

## Oasis 43

### Chapter 43: Part-time Slave Trader

It was early dawn.

People were seen getting busy in the Oasis Lookout.

The Swadians were diligently cleaning up the battlefield. They disregarded their fatigue as they went about cleaning up the village as quickly as possible.

It was especially so with the bloody mess of dead Jackalans. The bodies were of a top priority on the list of clean-ups to do. Temperatures in the desert were high. Once the bodies began to rot and seep into the soil, underground water reserves would have ended up contaminated. At the point, things would have taken a turn for the worse.

The sun slowly rose, bringing the arrival of dawn.

The battlefield had been completely cleaned up. More than 400 Jackalan bodies were piled into a mound.

That was the result of the previous night's battle.

There were also more than 100 Jackalans with their hands tied behind their backs located at the back of the houses. All of them hung their heads low in despair.

That was also a result of the battle. Those Jackalans had been taken as prisoners.

The 19 Swadian Militia member who managed to survive were keeping a close eye on the Jackalan prisoners. They held on tightly to their hunting crossbows. If they dared to try anything funny, bolts loaded on the crossbows were ready to be unleashed on the prisoners.

There was also the combat shovel—a weapon capable of penetrating armor with a single hit—being readied, waiting to crack open the skulls of the prisoners.

Then again, no one else seemed to care much about those Jackalan prisoners.

Kant's allies, who had helped him win the battle the previous night, were getting ready to depart that morning.

"It's time for us to leave, Baron Kant."

Sir Hobson extended his hand and held Kant's hand tightly. "Thank you for providing us with breakfast and fresh water. May Edmund, the great God of War, watch over you and your lands."

"Likewise." Kant nodded. Gratitude was seen in his eyes.

He turned around and looked at Scholar Hank. In an apologetic tone, he said, "Master Hank, I do wish the expedition into the Nahrin Desert would have brought more than just regret for you."

"It did." Scholar Hank shook his head and grinned. "I shall leave finding the lost city to my juniors."

He lightly sighed. He seemed rather vexed as he rummaged through his clothes and handed a scroll over to Kant. "This is the sum of my research of the lost city from the academy. I may never come to the desert again. Since you're the lord of the place, it would please me if you were to be able to find ruins, or at least some artifacts having anything to do with the lost city."

"Thank you, Master Hank." Kant solemnly took the scroll.

Kant was aware that the scholar's lifework was contained within the scroll.

He packed it away carefully and replied, "I shall treat it with care."

"I hope you can finish my work." Scholar Hank smiled and nodded. He looked as if a weight had been lifted off of his shoulders. He chatted with Kant for a bit before returning to his carriage.

"Farewell, Baron Kant."

Sir Hobson nodded before turning around and leaving with his retainer knights in tow.

Those who were gravely injured were assisted by their peers. The dead retainer knights were strapped onto the warhorses that served them. Both knight and horse were of a single entity. Even though they died on the battlefield, they needed to be brought home by others. That was where true honor lied.

Captain Rowan was among those helping the severely injured retainer knights.

After fighting such an intense battle, it was likely that Sir Hobson would vouch for him when they returned home. There was a possibility of a promotion waiting for him.

Then again, none of that had anything to do with Kant.

He had left the Dukedom of Leo quite a while ago. Now, he was but a lesser lord in the Nahrin Desert.

However, he still immediately recalled that father of his. At the thought of him, he sighed. He was puzzled at what was actually going on in his father's head.

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He exiled me here, yet...

He hung his head low and felt complicated emotions. Why bother sending anyone to back me up out here?

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That was what troubled him most.

He had been living in that world for 16 years. It was inevitable that he would become attached to that world.

It was even more so in the case of his father, the man who raised him.

"Good morning, Lord Kant. You do not seem to be in the mood."

A respectful greeting was heard from behind.

Kant turned around and found the leader of the trade caravan from Reyvadin behind him.

Kant grinned after nodding. "Good morning."

He behaved more amicably to the leader. That man, whom he knew nothing about before, had participated in that battle the previous evening. He fought hard with his escorts and mercenaries. That changed Kant's opinion toward him.

"I do hope I'm not getting in the way of anything, My Lord."

The leader of the trade caravan behaved just as respectfully as he had always done.

He did not let the merit of his help toward Kant get to his head. That was the way a person should have behaved. As a leader of a trade caravan going around towns and cities alike, he knew that very well.

"Is there anything you would need from me?" Kant was able to sense the man's hesitation.

The leader gulped and nodded. He said, "Well, it's like this, Lord Kant. I've seen that you have captured several Jackalans from the battle last night."

"Do you have any thoughts about them?" Kant was slightly startled.

Instead of skirting the question, the leader nodded and hurriedly said, "Those Jackalans look fit, and they seem to have some sense of reason still. I'm thinking that they would serve as decent labor for working in mines and forests, after they are tamed, of course."

"So?" Kant knew there was something else.

That was a specialty of the game.

Captured troop classes were resources tradable using Denars. Selling them to slave traders would have been very profitable. That was considered to be one of the most important sources of Denars to players.

"I'd like to purchase the Jackalan prisoners." The leader immediately said what was on his mind.

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"I see." Kant grinned as he eyed the rather awkward expression on the leader. He looked at the faraway dunes and said, "It never occurred to me that a trade caravan dealing with regular goods was into slave trade as well."

"It's a part-time job." The leader awkwardly lowered his head.

Slave traders were not of good repute. In fact, they were considered a notorious bunch on the Continent of Caradia.

To Kant, who was in desperate need of money, it was a boon and one of the best things that could have happened to him at the moment. He had sold slaves back in the game. Currently, there was no way he was going to overlook this type of opportunity.

As such, Kant asked without beating around the bush, "How much are you offering for the Jackalan slaves?"

“Well, in this case, I’d offer 30 Denars for each prisoner.”

The leader gulped as he looked at Kant with rather fearful eyes. In full honesty, he added, “I’m not a professional slave trader, so I’d only be able to evaluate and offer 30 Denars each. I do think that the actual price for each of those prisoners would be higher.”

“30 Denars, eh?” Kant muttered to himself. He turned around and said, “We have a deal.”

According to prices in the game he played in his past life, even the lowliest of bandits would have been worth 35 Denars each. However, considering that the leader was the only buyer having any link to the system, Kant did not object to the offer.

Besides, he still had to do business.

Furthermore, those were Denars that he gained from doing nothing.

Even if he were to only be given 10 Denars each, Kant would not have hesitated to sell the Jackalans.

He was unable to think of any decent ways to deal with the Jackalan prisoners. If the leader of the trade caravan had not offered to buy them, his only way to deal with the prisoners would have been to slit their throats, throw them into the pile, and burning them down to ash.

He did not need Jackalan slaves.

“There are 142 Jackalan prisoners.”

The leader flashed a beaming smile as Kant confirmed the headcount. He quickly said, “With each being worth 30 Denars, the sum would be 4,260 Denars.”

Kant’s heart skipped a beat. He asked again, “How much?”

“It is 4,260 Denars.” The leader lowered his head respectfully and added, “If there were any other slave traders around, they may have offered more than I did. For that, I’m truly sorry, Lord Kant.”

“Don’t be. That’s good enough.” Kant gulped, struggling to keep his emotions in check.

He had earned more than 4,000 Denars from selling 142 Jackalan prisoners.

This is explosively lucrative!

Not only did the trade gave Kant the funds needed for upgrading his forces, but he also gained enough to further develop his village by being able to build more buildings. It had also taken care of the weekly upkeep of his forces. All his problems were solved in one shot.

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Kant’s eyes glimmered. He had suddenly discovered a good way of generating wealth.

He licked his lips and looked at the leader. He asked, “Would you mind purchasing slaves for prolonged periods?”

“I shall be here once every month. If you happen to have slaves to sell, I shall evaluate them.”

The leader nodded affirmatively and added, "But, of course, I'd still prefer regular goods. If there were to be nothing else up for sale, then I shall purchase the slaves as well."

"Very well."

Kant nodded with glittering eyes. "Those Jackalan slaves are all yours now."

The leader excused himself and gestured to the people behind him.

The six escorts and 12 mercenaries standing by immediately walked up to the Jackalan prisoners with a vicious grin on the faces. They hoisted the prisoners up by the ropes, tying their hands and headed for the grocery store.

Those people had their own ways of making those Jackalans obedient slaves.

The 4,260 Denars were immediately added to Kant's account in his mind.

The sum he had at the moment was 5,743 Denars.

Time to get on with the upgrades.

Given that he now had so much money, Kant had nothing to worry about.

#### **Chapter 44: Explosive Growth in Quality of Forces**

With 5,743 Denars available, Kant had nothing to worry about.

Even back in the game played in his past life, there was no doubt that such an amount of money was a huge sum.

Kant immediately willed it and connected to the system.

"Open up the troop class page."

A dialog box was seen on his retina.

Kant's current forces were displayed. All of them had a "+" sign behind the names of their respective troop classes. It meant that he only needed to pay the required amount of Denars to level them up and make them troop classes of higher level and greater combat capacity.

I really am rich now.

He only needed to reorganize his crippled forces standing guard all over the Oasis Lookout.

...

[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.]

...

[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.]

...

All of them were troop classes available for upgrades to Kant.

The upgrades required payment of 1,367 Denars.

“Upgrade them all!”

Kant nodded affirmatively and with style.

At the moment, the 1,367 Denars was a small sum to him. It was money that needed to be spent anyway, so he did not hesitate.

If his forces were formidable enough, it allowed him to gain as much money as he fancied.

There was no shortage of Jackalans in the Nahrin Desert.

[Troop class upgrading...]

The system was continuing to upgrade his troops.

The 42 Swadian Peasants instantly became 42 Swadian Recruits.

The six Swadian Recruits became six Swadian Militias.

There was something different with the upgrade of the 19 Swadian Militias.

That was where routes for further upgrades split.

[Ding... Optional upgrades are available for Swadian Militias.]

[Swadian Footman/Swadian Skirmisher]

A dialog box was seen in the system.

It was two entirely different routes from then on out. One specialized in melee combat while the other in ranged combat.

Kant had long come to a decision about that. He made his choice without hesitation. "Upgrade all of them to become Swadian Footmen!"

Those troops were ideal for serving as the main infantry units on the battlefield.

The bodies of the units became even stouter and stronger. Their equipment became something else altogether. They were no longer clad in leather-based armor from top to toe. That had been swapped for iron-based armor. It made them look like elite troops.

They were armed with heavy spears, longswords, and thicker heater shields.

They were clad in mail armors and standard infantry iron helmets.

They wore thick leather boots covered in mail armor. It was a standard Swadian-styled armament.

The Swadian Footmen served as one of the main fighting forces on the battlefield. Further upgrades were divided into two different routes as well.

[Swadian Man-at-Arms/Swadian Infantry]

After getting past that stage, the king of land battles of the Kingdom of Swadia would become available. Be it infantry units for garrisoning or laying siege to cities or cavalry units excelling in fighting battles out in the open, the might of the strongest kingdom found on the Continent of Caradia would have been known to all.

However, it was not those troop classes from Swadia that saw the greatest change.

There were still the 17 Desert Bandits.

The bandits, who originated from the Sarrand Sultanate, acquired a huge amount of experience as well. All of them had been successfully upgraded.

They became Elite Desert Bandits.

After the upgrade, the Elite Desert Bandits were still armed with spears, but their close-combat weapon became the heavy flanged mace. It was capable of causing greater blunt trauma damage and sported better armor penetration.

Their hide-covered round shields, which were often seen in desert areas, remained unchanged. Two additional javelins were added to the initial four they carried. All six had become heftier.

Their initial leather armor was changed to scale armor, offering better defensive capacities.

Those top-notch bandits of the Sarrand Desert usually served as leaders or bosses of bandit gangs. Even the regular army of the Sarrand Sultanate was given quite a headache from those bandits, who proved even more ferocious than most.

Combined with the Desert Bandits he would recruit from then on out, Kant would have formed his own elite cavalry force by then.

Those elite forces were no match for the heavy cavalry units of the Kingdom of Swadia or even fourth-level cavalry units like the Sarrandian Horseman, but those Elite Desert Bandits were on par with mercenary riders available for recruiting in taverns. In some cases, the Elite Desert Bandits were an even better choice.

Prompts from the system did not end there.

[Ding... Surplus experience detected. Consecutive upgrades available.]

[Would you like to proceed with further upgrades?]

It was an inquiry from the system.

At that moment, there was no way Kant was about to object to making upgrades. As someone who had just gained riches, he nodded without hesitation and said, "Continue upgrading."

[Ding... Surplus experience from the system detected, continue upgrading troop class...]

[42 Swadian Recruits can all be upgraded...]

[Six Swadian Militias can all be upgraded...]

However, the following dialog box from the system made Kant frown slightly.

There were only two options for upgrades.

It was the Swadian Recruits or the Swadian Militias.

As for the Swadian Footmen, who were all stronger units, they had no "+" signs behind any of them.

It was a key sign that was linked to their upgrades as heavy cavalry units.

"System, are those two the only ones available for upgrades?"

Kant frowned and asked the system in his mind, "Are the footmen not available for an upgrade?"

"Unavailable." The system answered crisply as it had always been. "The current amount of experience is only available for upgrading low-level troop classes. Please acquire more experience if you would like to upgrade mid-level troop classes."

"Alright." Kant nodded exasperatingly.

The system only told the truth. There was no point arguing with it.

[Upgrade Cost: 540 Denars]

[Would you like to upgrade?]

"Upgrade them to become Swadian Footmen."

Kant had chosen the route of melee combat for upgrades. He needed to get a sizeable force of footmen ready.



All 25 of his Swadian Footmen were clad in mail armor and wore iron helmets. They were armed with heavy spears and heater shields, as well as wearing longswords at their waists. It made them look like the retainer knights he saw before.

They had begun to look like elite troops.

The 42 Swadian Militia members appeared behind him. All of them were stout, well-armed, and wore a solemn expression.

Swadian Militia was a second-level troop class and a reliable main force among the low-level troop classes.

It was especially so in the case of Kant's Swadian Militias. Each one of them was armed with hunting crossbows. That meant Kant was able to put aside any considerations of upgrading his troops to become ranged combat units. He only needed to focus on melee combat units for the time being.

After all, firing a round of bolts before charging with their spears made for a formidable assault.

As for the Jackalans, there was no way they were going to be able to withstand attacks from the Swadian Militias, even if both sides were of equal numbers.

It was even more so given that Kant had gained access to Swadian Footmen. It made his forces even more formidable.

Kant's Denar reserves dropped from 5,743 Denars to 3,836 Denars.

He had spent nearly one-third of his Denar reserves with just those upgrades alone.

The expenditure was worthwhile. It immediately enhanced the quality of Kant's forces. While he remained utterly incapable of fighting 2,000 Jackalans, it hardly mattered since those Jackalans would not have dared to show up anyway.

It was no longer Kant who was living in fear. It was the Jackalan Tribe.

It was worth noting that the massive force of 2,000 Jackalans was utterly crushed altogether. Even the chieftain had died on the battlefield. With only scarred and terrified remnants remaining, there was no way they were going to come looking for trouble in the Oasis Lookout.

The Jackalan Tribe was probably setting up defenses, speculating in fear of just how many humans there were at the Oasis Lookout.

There was no way a Jackalan force of more than 2,000 units would have been defeated by a small force.

Their brains were incapable of figuring out that Kant, Sir Hobson, and Scholar Hank had managed to win despite being severely outnumbered.

At the very least, the Jackalans were terrified to their cores.

Kant, on the other hand, was pleased with himself.

The Jackalans were now like treasure in his eyes. They were fine commodities to be traded for Denars.

Best of all, it was a trade that required no capital. As long as Kant was able to amass a force sufficiently formidable, he had the ability to capture those beast-like humanoid races and sell them to the system's trade caravan for Denars.

"System, open up the mall for a prize draw."

Kant connected to the system in his mind again with a grin on his face.

He currently had two Honors.

[Ding... System Mall is open.]

[One Honor is required for every draw.]

A dialog box from the system was seen.

There was a shut treasure chest on it. It symbolized the countless hidden treasures of the system.