

Village Head 60

Chapter 60 The Farm (2)

They immediately calmed down, and with a curious gaze, they began scanning the surroundings with keen interest, signalling that it was their maiden visit just like mine. As we drew closer to the colossal wooden gates, one of the men standing guard caught a glimpse of us and fixated his attention on our arrival.

As we approached the entrance, Fiona deftly retrieved a wooden chip from her dress pocket, which appeared similar to the one Thak had presented to me, but larger. Displaying it to the guards, they scrutinized it with a keen eye, nodding their heads in approval before handing it back to Fiona.

As one of the guards retreated and pulled the wooden gates apart, they revealed the stunning interior - a picturesque landscape adorned with an array of vibrant flowers and luscious grasses. I couldn't resist admiring the breathtaking view and let out an appreciative remark, 'It's beautiful!' Although not a gardener myself, the meticulous arrangements and pristine trimmings of the flora left me in awe - this was undoubtedly a paradise for every avid gardener.

"Please, feel free to enter," the other guard chimed in as his companion swung the gates wide open, granting us access to the botanical wonderland beyond.

Fiona gave a nod of approval and beckoned us to follow her, and we obliged eagerly, knowing that this was the reason for our visit. As we passed through the open gates and onto the path, I couldn't help but wonder if I would bump into Reena, who worked here. However, the sheer size of the farm soon became apparent as we walked along the path, surrounded by a stunning array of plants and flowers.

To my surprise, the farm was much larger than I had anticipated, extending far beyond the boundaries I had initially assumed from the imposing fences that encircled the area. I realized that if I were to climb one of the towering trees, I might be able to make out the entire perimeter, but the thought only emphasized the sheer expanse of the farm.

The sheer scale of the farm was mind-boggling, and I didn't even want to attempt to fathom how it was constructed. As we waded through the dense undergrowth and towering trees, it became increasingly difficult to navigate, requiring us to stay alert to our surroundings. Eventually, we emerged into an expansive clearing, where rows upon rows of land had been meticulously divided and planted with specific crops.

It was a breathtaking sight, each plot was waiting to be harvested by the villagers who were diligently tending to them. Across the land, I could see villagers of all ages toiling away, building irrigation systems and nurturing their crops. It was evident that the success of this farm was a collective effort, where each individual played a crucial role in ensuring its prosperity.

"Welcome to the farm, everyone," Fiona said with a warm smile. "During your awakening ceremony, you will be assigned to tend to the farm, just like every other villager who has passed through the ceremony. If your gift is beneficial to the farm, you will be permitted to continue working here. However, if it's not, but can still be useful for bartering, you will be able to set up a shop in the village square and continue on with your life."

The air was still as we walked through the farm, admiring the rows of crops and the quiet chatter of the villagers as they worked. Suddenly, a boy's hand shot up in the air, catching Fiona's attention. She gestured for him to speak, and the boy asked a question that had been on my mind as well.

"And what if we awaken gifts that are useful for the farm? Will we be forced to work on it?" he asked, his voice tinged with concern.

Fiona's expression softened as she shook her head, a small sigh escaping her lips. "No, you will not be forced to work on the farm," she replied. "It is entirely up to you whether or not you want to work here. But I will say this - there is much more pay for those who choose to work on the farm than anywhere else. And once you start, I'm sure you won't want to leave."

I could sense the relief in the boy's voice as he nodded, reassured by Fiona's words.

As we strolled across the vast farmland, we encountered some villagers who were intensely focused on their tasks, while others acknowledged our presence with a nod of their head in a silent greeting, to which we reciprocated.

The sheer size of the farm and the abundance of people present made me realize that finding Reena would be a challenge. Therefore, instead of actively searching for her, I concentrated on the task at hand.

As we approached the other end of the divided plots of land, I noticed that the area was densely populated with trees and tall grasses. Despite this, we were not heading back into the thick vegetation, but instead, towards a small wooden hut situated close to it.

As we approached the hut, Fiona rapped her knuckles against the wooden door, the sound echoing in the quiet surroundings.

"Knock" "Knock"

Within moments, the heavy footsteps of someone inside became audible, growing louder until the door swung open.

A striking middle-aged woman, dressed in the traditional tulga for women in the village, emerged from within. Her eyes scanned us briefly before settling on Fiona.

With a nod of acknowledgement, the woman spoke, "You must be Fiona, and these are the children for this year's awakening ceremony."

"Yes," Fiona's head bobbed in agreement. "The village chief said that..." But before she could finish her sentence, the woman interjected.

"I'm already informed," the woman said, cutting Fiona off. "I've been through this many times before," she added, glancing over us briefly before turning back to Fiona. "You all just need to wait here for a minute, I'll be back shortly," she said as she retreated into her hut and shut the door.