

The Witch 18

Chapter 18: Steelguard Escort Group

"Rest time is over! Pack your goods and get ready to move! Nighttime is arriving!"

Inside the traveling group's camp, a burly middle-aged man with a fierce aura barked at a group of ten younger men.

With their apparent scars, coarse clothing, battle equipment, and muscular builds, they were evidently all warriors—or, more precisely, Aura Masters.

At a glance, it was easy to guess that the burly middle-aged man was on an even higher level compared to the rest of the young men.

His gaze was clear, and his vitality was vigorous, which generated a commanding presence superior to the young men but inferior to Lord Manfred, a Rank 3 Aura Master.

The burly middle-aged man was a Rank 2 Aura Master.

"Ugh, I wished we get more than just four hours of rest," a young warrior complained.

"If you're a warrior, then suck it up. This is what it means to travel in a group through the Blackmoon Region. To shorten the traveling time, we can only rest during the day and move through the night."

"I wouldn't be complaining if we get to rest the full six hours, but on top of traveling through the night, we are forced to use up two hours of our rest time for training!" the young warrior complained.

"You got a problem with my training schedule, Reid?" the burly middle-aged man questioned.

"N-no problem, Captain Rhys!" the young man Reid immediately panicked after being questioned by the captain of their escort group.

"Hmph, I thought not!" Captain Rhys snorted before instructing the young men, "Listen up! You're all fresh recruits in our Steelguard Escort Group, but if you want to stay, you have to continue pushing your limits and improve! Understood?"

"Yes, Captain!"

"If you understand, then hurry up and pack up your tents! We set out in ten minutes!"

After passing down his orders, the recruits became busy packing up the camp without further complaints.

Sometime later, Captain Rhys stopped in front of a high-quality tent before his fierce look became more respectful and humble.

But before he could inform the person of importance within the tent, a commotion suddenly broke out on the recruits' side.

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"Halt!" a young warrior immediately stopped Vaan from approaching further before questioning him, "Who are you?!"

"Just a lone traveler passing by," Vaan gave a casual smile, neither too friendly nor too unwelcoming.

He was not bothered by the warrior's rude questioning, only indifferent.

"You?" the young warrior studied Vaan's appearance and equipment with a frown before adding, "Traveling alone?"

"I believe that was what I said, yes." Vaan's expression remained stoic.

Just as the young warrior prepared to continue his interrogation, Captain Rhys made his way over and asked with a commanding presence, "What is going on here?"

"Captain Rhys!" The young warriors greeted before Reid pointed at Vaan and reported, "This person suddenly approached our camp without warning. He appeared very suspicious, so I was just questioning him."

"I see." Captain Rhys frowned.

Captain Rhys inspected Vaan's light equipment before he asked with a deeper frown, "You're traveling alone? Where did plan to go with such limited supplies? Do you think you can make it to the next city alone? Aren't you too arrogant?"

From what the captain saw, the young man must have realized traveling alone was too difficult and intended to hitch a free ride with them.

Captain Rhys' expression turned grim when he arrived at that conclusion.

"Nature is unkind, but heaven does not cut off all road to life. With the stream for drinking water and wildlife for sustenance, I believe traveling to the next city is not a problem," Vaan casually stated as he surveyed the camp.

According to his Magic Vision, there should be two more people apart from the captain and ten young warriors.

"However, five days is too long. Thus, if your group doesn't mind, I was hoping to join your group for a night," Vaan added.

After hearing Vaan's request, Captain Rhys revealed a disdainful look. Sure enough, the person came to hitch a free ride.

If lone travels were so easy, then the escort business would not have existed.

Even so, it wasn't uncommon for people with funny ideas to join escort groups on the road to avoid commission fees.

"Since you planned to travel alone, then you should continue to travel alone until the end." Captain Rhys rejected Vaan's request without further thought.

He hated opportunistic bastards like the young man in front of him. Even escorts needed to work hard to put bread on the table.

The escort business wasn't very profitable, but it was stable—as long as their client paid them, that is.

"Let him join us," a charming voice suddenly interceded.

Captain Rhys turned his head and saw two beautiful witches with brown hair and sapphires eyes approaching.

Both had similar heights and appearances, but the one carried a mature vibe while the other still seemed naïve and inexperienced.

They were a pair of sisters.

"Lady Linette and Lady Lillias," Captain Rhys quickly greeted before adding, "But..."

"Let him join us. Don't make me repeat it a third time, Captain Rhys," the older sister, Linette, stated with a warning tone while exerting pressure with her power as a True Witch.

"Understood, Lady Linette," Captain Rhys conceded. Since his client, a True Witch, had a firm stance in the matter, he had no choice but to accept.

"However, we won't accept any responsibilities for his safety unless he pays us," Captain Rhys stated.

"You don't need to worry about that. I can take care of myself," Vaan stated coolly.

"Hmph!"

Captain Rhys snorted and stormed off. He did not believe such a thin person had the means to protect himself.

Shortly after the escort captain left, Vaan turned to the witches and smiled humbly, "Thank you for letting me join you on your trip, my Lady."

"No need to thank me. If you want to thank someone, thank my little sister. It was her wish for you to join us," Lady Linette stated coolly.

Vaan shifted his gaze to the shy lady hiding behind Lady Linette with an abashed look before he quickly understood the reason.

He had a more appealing appearance compared to the rough and bulky warriors in the escort group.

'I'm an eye candy, huh?'