the mountain range, as well as the flatlands on the other side of the mountain range, there were staggering amounts of fertile soil to be found.

If he had carriages carry soil over to the oasis, it would likely provide enough to modify the place.

That idea seemed rather stupid.

Yet, it was still one that would work.

I wonder how much time doing that will take.

Kant lightly sighed. He had considerably calmed down.

Thoughts streamed in his mind. If he were to actually carry out that stupid method of his, he knew that it would take much longer than months. For it to truly work as intended, it required years to achieve.

Still, something is better than nothing.

Seeing the peasants working on the land, Kant was eager to try it out.

That was the only way to change the Oasis Lookout.

Kant was deep in thought.

The peasants were hard at work with their specifically assigned tasks. The original sandy land was dredged up. The black mud was mixed into the barren land, bringing nutrients that had been piling for untold years in the pond.

Even the irrigation channels dug prior had been reworked.

The clear spring water from the pond flowed in the channels and began to irrigate the soil.

The basic structure of the agriculture area was formed.

Some peasants came to him and bowed slightly. A peasant respectfully said to Kant, "My Lord, the fields are now ready. Shall we begin seeding?"

"I'll leave you guys in charge," Kant answered.

He knew little about agriculture, so he deemed it best to not say anything unnecessary.

He left the task to the experts.

That was one of the key elements in Kant's management.

The Swadian Peasants were most proficient in working the land.

A peasant said in an affirmative tone, "I think if we plant the seeds now, we will be reaping wheat by autumn." He quickly added, "But, of course, we would

need to keep the channels well-maintained. The dry sand does a poor job of storing water. It is crucial to keep the fields irrigated in time to make sure all the wheat seedlings get enough to drink.”

Kant nodded. “Well done.”

At that moment, Kant heard a prompt from the system.

A dialog box instantly appeared on his retina.

[Ding... Main Quest assigned]

[Main Quest: Seeding]

[Reward: Swadian Peasants x 50]

9

[Introduction: Agriculture serves as the foundation of a fief. Cultivating fields for farming and planting seeds in the fields serves as a symbol of development and a way to prosperity in a fief.]

Kant was dumbfounded that another main quest had been given.

He felt rather puzzled about it.

Ever since he came to acquire his own fief by coming to the Oasis Lookout, it seemed that the system had been increasing the amounts of quests given.

2

It was worth noting that it would have taken months to even get one side quest from the system when he was back in the Dukedom of Leo. After only being in the oasis for little more than a week, however, he had gotten quests of all sorts.

1

It was fortunate that finishing those quests had been easy.

“Seeding, eh?”

Kant called for them to get to work. His face looked rather emotional.

The Swadian Peasants who served him were actually about to plant wheat seedlings anyway.

Shallow pits were dug out from the worked fields.

Yellowish, full wheat seedlings were thrown into the pits.

The peasants placed seedlings neatly in the pits as they walked the field. Some of them carried urns and watered them.

All 7.5 acres of farmland were quickly seeded.

A dialog box from the system appeared.

[Ding... After a round of hard work, you found that the fields are seeded.]

[Main Quest: Seeding completed]

[Reward Acquired: Swadian Peasants x 50]

[Comments: Peasants are crucial to working the fields. These experienced peasants will be able to perform a great majority of agricultural work. Of course, all of them, who have a lot of attachment to their homes, are willing to take up arms to defend their land.]

Another 50 Swadian Peasants were acquired without him having to do much.

Well... Kant shook his head with disbelief. That was easy.

It was surprisingly easy.

It was so easy that it seemed to be a freely given reward.

2

He looked at the sun in the sky. It had not yet reached its highest point. That meant it was about 10:30 a.m.

“Check the channels. If everything is OK, you can go rest.”

Kant quickly added, “But remember, before you rest, water the entire area we opened up in the morning once. The last thing I want to see is our seedlings being all cooked to a crisp by the heat.”

“Rest assured, My Lord.” The peasants answered confidently.

They were all very capable people when it came to farming.

Kant believed in them. He nodded and returned to the Council Hall. He needed to get someone to prepare lunch.

Apparently, noon in the Nahrin Desert was ill-suited for being busy.

Everyone ate lunch and took naps. That allowed them to be energetic enough to work by 2 p.m.

Such was the way to survive in the desert.

Despite not having been there for long, Kant was already used to such routines.

It was noon, and lunch was ready.

Lunch was the usual roasted dried meat with bread and cabbage soup, as well as bits of olive.

Of course, with the new 50 peasants joining their ranks, the lunch prepared was even more massive than it had been before.

