

## Sixth 181

### Chapter 181: Noodles

With these magical energy crystals, Herag will be able to save a lot of expenses in the future.

The only problem is that, for now, Herag can't convert these into cash and has nowhere to use them, so they can only be stored for the time being.

Other than that, there are various magic potion materials and casting materials. Herag is familiar with most of the magic potion materials, and together they are estimated to be worth more than ten thousand magic stones.

He doesn't recognize some of the casting materials, so it's hard to estimate their value. He plans to show them to Blake later to see how many magic stones they could sell for.

Apart from these material items, the most important thing is that he verified the power of the bloodline mark.

In the ruins of the Death Swamp, due to the weaker suppression of the World Will, Herag could unleash part of the power of the bloodline mark.

Once his entire body was covered with a metallic black sheen, he transformed into a demon form, with all his attributes significantly enhanced.

And this is under the suppression of the Wizard Plane's World Will.

If there were no suppression from the World Will at all, Herag felt he could unleash unimaginable power.

Herag glanced at the palm of his left hand, feeling that the energy was nearly full.

But even if the dimension coordinate energy was full, he still couldn't rashly head to the Abyss Plane just yet.

It's different there; at most, in the Barren Land, he might encounter a Level 2 wizard.

Entering the Abyss Plane, one might unexpectedly encounter a demon with Level 4-5 strength like that toad.

Who could withstand that?

The first two times, Herag was lucky to have the toad come to save him.

If it had been a moment later those two times, he would have died in the Abyss Plane.

Although he can use the bloodline mark's power over there, Herag doesn't believe it would elevate his strength to the level of that toad.

In the Abyss Plane, where powerhouses abound, that bit of strength is still insignificant.

Moreover, Herag is very concerned about the identity of the toad.

Though the toad has been very kind to him so far, that's because the toad has forgotten many things and hasn't recalled them yet.

There is a familiar aura on him, but Herag hasn't figured out what exactly this aura is.

Once the toad fully remembers, they might not necessarily remain friends.

Next time he goes in, the toad might just leap over and swallow him in one gulp.

Herag pondered greatly and approached the matter of entering the Abyss Plane with extreme caution; he absolutely couldn't go casually.

"Sigh... better continue the practice."

Herag shook his head, deciding to stop thinking about such distant matters.

What's most important for now is to keep practicing step by step.

He lifted his head, gazing at the starry night sky, and entered a state of meditation.

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Two months later.

Herag opened his eyes, his gaze calm and unaffected.

For these past two months, Herag had been practicing steadily.

He sold part of the items he brought back from the Death Swamp Ruins for ten thousand magic stones.

Herag decided to keep the rest for now and did not sell everything.

"Next up is slowly entering the liquid stage."

Having completed the meditation on the twentieth star, his mind was already filled with gaseous spiritual power.

The next step is to compress this gaseous spiritual power into a single drop of liquid spiritual power.

This is a very long and arduous process, and many people are stuck here for life.

Herag was neither anxious nor impetuous and slowly began the work of spiritual power liquefaction.

As he started to try, he felt a slight headache.

The process of compressing spiritual power is quite painful and not everyone can bear it.

Herag's breathing became somewhat rapid, not as steady as before.

After attempting to compress for a while, he stopped.

This process cannot be rushed; it can only be done gradually.

Herag ceased the compression of spiritual power and began meditating to adjust his state.

He didn't want to injure his mental sea due to impatience, as that would be a huge loss.

For a period after this, Herag's spiritual power would experience a stagnation in growth.

Until he entered the liquid stage, his spiritual power couldn't grow any further, having already reached the upper limit of the gaseous stage.

The time to enter the liquid stage is unpredictable, as it varies for each person.

Some might enter the liquid stage in one or two years, while others might take several decades.

There are also those who may need a hundred years or might never enter the liquid stage in their lifetime.

In the morning, sunlight streamed into the room through the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Herag got out of bed and stretched his body.

Chatiya stood at the doorway with a basin of hot water, a towel resting inside.

Herag maintained a regular routine, ending his meditation practice at this time every day, with Chatiya waiting outside.

"Come in," Herag said softly.

As Chatiya entered, she wrung the towel dry with her small hands before handing it, still steaming, to him.

After Herag washed up briefly, Chatiya asked, "Sir, are you hungry? Shall I make you some noodles?"

Recently, Chatiya had figured out how to make noodles, largely thanks to Herag's guidance.

With no shortage of flour, it didn't take long for Chatiya to start making noodles.

Herag tried them a few times, had Chatiya tweak them, and now the noodles were good enough to eat, comparable to those from his past life.

Usually, he had noodles or pastries for breakfast.

Herag shook his head and said, "No noodles today. Let's have your buns; I want to see how they taste."

Yesterday, Chatiya had just learned to make some buns, and Herag hadn't tasted them yet. It had been an extremely long time since he had eaten such things.

"Alright, sir, I'll steam the buns right away," Chatiya said efficiently, never dawdling.

While Herag was having breakfast, Blake arrived.

"Mr. Blake, is there something you need?" Herag asked.

Blake looked serious, hesitating to speak.

Herag sensed something amiss and asked, "Is there something going on?"

If it made Blake this tense, it certainly wasn't a simple matter.

Blake sighed and said, "There is something, but I don't know if it's a good thing for you."

"What is it?" Herag asked, puzzled.

Blake explained, "The Land of Dawn is recruiting people, requiring official wizards under the age of sixty."

Herag was stunned, never expecting it to be this news.

The Land of Dawn recruiting?

Herag wondered if this news was fake. Why would the Land of Dawn come to the Barren Land to recruit?

Seeing Herag's shock, Blake added, "When I first heard this, I was also incredulous, so I specifically inquired about it."

"The Land of Dawn is preparing a major invasion of the Elf Plane and will need a lot of manpower at that time. Since invading a plane is a long-term endeavor requiring as many people as possible, they've come to the Barren Land to recruit."

Chapter 182: Registration

Herag pondered: "Why is there an age restriction for Official Wizards under sixty? Wouldn't directly recruiting Crystalization Wizards enhance combat strength more?"

Official Wizards under sixty are usually at most in the Liquefaction Stage, and it's rare to find Crystalization Wizards under sixty.

This requirement from the Land of Dawn effectively excludes all Crystalization Wizards from the Barren Land.

And the combat strength of Crystalization Wizards is surely much higher than that of Gaseous or Liquidation Wizards.

Infiltrating the Elf Plane, the more powerful the participants, the better.

The restriction from the Land of Dawn seems somewhat strange.

Blake explained: "Wizards like me, who are Crystalization Wizards, are basically high-ranking leaders of various forces. We can't go, because if we go, many organizations in the Barren Land will lose a lot of members."

"Moreover, the Land of Dawn is recruiting mainly for the long term this time. Official Wizards under sixty are young enough and have time to grow. Many older wizards have little potential left."

Herag questioned: "Wasn't there a strict ban on wizards from the Barren Land entering the Land of Dawn before? Why is there an exception this time? Could there be something fishy?"

Herag thought about the Death Swamp Ruins, and from the Witch Array sealing the plane crack, it seemed that the Land of Dawn purely used the wizards from the Barren Land as tools.

While it's true that invading the Elf Plane requires many people, it also presents huge opportunities.

A whole plane's resources are unimaginably abundant; such a good thing would hardly fall to the wizards of the Barren Land.

Herag immediately felt skeptical, doubting that the wizards of the Land of Dawn could be so kind-hearted.

Blake nodded and said: "Things indeed seem strange, but in the face of such temptation, many people will go even if they know there's a problem."

Herag fell silent.

Blake was right; wizards in the Barren Land must know there's a catch.

But there's no choice; how tempting is it to join the Land of Dawn?

Once you join the Land of Dawn, you no longer need to worry about being stuck at the Crystalization Stage for life, and there's a chance to advance to Level 2 Wizard.

Joining only involves taking some risks, but as an Official Wizard, haven't they faced enough risks in their lives?

For them, this is definitely something worth taking a risk on.

There may be only this one chance in a lifetime to join the Land of Dawn.

The Land of Dawn is now pioneering the Elf Plane, exactly when they need a large number of people.

Once they've completely conquered the Elf Plane, the strength gap between the Land of Dawn and the Barren Land will widen dramatically.

By that time, there might not be another chance to join the Land of Dawn.

"Have many people signed up?" Herag asked.

"That's right, almost everyone who meets the criteria has signed up," Blake replied.

Herag's mind raced with many thoughts and he continued asking: "Is it really just being under sixty? No other conditions?"

He was still very puzzled as the Land of Dawn had always strictly limited people from the Barren Land going over.

There are quite a few Official Wizards under sixty in every Wizard Organization who meet this condition.

If that's all it takes to join, doesn't it mean that you just need to become an Official Wizard to join the Land of Dawn?

Then who would remain in the Wizard Organizations of the Barren Land? Everyone would rush over if they could.

Blake said: "Signing up doesn't mean you can directly join; aside from identity verification, there's also a test."

"A test? What kind of test?" Herag asked.

Blake shook his head: "The specifics haven't been revealed yet; we just learned about it recently, and Augustus Academy hasn't disclosed the details."

"With such few restrictions on the signup criteria, this test certainly won't be easy." Herag quickly concluded.

He's certain that the Land of Dawn definitely won't let that many people from the Barren Land join.

But the signup criteria are very simple, with almost no restrictions.

So the screening phase must be in the testing process.

This test surely won't be simple, and it's bound to eliminate many people at the testing stage.

Blake nodded: "That's also our speculation. I came here this time to ask if you want to sign up. If you want to, our Cheqi Family can help you register. With us, you won't have any problems with the identity verification."

Herag directly said: "Help me sign up."

Like everyone else, Herag couldn't possibly pass up this opportunity.

Even knowing there's something fishy about it, knowing things wouldn't be so simple.

But there's no choice; if Herag wants to grow stronger quickly, joining the Land of Dawn is the best option.

In the past, he had virtually no way to get into the Land of Dawn.

Now with such an opportunity right in front of him, Herag naturally wouldn't let it go.

Moreover, Herag knows there's a hidden danger at the Death Swamp Ruins.

The time left for him is limited, and he must become stronger quickly.

If something goes wrong at the plane rift, and he's still struggling as a Level 1 Wizard, he might not even be able to protect himself.

Herag speculated that while the test might be difficult, it wouldn't intentionally trap or kill these wizards from the Barren Land.

Those who can sign up are young wizards from the Barren Land, and there is no reason for the Land of Dawn to wipe out all these new forces.

The Land of Dawn only wants to control the stability of the Barren Land.

If all these young wizards like Herag were to die, then the Barren Land would be in a situation with no one usable for a long time afterward.

All the major wizard organizations in the Barren Land need new talent to keep running.

The Death Swamp Ruins also require someone to be a sacrifice every ten years, and if everyone was gone, the Witch Array wouldn't be able to keep operating.

So this test will be tough, but the purpose is definitely not to trap and kill them.

Herag quickly turned his thoughts over and came to the conclusion that the test would definitely not be a death trap.

As long as it's not certain death, he has hope of passing the test and thus decides to sign up.

Blake sighed: "I knew you wouldn't miss this opportunity; I just don't know if telling you about it is a good thing."

Herag smiled: "Mr. Blake, rest assured, I will act cautiously."

"Yes, if you can join, in the future our entire Cheqi Family will rely on you," Blake lamented.

Herag nodded: "If I really can join, I'll definitely help you as much as I can."

From a mutual benefit perspective, the Cheqi Family definitely hopes Herag can join the Land of Dawn.

As long as Herag can enter the Land of Dawn, it means the Cheqi Family has established a connection with the Land of Dawn.

This alone is invaluable.

The Cheqi Family's concern is that if Herag dies in the testing process, then the investments made in Herag over the past two years will have been in vain.

Chapter 183: Augustus Academy

Although Herag didn't sign a pact with the Cheqi Family, he would typically spend a considerable amount of time working there in the future.

If nothing unexpected happened, Herag would certainly stay in Black Rock Valley for quite a while.

Being a talented Official Wizard skilled in potion-making, Herag staying with the Cheqi Family would naturally generate significant profits.

But if he got killed outside before even staying for two years, it would indeed be a tremendous loss for the Cheqi Family.

Nevertheless, Blake still came to inform Herag of this news, leaving the decision in Herag's hands.

The Cheqi Family was also taking a gamble, betting that Herag could join the forces of the Land of Dawn.

As long as Herag could get in, it would be a huge aid to the entire Cheqi Family.

"After signing up, the test is said to be held at Augustus Academy. Once arrangements are made, we will escort you there," Blake said.

Now that Herag had decided to sign up, his value to the Cheqi Family increased once again, and they had to ensure his safety.

Other Wizards from the Cheqi Family also signed up, but their potential and talent could not compare to Herag's.

They feared something might happen to Herag on the way to Augustus Academy, so they planned to escort him all the way there.

Even though Herag knew he wasn't very afraid of Malcolm anymore, there was no need to take risks; having an escort was certainly better.

A month later.

Herag was sitting in the Cheqi Family's carriage, about to arrive at Augustus Academy.

Aside from him, Blake was accompanying him, as well as two other Official Wizards from the Cheqi Family, with Lennon driving the carriage.

The registration lasted for a month, and after the month ended, the testing phase would begin.

This month also allowed Wizards from far away to make their way there.

Some Wizards were quite far away, but Augustus Academy didn't care, as anyone not arriving on time would be considered to have forfeited automatically.

During this month, Herag had learned a lot from Chatiya about the Elf Plane and had gained a fairly detailed understanding of it.

He felt that the Land of Dawn's test might be related to these things.

Because the recruitment by the Land of Dawn was primarily for the purpose of pioneering the Elf Plane.

The carriage gradually came to a stop, and Herag heard the bustling noise outside the vehicle before he even got off.

Upon disembarking, before him lay a vast plaza, paved entirely with white stone slabs.

Carriages were stationed everywhere, suggesting that the people had come from afar to take part in the test.

The Wizards of Augustus Academy were easily identifiable, as they all wore long robes interwoven with white and gold.

The designs for Official Wizards and Wizard Apprentices differed slightly, but the overall color scheme was similar.

"Herag!" a blond beauty in the distance waved in their direction.

Herag looked up and recognized Lillian.

He had informed Lillian of his arrival time in advance, and Lillian had volunteered to greet him on time.

Lillian, after several years apart, had matured considerably.

Not only had her figure improved, but the girlish innocence on her face had also diminished.

She had gone from a young beauty to a stunning woman.

Herag smiled and said, "Long time no see, Lillian."

Lillian also felt a bit emotional, smiling slightly: "Long time no see. I didn't expect you to advance to Official Wizard so quickly; it's quite impressive."

Not having seen each other for a long time, there was still a sense of unfamiliarity between them.

Lillian glanced at Blake and smiled: "It must be Mr. Blake, right? The academy arranged for me to guide your Cheqi Family."

Blake nodded and said, "Thank you, Miss Lillian."

"This way," Lillian led them towards the east side of the plaza, where there was a gigantic stone arch.

"Herag, you must be careful during this test. I heard from my teacher that it can be dangerous and not easy," Lillian warned.

Herag nodded and said, "Yes, I will be careful. There's no choice; some risks must be taken to enter the Land of Dawn."

Lillian hadn't registered because she planned to enter the Land of Dawn through Augustus Academy's channels, so she wasn't participating in this test.

After passing through the stone arch, they found rows of tables in front of them, each with a Wizard wearing an Augustus Academy robe seated behind it.

In front of the tables, Wizards were lining up; this appeared to be a place to fill out some information.

"Mr. Blake, your Cheqi Family needs to register here, equivalent to signing in," Lillian explained.

Blake nodded and then approached an empty table, picked up a piece of paper, and began filling out information.

"How many people signed up?" Herag asked.

Lillian shook her head: "I'm not quite sure, but I heard it's about three to four hundred."

Three to four hundred doesn't sound like much, but one must remember that these are all Official Wizards.

These three to four hundred came from various Wizard Organizations and Wizard Families from the Barren Land, and they were the potential seeds or core forces of those factions.

"The test might be quite difficult this time; there's no way so many people can all enter the Land of Dawn," Herag pondered.

Lillian said, "It will definitely be hard, but the difficulty shouldn't be too high. The Land of Dawn is simply in need of people, so they want to select some potential individuals from us. This is indeed a great opportunity for the Wizards from the Barren Land."

Herag had previously inquired with Lillian, and from Lillian's information channels, it seemed that there wasn't much subterfuge in this recruitment.

Although Lillian's information channels might not be entirely accurate, they were still more reliable than others.

Herag could basically conclude that this was not an intentional trap by the Land of Dawn, but rather a genuine desire to incorporate more fresh blood.

Blake quickly finished filling out the information and handed it over to the Wizard on the other side of the table.

"Mr. Blake, I'll take you to the accommodations," Lillian said as she led the way.

Herag and the others would be staying in a relatively quiet area for the night, with few people moving around, and they all stayed in one house.

Lillian handed a set of keys to Blake and said, "I carefully selected this house for you to rest assured. If there's nothing else, Mr. Blake, I'll take Herag to explore a bit."

Blake smiled and said, "Go ahead, don't let me take up your young people's time."

After saying that, he winked at Herag.

Herag laughed helplessly and turned to follow Lillian out.

"How's the necklace I gave you? Why aren't you wearing it?" Herag asked.

Lillian raised her hand, and a wooden box appeared in it. When she opened it, it was indeed the Heart of the Ocean Necklace.

"Such a precious item isn't worn every day; that would be too ostentatious," Lillian said, though she still took the necklace out of the wooden box and put it on herself.

Herag looked at it and thought it was quite fitting and matched her well.

Chapter 184: Farewell to Malcolm

The Heart of the Ocean Necklace indeed looked a bit extravagant, not just the large gemstone, but the other gem decorations were also luxurious.

Such a luxurious necklace can hardly be pulled off without a certain air and appearance.

Lillian wore it perfectly, her own looks and demeanor fully supported the necklace, ensuring it wouldn't overshadow her.

The Heart of the Ocean seemed like a mere accessory on Lillian.

"Not bad. By the way, here's the five hundred gold coins I borrowed back then, I'm returning it to you with five magic stones." Herag took out the pouch that originally held the gold coins, now containing five magic stones.

Lillian rolled her eyes at him: "You can keep them, do you dislike my things this much? I've been using this pouch since I was little."

Herag immediately put the pouch away, smiling, "Got it."

"I didn't expect you could be promoted without relying on Moonlight Forest, that's quite impressive." Lillian said.

Herag replied, "Mainly with Mr. Larry's help, I couldn't have done it without him."

He was telling the truth; without Larry's help, he might've perished in the war with Green Cottage.

Lillian nodded, "You've met a good teacher. By the way, has Malcolm been giving you trouble again?"

Herag shook his head, "Haven't run into him for now, with Mr. Blake and others' protection, there's no need to worry about that."

As they walked along a small path at Augustus Academy, wizard apprentices holding books came and went everywhere.

The place looked much like a college campus of his previous life, with many benches along the roads where people were reading, and couples were chatting together.

Lillian moved closer, saying, "Rest assured, I've already had the teacher warn Malcolm. If he dares to trouble you again, I won't spare him."

As she said this, Lillian's tone was a bit domineering, exuding confidence in handling Malcolm.

"Thank you, Princess Lillian! But what if I'm the one giving him trouble?" Herag joked.

Lillian was speechless, "You trouble him? If you're rushing to die, then there's nothing I can do."

Herag chuckled without explaining.

With his current strength, he was indeed a little lacking in challenging Malcolm, but give it some time, and that might not be the case.

Herag and Lillian strolled around, briefly reevaluating the campus atmosphere.

While wandering, a blond-haired, blue-eyed man approached, exuding a noble aura.

Upon seeing Lillian, he excitedly called, "Lillian!"

Lillian turned and glanced back, saying, "What is it, Kross?"

Kross jogged over, "Haven't seen you for a while, since you got promoted to Official Wizard, you've seldom attended classes."

"I've been adjusting lately, so I've attended fewer classes." Lillian replied.

"And who is this?" Kross noticed Herag and asked politely.

"This is my friend, no need to ask more." Lillian seemed unwilling to let Herag get into trouble because of her, so she didn't even introduce him to Kross.

Kross nodded gentlemanly, "I see, must be a friend from another Wizard Organization, I've never seen him before."

"Why are you asking so much? Does it concern you?" Lillian grew a bit angry.

Seeing this, Kross quickly bowed his head, "My mistake, sorry for the disturbance."

After apologizing with a bow, he quickly departed.

Lillian, speechless, said: "He's so annoying, every time I take a class, no matter what subject I enroll in, he follows me to class and just won't leave."

"Isn't that just a sycophant?" Herag joked.

Lillian looked puzzled, "Sycophant? What does that mean?"

Herag awkwardly said, "Ahem... It doesn't mean much, it's basically another word for a pursuer."

Lillian hurriedly waved her hand, "Forget it, their entire family is just abnormal."

"Abnormal?" Herag asked, perplexed.

Lillian glanced around, then cast a Sound Insulation Spell and whispered in Herag's ear, "They have a lot of offspring, but the relationships are..."

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After hearing, Herag was dumbfounded, feeling his worldview shattered.

These people were practically inhuman in their pursuit of pureblood, an entire family of abnormalities.

No wonder Lillian seemed so disgusted, even thinking about it made Herag feel a bit nauseous, he quickly wiped his hands, grateful he hadn't shaken hands with that person.

After the experiences of the past few years, Herag felt that many wizards needed psychological treatment, with quite a few having psychological issues.

Herag and Lillian continued to walk and soon saw another familiar face.

"So you came too." Malcolm smiled, his freckles apparent.

Herag never expected to see Malcolm again at Augustus Academy.

"Why are you here?" Herag asked.

He wasn't afraid of Malcolm at all now; in terms of power, he could outlast him.

Besides, this was Augustus Academy; even if given a hundred courage, Malcolm wouldn't dare make a move.

Malcolm shrugged, "I'm here to register for the test!"

Herag was puzzled, "You're not yet sixty?"

"Of course not, I'm only fifty-five this year." Malcolm replied.

Herag was a bit shocked, never did he expect Malcolm to be so young.

At only fifty-five years old, he was already a Crystalization Wizard, and quite powerful at that.

He didn't show his surprise outwardly, instead musing, "Hmm... If Lune were still alive, he might also be here for the test now, what a pity."

The moment Herag said this, Malcolm's smile disappeared, his face immediately cold.

"You looking for death?" Malcolm said through gritted teeth.

"Yeah, I'm looking for death, why don't you try and kill me, bastard?" Herag spread his hands, acting rogueish.

Malcolm was so infuriated his lungs were about to burst, his face turning red as the magical energy around him began to fluctuate.

Lillian directly scolded, "Do you want to die?"

At her words, Malcolm immediately calmed down, realizing where they were.

"I warn you, if anything happens to Herag during the test phase, whether he falls on his own or is hurt by someone else, I'll hold you responsible! If you dare touch my... my friend, I'll kill you." Lillian threatened.

Malcolm struggled to control his emotions, biting his teeth and turning to leave without a word.

By this time, many wizards from Augustus Academy had gathered, all standing near Lillian.

Judging by their posture, it seemed that if Malcolm made even the slightest move, they would act immediately.

In the Barren Land, no one could bully people from Augustus Academy, let alone inside Augustus Academy itself.

Chapter 185: Permanent Resident Status

Lillian was quite famous at Augustus Academy, mainly because of her beauty and exceptional temperament.

In addition to her great talent as a student of Professor Nina, she had many admirers, among whom Kross was just one.

At this moment, seeing someone having a conflict with Lillian, people from Augustus Academy certainly wouldn't ignore it; they all came over, ready to help.

Malcolm slunk away without daring to say a word.

Seeing him leave, Lillian pulled Herag out of the crowd first.

"Why did you deliberately provoke him? You're going to take the test together, and I'm afraid he'll be unfavorable to you." Lillian complained worriedly.

Herag didn't answer the question but said, "I didn't expect you to be so imposing when you're fierce. Now that's more like a princess."

Lillian tugged at him and said, "I'm serious. He's a Crystalization Wizard, with strong combat abilities, so be extra careful when you go in."

Herag nodded and said, "I know. I provoked him on purpose. Would he spare me if I didn't provoke him? Besides, last time, Malcolm almost killed me. I've always remembered that debt. What he did to me then, I will repay a hundredfold one day."

"I believe in you." Lillian smiled sweetly.

The two continued wandering around Augustus Academy, with Lillian showing Herag some iconic buildings and taking him to classic spots.

They talked about many things along the way, not just the experiences of the past few years, but even the events of the Coleson Continent.

Before they knew it, it was late at night.

After parting ways with Lillian, Herag returned to the house.

This time, a total of three people from the Cheqi Family signed up, besides him, there was one man and one woman, both Gaseous Wizards.

The man was named David, with a strong build and few words.

The woman was named Reese, with a great figure, described in a previous life as having a curvy body.

Both of them were direct descendants of the Cheqi Family, with Reese being Larry's cousin by rank.

Mr. Blake saw Herag return and called the three of them together, instructing, "Once you enter the test, if you can cooperate, then help each other, you understand? If problems arise, let Herag decide. Although he's young, his experience is far richer than yours."

Mr. Blake specifically told Reese and David, "You two grew up under the family's protection and lack a lot of experience. In crucial moments, listen more to Herag, understood?"

"Understood." David and Reese both nodded seriously.

They weren't the type of rich kids who would otherwise not be selected to sign up.

They had no dissatisfaction towards Herag, as the matter of Herag single-handedly driving Carl away and preserving Black Rock Valley was well known in the family.

"Alright, anyway, act cautiously. The most important thing is to stay alive, even if you can't pass the test, it doesn't matter." Mr. Blake reminded them again.

"Don't worry, Mr. Blake," Herag nodded, saying no more.

"Rest first, tomorrow you'll be entering the test phase." Mr. Blake was most assured of Herag, having him gave him confidence.

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Early the next day, Lillian led the group to outside a hall.

"Those registered can enter, others cannot." Lillian said, standing outside the door.

"Thank you, Miss Lillian." Mr. Blake expressed his gratitude.

"I'm going in now." Herag said, looking at Lillian.

Lillian met his gaze, "Good luck."

Herag nodded, and led David and Reese into the hall.

Passing through the hall, they continued forward to a large auditorium.

At this moment, there were already many people in the auditorium, with several people standing at the furthest point inside.

When Herag saw these people, he instinctively felt a great threat.

"Level 2... no, maybe even Level 3 Wizards." Herag quickly judged in his mind.

At the furthest point in the auditorium was a man wearing a high top hat, with a monocle over his left eye, looking around thirty years old.

This man gave Herag the greatest sense of threat, clearly having no visible Magic Power fluctuation, yet Herag inexplicably felt his strength.

The man seemed aware of this, glanced at Herag, and smiled slightly.

Herag immediately politely bowed in salute, as this was a big figure he couldn't offend.

Half an hour later, the people were all there.

The man with the top hat walked to the front and said, "Hello everyone, I'm Bannings, the main person in charge of this operation."

"I believe everyone already knows that today we're conducting the test phase. But to be accurate, today we're actually just introducing the test situation, and you'll have the chance to opt-out."

With these words, the people below were puzzled.

Introducing the test situation?

Wasn't today supposed to be the test phase, so does it mean that no test is happening today?

And what does it mean to have the chance to opt-out?

If they were willing to sign up, they must be able to take on the risk.

Bannings glanced below and continued, "Our test is quite unique, requiring all of you to go to the Elf Plane for a year-long colonization war. During that year, you must follow arrangements to complete tasks. A year later, those who are still alive and without significant errors will be granted permanent residency in the Land of Dawn."

After these words, there was a moment of silence in the auditorium, and then many people started to discuss in low voices.

Bannings adjusted the monocle without interrupting the discussion below, giving them some time to absorb the information.

Herag was also very surprised, indeed not expecting the so-called test environment to be like this.

He originally thought it would be some conventional tests, possibly involving some combat or something.

But unexpectedly, the test was actually to directly enter the Elf Plane to participate in the colonization war.

And it's for a year, meaning they have to stay in the Elf Plane for the entire year.

The inherent danger of this doesn't need to be said.

The plane's colonization war implies absolute bloodshed and ruthlessness.

Whether in the Elf Plane or the Wizard Plane, to initiate a colonization war means countless lives will be lost.

The Wizard Plane, as the invader, would surely face fierce resistance when invading the Elf Plane on a large scale.

Now is the early stage of the colonization war, also when the Elf Plane is at its strongest, which also means it's the most dangerous time to enter.

Many people started to reconsider, but were reluctant to give up this opportunity.

As long as they stayed for a year, they could obtain permanent residency in the Land of Dawn.

This permanent residency carries significant meaning, it means one becomes a member of the Land of Dawn, no longer needing to remain in the Barren Land.

Moreover, the resident status means their family can also move to the Land of Dawn, as long as they are direct relatives or spouses.

Chapter 186: Expedition Team

After waiting for a while, Bannings felt they should have considered enough.

He waved his hand, and the large door at the back of the hall automatically opened, saying: "Now, those who wish to leave can do so. You have half an hour to decide. After half an hour, the door will close, and you won't have another chance to refuse."

Leave or stay, most people already had the answer in their hearts.

"David, Reese, what are your thoughts?" Herag asked.

David answered directly: "I'll stay."

Reese nodded: "Me too. This is an opportunity to revitalize the family; we can't back down."

The wizards in the hall mostly came from various factions, each bearing some kind of mission and responsibility.

If they retreated now, it would be betraying the expectations of the forces behind them.

David and Reese represented the new generation of the Cheqi Family, carrying the hopes of the Cheqi Family on their shoulders.

At this moment, it was impossible to abandon leaving.

Opening up a war is indeed dangerous, but as long as they succeed, it would mean the rise of the entire family.

No one would reject such a temptation.

Even knowing the road ahead is difficult, they must forge ahead fearlessly.

Herag nodded: "I'll stay too."

Others might be doing it more for the forces behind them, but Herag was entirely fighting for himself.

He considered that if he gave up now, it might be very hard to have the opportunity to enter the Land of Dawn in the future.

If he couldn't enter the Land of Dawn, Herag might just end like Old Lady Kallen, stopping at the Crystalization Wizard stage for a lifetime.

Half an hour later, no one left.

Bannings waved his hand again, closing the hall door: "Excellent, the wizards of the Barren Land are braver than I imagined."

"Congratulations, from now on, you are members of the Wizard Plane Expedition Team."

"After joining the Expedition Team, you aren't allowed to withdraw within a year. After a year, you may choose to leave or stay, depending on your choice."

"Expedition Team?" Herag heard the name for the first time, seeming to be an organization from the Land of Dawn.

Bannings explained: "The Expedition Team is a collective term for one of our organizations in the Land of Dawn. Members are all wizards from the Land of Dawn, primarily aiming to open and conquer various planes, seizing resources. You are joining the Expedition Team for the Elf Plane this time; the Elf Plane has just been opened, so it needs people urgently."

"Perform well; this is actually a very good opportunity. If you perform exceptionally, you might be noticed by the Wizard Influence in the Land of Dawn; the Expedition Team includes many high-level people from various factions in the Land of Dawn."

"In seven days, you will enter the Elf Plane for a year-long testing phase, so please prepare and arrange your affairs well in the coming days."

"If anyone has questions now, feel free to ask; I will try to answer as much as possible."

Very quickly, someone raised a hand to ask: "Master Bannings, we are all Level 1 Wizards; surely many strong beings exist in the Elf Plane. Will the Expedition Team send us to deal with these strong beings?"

His question was also the question in many people's minds. In plane wars at this level, Level 1 Wizards are hardly enough, almost the most basic soldiers.

The Elf Plane certainly has many strong beings; sending them against those beings would be nothing but sending them to die.

Bannings smiled and said: "Rest assured, the tasks assigned will suit your strength. In plane wars, everyone is a precious entity; your lives won't be wasted senselessly. Of course, everyone must be mentally prepared. Once you enter the Elf Plane, anything might happen; no one can guarantee your safety."

"War is always cruel; I can only hope you all have good luck."

Then someone else asked: "Master Bannings, if we make meritorious deeds in the opening war, can we receive the same treatment as the wizards from the Land of Dawn?"

His question was actually concerning fairness.

Wizards from the Barren Land are naturally one class lower; if they can't gain adequate returns for their merits in the opening war, it would be terribly unfair.

That is precisely what they fear.

Bannings nodded: "Rest assured, in the opening war, everyone is treated equally. If you make merits, you will definitely receive the corresponding rewards; it won't be taken away or reduced just because you are from the Barren Land."

Bannings then answered many more questions, patiently responding to each one.

An hour later, everyone dispersed.

Blake and Lillian had been waiting at the door all along; Herag briefly explained the specific situation of the test.

This wasn't confidential content, so there was no issue in sharing it.

Blake pondered for a moment: "I'll immediately have the family send over a batch of Magic Potion. I'll also prepare some other resources for you all. Time is tight, so I'll go contact them now."

After saying this, Blake left to quickly transfer resources over, preparing for the opening war when Herag and the others enter the Elf Plane.

They can't offer much help; all they can do is ensure sufficient resources.

"I'll go to the teacher and gather some information on the Elf Plane for you." Lillian said.

She wanted Herag to have enough understanding of the Elf Plane; information and intelligence are critical.

Sometimes, given different information, completely different decisions can be made.

And these decisions often involve matters of life and death.

Seven days later.

Augustus Academy houses an ancient arena, which covers a vast area and can accommodate tens of thousands of spectators for gladiatorial shows.

However, the arena has lost its previous function, as Augustus Academy generally uses it to host various grand events.

Since the arrival of the Expedition Team from the Land of Dawn, they modified it into a teleportation place for planes.

In the large arena, a giant door stands, through which an emerald green light emanates.

Herag and others had already arrived before the door, and Bannings stood in front of it: "Next, begin entering the Teleportation Gate according to the order of names called. Based on the information you filled out when signing up, we'll try to assign people from the same forces to the same base."

"Our Expedition Team currently has thirty bases in the Elf Plane, each located in different places; you will be assigned to these bases."

Herag sensed someone watching him; he turned to see Malcolm, who was looking at him with a cruel smile.

Herag understood the meaning of the smile; Malcolm seemed very hopeful that they would end up at the same base.

Bannings soon began calling names from the roster; those called would walk to the light gate. Once two or three or sometimes five people gathered, they entered the portal for teleportation.

Malcolm and three other wizards from Green Cottage entered the light gate together.

It wasn't yet Herag's turn, so it seemed they would not be assigned to the same base.

Chapter 187: Base 27

"Herag! David! Reese!"

Bannings called out the names of the three.

The trio came before the Light Gate.

"Just walk in, no need to be nervous," Bannings prompted.

Herag nodded, took a deep breath, and stepped into the Light Gate, followed closely by David and Reese.

As soon as Herag entered the Light Gate, he felt a strong pull drawing him in.

Ahead seemed like an endless abyss, pulling him continuously forward.

A force behind also tried to drag him back.

But under the influence of the Light Gate, the pull ahead was stronger, pulling him completely forward.

In an instant, a bright light filled Herag's eyes, and he found himself upon a stone array surrounded by wooden huts.

"Welcome to Expedition Team Base 27."

Herag turned his head at the voice, discovering it was a tall, large man speaking, who looked to be about five hundred pounds.

"You three must be the newcomers from the Barren Land?" the large man asked.

Herag nodded, "Yes, my lord, I'm Herag, this is David, and that's Reese."

The large man patted his belly, saying, "I'm Parker, the expedition leader of Base 27. I'm glad you could join us."

Parker's aura was similar to Bannings', leading Herag to guess he might also be a Level 3 Wizard.

Parker appeared honest and straightforward, always wearing a simple smile on his face.

"Come, let's talk as we walk. I'll introduce you to the situation here." Parker's massive figure led the way, akin to a small mountain.

The three quickly followed behind.

Nearby, tall walls made of wood and stone surrounded them, with a magical barrier hovering above.

"Base 27 was only established a little over three years ago. Base numbers are sequential; the earlier they were established, the lower the number," Parker explained.

"Currently, Base 27 remains hidden, undiscovered by nearby Elves or the Human Race, thanks to the concealment of the array over the entire base."

Parker slowly introduced the scene.

The Elf Plane isn't solely inhabited by the Elf Race, although they are the ruling power.

Like other planes, the Elf Plane hosts various species, even numerous Human Kingdoms.

Except for differences in customs, language, and such things unlike humans from the Wizard Plane, they're really not much different, just ordinary humans.

In fact, this place also has Giant Dragons and Giants, among many other races.

To completely conquer this place from the Wizard Plane would actually be quite difficult, with time measured in centuries.

This is only the initial phase of warfare.

"There are just over seventy people at Base 27, including those responsible for logistics, defense and combat, and exploration," Parker introduced the personnel composition of the base.

Base 27 has rows of small wooden huts intended for accommodation.

Herag and his companions each had a small wooden hut, all adjacent to each other.

Parker knew that arrivals usually came from the same faction, so houses were typically arranged next to one another.

People who know each other from the same faction certainly cooperate better.

Parker took the group on a tour of Base 27, familiarizing them with the environment and explaining the functions of various areas.

They saw many other wizards engaged in activities throughout the base during the tour.

The entrance and exit to Base 27 is a wooden gate.

The entire base is protected by a Witch Array, not just one, but several.

Some arrays were still being set up; there are defensive, offensive, and concealing arrays, all serving different purposes.

"Familiarize yourselves with the environment and our basic requirements and rules. In a few days, you'll be given tasks," Parker said and handed them a small booklet.

The booklet contained the various requirements and rules within the base, as well as some guidelines for rewards and penalties.

Herag and his companions memorized the booklet's contents.

Returning to their huts, Herag looked at the interior arrangement.

Simple, but sufficient for daily needs, without any extra furnishings.

Two days later.

Parker brought a thin, elderly man, introducing him, "This is Kane, a Level 2 Wizard. For a while, he will guide you in completing some tasks."

"Mr. Kane," the three quickly greeted.

Kane nodded, "You're lucky to be assigned to this base. While construction isn't complete, this also means we're hidden from outsiders and not in great danger."

"For now, our main task is to survey the surroundings, map the area, and record the distribution of forces and populations for future reference."

The short establishment time of Base 27 keeps the Elf and Human Races unaware, preventing immediate attacks. Task outings are less likely to face ambushes.

Many established bases have already been discovered.

Task assignments outside can be perilous; you never know when you'll walk into an ambush, with high levels of danger.

"The top priority for Base 27 is concealment. Be cautious during tasks and don't reveal your identity. We'll provide you with some clothing, and you should learn the local human language promptly."

"Upon encountering locals, remain calm and don't reveal your true identity."

Kane handed out two books of this world's human common language.

Herag had already familiarized himself with the local customs and culture but had not yet learned the language.

For him, learning the language posed no difficulty.

Although David and Reese didn't have Shenlan Assistance in learning, both were Official Wizards, facing no difficulty in learning a simple human language.

The local language isn't vastly different from that of the Wizard Plane, making it easy to master.

From today, Herag and his companions must stop wearing their old clothes and switch to local human attire.

Kane was to help them quickly master the language and human customs here before they could undertake tasks.

In short, they were in a training phase.

The trio needed a bit more time to become familiar with the rules to contribute to Base 27.

Five days later.

The trio fully understood the language and donned local attire.

Chapter 188: Mountain Patrol

Kane stood in the small square of the base, though calling it a square was an exaggeration; it was merely a small flat area.

In front of him stood Herag and two others. "In the past few days, everyone should be quite familiar with the situation here. Today we leave the base and complete the first task."

Kane produced a map, the shape was quite irregular.

With the base at the center, many unexplored regions surrounded it, appearing as blank spaces on the map.

Kane said, "What we need to do today is perfect the terrain in the southeast direction. The task is simple, and the likelihood of danger is relatively low."

Base 27 was situated deep in the mountains, surrounded by desolation, even lacking small paths on the mountains.

Herag and the two others followed Kane out of the base's main gate, encountering dense jungle.

Since no traces could be revealed for the time being, no paths were opened up, making the mountains and forests hard to traverse.

Herag and the others directly traversed the primitive forests; fortunately, all were Official Wizards, so they did not move too slowly.

"Shenlan, activate environment detection."

Herag promptly activated Shenlan's environment detection, constantly observing the surroundings.

The concentration of energy particles here was much thicker than on the Wizard Plane, perhaps thicker than in the Barren Land.

In the Elf Plane, and similar to the Abyss Plane, the operation of wizard magic was less fluid than on the Wizard Plane.

The magic didn't flow as smoothly, and various spells' effects were somewhat reduced.

This was the result of the Elf Plane's World Will suppression, though not as severe as in the Abyss Plane.

In recent days, Herag attempted to sense the Bloodline Mark, which here was still being suppressed.

However, since the Bloodline Mark contained the aura of the Royal Elf Bloodline, it seemed capable of exerting that portion of the Royal Elf Bloodline Power.

Herag never truly activated it because, within the base, monitored by the Witch Array, he couldn't act recklessly.

Unlike before in the Abyss Plane.

After arriving in the Elf Plane, Herag felt particularly good, with his magic operation not becoming dull but rather smoother.

"It appears it's due to the Royal Elf Bloodline."

Herag speculated in his heart.

After absorbing Chatiya's Royal Elf Bloodline, arriving in the Elf Plane felt like coming home.

The World Will here didn't suppress his magic operation.

Aside from the suppression of the Thunder God Ancestral Bloodline Power from the Abyss Plane, no other powers were suppressed.

Herag and the others traversed mountains, arriving in the large mountain area in the southeast direction.

Upon arriving, they began using magical perception to detect the surrounding terrain and draw it onto the map.

The work was monotonous, but its simplicity made it less daunting.

Kane led the three, drawing the surrounding map as they moved.

In Herag's mind, a broader, larger map was forming.

Shenlan's environment detection range was much larger than this spell of magical perception.

Herag was also releasing magical perception, working conscientiously on the map.

Though his perception had already grasped what the broader terrain looked like.

He still drew the map slowly, following the range of magical perception.

It was impossible for him to present Kane with the map detected in full.

The magic perception range of a Level 1 Gaseous Wizard generally spanned a hundred to two hundred meters.

Shenlan's environment detection range was fifteen hundred meters, far exceeding the magic perception range.

At their current pace, estimating a month's time was needed to complete the map of this southeast region.

If gauging by Shenlan's range, it could be completed in seven or eight days.

Such tasks could afford some delays if possible; completing them too quickly might result in new tasks.

Herag would struggle to explain how he detected such an extensive range.

Herag just followed normal progress, slowly drawing the map.

While advancing through the mountain forest, Herag also documented the various plants encountered along the way.

Many of the plants here weren't found on the Wizard Plane, and Herag had Shenlan record each one.

...

While Herag and companions were mapping, across the mountains another group was trudging through the forest.

These people wore light armor, carrying bows, arrows, and packs.

They were border soldiers from the Noen Kingdom, responsible for patrolling this mountainous region.

Calot was a veteran at the border, having served here for ten years.

Patrolling the mountains was tough work, meant to prevent illegal smuggling as well as ensuring immediate alertness to any movements by enemy nations.

Calot's group consisted of thirteen, having been in the mountains for five months.

With one more month of patrolling, they could return to their military camps at the border for much-needed rest.

Life in the mountains was truly harsh, apart from the difficult paths, they also faced various poisonous insects and beasts.

Beasts were manageable, as several were Official Knights in the group, handling beasts wasn't difficult.

Ordinary beasts didn't dare approach with so many people around.

After making noise in the mountains, clever beasts kept a safe distance.

In the mountains, the real trouble was those poisonous insects.

With myriad little bugs impossible to guard against, a lapse could see them crawling down necks or into pant legs.

Getting bitten a few times was bearable, but many were poisonous.

If bitten by a bug, failing to treat it timely could mean losing an arm or leg.

The only fortunate aspect was the lack of warfare recently, keeping the border relatively tranquil.

Mountain-patrolling soldiers didn't encounter enemy troops, at least avoiding large-scale casualties.

As long as lives were preserved, suffering was tolerable, at least without threat to life.

Calot brushed off a black bug from his calf, applied some ointment, and continued the journey.

This patrolled area today was one they hadn't been to before, an uninhabited area.

Calot held a telescope, ready to view the landscape.

He looked through the telescope for a while, suddenly spotting four people in action in the distance.

"Come quickly, there's someone over there."

Other members took turns looking through the telescope, discovering Herag's group.

"What are these people doing; why are they here?" Calot was puzzled.

Seeing Herag's group dressed like commoners, devoid of weapons.

Yet this was an uninhabited mountain, what kind of people could arrive here without any weapons?

Calot decided to approach and inquire, fulfilling their duty as border patrol soldiers.

By then, Herag had noticed this squad too, but he couldn't say anything.

Kane, a Level 2 Wizard, hadn't noticed; how could he, a Level 1 Gaseous Wizard, have noticed?

Chapter 189: Death's Grasp

At this moment, Kane stopped in his tracks and glanced back over his shoulder.

"It seems like we've been discovered by someone; I felt like we were being watched just now," Kane murmured.

The keen senses of a Level 2 Wizard still allowed him to notice something unusual.

Herag sensed that the group was quickly approaching, so he spoke up, "Mr. Kane, should we leave first?"

Kane nodded. "Yes, let's head back for now. It's best to avoid being spotted and reduce contact with the locals here."

Of course, it wasn't that he feared losing a fight; he just didn't want to complicate matters.

Base 27 had just been established, and the most crucial thing was to remain hidden, minimizing the risk of exposure.

The group then turned around and temporarily halted their map-making work for the day.

On the way back, Herag suddenly sensed something up ahead but said nothing.

Soon, Kane also became aware of the situation in front of them.

Two border patrol soldiers had already circled ahead; this group was acting separately, closing in from all directions.

As things stood, it seemed they couldn't avoid a confrontation with them.

Herag thought for a moment and then took out a herb basket from his Space Ring, casually putting some ordinary herbs inside and slung it over his back.

Soon, soldiers were standing both in front of and behind Herag's group of four.

Calot scrutinized the four with an assessing gaze and then asked, "Who are you? What are you doing here? Where did you come from?"

Kane chuckled, "Hello, officers. We are here to gather herbs in the mountains."

"Gathering herbs?" Calot's face showed suspicion.

Herag placed the basket on the ground and showed it to Calot's group, "These are the herbs we gathered from the mountains."

The four of them didn't want to resort to force for now; killing these people would be easy.

The trouble lay in the aftermath.

These border patrol soldiers were not very strong, but if they were killed, it would surely lead to an investigation.

A whole squad of soldiers disappearing undoubtedly would be a significant event.

Plus, it was on the border, where the Noen Kingdom would certainly send more people to investigate.

Therefore, it was best not to kill this group, avoiding conflict if possible.

Calot carefully examined the herbs in the basket and asked, "Gathering herbs? If you are indeed gatherers, why is there not a speck of dirt on your hands, clothes, or pant legs, nor any signs of wear from being scraped?"

During their journey, Herag's group used magic power to keep insects and bushes at bay, making their passage easier.

Indeed, there were no traces on them to suggest they had been traversing through the jungle.

This made Calot and the soldiers feel something was very off.

Having lived and patrolled the border for years, they naturally knew how someone who had walked through the mountains should appear.

They immediately noticed the peculiarity about Herag's group of four.

Herag grinned foolishly, "We just have a few little tricks to make it easier to walk in the woods."

"Little tricks? What kind of tricks?" Calot inquired skeptically.

"There's no need for you to ask, sir; too many questions will only bring you trouble," Herag had already seen the cold gleam in Kane's eyes.

Since these soldiers had already grown suspicious, they couldn't be left alone now.

Calot drew his Longsword, and the others around him readied their Longbows, aiming at Herag's group of four.

"Now, please come with us. After we get back and clear things up, then you can leave."

In Calot's mind, these four were far too suspicious with clues pointing to misconduct all over them.

His many years of border experience signaled that these four must have major issues.

They had to be taken back for thorough questioning; there was a chance they were spies from an enemy nation.

In Calot's eyes, only David and Herag posed a substantial threat; those two seemed very strong.

The other two, an old man and a woman, didn't seem to possess much combat prowess.

Calot kept his primary attention on Herag and David, his eyes filled with caution.

The others kept their bows trained on the four, ready to shoot them into porcupines at the slightest resistance.

Both Herag and David were robust individuals with strong physical power.

Having served in the military for years, Calot was keenly aware of people like them.

To him, it was likely that those two were the strongest here.

Calot himself was not confident he could defeat Herag and David.

But that didn't matter.

In warfare, individual bravery never won battles alone.

They had numbers, bows, and even Knight Level experts.

Surely, he could take these two down.

Kane felt somewhat ignored, no one paying attention to him, so he chuckled dryly and raised his right hand, opening his palm.

"Death's Grasp."

He suddenly clenched his right hand into a fist.

Immediately, Calot and the others held their hearts, spat blood, and fell to the ground one after another.

Calot fell to the ground, his consciousness not fully gone yet.

He stared hard at the four of them, countless thoughts racing through his mind, wanting desperately to relay the news back.

But alas, there was no longer a chance, nor time.

Calot realized that the old man before him was an Evil Wizard wielding Evil Magic.

An Evil Wizard, an entity capable of easily destroying a city.

To the entire Noen Kingdom, such an existence was a monumental disaster.

Calot could never have imagined encountering a wizard in this place.

According to the propaganda in the Noen Kingdom, one should always relay information if they encounter a wizard.

The kingdom would then request the powerful Elf Race to come forth, eliminate the wizard, and protect ordinary people.

"Must go back... must go back..."

Calot tried to control his body, wanting to crawl back.

But his limbs were not obeying him, and his body grew colder by the second.

Despair deepened in his heart, not from the looming death, but from the inability to send the news back.

Straining, Calot glanced in the direction of the Noen Kingdom.

It was his homeland, where his family and friends were, the place he had always defended.

Calot felt his eyelids getting heavier, and after closing his eyes, his consciousness plunged into eternal darkness.

Kane glanced at the corpses strewn about and extended his hand, murmuring, "Coffin of the Dead."

In front of him, energy particles quickly gathered, and a black coffin soon appeared.

With a wave of his hand, all the surrounding corpses and the blood on the ground floated up.

Once the lid of the black coffin automatically opened, these bodies floated inside.

Though the coffin seemed not large, it could accommodate this many corpses.

"Let's go, back for now," Kane said after dealing with the traces at the scene.

For Kane, this was a trivial matter, effortlessly handled.

The bigger issue lay ahead, with some troublesome matters likely needing attention in the future.

Once the disappearance of this squad drew attention, the Noen Kingdom undoubtedly would continue to send people over.

Chapter 190: Search

Two months later.

Noen Kingdom, border.

Tyrion is the border commander, responsible for governing and managing fifty thousand border troops.

Tyrion has always been very responsible for managing the army, personally inquiring about many matters.

A month ago, the Mountain Patrol Team, which was supposed to return on time, has yet to come back.

An entire month has passed, and there's been no news from this team.

Originally, this was just a patrol team, not significant enough to be reported to someone of Tyrion's level.

However, due to Tyrion's keen interest in these matters, he also learned about the disappearance of a Mountain Patrol Team.

"Strange, Reili Kingdom hasn't made any moves lately, so why has an entire team vanished?"

Tyrion keenly sensed something unusual about the situation.

Outside the border, in the mountains, there are rarely any powerful demons appearing.

Even if there are demons, the team has several Knight Level members.

Even if they can't win, surely one or two out of a dozen people can escape.

If it were an attack by a neighboring country, a force of at least dozens or hundreds would be needed to completely wipe out a dozen people.

That is in the mountains — escaping into the woods makes pursuit difficult.

But now, this Mountain Patrol Team has been missing for a whole month.

He pondered, then called his Order Officer over: "Dispatch a hundred-man team, divided into ten squads, into that mountain range to search for the missing team."

The Order Officer questioned, "Commander, is it necessary to send so many people? They might just be lost."

"No, it's not that simple. Remember to instruct them not to be too far apart, ensuring they can support each other if needed."

Tyrion shook his head, insisting on sending a hundred-man team into the mountains.

This hundred-man team will head into the mountain range to search within the patrol range of the missing Mountain Patrol Team.

After Tyrion personally gave the order, the hundred-man team quickly assembled.

This hundred-man team consisted of elite soldiers, not only having many Knight Level warriors but also three Great Knight Level powerhouses in command.

A hundred men set off for the mountain range, determined to find the missing team's whereabouts.

Alive to see the person, dead to see the corpse.

...

Since encountering that Mountain Patrol Team two months ago, Herag and his two companions have had an additional task besides exploring and mapping.

That is patrolling and reconnaissance.

Herag and the other two would go out on patrol every few days to check if anyone was approaching.

For the past two months, it has been very calm, with no other humans coming close.

Herag and the others painstakingly drew maps and completed patrol tasks.

Life at Base 27, generally speaking, is quite dull and boring, with no entertainment facilities or activities.

However, Wizards are those who can withstand loneliness, so they have little need for such things.

Those who come here to participate in pioneering warfare are eager to go further, not concerned with trivial matters like these.

Herag, as usual, stood on a hill, staying alert to the surroundings.

The map drawing work is almost complete, with most of the mountain covered.

The patrol task is, generally, also rather boring.

The mountain scenery is nice, but even the most beautiful view becomes tedious if seen every day.

Herag peered forward, suddenly crouching down.

"Someone is coming ahead."

Upon hearing this, David and Reese came over, crouching down as well, hiding behind the trees in front of them.

Standing atop the mountain, they could see a group climbing at the base, far below.

The group was sizable, likely numbering over a hundred.

Herag took out a telescope to observe closely; they wore the same standard light armor as the Mountain Patrol Team encountered earlier.

"It seems they're the Noen Kingdom troops, probably here for the missing Mountain Patrol Team. Let's report back to Mr. Kane and Lord Parker."

Herag stooped low, retreating silently, with David and Reese nodding and following behind.

They quickly returned to Base 27, informing Parker and Kane of the situation.

"A hundred-man team?" Parker pondered, then said, "Kane, advise everyone to stay inside during this period."

"Understood, Lord Parker." Kane quickly went down to give instructions to everyone in the base.

Parker continued, "If it's just the border army, there's no need to worry; they won't find Base 27. We just need to see if there're any Casters among them."

"Casters? You mean Wizards?" Herag asked.

Parker nodded, "Pretty much, just different terminology."

The search operation by the hundred-man team soon commenced, with everyone in Base 27 staying indoors during this time.

All remained inside, with none venturing out.

Base 27 is protected by a Concealing Witch Array.

This hundred-man team, even with some Great Knight Level warriors, has no clue about such arrays.

Even searching for a hundred years wouldn't reveal Base 27's presence to them.

The hundred-man army's search operation quickly commenced. Once inside the mountain range, a hundred men seemed insufficient.

The mountain range was vast, making it impossible to scour every single location.

However, they were able to traverse most areas.

Several times, they passed right by the entrance of Base 27.

Yet they completely failed to detect the existence of Base 27.

To them, it appeared as a solid rock face from which a mountain spring flowed.

Thirsty soldiers even drank a few sips while resting against the rock face.

In such scenarios, one couldn't know that behind the rock face lay a base.

A month later.

This hundred-man team finally withdrew.

"Commander, we've searched that mountain range for a long time without finding any trace of the missing team. However, we did find some traces of human activity, though we can't confirm who they belong to," the leader of the hundred-man team began his report.

After a whole month, they hadn't found the whereabouts of the lost patrol team.

Tyrion frowned, "Things are indeed not simple. Since you can't find them despite so many people looking, searching further would be pointless."

He turned to the Order Officer and said, "Go to the Adventurers' Guild and issue a task. Search the mountain range for any suspicious traces. I think perhaps only the Casters might find some clues."

There are very few Casters, and they hold uncommon statuses in the military, so commanders can't just order them into the mountains to search.

Instead, the task is entrusted to Adventurers from the Adventurers' Guild — they only require payment.

There are many capable individuals in the Adventurers' Guild; Tyrion does not underestimate them.

In fact, the military frequently collaborates with these adventurers, and this isn't the first task they've commissioned.

There are many tasks the military isn't suited or appropriate to handle.

These adventurers are free-spirited, skilled, and not bound by many constraints.

Often, they get things done more efficiently and swiftly.

The Order Officer nodded, "I'll handle it right away."