

Sixth 191

Chapter 191: Asuna

Oberstein is a border city of the Noen Kingdom, where fifty thousand Kingdom Army troops are stationed.

Asuna grew up in Oberstein and was taken in as an apprentice by an old caster due to her talent in magic.

However, within a few years, her teacher passed away.

Asuna then started to make a living by taking on missions at the Adventurers' Guild, using the skills she had learned.

Over the years, Asuna has become a very powerful caster apprentice, not far from becoming an Initial-tier Caster.

Once she becomes an Initial-tier Caster, Asuna will be able to earn more money and provide a better life for herself and her brother.

At night, Asuna had just returned from completing a escort mission in a distant location.

After an intense battle, her spirit was a bit exhausted.

She bought some pastries on the way home, which her brother liked to eat.

When she returned home and opened the door, the house was empty.

"Where has Lins gone again?" Asuna sighed and placed the pastries on the table.

She wants Lins to study at the Imperial Academy of the Noen Kingdom, to learn and live a stable life as an official in the future.

Lins doesn't have the talent of a caster, and his knight talent is quite ordinary as well, so studying to become an official is the best choice.

But Lins doesn't think that way; he doesn't like his sister arranging his life and has always wanted to become a knight.

Late at night, Lins returned home exhausted, holding a longsword.

As soon as he opened the door, he saw Asuna sitting in the living room.

"Did you go for knight training again?" Asuna questioned.

Lins showed displeasure and retorted, "What does it have to do with you?"

"I'm not stopping you from knight training, but you should at least study those books. I even paid for a teacher to tutor you. Can you be a little more attentive?" Asuna scolded.

"Mind your own business. I'm grown up now, and I'll decide my own life!" Lins shouted angrily.

Lins was furious, storming into his room and slamming the door shut hard.

Asuna was infuriated by him, not knowing how to handle her brother.

She has worked hard for years to earn money, hoping to provide a better life for both herself and her brother.

Even if Lins becomes a knight, he is destined to live an unstable life.

Asuna, being an adventurer, knows well that even knights face many dangers.

Lins always thinks that knights live a carefree and adventurous life, free to roam the world.

But few knights truly enjoy a life of wandering.

Most want to earn enough money to settle down and live out the rest of their lives in stability.

No one wants to live a life of constant wandering, with their lives hanging by a thread; it's truly a difficult existence.

The next morning, Asuna prepared to go out and return to the Adventurers' Guild to take on more missions.

She took out a purse containing ten gold coins, the reward for her last mission.

Asuna placed the purse on the table next to the pastries.

Seeing that Lins was still asleep, she didn't wake him but instead wrote a note: "Eat the pastries early; they spoil quickly in warm weather."

After placing the note under the purse, Asuna gently closed the door and headed towards the Adventurers' Guild.

"Asuna!" A girl in leather armor waved at Asuna.

This was Asuna's adventurer companion, Shadi, an excellent thief with great agility.

Aside from Shadi, there was also a knight who used a sword and shield, and a holy mage who had studied at the church.

Their four-person team had completed many missions together and was quite famous among the adventurers in the vicinity.

Asuna and these people had known each other since childhood, and their feelings were almost like family.

Because of this, they had enough trust in each other during dangerous times to rely on one another.

"So early, Shadi," Asuna smiled.

Shadi linked arms with her as they walked into the hall of the Adventurers' Guild, chatting as they went.

"I hope we can find some good missions today," Shadi murmured.

Asuna nodded, "Hopefully. After completing two more missions, I should have enough gold coins to study higher-tier skills. I might break through to become an Initial-tier Caster."

Shadi looked at Asuna with admiration, "Asuna, you're always so amazing. Thanks to you, we were able to survive all these years and even save some money."

"Being an adventurer is always a bit dangerous. I hope to earn more money after breaking through to be an Initial-tier Caster so that you all won't have to accompany me on adventures every day. By then, we could buy a little garden in a small town and do some small business or whatever."

Asuna had always been planning for their future, knowing that being an adventurer was not a long-term career.

One cannot be an adventurer forever; the profession is too dangerous and full of uncertainties.

Once she saves enough money, she plans to leave the industry with her companions.

As for her brother, he continues to want to become a knight and join the adventurer industry.

This gave Asuna quite a headache.

She has been an adventurer for many years and doesn't want Lins to become one.

But now that her brother has grown up, he doesn't listen to her anymore.

"Asuna, what's wrong?" Shadi noticed that Asuna seemed a bit off, as if she was troubled.

Asuna shook her head, "Nothing, it's just that Lins still wants to become a knight and then an adventurer."

Shadi patted her chest, "Don't worry. I'll try to persuade him later. He usually listens to what I say."

Asuna smiled, "Okay, I'll trouble you with it. It's clear that he really likes you."

Shadi winked, "Maybe we'll be family in the future."

"Aren't we family already?" Asuna laughed.

They waited in the Adventurers' Guild hall for a while until the other two arrived.

Together, they approached the task bulletin board to browse through suitable missions.

"Search for the traces of a missing team in the Lime Mountain Range? Oh, the mission issuer is the Kingdom Army of Oberstein," Asuna immediately noticed the mission.

"A mission issued by the Kingdom Army? Check it out quickly. If possible, take it," Shadi and the others were excited to hear it was issued by the Kingdom Army.

Because the Kingdom Army has a lot of money and good credit.

The missions they issue usually have high rewards, and the payment is prompt without any delay.

Adventurers fear nothing more than mission issuers using various excuses to delay or withhold payments.

Asuna and her team have encountered many such cases during their years as adventurers.

But the Kingdom Army is different; their credibility has always been guaranteed.

"This mission has no restrictions on the number of participants. As long as the mission is completed, there's no rush to compete for it."

Asuna looked over the mission requirements and didn't rush to take it.

As the leader of this adventurer team and its core member, she needed to be responsible for Shadi and the others.

Every time Asuna takes on a mission, she thoroughly understands the details to confirm that her team can handle it.

Chapter 192: Departure from the Border

From the task notice board, you can't really get much information.

Asuna approached a window, took out two silver coins, and handed them over.

Behind the window was a skinny man, who skillfully pocketed the two silver coins with a touch.

He then chuckled and said, "So, what news are you seeking this time?"

"The task released by the Kingdom Army, the one about finding the missing Mountain Patrol Team, I'd like to know the details," Asuna replied.

She was already quite familiar with this person, frequently coming to buy intel.

Those inside the Adventurers' Guild often have more reliable sources, and through their channels, Asuna can often obtain valuable information.

Information and intelligence are always paramount, strategize before acting.

The skinny man smiled and said, "Oh, that task. I don't know much either, the only thing I know is that the commander sent over a hundred people to search there for a month, but they found nothing."

"Did they have any casualties during the search?" Asuna continued to ask.

"No, at least I haven't heard of any. A hundred people searched there for a month and then returned," the skinny man answered.

Asuna thought for a moment, then asked, "What is the strength of the missing team?"

"How would I know? But generally, a Mountain Patrol Team would have about two to three Knight Level members."

Asuna proceeded to ask a series of questions about the disappearance timing of the Mountain Patrol Team, gaining a detailed understanding of the task.

"Asuna, how is it?" Shadi saw Asuna returning and knew she had found out.

Asuna contemplated and said, "We can take it, but there might be some risk involved."

"Risk?" Shadi was uncertain about the extent of the danger Asuna meant.

Asuna explained, "A Mountain Patrol Team disappeared in that mountain range, and even a hundred-man army couldn't find their whereabouts."

"I'm just thinking, what kind of situation could cause a team to completely vanish? I suspect they encountered a Caster."

"Only a Caster could make a Mountain Patrol Team, with two or three Knight Level members, disappear without a trace. This might also be why the Kingdom Army issued the task; they want us adventurers to see if we can find some clues."

"The fact that a hundred people didn't find any traces suggests that special means might be necessary to see some signs."

"If we're only searching for clues during this task, the danger shouldn't be too high, as long as we don't directly confront any possible Casters."

Shadi leaned against Asuna's shoulder and said, "Then why wait? Let's go! The task reward is a whole hundred gold coins!"

Just needing to find related clues without having to find people can earn them a hundred gold coins.

This was an irresistible temptation for Asuna and her group.

On their previous task, they worked tirelessly for a month escorting, earning just thirty gold coins.

Asuna took the majority, getting ten gold coins, while the other three split twenty gold coins.

Moreover, this escort task was considered a high-paying task.

A hundred-gold-coin task is rare, and even when there is one, others quickly seize it.

The Kingdom Army's task has no limit on the number of people, just provide valuable clues.

This task is more like a timed challenge; whoever completes it first gets the bounty.

"Asuna, let's depart quickly. If we're slow, others will take it," Shadi urged eagerly.

This is a whole hundred gold coins!

If they don't seize the time, someone else will beat them to it.

Asuna nodded, planned to purchase some basic supplies, and set off immediately.

After registering the task at the Adventurers' Guild, the four bought some water and food in the city and then crossed the border.

When Asuna was registering to cross the border, she noticed quite a few adventurer-looking individuals also preparing to leave.

Border quests are rare, so most of those heading out are likely aiming for the same task.

Among these adventurers are quite a few powerful individuals, adding pressure and urgency to Asuna.

She had confidence in this task, but seeing so many strong competitors, she quickened her pace.

Asuna possesses an innate talent that allows her to sense these energies such as magic power, life energy, and bloodline power.

Just a glance, and she can discern others' strengths and weaknesses.

Using this talent ability, Asuna has repeatedly escaped peril in her adventuring career.

This ability was why she could travel so far.

While at the border, Asuna discovered several Casters stronger than herself; their magic power neared Initial-tier Caster levels.

Asuna rode her horse, looking at the endless mountains in the distance, she tightened the reins.

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Base 27.

After the hundred-man search party from Noen Kingdom left, Base 27 resumed normal operations.

Parker reckoned these people wouldn't give up and would surely send more over.

Herag and the other two continued executing patrol and alert tasks, and besides them, over a dozen others were patrolling around Base 27.

They lurked in the mountains, constantly on guard with various methods.

Herag sat upright under a tree, eyes closed in meditation.

Shenlan's environmental detection had started, replacing his vigilance around.

David and Reese were each on one side, seeming like they were on alert but more like guarding Herag.

Having been in the Elf Plane for four months, they hadn't encountered much danger yet.

But Herag and his team were not relaxing their vigilance.

They knew this was because Base 27 had not been exposed.

Should Base 27 be exposed to the Elf Plane, they would surely face a thunderous assault.

The Elf Race harbors deep-seated hatred against these invaders from the Wizard Plane, an unresolvable blood feud.

Currently, Base 27 isn't strong enough to withstand the elven assault upon exposure, so they must act cautiously.

"Someone's coming," Herag suddenly stood, looking towards the distance.

Several adventurers carrying swords and weapons were riding horses heading over, followed by scattered small black dots, these were humans also rushing over.

David and Reese cautiously looked ahead, took awhile to notice those black dot-like individuals in the distance.

They could barely distinguish that these were humans by sight compared to Herag who had Shenlan, seeing the weapons these people carried clearly.

Herag continued observing for a bit, discovering Casters among these people.

Judging by the magic power aura, it was around the level of Third Class Wizard Apprentice.

As for Official Wizard Level, none had been found yet.

This made Herag frown; if Casters came, Base 27 risked being exposed.

Chapter 193: Encirclement

Although the strongest of these casters is just a Third Class Wizard Apprentice.

But who knows if these casters have any special means.

As long as there is the slightest possibility of Base 27 being exposed, it is a significant risk.

Herag turned and left: "Go, we must report quickly."

When they returned to Base 27, they found that other patrolling wizards from different districts had also returned.

Apparently, they had also discovered the tracks of that group of adventurers.

Parker quickly received the news and began contemplating a solution.

The foremost certainty is that these adventurers, at least the casters among them, cannot be allowed to approach Base 27.

Although there is a concealing witch array, Parker and his team are all experienced senior wizards.

They naturally know that many methods are actually unrelated to strength.

The simplest way to prevent these adventurers from approaching Base 27 is, of course, to kill them all.

The problem lies in how to kill them, as these adventurers operate independently, forming small groups of three to five people, scattered throughout the mountains.

If they make a move, they must ensure that not a single one escapes.

More adventurers are arriving, and Parker said, "First, open the way and let them in. This mountain range is large enough. We are deep within it, so for now, we don't have to worry about anyone getting close."

"Once these adventurers have all entered, guard the mountain pass and all directions, then strike to capture them all."

Herag asked, "But, Master Parker, if we do this, won't the deaths of all these adventurers in this mountain range draw attention?"

Parker explained, "Every base is destined to be exposed; we can only try to delay the exposure. Once the base is fully constructed, it won't matter if it's exposed; we will proactively do some things then."

"The death of just a group of adventurers won't cause much of a stir. At least to the Elf Race, it's merely some adventurers perishing on an adventure, far from enough to garner their attention."

"Our most important enemy is the Elf Race. Near Base 27, there is no World Tree or Elven settlement; having a conflict with the Human Kingdom is still within acceptable limits."

Base 27, as one of the invasion points of the Wizard Plane, is bound to be exposed in the future.

When they make significant moves to the outside world, they will inevitably be noticed, which is unavoidable.

The adventuring line of work is inherently filled with high risk.

Every day, countless adventurers die; it's just that a massive number of adventurers dying while exploring an area is relatively rare.

But such occurrences are not few, and to the upper echelons of the kingdom or the Elf Race, it's a trivial matter.

In other words, killing all these adventurers would only cause some local unrest.

But to the entire Noen Kingdom, it's just a minor issue.

Parker quickly made deployments, allocating the personnel of Base 27 throughout the Lime Mountain Range.

These people together formed a pocket, surrounding the adventurers.

The only gap is the entrance to the Lime Mountain Range, the direction these adventurers came from.

No one is stationed at the entrance yet, but once the adventurers are mostly in,

Kane will personally guard the entrance to ensure no adventurer can escape.

For these adventurers, whose strongest member is a Third Class Wizard Apprentice, a Level 2 Wizard is an insurmountable existence.

Herag and two others were also assigned to guard a region, with the task of killing the adventurers in their respective areas upon command.

If there are casters, they can be captured alive if possible.

These casters have certain research value; their casting principles and magic are valuable information.

Whoever captures them alive will claim the bounty.

Bannings had mentioned before coming that there would be no unfair treatment just because they are from the Barren Land.

In the four months since Herag arrived, he indeed has not faced any unfair treatment.

At Base 27, only the three of them were from the Barren Land, while the others were wizards from the Land of Dawn.

Their usual tasks and treatment were the same as others, with no difference.

However, discrimination still existed; others simply didn't interact with the three of Herag.

Even if they didn't say it, Herag could sense their disdain towards them.

This feeling reminded Herag of when he was a groom, and how those noble lords viewed him.

However, Herag didn't care about these things, nor others' opinions of him.

What he valued most was always the enhancement of his own strength.

Other things are external and illusory.

Herag's hand bore a jade bracelet, a communication tool.

The Elf Plane does not have a Magic Net, so a talisman stone cannot be used.

This bracelet is suitable for mid-range information communication near Base 27.

Herag, along with David and Reese, hid in the forest, awaiting Parker's orders.

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When Asuna entered the mountain range with her three companions, there were already many adventurers around.

Since this mountain range is quite vast, everyone dispersed after entering the mountains.

Asuna glanced around, chose a direction based on intuition, and then started moving in that direction to search for clues.

The warrior in the team took out a shield and a sword, leading the way at the front.

It was hard to traverse through the forest, and he had to force open a path at the front.

Shadi, on the other hand, guarded the rear; her duty was to protect Asuna and the Holy Mage while being vigilant of the surroundings.

"There are so many bugs here!" Shadi flicked a small blood-sucking insect off her arm with a dagger.

After entering the mountain range, there were bugs everywhere.

Asuna observed the situation, then took out a bag of powder, which looked like some crushed herbs.

After retrieving the powder, she chanted some syllables, and energy particles began to gather.

Subsequently, Asuna scattered the powder, which adhered to the four people.

"Now we don't have to worry about insects anymore."

This powder, combined with Asuna's magic, had an insect repelling effect.

Wherever they went, insects automatically kept their distance from Asuna's group.

Asuna and her team had prior experience surviving in the jungle, so they were naturally prepared.

The group slowly advanced through the forest, encountering nothing but a bear, without any unexpected incidents.

"What a pity, that bear pelt could have sold for a good price if we weren't pressed for time." Shadi was still thinking about the bear they encountered earlier.

She originally wanted to hunt, but Asuna advised against sidetracking, urging to prioritize the mission, so Shadi had to give up.

"We not only have to hurry but also try to maintain our condition. In the Lime Mountain Range, danger could arise at any moment, conflicts could happen anytime." Asuna knew Shadi was always thinking about money, so she added a few words.

Chapter 194: Encounter

"Alright, alright, got it." Shadi stuck her tongue out and went into the woods on the side to keep watch.

Asuna sighed and took out a map to study it.

The Lime Mountain Range was so vast, and with only four of them, it was almost impossible to search the entire area.

If they wanted to quickly find some clues, they needed a method.

Asuna contemplated the map, where several circles were drawn with a feather pen.

One circle marked the usual patrol area of the missing Mountain Patrol Team, while the others were calculated positions by Asuna.

These positions were Asuna's estimations based on the patrol time of the Mountain Patrol Team, providing a rough idea of where they might have gone missing.

The border army's patrol teams all had fixed times for entering the mountains. By comparing the entry times and the approximate time of disappearance, and checking the patrol routes, she could determine a few potential locations where they may have gone missing.

The location of their disappearance would be where the team encountered danger, and searching such places would have a significantly higher chance of finding clues.

There were several such locations, and Asuna planned to visit each one first, eliminate possibilities, and then search elsewhere for clues.

The progress through the forest was slow, and it wasn't until sunset that Asuna and her group entered the interior of the Lime Mountain Range.

Asuna glanced at the map again, calculating the dates.

Searching all these locations would take about seven to eight days.

It's slow, but there's no other option.

In the vast mountains, a blanket search was impossible.

They didn't have enough manpower or time.

After sunset.

Asuna and the others found a sheltered spot where they planned to rest for the night.

It's very dangerous to wander around the mountains at night.

With the campfire lit, Asuna and the Holy Mage sat around the fire.

Shadi was next to them, using a dagger to handle a rabbit they had just caught, while the warrior sat on the perimeter, watching for any movement outside.

As she dealt with the rabbit, she said, "Asuna, we've been walking all day and found nothing. We have no idea where those people went."

"I don't know either. We'll just have to see if we can find any traces tomorrow."

Asuna hadn't detected any magical energy residues today, unsure if too much time had passed and it had dissipated, or if it was just undiscovered for now.

"The others don't seem to have found anything either. I wonder if we can find it," Shadi said, shaking her head.

During the day, they encountered several other adventurers, but no conflicts arose.

Everyone was here for the same reason: to find clues about the missing team.

Before there was any interest to compete over, no one would act recklessly.

With the configuration of Asuna's team, ordinary adventurers wouldn't dare to provoke them.

Half an hour later, while they were roasting the rabbit around the fire.

Asuna suddenly stood up, looking into the distance.

"Asuna, what's wrong?" Shadi asked.

Everyone's expressions turned serious. If Asuna was this tense, something must have happened.

Asuna's perception had always been very sharp, especially for danger, far surpassing ordinary people.

Now her expression was one of terror, making the others' skin crawl.

Seeing Asuna with that expression meant something serious was definitely happening.

Asuna took a deep breath, calming her nerves and adjusting her breathing: "Over there, there's a very strong surge of magical energy, a very potent magical aura."

She pointed towards the dark, shadowy mountains in the distance, where Shadi and the others felt nothing.

"Abandon this task, leave now!" Asuna decisively made a decision.

"Huh? Abandon it?" Shadi was a bit baffled.

The task promised a high reward, and giving it up was quite disheartening.

Moreover, leaving now, at night, seemed a bit hasty and dangerous.

Asuna explained, "That magical aura over there might belong to a middle-tier caster, or even a high-tier spellcaster, which is way beyond our ability to meddle with."

"The danger that missing team encountered likely exceeded everyone's imagination. We must leave immediately, even if we encounter demons on the way back, it's better than facing a high-tier spellcaster."

With that, the others quickly realized the seriousness of the issue.

A high-tier spellcaster?

In Shadi and the others' eyes, Asuna was already a very powerful caster.

But even she was only at the caster apprentice level.

They had hardly seen any official casters, let alone high-tier spellcasters.

Such beings were practically legendary.

Now, such a presence was in the mountains, and the thought of it had Shadi and the others with their hearts in their throats, wishing they could teleport out of the Lime Mountain Range.

They didn't wait for the rabbit to fully roast, immediately extinguished the campfire, packed up, and hurried back.

For many years, Asuna's judgments had always been accurate.

Shadi and the others never questioned Asuna's decisions, always trusting and executing them.

They began to quickly trek back in the dark, moving faster than when they had come during the day.

They had been leisurely before, but now they were fleeing.

They were accustomed to the dark forest, finding it quite manageable to move through it.

Their physical fitness was good, allowing them to see fairly clearly even at night.

"Good evening, everyone." They suddenly heard a voice behind them, and when they turned around, they saw a black-haired man standing on a tree, smiling at them.

Asuna's pupils dilated instantly upon seeing Herag, her mouth gaping in terror before she covered it tightly with her hand, displaying an extremely horrified expression.

"Asuna! Asuna! What's wrong!" Shadi immediately noticed Asuna's abnormal behavior.

The black-haired man seemed unremarkable and had done nothing, yet why would Asuna show such an expression?

At that moment, in Asuna's eyes, apart from the man's magical power, comparable to a middle-tier caster.

Most importantly, the bloodline power within him was terrifyingly strong.

Asuna could see the strength of others' bloodline power, with most people just having some red glow within their bodies.

The more powerful knights would have a faint red glow enveloping their bodies.

Even more powerful great knights would be surrounded by some red glow all over.

The strongest bloodline power Asuna had seen belonged to an elf, who was completely shrouded in a layer of red mist, signifying extremely robust bloodline power.

But compared to this black-haired man, they were insignificant.

The red glow from the black-haired man could almost be described as a sea of blood, forming surging tsunamis and tidal waves.

Asuna looked up and saw the red blood light covering nearly the entire night sky.

And within the red glow, a black humanoid shadow, with a pair of bat-like wings—only wider and larger than those of a bat.

This was a spectacle Asuna had never seen, never having witnessed bloodline power manifest such phenomena.

Chapter 195: Bloodline

Asuna watched the terrifying scene, and deep fear rose in her heart.

What kind of bloodline power could display such a scene?

Herag stood on the tree, looking at the four people in front of him, feeling a bit strange.

He hadn't even done anything yet, so why was this adventurer so afraid of him?

David and Reese went to the other side, where there were also a few adventurers.

He came over here alone to deal with these adventurers.

Kane was already guarding the entrance to the mountain, so no adventurer could escape from there.

There were also wizards from Base 27 in other directions, controlling every path.

So Herag wasn't in a hurry; these adventurers were like fish in a barrel, doomed to die.

"Run!" Asuna turned her head and shouted to Shadi and the others.

"Run quickly! This person is a monster!"

Asuna saw that Shadi and the others hadn't moved, so she continued to shout.

Herag touched his nose: "Miss, it's not very polite to call someone a monster to their face."

Asuna mustered the courage to stand in front, saying to the three behind her, "Go quickly!"

Shadi understood now; this black-haired man seemed very strong, which was why Asuna acted this way.

Under such circumstances, she couldn't leave either.

Shadi went to Asuna's side: "How could we let you stay here alone."

The warrior and the holy mage also approached proactively, guarding Asuna.

All these years, they had relied on unity to come this far.

Asuna was very moved but felt powerless, a bit of despair in her eyes: "You should go, the bloodline power of this person before us is akin to that of gods, beyond our capability to fight. You leave, and I'll try to delay him, even for just a second."

At these words, the others looked at Herag.

Akin to gods? What kind of evaluation was this?

At this moment, Shadi was instead very calm, holding Asuna's hand and saying, "Since that's the case, why should we run? When we became adventurers, we anticipated a day like this. Dying together with Asuna isn't necessarily a bad thing."

"Bloodline power? You can see the bloodline power within me?" Herag was somewhat surprised; the woman before him could actually see that the bloodline power within him was godlike.

The bloodline power of the Thunder God Ancestor was naturally the highest-level bloodline power.

Herag understood that the Ancestor represented the ultimate level of all power and the origin of everything.

Information about the Ancestor was very scarce, and all relevant materials that Herag had found were merely a few notes.

Comparing gods to the Ancestor wasn't even adequate; strictly speaking, gods were below the level of the Ancestor.

But Asuna didn't know; in her understanding, the highest level of power was that of gods.

Asuna took a deep breath, trying to calm herself down.

She must not panic!

She must not panic!

She must do her best to preserve Shadi and the others' lives!

Asuna had now regained her composure, knowing she couldn't give up.

If even she had despaired and given up, then Shadi and the others would surely die.

Asuna started to quickly think of solutions. Fighting was definitely not an option; she had to think of another way.

"Bloodline power..."

Asuna noticed that Herag seemed surprised that she could perceive his bloodline power; perhaps this could be a breakthrough point.

Asuna calmly said, "Sir, would you allow my friends to leave? I can stay behind, and I'll answer whatever you ask."

"Do you have the leverage to bargain with me?" Herag asked with a smile.

The current situation was not for Asuna to decide. Herag could decide their life or death at a thought, and she had no qualifications to negotiate.

Asuna almost stopped breathing; she knew she had no leverage to negotiate with Herag, forced to speak up.

"But I don't care; you stay, and they can leave," Herag said.

The area was already surrounded, and these people were doomed to die.

Besides this caster, the others held no value to him.

The other three were destined to die; the difference was whether by his hand or another's.

Herag was more interested now in why this caster could see his own bloodline.

After making the Great Dark Heaven his talent spell, Herag could also sense the strength of the bloodline.

But it was only a very vague feeling.

Judging by the caster's expression, it seemed that her perception was very clear and evident.

So he decided to keep this caster for more in-depth communication.

As for the others, they didn't matter nor concern him.

Asuna, hearing that Herag would let her companions go, immediately said, "Shadi, go quickly!"

"But..." Shadi and the others were still reluctant to leave.

Herag was most annoyed by such time-wasters, so he said, "Disappear from my sight within three seconds, or die."

"Go!" Asuna gave a forceful push.

Tears welled in Shadi's eyes, and after thinking about it, she left with the other two.

Herag glanced at the direction they were fleeing, heading towards the mountain entrance where Kane awaited them.

"Alright, now tell me, how did you see the bloodline power within me?" Herag asked.

Asuna took a deep breath and did not answer immediately.

Herag could tell she was stalling for time, hoping Shadi and the others could get further away.

"Rest assured, I'm not interested in hunting them down," Herag said.

Knowing her little plan had been seen through, Asuna had no choice but to say, "Since I was a child, I've had a certain ability to sense the strength and amount of magical energy, fighting qi, and other energies within others, and I can also see the strength of others' bloodline power."

"Then what did you see in my bloodline power?" Herag asked.

Asuna described the vision she saw completely and in detail, without omitting any detail.

"So that's how it is. It seems she saw the bloodline power of the Thunder God Ancestor. What a miraculous talent, to even discern the Ancestor's bloodline."

Herag pondered; the ability of the caster before him should also be a type of bloodline power.

To see through the Thunder God Ancestral Bloodline, she must certainly not be simple and might hold more hidden powers.

Herag thought about it and decided not to kill the caster before him for the time being, as keeping her might serve many purposes.

He took out a master-servant contract and handed it to Asuna: "This is a master-servant contract; drip your blood onto it."

Looking at the master-servant contract, Asuna was filled with countless thoughts.

Although Herag said nothing, Asuna knew that not signing meant death.

She now had no choice, so she bit her finger and let the blood drip onto the master-servant contract.

Chapter 196: Value

Herag then dripped his own blood onto the master's position, and the master-servant contract was officially established.

"What's your name?" Herag asked.

Asuna's emotions were somewhat confused, and she answered, "Asuna."

She didn't know what to do in the future. Now that the master-servant contract was signed, her life and death were in the hands of this black-haired man before her.

"I'm Herag. Just wait here for a while; I'll investigate your talent issue after we return."

Herag jumped onto a tree, watching the surroundings for any movements.

He also kept an eye on his bracelet, waiting for Parker's next instruction.

Inside Base 27, the sorcerers were at least Level 1 Official Wizards.

And the strongest of these adventurers were only Third Class Wizard Apprentices.

The power gap between the two sides was too vast.

If Base 27 wasn't aiming to completely annihilate these adventurers, things wouldn't have escalated this much.

They could send out just one person to kill them all.

The only issue is that one person can't guarantee there won't be any survivors.

Even one escaping constitutes a hidden threat to Base 27.

Under Parker's arrangement, these adventurers had no hope of survival.

Upon stepping into the Lime Mountain Range, if they didn't leave before sunset, it destined their fate to never return.

After sunset, no new adventurers would come, which was a perfect time to act.

They just needed to eliminate all the adventurers who entered the Lime Mountain Range.

Ordinary adventurers would be killed directly, only casters might have a chance to survive.

The Wizard Plane's invasion of the Elf Plane, besides plundering resources, also involved learning many things from the Elf Plane.

The power systems of these casters and the Wizard Plane may look similar, but there are still many differences.

For instance, they don't need magic potions to advance to Official Wizards.

These are issues that the Wizard Plane needs to research and learn about.

Therefore, casters generally survive, as they carry valuable research insights.

Asuna looked in the direction where Shadi and the others had departed, her face full of worry.

She was now completely calm; after thinking, she suddenly realized that Shadi and the others might be in danger.

With the master-servant contract signed with Herag, she shouldn't be in immediate danger.

Asuna noticed Herag waiting for something and also sensed various magic power fluctuations from the surroundings.

"So many powerful casters..." Asuna's face turned deathly pale.

From the surrounding magic power fluctuations, there seemed to be many powerful official casters within the Lime Mountain Range.

She didn't know where Herag and his group came from or which faction they belonged to.

But based on the current situation, it could be deduced that Herag's faction was hiding within the Lime Mountain Range to undertake a very important task.

The missing Mountain Patrol Team must have already died at the hands of these people.

And once her group of adventurers entered the Lime Mountain Range, Herag and his group were determined to capture them all.

Asuna speculated that it was because of her special talent ability that made Herag temporarily intrigued, leading him to sign the master-servant contract and let her live for now.

However, Shadi and the others weren't as lucky.

Why didn't Herag care about them leaving?

After pondering for a moment, Asuna concluded that Shadi and the others couldn't escape, even if they left they would die.

Herag knew long ago that their death was inevitable, so it didn't matter if he let them stay or go.

At this thought, Asuna's heart suddenly filled with anxiety.

She glanced at Herag sitting on a branch and slowly said, "Master, could you save Shadi and the others?"

"Shadi? Oh, they're your companions, right?" Herag paused before understanding.

Asuna knelt on the ground, crying, "Master, please save them!"

Herag chuckled, jumped down from the tree, squatted beside Asuna, and used his hand to lift Asuna's chin, making her raise her head.

"You must understand, you can survive because you bring value in surviving. Your three companions hold no value for us. From the moment they entered the mountain, their death was certain."

"My greatest kindness lies in not killing your friends in front of you."

"Moreover, I lack the ability to save them."

When Herag decided to keep Asuna, he was already determined not to kill Shadi and the others.

At that point, he intended to keep Asuna, a caster, for detailed research.

And Shadi and the others apparently shared a good relationship with Asuna.

If Herag had killed the three directly, it would create a permanent hurdle in Asuna's heart.

Such actions would cause many troubles for him.

He simply wanted to keep Asuna for research and learning; if Asuna didn't cooperate, it would require more effort.

The death of Shadi and the others was inevitable; the difference was only in whether they died by his hands.

Herag preferred to have a truly obedient servant rather than one who constantly thought about revenge.

Letting Shadi and the others leave wouldn't cost him anything.

"Oooh..."

Asuna collapsed on the ground powerlessly and cried, covering her face after hearing Herag's words.

This feeling of knowing your friends will die yet being powerless was one of unparalleled despair.

At this moment, she suddenly felt that dying with Shadi and the three of them might be better than living like this.

Herag noticed her unusual emotion immediately and said coldly, "Suicide or self-harm, or any form of self-injury, is not allowed."

Asuna's hand, holding the dagger, paused, and she looked up at Herag, her face covered with tears.

Due to the enforced effect of the master-servant contract, Asuna's hand almost involuntarily put the dagger back.

Asuna couldn't die yet since Herag still had use for her.

If Asuna committed suicide, all his efforts would be in vain.

Regret flooded Asuna's heart; she regretted accepting this task.

If she hadn't accepted this task, Shadi and the others wouldn't have died because of it.

And her brother back home, it looked like she wouldn't return, and she didn't know what would happen to him afterward.

She regretted letting Shadi and the others leave.

She had thought leaving would be safe; who would have thought the Lime Mountain Range would have so many powerful casters?

Asuna attributed all faults to herself, being the leader of this adventure team, she had to be responsible for the others.

After giving orders against suicide, Herag did not care about Asuna but paid attention to the surroundings.

Earlier, there were many magic power fluctuations everywhere, but now they had gradually settled down, which seemed to indicate everything was resolved.

It was expected; official wizards dealing with knights and wizard apprentice level was too easy, requiring little effort.

The blue light flashed on the ring on Herag's hand, and Parker's voice came from within, "After cleaning up the scene, immediately return to the base."

Chapter 197: The End

Asuna suddenly raised her head upon hearing this voice, looking at the ring in Herag's hand.

She couldn't understand Parker's language, but she could tell someone was issuing orders to Herag.

Herag is already so strong, yet there's someone who can command him!

"Moreover, I don't have the ability to save them either."

The words Herag just spoke echoed in Asuna's mind.

She suddenly realized that the forces behind Herag might be more terrifying than she had imagined.

Herag's claim of having no ability to save them was indeed helplessness.

This meant there's an existence far stronger than Herag orchestrating this massacre from the shadows.

"Asuna, you're not allowed to disclose any information related to my bloodline to anyone." Herag, feeling uneasy, issued a command.

Herag's Thunder God Ancestral Bloodline Power was something even Parker hadn't discerned.

Without activating the Bloodline Mark, he seemed no different from an ordinary wizard.

This was also a significant reason Herag kept Asuna.

Even Parker, a Level 3 Wizard, couldn't detect the Bloodline Power; why can a Third Class Wizard Apprentice level caster discern it?

This made Herag very curious, intending to investigate it.

But the research had to wait until returning to the Wizard Plane.

Currently at Base 27, besides having the Witch Array.

There were also many powerful wizards, and anything he did would be sensed.

He couldn't expose his secrets; during this time at Base 27, he could only cultivate diligently, without showing any abnormalities.

Asuna nodded: "Yes, my lord."

She gleaned some information from Herag's command.

That is, Herag's Bloodline Power seems to be a secret, even unknowable to the forces behind him.

This made Asuna instantly think of many things.

In Asuna's view, Herag is absolutely a god-like figure.

Yet his magical aura only neared the level of a Middle-tier caster.

This was too incongruous.

Why would such a powerful Bloodline Power existence disguise itself as a mere caster?

There must be more secrets hidden behind Herag.

In a flash, many thoughts crossed Asuna's mind; she shook her head.

These didn't matter to her, uncertain about how long she could live.

Asuna naturally did not know, Herag's Bloodline Power was indeed substantial.

But that was a power usable only on the Abyss Plane.

The stronger the Power, the more suppression it faced from the World Will on other planes.

If a common demon from the Abyss Plane arrived at the Elf Plane or Wizard Plane, it would face minimal suppression, with little reduction in strength.

Herag's Ancestral Bloodline status was too high, suppressed dead by the World Will, unable to normally activate the Bloodline Mark.

There came some commotion from behind Herag, and Asuna turned back to look, spotting a man and woman.

Reese glanced at Asuna, then reported to Herag: "We've handled things on our end, Lord Parker sent word for us to return."

"Hmm, let's go." Herag nodded.

David and Reese also glanced at Asuna, then ignored her and turned away.

Asuna gasped, the two before her were also Initial-tier Casters, with strong magical auras.

Judging by their demeanor, they seemed to be Herag's subordinates.

Asuna kept her head down, silently following behind Herag.

She swept away negative emotions and made another decision.

I must survive.

I must become stronger.

For the first time, Asuna had such a strong desire for power.

If she were strong enough, Shadi and others wouldn't have died.

If she were strong enough, she wouldn't be in a position to be so easily slaughtered, utterly powerless to resist.

Asuna realized, the people before her were so powerful.

Once she entered the force they were part of, there would be a chance to access great power.

Asuna believed her talent was unmatched.

The two before her could become powerful Initial-tier Casters, she could too, and could travel even further.

More importantly, Herag, who had signed a Master-Servant Contract with her, was a God Level existence disguised in human skin.

Suddenly, Asuna thought maybe this was an opportunity for her.

To become strong, she had to rely on Herag.

Though she didn't know what Herag intended, by staying by his side, there would eventually be opportunities to grow stronger.

From this moment, Asuna tied her own interests to Herag's.

Unknowingly, Herag walked a distance while Asuna contemplated so much.

He and David Reese, along with others, returned to Base 27.

Others gradually came back as well.

Judging by their appearances, it seemed they had easily dealt with those adventurers.

Herag even saw a bald wizard carrying a well-built woman, who upon closer inspection was dressed like an adventurer.

The bald wizard felt something, turned to see Herag, then grinned.

That woman was his trophy; it seemed life at Base 27 had been so dull, frustrating him greatly.

Parker wouldn't care if you brought people back from outside, as long as they weren't let out.

Within the base, you could do as you pleased.

Asuna also saw that woman, then covered her mouth; she recognized that woman, she was a well-known assassin among adventurers, Knight Level strength.

Judging by her looks, she was still breathing, but could foresee rough days ahead.

Thinking this, Asuna glanced at Herag's back.

Concerned, if Herag planned something against her, she'd be helpless.

An hour later, Kane was the last to return.

Many people stood in the plaza within the base, with Parker in the center.

Kane reported: "All traces have been cleared from every place."

Parker nodded: "Yes, understood. After eliminating these adventurers, stronger beings might come investigating, everyone prepare beforehand."

Parker dared to order the extermination of those adventurers, naturally prepared for the consequences.

After these adventurers disappeared, stronger beings would surely come investigating.

But Parker didn't care, nor did Base 27.

They just needed time, and once they truly faced the Elf Race, Base 27 would have enough confidence.

At that time, Base 27 would actively strike, no longer needing to hide as they do now.

Asuna stood behind Herag, looking at the group of Initial-tier Casters, Middle-tier Casters, and even High-tier casters around.

Moreover, there were some whose magical power far surpassed High-tier casters.

She felt a bit dizzy, wondering why so many powerful existences gathered in the Lime Mountain Range.

She still didn't understand the Wizard Plane's language, couldn't comprehend their discussions.

Chapter 198: Ants

Asuna could sense that this group was likely scheming something very important.

Inside Base 27, there were many high-energy facilities, and Asuna saw numerous devices containing extremely high magical energy.

But she didn't recognize them, had never seen them before, and didn't know what they were.

Asuna looked around, feeling a bit strange.

"It seems there's no one stronger than Lord Herag..."

In Asuna's view, if Herag were to display his true bloodline power, he could wipe out everyone here on his own.

At this moment, Asuna was even more convinced that Herag was concealing his strength for a purpose.

After Parker finished speaking, he glanced around and said, "Anyone who captures a caster or captive this time needs to register. You can directly sell the casters to me, or you can keep them yourself. Note, all captives are not allowed to leave the base."

"It's best to sign a master-servant contract, those without can come to me to purchase one."

In the Wizard Plane, there are many bases on the Elf Plane, and at each base, wizards would catch some captives, making elf maidens their servants was a very common thing.

After Herag registered with Asuna at the base's population administrator, he took her to his room.

"You should know the rules as well, absolutely do not think about leaving here, understood?" Herag warned.

Asuna nodded, "Understood, sir."

...

The next day.

Herag, David, and Reese were guarding a hidden forest within the Lime Mountain Range.

Yesterday, they only eliminated the first batch of adventurers that came.

According to the information revealed by these adventurers, more adventurers are expected to come over the next period of time.

So, people still needed to be arranged to hide in various places in the Lime Mountain Range, to kill whoever comes in.

Their only chance was to turn back and leave at the entrance.

After sunrise, more adventurers gradually arrived.

No one knew what happened in the Lime Mountain Range last night, nor did anyone notice anything unusual here.

After all, dozens of people entering the Lime Mountain Range was like a drop of water falling into the sea, without leaving a ripple.

Today's adventurers were fewer than yesterday; most had already arrived yesterday.

Those who came today mostly saw the mission when they returned from outside.

Herag was guarding at the mouth of a valley, watching a group of people walk into the valley.

This group was not small in number, there were seven of them.

At the front was a Great Knight level man with a large sword on his back, and among the six people behind him, two were Knight Level, while the others were at the Ordinary Level.

Among the adventurers, this team was considered strong.

But in front of Herag, these people were quite weak.

Herag stood up and stretched, "Time to get to work, haven't moved my muscles in a while."

"I can go," David offered.

Herag shook his head, "I'll do it, haven't fought for a long time and my hands are itching."

"Absolute Defense."

A colorful shield appeared around Herag's body.

"Blood Python's Fury!"

Herag took out some blood and smeared it on his palm, then cast various beneficial magic on himself.

"Giant Body!"

Herag's body began to rapidly expand, his clothes instantly burst apart, leaving him standing stark naked in no time.

"So big!" Reese's cheeks reddened, but she couldn't bear to look away, staring unblinkingly.

"Dark Armor!"

A layer of black mist enveloped Herag, forming a shiny black armor on his body surface.

Now, Herag had transformed into a giant over three meters tall, donned in full black armor, exuding intense presence.

"You all stay here and keep an eye on the surroundings, I'll go and stretch a bit."

Herag took a glance at the distant group and walked towards them with large strides.

In the valley.

"Williams, why haven't we encountered anyone on the way, aren't there many who came yesterday?" remarked a man dressed like an assassin.

Walking in the front with a large sword on his back, Williams said in a deep voice, "The Lime Mountain Range is so vast, it's normal not to run into anyone. We need to hurry, those who came a day earlier might have already found some clues."

The assassin toyed with a dagger in his hand and chuckled, "No worries, given our strength, if anyone has found clues, we'll just snatch them away."

With a Great Knight and two Knight Level, they had every reason to make such a claim.

As long as they didn't encounter casters, they could practically go unhindered.

Ordinary adventurer teams would find it fortunate to have a Knight Level among them.

They not only had two Knight Level but also a Great Knight level strongman.

Williams shook his head, "I don't think it's that simple, we can't be careless."

"Relax, with you here, who can withstand your great sword!" said one of Williams's teammates confidently in him.

In past adventures, Williams was almost an invincible presence.

He once faced a caster, and with his great sword, he charged in and sliced the caster in half.

Though the caster was already injured, that battle made Williams famous.

Williams's expression remained serious; ever since entering the Lime Mountain Range, he had felt something was off.

The intuition of a Great Knight told him that some danger was lurking here.

So Williams was cautious all the way.

There was an indescribable feeling lingering in his heart.

Williams glanced at the map, just past this valley would be the patrol area of the Mountain Patrol Team.

"Ahead is the Mountain Patrol Team's patrol area, let's hurry up and get there," Williams instructed as he put the map away.

The group quickened their pace, preparing to speed through the valley.

"Since you're here, you might as well stay," a low voice sounded from the front.

Immediately after, a giant clad in black armor emerged from ahead.

The moment Williams saw Herag, his heart involuntarily skipped a beat.

A sense of impending death erupted from deep within, nearly driving him to lose his mind.

He, as a Great Knight, was highly sensitive to such feelings.

It was precisely because of this that Williams had an immediate sense of Herag's power.

On the contrary, the others were just very wary of Herag.

From Herag's towering build, they could tell he was very strong.

But they didn't know just how strong Herag really was.

"My friend, we should have no grudges, right?" Williams took a deep breath to calm himself, not daring to even draw his sword now.

He had a gut feeling that if he dared to draw his sword, he would certainly die.

Herag nodded, "Indeed, no grudges, but I don't need a reason to crush a few ants."

"Arrogant!" The assassin couldn't hold back on hearing this.

Ants?

Is he talking about us?

This guy is too arrogant.

Chapter 199: Slapped to Death

He was a Knight Level assassin, not top-tier combat power like a Great Knight.

But among adventurers, he was a somewhat famous assassin.

When had he ever been so looked down upon?

The assassin drew out his dagger, crouched low, gave a cold glance at Herag, and then vanished.

"Meina! Stop!" Williams abruptly turned back to stop his companion, but unfortunately, Meina had already disappeared from his spot.

The next second, a humanoid shadow appeared behind Herag.

Upon closer inspection, it was Meina holding a dagger.

He aimed the dagger at Herag's neck, trying to stab through the gap in the black armor.

Herag stood motionless, speaking deeply, "Even when I was an ordinary person, I killed someone as weak as you."

Recalling the past, Herag remembered when he was in the Jade Mountain Range, he wasn't even a Knight and had no magic power.

At that time, he encountered a Knight Level assassin pursuit and killed him instead.

Meina naturally didn't believe what Herag said and sneered contemptuously.

An ordinary person killing a Knight Level expert?

Do you think I'm an idiot?

Herag's words made Meina even more disdainful, and he accelerated the dagger swiftly downward.

However, Meina found his dagger stopped a few centimeters from the neck.

There seemed to be something blocking his dagger.

Upon closer look, it was a thin membrane shimmering with various colors.

This membrane looked very transparent, if not for those colors, it would be completely invisible.

Upon failing with this move, Meina felt an ominous sensation rise in his heart.

Missing the attack, retreat at once.

This is the conventional strategy of an assassin.

Just as Meina wanted to retreat, Herag moved.

Herag grabbed Meina's right hand that held the dagger, yanked hard, intending to pull all of Meina forward.

Unexpectedly, he didn't pull the person over, only an arm, with blood gushing.

"Ah!"

A pained wail came from behind Meina.

Herag said deeply, "Sorry, didn't expect you to be so weak, used a bit too much strength."

Meina clutched his wound with his left hand, looking at Herag in horror.

What kind of monster is this?

With just a seemingly casual pull, he tore off Meina's entire arm.

A normal person, with a bit more strength, might have just pulled the person over.

And tearing off an entire arm can only mean this person's power has reached an extremely terrifying level.

It really looked like Herag accidentally tore off the arm.

This was what terrified Meina the most.

The giant man before him possessed power beyond his comprehension.

"Meina!"

Seeing this scene, Williams couldn't think much and charged with his giant sword, intent on saving his companion.

The broad giant sword, accompanied by a strong gust, slashed down fiercely towards Herag's head.

Williams didn't know if this strike would succeed, he could only go all out.

Herag, seemingly slowly, stretched out his hand, his large palm grasped the giant sword, and with a squeeze, the giant sword instantly deformed and twisted.

Williams' pupils constricted, and seeing this scene, his face showed an expression of disbelief.

His giant sword was crafted by the Dwarf's craftsmanship, using meteorite mixed with dragon blood, known as a divine weapon.

Williams, holding this giant sword, had cut through countless weapons.

But today, this incredibly hard, invincible giant sword was easily squeezed into scrap metal by this man before him with just a grip.

Herag yanked hard, easily snatched the giant sword from Williams' hands, squeezed hard, breaking it into several pieces, muttering, "What's this?"

He turned his head to glance at Williams, casually slapped over.

Seeing the slap quickly approaching his face, Williams wanted to dodge, but his body wouldn't move.

Move!

Move!

What's holding me in place, is it magic?

A doubt flashed through Williams' mind, wondering why he couldn't dodge the slap.

Smack.

Herag's slap landed on Williams' head, instantly separating it from the neck and sending it flying.

As his head flew away, Williams suddenly realized, "I wasn't immobilized; it was his speed, too fast..."

And with that, his consciousness completely plunged into darkness.

Thud!

Williams' headless body crashed heavily onto the ground, making a dull sound.

The scene suddenly went silent, even Meina, clutching his wound, seemed numb to the pain.

At this moment, everyone looked at the corpse on the ground, then at Herag with vacant eyes.

After a brief stupor, immense fear rose from the depths of their hearts.

Williams was dead.

Dead.

And he was slapped to death.

Everyone wondered if they were dreaming.

This scene shattered everyone's understanding.

The Great Knight Level Williams was slapped to death, just like that.

He died so easily, without any ability to fight back.

Like a mosquito easily swatted dead by someone.

"I don't need a reason to step on a few ants."

Herag's earlier words echoed in everyone's ears again.

At this moment, they finally understood.

Herag wasn't arrogant; it was themselves in his eyes who really were ants.

Do you need a reason to step on an ant?

Indeed, you don't; you just step on it if you want to.

Run!

You must run!

After the intense fear, the instinct of survival urged them to flee.

At this moment, regaining some rationality, they each chose a direction to run away.

So many people, going in different directions, it was just a matter of who had the bad luck.

"A wise choice, but it's not applicable to me," Herag said in a deep voice.

Although he appeared large, giving the impression of being cumbersome.

The adventurers thought the same.

They had seen giants, whose strength indeed was great, but their movements were always slow.

At this moment, they just wanted to run and get out of this place.

Meina, having lost an arm, was the first to react, becoming invisible and starting to run frantically.

Herag stomped his foot, appearing behind Meina in an instant, and swung a punch at Meina's back.

Meina abruptly accelerated, flying out and crashing against a distant cliff wall.

After the corpse slid down, it left a smear of blood on the cliff, like a mosquito smashed against a wall.

Seeing Herag chase after Meina, a glimmer of hope rose in the others' hearts.

The valley exit was just in front of them; if they could just run a bit faster, they could escape.

But Herag's speed far exceeded their expectations.

After punching Meina dead, Herag didn't pause at all, and in the blink of an eye, he caught up with another adventurer fleeing in a different direction.

This person didn't even have Knight Level strength, though even at Knight Level it made no difference.

With just an ordinary slap, Herag smashed this person away, leaving him lying on the ground without a sound.

Chapter 200: Pastries

Herag transformed into the Grim Reaper, striking one after another, leaving these people no room to resist in front of him.

In just seven or eight seconds, this group was completely dealt with by Herag alone.

The person who ran the farthest was about three hundred meters from the valley entrance.

He thought he was close to the exit and would escape soon.

The constant screams behind him were like omens of death.

The next moment, a pain struck his chest, and before he could react, his consciousness plunged into darkness.

A tremendous force crashed into him, his insides rupturing everywhere, unable to withstand such powerful stress.

After dealing with these people, David and Reese jumped down from a nearby slope.

"Let's clean up."

Herag instructed, then relinquished his current state.

"Change your clothes." Reese took out a set of clothes from the Space Ring, walked over to Herag, handing them over with a slight blush on her face.

Herag paused for a moment; he originally had clothes ready.

But since Reese had already prepared them for him, it wasn't polite to refuse.

So he nodded and said, "Thank you."

Now, Herag had relinquished his Giant Transformation, returning to his original body size.

Reese quickly stole a glance while Herag changed: "Still so big..."

In the following half month, adventurers continued to trickle in.

The Wizard from Base 27 was stationed throughout the mountain range, killing any adventurers who entered.

Gradually, fewer adventurers came to Lime Mountain Range, making Herag and the others' work much easier, beginning a leisurely time in the mountains.

...

Oberstein, in the Border Camp of the Noen Kingdom.

Tyrion looked at the reporting Order Officer in front of him and said gravely, "Are you saying that none of the adventurers who entered the Lime Mountain Range have returned yet?"

The Order Officer swallowed with some bitterness, nodding, "Yes, Commander. In this half month, two to three hundred adventurers, including many Casters, went in. But so far, none have come back."

Tyrion closed his eyes, leaned back in his chair, rubbing his temples.

He knew that most of those adventurers were not coming back.

As for why they couldn't return, nobody knew.

"We also sent a hundred-man unit back then, and there were no casualties. Why is it that these adventurers went and couldn't return?" Tyrion was a bit perplexed.

The Order Officer thought for a moment and said, "Perhaps the other side didn't want to clash with the Kingdom Army, while those adventurers didn't have much backing, so they all met with misfortune after going in."

Tyrion shook his head, "That shouldn't be the reason. That Mountain Patrol Team is also missing; this explanation doesn't make sense."

"Well... subordinate doesn't know either." The Order Officer was also puzzled.

After pondering for a while, Tyrion said solemnly, "Withdraw that mission."

"It's already been withdrawn, and now no one dares to take on that mission. The news of adventurers disappearing in the Lime Mountain Range has spread throughout Oberstein, and no one dares to take it on." The Order Officer replied.

Tyrion nodded, "Make a proclamation forbidding anyone to approach the Lime Mountain Range. I will report this matter to Sea Stone City. Until things are clarified, that area will be designated as a forbidden zone."

Sea Stone City is the capital of the Noen Kingdom, as well as the center of power.

Tyrion could no longer handle the issue there, and his intuition told him that there might be severe problems involved, necessitating reporting to the King.

"Understood, I'll handle it right away." The Order Officer quickly drafted the proclamation and had it posted throughout Oberstein.

At this time, rumors about the Lime Mountain Range had already spread across Oberstein.

Indeed, there was no need for Tyrion's announcement as even ordinary people, not to mention adventurers, dared not approach that place now.

Anyone who went in vanished without a trace, and who would carelessly go there.

Some bold adventurers believed that the larger the storm, the bigger the fish, and thought there might be treasures inside.

Considering themselves chosen ones, extraordinarily powerful, they plunged into the Lime Mountain Range, only to disappear as well with no news.

After the news of Lime Mountain Range spread, adventurers in other cities heard and began journeying there.

Among them were powerful beings like Initial-tier Casters.

The existence of such levels was practically the pinnacle of adventurers' strength.

They had encountered bizarre occurrences before and understood that there were many places that ordinary people could not easily tread.

Only Formal Casters like them could explore the mysteries of such places.

To ordinary adventurers, it was a dead zone, but to them, it was an opportunity.

Many Casters knew that such places might well be ancient ruins.

The dangers within were naturally beyond what ordinary adventurers could resolve.

Oberstein, at Asuna's house.

Lins sat inside, hands covering his face, tears streaming through his fingers, his body trembling uncontrollably.

Asuna went to the Lime Mountain Range half a month ago and hasn't returned yet.

Shadi hasn't come back either; their entire adventuring team disappeared in the Lime Mountain Range.

Lins didn't pay much mind initially; Asuna often took ten days, half a month, or even a month for tasks without returning.

But then the Lime Mountain Range news came out.

No adventurers who entered have returned.

Under such circumstances, not coming back, everyone understood what that meant.

It's highly likely they would never return.

Lins never anticipated this day would come.

In his eyes, although Asuna was a bit annoying as an older sister.

He always admired his sister, though—strong, intelligent, talented, a powerful Caster.

Lins diligently trained as a Knight, with Asuna as his role model all along.

He aspired to be as strong as his sister, free from living under her shadow forever.

Lins never thought that such a powerful sister would disappear in what appeared to be an ordinary Lime Mountain Range, unlikely to return.

The note on the table was still there, which read: "Eat the pastries while they're fresh; they spoil easily in hot weather."

The pastries remained, initially untouched out of reluctance, now because he couldn't bear to eat them.

Those were the last items Asuna bought for him.

The pastries had long spoiled; Lins still hadn't thrown them away and didn't even dare to touch them.

At this moment, Lins was filled with endless regret and guilt.

Some things are only cherished when lost.

Because when it was there, you never felt its presence.

Lins looked at his Longsword, his gaze filled with newfound determination.

I want to become strong.

He didn't rashly charge into the Lime Mountain Range.

Because even someone as powerful as his sister didn't return, going in recklessly meant he, too, would likely never come back.