

The First Vampire Chapter 7 - 007 Tulip Chamber of Commerce_1

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According to the Aureate Empire's [Lord's Law], nobles who lose their fiefdom will be stripped of their nobility.

2

However, there is a way to restore one's former title.

That is to reclaim the fiefdom by one's own power.

Otherwise, even if the fiefdom is recaptured, it will be granted to the newly ennobled nobles who have contributed in the war, rather than returned to the former lord.

This survival of the fittest rule ensures the turnover of the imperial nobility system and prevents the emergence of nobles who survive only by relying on their ancestors.

The real Cain Sudor chose to go to Fallen Eagle City to seek Count Uman after his family was ruined, instead of seeking Duke St. Hilde, the suzerain of the Sudor family, for this reason.

1

If he sought Duke St. Hilde, even if the Duke sent troops to recapture Ice Rock City, it would not be returned to the Sudor family.

But it would be different if he sought his uncle Count Uman. Though Count Uman would not help Cain unconditionally, he would consider the relationship with the Sudor family and give some care.

At least, Ice Rock City should come back to the Sudor family.

Now, the real Cain might not know how the negotiation with his uncle was going, but Colin, who was pretending to be Knight Cain, already had a patron.

"Mr. Oliver, I appreciate your kindness. However, assembling an army capable of taking cities and recruiting a mercenary group escorting a caravan are not the same thing, they require totally different costs."

"Of course, I understand." Oliver chuckled with an unusual sparkle in his eyes. "My father was once a quartermaster. He was... dismissed for certain mistakes, but I have a rough understanding of the expenses of maintaining a real army."

"Oh?" Colin finally looked at the plump merchant at his side.

If before, Oliver was seen by Colin as an ignorant and reckless speculator, now he was a bold and reckless speculator.

Even though he knew he was an imposter, Colin was still interested in probing out this unremarkable merchant's foundation:

"So, how much gold can you sponsor, Mr. Oliver?"

"Hehe, well, I obviously don't have enough money to help you form an army. Actually, it's our chamber of commerce that intends to sponsor you."

"Chamber of Commerce?"

"Yes. Allow me to reintroduce myself. I am an administrator of the Tulip Chamber of Commerce."

"If you, Knight Cain, are willing to accept the chamber's sponsorship, I can apply to the president."

"The chamber will then comprehensively consider your strength, the cost required to recapture Ice Rock City, and the scale of sponsorship, as well as the return on investment afterwards."

"Tulip Chamber of Commerce?" Colin suddenly found the name of the chamber familiar and asked after searching his memory for a while, "The Ice Lake Town two years ago?"

"Exactly!" Oliver puffed out his chest and nodded proudly, "Two years ago, Baron Billy reassembled his army and recaptured Ice Lake Town with the sponsorship from the Tulip Chamber of Commerce."

The status of merchants in this world is not high, as no amount of money can buy nobility.

However, evidently, some shrewd and bold merchants are starting to use their wealth to expand their influence.

The Tulip Chamber of Commerce appears to be a leader among them.

"So, what did Baron Billy give you in return?"

"Apologies, Knight Cain, that is a commercial secret, which I cannot disclose to you."

"Alright." Colin scratched his chin and changed the question, "Then, what do you want from me?"

"Hehe, the specific terms can be discussed in detail when you meet our president." Oliver replied without revealing anything.

"I'll need to think about it."

"Of course, let me know whenever you have made up your mind," Oliver added with a squint and a jovial smile, "But I can assure you that neither Duke St. Hilde nor Count Uman can offer you a more favorable deal than our Tulip Chamber of Commerce."

"But the help you offer can't be compared to a duke's, or a count's."

"Of course, but our appetite is much smaller."

Colin nodded, suddenly finding the Tulip Chamber of Commerce quite interesting.

Although he himself was an imposter and didn't need their sponsorship, he still asked, "Does your Chamber of Commerce have a stationed point in Fallen Eagle City?"

"Of course, it's right next to the slave market in the western district of Fallen Eagle City. We welcome your visit at any time!"

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Colin secretly noted this location down, to be used as needed in the future.

Then he shifted the topic, and began chatting with Oliver about all manner of things.

Oliver, having traveled extensively for business, was very knowledgeable. Combined with his efforts to please Colin, the two immediately hit it off, as if they were old friends who hated to part.

Unbeknownst to them, night gradually deepened, and the camp slowly quieted down, with most of the mercenaries having gone to rest.

Oliver eagerly invited Colin to rest in his own tent. Colin hesitated for a moment, then seeing that Oliver's tent was indeed luxuriously decorated, he agreed.

But as everyone was deep in sleep, Colin was suddenly awakened by a slight noise.

He immediately got up, listened carefully for a moment, then abruptly shook Oliver awake, "Wake up, wake up! Someone is approaching our camp!"

Oliver was alert and quickly got up, but after listening carefully he was perplexed, "Really? How come I don't hear anything?"

"Listen carefully." Colin said confidently.

He found his hearing to be greatly enhanced at night, even the slightest sound from a kilometer away couldn't escape his ears.

"Enemy attack! Enemy attack!"

As expected, the mercenaries on guard also noticed the enemy and immediately raised an alarm.

"Calm down, don't panic! Light the torches, find your companions, stay alert, and don't leave the camp!" The distinct, gravelly voice of Saru, the captain of the Foxfire Mercenary Group, immediately rang out, stabilizing the flustered camp.

"I'm gonna have a look." Oliver, concerned about the safety of his goods, hesitated for a moment before running out of the tent.

Colin followed, only to see the enemy that had rushed into the camp already engaging in combat with the Foxfire mercenaries.

He did not join in the fight. After all, Oliver had not paid him any mercenary fee, so he wasn't about to risk his life for this fat man.

However, after watching for a while, Colin let his guard down.

The attackers were just a group of bandits, very weak, without even a single beginner-level warrior.

There weren't many of them either, about seventy or eighty people. He couldn't believe they had the guts to attack the Foxfire Mercenary camp of over a hundred people.

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After overcoming their initial panic, the Foxfire Mercenary Group quickly stabilized and started to beat back the bandits.

Within half an hour, the bandit group had finally collapsed in a panicked retreat after leaving over thirty bodies behind.

"Don't pursue, don't pursue!" Saru shouted calmly, stopping those who wanted to give chase into the forest.

Once the bandits were out of sight, Saru started to arrange for the clean-up of the battlefield.

Oliver quickly went to check his goods and calculate his losses.

Colin quietly walked to a remote, dark corner, crouching in front of a bandit's corpse, and pulled out a dagger and water bottle.

4

"Shhh!"

"Glug, glug..."