

Sixth 551

Chapter 551: Lins

Herag's arrival drew their attention; several people in charge of vigilance approached, holding weapons.

"Who are you?" a red-haired man holding a broad long blade asked.

Herag said, "Adventurer, heading to Red Leaf County."

Red Leaf County is a medium-sized city ahead, quite well-known in the vicinity.

This is also a necessary stop to reach Red Leaf County, so Herag's words made sense.

This group of people were experienced adventurers, familiar with the surroundings, and knew Herag's words posed no issue.

The red-haired man said, "Sorry, we don't allow outsiders to camp here, so you'll need to find a place some distance away for the night."

These people remained highly cautious of Herag, their tense muscles indicating they were prepared to act at any moment.

Anyone able to travel alone in the wild is not an ordinary person.

They understood this well, so they dared not take any action against Herag, only keeping vigilant.

Herag nodded slightly, "I'll head forward, won't disturb you."

He had no intention of staying with this group; with the Fallen Wings, it's much safer alone.

Herag had just taken a few steps when a man's voice called from behind, "It's fine, friend, stay with us; safety in numbers. There are demons everywhere now, being alone is too dangerous."

"Chief, this guy..."

"It's okay, with so many of us, what do we have to fear? Adventurers out here have it tough, and we definitely need to help each other."

...

Herag heard the dialogue behind him, finding the voice both familiar and unfamiliar.

He turned his head to see a scruffy, thirty-something man discussing with the red-haired man.

Looking at the scruffy man, Herag felt he looked familiar, then suddenly realized, isn't this Lins, Asuna's brother?

Compared to the first time they met, Lins' face completely lacked the youthfulness of back then and was filled with signs of hardship, with a long scar on his left cheek.

Lins' appearance had changed significantly compared to before, especially his whole demeanor was completely different, no longer the kid he used to be.

Herag didn't recognize him at first, only realizing after a moment.

Lins noticed Herag looking at him and smiled, "Brother, if you don't mind, join us, it's livelier with more people."

Herag was in the Thousand-Change Potion state, so Lins did not recognize him.

Although Herag initially planned to leave, upon seeing Lins, he reconsidered and decided to stay.

He spoke, "Thank you!"

Lins smiled, "No worries, by the way, my name is Lins, and I'm the leader of the Earth Adventurer Group. These are our members."

"Earth Adventurer Group..."

Herag murmured this name, remembering the Earth Breathing Technique he once gave Lins.

This kid now had the aura of a Great Knight; his presence was quite remarkable.

Most importantly, Herag noticed some earth element particles floating around Lins.

Normally, only wizards would exhibit such phenomena.

Herag recalled that the Light Knight he met before showed similar signs.

Herag wasn't familiar with the Knight's path, but he knew that its potential far exceeded the Great Knight; there are stronger realms beyond.

But these were insignificant compared to wizards, the disparity was too great, so Herag naturally wasn't concerned.

Now it seemed, Lins was somewhat like the Light Knight he met before; he had likely had some adventures throughout the years.

Herag remembered, Lins's talent was poor at that time, with very little chance of becoming a knight.

Even with the improved Earth Breathing Technique, the knight's path was an arduous one for Lins to tread.

Reaching his current level must have involved numerous ordeals.

"Thank you for providing a safe camp, my name is Shane," Herag expressed gratitude.

Lins said, "Mr. Shane, do you have a tent? If not, we have an extra you can use for the night."

He noted that Herag almost didn't have any baggage and thus asked.

Herag shook his head, "Thanks for your kindness, but it doesn't look like it'll rain today, so I'll just make do and find a spot."

Lins nodded and didn't insist; after arranging for Herag, he went on to handle other matters.

Apart from Lins, the others were seemingly not fond of Herag.

They remained highly cautious of Herag, and some even quietly complained about Lins.

Although their voices were low and they were in the distant woods.

With Herag's sharp ears, he heard it clearly.

"The chief's old habit's at it again!"

"You'll get used to it; that's just how he is, always likes to help others, but it brings him quite a lot of trouble too."

"This guy doesn't seem very strong, should be fine."

"Who knows, never underestimate anyone these days; I'll have Old Seven keep an eye on him, don't worry."

...

Herag listened and roughly understood; it seemed Lins often did such things.

He remembered the first encounter with Lins when he was being hunted for freeing captured women.

After all these years, maintaining such a heart isn't easy.

Especially being able to survive while holding onto that heart of goodwill.

With nothing better to do, Herag collected a pile of dry grass nearby, then found a spot to lay down for the night.

He lay on the ground seemingly resting his eyes, but secretly observing Lins.

Herag noticed, Lins's aura was powerful, with an earth affinity energy circulating within him.

He figured that although he couldn't become a knight himself, the improved Earth Breathing Technique was proving to be beneficial for Lins.

But Lins's internal condition wasn't great, with multiple hidden injuries and even an arrowhead within his chest that fused with surrounding tissue.

Given the medical conditions of the era, removing the arrowhead would likely be impossible.

Seeing the injuries on Lins, Herag roughly understood how hard these years had been for him.

Lins, without any natural talent for becoming a knight, persisted on this path, destined to exert a hundred times more effort than ordinary people for the faintest hope.

Red Leaf County is located in the northern part of the Noen Kingdom, quite a distance from Oberstein.

Lins operating in this area indicated he no longer intended to rescue Asuna from the mountains.

He once thought that upon becoming a Great Knight, he would be able to rescue Asuna.

Now, after truly understanding the power of wizards, he realized he had no hope.

Chapter 552: Sky Temple

From Lins' perspective, after realizing the power of the Wizards, he believed Asuna was already dead.

The entire Noen Kingdom had lost more than half of its territory; no one could stop the invasion of the Wizard Plane.

Asuna wasn't even an Official Caster, and directly entered the Wizards' lair, destined to not return.

Years ago, when Lins had just become a Knight, he ambitiously participated in the front-line battle, attempting to directly charge into the mountains to rescue Asuna.

However, reality was harsh.

Great Knights were as fragile as paper on that battlefield; even the mysterious and powerful Casters could barely cling to life.

That was the first time Lins had personally felt his own insignificance, the immense power gap almost shattered his understanding of the World.

Originally, he thought being a Knight made him formidable, able to traverse the land at will.

After surviving that battlefield by luck, Lins trained himself even more diligently, embarking on the path of an Adventurer, seeking to enhance his strength quickly.

Over the years, his power indeed increased significantly, and he encountered many adventures.

Yet, after experiencing much, the naive youth had now transformed into a weathered man.

Lins sat by the campfire, holding the freshly warmed wine, reminiscing about the past.

...

At dawn, a ray of sunlight pierced the sky, dividing the woods into two halves of light and shadow.

The camp gradually stirred from nighttime tranquility to bustling activity, as many people had risen to start packing for departure.

Lins had long been awake, directing the Adventurer Group members in their orderly tasks.

Herag lay on dry grass, ready to rise for a drink of water, when he suddenly sensed something and looked behind him.

Behind was a tall mountain with steep cliffs.

This was also why Lins and the others chose this spot as their camp, having a mountain wall akin to a high wall to avoid being attacked from all sides.

After Herag glanced at the peak, three Giant Swords descended from the sky, landing around the camp and blocking everyone's retreat.

The three Giant Swords stood around nine meters tall, broad and thick like walls, overall showing a sky blue hue.

Three people dressed in sky blue robes stood atop the sword handles, their faces obscured within the robes.

Meanwhile, an old man with a white beard appeared at the front of the camp, dressed in a cumbersome robe.

The robe was also sky blue, but covered with intricate patterns.

"Lins, that's your name, right? Where's Levi, that betrayer? Why isn't he with you?" the white-bearded old man asked.

Lins replied expressionlessly, "Elder Rayne, he is already dead."

The others in the camp quickly formed a defensive stance, wary of these four individuals.

Though there were only four of them, they exerted immense pressure on everyone.

Their years of Adventurer experience had long honed their instinct to sense danger, and these few brought a substantial sense of threat.

They felt the killing intent from these four, so intense it nearly suffocated them.

They accepted Herag because Herag was devoid of any murderous aura and showed no malice.

Nonetheless, someone watched Herag intently throughout the night.

Elder Rayne feigned surprise, "Dead? That's truly a pity; I taught him swordsmanship when he was this tall."

He gestured with his hand, wearing a regretful expression.

"Stop posturing here; you know better than I do why he died." Lins said, glaring sharply at Rayne.

"Everything he had was given by the Holy Hall; he was only asked to do something and refused. They had no choice but to take back everything bestowed by the Holy Hall, including his life." Rayne calmly stated.

"Your so-called task was for him to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives, becoming a betrayer?" Lins angrily questioned.

"Look at the bigger picture, Lins. Levi didn't understand this principle. Our lives far outlast ordinary people. It's merely a temporary loss of some lives; these lives will grow back sooner or later, like vegetables in a field. But it will bring the Holy Hall longer-lasting growth. Only by strengthening ourselves can we protect more people." Rayne justified.

"To protect more people, we must first let hundreds of thousands die? How ridiculous." Lins mocked.

Rayne said, "Alright, Lins, I'm not here to reminisce. Since Levi is dead, the Heart of the Earth must be with you."

"What Heart of the Earth, never heard of it." Lins responded.

Rayne chuckled, "You're not good at lying, just like Levi; both good kids who can't lie. You and your mentor are exactly alike; no wonder he chose you despite having poor aptitude."

"You're his only disciple, the Heart of the Earth must be in your hands."

"Give it to me, child."

Rayne seemed amiable, kindly, and spoke gently, like a benevolent elder.

"I already said, I don't know any Heart of the Earth." Lins replied.

Rayne instantly changed his expression, indifferently stating, "Lins, I know you're not afraid of death, but can you watch them die?"

Rayne finished, glancing around at the vigilant Adventurers.

Lins' pupils contracted slightly, his fists clenched tightly.

These Adventurer Group members were comrades who had lived and died with Lins; he couldn't bear to see them die, nor would he want them to die because of him.

"Leader, don't fear him. There are only four of them; we have many, we'll defeat them easily!" Someone said with a smile behind him.

Though his words were light-hearted, everyone understood the gravity of the situation.

"Oh? Is that so? Young people today really have confidence. It's natural not to regard an old man like me. But, ignoring three Sky Knights is a bit excessive." Rayne remarked.

When the words Sky Knight came out, everyone felt as if a Giant Hammer had struck their hearts.

They were seasoned, knowledgeable Adventurers and naturally knew what Sky Knights represented.

Sky Knights hailed from the Sky Temple, a mysterious and powerful organization.

The Sky Temple was a place yearned for by countless Knights from the Elf Plane; almost all Knights dream of joining the Sky Temple one day.

The Sky Temple was said to be under the protection of Gods, and the Knights within were endowed with divine power, incredibly strong.

Only, the number of Knights in the Sky Temple was extremely low and rarely appeared in the world.

But whenever they did appear, they were a force far beyond Knights of the same rank.

Chapter 553: Slaughter

For example, Lins' teacher, Levi, is a Knight in the Sky Temple, and moreover, a Great Knight.

If Lins hadn't met Levi, he wouldn't have come this far; he might have died long ago in some chaos.

And now, there are three Sky Knights surrounding the area.

For the adventurers in the camp, with these three around, there's hardly any chance of escape.

Once the fight begins, they are bound to die; the gap in power is too great.

Among the people present, only Lins is a Great Knight, while the others are merely at Knight Level.

The disparity in combat strength is utterly one-sided.

The camp fell silent immediately, and everyone seemed to hear the breath of the people next to them.

Rayne looked at the silent crowd and smiled with satisfaction: "Lins, you know, I despise slaughter. Just hand over the Heart of the Earth, and I'll let them go—and you too."

Lins was silent for a moment, then said seriously: "Let them leave first; they're not involved in this matter. This is between us."

"That won't do, little Lins. You must make a choice; I don't have much patience," Rayne said.

Rayne would never allow others to leave; once they did, he would lose the leverage to threaten Lins.

He understood Lins' type very well—unafraid of death himself, but he values his friends greatly.

To someone like him, the threat of death is far less effective than chopping off a finger of their friend.

"Captain! Let's just fight him!" the red-haired man stepped forward and said.

Lins shook his head, knowing well these people's strength.

The people behind him are only at Knight Level, and fighting would only lead to needless deaths.

But the Heart of the Earth—Lins doesn't want to hand it over to Rayne because it's the only possibility of overthrowing the Sky Temple.

Levi originally didn't want the Heart of the Earth to fall into the hands of the Sky Temple, and that's why Rayne sent people to hunt him down, leading to his serious injury and eventual death.

"The Heart of the Earth is inside me. Let them leave. Anyway, they're worthless to you," Lins exhaled and said.

He planned to exchange his life for everyone's safety.

"You've started absorbing the power of the Heart of the Earth? I didn't expect you'd gain its approval. Lucky I arrived in time," Rayne said, somewhat surprised.

He laughed heartily: "Very well, rest assured I won't kill you before the Heart of the Earth is extracted from your body, you're safe. But as for them, as you said, they're worthless to me. So just... kill them."

Rayne's last three words sounded more like an order, directed towards the three Sky Knights behind him.

"You!" Lins drew his sword in anger and pointed it at Rayne.

"You're too naive. How could I allow the secret of the Heart of the Earth to be known by others," Rayne sneered.

"They're not aware of it—entirely unrelated!" Lins shouted.

"Does it matter if they know? As long as they become dead, it's fine," Rayne said flatly.

As his words fell, the Sky Knight behind him moved, with two other Sky Knights guarding the sides to prevent anyone from fleeing.

The Sky Knight didn't draw the giant sword from the ground but pulled out the sword at his waist, directly flying over Lins, heading towards the crowd behind him.

The first target of the Sky Knight was the red-haired man, as he was the closest.

"You dare!" Lins was about to step forward to block the Sky Knight.

However, the Sky Knight has the ability to fly, and Lins, on the ground, simply cannot reach him.

The longsword was unsheathed, emitting a long cry, and the longsword in the Sky Knight's hand gleamed and stabbed towards the red-haired man's skull.

The next second seemed like it would cleave open the red-haired man's skull.

The Sky Knight's speed was extremely fast, too fast for Lins, a Great Knight, to see his movements clearly.

This is the Secret Technique from the Sky Temple, which not only allows flying but also grants great speed.

The imagined bloody scene did not appear; two fingers pinched the downward-stabbing longsword.

Everyone looked towards the direction of the fingers and surprisingly found it to be that mysterious stranger from last night's campout.

The red-haired man realized only now, unaware of when the stranger reached atop his head, the sound of the longsword being unsheathed hadn't stopped.

Everything happened too fast.

The Sky Knight, hovering in mid-air, saw this scene and was shocked.

With his sense ability, he hadn't noticed when Herag appeared until the longsword would not move forward that he noticed the man's presence.

He tried pulling back the longsword with force but found it completely immobile, as if welded between the man's two fingers.

In the next moments, Herag acted.

He exerted force on his arm, lifting the whole Sky Knight from mid-air.

The sudden increase in force caught the Sky Knight unprepared, and he lost balance instantly, pulled downward by the immense force.

"Not good!"

The Sky Knight's heart surged with immense danger, attempting to discard the sword and fly high.

Yet, a large hand grasped his neck, the immense force from the hand squeezed his neck repeatedly, emitting the sound of cracking bones.

"Impossible..."

He felt the power in the hand, almost unable to believe the man before him was human.

He had grown up in the Sky Temple, his body strengthened by various secret techniques, greatly powerful.

But now, compared to this man in front, he felt as fragile as mud.

Herag grabbed his neck, squeezing hard while pulling the whole person forcefully down.

The Sky Knight's body smashed onto the ground, his neck intimately contacting the surface, his head starting to twist in an unusual way.

Moments later, except for his body slightly twitching, there was no sound from him.

A gust of wind blew through, and the camp fell silent.

Herag clapped his hands, looked at Rayne, and said: "You just said you don't like slaughter, I like it."

"You... Who are you!" Rayne's face still held a shocked expression, his mouth opened wide, seemingly unable to close.

"Just an ordinary adventurer," Herag replied.

Ordinary...

"..."

The adventurers in the group didn't know what to say, even doubting whether the Sky Knight on the ground is truly a Sky Knight.

They couldn't help having such thoughts because everything happened so quickly, too easily.

A Sky Knight like that—dead?

Almost everyone couldn't believe what lay before them was real.

Lins paused for a moment, then said: "Th... Thank you."

He didn't expect the wanderer he'd accepted out of goodwill to be... so fierce.

Chapter 554: The Power of Time and Spatial Rules

The other two Sky Knights reacted quickly, though they were briefly stunned, they immediately raised their hands, and the giant swords embedded in the ground flew up.

The two giant swords, like towering mountains, ascended above Herag and the others, blocking out the sky and sun, bringing an overwhelming sense of oppression.

If hit head-on by these two giant swords, perhaps merely the force they carried would crush a person into pulp.

The two Sky Knights raised their heads, the eyes hidden beneath their robes emitted a blue glow, and the robes billowed, their aura growing ever stronger.

The two giant swords also began to emit a blue glow, their blades gradually turning into a pure blue color.

A raging wind sprang up around, and the two giant swords seemed about to fall.

However, everything suddenly froze, the fierce wind abruptly ceased, and the blue glow on the blades of the two giant swords slowly faded, as if energy supply had been cut, they stopped functioning.

Suddenly, a scent of blood permeated the camp, with drops of blood falling on the faces of Lins and others.

Feeling puzzled, they looked up, witnessing a shocking scene.

At some point, the heads of the two Sky Knights had already separated from their bodies, blood spouted out, drifting down below.

The two heads followed suit, tumbling to the ground.

The giant swords fell shortly thereafter, smashing heavily onto the ground.

However, the falling speed was just that of normal free fall, the people below, at least being Knights, quickly reacted and dodged away.

No one knew what happened, except Rayne, who looked gravely at Herag: "You are a Magic Master!"

Herag smiled without speaking; naturally, he wouldn't respond.

He had just used the spell Spatial Cutting in combat for the first time; the effect was quite excellent.

For those who did not grasp the Rule, this was a dimensional attack, where the opponent was entirely unable to resist, or even detect the attack.

The power of the Rule was too formidable; for those who hadn't mastered the Rule, they were like lower beings before Herag.

The disparity in methods was too great; fighting was almost without any suspense.

Herag used Spatial Cutting to directly sever the heads of the two Sky Knights, a process that was subtle and silent, without any signs.

It wasn't until the two heads dropped that everyone realized the two had already died.

Rayne himself was also a Magic Master, although he hadn't comprehended the Spatial Rule, he somewhat sensed the change in the Rule, then realized that the man in front of him was a Magic Master.

He didn't expect Herag, with such strong physical power, would also be a Magic Master.

"Do you know the consequences of enraging the Sky Temple? Since you are a Magic Master, you should know what powers you can't provoke!" Rayne threatened.

Herag chuckled; not being a native of this Plane, such threats held no value to him.

"Stop the nonsense, bow your head, old man," Herag smiled and said.

"Bow?" Rayne didn't understand what Herag meant, only feeling his words were baffling.

"Bow your head, so I can take your head," Herag said.

"Arrogant!" Rayne's magic power fluctuated, and the Wind Element Rules around began to fluctuate, evidently preparing to make a move on Herag.

Rayne was not afraid of Herag, just didn't expect Herag could control the Spatial Rule, finding this opponent rather tricky.

He was constantly attentive to the changes in rules around him, ready to dodge at any anomaly to prevent being eliminated by the spatial magic that had just been discharged.

"This is..."

Rayne's pupils contracted, as if he saw something unbelievable.

However, Herag merely stood where he was, and others did not know what Rayne had seen.

The next moment, Herag appeared behind Rayne, and Rayne's head suddenly moved, but it wasn't turning, instead, it was sliding off to the side.

Moreover, Rayne's whole body was directly sliced into several pieces.

A strong scent of blood instantly rose at the scene, and Rayne's body on the ground had been cut into several segments, unrecognizable to its original form.

"Time Stop Zone."

Herag recalled the process of using this spell just moments ago, indeed, the effect was very good.

After using this spell, he simply walked to Rayne's back and used Spatial Cutting to cut Rayne into pieces, like slicing.

The whole process only took 0.3 seconds, consuming 30% of his magic power.

Time Rules, although powerful, were also a significant drain.

Herag, consuming all his magic power, could only pause time within a limited surrounding area for one second.

But in many battles, even 0.1 seconds is already incredibly long, sufficient to accomplish many things.

Just now, Rayne sensed a change in the rule, but when he found that the changing rule was in an unfamiliar domain, he was puzzled.

He couldn't even discern what rule it was.

By the time Rayne realized, he felt the terrifying nature of the man before him.

He wanted to escape, but it was too late.

In Rayne's perception, upon detecting a change in some rule, he immediately felt pain all over his body, and his consciousness plunged into darkness.

Through this real combat, Herag genuinely felt the immense power of Rule Power.

Especially with time and space rules like these, they were exceptionally terrifying for those who hadn't mastered them.

A Magic Master is essentially the strength of a Level 2 Wizard; the capabilities and methods of the two are roughly similar.

At the Level 2 Wizard stage, the competition is essentially over how much rule power one can command and to what degree one commands it, effectively unleashing rule power.

For a Magic Master like Rayne, the Spatial Rule was already extremely hard to comprehend, let alone the Time Rule.

When Herag used the Time Stop Zone, Rayne could only vaguely sense something, and he was already caught.

If one similarly comprehended the Time Rule, they could clearly sense the change in the Time Rule, and it would be much harder to be caught.

After all, the range of the Time Stop Zone was too close; with the ability of a Level 2 Wizard, if seeing the flow of time rule in advance, they can easily leave this range.

Unless the area affected by this Time Magic can cover a vast surrounding region, making it impossible to retreat in a short time.

But a magic of this level exceeds the power a Level 2 Wizard can control; even a Level 3 Wizard might not achieve that.

In this gap of strength, whether time magic is used or not makes no difference.

Herag noticed a space ring on Rayne's finger, so he bent down to retrieve the ring.

However, unexpectedly, as soon as he made a move, everyone except Lins shuddered in fear and retreated backward.

Chapter 555: Celestial Giant Sword

Herag noticed this and couldn't help but smile.

Now, in the eyes of these people, he was probably no different from a monster. They likely no longer considered him one of their own kind.

This was unavoidable, after all, his recent actions in their eyes were extremely strange, mysterious, and frightening.

Any normal person would feel a fear from the depths of their heart, making it difficult to feel any sense of kinship, even if he had defeated their enemies.

But this didn't mean Herag was their friend; these adventurers were now more terrified than before.

If the people from the Sky Temple could still make them angry, Herag could only bring them fear.

After all, with the Sky Temple's people, they could still have thoughts of resistance and understand their methods.

As adventurers, dying under blades was all too normal, and perishing under a barrage of magic was just as commonplace.

But Herag's recent methods only instilled fear from the bottom of their hearts.

Rayne himself was also a Magic Master, and from the Sky Temple no less.

He was an absolutely powerful caster, yet such a caster had inexplicably died by Herag's hands.

Lins inhaled a bit nervously, forcing himself to calm down, and then said, "Sir, they aren't..."

He felt that his companions' actions were rude, and he wanted to explain.

Herag had saved them, yet these people acted this way, which could easily anger Herag.

Unexpectedly, Herag just waved his hand, "It's fine, I don't care."

"Thank you, sir." Lins expressed his gratitude with some embarrassment, bowing his head.

The others realized that their previous actions were purely instinctual, feeling fearful by nature.

They now understood just how rude their actions had been.

Herag didn't care much about this. He picked up Rayne's ring and took a look.

Inside, there seemed to be nothing useful, mostly items resembling religious books, a few sets of clothes, and some belongings.

To Herag, these things held no value.

It seemed that the truly valuable items were kept in the Sky Temple; that old man wouldn't carry them around.

Or rather, with Rayne's power, he wasn't qualified to carry important treasures with him.

Herag tossed the ring to Lins, saying, "It's yours."

"This...how can this be, sir? This is your spoils of war." Lins hurriedly refused, intent on returning the ring.

In the eyes of these adventurers, the spoils of war from those Herag defeated naturally belonged to Herag.

That they managed to survive was already quite fortunate; asking for his things would be utterly unreasonable.

"Take it if I tell you to, what use are those things to me? They're just taking up space." Herag said impatiently.

Lins, seeing this, couldn't insist further and simply nodded, "Thank you, sir!"

At this point, the others realized Herag wouldn't harm them and bravely stepped forward to express their thanks and apologies.

Herag said nothing, instead heading over to the three giant swords and casually picked one up.

"Hmm?"

Herag found this giant sword somewhat peculiar; its principles were similar to witchcraft artifacts but not exactly the same.

The power of witchcraft artifacts comes from the magic enchanted upon them; these spells and the materials used to make the artifacts produce some wondrous effects.

The giant sword before him didn't have any magic enchantments, yet it bore some strange energy.

This energy felt familiar to Herag, and upon reflection, he realized it had a divine quality.

When Herag entered his Divine State, the wish power his followers contributed felt quite similar to the aura of the giant sword.

But the energy of the giant sword wasn't wish power; it was more like energy that had undergone numerous transformations based on wish power.

"How is this thing used? Do you know?" Herag asked, turning the giant sword around.

Lins responded, "I'm not too sure, but this sort of giant sword can only be used by the knights of the Sky Temple. They've obtained great power through the divine blessing of the Sky Temple, which allows them to wield such swords."

Lins revealed everything he knew, though it wasn't much, mostly learned from his mentor Levi.

Herag pondered briefly, his thoughts sparking with inspiration as he entered the Divine State.

Once in the Divine State, with a mere thought, the giant sword in his hand shrunk to the size of a regular longsword.

Then the longsword began slowly growing larger and then smaller again.

Herag laughed, now understanding how to use such a giant sword, able to manipulate it at will.

He also comprehended the power attribute of those in the Sky Temple; it was essentially wish power, though manifested differently, but at its core, it was the same.

Herag also had wish power within him and could directly drive the giant sword with it.

The power the knights of the Sky Temple possessed was transformed by the divine, but essentially originated from wish power.

"This..." Lins watched with a surprised expression.

In his understanding, this type of giant sword could only be wielded by the knights of the Sky Temple.

But the man before him was clearly not from the Sky Temple, so how could he use it?

Herag, naturally, had no explanation to offer; being a god himself, it was only natural he could use such a giant sword.

"You'll not need them anyway, I'll be taking them all." Herag then stored the three giant swords in his space ring as backup weapons.

Herag never had a convenient weapon; when he entered the Titan Power form, the weapons from the kobolds were barely usable.

But those weapons, while large, were made from crude materials, just ordinary oversized swords.

If the battle intensity increased slightly, those weapons would become entirely useless, breaking easily.

But this giant sword in front of him was different, made of a very special material that Herag couldn't even identify, extremely hard and flexible.

The blue giant sword even carried a special energy, quite unusual.

"Let's call you the Celestial Giant Sword." Herag casually named it.

Recalling the process in which the Sky Knight had wielded the sword earlier, Herag infused a small bit of wish power into the sword.

The blade of the Celestial Giant Sword transformed, becoming a pure white glow, akin to a light saber.

Herag placed the Celestial Giant Sword gently on the ground, and it sunk effortlessly into it, unimpeded.

Herag sensed that if he let go, the Celestial Giant Sword would slip right into the ground like sinking into water.

Chapter 556: Victory and Defeat

After the Celestial Giant Sword was enveloped in white light, its sharpness surpassed Herag's imagination.

The sword itself was also very heavy, and the sharpness combined with the power wielded by it increased its lethality by several levels.

Moreover, due to the special material of the Celestial Giant Sword, it could withstand high-intensity battles and was not easily damaged.

"This..." Lins was both shocked and more puzzled when he saw Herag could actually wield the Celestial Giant Sword.

He completely couldn't figure out what Herag's identity was now.

Originally thought to be just an ordinary adventurer, it turned out he was also a powerful magic master.

But now it seems, he might also be a follower of some god, possessing power similar to a Sky Temple Knight, otherwise he couldn't use the Celestial Giant Sword.

So many factors combined in one person were beyond Lins' comprehension.

Even when he followed Master Levi in the past, he had never heard of such a person.

Lins didn't consider the wizard angle, because in his view, wizards were evil and terrifying; how could they possibly save him?

"If there's nothing else, I'll be on my way." After tidying up the spoils of war, Herag also planned to leave.

He had originally thought about traveling with Lins' adventurer group to reduce some trouble on the road.

But now that his strength had been displayed, he couldn't hide it anymore and could only travel alone.

"Thank you, sir, for saving my life!" Lins expressed his gratitude.

Herag smiled and said, "You owe me a second life now."

"Second?" Lins was bewildered, unable to react for a long while.

By the time he came to his senses, Herag had already gone far, disappearing from his sight.

"Could it be..."

Lins suddenly recalled the knight who saved him years ago in Oberstein, could they be the same person?

But their appearances and demeanors were completely different, although... their speaking tone was quite similar indeed.

Lins remembered Herag deeply from back then, not just because he saved him and taught him the Earth Breathing Technique, but also because he was a friend of his sister's.

But after that year, Lins had never seen Herag again.

Later, the war in Oberstein broke out, and the allied forces of elves and humans were continuously retreating, with fires of war burning everywhere.

After considering this possibility, Lins hurriedly chased after him, but where could he see Herag's figure now?

He suddenly understood why the other party would save him, entirely because of his sister's sake.

Lins remembered that the other party came to Oberstein because of his sister, originally thinking that he might have died.

Now it seemed, this benefactor was even more powerful than he imagined.

"Leader, we..." The adventurers behind caught up, inquiring.

They had already cleaned up the camp and dealt with the bodies there.

They were all seasoned adventurers, very experienced in handling these matters.

Lins said, "The Sky Temple certainly won't let it go. There will definitely be others coming to find me later. It's too dangerous for you to be with me, and I don't want you to fall into such a situation like today again. So from now on, I plan to act alone. Their target is only me, so they won't trouble you."

"Leader! We can face it together with you; with more people, we can look out for each other." The red-haired man advised.

They had been through thick and thin together for so many years, how could they be at ease letting Lins leave alone to face the Sky Temple?

Lins sighed, "It's something we can't help. We can't always rely on luck. Moreover, how did the Sky Temple know our location?"

"Leader, do you mean..." The red-haired man quickly understood Lins' implication.

He also realized it; they hadn't been on a mission this time, and their actions were very secretive.

In fact, Lins was mentally prepared after Levi's death, so he acted low-key and cautiously, yet their whereabouts were still exposed.

This indicated there was a problem within, someone leaked the information.

With so many people in the adventurer group, having one or two insiders was normal.

Lins treated them all as family and didn't want to interrogate each one, as that would hurt relationships.

Instead, he decided it was better to act alone, so others wouldn't be endangered because of him.

"I'll root out that person!" The red-haired man's face showed some anger, not expecting someone would actually betray a comrade.

"Barrel, from now on, you'll temporarily be in charge of the adventurer group's affairs. I won't go to Red Leaf County; some journeys have to be faced alone," Lins said.

He felt the magical power within him that still needed a long time to digest slowly.

Once Lins could fully control this power, he would be able to face the Sky Temple head-on.

By then, the ascension channels for knights would no longer be monopolized by the Sky Temple.

Lins gazed toward the horizon, determination filled his eyes.

...

After Herag left, a few space travels quickly widened the distance, and Lins naturally couldn't keep up with his pace.

He also sensed the special energy within Lins, but didn't inquire further.

Everyone has their own path to walk, and it's not good to interfere too much, as the outcomes are uncertain whether they're good or bad.

Herag had thought that Lins might not survive this war but surprisingly, he was doing quite well.

For now, it seemed this kid wouldn't likely die soon; perhaps he was a role similar to a Child of the Plane.

This way, when Asuna is brought back in the future, she wouldn't be too sad.

Arriving in Red Leaf County, Herag heard a piece of news: Reks County had been recaptured.

Reks County is a large city located at the border, and before the war, it was a prosperous and famous city.

But later, it fell into the hands of the wizards during the war, becoming a defensive base for them.

However, now this city had been successfully recaptured.

The entire Red Leaf County was filled with a jubilant atmosphere, with people dancing and singing in the streets to celebrate the victory.

Herag stood by the street, listening to the people around discussing.

Although they were boasting about the courageous front-line warriors who bravely fought and recaptured Reks County.

But in Herag's view, chances were the expedition team voluntarily abandoned the place and was retracting their lines.

The expedition team was likely planning to withdraw, thus wouldn't expend great effort to hold so many cities.

In the upcoming period, the withdrawal speed of the expedition team should accelerate, and most of the Noen Kingdom's lost territories would slowly return to their hands.

This plane expedition war was undoubtedly a failure for the Wizard Plane, as it didn't achieve the predetermined goals.

Chapter 557: Return

The fundamental reason for the Wizard Plane's invasion of the Elf Plane is still the World Tree.

They want to seize the World Tree, even if it's just a branch.

If the World Tree can be transplanted into the Wizard Plane, it will enhance the qualifications and level of all wizards within the plane, which would be beneficial for generations to come.

Unfortunately, although the Wizard Plane has successfully seized many World Trees from the Elf Race, not a single one has been successfully transplanted.

Now being forced to leave, it signifies that all the efforts during this period have been in vain.

Herag believes that if it weren't out of desperation, the Wizard Plane would never retreat like this.

It seems that the pressure from the Boundary Land has been imposing, forcing the upper echelons of the Wizard Plane to choose withdrawal.

"You've got quite the looks, young man! Come have a drink; this is Balihakun's special brew, only brought out on major celebratory events."

A woman dressed in traditional clothes of some ethnicity handed a glass of wine to Herag, smiling happily.

Herag smiled slightly, took the wine, and said: "Thank you!"

"Cheers to victory!" The woman raised her glass in a toast.

"Cheers to victory!" Herag also raised his glass, downing the wine in one gulp before handing the glass back to the woman.

Herag had already checked the wine; there was nothing wrong with it. It was made from some fruits and grains, and contained no toxins.

With so many people on the street, it didn't make sense to specifically target him with poison.

The woman deemed herself very pleased to see Herag finish the wine in one go and continued singing and dancing with the celebrating crowd.

Having drunk the fine wine, Herag was carried forward by the thronging crowd around him.

There were simply too many people, and Herag was almost being pushed along.

For these people, they had been suppressed for far too long, previously shrouded in the shadow of doom.

Now that the dawn of hope had appeared, they naturally wanted to celebrate extravagantly.

Herag looked at the smiling faces around him, feeling that human sorrows and joys are not shared.

...

Outside Base 27, Herag paused and glanced at the place he used to patrol, then turned around and entered the base.

There was a toad perched on his shoulder. The toad emitted no aura nor attracted anyone's attention the whole time.

Others passing by barely glanced at Herag.

The number of people inside Base 27 had visibly increased, and the atmosphere was somewhat tense.

Herag entered Kane's room and found Kane still dealing with the towering pile of parchment, as if it would never end.

"What's been going on?" Herag asked.

Kane lifted his head upon hearing the voice, saw it was Herag, and said: "You're back so soon."

In Kane's perception, it seemed Herag hadn't been away for long.

Herag felt a bit speechless; he had been away for months, how busy must Kane be?

Kane said: "You might have noticed when you returned, a lot of people at the base have already been summoned back. Although it's not confirmed yet, I can divulge that we're basically going to retreat."

"Really retreating? Doesn't that mean all the previous efforts would be wasted?" Herag asked.

"No choice, it's orders from above. There must be reasons for their decision. It's not uncommon; not every expedition can succeed. It's just our bad luck that this attempt failed, and we didn't gain much benefit," Kane said rather helplessly.

Herag asked: "Since that's the case, is there a rough timeline for the withdrawal?"

"It's actually already starting; many have returned. There's not much to do, and remaining here doesn't require that many people. By the way, when do you plan to return?" Kane said.

Herag contemplated: "If there's nothing else, I might prepare to return in the next couple of days."

"There's someone at the teleportation altar responsible for teleporting at all times; you can return whenever you wish. Staying a bit longer is also fine, but likely there won't be another chance to come back in the future," Kane sighed.

Herag nodded without disturbing Kane further, recognizing how busy he was.

Since the expedition team was preparing to retreat, there wasn't much for them to do, yet for Kane, there was a pile of matters to handle.

Herag wandered around the base as if strolling, and before long he reached the vicinity of the teleportation altar.

Beside the teleportation altar was a lean, old wizard, reclining on a chair, with a small table next to him bearing some food.

Next to the small table was a little stove, on which a teapot was brewing tea, with its fragrance wafting all around.

Whenever someone came by to return, the elderly wizard would get up to activate the teleportation altar and send them back.

Herag approached, finding an excuse to chat for a while with the elderly wizard, whose name was Iztoke, a Level 2 Wizard.

Herag was somewhat surprised to learn that Iztoke was not part of any wizard force; rather, he belonged solely to the expedition team.

This was quite rare in the Land of Dawn, Iztoke grew up in the Central Region, joined the expedition team after years of experience, and has stayed till now.

Taking advantage of the conversation opportunity, Herag continuously observed and collected relevant information about the teleportation altar.

The toad remained motionless, its eyes occasionally shifting.

Iztoke paid no heed to the toad, merely assuming it to be Herag's small pet.

When the chat ended, Herag returned to his small cabin, glanced at the toad, asking with his eyes.

They were still inside Base 27, among the multitude of witch arrays, making it impossible to speak.

The toad instantly comprehended Herag's intention, nodded without saying a word.

Herag understood; evidently, the toad had already procured the location of the space channel.

If so, this trip wasn't in vain.

Even if the Wizard Plane withdraws from the Elf Plane later, he could still use this space channel to return to the Elf Plane.

The next day.

Herag arrived at the teleportation altar, saying to Iztoke: "I'm heading back first. We'll dine together when there's a chance."

"Since you said that, I'll feast on your generous account next time. As for me, I don't know when I'll get to return, probably when the base is fully withdrawn," Iztoke laughed.

Iztoke had also learned of Herag's identity, previously having heard about him.

Since Herag had come from Base 27, anyone staying a bit longer would have heard of Herag's stories.

Because life within the base was exceedingly dull, any tale worthy of conversation would be discussed.

Chapter 558: Erza's Letter

Herag, from a nameless Junior Wizard in the Barren Land, quickly grew into a Level 2 Wizard after entering Serlandir through plane wars.

Such achievements certainly drew attention; many envied his rapid promotion.

Moreover, Herag hailed from Base 27, making him a frequent topic of conversation among these wizards during idle chats.

Yet, despite the frequent talks, few truly knew Herag.

Thus, when Herag arrived at Base 27, nobody knew who he was, nor did anyone pay him any mind.

It wasn't until Herag started chatting with Iztoke by the Teleportation Altar that Iztoke realized the young man before him was Herag.

The Teleportation Altar slightly trembled, and after a flash of light, Herag disappeared from the altar.

...

No one knew of Herag's return; he merely informed Reese.

After leaving Augustus Academy, he headed to Black Rock Valley.

Herag didn't plan to return to the Cheqi Family's residence as he had some tasks to complete.

These tasks were more suitable to be handled in Black Rock Valley—the castle would be undisturbed and empty at this time.

"Herag, why have you returned?"

At the entrance to Black Rock Valley, Booker was somewhat surprised.

After Herag went to the Elf Plane, Booker went back to Black Rock Valley to continue his guard duties as usual.

Asuna and Reese continued to stay at Wisteria Ridge, where there was someone to care for them, and the security force was much stronger there.

Booker was originally in his vegetable garden, sipping some liquor when someone below reported Herag's arrival.

Having received no prior notice, Booker was somewhat puzzled, and his surprise grew when he actually saw Herag at the entrance.

Herag said, "The war on the Elf Plane is nearing its end; with nothing left for me to do there, I returned early."

"Not going to Wisteria Ridge?" Booker asked.

"It's too far; I'll rest here for a few days first," Herag replied.

Booker responded, "That's fine, the castle is untouched, and people are responsible for cleaning it regularly."

Herag nodded and returned to the castle, where everything was as before.

Not a speck of dust on the table, clearly indicating regular cleaning.

Herag set up a Witch Array in his room, summoned the Toad, and asked, "How's the space channel construction going?"

"No issues, I've gathered the coordinate information for the space channel, and it's mostly excavated now," Toad replied.

"Excavate?" Herag was puzzled.

The space channel isn't a layer of soil—why use the word excavate?

Toad said, "You can understand it as excavation; though I got the position of the space channel, I need to excavate a small path from elsewhere to reach it. Besides, with the Expedition Team's Teleportation Altar still active, I can't proceed lest I alarm them..."

After Toad's explanation, Herag understood.

Indeed, the space channel is akin to a tunnel within the soil layer, connecting the Witch Plane and Elf Plane.

After finding the space channel's location, the Toad didn't enter from the Witch Plane end directly. Instead, it excavated a small path some distance below the entrance to get inside.

Then, another small path is excavated near the Elf Plane entrance.

Directly entering and exiting via both ends would easily alert those on the Witch Plane.

This method allows discreet use of the space channel between the two planes, avoiding detection.

Currently, since the Expedition Team from the Witch Plane has not withdrawn, the space channel is frequently used.

Toad, being cautious, has only excavated the small path outside the space channel—not entered it for fear of detection.

Once the Expedition Team fully retreats from the Elf Plane, Toad will breach the space channel, crawl near the Elf Plane entrance, and excavate a path into the Elf Plane.

"Is the space channel you excavated stable?" Herag asked.

Toad cast an aside glance and said, "I'm a Level 6 creature, a laborer to excavate your space channel, yet you doubt my skills?"

"Haha, it's my folly! The level is too high beyond my knowledge, so I seem ignorant; Toad boss, please forgive," Herag chuckled.

Half of the space channel task is completed as of now; the remaining half awaits the Witch Plane withdrawal.

Herag wasn't anxious; anyway, this isn't something that needs immediate execution, just waiting for the right opportunity.

...

During dinner, Booker came holding a letter, saying, "By the way, a letter came for you a month ago. It arrived at Black Rock Valley, but since you went to the Elf Plane, I kept it safe."

Herag had just returned shortly; Booker remembered this matter.

But Herag was inside the castle at the time, having said not to disturb him before dinner.

Thus, Booker waited until Herag came out to deliver the letter.

Herag took the letter and found it was sent by Erza.

"I'll come back for dinner later," Herag said upon seeing the letter.

Booker nodded; seeing the sender's name was a woman, he dared not entrust Reese with it nor speak of it.

Looking back, it seemed wise, as Herag didn't even want dinner upon seeing the letter, suggesting something was amiss.

Booker scratched his head—it wasn't his concern, he's merely the messenger.

Upon opening the letter, Herag first smelled the familiar perfume scent.

The scent was light yet alluring, evoking many memories for Herag.

Recalling past events stirred Herag's inner spirit slightly.

However, with high spiritual power now, he suppressed those feelings easily.

He began reading the letter.

"You heartless man, finally back in the Barren Land and not visiting me, forgetting old flames upon finding new ones..."

Seeing the first sentence, Herag inexplicably began to sweat upon his brow.

Clearly, Erza knew Herag had returned to the Barren Land. Being part of Dream Island's forces, she surely had channels for news about the Barren Land.

But Herag's return was a secret back then, only known by the Cheqi Family and Nightingale Commerce Association.

By the time word reached Erza, Herag had already entered the Elf Plane.

Chapter 559: Sending a Message? Sending a Person

Erza originally thought she could finally reunite with Herag, it's been so lonely all these years.

However, when she was ready to find Herag, she learned that he had already entered the Elf Plane.

The Doris Kingdom is too far from here, and news takes time to travel.

At that time, Erza was furious and then wrote this letter to send over, so that when Herag returns, he can see it and won't go back to the Land of Dawn right after.

Over the years, Erza actually kept an eye on Herag's news, even knowing many things about him in the Land of Dawn.

Seeing Herag become stronger step by step, going farther and farther, Erza was sincerely happy from the heart.

After Herag learned all this from the letter, ripples arose in his heart.

Wherever you are, knowing that someone cares about you feels different.

From the letter, Herag also learned that Erza had become a Level 1 Official Wizard and is currently at the Gaseous Stage.

Although the level isn't high, it's already remarkable for Erza.

Herag was somewhat surprised; he knew Erza's talents very well, not just her physique.

With Erza's original aptitude, it was almost impossible to advance to an Official Wizard under normal circumstances.

"The things I sent..."

Herag noticed that Erza mentioned that the things he sent helped her advance to an Official Wizard.

At first, he didn't react, not remembering that he had sent anything that could help Erza advance.

But soon, Herag recalled.

He had sent the sap of the World Tree to Erza; the original purpose was only to help her maintain her youthful appearance and increase lifespan.

But now it seems the World Tree's sap might also improve a wizard's training aptitude.

When Herag consumed the sap of the World Tree, it indeed greatly aided his training, but he hadn't expected such a heaven-defying function of improving aptitude.

No wonder the Wizard Plane is always thinking of transplanting the World Tree there, and even the wizards at the Boundary Land are also eyeing the World Tree.

This thing is indeed a divine artifact for wizards, able to fully support wizard cultivation and strengthen the whole Wizard Plane's power.

After Erza became an Official Wizard, she formally entered the Dream Island Wizard Organization, receiving various resources and support.

She was originally Dino's descendant, and Dino's lineage was considered a notable force in Dream Island.

Previously, she only served as a City Lord to prepare for a stable life due to lacking aptitude.

Even though she was Dino's descendant, resources would not be wasted on her for nothing.

But now that her aptitude had improved, she naturally would receive more resources.

Erza said in the letter that she is now also making an effort in meditation practice, striving not to be left too far behind by Herag.

Herag's diligence and effort left a profound impression on her, always squeezing in time to meditate after everything was done; that was incomparable.

"If you come back and see this letter, come find me quickly, or else there won't be many chances in the future. I may not live much longer in this world..."

Herag's eyebrow twitched upon seeing this, instinctively feeling that Erza might be up to something.

However, he was genuinely worried, unable to ease his mind, not knowing what problem Erza might be facing.

She didn't explicitly mention it in the letter either.

Herag had no choice but to change his plans, deciding not to return to Wisteria Ridge for now, but to go find Erza first.

Erza was no longer in Ryan City; after she became a Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, she had already been residing within Dream Island.

So if Herag wanted to find her, he wouldn't find her in Ryan City, but would have to make a trip to Dream Island.

Herag quickly looked up Dream Island's location, which was in the seas to the west of the Barren Land.

As for the exact location, no one knew, and the information Herag found didn't elaborate.

Erza didn't mention the location in the letter either, whether because she couldn't or deliberately didn't.

Herag felt it was intentional, like a test to see if he truly cared enough to find her.

Perhaps Erza herself wasn't sure if her feelings had changed, so she wanted to test her heart this way.

Although the letter didn't provide a location, there was an earring inside.

This earring was obviously one of a pair, now only one remains.

Erza said it was a token from Dream Island, and with it, he could enter Dream Island to find her.

Herag sighed, thinking it seemed the same everywhere; women are always afraid of you changing or falling out of love.

He soon contacted the couple from the Nightingale Commerce Association to inquire about how to get to Dream Island.

The Nightingale Commerce Association's channels were strong indeed, managing to contact a guide to Dream Island for Herag in just three hours.

Originally, entering Dream Island was a complicated matter since, like any other wizard organization, without permission, outsiders couldn't enter it freely.

Unless you held a token.

Herag luckily had such a token on him, so the condition was met.

The Nightingale Commerce Association worked efficiently, quickly arranging everything for Herag.

Herag only needed to head to the West Coast of the Doris Kingdom and find the guide named Staven to then use the token to enter Dream Island.

After everything was settled, Herag was somewhat troubled: "How do I get to the coast of the Doris Kingdom?"

The Black Rock Valley was almost at the easternmost point of the Barren Land, but the Doris Kingdom was the westernmost kingdom, and the distance between was simply too vast.

The toad resting on Herag's shoulder, originally meditating, suddenly opened its eyes and said, "I can send you there."

"Send me there? How?" Herag asked.

"A gold coin will suffice," said the toad.

Herag quickly realized, "Can a Messenger transport people?"

He had some understanding of Messengers, knowing that ordinary ones could only transport items and had never heard of them transporting people.

"Ordinary Messengers can't, but I'm special, different from other Messengers," the toad explained.

The toad was inherently skilled in Spatial Rules; the ability needed by a Messenger was trivial for it.

Because the toad had been recognized by the World Will of the Wizard Plane, it could exert power far beyond an ordinary projection.

"You just need a target to send you to. If it's Erza, it probably won't work; I just sensed her area is quite special. Entering might not be an issue, but it could lead to some trouble," the toad added.

The Messenger's rule was like this: besides requiring some cost, you also needed to specify to whom you were delivering, for the Messenger to transport the item.

Chapter 560: Servant Ed

Normally, messengers can go to most places, and there are even some like the Toad who can cross planes.

But some places are not so easy to enter. For example, some important locations have special witch arrays for protection, which makes it impossible for regular messengers to enter.

Most wizard organizations in the Barren Land have such defense mechanisms. Generally, a messenger can't get in unless there's a pre-registered cooperation.

Dream Island naturally has such a witch array, and it's not an ordinary one.

Dream Island is situated in the sea, leveraging the power of the sea to greatly enhance the effectiveness of its defensive witch array, far surpassing normal defensive effects.

Of course, this kind of defense is useless against the Toad; he can get in if he wants to.

The problem is, this time it's not about delivering a letter, but sending a person.

If the Toad directly breaks through Dream Island's defenses and sends Herag inside...

As soon as the Dream Island wizards discover it, they will inevitably launch an attack.

They won't care who you are; if you intrude into their base, they'll definitely strike first.

Herag is not confident enough to face a wizard organization alone, even if it's a Barren Land wizard organization.

It's essential not to underestimate the foundation of any wizard organization; the Barren Land's organizations were once part of the Land of Dawn's wizard organizations.

Although they failed in competition, they survived, unlike many organizations that disappeared in the river of history.

Any wizard organization that has survived until today is not simple.

Moreover, Herag is visiting a friend, not picking a fight, so there's no need to force entry.

Thinking this through, directly reaching Erza's side is not feasible; another target must be found.

The Staven found by the Nightingale Commerce Association won't do either, because Herag has never met this person.

According to the messenger's rules, one must have seen the person to deliver a message successfully.

The target should be as close to Dream Island as possible.

After a moment's thought, Herag quickly came up with an idea—that's Ed.

Ed was the coachman who once drove him to Ryan City.

When Herag left Ryan City back then, he left his house to Ed and his wife Judy.

More than ten years have passed in a flash; Herag wonders if Ed is still alive.

Herag decides to try and tells the Toad Ed's name.

After the Toad closes his eyes and senses for a moment, he says, "No problem, I can locate him; he's far to the west."

...

Ryan City.

Ed holds a pair of scissors, trimming the lawn in the yard.

The whole yard looks neat and tidy, spotless.

Considering there are three children at home, maintaining such cleanliness and orderliness is not easy.

Ed trims the lawn carefully and meticulously, just as he did when he served that gentleman in the past.

This house belongs to the gentleman.

Ed has always believed so, even though the gentleman said he was giving the house to him.

All these years, he has maintained the yard well, never stopping.

The house where Herag once practiced alchemy, Ed still considers it forbidden ground, not allowing his three children to set foot inside.

Ed himself only goes in at specified times to clean the outside, but never enters inside.

He clearly remembers that the gentleman often did some very important things inside, spending entire days there.

This indicates that it's a significant place and he shouldn't enter casually.

Even though the gentleman has left, and there's probably nothing important inside anymore, Ed has always abided by his duty.

Ed wipes the sweat from his forehead and looks at the sky.

Sometimes, he wonders when the gentleman might return and when he might drive for him again.

"Oh! I guess I really am getting old. A little lawn trimming and I'm dizzy with hallucinations." Ed hears a noise in front of the yard, looks over, and sees the unbelievable.

He sees Herag.

Ed doesn't really believe he's seeing Herag; it must be his imagination.

Over a decade has passed, and no one stays unchanged.

"Ed! What are you daydreaming about?"

Only when Herag called out to him did Ed realize that this might not be an illusion.

"Is it really you, sir?"

Ed feels extremely emotional, bending over and running to kneel on the ground.

"Your most loyal servant, Ed, greets you, sir!"

Herag asks, "How has life been these years?"

He notices Ed has aged a bit, but his complexion is rosy, and his heartbeat sounds strong and healthy, indicating a decent quality of life.

"Thanks to you, sir, the City Lord helped me open a blacksmith shop, and life has been good. Oh, and sir, I have three children now, all sons!"

Ed briefly recounts his life over the years and feels particularly proud mentioning his three sons.

His oldest son is already eight years old and is said to have great knight talent, having taken a knight from the City Lord's Mansion as his teacher.

The second son is younger, only six, but extraordinarily smart, learning everything quickly. He's currently a student of an old scholar in Ryan City.

The youngest son is still too young to show much, being only two years old.

Ed never imagined he could have a wife and three sons in his lifetime.

Even more unexpected is that his sons would turn out so well.

Ed always feels this is because he once served beside Herag and was blessed by Herag's noble aura, bringing him such fortune.

Judy once said it's the gods' blessing, and Ed fiercely rebuked her right then and there.

In Ed's view, in front of the gentleman, no gods matter.

Gods? Nonsense!

"Where's Judy?" Herag asks.

Judy was a woman from the slums who originally came to do laundry and cooking for Herag.

Later, Judy and Ed became interested in each other and naturally got together.

"The Light Church is holding a blessing ceremony today, and she took the kids there to pray." Ed laughs.

Today, with his wife and kids out, Ed finally has some time to himself, hence he started trimming the lawn.

Ed doesn't know why, but trimming the lawn always makes him feel particularly at ease.

Herag nods without saying anything, glancing at the yard, and comments, "This yard looks just like when I left."

Ed grins at these words as if he has received the greatest praise.

"How long do you plan to stay this time, sir? By the way, City Lord hasn't been in the city for the past few years."

Ed assumes Herag has returned to find City Lord Erza; otherwise, he wouldn't suddenly come back.

But Erza left Ryan City years ago, and no one knows where she went.

"Yes, I know. I just came by to see you on my way; I'm leaving soon." Herag says.