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Chapter 61: Golden Claw Mercenary Team

Jacob's eyes contracted after reading this and couldn't help but question, "Explain!"

The writing changed, "Hehehehe, impenitent, aren't we? I already said, you 'might' not 'will' so it still isn't clear. But I can tell that your mutated heart might bring you some benefits like a supernatural ability on this level, but as I said, it all depends on your luck."

Jacob's eyes instantly shone with elation, since it was nothing but good news. However, it wasn't clear and Immortika also didn't explain clearly, and he knew asking it was meaningless.

He yearned for a supernatural ability like in the fantasies.

Although he knew he might get such an ability eventually as long as he cultivated this book on a high enough level, hearing it still made him elated and filled his heart with anticipation.

But he quickly calmed down since he knew riling up won't do anything and sneered disdainfully, "You only told me this because you felt bored again and wanted to motivate me into leaving again for your entertainment, I'm I right?"

"Hahaha... I can't answer your question... hahaha..."

Jacob shook his head helplessly since he could tell by that laugh he was right and closed that pesky book. Nonetheless, he was still optimistic and headed toward the bath to clean himself first.

Jacob appeared again with long hair and a clean face. His body had become even more devilish after two more injections, and he felt enormous strength in his muscles.

After wearing a black shirt and pants, he ate five pounds of meat before he headed to his bedroom.

There was a paper on a small table he took and saw the detail.

"C Rank Mercenary Mission,

"Danger Level: C

"Collect (Uncommon) Flora Spider's venom glands.

"Reward: 5 Gold Coins for each Flora Spider Venom Gland."

On the other half of the paper was a picture of a leaf-like spider and its information.

It looked just like a wither leaf, and that was why it was extremely difficult to find. Its poison was also deadly, and it could kill any normal human within five minutes after its bite.

That was why this mission was for Rank C mercenaries, and the reward was also lucrative. And this mission has no limit on how many venom glands you could hunt, and the agency will buy as many as you had.

This was the exact mission Jacob wanted, and this spider existed in the deep southern parts of rainy mountain ranges, where he could hunt for heart essence as well.

But this time he was going to carry over two metal boxes for heart and blood, and he was fully prepared.

He waited for the night before he left the house without being spotted, and he was heading straight toward the southern rainy mountain ranges for hunting!

In the central area of Rain Town,

There was a two-story house with a beautiful exterior.

Inside the house, five men and two women were sitting around a square table, looking at the burly man with a mole above his left eyebrow.

This man's name was Jonty, and he was the famous C rank mercenary of rain town and quite active. The other seven were his teammates and the members of the famous Golden Claw Mercenary Team, and all of them were D Rank mercenaries.

Jonty had a mild smile on his square face as he said, "Did you find the new C Rank yet?"

In reply, a man with a long black beard spoke, he was the vice leader of the golden claw team, Corbin, "No, he's still not returned to the town after he left for the mission and the agency won't reveal the information about what kind of mission he took."

Jonty's eyes flashed with a cold light as he said, "Is that so? Then forget it. I just want to invite this new guy for the wolf king hunt to see his strength. But he's too inconspicuous, and if we wait anymore, those two annoying fellows might join the fray of the wolf king."

Corbin nodded. "Yes, the Agency Leader is still absent and Ralf won't move without him, so we're clear for now to hunt."

Another tall man spoke with a frown. His name was Ton. "But aren't we going too lightly? We're talking about a wolf king of rare rank; which strength is only below B Rank. I'm concerned!"

No one refuted Ton, since he was telling the truth, and they all looked at Jonty for his reply. Even the shrewd and obedient vice leader, Corbin, was expecting an answer.

Jonty smiled confidently at this moment as he said, "I know your concern is valid, and it looks like I'm underestimating this wolf king."

"But I have already talked with the leaders of Sharp Sword Mercenary Team, and Purple Mercenary Team and they agree to lend us their assistance in this mission by giving them 20% of the materials we'll get from the wolf king's carcass."

Corbin frowned. "I don't think they're enough. According to the information, there are many dark wolves around the dark wolf ridge, so the more people we have, the better."

Jonty pull a wintry smile, "Hehe, I have already taken care of it, I have announced that anyone who wanted to join our wolf king hunting party they are welcome and there'll be more than enough cannon folds to distract those minions."

Tan couldn't help but smile coldly and praise, "As expected of Leader, now we don't have to worry about meat shields, and we can also use them to weaken the wolf king before killing it. We'll be famous!"

Jonty smiled in satisfaction and looked at the petite woman with black hair and asked, "Nala, do you test the new recruit? I heard she's a thorny rose. Is she clean?"

Nala answered with a hint of unhappiness, "She's quite something. Not only she's extremely overbearing, she even beat me and arrogantly said she'll change team leader next time. But she didn't have any hidden identity, and she'll be an excellent addition to our team. I'm only waiting for your confirmation."

Jonty smiled, hearing this, but there was a hint of desire in his eyes. "Let her join this mission, and I'll see what she's made of. What's her name, though?"

Nala replied, "Rosalia Lion!"

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Chapter 62: A Strange Encounter

Jacob was hiding within a tree branch as he impassively looked at an adult moose drinking water from a small pond.

However, he had no intention of attacking, as he calmly looked at the black moose like a predator waiting for his chance.

Right at this moment, the moose seemed to sense something as it rushed toward the thick woods. But before it could, five small silhouettes lunged from the tall grass from different directions and stabbed their claws at the large body of moose, which ran wild while shrilling.

These newcomers were crimson strip hyenas, an uncommon specie while the black moose was a common species, and Jacob was waiting for them to make a move before he does.

And just as those hyenas were struggling with the mooses, Jacob pointed his revolver at the biggest one in the group and then pull the trigger.

'Bang!'

The gunshot startled the animals, but it was too late for the targeted hyena as the bullet pierce into his brain, and it died within an instant.

The other three hyenas were shaken as they abandon the bleeding moose and ran for their lives, while the moose also ran wildly, but with all those wounds it won't be able to stay alive for much.

Nevertheless, it has nothing to do with Jacob, who was only interested in uncommon species, and he already got the heart and blood as well as his dinner.

After making sure no one was nearby, he jumped off the tree and quickly headed toward that bleeding carcass.

It has been ten days since he left the rain town for this spider hunting mission, and he was quite efficient in his newly found strength.

Not only his stamina has increased, but his speed and senses as well. That was why he could collect three uncommon hearts and blood, including this crimson strip hyena.

However, he was losing interest in hunting these uncommon animals and wanted to find a rare species to test his strength, and they were also more potent and can give a high percentage of the heart essence.

He even had the thought of heading toward the rare region for a moment before he brushed it off since it was still too dangerous, and it won't be too late to head there after he had A Rank strength.

He still hadn't forgotten about those mountain giants, and he wasn't sure if he could take a hit from them, even after becoming an A-rank mercenary.

Nevertheless, things were going extremely smoothly, and he was very close to the place where the nest of flora spiders was located.

"I wonder if spiders have a heart..." Jacob couldn't help but smirk at himself.

Another night pass,

The next day, Jacob was moved between trees as it has become his habit, and it was relatively safe to remain in these tree crowns as long as he didn't encounter any snakes or insects.

At this moment, his step came to an abrupt halt as he hid his presence and looked between those trees a few tens of meters away with narrowed eyes.

Thereupon voices of hoofs rang before a carriage covered in a black cloth pulled by three horses as a hooded man was controlling it and two more riders in dark hoods were following this covered carriage appeared.

They were slowly moving with the carriage.

'Three hooded persons and cover carriage in this remote location. Not suspicious at all.' Jacob thought as he deeply looked at the carriage.

His eyes were fixed on that metal part that wasn't covered with the cloth, and he couldn't help but think, 'Is this a cage carriage? But what is caged inside? Since they're moving this sneakily without any insignia or revealing their faces, they didn't want anyone to find out. I shouldn't get involved with these kinds of strangers.'

Jacob remain calm and let the carriage pass until he heard a reverberating voice which made him shudder slightly.

'Mooooowwwwwwwww...'

Those horses staggered as well.

The hooded coachman shouted in panic, "Quickly, it's awake again, use the tranquilizer!"

One of the riders quickly sprang into action and dismount the trembling horse. He then pulled a tranquilizer gun from the bag pack hanging around the horse and lift the black cloth from the side.

There was indeed a cage and something was inside.

He shot the tranquilizer shot without any delay and that voice quickly calm down before vanishing.

The rider couldn't help but sighed in relief, "The effect of this rare grade tranquilizer is started to diminish on it. We need to hurry, or we might get spotted by someone. You know what will happen if someone were to find what we are doing?"

The coachman sighed and shake his head, "Do you think we have any other choice? Besides, you don't need to worry too much. This is the human kingdom. They didn't have many powerful beings in their ranks. As long as we remain careful, we can easily pull this off. Or we can just kill them if they get in our way." he sneered disdainfully in the end.

The second rider's voice also sounded in agreement, "Heh, as long as there isn't a B-rank mercenary blocking our way, we'll easily let this beast lose close to the lionheart city and enjoy the show!"

They were about to continue their journey again when a nonchalant yet icy voice rang through the silent woods.

"So, this means there's a beast in this cage?"

Those three were startled by this sudden voice and become alert as they started to look around and pull their weapons, which were quite advanced in comparison to what Jacob saw so far.

One of them was holding a shotgun, while the other two took out two pistols.

"Who are you? Show yourself!" the coachman shouted as he held the shotgun with both hands, ready to fire at any moment.

The voice rang again with a hint of ecstasy. "Oh, you delivered a beast and some excellent specimens for me. How should I thank you?"

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Chapter 63: Tiger Bull

The voice rang again with a hint of ecstasy. "Oh, you delivered a beast and some excellent specimens to me. How should I thank you?"

The coachman holding the pump-action shotgun roared, "Bastard, come out if you dare!"

They were all having an extremely hard time finding the location of this voice in those woods, but they hold their ground to wait for the person to make a mistake because they had a huge advantage with their guns.

Jacob's voice sounded again with a hint of ridicule, "Although this imitation of Ithaca-37 is good, its tubular under-barrel magazine can probably hold two 12-gauge cartridge rounds at most.

"While the two of you were holding pistols which can only shoot water at most, so how about you leave all this and scram? It'll be a win-win for both sides or, trust me, you are all dead."

"There!"

The coachman quickly shouted and pull the trigger, while the other two follow suit.

They emptied their magazines in that direction and quickly started to reload.

"Don't say I didn't give you a chance."

Just as Jacob's voice trailed off, a sharp gunshot reverberated in the vicinity. The coachman who was busing loading the gauge was instantly sent flying backward as his head explode!

"He also had..." before the rider could completely his word, another thunderous sound rang and send him flying with a hole in his stomach.

The last one wanted to run, but how could he escape Jacob's rifle? He was also killed with a headshot.

The forest regained its calm as three mingle corpses lay on the dirt ground, and two horses were already fled and only the cage carriage remained. If it wasn't heavy, those horses would've already fled at full speed.

Thereupon, Jacob emerged as he held the silver rifle with smoke rising from its muzzle. Although it was still the same, there were some changes with its trigger, chamber, and handle.

Nevertheless, it was still far from an optimal rifle in Jacob's view, but beggars can't be choosers.

Jacob looked at the corpse and his eyes contracted when he saw the face under that hood, it was a brown-skinned person with a long face and sharp teeth visible from its mouth, and he looked at the others, but their faces weren't intact anymore, yet their skin color was the same.

"Hob-Trolls from the Earthen Kingdom!" Jacob quickly identify them because he had seen the Hob Trolls pictures in the history books.

"So, they were sent here to cause trouble with this beast in Gloria Country. It seemed something was going on in the shadows between the three kingdoms. Well, it has nothing to do with me, since I reap a

huge harvest. One uncommon heart from Hob Troll and, of course, this beast!" Jacob sneered as he collected the loot first.

He first collected the heart and blood of one hob troll, before he picked two lather bags laying on the ground and their firearms.

"My storage space is completely full, and I can only store one more heart box in the pendant. I have to carry these bags and firearms. It seemed by trip come to an end without completing the agency mission." Jacob smiled without any regret at all.

The hunting and collection missions have a fixed time, One Year, and if you took the mission and didn't complete it in one year, it'll automatically declare failed, and the mercenary only needed to pay five percent plenty the next time he collected another mission.

So, Jacob wasn't worried. Even if this mission failed, he had gained far more than he was expecting, especially this caged beast, which was even more powerful than the wolf king, he could tell by that roar.

That was why he took the risk of exposing himself because he knew if he missed this chance, he won't get another beast on a silver platter.

As for killing these hob trolls, he cared little since accidents always happened in these vast mountain ranges, and he also got more guns to work with and those tranquilizers that can put this beast to sleep were also quite interesting.

Jacob put the bags and guns on the front of the carriage where the coachman's things were, and everything was Jacob's now.

After putting everything on the carriage, he finally lifted the black cloth and saw the beast inside. And he was astonished when he saw the creature.

It was a crimson bull with tiger-like white straps around its body and huge bullhorns.

"Tiger Bull?!" Jacob quickly remembered seeing this beast in the book he got from Decker.

Tiger Bull were extremely vicious creatures, and they were at the very apex of the rare beast list because they were carnivores and had extremely strong bodies almost like iron, and it was written that if their skin were a little bit tougher, they would fall into the Rarer Beast Category!

Nevertheless, this was a tremendous surprise because these hob trolls somehow managed to capture this tiger bull from the rare region, and they were extremely hard to find as well.

"It seemed this plot was far more complex than it meets the eyes." Jacob guessed someone was scheming something, and these three were just pawns.

If they succeeded in releasing this Tiger Bull into the lionheart city, then there would be huge casualties, as it wreaked havoc and only B Rank Mercenaries can hold their own against this Tiger Bull.

"I'm also going to cross the 10% hurdle, and I just happened to need meat like this Tiger Bull. So, I can't kill it here, nor can I leave it as it is. They clearly said the tranquilizers are losing effects, and it can break free from this cage as well.

"However, the lionheart city is still quite far, so they had to have enough tranquilizers for the trip." Jacob quickly moved toward the front and checked those bags.

There was a total of eight bags, including the ones on the carriage, and he open them one by one!

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Chapter 64: Gossip Of The Town

Just as Jacob thought, three of the bags were filled with tranquilizer shots, and they were a total of 120 shots, and he mused one shot would last for 8 or 10 hours because only with this ration one could reach the lionheart city with this much supply.

Two of them were filled with dry meat and water.

While the last three were probably the personal belonging of those three hob trolls.

He found, a total of 143 bullets for all the firearms, three mercenary IDs which were affiliated with the Earthen Kingdom, nothing to surprise about. Three long knives, 433 bronze coins, 303 silver coins, and 105 gold coins.

Lastly, he found an unopened envelope with a sword stabbed into a human skull insignia imprinted on the back.

'Interesting.' Jacob opened the envelope.

But he frowned when he saw the letter inside was filled with symbols, and nothing make sense.

'An encrypted letter? There's a conspiracy behind this, and they are superb at hiding their tracks. This letter was probably meant for someone important, and only they could decipher this letter. Or even if something happened just like now, this letter will be useless even if someone read it.' Jacob smiled and store the letter and envelope away.

Although he wasn't interested in the politics of this world, he was interested in information because nothing was set in stone, and he might need this information someday for his own use.

Afterward, he controlled the carriage and changed its route, and headed toward the Rain Town.

He was planning to hide this tiger bull in a remote region before he would quickly make a trip to his house and make an injection of heart essence and then absorbed it close to the carriage.

After he reached the ten percent mark, he would then slaughter this tiger bull and collect his heart and blood before devouring it for nutrition before coming back and continuing to create reaming injections.

Although his plan seemed flawless, nothing was flawless when nature was involved.

On the first night, the rain started to pour like mad and the carriage nearly turned upside down on a hill slope. If not for Jacob using his strength to keep it steady, he didn't dare to imagine what would've happened if that beast broke out of that cage.

Jacob had already examined that cage, and he even shot it with his rifle, but it didn't leave a scratch on it. This made him excited since he could use this cage to forge high-quality gun parts.

But he knew it was a pipe dream for now since it would take some time to set up a forgery and make the equipment he needed to work with. Furthermore, he didn't want to abandon this kind of lab in the future.

So, he was still hesitant to decide and leave that thought for the future, when he would be powerful enough to protect his things.

Anyhow, Jacob became more careful after that incident and his pace plummeted.

The travel that took him over ten days to reach that point, it took him a whole month just to reach the outskirts of the rainy mountain ranges, and he was still half a journey away from the rain town, only if he traveled alone at full speed.

Despite that, he wasn't planning to go there with this cage carriage, so he headed toward a remote area where he could hide this carriage.

He quickly found an old cave that was abandoned by some wild animals, and it was size-wise perfect, as well.

After taking care of the carriage, he first released those horses since he won't be needed them anymore and then break the wheels.

Now, even if someone found this cage, they won't be able to take it away, and they definitely won't be crazy enough to provoke that Tiger Bull unless they had a death wish.

After giving the Tiger Bull a large dosage of the tranquilizer, which was enough for two days, he hid the cave with a huge bolder and left toward the rain town, carrying those bags and guns on his shoulder.

Dawn was already breaking, so he entered the town without any hitch.

But he suddenly noticed the commotion on the streets and heard some bystanders talking about something interesting.

"I heard the Golden Claw Mercenary Team came back yesterday after they left for the wolf king's hunt with an enormous wolf king hunting party. But the thing is, they came back empty-handed, and it turned out someone else has already killed the wolf king, and they only found its bones and the agency refused to pay them without evidence of killing the wolf king!" A person gossiping in front of a butcher's shop.

"Heh, it's ancient history now. Just this morning, the Leader of Golden Claw Mercenary Team, Jonty, with the leaders of Sharp Sword Mercenary Team, and Purple Mercenary Team storm the gates of town lord mansion and demand the rewards.

"They accused the town lord of publishing a hoax mission and wasting their time. But the truth is the wolf hunting party they gathered is demanding compensation for wasting their time as well.

"So, they had no choice but to look for the town lord for payment, or they might go bankrupt this time. But seriously, just who killed the wolf king and left it to rot? That person might be a B Rank character and killed it when he was passing by.

"Now the whole town is talking about this." The butcher presumed.

Jacob smirked at hearing this and silently moved toward his house.

He wasn't worried that someone would find out about him since nothing could connect that corpse to him.

On the contrary, they might have found the bullet wounds on its skull, and the only one who was carrying this kind of bullet was none other than Gus's party.

So, this thing might come back to bite that sole witness and survival of this entire hunt, Jennifer!

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Chapter 65: The Knight Order!

While Jacob was peacefully making the heart essence in his home.

The lord's mansion was extremely lively at this time.

In the dining hall,

Jonty sat around on the left side of this big rectangular table with an ugly expression on his face, while there were two other men with the same kind of expression sitting right next to him.

One was a fat beard man, he was the leader of Sharp Sword Mercenary Team, Hadi.

While the other was a short man with purple long hair, he was the leader of the Purple Mercenary Team, Jett.

On the right side of this table were sitting the Town Lord Ciaran and his two younger brothers, as they looked at the three on the other side, specifically at Jonty, with hostile and outraged expressions.

But no one dare to speak as their focus was on the mean seats of this table,

There was an old man in black robes with scholarly air around him, while a young man was sitting on another chair with a haughty expression.

Right in the middle of these two was none other than Jennifer, who has recovered and regained her aloof charm. But there was a hint of fear deep within her eyes, which she was trying to hide.

The old man spoke impassively while he looked at Jonty and the two others, "So, you are the famous C Rank Mercenary of Rain Town? I heard you were once nurtured by the house, Taran, but then went rogue after having your way?"

Jonty's expression changed slightly as he felt a sudden chill in his spine despite being a C Rank mercenary. He couldn't help but feel dread from this old man and didn't dare to antagonize him with his arrogant attitude.

"Sir, Knight, don't believe in baseless rumors. I left because our beliefs were different, but I'm always grateful for the town lord's kindness and will repay it anytime house Taran faces any danger."

A young man who had some resemblance to Ciaran retorted, "You dare to spout lies? Don't you betray us because you had a new master and were offered more coins..."

'Slap!'

A sharp slapping voice rang in the entire hall.

The slap came from none other than Ciaran. His face was livid as he rebuked. "Eoin, enough. Don't be disrespectful when, Sir, Knight is speaking!"

He then quickly looked at the old man and apologized, "Please forgive him, Sir. Knight, he's still young and yet to learn his manners properly."

In the humane kingdom, the knight order was above all and only below the royal family.

Even the nobles were afraid of offending them because these knights were the protecting force of the kingdom, and they were extremely terrifying to fight with as well.

In every noble household, knights were appointed as their protectors, but everyone knows they were more of watchdogs than protectors, and they directly report everything to the higher-ups.

Even mercenaries were afraid of them, not because of the royalty, but because of the terrifying existences within their ranks. The strongest person of the humane kingdom was not a B Rank Mercenary, but the Marshal of the Knight Order!

That was why those mercenaries don't poke their nose too much in the noble affairs, especially if that matter involved knights of any rank!

Although this old man was only an eighth-rank junior knight, he was still a scary existence, and he can execute anyone as long as he had valid reason without giving any explanation to anyone and his strength could rank in middle levels of C Rank mercenaries.

That was why everyone in this hall was so tense since this knight showed up for the investigation of Gus's death, not the Baron. Which was out of their characters since they won't normally poke their nose in the noble household's personal matters as long as it didn't affect them.

When Jonty, Hadi, and Jett stormed into the manor, they didn't know about the presence of this old knight, or they wouldn't dare to barge in so arrogantly, and now it was too late to escape.

The old knight didn't say anything, as his eyes were fixed on the three mercenaries with clear contempt.

The knight order had a very hostile relationship with the human mercenaries, not with the agency itself. Because many promising youths decided to join the agency, which was lax and not like the discipline knight order.

But they also died in the agency much sooner because of other schemes and benefits.

In their view, they should be serving their kingdom, not wasting their life in the wild while working for others.

But they can't act against the agency because of the hegemony behind it, so they could only vent their anger on these humans who offer themselves to them.

Jonty and the other two sweated in the old knight's sharp gazes and felt as if they were sitting on thin ice.

Jonty couldn't help but say, "Sir. Knight, we know we were disrespectful today, and we are willing to compensate and swore to never do any disgraceful act in the future."

He then looked at Ciaran and lower his head, "I know, my departure was sudden and without any prior notice, but I have my own reasons. But I'm telling the truth when I say I'll help the house Taran if it ever needs me. Please forgive me."

Hadi and Jett nodded after Jonty, but the unwillingness in their eyes told otherwise.

They were like two innocent bystanders who got dragged by that sly bastard Jonty into this, who told them they didn't have to pay those cannon folds with their own pockets as long as they force the town lord.

But now they were forced to pay without doing anything with him, and it was he who decided this for them as well!

They silently decided to never collide with this sly bastard in the future, ever!

The old knight suddenly smiled, but there was a hint of chillness as he spoke...!

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Chapter 66: A Knight On The Case

The old knight suddenly smiled. "Since you seemed an upright person, I won't pursue the matter about you barging into a noble household under the Gloria Country authority."

Jonty and others have a massive sigh of relief, but the old knight wasn't done yet.

This time, there was a hint of chillness as he spoke. "But each of you three has to compensate with 1,000 Gold Coins annually to Gloria City for five years. If you missed even a year, heh, I'll report this incident to the higher-ups."

"What?!" they were all shocked and panicked.

1000 Gold wasn't a small amount even for them, especially for Hadi and Jett, who were only D Rank mercenaries. They might die in collecting this kind of wealth.

"What, are you unhappy? Then how about joining the knight order?" The old man's lips curled.

Jonty felt his misfortune was on a roll because first, he found the wolf king was already dead and didn't get the payment. Now, he was here to extort the town lord, but it was he who was getting extorted.

He couldn't help but clinched his fist, but he didn't retort. He knew if knight order acted, no one would save him, not even his backer.

Knight Order was infamous to be unreasonable when it came to mercenaries, so he didn't want to try his luck, nor did he want to join them since it was far more dangerous to be a mercenary.

At least he had freedom.

He gnashed his teeth and nodded, "Alright, we'll pay on time. You don't need to worry."

Hadi and Jett again cursed Jonty to decide for them, but they had no choice, so they agreed in silence.

The old knight nodded in satisfaction. "You may go, now. I'll be waiting for your report. I hate those who go back on their words." He chased them away with a stern warning.

Ciaran, Eoin, and the third Tarn brother couldn't help but admire the influence of this knight order.

They also felt quite refreshed when the arrogant Jonty, who was dancing on their heads for years, get taken care of with few sentences.

Now there were only the three Taran brothers, the old knight, the young man, and Jennifer left.

The atmosphere was again tense when the old man looked at Jennifer with a smile. "Little Miss, you don't seem happy to see me?"

Jennifer's expression changed ever so slightly, she knew this old knight was a watchdog of the knight order, and he monitored her father's every move.

As for the young man on the other side, he was this old knight's disciple, and he was also her suitor.

She would also feel uncomfortable in these two presences, but she knew she can't appear afraid, or they would notice something.

She was long ready if such a thing would ever happen, but she still thought it was too soon and those people might have lied to her.

Nonetheless, she won't be going down so easily. She smiled and said, "Grandpa Austin, please don't jest. I'm the happiest to see you and Kai."

Kai, who remain silent this whole time, spoke with a content smile, "Jennifer, when I heard you were almost got killed by that beast, I beg the teacher to come here and take you back safely."

'So, it was this brat who moved this old thing!' She couldn't help but get perplexed.

She knew Austin dotted on Kai the most and treated him like a son since he had no family.

Kai also had a crush on her from childhood, and Austin made sure he would get her in the future as well.

But she never liked Kai because he was too strange, and she felt uncomfortable around him when he saw her as if she was naked.

That was why she wanted to inherit the Baron's position to have a say in her marriage, or she would become a tool for her father to curry favor with Austin.

Austin chuckled, "Heh, this brat treated you well. He nearly cried with joy when he heard you were safe and sound."

Kai's face flashed as he lowered his head and mumbled, "I was just worried about you."

However, Jennifer didn't buy Kai's act and only pretend to be happy as well, "Really? Thank you, Kia. You are so good to me."

Austin looked at Ciaran impassively at this moment and said, "Do you find the whereabouts of the young Lord and who killed the wolf king?"

Ciaran quickly replied while sweating, "My Lord, according to the agency, there were some fresh human bones found on the dark wolf ridge, as well as the wolf king. We presumed they..."

He hesitated to speak as he looked at Jennifer. Her eyes started to get misty.

Austin got what he wanted to say and nodded, "What about the person who killed it and how it was killed? Did they find their belonging? They were carrying the latest firearms with them."

Ciaran's heart palpitated when he felt Austin's piercing gaze. He took a deep breath to calm himself before he said carefully, "The killer's identity is still unknown. As for how the wolf died, they said there were holes in its skull, made with bullets, but they didn't have the means to find out from which kind of gun they were shot.

"As for the belonging, I'm afraid nobody reported it. I think those mercenaries took them for themselves. They would never hand over anyone they found during the mission, nor would agency demand it."

Austin felt into deep thought before he said while glancing at Jennifer subtly, "I understand. But this wolf king's appearance is strange. I would meet with the agency leader here tomorrow. You did well on your part. I'll handle this case myself now."

Ciaran felt as if he was pardoned from a death sentence. He was afraid that his family would get slaughtered under the pretext of Gus's death, but it seemed he had dodged the bullet.

On the other hand, Jennifer's heart sank when she heard this, 'This is bad!'

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Chapter 67: Titan Iron

At night,

Jacob again sneaked out of the Rain Town and headed toward the cave, where he hid the cage carriage with Tiger Bull.

He had already made a heart essence injection from Hob Troll's heart and blood, and it was in his pendant right now.

However, when Jacob reached the hidden cave, his expression turned ashen because the boulder he used to close the entrance was now completely shattered apart as a huge bulldozer hit it.

He ran toward the cave and when he saw that one side of the cage was broke opened, he cursed out loud, "That damn bull escaped!"

Jacob couldn't help but doubt the tranquilizers because he clearly gave it an overdose, and it was enough to let it sleep for two or three days. But it didn't even last twenty hours.

He suddenly had a dangerous proposition about this as he thought with a grim expression, 'Could it be that bull fake its sleeping hours and when I finally drop my guard, it took advantage? I still underestimate a rare species like Tiger Bull in the end. Fuck!'

However, Jacob knew there wasn't any reason to cry over spilled milk anymore. He had already done his best and just miscalculated the intelligence of a rare species.

They adapt just too fast, and this was his first time experiencing this kind of defeat by an animal. Truth be told, it kind of hurt his pride.

Nevertheless, he wasn't overly worried because he knew that bull would wreak havoc soon, and it won't be too late when it got spotted. Or it won't be too late to hunt it down himself once he broke the 10% threshold.

He didn't mind hunting it down at that time, but now he was hesitating to inject this heart essence since he didn't know how much longer he had until he experienced that hunger attack.

To find that answer, he summoned Immortika and asked, "Can you tell me how long I can last without eating after crossing the 10% completion?"

However, as always, it didn't answer the question without its sarcasm. "Hahaha... that little bull really pull a fast one on you, didn't it? Well, don't worry, you won't experience a hunger attack for 3 months after every 10% completion, and that's only if you don't eat anything. So, go for it."

"Can't you just answer the damn question for once?" He rebuked and closed the book before it could say anything.

'I should head back and inject it when Pig Head is head around. It's not safe here anymore with that livestock on loss.' Jacob left the cave, but he didn't forget to take the broken cage with him.

Even the Tiger bull wasn't able to break this iron and only managed to break the bindings.

Furthermore, despite this cage size, its weight was extremely light, only 150 KG and, as for drawing attention, Jacob was confident in his speed. Even if someone spotted him, he could just say he was bringing it to raise livestock, which wasn't strange at all.

This time he wasn't stealthy because of the enormous cage, but the guard didn't stop him from bringing it in since it was empty.

But Jacob failed to notice just after he left that one guard quickly headed toward Lord Manor.

Jacob's appearance was quite eye-catching because of his bright silver hair, and everyone knows in the rain town that the new C-rank mercenary had silver hair and a handsome appearance.

Jacob reached Isaac Smithery and when Isaac noticed the iron used in that cage he nearly jumped in shock.

"Where did you find it?!" He exclaimed as if he was in a dream.

Jacob coolly answered, "Don't ask a meaningless question. Can you work with it or not?"

Isaac didn't ask again and thought for a moment as he shook his head with great regret, "I'm ashamed I can't craft it into those parts you ordered. If I'm not wrong, this is the famous Uncommon Grade Titan Iron of the Earthen Kingdom. It's not only extremely sturdy but lightweight.

"I don't know how you get your hands on it but just a gram of it worth, 10 Gold Coin, and here we have almost 200KG of pure Titan Iron. Which means almost 2 million gold coins!

"Only the Gun Smith Guild has this much Titan Iron in their possession, and only they can help you with it."

Jacob's eyes narrowed with a hint of disappointment, but he knew Isaac won't play tricks with him. As for those two million gold coins, he wasn't fazed by it at all. Money was the least bit of his worries right now.

Because he knew if he sold it to the agency, some people might take an unwanted interest in him or from where he got it from.

Jacob asked, "Then can you make two short swords and turn the rest into iron bricks of one KG each? You can have five bricks, and we'll consider our account close?"

Isaac's eyes brighten hearing this, he knew even if someone had money this Titan Iron wasn't easy to get and five kg of it was generous enough for someone like him who probably could never get into contact with this Titan Iron in his entire life.

He couldn't help but felt grateful to Jacob because, from the moment he met him, his skills improved tremendously. He was an honest man and an upright person. Furthermore, he wasn't greedy for momentary gains.

Additionally, he knew someone like him won't be able to survive with this much wealth, so it was enough to just have a good relationship with Jacob.

He replied, "I can do that. Your previous order would take three more weeks and included this order. Give me one more week."

Jacob shook his head. "I need those swords in two days. You can take your time with the rest. But don't show this to anyone, hide it. I don't want unnecessary attention, and it would also put your life in danger. I hope you understand."

Isaac thought for a moment and nodded solemnly. "Don't worry, I understand. You can collect your swords in two days!"

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 68: Visitors

Jacob returned to his house and directly entered the basement to start the injection procedure.

This time, when he took the injection, his expression suddenly changed when that heart essence started to course through his veins.

This time he felt a sharp pain in his blood vessels and his heart seemed to be expanding in his chest and then reducing.

Suddenly, he heard a cracking sound that was coming out of his rib cage, and he caught up blood and groan in pain.

'Just what is happening!' He was in extreme pain, but he could still bear it.

But he could also feel those bones were mending slowly, as the pain was also decreasing. He wasn't in impending danger.

The dark mark in his heart was also becoming more and more visible with every heartbeat.

Thereupon, Jacob noticed dark blood coming out of his chest pours before it spread all over his body, even his eyes were bleeding in dark blood. But this time he didn't feel any pain, but as that blood was gushing out, he felt lighter and lighter.

This process only lasted for five minutes and so was the essence absorption process, since it was only from an uncommon species.

Furthermore, Jacob could feel the change in his heart rhythm, and it was almost soundless, and his body had become weightless. He felt it was someone else's body.

As he tried to stand up, his palms left a deep crack on the stony floor, but he could also feel the pain in his hand, he exclaimed, "It seemed I got more power than my body could handle and if I used it carelessly, I might get hurt. I have to start eating soon. I could feel that light hunger again..."

Jacob noticed the process only last for over fifteen minutes, and he mused it was because the more heart essence he absorbed, the faster the process would get.

He straight headed toward the bath before he cleaned himself, and he noticed he had become slightly burly from his ripped self and slightly taller.

After cleaning himself up, he took the advantage of the nighttime and started to turn more heart and blood into heart essence.

He wasn't planning on leaving until he absorbed all the heart essence, and he still had two days until his swords got ready.

Afterward, he was planning to look for that Tiger Bull on the run.

He was extremely confident in subduing it now with his current strength, and it was also the only piece of nutrition that can help him convert his body in one fell swoop, not to forget about its heart essence.

This time after making an injection, Jacob didn't wait or go into the basement and directly absorbed it, and just as he suspected, the heart essence of this uncommon crimson strip hyena got absorbed in five minutes, and he didn't feel any change at all.

'Although, I'm raising the percentage. But at this rate, I might need hundreds of uncommon species to complete this process...' Jacob mused as he put another heart and blood into the boiler.

'Nah, I'm too impatient, like the old days. I should calm myself down and think with a tranquil mind.' Jacob smile and returned to this resting position.

However, after he just absorbed the third uncommon heart essence and was about to put the last one on the boiler, he heard a sharp knock on his door for the first time he came to live in this house.

'It seemed news of my return spread quite quickly. Only those bigwigs around here will try to approach me, though. It might be cumbersome to offend them for no reason. Let's see who you are.'

Jacob hid the distillation equipment and headed toward the door. He wasn't afraid of anyone in this town or in this kingdom as a matter-of-factly, right now. So, he didn't have to hide his face here anymore.

'This heartbeat rhythm is quite peculiar, calm, and sturdy. At least a C Rank. The other is slightly fast while the third one is seemed to be in high gear, probably, agitate.' Jacob's hearing has become extremely precise after this small breakthrough, and he started to notice unique heart rhythms.

This could be a terrifying ability if he could refine it to a top level. But he wasn't even close yet.

Just as the door opened,

An old man and a youth appeared in his view.

Surprisingly, they were Austin and Kai!

Behind them was the butler of Taran's house, Harland, with a somewhat pale expression on his face as he looked at Jacob with somewhat apologetic, yet uneasy, eyes.

'What's the deal with him?' Jacob looked at the refine old man in butler clothes and wondered.

But he merely glanced at him as he looked at the old man in a blue suit.

He impassively said, "What do you want?"

Harland wanted to warn Jacob about Austin, but he knew better, so he remained silent since he knew Austin and Kai had followed him for some other reason. If he messed it up, it might inflict the house, Taran, so he could only watch helplessly.

Who would've thought this old knight would be interested in meeting with Jacob, the new C rank mercenary of rain town, and followed Harland here when he was about to come with a meeting gift from the Town Lord?

Harland knew if Jacob had a poor impression of the house Taran, they could just forget about his friendship. In the end, it all depended on Austin now.

Austin looked at the silver-haired young man, and he suddenly felt he wasn't just merely a random C-rank mercenary like Jonty.

He was full of openings, but Austin has this strange feeling that if he made a move, he might regret it.

Austin smiled amiably and said, "I'm Austin Port, an Eight Rank Junior Knight. I'm here out of curiosity. Please forgive my blunt visit."

Kai couldn't help but looked at his teacher with a hint of a surprise because this wasn't his usual style to talk with these mercenaries!

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 69: The Three Hegemonies

Jacob's cocked an eye when heard the word. Knight.

He naturally knows about the backbone of the Humane Kingdom, the Knight Order!

It was not because he was curious; it was because these knights had too many story books about them. It was quite clear that it was done deliberately to encourage the Knighthood within common folks and inspired them to join the Knight Order.

However, Jacob has nothing to do with those folktales, and he wasn't interested in becoming a Knight, no matter how many benefits they would offer him because the humans were too weak and can't sustain his needs.

If the humans were like the mountain giant race, he might've considered setting here for a decade or two, but he knows it was just a pipe dream.

After encountering those hob trolls, he was even more sure that humans were in constant danger and very easy to push around, so he had an even worse image of them right now.

Nevertheless, this didn't give him the reason to antagonize the Knights from Knight Order, since they might bring unnecessary troubles to his door.

He still needed to stay for some time in here, so he didn't plan to fall with the strongest force of this kingdom. Unless they're courting death themselves.

He looked at Austin and nodded slightly. "No need to be polite. Come in."

Jacob brought the guests into the small living room, where a table and two chairs were.

He took one chair and pointed toward the other. "I don't have any more chairs, since I wasn't expecting other guests."

Harland's expression changed and Kai's eyes turned stony as he was about to rebuke him when Austin took the chair and sat down with a smile.

"Don't worry, I won't take your precious time. You two wait outside."

Austin's words made Kai stand down with resentful eyes, and gave Harland a tremendous surprise since he knew Jacob was just being extremely rude. But Austin didn't react at all, and he started to get suspicious that they both know each other.

But when he saw Kai clenching his fist slightly, he thought otherwise. They both left the two alone.

Jacob didn't even glance at Kia or Harland all this time, so their departure wasn't anything for him.

He asked impassively, "So, what brings Sir Knight to my door? If you were just an hour later, I was going to leave for another trip."

Austin smiled amiably and reply, "I was here out of curiosity to see what kind of C rank mercenary has appeared here. As you know, people use the identity loophole all the time, and it's seldom that a C rank mercenary appeared, especially in such a small town."

Jacob coolly replied, "This place suits me for the time being, so I decided to register from here."

Austin nodded in understanding and didn't discuss further into it, since everyone has their reasons.

His eyes suddenly turned sharp as he said, "I can tell you are extremely strong, far stronger than me. You also look like someone with hidden motives. So, I won't beat around the bush with someone like you. I want to invite you to join the Black Knight Order!"

Jacob didn't react, but his lip curled slightly. "Black Knight Order? Let me guess, it's some personal army under the crown, and they are free to do whatever they want, but they had to protect the royal family whenever they are in danger.

"Or, they are some kind of assassination squad or like this. Let me tell you straight, I will not join anything if it's affected my freedom."

Austin pursed his lips. "You didn't even hear me out and directly rejected me? Don't you want to know what the Black Knight Order is?"

Jacob shrugged. "My answer is the same. I will not join anything if it affects my freedom."

Austin sighed, "I will still tell you. You can then decide to join or not."

Jacob remained silent and let Austin continue.

"You see, the Black Knight Order is different from the Knight Order because it wasn't made public and only nobles know about it.

"The Black Knight Order isn't under anyone's command, not even the crown, but it's under the Nightmare Knight Legion."

"Nightmare Knight Legion?" Jacob's interest was suddenly piqued when he heard this unfamiliar name.

Austin nodded, "Yes, the Nightmare Knight Legion is like the Start Mercenary Agency, Apothecary Guild, and Gunsmith Guild. You're probably wondering why such an organization isn't famous as the other three, right?"

Jacob nodded. He had already known about three famous forces that represent and target unique aspects of professions.

Austin smiled, "Just like the Star Mercenary Agency had the Zodiac Taurus Bank, and the Apothecary Guild and Gunsmith Guild had the Alchemy Guild behind them, the Nightmare Knight Legion also has the Zodiac Warriors Alliance behind them."

'So, there were some important parts they missed in those books, huh? It seemed this Alchemy Guild and Zodiac Warriors Alliance are on the same level as the Zodiac Taurus Bank.

'But the Zodiac Taurus Bank seemed more famous and open than the other two or they simply aren't worried about influence?' Jacob's eyes shimmered with uncertainty.

"Please, continue." Jacob nodded in understanding.

Austin smile meaningfully as he had already guessed Jacob didn't have this kind of information, and he knew he had to convince Jacob with facts if he wanted to persuade him.

He said, "These three are the three hegemonies in four regions and their roots are so deep no one knows where they end, so no race goes against them.

"As for why I tell you about the other two? It was because it would be simple to understand this way.

"First, the Alchemy Guild, their strongest strength is their control over life knowledge, the forerunner of life, and unimaginable technology. They had all kinds of knowledge of different professions which greatly affects our life and others, even wars.

"That's why they were dreaded by everyone, and no one dare to fall out with them. The Apothecary Guild and Gunsmith Guild were just fragments of their knowledge. We humans just weren't interested enough to arouse their further interest.

"Second, the Zodiac Taurus Bank, I don't have to introduce them since you might've already known. Their strongest strength is wealth and their way to keep increasing it and keeping it safe.

"The biggest reason for Zodiac Taurus Bank is one of the three hegemony, is their way to protect the wealth they controlled, and they had many mysterious ways to hunt you down if you ever try to rob them.

"That's why everyone trusted them, even those arrogant Apothecaries and Gunsmiths, have accounts and safes in the Zodiac Taurus Bank.

"Lastly, the Zodiac Warriors Alliance. They didn't have the knowledge or technology like the Alchemy Guild, nor did they have the wealth of Zodiac Taurus Bank.

"But it ranked first between three hegemonies, do you know why?" Austin smiled mysteriously, which made Jacob's eyes narrow with prudence!

Cursed Immortality

Chapter 70: Black Knight Order

Jacob impassively replied, "Enlightened me." But the wariness in his eyes increased.

He suddenly felt like a frog in the well who only see the world with that narrow viewpoint.

Austrian said, "Zodiac Warriors Alliance is the strongest because they only had fighters or true warriors in their ranks and they didn't let just any tom dick and harry into their ranks, even if it's the Nightmare Knight Legion

"They only give access to the Nightmare Knight Legion through a kingdom's army while creating a Black Knight Order within the army, and then to join the Nightmare Knight Legion through the Black Knight Order you have to be someone below the age of thirty and strength equivalent to a C Rank Mercenary."

Jacob's eyes shine with understanding, he finally understood why Austin was going to such a great length to tell him all this. It was because of his young appearance.

Austin's next words just confirmed his guess, "The moment I saw you I can guess you're extremely young, and I don't want you to waste your youth and potential like those fools in the wild and then die.

"I'm training my foster son to enter the Black Knight Order and he might be able to make it in the upcoming test. But on the other hand, you are completely another story, you are like those youths trained under first-class knights.

"That's why you'll get into the black knight order and then might have a chance to enter the Nightmare Knight Legion.

"I won't lie to you about the Nightmare Knight Legion, only someone with B Rank Mercenary Strength and age below forty can join their ranks. In the history of our human race, only three humans managed to join them.

"The current Marshal of the Knight Order is also a Nightmare Knight and he is the strongest person in humanity. That's why everyone is afraid of offending the knights."

Austin's voice was filled with longing and worshiped in the end. But there was also bitterness since he knew he had little potential, he wasn't even qualified to enter the Black Knight Order and that was why he trained Kai to fulfill the biggest regret of his life.

However, Jacob wasn't moved by Austin's speech in the least bit, and all his focus was on the information about the Zodiac Warriors Alliance.

'I have to be careful of this alliance. Since they are so strict with their selection process, then they are really not to trifle with. Who knows what kind of existences are within their ranks to have them become the strongest force.'

He looked at Austin who was still lamenting about his past, he said, "You say they didn't have anything the other two powers have, then what do they have to offer?"

Austin was surprised by Jacob's uninterested expression and thought it was his fault for getting off rails, he didn't tell Jacob about the true strength of the alliance and directly told him about the joining process.

He said, "I'm sorry I got slightly emotional. So, as I said, they had fighters, but what drew those fighters and made them strive to join the alliance is not wealth or any technology, but the Fighter Manuals in their possessions.

"Don't look down on these Fighter Manuals, although there isn't much information about them in Knight Order. But according to some senior knights, those Fighter Manuals have the ability to increase your fighting potential and prowess!"

'Just that?' Jacob felt his expectations got burned all of a sudden.

But when he thought from the perspective of someone like Austin, he thought it made sense that all those fighting maniacs would choose to join the alliance since money and knowledge can come with power as well!

Furthermore, he knew there might be some important information being held back and someone like Austin or the ordinary Knight from Knight Order won't know the complete mystery of these Fighter Manuals.

Nevertheless, he was still halfhearted because he had a manual of his own that can increase his strength to an unknown height, so the allure of this alliance was almost like dry meat to him.

As long as he wasn't desperate, he won't eat it no matter what!

But he can't tell this Austin, since he told him this information which gave him more prospects about this world, he won't be ruthless to the old knight.

He said as he nodded, "So, how can I join this Black Knight Order?"

Austin smiled broadly as if he had already expected it, "You just have to head toward the royal city and pass the examination of Black Knight Academy in six months."

Jacob nodded, but he suddenly sensed something and asked, "I think you're missing something? I heard you guys hate the mercenary agency, but why did you promote the Black Knight Order?"

Austin's expression changed ever so slightly, but Jacob noticed it and he knew he had hit a bull's eye!

Austin sighed, "You're just too sharp for your own good. But since you have noticed it, I'll tell you which you're supposed to know after the test. This is also good since you won't think I trick you.

"The thing is, the Black Knight Academy accept anyone under the age of thirty as long as they passed the strength and comprehension test. But they only train them until they reached the age of 39. No matter at what age you joined, you'll be kicked out at the age of 39.

"As to the reason for this rule, it's because, during your stay in the academy, you have to become a True Black Knight, which is equivalent to a B rank mercenary.

"If you succeed, you'll get a chance to join the Nightmare Knight Legion Academy in Rare Province as long as you pass the entrance test.

"But if you failed..." He deeply looked at Jacob's cold eyes and sighed, "If you failed, you have to join the Black Knight Order Academy as a teacher and serve your kingdom for your entire life. It's the rule of every kingdom with Black Knight Academy!

"This is the steep price to pay for who wants to join the Nightmare Knight Legion. Since they had already spent resources on you and let you practice in the Fighter Manuals, they won't leave you free.

"But don't worry..."

Jacob cut Austin short with his icy voice, "I understand. I'll consider it. You may leave now!"