

Another World 171

Chapter 171 - Thinking of a Way

Zhao Hai frowned and said, "It seems like the threat of the Carrion Swamp is very difficult to solve. If it wasn't for him being a Rank Nine expert, exploring the Carrion Swamp would have been a struggle. How should we handle this?"

Green also frowned. "This matter is truly difficult. That flower is as strong as a Rank Nine expert. Adding in the fact that there are a lot of guardian magic beasts and undead defending it, trying to solve this will be very hard. Oh, right. Buffy, did you bring space equipment when you explored the Carrion Swamp this time? If you didn't, how did you eat?"

Buffy replied, "I didn't bring any space equipment since exploring the Carrion Swamp would've been dangerous. The clan didn't allow me to bring space equipment because of that. However, eating wasn't a problem. After all, there's a lot of plants and animals in the Carrion Swamp. Even though they're toxic, you just needed to find some that had less toxicity and think of a way to detoxify them. After all, magic can be used to detoxify."

Green nodded as what Buffy said was right. Buffy was a Rank Nine magician and a wind element magician. Though only light and water elements had spells that could purify, there were still many possible detoxification methods. Even the general detoxification spell of magicians could be used as a contingency. Since Buffy explored the Carrion Swamp without any space equipment, naturally he would look for less toxic plants and magic beasts, then detoxify them. He then wouldn't starve to death, nor would he be poisoned.

Green didn't inquire into this matter anymore since the most important thing was to solve the threat of the Carrion Swamp. Eating wouldn't be a problem for them since Zhao Hai had the Space. Even if Zhao Hai brought the slaves into the Carrion Swamp, there wouldn't be a food issue.

The group of people in the villa frowned after hearing what Buffy said. Although Buffy had told them a lot of information, the most important piece for Zhao Hai was the flower. They had to be more sure of it. The more pressing issue was that they had found the root of the problem. However, they hadn't obtained any solutions for it.

After a while, when Meirin saw that the others didn't have any ideas, she stood up and said, "Well, don't think about it for now. Leave this matter to Buffy. First, bring him some paper. Then let him go back out and draw a map of the terrain as he passes over it. After the map is drawn, we will have a guide we can use for when we enter the Carrion Swamp."

Zhao Hai nodded and said, "Yes. Anyway, now that we can't think of anything, let's just leave it at that. Meg, help Buffy get some paper and a pencil and let him draw the map." Meg complied with his words and went to get Buffy a pencil and paper.

Green followed. "Yes. For now, let's leave it at that. Master, it seems that we can order Drunk to return now and bring some plants and magic beasts back. So long as Master's Space levels up, everything will be alright."

Zhao Hai nodded. "Fine, I'll order Drunk to come back. We'll wait for them and see what degree the Space upgrades. As long as the Space does level up, everything will be easier."

Green nodded his head and said, "Yes. In fact, I want to emphasize that the Space does have great offensive capabilities, such as the Capture function and the Fly Swatter. They have very strong offensive power. Even Buffy, a Rank Nine expert, couldn't withstand them. Adding in the ability to use insects and mosquitoes through the other functions, and the ability of the Space is quite strong. However, since we're going into the Carrion Swamp, we can't rely heavily on these functions. We should plan carefully."

Woodhead, who hadn't spoken, suddenly said, "Grandpa Green, Master, if we let the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms carry the Ghost Cane and travel through the skies of the Carrion Swamp, we can avoid most of these perils. Just order it to go directly to Flower City and observe the situation. If they really can't survive with their strength, then let them return."

Green was stunned for a moment after hearing what Woodhead said. Then he replied, "This is a good way too. Master, how do you see it?"

Zhao Hai thought about it and said, "This approach is excellent. As long as Buffy can confirm the locations, we will be able to freely observe the situation. Furthermore, the Space can place a transfer point since I have saved them up in case there was a greater need for it. If we can really do it like what Woodhead said and go directly to Flower City, then it's possible to place a transfer point in the city itself. Then we can go in and out of there anytime."

Green stood up, walked around, and said, "I think with this matter, we should head there first to observe. Anyway, sooner or later this matter will be solved. Establishing a transfer point wouldn't only help us understand the Carrion Swamp, but can also give us a place to hide."

Zhao Hai nodded as he agreed with what Green said. Although they had the Space as their hiding place, hiding there for a long time wouldn't be a good thing. However, if they couldn't hide in Stony Mountain, nor the Black Waste since a Rank Nine expert could search there, they would only be able to hide inside the Space. Furthermore, if their identities were exposed one day, it wouldn't be safe to stay in either Stony Mountain or the Black Waste, and they really could only disappear inside the Space.

However, the Space couldn't last longer than a generation. Thus, they needed more places they could hide with a lot of security. There was no other place as vicious as the Carrion Swamp. Even a Rank Nine expert wouldn't dare enter easily.

Of course, this would only be the last option if they needed to hide. If they were really forced to retreat to the Carrion Swamp, then it only meant that they had no place on the continent.

Meirin frowned and said, "I'm afraid that it will be dangerous for Master to go. After all, Buffy said that the flower had a strength rivalling that of a Rank Nine expert. Green, remember when Buffy attacked you? If we didn't have the Space, you wouldn't have only been seriously injured."

Green nodded his head and said, "This is a problem. However, we can just let Master stay inside the Space. Then we will go out and investigate this flower that's the key to unlocking the mysteries of the Carrion Swamp."

Zhao Hai nodded. "Grandpa Green is right. Buffy did say that if he hadn't attacked the flowers, they wouldn't have assaulted him. So long as we don't take the initiative to attack those flowers, we shouldn't have anything to worry about."

Green nodded his head. "In any case, we shouldn't be worrying since it's not a big deal if we go out while the Master stays inside the Space. We'll investigate. That flower is just a plant, so Master's Space can help a lot. If this plant really is smart, then it won't be difficult for Master."

Zhao Hai and Meirin chuckled as they listened to Green. Green looked at them with a frown and said, "You both shouldn't laugh. I heard that if a plant has a soul, then it's more sensitive. For this matter, perhaps there will be a good solution."

Zhao Hai smiled and said, "Grandpa Green, I wasn't thinking that you were wrong. I also feel that if we stay together with those plants, it would be more comfortable if they can sometimes show some emotion. I just think that these matters we had been looking into have given results that we weren't expecting. Ha ha."

After Zhao Hai said this, everyone smiled. With regards to these issues, they really hadn't thought that such would be the results. It really was too funny.

Meg came back with the paper and pencil that would be given to Buffy to draw. She looked at everyone's faces and saw that the atmosphere was somewhat relaxed. Puzzled, she asked, "Grandpa, Master, why is everyone happy?"

Meirin smiled while calling her over. Then Meirin told Meg about the situation which made Meg smile too. She said, "I think Grandpa is right too. So long as Master acts, we will be able to handle it well. We should think about what we should do once the issue with the Carrion Swamp is resolved."

Zhao Hai smiled. "Your confidence in me is really high. If the issue of the Carrion Swamp was really that easy, then others would've already solved it. If it was just that, then it wouldn't be called one of the five great ominous locations on the continent."

Green didn't care much about it. "Anyway, we have already thought of a way forward, so let's try it Master. However, let's do it this way. We'll let the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm carry the Ghost Cane, but we won't set a transfer point for now. We must first look into the situation in order to avoid wasting a transfer point."

Zhao Hai nodded and said, "Alright then. As soon as we have observed the situation, we'll do it then. Right now, I'll call back Drunk's team and order them to defend the Black Waste and Stony Mountain. They don't need to explore now anyway. If they stay in those two places, we can immediately help them if something ever comes up. Let's do it like this and first wait for them to come out of the swamp."

Green shook his head and said, "This won't do. I think we should go prepare for a few days. Order Drunk to stay where there are now and allow the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm to fly over them while carrying the Ghost Cane, then let Drunk directly return back inside the Space. It will be much faster than waiting for them to come out of the swamp, right?"

Zhao Hai patted his head as if he had forgotten this. So long as the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms flew over the Carrion Swamp while carrying the Ghost Cane, it'll be able to find Drunk's team. Why should he order them to come out of the swamp when he could do it this way?

During the next few days, Zhao Hai prepared to head into the Carrion Swamp. Since they already knew the key to solving the threat of the Carrion Swamp, they should try it. Otherwise, the Black Waste wouldn't find any peace.

For now, they were waiting for Buffy to finish drawing a map. Although they would be using the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm to fly over the swamp, they still needed the map. Buffy himself wasn't able to find Flower City within just a day. He didn't encounter much danger going there, but it still took him a month of exploring the Carrion Swamp in order to do so.

Chapter 172 - Into the Swamp

Nowadays, the trading cooperation between Zhao Hai and Laura had been very stable. The addition of ten mu of farmable land in the Space had allowed Zhao Hai to plant all kinds of magic vegetables, not allowing any of the land to idle.

These new kinds of magic vegetables were assessed by the Space as level 15, so the time for them to mature was a bit longer, around a day or so. Moreover, these crops had a three harvest season rotation, which made it so that Zhao Hai wouldn't need to attend to them too much.

These five types of crops were magic vegetables, but Zhao Hai thought that they looked like the vegetables from Earth. The tubers looked like potatoes, the sweet peppers looked like green peppers, the red turnips looked like carrots, the olives looked like tomatoes, and the green lettuce looked like celtuce.

Although they looked similar, their taste was a lot better than the vegetables from Earth. This might be due to the magic elements within, but Zhao Hai didn't feel anything.

Zhao Hai's ranch also wasn't idle. The hundred vacancies that had been added after the upgrade were used to raise more Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. With this many, it would soon be comparable to an air

force in numbers. Zhao Hai believed that after another upgrade, the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms would probably be able to carry people, allowing them to form a proper air force.

Five days after they exterminated him, Buffy finally finished the map. Although the map was simple, for Zhao Hai and everybody else, this was very useful.

Buffy had explored the place several times already. However, he hadn't flown in a straight line towards Flower City. Instead, he'd gone all around the Carrion Swamp for a while before arriving at Flower City.

Zhao Hai asked Buffy if he deliberately did this, but was surprised when he heard Buffy's reply. He said that he hadn't intended to do so, but just wanted to go to the other end of the Carrion Swamp to see what was there. However, upon entering the swamp, he was completely surrounded by the smog, which made him feel disoriented. Although he felt as if he were moving in a straight path, in the end he had just been flying around in circles.

Even rushing out of the swamp was hard as Buffy had gone the wrong way a lot of the time. Only at the end had he finally found the way out.

With this thought, Zhao Hai couldn't help but think of Drunk. Although Drunk wasn't that deep into the Carrion Swamp, he still feared that going back wouldn't be easy. Seemingly, the Carrion Swamp wasn't simple.

After Buffy finished drawing the map, Zhao Hai didn't immediately move, but instead went to Casa City and bought a section of magic beast hide. This magic beast hide had been processed into leather. It was around two meters long and a meter wide. After tidying it up a little, they took Buffy's drawing and carefully copied it onto the piece of leather, expanding out from the small portion.

Due to the agreement between the Aksu Empire and Buda clan, the Carrion Swamp was considered a part of the Buda clan's territory. If you really measured the entirety of the Carrion Swamp and dictated it as a part of the Buda clan's land, then they would have a territory larger than the entirety of the Aksu Empire.

It was known by everyone on the continent that the territory of the Buda clan was basically useless, even though it was very large. Consider the Carrion Swamp, which no one dared to enter, and then add

in the Black Waste, and it just shows that the piece of the territory the Buda clan occupied was just a desert in reality.

Zhao Hai, however, didn't think of it like that. If they could really solve the threat of the Carrion Swamp, then not only would that threat be solved, but all of the problems within the Black Waste would also be solved.

Solving the threat of the Carrion Swamp would make it so that no magic beasts or undead would come out from there and make trouble through the Black Waste. Also, Zhao Hai had placed a lot of undead and magic beasts of his own around the periphery of the Black Waste to seal it up. This made it so that the average person wouldn't dare enter there and cause a greater ruckus. Even if they wanted to make a lot of noise and flip the skies, no one would know.

This was the result Zhao Hai wanted as he would be changing the Carrion Swamp and Black Waste into an independent kingdom. When the day comes that they finally had enough strength, then even if their situation were to be known to all, no one would dare move against them.

It was for this reason that Zhao Hai had thought of placing the map onto the piece of leather and increase the scope of it. It was so that he could have a very good look at the entirety of his territory.

Zhao Hai and Green used up several days in order to complete this map. After completing the map, they were now ready to go explore the Carrion Swamp. Furthermore, they now had more than one thousand Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. Such a quantity wasn't small. Although a human couldn't ride atop an Eagle Virtuous Phantasm, these birds obeyed any command given by Zhao Hai. So long as Zhao Hai ordered them, their overall battle prowess would be very high.

In fact, they hadn't prepared much before heading into the Carrion Swamp since they only needed to select a few to go. They wouldn't take the slaves, thus they didn't have to worry about food and water, as well as the toxin. What this meant was that they didn't have any worries at all

The preparations that Zhao Hai did was actually for the cooperation between Laura and them. Since they had the Space, transactions with Laura wouldn't be a problem. However, they were now going inside the Carrion Swamp. If there really were a problem that they could not run from, then they had to make the necessary arrangements. Else it would become very troublesome.

The business cooperation between them had grown further as they traded bamboo rice, radishes, fruit oil, and blue-eyed rabbits with Laura, all of which made Zhao Hai really busy.

Fortunately, with the help of the Space, everything moved according to his plans. However, handing everything over to Laura was an issue.

In the end, Zhao Hai used the same arrangements he'd used from when they had done transactions with the Purcell clan. The method was that Zhao Hai would place the products at the foot of the mountain while Laura picked them up from there.

It could now be considered very quiet around Stony Mountain, especially after the Purcell clan transferred back their slaves to the Ica plains to level the land as well as plant some crops. Although they couldn't collect much food, some of it would still end up as edible. Thus, they could avoid any significant shortages.

The Purcell clan had been able to restore peace in the end. In fact, although the food crisis was a serious disaster, the most important losses were the ones that had happened inside the clan. Although the Purcell clan had a great heritage, their losses this time, which hadn't been made known to the public, wasn't any natural calamity that randomly happened. Rather, it was a man-made calamity. It wasn't something that Zhao Hai's pest crisis had instigated, but problems caused by the merchants.

If these merchants hadn't disturbed the market, then everyone in the Purcell Duchy would have had an easier time dealing with the food crisis. There wouldn't be any food price fluctuations, nor would any rumors have been spread. The Purcell Duchy might have only lost some money. If they weren't under such heavy pressure, then they might not have been in the mood to look for trouble against the Buda clan.

However, this matter wasn't without its advantages. Since Evan now held the highest authority in the Purcell clan, it could be considered a good thing, especially for Zhao Hai. On the other hand, this wasn't good for the merchants who hadn't acted honorably during the crisis and had even caused the Purcell clan to heighten their vigilance towards them. This was especially true in the case of the food commodities, along with the basic commodities. More importantly, wanting to cooperate with the Purcell clan in the future would be impossible.

The tranquility that the Purcell clan was having had both advantages and disadvantages for Zhao Hai. On one hand, he would benefit from the ease in which he conducted business inside the Purcell Duchy. On

the other hand, with the stability of the Purcell clan, they might come and examine the situation inside the Black Waste.

Zhao Hai wasn't too worried about that matter. If someone really did come to the Black Waste, there would be no fear of them being able to hide from the undead in the area. This allowed Zhao Hai to easily prepare ahead of time.

Zhao Hai had actually told Laura that he would be going somewhere far, but the truth was that most of the time, he was usually either at Fort Iron Mountain or at Stony Mountain. He would just make the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm carry the Ghost Cane over the swamp. When they stopped to rest, he could go out of the Space and check around for some particular plants. For the rest of the time, Zhao Hai didn't stay too long in the Carrion Swamp.

Finally, ten days after Buffy had gone out and been extinguished by Zhao Hai, everything was ready. Zhao Hai released five Eagle Virtuous Phantasms which then flew towards the Carrion Swamp.

However, he hadn't thought that just after the eagles entered the swamp, the Space would prompt and in a tone, say:

[Biochemical beasts exposed to toxic substances.

Mutating genes.

Assimilated toxicity.

Enhancing genes.

Added toxicity to attack.]

This made Zhao Hai shocked. Green was puzzled as well and asked, "Master, the Space had already strengthened the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms before. Just like the undead, their attacks should have already been toxified, right? "

Zhao Hai thought about it for a while, then shook his head afterwards. "It seems they weren't. The Space didn't do what it usually does to the undead, and it also hasn't strengthened the magic beasts. We should pay attention to this matter in the future."

Green nodded his head and said, "Yes, if the Space can strengthen magic beasts just like the undead, then their battle efficiency will unceasingly increase. When that time comes, we can relax."

Zhao Hai smiled. "The magical abilities the Space currently displays is beyond my imagination. Who knows what will happen in the future. Anyway, the level of the ranch is still too low. Perhaps once we level it up, we will have more pleasant surprises to see."

Green nodded, looking pleased. "Yes, ah, the farm alone has already given us a lot of surprises. I'm really anticipating what other surprises the ranch will show us."

Zhao Hai also had expectations. Although he had a very good understanding of the farms and ranches in computer games, the present situation of the farm made him understand that he didn't actually know much. Only after leveling the Space would it enable him to see a summary of the abilities it had. However, although he saw these summaries, they were written quite vaguely. Thus, this made Zhao Hai surprised at the beginning when the Space improved the crops.

Zhao Hai and Green stared at the screen inside the Space. They themselves hadn't truly entered the Carrion Swamp as they were still observing what kind of environment the swamp had.

Zhao Hai was unexpectedly surprised. They had all thought that the visibility inside the Carrion Swamp would be very low. However, contrary to what they understood, the visibility inside the smog wasn't low and was even somewhat equal to the visibility outside. They had a visibility of over two hundred meters. Although it wasn't as clear as that of a sunny day, it was still better than what they had imagined it to be.

Chapter 173 - Upgrade Again

Zhao Hai and Green paid attention to the situation happening on the screen. Although the screen could only show what happened within two hundred meters, for the both of them this was already very good.

They really hadn't thought that the swamp would look like this. Even the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms were greatly influenced by it. However, the plants that they saw weren't taken by Zhao Hai since he believed Drunk would have already gotten those plants for him. He might as well wait to meet Drunk, then allow Drunk to come back inside the Space.

While the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm flew over the swamp, Zhao Hai himself didn't watch. Instead, he let the others do it.

The speed of the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms weren't slow while flying. However, flying over the Carrion Swamp while surrounded by the seven-colored smog made their speed slow. Even if they wanted to speed up, it wouldn't be possible.

Since the time to do transactions with Laura hadn't arrived yet, Zhao Hai and Green didn't go outside. Once a person came to observe the situation from the screen and replace them, they would go back to their own rooms and rest.

The Eagle Virtuous Phantasms hadn't encountered Drunk that day, which made Zhao Hai feel very strange. Drunk had only explored over a thousand kilometers, less than 1,500 kilometers into the swamp. Supposedly, the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm had also already covered over a thousand kilometers and less than 1,500 kilometers, which should have meant that they'd have encountered each other already. However, they currently haven't yet, which was really surprising.

Zhao Hai didn't let the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms rest on a small island in the swamp during the night, but instead let them rest inside the Space. The following morning, unlike the original plan which was to keep flying straight, the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms flew around the area as Zhao Hai was afraid they'd missed Drunk. He wanted to look and see if they could find where Drunk was.

However, to Zhao Hai's surprise, they weren't able to locate Drunk. The Eagle Virtuous Phantasms flew sideways for over three hours and they still hadn't found Drunk. Zhao Hai and Green felt that something was wrong and decided to let the eagles fly back, thinking that they could find Drunk that way.

Zhao Hai and Green might have felt that something was wrong, but it was also possible that they just couldn't recognize the places that they had already seen. After all, the visibility in the swamp was still too low. They might as well wait while looking at the big screen in the Space.

Meirin came back inside the Space during the evening to prepare food for Zhao Hai and Green. During the daytime, she watched over the slaves at Fort Iron Mountain, which made her very busy.

Zhao Hai didn't want Meirin to be so busy, but Meirin had gotten used to being active throughout her life. Thus, keeping her idle would make her feel somewhat unfamiliar.

Upon entering the Space, Meirin found it somewhat strange that Zhao Hai and Green frowned as they sat in front of the screen. They were still watching over the situation at the swamp, which appeared to be normal. "Master, how is it? What happened?" Meirin curiously asked.

At the same time, Meg had also just come back from the outside. She smiled after hearing Meirin ask these question and also looked puzzledly at Zhao Hai and Green.

Zhao Hai smiled. "There's not much to worry about. However, we still haven't found Drunk today. We're a little anxious since Drunk told us they weren't moving from the small island where they'd been. However, we still haven't found them today. We just feel that it's strange."

Meirin smiled and said. "Master, it isn't that you couldn't find Drunk, but rather that you forgot that you'd ordered him to go back to monitor Buffy. Buffy may not know them and definitely didn't look for them. That's why he flew straight ahead and without any thoughts of going back to look for them. So, we can't just relax and let the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm fly back since Drunk will definitely be found."

As Meirin told Zhao Hai of such things, Zhao Hao couldn't help but stamp his foot. "Yes, there really was such a thing. When Buffy went into the swamp, no one told him to look for Drunk. Naturally, he just flew straight ahead in order to make the map. It seems like what Grandma Meirin said was correct; that while Buffy was flying, he probably met Drunk."

Green smiled as he became aware of the issue and said, "The two of us were at this for a long time. We're not as good as the old woman in terms of thinking this through. I also became aware of that only after she said it. Tomorrow, we should let the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm fly out of the swamp so that can take a good look."

The next day, Zhao Hai allowed the eagles to fly straight, yet they still couldn't find Drunk's team. However, at night, Drunk's team rested at a campsite. Although they couldn't see Drunk, Drunk had seen the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms.

Drunk and his team were undead. Although they were zombies, their heights were still similar to that of a human. When they looked at something, they used their personal senses instead of their sight. Thus, the colorful smog didn't have any impact on their senses and they could feel the presence of things they examined from a large enough distance.

The Eagle Virtuous Phantasms weren't the same as they still relied on their sense of sight in order to see things. Although their Eagle Eye was powerful, in a place where it was covered with smog, it was still not easy to notice things.

Zhao Hai was afraid to miss Drunk, so he ordered those undead in the team to line up. He then ordered them to be on alert. As soon as they saw the five eagles, they were to immediately tell Zhao Hai as he really didn't want to miss them.

Drunk had really gained a lot of things this time around. There were a lot of Carrion Swamp plants that were very unique and weren't ones that had been seen before by Zhao Hai.

Upon placing all the plants that Drunk's team had collected into the Space, the Space actually rose to level 15, which made Zhao Hai really surprised.

After reaching level 15, they could now open up twenty mu of land. Unfortunately, most of the plants were poisonous. But they weren't that toxic and were just plain poisonous plants. Even though the space had been upgraded by four levels, it still had no way of cleansing the toxicity within the plants.

Zhao Hai wasn't short on money right now, so he naturally opened up the twenty mu of land. He wasn't polite as he planted the seeds that the Space had awarded all over the land.

From level 10 to level 15, the Space had given him an award of four kinds of seeds. They were namely: soybeans, sponge gourd, bamboo shoots, and grapes.

Before level 10, the space only awarded an amount of seeds that could be planted within two mu of land. However, after level 10, the seeds that were awarded could be planted in upwards of five mu of land.

Zhao Hai was still observing two kinds of crops in the Spatial Shop. These two crops were like the Magic Peach and had special abilities as well. One was called Ba Jiaoshan while the other was the Immortal Gourd. Banana Leaves were used as a material for the Palm-leaf Fan in the Journey to the West. It was a type of a wind magic plant that could produce strong winds, with a ten percent probability of the item having the ability to reach a distance of up to 5,000 kilometers. The space had evaluated it as a level 15 special plant. In order to cultivate it, the Space needed to be level 20.

The Immortal Gourd was similar, but its main effect had a more special use. It was able to be used to make wine. The Immortal Gourd had an infinite space. Crops suitable for wine could be absorbed into the gourd's reed. Then it'll automatically start brewing, making it very convenient.

Although it had such features, it also required the Space to be level 20. As well, while the Immortal Gourd could absorb a lot of wine making materials, if it was still young, it could only absorb enough to make five kilograms every seven days. Half a kilogram of wine needed fifty kilograms of grain, and also a minimum of 25 kilograms of fruit, else it would be impossible.

The wine was excellent as it didn't only heal minor injuries, but could also instantly restore magic power or battle qi. For both magicians or warriors, this was very important.

Zhao Hai also knew that the Magic Peach was the same as it was an award from the Space given before reaching level 10. In order to cultivate it, there was a restriction, which was to reach level 10. This was the case for the Ba Jiaoshan and Immortal Gourd as they were special items. The seeds were given before reaching the level required to plant it, which was the case for these two. They were given at level 15, but could only be planted at level 20, showing that there was the restriction.

Zhao Hai wasn't too concerned about the Ba Jiaoshan as its usefulness wasn't that great. It didn't have the ability to cause mass destruction. As long as the enemy had good defensive capabilities, then there wouldn't be much damage. All it could do was to blow the enemy away.

The Immortal Gourd, on the other hand, would be really useful. However, the yield was very low as it would take seven days to produce five kilograms, which was really too lacking. Both of these magic plants required the Space to be level 20 in order to be planted, so Zhao Hai didn't buy them yet.

The toxic plants that were collected by Drunk were somewhat useful. These plants had helped upgrade the Space and were also edible. Not only that, they could also be used to produce some detox potions. However, producing a detox potion would require the Space to be level 30, as that was the level required to be able to open the Processing Plant.

Zhao Hai and Green didn't have enough time to manage all of this, so after they brought Drunk back into the Space, Drunk was immediately placed at Fort Iron Mountain to guard it. Then the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms were ordered to fly straight into the Carrion Swamp.

Chapter 174 - Treasuring a Jade Ring Becomes a Crime

While Zhao Hai explored the Carrion Swamp, Casa City wasn't too peaceful. This time around, it wasn't the Purcell clan, but rather Laura who was in trouble.

Laura's business was larger than ever before as the Higanbana firm accounted for fifty percent of the entire commodities market within the Purcell Duchy. This figure was quite alarming.

Although the Purcell Duchy wasn't as great as the other duchies, the commodities market of an entire duchy was still quite large. In fact, it was quite a luxuriant line of business. How much did the people eat everyday? Saying that every day would be a struggle for their gold wasn't absolutely an exaggeration.

If there was a block of fat there, then everyone would want a piece. But if that fat was stuck on bone, then not everyone would be able to sink their teeth into it.

An outsider trying to take a bite would be quite a hard feat, but that doesn't mean a family member couldn't try to eat it. This time, the schemes Laura had to fight against were by none other than the Markey Dell clan.

Although Laura's father was the second heir, the old patriarch was still alive. He was Laura's grandfather, and Karen's father, Sioux.

The old patriarch ruled the Markey Dell clan's huge business empire. He wasn't an easy person to deal with as he was a pure businessman. Everything and anyone, in his eyes, were just business commodities. For commodities, so long as the price was right, he could sell them.

This old patriarch of the Markey Dell clan had very good business sense, which was beyond the imagination of ordinary men. His methods were extreme, and since the time he had taken over the Markey Dell clan, the clan's business had become a lot larger.

Although the Markey Dell clan's business was doing great, to have half the shares of the commodities market within a duchy, like what Laura had, wasn't something the clan was able to do. In comparison to the income of the other heirs, Laura's income was quite high.

This situation wasn't something the old patriarch would meddle with. To be honest, the old patriarch's thoughts about his second son weren't really positive. This was due to Karen's attitude towards doing business.

In the opinion of the old patriarch, if you were born in the Markey Dell clan and you didn't want to do business, then what were you going to do? If Karen wanted to learn magic, then he should excel in it. However, Karen hadn't. His life was not for cultivating magic, but rather, for researching magic.

If Karen really liked to cultivate magic, then even if he didn't do business, as long as he became a powerful magician then it would be of great help for the Markey Dell clan. However, he'd only chosen to study magic. His strength was also only just that of a peak Rank Seven magician.

A Rank Seven magician was a great presence in the eyes of the commoners. However, for a clan such as the Markey Dell clan, a Rank Seven magician was inadequate.

Since the clan didn't pay any attention to Karen, and along with Karen's attitude towards doing business, even though he was the second heir, he had already lost the possibility of inheriting and becoming the next clan patriarch. Therefore, he was banished to the small northern area, the Purcell Duchy.

The location of the Purcell Duchy in the Aksu Empire wasn't good. It was in the north where it bordered with the Beastfolk. Although the Beastfolk haven't caused any major problems lately, the Purcell clan would always have to be on guard in order to avoid any major disasters from happening, year in and year out. If those Beastfolk created trouble, then there wouldn't be much money to be made from doing

business with the Purcell Duchy as the duchy was not very developed. This made it a somewhat remote and small area of the Aksu Empire.

However, even if it was a remote area, the people living there still needed daily necessities. And Laura, being a genius in business, had already spread the Taoyuan commodities throughout the Purcell Duchy and had even begun to export them throughout the Aksu Empire.

Laura certainly didn't cooperate with others as all of this business was handled by herself, especially in the distribution and sales of the Taoyuan commodities. With regards to the daily necessity stores, Laura promoted a live advertisement, stating that even if she were willing to cooperate with others, she had already made an agreement with Zhao Hai. Their agreement was that if she ever let others sell Taoyuan brand commodities, then Zhao Hai would cease to provide her with the products.

It was precisely because of the Taoyuan brand commodities that there was such success, so naturally, it made a lot of people envious. Putting others aside, even the heirs of the Markey Dell clan wanted to fight against her.

The fight between the heirs of the Markey Dell clan in other aspects wasn't too serious. However, the ability of an heir to do business was very important. This was also important when selecting the rightful heir of the Markey Dell clan.

Vying for the position of the next Clan Head were, besides Karen, the seven provincial heirs. These heirs would obstruct and maneuver against each other until they had indisputably beaten each other. This was a normal occurrence within the clan.

Karen's father understood the situation as he was already quite old. However, he wasn't ready to give up his position even though he allowed his heirs to run their own businesses. The every action of these heirs couldn't be hidden from him.

Karen was the exception. Karen and Laura were in the Purcell Duchy, and the influence of the Markey Dell clan hadn't reached there yet. It could be said that Laura going out and establishing her own firm in the Purcell Duchy didn't conform to what the Markey Dell clan wanted. However, she had never asked for anything from the clan to assist her.

It was precisely because of this that the Markey Dell clan's influence over Karen was minimal. Moreover, Laura didn't need to fear the clan this time around. She had helped the Purcell clan, so Evan was indebted to her. The Purcell clan would show kindness to Laura, and there wouldn't be any matter that would negatively affect them inside the boundaries of the Purcell Duchy.

One must also know that Laura was backed by the producer of the Taoyuan commodities, a black magician. That was something a lot of people were afraid of.

However, the most attractive thing were the benefits. To get benefits, people were willing to do everything they could, just like how it was when Zhao Hai was on Earth. To gain benefits, people would dare to do anything. Seemingly, this was a law that was relative to both planets. But on the Ark Continent, they could easily do it unlawfully. Such people would naturally do anything in their power in order to gain benefits.

Others wouldn't dare to struggle when it involved someone of the Markey Dell clan. However, the members and heirs of the Markey Dell clan wouldn't be as polite.

This time around, the old patriarch of the Markey Dell clan hadn't sent anyone. To be honest, even after Laura had made such a large scene, the old patriarch wasn't going to give them any attention. However, this was not the case for the heirs since they were now engaged in a battle for the right to obtain the Clan Head's position. If they could get the Taoyuan commodities, then it would give them a great boost.

The heir that looked for Laura was not Karen's brother, the first heir Cenwen, but rather the fifth heir of the Markey Dell clan, Carlo.

Of course, Carlo didn't come personally, but instead sent his own steward, Alodia. Carlo grew up with Alodia as his servant. Later on, when Carlo established his own force, Alodia was promoted to his steward because of his competency. Alodia, however, wasn't one of the clan's main stewards, but only an elder steward as he was in charge of assessing contributions.

Although the Markey Dell clan had eight heirs, there were only three powerful competitors. First was Karen's brother who was the first-in-position heir, Cenwen. Next was Carlo, and the third was Jamie.

The most vigorous of them was Jamie since he was highly favored by the Markey Dell clan's patriarch, Sioux. However, Karen's brother, Cenwen, was the one who had the greatest support inside the clan.

This was due to the handling of his business, which was the oldest one among the heirs. Thus, he had a lot of influence with powerful people.

Carlo was the weakest of the three as he didn't have the patriarch's favor, nor massive supporters like Cenwen. However, he was the person who had the best behavior as he handled matters splendidly in all sorts of social occasions. He had even maintained a very good relationship with the nobles and was approved by the clan's servants.

Compared to Karen's position, Carlo's status was a lot higher. Sending Alodia to see Karen was, in fact, giving Karen a lot of face.

Before Alodia arrived in Casa City, Laura already knew about it and had asked Karen and Quinn John to meet her in the study room. She then said, "Grandpa Quinn John, Father, this visit of Alodia's this time looks like it won't be a good thing. How do you see it?"

Karen said thoughtfully, "How can he so easily come and see us?"

Laura looked at Karen, speechless, so she turned her head to Quinn John. Quinn John saw Laura's look and calmly said, "Before, during that accident of yours Laura, it could have happened due to some people of the clan who might have tried to reach out to us here. Since your route was a secret, there must have been a breach of confidentiality from the family. In the beginning, we had sent people to investigate and the evidence points to Sir Cenwen.

"But now, I think it unlikely since Sir Cenwen wouldn't need to do such a thing. Furthermore, during that time, we hadn't amounted to anything when compared to now. Up until now, we haven't aroused his interest. So I concluded that someone else had done this and was planning to pin everything on Sir Cenwen. The people who might have done this would be either Carlo or Jamie as they have always been thinking of ways to attack Sir Cenwen. And now, Carlo has sent someone. I feel that this isn't looking good."

Laura nodded and said, "Of course this isn't a good thing. However, I don't know their motives for coming here yet. Is it for our firm, or is it the Taoyuan products?"

Quinn John replied, "I'm afraid it won't be due to our firm. If he really dares to grab our firm's gains, then he would lose the right and qualifications to compete for the next head of the clan. As I see it, it

will definitely be for the Taoyuan products. This is especially likely since right now, in the conflict between the three, he has the most inferior standing. Thus, he will want to use the Taoyuan products in order to expand his influence.”

Chapter 175 - Alodia

Laura frowned and said, “I had already thought of this situation beforehand, but I never thought that this would happen so fast. We’ve only just improved our situation by a little bit and they are already coming. I think we need to talk to Mister about this.”

Quinn John nodded. “We definitely should tell Mister about this, but we should wait and see what Alodia does and what he has to say. Afterwards, we can then tell Mister. After all, we cannot let just any minor issue bother Mister.”

“Let’s talk about this two days later then,” Laura said. “About the issue of the clan’s response, since we haven’t expanded our business that much, and have only just settled here in the Purcell Duchy, we should try and open one to two stores in the other big cities. I’m sure it won’t affect their businesses and I don’t even think they would still remember us.”

Quinn John sighed and said, “The Taoyuan products are really too appealing. Although we allow our stores to sell the products without limits here in the Purcell Duchy, we will have to limit the sales in the other big cities. However, for a popular brand such as Taoyuan, just having such products be known that it exists will make it very clear to everyone what it means to sell it in their own stores. As such, everyone will definitely try to take a hold of it.”

Laura coldly snorted. “They only think of us now that the Taoyuan products have become famous. Back then, we weren’t even given attention. Right now, even if we’re willing to submit to them, it might result in Mister deciding to stop the cooperation. Hmph. Well, let’s see what these fellows intend to do.”

Karen listened to the two as they talked, but he wasn’t interested in such a discussion. Still, he was a bit interested in Alodia. As Quinn John said, he may be here due to Laura’s business. Karen was also somewhat angry.

Karen was a nice guy, that's true. However, if they moved against his daughter, then he wouldn't be polite. He just couldn't possibly endure it. Especially since he knew about everything that happened here in the Purcell Duchy, such as Laura's struggles where, bit by bit, she raised the reputation of her firm. All of these efforts were done to make the firm great. If they really wanted to move it, then it would be the same as moving against Laura. How could Karen let it happen?

Karen sullenly said, "Laura, if anything happens, don't forget to tell me. Although I'm not really into business, after many years I have gotten to know some magicians that have become dear friends of mine. They will definitely help us if things get busy."

Karen spoke somewhat contrary to what Laura was used to. The Karen she knew generally wouldn't be this aggressive. Doing otherwise today made her feel a bit unfamiliar with it. Laura replied, "Don't worry Father, if anything comes up I will definitely inform you."

Karen nodded, stood up, and turned to leave. Laura didn't stop him. She had never thought that Karen would help her this much.

Although Karen was a magician, after all these years, he knew not only magicians but a lot of pharmacists and alchemists. In the eyes of a normal person, these alchemists and pharmacists were crazy. They liked to study a mess of things. Due to this, their lives were very difficult. However, from time to time, Karen helped them.

Even if this could be considered as making contacts, it wasn't that useful as the empire didn't give them much importance. Only people like Karen and other lunatics would contact these lunatics. This implied that Karen was a lunatic himself.

Laura looked at Karen's back and said, "Grandpa Quinn John, Father seems a little bit odd today."

Quinn John smiled and said, "It's fine, he is just feeling a little sad. He feels that he can't help you. After all, a father wouldn't want to see their children suffer and be embarrassed. Anyway, forget about this and think about Alodia. If he really does propose something related to the Taoyuan products, what are we going to do?"

Laura coldly snorted again. "I don't fear them. It's not like they can rob the Taoyuan products from us. Hmph. We're here in the Purcell Duchy's territory. We don't need to be afraid of them. We're going to fight."

Quinn John smiled. "I'm also not afraid of them and they really can't take away the Taoyuan products. However, you should know that those people from the clan aren't anything good. If we don't agree, I fear that they will move against us by using some underhanded method. We should do some preparations ahead of time."

Laura's eyes gleamed as she nodded. "If they do use those little tricks, it won't be a problem. If they dare to play tricks on us, then I will teach them a lesson. Let's see if they dare act recklessly."

Quinn John slightly smiled. "We should do it so that the clan knows our current strength. Later, once the Young Lady talks to the clan about conditions, we'll have even more persuasive power."

Laura nodded. She knew her current situation. Since she was already eighteen years old, like in other clans, girls at that age should have already been married. However, she still wasn't married up till now.

This didn't have anything to do with her mother. If her mother were still alive, she would have already arranged for her marriage. To be honest, Laura felt good about her current situation. She had always reasoned out that they should focus on business in order to avoid marriage. Also, of those noble clan heirs that had been introduced to her, none caught her eye.

Those aristocratic clan heirs were either proud like an arrogant cock, as hypocritical as a fox, or as gloomy as snakes. Or they were dandies, which she didn't like.

It was precisely because of this that Laura did her best to learn everything about business. This was so that the clan wouldn't force her into marriage. For the Markey Dell clan, a marriage would have to be made with another large noble clan. Otherwise, they wouldn't be good enough for them.

Regarding Laura's business management, she was doing her best to perform strongly. Although her businesses were now stable, she didn't relax a bit. She clearly understood that these businesses would be her bargaining chip against her own clan.

However, in order to cope with the arrival of Alodia, Laura made advanced preparations and allowed the stewards of the stores to prepare their eye drops so that they would be a little honest.

Laura had a good discussion with them and on the third day, Alodia arrived at Casa City. Naturally, he reported first to Laura.

Laura's house in Casa City wasn't small and was a distance away from their stores. Her residence was in an area of Casa City that was expensive and was the area where the rich lived. If you didn't have an identity, then it would simply be impossible to live there.

Since Carlo had a high status in the Markey Dell clan, Alodia's status, being his steward, wouldn't be low either. However, Laura couldn't just meet with him. No matter what, Alodia was still a servant of the Markey Dell clan. It should always be that the servants go to meet the masters.

In the past, Laura had some contacts with Alodia. Alodia was a tall and lean person who usually worked very carefully and did things low-key.

Laura, Karen, and Quinn John were sitting in the parlor room. A servant led Alodia to them. Just like from Laura's memory, Alodia was tall and lean and looked to be in his sixties. His face was weathered and his attitude was very respectful. He entered the room and immediately made his greetings to Karen. "This little Alodia greets the Second Young Master and have seen Miss Laura and steward Quinn John."

In the Markey Dell clan, the heirs were to be called young master since Master Sioux was still alive. Alodia was a man of the Markey Dell clan, so he knew what to call them.

Karen looked at Alodia, nodded, and said, "No need to be polite. I wonder how Fifth Younger Brother is. It has been a long time since I last saw him."

Alodia quickly replied, "The Fifth Young Master is fine, he is just too busy. That is why he could not come and meet the Second Young Master. As such, the Fifth Young Master apologizes to the Second Young Master for it."

Karen nodded his head. "Fifth Younger Brother is so kind. He still remembers his disappointing brother. I am very happy to hear that. Anyway, since you know I am not into such matters, tell Laura what you have to say." He then stood up and walked out.

Alodia was apparently very understanding, so he wasn't surprised by how Karen acted. He bowed to Karen and said, "I see off the Second Young Master."

Karen nodded his head and walked out of the parlor room.

As Karen left the parlor room, Laura smiled and said, "Steward Alodia, you don't have to remain standing, please sit down. You've worked very hard today."

Alodia gently sat down in a chair. "Thank you, Miss Laura, for being concerned over this one's inexpensive little life. Rushing down the road was not very hard."

Laura nodded and replied to Alodia, "This business of Fifth Uncle presumably isn't bad. With the abilities of uncle, business should be a piece of cake, right?"

Alodia smiled. "The Young Master's business is very good. Only, recently he has been very busy, otherwise he would have personally visited. The Young Master also told this little one to give a gift to the Second Master and Miss Laura. It is in the carriage."

Laura nodded her head. "Uncle is too kind. Grandpa Quinn John, please order some people to move the gifts into the storehouse. Also, please prepare a convenient place for steward Alodia. He had been travelling for two days, taking great difficulty to head out here to the Purcell Duchy."

Alodia saluted Laura and said, "This little one thanks Miss Laura."

Laura nodded. "You've worked hard along the way, so go rest for two days. If you have anything to say, please do so after those two days if it isn't urgent. That will do for now."

Alodia quickly stood up and said, "This little one has nothing urgent to say and will take his leave." He finished his ceremonies to Laura and walked out.

Laura really didn't expect Alodia to really back down. Now, she was doubting if Alodia's gourd was selling medicine.

Soon, Quinn John came back. Laura looked at Quinn John and asked, "Grandpa Quinn John, how did it go?"

Quinn John said, "It seems like they were really prepared this time. Aside from our present, there are two more carriages. Evidently, they also contain gifts. However, I don't know to whom they will be sending these gifts."

Laura frowned and said, "For now, we'll wait. During these two days, they will surely make their move."

Chapter 176 - Give Me Face

Alodia really didn't disappoint Laura as, right after arriving in Casa City, he immediately moved. Plus, his movements couldn't easily be hidden from Laura. Thus it was clear that they didn't intend to hide their movements from her, and she was surprised to see that Alodia's first move was to head to the Grand Duke's Mansion.

Laura hadn't thought that Alodia would end up going to the Grand Duke's Mansion. This was a bit beyond her expectations, but she thought that it was also reasonable of him to do so.

Anyway, since Alodia was the representative of Carlo, and Carlo was an heir of the Markey Dell clan with the same status as Karen, it was appropriate that they would end up visiting Grand Duke Evan. This was especially the case since Carlo could become the next head of the Markey Dell clan. Since Alodia was his representative, it was quite appropriate.

However, Laura was cautious since she thought that Alodia's visit to Grand Duke Evan wasn't that simple. Moreover, the people of the continent already knew that the Purcell clan owed a favor to her for her help in the food crisis. Not just that, but she had also backed up Evan when he tried to get his authority back. It could be said that Evan was her patron, so if you wanted to move against her, you must first settle this patron.

Alodia was obviously targeting the Taoyuan products this time. Since the Taoyuan products were the most precious thing in Laura's hands, it would be impossible for her to let it go. If they wanted to get the Taoyuan products from Laura, then they had to use some other ways, especially since she was still in the Purcell Duchy. This meant that they needed to first settle Grand Duke Evan. So long as you could make Grand Duke Evan stop protecting Laura, then even if he didn't help them deal with her, it would be enough.

After Laura saw that Alodia was heading for the Grand Duke's Mansion, she immediately thought of such things. Sadly, she had no way to stop the meeting since it could be considered an official visit between Alodia and Grand Duke Evan. How could she try to stop it?

This was open intrigue. Even if Laura knew what Alodia was going to do, she couldn't do anything about it. She wanted to see just how much Alodia could achieve. If, in the end, Alodia really could convince Grand Duke Evan, then she would be really disappointed.

However, Laura wasn't too worried. After all, even if Grand Duke Evan were to stop protecting her after meeting with Alodia, there was still Zhao Hai. If Laura's trust in Grand Duke Evan was ten, then her trust in Zhao Hai was a hundred.

Although Laura didn't stop the meeting between Alodia and Grand Duke Evan, she still secretly observed Alodia. Since he dared to act so boldly, she was sure that Carlo had already approved it. However, since they would be moving around in the Purcell Duchy, which was Laura's territory, Laura didn't fear that they could so easily flip the skies and leave.

Grand Duke Evan didn't let Laura down. After Alodia went to see him, he'd immediately sent someone to inform Laura that Alodia wanted to deal with her. This time, Alodia had entered his city. He told Alodia that if he were to move against Laura, then it would be tantamount to offending the Grand Duke.

The Grand Duke's words were serious. Although the Markey Dell clan was very powerful, the Purcell clan itself wasn't weak. The Markey Dell clan was a business clan while the Purcell clan had their own duchy. If Alodia really dared to move against Laura, it would be tantamount to offending Grand Duke Evan. A Grand Duke must have dignity, which meant that there was no way he would retract what he'd said. He would not be incoherent with his words. This was what it meant to be the ruler of a duchy.

Laura hadn't thought that Evan would give her so much face. Since the Grand Duke had stated it already, even if Carlo were to really move against Laura, they would have to think twice before doing so.

Laura knew though that Alodia wouldn't stop with this just after hitting the wall that was the Grand Duke. They should still have other ideas. With this, she feared that they would start moving against Zhao Hai.

With this thought, Laura couldn't sit idly by and immediately ordered people to prepare her carriage. Simultaneously, Quinn John had gone to the Grand Duke's Mansion to express their gratitude. She didn't go herself to the Grand Duke's Mansion to personally thank the Grand Duke, but sent Quinn John instead. After these arrangements, Laura led Nier and they went to Stony Mountain.

This time, Laura went to Stony Mountains without sending a letter first. She had wanted to do so since she knew Zhao Hai didn't want to be disturbed and had too many secrets. However, Alodia might get there before her and act impudently. She feared Zhao Hai wouldn't be polite and would deal with Alodia.

While Laura didn't like Alodia, she didn't want Zhao Hai to move against him. After all, Alodia represented Carlo. If Zhao Hai offended him then it would be troublesome.

* * * * *

Once Laura went out of Casa City, Zhao Hai received the message. Although his attention was focused on the Carrion Swamp these days, he didn't lower his surveillance of Casa City. Adding in Drunk's team who had just come back, his manpower was quite sufficient. Thus, his surveillance of Casa City was a lot more strict.

Zhao Hai and Green were in the space. After Zhao Hai received the message that Laura was coming, he immediately told Green. Green frowned and said, "I don't know what's happened this time that would make Miss Laura visit. Our forces in Casa City is currently too small. If something really happened in Casa City, we won't be able to get a timely report, which is somewhat unfavorable for us."

Zhao Hai nodded. "We don't have any way to cope with this matter at the meantime since we don't have any available manpower. If we let the Night Shades stay in Casa City for a long period of time, it wouldn't be good. After all, they are undead. If they were to be found out, then it will be troublesome."

Green nodded his head while frowning, then said, "With our present state, we still haven't established our own forces. If we are to be found, it will be a problem. Right now, this manpower issue is a really big issue."

Zhao Hai also wrinkled his brow. The faster they developed, the more the manpower they had would end up as insufficient. Slaves couldn't be considered. After all, they were slaves. If they were to be tasked to be stationed in Casa City, then they would just be arrested for being a fugitive slave. On the other hand, undead were undead and if they were to be found, then it would cause its own troubles too.

Most importantly, the Night Shades were now zombies. With their original appearance, they looked no different from others. If they stayed too long in Casa City, however, then it may cause their forces to be found out. At that time, it would really cause a lot of trouble.

Zhao Hai had already placed the Night Shades at their former location. Still, he was afraid that powerful opponents might be able to find them. Zhao Hai didn't want such forces to see his Night Shades. If they were light magicians like Garan, then it would definitely lead to a conflict. Zhao Hai didn't want such a conflict to occur.

Green saw Zhao Hai frowning and thought that he was worried about the issue of manpower. Green said, "Master, hear me out. After we meet with Miss Laura, we should give her an Eagle Virtuous Phantasm and ask her to send news every few days by using the eagle. With that, we will not only know the situation there, but will also be able to strengthen our ties with Miss Laura. What do you think?"

Zhao Hai nodded after thinking about it. "This approach is excellent, especially now that we have more than a thousand Eagle Virtuous Phantasms in the Space. Sending a few to Laura will not only strengthen ties, but also serve as a guarantee for Miss Laura's security"

Green lightly laughed. "Master is really concerned about Miss Laura. Ah, Sir, I think it is better to ask Miss Laura about her thoughts. If she really has regards for Master, then won't it be good to settle down with Miss Laura? What do you think?"

Zhao Hai hadn't thought that even Green would mention this issue. Dumbfounded, he said, "Grandpa Green, we haven't even reached an agreement yet. For now, don't worry about it since we don't know what Miss Laura thinks of it. If I really did say something brashly, and Miss Laura has no such intentions, then our meetings in the future will be full of awkwardness."

Green deliberated about it and didn't say anything. In his mind, he would just let it go for now. But if the opportunity arises, he would certainly raise the issue.

Zhao Hai saw Green's facial expression and knew what he was thinking. He smiled wryly and also kept quiet. He knew that saying more would just add insult to the injury.

After a little while, Laura arrived. Zhao Hai and Green went out of the Space along with Meirin and Meg. This was because Laura had already seen the four of them. If someone were to be missing, then Laura might get suspicious.

After inviting Laura to the parlor room to sit, Zhao Hai looked perplexedly at Laura and said, "Miss Laura, what is the matter this time around? Have any incidents sprung up in Casa City?"

Laura quickly smiled and said, "No, there's no incident in Casa City. However, I am visiting this time around to tell you about my issue."

Zhao Hai looked at Laura, mystified. "For your issues? Miss Laura, what happened?"

Laura smiled wryly as she voiced all her speculations with regards to Alodia. She then said, "Mister, this time, Alodia might disturb you. I came here to notify Mister of such a matter."

Zhao Hai shook his head and said, "Miss Laura, please tell Alodia to go back. I don't like meeting people and I will not like being bothered by him. I will not meet with him even if he dies and gives me a piece of his heart."

After hearing Zhao Hai, Laura was happy, though she still smiled wryly. "I'm afraid I won't be able to stop him. The truth is, my Fifth Uncle, although he seems very amiable as a person, my Father says otherwise. From birth to maturity, he was someone who, if he wanted something, he will obtain it. If he can't obtain it, then he will destroy it so as to not let others take it. This time, he has sent people and I'm afraid it won't be easy to deal with them. That's why I came to tell Mister about it."

Zhao Hai frowned and said, "If they know the difference between good and bad, then do not blame me for being impolite."

Laura feared such a result, so she quickly said, "This time, Laura wanted to tell Mister that I am currently much stronger than Fifth Uncle. However, Mister, Alodia will definitely bother you, so I was hoping that Mister will just ignore him. It is best not to have any conflict with him. I hope that Mister would give me face."

Chapter 177 - Going Around in Circles

Zhao Hai looked at Laura and nodded. "Miss Laura, please be relieved. As long as they don't do anything excessive, I won't be unkind to them. You should know that I'm not the type of person that likes to stir up trouble."

Laura didn't relax even after hearing Zhao Hai's words. It wasn't that she didn't trust Zhao Hai, but rather, it was her own clan that she had no confidence in.

She knew that her uncles, as well as her grandfather, would do anything to get what they wanted. If they couldn't get it, then they'd rather destroy it. Everything was based off their personal interests and, in their eyes, everything was a commodity.

Laura also knew that Zhao Hai was a person who didn't like to suffer at the hands of others. Since she'd seen what he had done to Garan, she knew that if someone really dared to go against him, then he wouldn't be polite. Towards her Fifth Uncle, it was impossible for Zhao Hai to hand over his products, so she couldn't easily believe in what he had said.

Zhao Hai just looked at Laura. He himself wasn't too concerned about this situation. So long as it wasn't a Rank Nine deity that came, then he wouldn't be afraid of anything. He turned to Green and said, "Give the gift that I prepared to Miss Laura."

Green immediately complied and turned around. Laura couldn't help but smile and said, "Mister has a gift prepared for me? I'm embarrassed that Mister will be giving me a gift when I haven't brought one. How can it be good to receive Mister's gift?"

Zhao Hai smiled. "In fact, this gift will also benefit me. Miss Laura, I have come here to Casa City, but don't know much about its situation. With my identity, I wouldn't be able to stay long inside Casa City since I fear that I'm not that popular. Because of that, I wanted to ask for one thing of Miss Laura."

Laura quickly replied, "Mister is too polite. Please, don't hesitate to command me."

Zhao Hai smiled and said, "I don't dare order you, but there really is one thing that I will request of Miss Laura. The Young Lady knows that I am a businessman, and a businessman squatting on a mountain everyday won't always be good. With regards to any situations in Casa City, I won't have any idea of them and also won't know anything. This time, I am requesting Miss Laura to help me by informing me the situation in Casa City."

Laura felt relieved after hearing Zhao Hai. She thought that it would be some other matter. Anyway, such a request was too simple for her as she had her own intelligence network. For her, naturally, intelligence gathering was easy. Now that there was an ally like Zhao Hai, intelligence sharing between them was normal. Laura was glad to see such a situation as she felt that Zhao Hai trusted her enough, and that their relationship even closer.

These thoughts made Laura smile. "That is no problem at all, so Mister shouldn't be too polite. Mister, please rest assured that every seven days, I will send news regarding the situation in the city."

Just then, Green came back from the outside. Following behind him were five handsome eagles. These eagles had a height of over a meter. They came in from the outside in a bold and imposing manner.

Zhao Hai smiled to Laura and said, "Then I thank Miss Laura. And also, these few Eagle Virtuous Phantasms are my gift to you. These were the Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs that you had given me, so gifting this to you would just be returning something back to its rightful owner."

Laura was surprised for a moment as she knew that hatching a Virtuous Phantasm colored egg wouldn't be easy. Hatching it required the use of proper temperature. Furthermore, it was also important to note that a person would need to continuously provide magic or battle qi to the eggs. Finally, after hatching, they must be given a drop of blood in order for them to recognize their master, otherwise these Virtuous Phantasms wouldn't listen to anyone.

Right now, Zhao Hai was giving her all five eagles? Even getting one would be enough; taking more would be too much.

Zhao Hai looked at Laura and understood what she was thinking. During the past few days, however, Green had told him about the matters concerning these Eagle Virtuous Phantasms, so he explained, “Miss Laura, please be assured that although they do look like normal Eagle Virtuous Phantasms, they are different. Firstly, they do not rely on their masters to provide magic for their growth. Secondly, they aren’t hard to feed, so you can just let them eat what normal eagles eat. Lastly, they don’t have a master yet. After leaving one of them to be a messenger, you can keep the others for yourself.” He then turned around, looked at the eagles, and said, “Later on, she will be your master. You all must abide and listen to her.”

These Virtuous Phantasms weren’t stupid. After the improvements done by the Space, Zhao Hai found out that they could understand him, and that they were smarter than the average seven or eight-year-old child.

Laura looked at Zhao Hai. She had already seen Virtuous Phantasms before, and her impression of Virtuous Phantasms was that they couldn’t grow further. However, these few Eagle Virtuous Phantasms near Zhao Hai were unexpectedly quite vigorous and handsome and had almost caught up in size to a normal magic beast. Furthermore, Zhao Hai could speak to these Eagle Virtuous Phantasms? This, can you really do this?

However, Laura was more surprised by what she saw happened afterward. These Eagle Virtuous Phantasms really did seem to understand Zhao Hai, because after he directed them, they slowly walked towards Laura and acted as though they were guarding Laura and Nier as they stood there.

Zhao Hai smiled at Laura. “Miss Laura, please rest assured that from here on, you will be their master.”

Laura recovered and, with shining eyes, looked at the eagles. These eagles really did look better than wind falcons and were even unusually superior. Furthermore, they were Virtuous Phantasms, thus they were a lot more useful.

Zhao Hai politely asked for Laura to stay for a meal, which she gladly accepted.

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When Laura left Stony Mountain, the eagles immediately flew up and kept pace over Laura's carriage along the way.

Laura stood outside the carriage and looked at the eagles. She couldn't help but be amused by the sight. However, she'd also thought of something else, thus she turned to Nier and asked, "Nier, have you heard of such obedient, good looking Virtuous Phantasms before?"

Nier was an animal enthusiast, and liked to keep and read books about animals. With regards to this matter, she really had the right to speak up.

Nier shook her head and said, "No, Young Lady. I have read many books about Virtuous Phantasms, but they aren't generally large. Furthermore, they aren't that obedient. These Virtuous Phantasms of Mister's really look more like magic beasts than Virtuous Phantasms. Thus, I don't know if they are truly Virtuous Phantasms."

Laura nodded. "This is very strange. If it is really as what Mister said, then these are the Virtuous Phantasms that came from those Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs I had given him. This shouldn't be right."

Laura initially bought the Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs and knew that they were Virtuous Phantasms that could fly. She'd seen the spawning of the eggs of these Virtuous Phantasms, and those several Virtuous Phantasm eggs couldn't be found in the wild, but could only be bought from a specialized farming factory. She had specifically seen the process from which the few Virtuous Phantasms spawned their eggs.

Although those were also flying Virtuous Phantasms, their builds weren't large as they were just almost as big as a normal falcon. They also didn't look so vigorous and obedient. However, these eagles from Zhao Hai were actually so different.

Laura was really puzzled as to how Zhao Hai could make ordinary things become so amazing. This was something Laura was most curious about.

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After Laura left Stony Mountain, Zhao Hai and Green didn't rush back inside the Space. Instead, they called Meirin and the others into the parlor room and sat down. Zhao Hai asked Green, "Grandpa Green, after hearing the situation from Laura, what do you think we should do?"

Green thought for a while then said, "I think we should be very careful. I've heard that the Markey Dell clan members are vicious and greedy. If we are targeted by them this time around, I fear that this will become really troublesome."

Zhao Hai nodded and said, "This really is troublesome. As far as I can see, Miss Laura feared that his matter would cause a stain in our relationship. However, I think that with this situation, we should teach them a lesson."

Green frowned and said, "I'm afraid that this isn't as simple as you think it is. A Markey Dell clan member is notoriously ruthless. If they suffer a loss here, then I fear they wouldn't just let it go."

Zhao Hai also frowned. "What can we do now then? We had just established ourselves here in Stony Mountain. If they come here to disturb us, then this will be very annoying."

Meirin smiled. "As I see it, this wouldn't be like that. Previously, we had helped the Purcell clan. If they really dare move against us, then I fear that the Purcell clan wouldn't let them off."

Zhao Hai continued to frown. "I hope so, but I don't like to owe a favor to the Purcell clan. It would be good if we can solve this matter while also giving face to Miss Laura. So long as they don't do anything excessive, even if they really do dare to move against us, I wouldn't mind it at all."

Green nodded and said, "I do hope this will be the case. With our identity, they would think twice before making any rash moves. Otherwise, I fear that this hatred will cause enmity between us."

Zhao Hai snorted. "Now that we have this hostility, we won't need to cooperate with them. Those guys from the Markey Dell clan really aren't the friendly kind."

“Fortunately, we have adequate manpower to cope up with such a scene,” Green said, nodding. “If a Rank Nine doesn’t come, we should be able to deal with everything. Master, we should go back to the Space and continue to observe, as I don’t know what the eagles have seen.”

Zhao Hai nodded and they went back inside the Space. The Space was now level 15, but there had been no upgrade to the ranch, which made Zhao Hai feel a little sad.

Zhao Hai couldn’t help it. Drunk would have had a hard time catching the magic beasts in the Carrion Swamp. Even if they tried it, it wouldn’t be easy to feed them. That’s why they didn’t catch any magic beasts and instead focused on collecting plants in order to make the Space level up to 15.

The eagles had been flying over the swamp for several days now, but their speed wasn’t fast. Zhao Hai was surprised to see that the eagles had flown over some places that Buffy hadn’t drawn on the map. It seems like they had started circling around in the swamp.

With regards to this situation, Zhao Hai didn’t know what problems the Carrion Swamp had. Why was it that both humans and magic beasts went around in circles when they were inside the Carrion Swamp?

Chapter 178 - Marriage?

After Zhao Hai arrived inside the Space, he looked at the screen and saw that something was off. The screen didn’t show the original seven color smog, but instead a chaotic battle.

Green dots can be seen everywhere in the screen. These dots were in the shape of swallow-like birds with small bodies that madly attacked the eagles.

Zhao Hai actually felt that outside, unexpectedly, the majestic eagles were too powerless to even fight back. These eagles went left, then suddenly rushed to the right, seemingly wishing to escape the encirclement of those birds.

Zhao Hai looked at the situation on the screen and was somewhat in a daze. This was beyond their understanding as the bodies of those birds and the eagles had too much of a difference. Yet, how come the eagles couldn’t seem to counter and even seemed like they were out of energy?

Zhao Hai soon went to look out of the Space and at the eagles. Although they were powerful, their opponent birds were very flexible as they maneuvered through the air quickly and with ease. However, because the eagles had larger bodies, they weren't as swift and agile as those birds. Due to this, the small birds were able to capitalize on their advantages and pressed hard against the eagles. This made it a struggle for the eagles to cope with them.

Zhao Hai really hadn't thought that the eagles would be suppressed just like that. He waved his hand to let the rest of the eagles leave the Space. With a thousand eagles flying around in the scene, they should be able to deal with the situation.

Sure enough, after the mass of large eagles appeared, the small birds panicked and immediately tried to escape. However, the eagles wouldn't let them get away and, in the end, they caught a lot of those small birds.

Zhao Hai couldn't help but feel relieved after seeing the situation. Green also exhaled after watching the fierce battle. Even though they hadn't been involved, they still felt tragic over the situation and were nervous.

With Zhao Hai's intent, he moved the eagles from the outside back inside the Space and, along with a few others, they went over to the ranch. Upon arriving, a beep came from the ranch and sounded:

[Discovered new animal.

New animal biological variation: Swallow class.

Animal rating of level 3.

Digitizing animals.

Animals can now be bought from the Spatial Shop.]

Zhao Hai didn't care since there weren't any upgrades for the ranch. Moreover, even if there were more of these swallow class animals, there wouldn't be much use for them.

He hurriedly began to check over the few eagles that had been attacked. Since these eagles were already matured, they weren't allowed to stay inside the ranch because they weren't able to grow any further. Still, Zhao Hai was allowed to take them out and examine them for that short period.

After carefully observing the eagles, Zhao Hai was surprised for a moment. Their injuries hadn't been light, and there was even one that had been pecked in the eye and blinded.

Seeing this situation, Zhao Hai and Green couldn't help but feel a bit scared. They hadn't expected that those small birds could even peck at the eyes of the eagles.

Zhao Hai placed a few of the withdrawn eagles back inside the warehouse. Then he ordered five other eagles to fly forward and explore once more while carrying the Ghost Cane. They all then returned to the living room of the Spatial Villa.

Everyone sat down upon entering the living room. Zhao Hai turned to Green and said, "Grandpa Green, it seems like the Carrion Swamp cannot be underestimated. Even those birds had unexpectedly given a lot of trouble to the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. It seems that we can't let anyone else leave the Space."

Green nodded his head and said, "It seems that we have really underestimated the swamp. Buffy also told us before that he'd encountered several attacks, though he didn't say anything else about them. Since he was a Rank Nine expert, he didn't care much about those attacks. However, that was because of his strength as a Rank Nine expert. On the other hand, we cannot take these issues lightly."

Zhao Hai nodded his head. He looked at the seven-colored smog that constantly fluctuated on the screen and said, "The map that Buffy completed has now become irrelevant. We don't know how far Flower City is, and can only blame this strange smog. The Carrion Swamp is really mysterious."

Green nodded, sighed, and said, "There's not much information about the Carrion Swamp here on the continent, so even if we wanted to know more, we can't. However, I think there might be some ancient items that past magicians had left inside the Carrion Swamp. Not to mention, even for how long that city existed after so many years, I have never heard anyone say that there was a city in the Carrion Swamp."

Zhao Hai nodded. "It seems like there should be a lot of stories about this Flower City. The Carrion Swamp had existed for so many years, yet no one knew where the city was. That in itself explains the current problem."

Green sighed once more and said, "It just means that no one knows much about the situation here in the Carrion Swamp. This is because the swamp has been known to be dangerous for so long, such that not even a Rank Nine expert dares to enter randomly."

"I heard that a long time ago, the Carrion Swamp was a paradise for adventurers. A lot of them came here to hunt magic items for money, but probably, around a few thousand years ago, a major catastrophe befell the continent. I heard that it was hell back then. The sudden appearances of hellish demons sprung from the ground, killing major ethnic groups and became the continent's biggest disaster. A lot of literature was either lost or destroyed during that time. Since then, the Carrion Swamp has become a lot more dangerous. Up to now, nobody dares to go venture into the Carrion Swamp."

Zhao Hai nodded. "Anyway, we still have to go to Flower City. We must know more about that Flower City, especially since we don't have anything important to do right now. We might as well solve this threat of the Carrion Swamp."

Green nodded his head. He looked at the situation on the screen, then turned back to Zhao Hai. "Master, I don't think we should be flying around randomly. I think the reason why there was no information regarding the Flower City was due, first, to the destruction of literature back then."

"Secondly, perhaps nobody had really discovered the city. Buffy might have just been lucky enough to run into the city. Thus, we should just follow his map, even if it will make the trip a bit longer before we can reach Flower City. Otherwise, I really don't know how long it will take for us to find the city."

Zhao Hai nodded his head. He looked at the screen and ordered the eagles, instructing them not to fly straight, but instead to fly across and find the terrain shown on the map. Afterwards, they were to follow the directions on the map.

Zhao Hai also found out about another feature of the screen, it now looked like what a screen looked like in the game, as it showed a map that was darkened if the eagles hadn't yet flown over that area. If it was already explored by the eagles, then it would show the terrain on the screen and even show the magic beasts in the area. Also, the terrain displayed on the screen didn't require one to prompt a message, but rather, it remained in the corner of the screen. Aside from observing the Carrion Swamp daily, Zhao Hai also intended to draw a full map of the land of the entire Carrion Swamp.

Truth be told, staring in the screen was absolutely boring. Zhao Hai, however, feared that the eagles might be attacked. Thus, they remained and stayed in the Space while chatting.

Green also liked to stay inside the Space as the air inside was very good. When one entered the Space from outside, they would feel refreshed, as though their spirits were being cleansed.

Staying in the Space for a long time wouldn't only be good for the body of practitioners, but it also enabled Zhao Hai's body to continue to feel better. He woke up well, and even after just waking up, he wouldn't feel sleepy again. Back then, he used to breathe twice as heavily as a normal person, but now he had regained his normal physique.

It was the same for Meirin. She was already quite old, but still very busy daily. Thus, she always felt tired. Moreover, the elderly tended to have bad sleeping conditions, so when she'd woken Zhao Hai back then, her face didn't look too well.

Nowadays, however, she had completely changed. Her face was more ruddy, and even if she were busy everyday, she didn't look tired at all. Furthermore, it was quiet within the Space at night, so she could sleep well. Aside from that, her body really felt a lot better than before.

The Space was an attractive place as everyone who had stayed inside the Space tended to become somewhat accustomed to it. Even the slaves, if not for their own properties outside the Space, wouldn't have liked to leave it.

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Now that Laura had a predicament, Zhao Hai didn't want any contact with her for the moment. As such, they could only stay inside the Space. Anyway, there were no more meetings with Laura.

Suddenly, Zhao Hai heard a knocking at the door. Zhao Hai was surprised for a moment and switched the image on the screen to Fort Iron Mountain. Woodhead and Stonehead were there watching the slaves and had knocked on the door. It seemed like they had found something and needed to tell Zhao Hai about it.

Although this was described as a knocking sound, it wasn't actually knocking, but instead it was them contacting Zhao Hai. After placing two transfer points, if a person outside of the Space had any matters they wanted to tell Zhao Hai, they could just knock on the ground and Zhao Hai could hear the sound from inside the Space. The sound made was just like that of someone knocking at the door. Since Zhao Hai had heard someone knocking, he knew that Woodhead was looking for him.

This was the only way to inform Zhao Hai. Woodhead and Stonehead stayed at Fort Iron Mountain, while the undead were placed in Stony Mountain. If an undead wanted to look for Zhao Hai, they could just directly contact him and didn't need to knock on the transfer point.

Sure enough, after turning the screen, Zhao Hai saw Woodhead standing in the transfer point. The people around stood up, and, with Zhao Hai's intent, him and the others appeared at Fort Iron Mountain.

Woodhead was standing there. When he saw everyone, he hurriedly rushed forward and said, "Master."

Zhao Hai nodded. "What's up? What's the matter?"

Woodhead smiled. "Master, today is a good day. Today, two slaves suddenly came to me and said they wanted to marry. Since Master hadn't said anything about this matter if it ever came up with the slaves, I decided to let you look into it."

Zhao Hai paused for a moment, then, interested, said, "Oh, was there such a thing? This is good. Getting married is good. Hurry and lead the way."

Green immediately complied and led Zhao Hai outside the fort.

Chapter 179 - Award

Between the fort's interlinked inner and outer gates stood two slaves, a man and a woman. The man looked to be around 23 to 24 years old, while the woman looked younger by a couple of years. They both looked normal with no distinguishing features on them.

The two saw Zhao Hai coming out and immediately knelt down to salute to Zhao Hai. They both said, "Master Wanan."

Zhao Hai nodded, waved his hand, and said, "Stand up and speak." Only then did the two stand up, albeit their bodies were still bent, their expressions cautious as they did so.

Although these slaves knew Zhao Hai was kind, they had previously undergone enslavement education. Thus, when they saw Zhao Hai, they couldn't even try to be impolite. They stood up after Zhao Hai told them, which was already very good progress for them. If it were normal slaves, even if they were told by Zhao Hai, they wouldn't dare to stand up.

Looking at the two, Zhao Hai didn't bother to be polite as he asked, "Are you the ones who wish to get married?"

The two people lowered their heads and bent themselves further down, then the man said, "Yes Master. We both want to get married. We seek the help of Master."

Zhao Hai nodded and asked, "What are your names?"

The male slave immediately answered, "Master, my name is Chee and she is called Schee."

Zhao Hai nodded and looked at them. "Alright, very good. Since you took the initiative to ask me to help you get married, it's fine then. I will help you today. Grandpa Green, please prepare a gift to be given to them today."

Green complied immediately. Meirin smiled and said, "This calls for a celebration. Master, I'll go tell the slaves to rest for the day."

The two slaves actually both knelt down together as the man panicked and said, "Master, we little ones don't deserve such treatment. Our lives are cheap and Master allowing us to get married is already a huge fortune. We wouldn't dare ask for any more from Master."

Zhao Hai smiled and said, "It doesn't matter. Since you are the slaves bought by Grandpa Green, and the first couple to be married, we should take this opportunity as well and make it as lively as possible. This isn't just for the two of you." The couple stood up afterwards.

Green led the couple away, leaving only Meg to stand beside Zhao Hai. Right now, Zhao Hai wasn't missing anything, and his monthly income could feed a hundred people without a problem.

Zhao Hai didn't help in the preparations and instead led Meg back to the fort's living room and sat down. He had just told Green to give them whatever they needed, so if there was anything required for the preparations, Green could take care of them.

After they arrived in the living room, Meg poured a cup of tea for Zhao Hai and placed it on the table. Zhao Hai then told Meg, "Sit down, let's talk about this wedding."

Meg sat down, looked at Zhao Hai, and said, "Master, why did you do it in such a big way? Did you want the other slaves to see them?"

Zhao Hai nodded. He sighed and said, "Now that our Buda clan has selected these people, the slaves must be able to flourish, especially because they have been marked with the Buda clan's brand which is impossible to remove. Since our conditions now is a lot better compared to before, the slaves acquiring the initiative to get married will be a good thing for us. The other slaves who are afraid to do so will slowly gain confidence, and this will be a good way to increase our population. Moreover, the lands I had improved is growing. At present though, it cannot be cultivated. I plan to give these lands to the slaves and have them pay some rent. That way, they can cultivate the lands and prosper for themselves."

Meg was surprised for a moment. She looked at Zhao Hai and said, "Does this mean Master will restore the slave's status back to civilians starting today? Furthermore, Master will also reward them with a piece of land that they will be renting?"

On the continent, farm renting was generally allowed only by civilians. Thus, if Zhao Hai said that these slaves could get land to rent, then Meg understood what Zhao Hai actually meant to do.

Zhao Hai nodded and said, "Yes, ah, it will be a good start. We can then slowly develop and grow the Buda clan. The present situation is somewhat wrong, so I will slowly let the slaves recover their civilian

status in order for them to own their own piece of land. Having their own income will be something for them to look forward to.”

Meg grew up on the Ark Continent, and in their view Zhao Hai’s approach was akin to throwing out money. Everyone knew that a slave was the Lord’s clan property. If Zhao Hai restored their civilian status, then they couldn’t be regarded as Buda clan property anymore. This was just throwing out their own wealth.

However, what Zhao Hai said had some truth to it. Since the Buda clan would have such a joyous occasion, they would be able to inspire the enthusiasm of the slaves by a hundred percent and encourage them to work better to restore their status as civilians. They would be trained and then given a piece of land. Such opportunities were, no doubt, heaven for the slaves. Thus they would naturally strive hard to attain it.

Since Zhao Hai gave his all to succeed, then along with the help of the Space, the people of the Buda clan wouldn’t argue about what he said. Meg didn’t object either as she just nodded her head.

Zhao Hai turned around and looked out at the sky. He sighed and said, “Although at present our development is going well, there’s still a problem. If we let the world know who we are, then with our current strength, we will instantly lose. I just hope that one day, we can stand openly under the sun and tell the whole world that we are the Buda clan. Only then can we be considered to have really succeeded.”

Meg looked at Zhao Hai with teary eyes. “Don’t worry Master,” she said, “that day will surely come.”

Zhao Hai sighed and slowly close his eyes, sitting down on a chair to rest.

Meg’s heart was very upset since she knew that Zhao Hai wasn’t quite healthy. If not for the Space, she wouldn’t know what would have happened to Zhao Hai.

Since Zhao Hai had awoken, he’d been dragging his body around in order to create a better future for the Buda clan. This made him very busy, which made the people around him feel pained.

Zhao Hai was also really tired. Although he exercised a bit, his body really wasn't healthy right now. Adding to the fact that he needed to tend to a lot of events, even if his body wasn't tired, his mind would be. After sitting on the sofa, he soon fell asleep.

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After an unknown amount of time, Zhao Hai heard someone calling him. He slowly opened his eyes, and saw someone that looked like Meg. Meg called out to him in a soft voice. Zhao Hai sat up and moved around a bit since he'd been leaning on the sofa for a long time. He moved his neck, then stood up and asked, "Are the preparations done?"

Meg nodded her head. "The tables are already arranged in the outer fort along with the food. Grandpa also prepared some ale. It seems like this will turn out to be really lively."

Zhao Hai nodded. He then thought of something and turned to Meg. "Also, I remember that some time ago, we had prepared a lot of colored-paper. Are they still available?"

Although Meg didn't know what Zhao Hai wanted to do with it, she still nodded her head and replied, "Yes, we still have those colored-paper we had bought earlier. If the slaves had any matters, it could be used to write announcements."

"I will go to the study room," Zhao Hai said, nodding. "Meanwhile, please prepare red colored-paper." Meg immediately complied, even though she didn't know what Zhao Hai wanted to do with them, and followed Zhao Hai to the study room.

Zhao Hai told Meg to cut the paper into a rectangular shape after arriving at the study room. He then personally inscribed congratulatory words onto the paper, along with the names of the couple and their date of marriage. With this, he had made this world's first, simple, marriage certificate.

Meg had been observing what Zhao Hai was doing. Although she hadn't understood it earlier, she had now somewhat gotten an idea after seeing the characters Zhao Hai had written. This made her feel a little strange.

This marriage certificate was very simple; just a piece of red paper with words written on it. Zhao Hai had only thought of this as a temporary thing, but he would have never thought that this would become a clan heirloom, and that this marriage certificate idea would slowly spread throughout the entire continent.

After making the marriage certificate, Zhao Hai and Meg went down the stairs and towards the square outside the fort. The square was a lot livelier now that the tables were placed. There were eight types of vegetable dishes on each of the square tables. Eight people could sit on each table and a barrel of ale was next to each of them.

This ale was a kind of relatively inexpensive ale on the continent. This was what civilians usually drank. Some time ago, Green had deliberately bought a little and was prepared to give the slaves some. In the end, it finally became handy now.

At this moment, the slaves sat at the tables as they waited for Zhao Hai and Green. Upon Zhao Hai's arrival, the slaves immediately tried to salute to him, but he waved his hand to let them be at ease. Then he said, "Today is a wonderful day wherein Chee and Schee will be married. I would like to take this opportunity to let you all have this lively occasion."

The slaves were glad for Chee and Schee, while the two of them were excited, albeit a little bit shy with red faces. Zhao Hai waved at the couple and said, "Chee, Schee, come here." The couple immediately walked towards Zhao Hai.

Zhao Hai looked at the couple and smiled. "Very good. You are our Buda clan's first couple in the Black Waste. With that, I will award you. Starting today, the two of you won't be slaves anymore. Rather, you will both be civilians here in the Buda clan's Black Waste. I will allow Grandma Meirin to gift you 7000 square meters of farmable land outside the fort. That will be the area you can farm. Later, you will only have to give us a fourth of your annual harvest, while the rest will be yours. Moreover, we will provide you with a room in the fort along with the necessities you will be needing. Later on, you can even have your own home."

Zhao Hai's words were breathtaking, aweing the slaves. They'd never thought that Zhao Hai would actually be this generous to Chee and Schee. He'd even give them a piece of land, so long as they pay the rent for it. For the slaves, this was very important.

Chee and Schee felt as though they were in a dream, and it took them a while to react. They quickly knelt down and bowed to show their gratitude to Zhao Hai.

Chapter 180 - Toast

Although Zhao Hai had shown some enthusiasm and had even given rewards to the couple today, the slaves were only a bit shocked about it and everything went back to normal. After all, this wasn't the first time that Zhao Hai had shown this side of himself to them.

Zhao Hai helped the couple up, then took out the marriage certificate that he'd prepared. He gave it to the couple and said, "Today is your wedding day, and as the first couple to be wed in our Black Wastes, I have personally prepared this marriage certificate. Although this certificate won't be recognized anywhere else but here in the Black Waste, so long as you have this certificate, you are a legally married couple. This is something on top of my congratulatory gift."

This was the first time such a situation happened on the continent. No one had ever heard about it before, not even Green nevermind the slaves. Chee and Schee took the paper, albeit with some confusion.

Although they could identify the words, most of them weren't legible to them. While there were some words that they didn't know, they still looked stunned after receiving the sheet of paper.

Zhao Hai smiled, then looked back to the crowd. "The laws of our Black Waste will be different from those of other places. This piece of paper, although modest, represents that you are legally husband and wife. If there comes a time when the husband bullies the wife, the wife can come to me and I will help her deal with it. If there will also come a time when the husband leaves the wife, you may bring this piece of paper to me, and I will judge him for his crime. This goes the same against the wife as well.

"Since Chee and Schee are the first wedded couple here in our Black Waste, I wasn't able to prepare much. As such, this piece of paper will be their marriage certificate. Please lead them here. Head Steward Green of the Black Waste will be the witness of the union between Chee and Schee. Please, Head Steward Green; read the marriage certificate."

This kind of a wedding ritual was what the former Zhao Hai from Earth usually attended. Weddings on the continent were quite different. On the continent, slaves didn't hold any wedding ceremonies. As

long as two slaves were together, and they informed and got the approval from their steward, then they could be together.

The wedding between civilians would be a bit different. First, there would be a matchmaker who would introduce the man and woman. Then, they would meet each other, before the man offers gifts to the bride's family as a bride price. The woman's side would then send a dowry. Lastly would be the wedding. On the wedding day, the relatives and friends would come to congratulate them. Women held a high status on the continent. Thus, on their wedding day, out of respect for the couple, there would be a wine ceremony.

The wedding ceremonies between the aristocrats and the royal clan would be a lot more grandiose, along with a great deal more customs. This kind of wedding was what Zhao Hai liked, but had never experienced.

This was also the first time Green had seen this kind of thing, but he had also watched the big events from before, which were magnificent. As such, he took the marriage certificate from Chee's hand and loudly said, "Today, civilians of the Aksu Empire join these two happy people who have fallen in love with one another, and watch as they are married and become husband and wife. This special citation is issued by the Lord of the Black Waste, the Aksu Empire's Zhao Hai Buda. "

Having this paper wasn't too much of a big deal, but it allowed for the meaning to be expressed clearly. On the Ark Continent, there weren't any marriage laws, so Zhao Hai hadn't written anything conforming to the law or any words associated with it. He just wrote that they'd fallen in love and were married; such a case.

Most importantly, this piece of paper had been written in the words of civilians. In a sense, this makes the piece of paper a proof of identity for the slaves, proving that they were now civilians.

After Green finished reading, he handed the marriage certificate back to Chee and Schee. Chee excitedly took the piece of paper, and, as though the paper felt heavy, carefully handed it to Schee. Schee also carefully picked up the piece of paper and folded it carefully, placing it onto her arms.

Zhao Hai looked at how the couple acted and didn't said anything about it. He smiled, then said, "Well, this ceremony has now ended. Chee, Schee, starting today, the two of you are now officially husband and wife. Don't be in a hurry to toast with me. Instead, don't forget to have a toast with your wedding witness, Grandpa Green."

Chee and Schee were excited as they complied. Meirin smiled, then picked up two cups of wine that were then taken by Chee and Schee. The couple knelt down together and lifted the glass in front of Zhao Hai.

Zhao Hai stared blankly at them. He tried to help them up while saying, "What is this? Get up."

Chee and Schee didn't stand but continued to kneel on the ground, sobbing loudly. "Master, you are too good. Although Master has restored our civilian status, in our hearts and mind, we will forever be Master's slave. Master, please drink along with us with these two cups of wine."

Zhao Hai looked at the couple and felt excited deep down in his heart. He stood up straight and said, "Good, good. I'll drink these two cups of wine since this is a wedding banquet. Ha ha. People say weddings are not intoxicating. However, today, I will drink two cups." He then drank a cup, then raised the other cup.

Woodhead, who stood at the side, also applauded and appeared to be very lively. Zhao Hai placed the cups down and looked at the two. "From now on, the two of you should love each other. No matter what difficulties you have, you can come and tell me."

The couple complied as Meg helped them by pouring some more wine. Next was Green. Green said a few auspicious words, then they turned to make a toast with Meirin.

At this time, it could be considered to be really lively. The slaves had eaten meals a few times before with Zhao Hai. At dinnertime, they were relaxed since during that time around, there were many meat dishes which was also their opportunity to eat a little more.

The banquet this time around wasn't the same as it was in other places. They had a lot of vegetables dishes and could also eat a lot without limit. This made the slaves very happy.

Although these slaves hadn't gotten their statuses restored to civilians, they were satisfied with their current lives. They ate everyday, weren't too tired, and occasionally ate tons of meat. They'd even gotten the chance to drink wine like today, which in the past was unthinkable.

Seeing how Chee and Schee, after getting married, were restored their civilian status, and moreover they'd been given it just like that, these slaves had also thought about how to seize the opportunity and do the same thing.

This was naive, but quite lively. However, Zhao Hai didn't drink any more of the wine and, followed by Green, returned to the Space. This was just in case the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms were being attacked.

After they sat down in the Space, Zhao Hai couldn't help but smile lightly. "Today, we had a very good start. I fear that there will be a lot of marriages soon, so Grandpa Green, you should go to Casa City in a few days and order a batch of a higher quality paper for marriage certificates so that we can use them later on."

Green smiled and said, "Alright. I have to say, Master is really good at this. By the way, I think I won't have to go to Casa City. I'll just let the eagle messenger go to Miss Laura after several days. Then we can request our needs to Miss Laura. As long as we don't have them know about our territory, it should be good. How do you see this Master?"

Zhao Hai nodded and said, "Alright, we'll do that this time. Also, although we've given Chee and Schee a piece of land, we should explain some things to them. For example, they should tell us what they want to plant. They will have to keep a count of it. Once they obtain their harvest, we can even sell it for them. If they want to buy something, we can even buy it for them. Such are the current conditions."

"This is very good," Green said, smiling. "That the slaves can now have their own homes is a very good idea. Since Master is giving them a good place, they will work harder. However, if later all the slaves have restored their statuses to civilians, what should we do then?"

Zhao Hai smiled and said, "It is actually very simple. They will still need farming tools, seeds, and even scaled wildebeests. These are things that they don't have, so we can just rent it to them. If they want to use these things, they can help us by planting in an area. Or if they have the item themselves, we can still hire them to do work for us through farming, and we'll pay them. Of course, the price wouldn't be too high, but for them, that in itself is extra money. Thus, they will naturally agree."

Green nodded his head and said, "That's good. It seems like we will need to buy more slaves. However, we can't just buy any good slaves in Casa City. Instead, we should buy them from the Imperial Capital. On the outskirts of the Imperial Capital is where the continent's largest slave market is, so we can certainly buy an appropriate kind of slaves."

Zhao Hai frowned and said, "Is it alright with our present status? If we went to the Imperial Capital, won't we be recognized there?"

Green nodded his head. "This wouldn't be a problem in Casa City since there's no one here that knows us, but there's a lot of people who knew us in the Imperial Capital. So be it, let's go somewhere else to buy slaves. Master, I heard that the beastfolk sell a lot of slave. Do you think we can go and visit the beastfolk?"

Meirin added, "I think this approach is good. There are a lot of slaves in the Beastfolk Prairies, and we can also establish a good relationship with the beastfolk. The beastfolk raise all kinds of magic beasts, but they lack food supplies. If we can develop the Black Wastes later on, we will have a lot of food on our hands. Since, on the continent, there are already big firms that handle the food supply, it will be difficult to intervene. I think it would be best if we can trade with the beastfolk."

Zhao Hai replied, "This issue of the food scarcity of the beastfolk, though we know of it, isn't this the same for the big firms? Why aren't they selling food to the beastfolk?"

Meirin smiled and said, "They do sell, but they sell it expensively. The empire had stipulated that if they want to buy food, the empire will impose heavy taxes. Even if the aristocrats wished to smuggle, they wouldn't dare do so. That's why the food being sold to the beastfolk is very expensive. Anyway, since we have the Space, we can avoid this tax."

Zhao Hai nodded. He understood that this was the way the Aksu Empire restrained the beastfolk. This was tantamount to sucking the blood of the beastfolk so that they would never grow up, thus ensuring the safety of the northern part of the empire.