

## Oasis 41

### Chapter 41: Forging a Path to Victory

Intimidation was an extraordinary item provided by the system to begin with.

It served to weaken the enemy's morale, including those of the Jackalan forces.

Brroooooooooommm

The 50 retainer knights led by Hobson immediately cut into the flanks of the Jackalans. The might from the charge of the handful of heavy cavalry units was comparable to that from over 1,000 infantry units.

Around 40 to 50 Jackalans were sent flying by the stout warhorses charging into their midst.

Their fine lances easily skewered the Jackalans' bodies.

As they continued to rampage among the Jackalans, the knights drew their longswords. Any that had not been able to evade the knights' attacks in time, or those who simply froze in fear, were quickly slain by the knights on the spot.

Cavalry units always had an edge over infantry units.

Heavy cavalry units in the era of cold weapons were lauded as kings of land battles for their impressive capability to crush any other types of units.

As such, the Jackalans were thrown into utter chaos.

After seeing their own instantly dropping dead left and right, and knowing that they were caught in a pincer attack carried out by human infantries in front and human cavalry units at the rear, the Jackalans stopped resisting and started fleeing in panic.

"For Swadia!"

The infantry units on the street, who were all in a frenzy with bloodlust, continued to hunt down the Jackalans before them.

Kant also had his own cavalry force.

The 17 Desert Bandits quickly emerged. Each one held a spear and skewered any Jackalan that did not manage to flee in time. The Desert Bandits did not even bother to pull their spears out before bringing down their flanged maces onto the heads of those beast-like creatures.

The Jackalans' skulls were cracked open.

Crimson blood, which was mixed with grey brain matter, splattered everywhere.

When it came to brutality and ferocity, there were times when humans were on par with beasts.

The humans showed no mercy.

In this battle, the survival of their species was on the line. The Desert Bandits charged forward with their horses. They paid no heed to their own safety as they blazed a trail for the infantry units behind them. They charged straight into the deeper parts of the Jackalan forces.

The Desert Bandits divided the already messed-up formations of the Jackalans. As they pushed through the tribe, it was as if they were slaughtering chicks. The ferocious primitive tribe members fled with only terror and fear in their minds.

Owwuuuuuuuu!

The Jackalan chieftain swung its two-handed battle ax down onto the Jackalans beside him, killing them on the spot.

He wanted to stop his forces from crumbling. However, it did not matter how angry his howls were. The Jackalans, which were feeling nothing but fear and terror by then, had no intention of staying on the battlefield.

That was the fate of primitive forces fighting without any form of strategy.

They quickly fell into panic and chaos once a crippling blow had been dealt.

Furthermore, that red banner emblazoned with a golden lion continued to billow without wind. It cast formless waves onto the battlefield in the dark of night.

Its effects continued to work at full force.

The Jackalans' morale had practically been decimated to the point that was hardly any morale left.

All of them fled quicker than before.

Even though the Jackalans had an overwhelming advantage in terms of numbers, all of them had been thrown into utter chaos and panic. They knew of nothing else at the moment but to run with their brethren around them. As they saw some of them were already running, more Jackalans ran. The vicious cycle brought about by a herd mentality caused the Jackalan forces to crumble.

As he followed behind the Desert Bandits, Kant drew his short sword and held his banner high.

The retainer knights, who seemed to be clad in blood-red linen robes, were seen causing terror among the Jackalans not far away. They were covered in blood by then. Their red linen robes were stained with the blood of slain Jackalans.

In this battle, the value of an elite force was brilliantly displayed.

Even Kant had grown envious of the retainer knights, who were still rampaging about.

If only I had 50 Swadian Knights under my command.

He quickly rectified his thoughts.

Even if he had 10 Swadian Knights under his command, he would have been extremely happy. It would have allowed him to lead the low-level troop classes. They would have torn the Jackalan forces apart, slaughtering the enemy to their hearts' content without any restraint.

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Owwwuuuuu!

Howls of anguish were heard somewhere in front of him.

Kant narrowed his gaze forward and held tight on his Intimidation banner. He looked rather serious.

The howls had come from the Jackalan chieftain.

The chieftain swung his two-handed battle ax without any regard for the Jackalans around him. He brought down two of the retainer knights' horses on the spot. The blood on the ax was a testament that those two knights' fate had taken a turn for the worse.

A chieftain position was reserved for the strongest Jackalan.

The strongest Jackalan before them wore mail armor and wielded a two-handed battle ax. He had especially terrifying combat prowess.

He was so terrifyingly powerful that not even the retainer knights dared to get close to him.

That Jackalan chieftain's bloodshot eyes were focused forward. He howled in a frenzy as he charged at the retainer knights. The chieftain swung his battle ax with wild abandon. He brought down several retainer knights like a miniaturized windmill.

That scene seemed to have restored some of the morale of the Jackalans around him.

"Sh\*t." Kant frowned.

If the Jackalans had their morale restored, the chaos before them was likely to continue.

It was especially so if they were to discover that the number of humans hunting them down was actually only a fraction of their forces in terms of numbers.

At that time, those ferocious Jackalans would have fiercely retaliated. Kant's forces, as well as the retainer knights know, would have quickly experienced what it was like to be brought down by overwhelming numbers.

"Lord Kant, I guess we need to take that guy down."

The Desert Bandits, who were riding their horses in front of Kant, noticed Kant frowning.

They continued thrusting with their spears and swinging their flanged maces, bringing down Jackalans around them.

Due to the might brought by all 17 of them, the Jackalans around them were escaping left and right without any intention of fighting back. The Jackalans were still in a panic and desperately trying to flee. F

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"Alright, do you guys have any ideas?"

Kant nodded with a serious expression.

“Sure.” The Desert Bandits answered affirmatively as they drew the javelins from on their backs.

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The javelins, which were comparable in length to that of a grown man’s arm and crafted using fine wooden materials, had very pointy spearheads. They were stabilized by a weighty metal counterweight at the rear end. All of that made them very formidable throwing weapons.

The Desert Bandits were also very well-trained in the use of such weapons.

Kant said in a low voice, “Take him out!”

The Desert Bandits lifted their pilums in place of a verbal answer before kicking the bellies of their horses hard.

A stinging pain was felt by the desert horses, causing them to immediately charge. All 17 of them formed a wall of horses. They trampled any Jackalans that happened to get in their way.

The Desert Bandits quickly closed in on the Jackalan chieftain.

They expertly threw their javelins, which they had raised beforehand, in full force at their target.

Shoooooo...

The sounds of projectiles tearing through the air were heard. The Jackalan chieftain continued to madly swing about with his battle ax several feet away. Before he knew it, he soon felt a massive force hitting his back.

Owwwuuuu...

The pain caused his eyes to become even more bloodshot.

The 11 javelins penetrated his back, which was clad in mail armor. The spearheads, which had blood grooves, lodged deeply into his back muscles. It made the Jackalan chieftain, who seemed strong and mighty, look like a hedgehog instead.

His right arm, which was the arm wielding the battle ax, had two javelins lodged into it. The pain was so intense that he struggled to maintain a grip on the weapon.

Howls were heard from his wolf-like head. His eyes quickly filled with murderous intent. He glared at Kant and the Desert Bandits behind him. The Desert Bandits switched back to their spears and flanged maces.

Those were the people who threw javelins at him moments ago.

However, he was able to do nothing but remember the moment.

Shooooo...

A glitter of cold steel was seen as a longsword lacerated the throat of the Jackalan chieftain.

Sir Hobson charged at the chieftain with his sword in hand, which was sharp enough to easily tear through the chieftain's throat. It caused the chieftain, who looked strong and mighty, to fall to his knees holding his throat.

The Intimidation banner billowed in the breeze. The golden lion looked even more ferocious than before.

The second effect was activated.

Killing the enemy leader caused the enemy forces to be thrown into chaos.

The Jackalan forces had fallen into complete chaos by then.

It was chaos of such a level that the Jackalan forces suffered an utter defeat right there and then.

The Jackalans, which saw their chieftain falling to the ground, dropped their weapons and whimpered. There was only one thought on their minds by then—run!

The further away they were able to get the better.

“For Swadia, kill them all!”

The death of the Jackalans' leaders became a decisive turning point that determined the outcome of that battle.

The soldiers charged as they shouted in a frenzy. They pounced on the fleeing Jackalans with greater fervor since they no longer had anything to fear.

The retainer knights galloped away on their warhorses, killing any fleeing Jackalans they were able to find around them. They wanted to make sure that the members of that primitive race being thrown into chaos was so thorough that there was no way for them to recover again.

The entire place was filled with fleeing Jackalans.

It was quite ironic given that there were still at least 1,500 of them around.

However, having lost the will to fight, they were of little difference than sheep waiting to be slaughtered.

To Kant, his single largest threat in the Nahrin Desert was that massive Jackalan Tribe. Now, under the glittering stars in the sky, they had completely lost the ability to fight him. The Jackalans were reduced to little more than gravel to be stepped on. They were now a page in the history books.

## **Chapter 42: Surplus Experience**

The bright moonlight shining from above seemed to have been imbued with a chill that seeped deep into their bones.

They were in the Oasis Lookout within the Nahrin Desert.

The fighting at dusk had been intense, and it ended with the total collapse of the Jackalan forces.

The stench of blood remained thick in the air.

It made the scene feel like a slaughterhouse.

After all, it was a battlefield where fevered combatants had gone for each other's throats. Dead bodies were sprawled everywhere. Blood was in such abundance that it stained the sand beneath them red. The bodies belonged to beings who did not want to die. The yearning for life was still seen deep within their lifeless eyes.

None could have afforded to pull punches on that battlefield. None could have afforded mercy for the enemy.

Only victors were qualified to savor the brutality of a battle and be sorrowful over it. Losers deserved only to be buried and reduced to specks of dust in history.

Kant knew that very well.

If he had been on the losing side in that battlefield, not even the bodies left sprawling on the ground would have ended up being buried.

Jackalans were not averse to the notion of eating human flesh. To the members of that primitive race, fine, juicy human dead bodies were, to an extent, considered a delicacy to them.

Jackalans and humans were totally different races at the most fundamental levels.

"Winner takes all. Losers can shove it."

Kant quietly muttered to himself. He had little to mourn over regarding that intense battle.

He did not mind seeing more Jackalans dead. On the contrary, he felt pity for all the Swadian troops who perished in that battle. It meant that his military force suffered a huge loss.

The leader of the trade caravan did the accounting and made a report of the casualties:

100 Swadian Peasants. 58 dead, 42 remained

30 Swadian Recruits. 24 dead, six remained

35 Swadian Militias. 16 dead, 19 remained

The loss was crushing.

Kant's forces had suffered a devastating blow in the battle.

It was bound to take quite a while for his forces to recover.

Kant frowned hard when he saw the report.

He took a deep breath to calm the intense frustration he felt deep down. He bitterly said, "The cost of 92 dead is steep."

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It was actually more than steep.

More than half of his zero-level troop class was lost.

His first- and second-level troop classes were almost gone.

It was a crushing blow that would significantly slow the development of Dronnheim.

After losing so many troops, Kant was not going to be able to organize an effective defense.

After losing so many peasants, he was also unable to further develop his village.

“Count your blessings, I guess.”

Kant sighed. He still felt grateful for the bright sight of things.

Although he had suffered huge losses, he had the system. It allowed him to recover some parts of the loss.

[Ding... The enemy has been totally crushed after a bloody battle.]

[Side Quest: Persistence in Adversity is complete.]

[Reward Acquired: Denar x 1,000, Reputation x 500, Honor x 1]

[Introduction: Your bravery served to keep your forces going on the brutal battlefield. As a result, they were able to hold on to their beliefs and crush the brutal, merciless enemy forces in staggering numbers.]

Kant’s reward was issued by the system through the dialog box.

However, a new dialog box appeared before the one he was reading disappeared.

[Ding... You have acquired a proud victory due to having a battle in which you had been severely outnumbered.]

[Evaluation Acquired: Epic Victory]

[Acquired Reputation x 100]

[Acquired Honor x 1]

That was the evaluation of the battle given by the system.

The result was astonishing.

Epic Victory?

Kant clenched his fists as his heart raced.

It was quite a lovely surprise for him.

It was especially so because he had acquired two Honor. While he suffered considerable losses on the battlefield, have those two points for the prize draw in the mall allowed him to recover all of his losses. If he were really lucky, he could become even richer than that.

After all, Kant had acquired the sacred Intimidation banner through prize drawings.

Suddenly, a dialog box from the system appeared yet again.

It was a dialog box regarding troop classes.

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

The battle was over.

After the intense battle, his troops were finally able to continue getting upgraded. They could become troop classes with greater combat capacity.

“Open up the troop class page.”

He felt rather heavy deep down and took a deep breath.

His upcoming actions greatly affected the strength of his forces.

The dialog box from the system immediately opened, and the list was packed full of options.

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[Upgradable Troop Class: Swadian Peasants x 42]

[Spend 10 Denars each to upgrade to Swadian Recruit]

[Ding... You have surplus experience. Your forces can be upgraded consecutively.]

...

[Upgradable Troop Class: Swadian Recruits x 6]

[Spend 20 Denars each to upgrade to Swadian Militia]

[Ding... You have surplus experience. Your forces can be upgraded consecutively.]

...

[Upgradable Troop Class: Swadian Militias x 19]

[Spend 30 Denars each to upgrade to Swadian Footman/Swadian Skirmisher]

[Ding... You have surplus experience. Your forces can be upgraded consecutively.]

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[Upgradable Troop Class: Desert Bandits x 17]

[Spend 25 Denars each to upgrade to Elite Desert Bandit]

[Ding... You have surplus experience. Your forces can be upgraded consecutively.]

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Things happened as Kant had expected.

After securing an Epic Victory in that battle, every single unit that lived managed to get upgraded.



There was even surplus experience to be had.

According to the system, they were able to be upgraded to further levels.

All of that served as a testament to how much Kant gained from that one battle. Bagging a decisive victory fighting 2,000 invading Jackalans had been incredibly difficult.

One mistake could have led to them all ending up dead on the battlefield.

Kant gulped.

He browsed the troop class page. "Well, the number of Denars required for upgrades seems rather steep."

According to the available upgrades for his current forces, it required spending 1,367 Denars to get the upgrades.

Worse still, that expenditure excluded further upgrades after that.

Kant had no idea just how much surplus experience would have been left after upgrading them.

Then again, he would not have had to worry about it in the first place.

At the moment, the 1,367 Denars was a huge sum to Kant.

He had acquired 500 Denars after selling the dates.

He had spent 30 Denars recruiting one Desert Bandit.

He next acquired 1,000 Denars by completing the Persistence in Adversity quest.

With that added together, Kant currently had 1,470 Denars to spare.

If he upgraded all of his remaining units in one go, Kant would be broke. It would have created a situation like how it had been before where he could not afford to pay the upkeep for his forces in the following week. It was bound to put him in a very awkward position.

There was no way he was able to proceed in that way.

"This is really a headache."

He pinched at his brow hard. He had just secured a victory, yet he felt jaded all over.

It felt as if all of his strength had been sucked out of his body.

As he was thinking about what to do next, he heard hurried footsteps from behind.

Captain Rowan, who had been fighting alongside the retainer knights before, approached Kant. He was also soaked in blood. He lowered his head and said with a rather complicated expression, "My Lord, Sir Hobson and Scholar Hank wish to speak with you."

"Yeah, noted." Kant nodded.

Regardless of feelings, Kant was a baron, so Rowan's tone was polite and lacked the slightest bit of impatience in it.

The presence of both Hobson and Hank was a testament to Kant's nobility. As a mere captain of the knights, Rowan's status made it such that he was unthinkable to offend Kant.

Kant quickly went to the Council Hall, where the retainer knights were regrouping and tidying themselves up.

When they were charging at the Jackalans and dealing them a crushing blow, there had been many among those brave retainer knights who ended up injured. There had even been several among them who died during the battle.

Kant went up and asked in a rather serious tone, "How are the casualties, Sir Hobson?"

"Six were gravely injured, and seven are dead," Sir Hobson replied.

Kant's frown became even more pronounced as he apologized. "I'm sorry for getting you all in this mess, Sir Hobson."

It was indeed him who got them in that mess.

If it had not been for Kant, those retainer knights would not have had needed to come to the Oasis Lookout and fight that many Jackalans in the first place.

"It is the destiny of knights to die with glory on the battlefield."

Sir Hobson shook his head and took a deep breath. He said, "It's a more memorable way to go dying in battle than to die of old age yet having accomplished nothing after all."

He paused for a bit before turning around to look at Kant. His tone became rather secretive when he said, "It is indeed our mission to help solve your problems when we're out here. That was the other mission of ours, one that no one briefed us about or said out loud."

"I don't quite understand." Kant frowned.

"You are part of the duke's bloodline."

Scholar Hank walked out of the Council Hall with his cane and said, "I never believed for a second that someone of my status would have warranted an escort consisting of 50 retainer knights of the castle for protection, or that the expedition was little more than a common survey."

"I'm truly sorry." Sir Hobson had nothing to offer the scholar but an apology.

"Don't be. I was able to guess what was going on." Scholar Hank smiled after shaking his head. In a lethargic tone, he said, "That's how it is with you nobles, and that's why I don't like mingling with you people."

Both men knew that there was no need for more words after that.

Kant frowned, recalling his high-born, convenient father—Duke Cameron.

"So, it's because of you," the scholar muttered to himself.

Now that thing had been put in such a manner, everything made sense.

“Baron Kant.” Scholar Hank interrupted Kant’s thoughts.

“What is it, Master Hank?” Kant came to his senses again.

The scholar said, “The Jackalans have suffered a crushing blow. If everything goes well, they won’t be attacking this place again for a very long time. As such, I’m preparing to leave this place.”

“Leave?” Kant was slightly baffled.

“Yes, I’m thinking of leaving.”

Scholar Hank felt rather overwhelmed when he gazed at the faraway dunes. He shook his head and said, “The lost city is but a myth. I thought that Duke Cameron had been moved by my findings and finally decided to back my expedition. Come to think of it now, it was reckless to judge that the legends were true from nothing more than a single line in some book.”

“Well...” Kant opened his mouth but quickly found himself tongue-tied.

Scholar Hank shook his head and wore a bitter smile. “I’m thinking of heading back. I can consider the expedition to have fulfilled my dreams.” He sighed and quipped, “The lost city is but a myth after all.”

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It was a renowned legend in the Dukedom of Leo. Countless people throughout history had searched for it before.

If there had indeed been clues out there, said clues would have probably long been found.