

Sixth 61

Chapter 61: Advancement

Herag looked at Larry and it seemed Larry had no intention of leaving.

If a war really breaks out, even an Official Wizard cannot avoid being dragged in.

"Me?" Larry laughed, "I'm just a logistics person. If it really comes to a fight, my knowledge of Magic Potions is far more useful than combat. If even I have to take the field, it means I should prepare to run away."

"Don't Official Wizards also have to sign a contract with Moonlight Forest?" Herag felt that Larry didn't seem to be bound by much.

"That's the benefit of being a Master of Magic Potions! The contract I signed with Moonlight Forest is different from others. Strictly speaking, we're just in an employment relationship, so I'm not that heavily constrained." Larry explained.

Herag suddenly understood: "I see."

This is the advantage of having expertise; seems like being specialized is appreciated everywhere.

"Next, I'll tell you some things to pay attention to in the promotion process." Larry continued.

"There's an old saying in the Wizard World: no promotion process is exactly the same. It means that when Wizards advance, all sorts of situations can arise, and you'll need to use the knowledge you have to adapt and manage accordingly."

"Of course, you're only promoting to Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, so you shouldn't encounter many difficulties. Just remember that a Wizard's most powerful weapon is always knowledge, which can solve most of your problems..."

...

After returning home, Herag spent two days digesting the experience Larry had taught him, then took out the Dawn Potion.

"Shenlan, begin comprehensive monitoring of the body's state, prompt feedback if any issues arise during the promotion process."

"Task has been filed."

A 3D human model appeared in front of Herag, representing his current bodily state, with numerous parameters denoting his current physical condition beside it.

Herag removed the wooden stopper from the Dawn Potion, and a puff of purple mist emerged, spreading outward.

He tilted his head back and drank the pale purple liquid of the Dawn Potion, which tasted very bitter and slightly painful.

Once the Dawn Potion entered his body, it became a surge of energy that spread throughout.

"Heart rate accelerating, current heart rate: 157."

"Toxic substances have entered the body, causing damage, current damage degree 3%, stop promotion and dispel toxic substances?"

"Do not stop, continue."

...

Herag closed his eyes, knowing this was the effect of the potion and that he must not stop.

A layer of purple flames emerged from his body. The flames had no temperature and couldn't ignite the clothes he was wearing.

"Current heart rate: 267."

"Body damage degree: 10%!"

"Gene chain is breaking..."

Herag's current bodily state could be described as dire, yet he did not panic at all, remaining mentally stable.

"Gene chain is reorganizing..."

"Herag, look at what this is?" A woman's voice came from behind, but Herag seemed not to hear and ignored it.

He ignored it, yet the voice did not cease; instead, it became more numerous and chaotic.

"The odd changes, not the even, look at the symbols and quadrants..."

"Wake up! They're calling roll!"

...

Herag's strong Spiritual Power kept him awake, focusing only on the promotion process.

Boom!

After an indefinite duration, Herag suddenly felt as if his head exploded.

"These are Wind Energy Particles, the red ones should be Fire Energy Particles, and the black ones... are Dark Energy Particles?"

Previously, Herag could only sense the Free Energy Particles in the surrounding space but couldn't distinguish their attributes.

But now, he could clearly perceive the attribute of each Energy Particle.

"So, which type of energy particle is suitable for me?"

As a First-Class Wizard Apprentice advances to a Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, they sense one or more types of suitable energy particles for themselves.

Wizard Apprentices can absorb these Energy Particles into their bodies, continuously radiating and enhancing their Constitution.

Herag's physical strength would increase continually with this radiation, making his own body somewhat radiant. At the Wizard Apprentice stage, this radiance wouldn't significantly affect ordinary people, but having offspring with them would be difficult.

Meanwhile, Wizard Apprentices, when using Magic of the same attribute, will experience enhanced casting speed and spell strength.

This does not mean other spells can't be learned; rather, magic from the particular attribute becomes much stronger.

Herag took a deep breath, commenced Meditation anew, and opened his hands to absorb the Energy Particles surrounding his body.

He no longer absorbed all Energy Particles indiscriminately, as he'd done previously, instead letting them congregate on his body surface. Those harmonizing with him automatically entered his body; those that didn't floated on the surface.

"Turns out they're Dark Energy Particles..."

Herag discovered the one attribute he attuned to was the Dark Energy Attribute Particles.

This is a type of advanced Energy Particle, subdivided into many sub-types such as Negative Energy Particles, Shadow Energy Particles... all belonging to the Dark Energy class.

"Looks like I will need to specialize in dark energy spells henceforth."

Wizard Apprentices can achieve greater effectiveness by specializing in the direction they naturally attune to, so many choose to pursue specialization, particularly upon reaching the stage of becoming a Third Class Wizard Apprentice, it becomes preparation for advancing to Official Wizard, demanding more specialization.

Herag's previously met Rock seemed to be doing the same, specializing in Earth Element Magic, as the magic he utilized was primarily Earth-based.

"Current heart rate: 97."

"Body is gradually recovering..."

Herag felt his physical state starting to stabilize.

"Shenlan, check current bodily state."

"Herag Merlin: Power 3.0, Agility 3.1, Constitution 4.8, Spirit 11.0, Magic Power 40%."

Herag nodded: "Promotion succeeded, just as Mr. Larry said, with my current Spiritual Power the advancement to Second-Class Wizard Apprentice should be relatively effortless."

"Dark Energy Shield!" He cast a shield on himself to examine the post-promotion effects.

"Shenlan, how does the current Dark Energy Shield compare to before in strength?"

"After calculation, because most of the magic in this spell was composed of Dark Energy Particles, shield strength increased by 63%, Magic Power consumption decreased by 39%."

Herag contemplated: "No wonder Second-Class Wizard Apprentices start choosing specialization; this strength enhancement is significant. Spending one hundred percent effort yields one hundred and fifty percent return."

Having completed the promotion, he didn't indulge in jubilation but sat steadily down to complete Meditation.

In his mind, there were six stars, and he needed to complete Meditation on four more stars to advance to Third-Class Wizard Apprentice.

Herag searched within the starry sky briefly, chose a star, and began meditating.

"Without the aid of Meteor Grass, the Meditation speed is considerably slower."

Herag had been utilizing Meteor Grass assistance for some time, and transitioning back was challenging given the slowed Meditation speed.

Meteor Grass was no longer useful for him at this stage, thus he needed to think of other ways to speed up Meditation thereafter.

Chapter 62: Preparations

After Herag finished his meditation, he went downstairs to take a hot shower, there was a strong smell of medicine all over his body.

Northern Forest Region.

After Herag went out, he clearly felt that the atmosphere was different from usual, and the faces of the wizards passing by were somewhat serious.

He also saw many people who were already injured.

When passing by the flea market, Herag noticed that it was much quieter than usual.

"At this time, there should be more and more frequent transactions, it seems that many people have already taken tasks to flee Moonlight Forest."

Herag was focused on preparing for his promotion during this time and paid relatively little attention to the movements in the forest.

After arriving in town, he found that the crowd was significantly smaller than usual.

The originally bustling gathering place now had only small groups of people, and they all looked worried, seemingly unable to find a way to weather the storm.

The tasks allowing people to leave the forest are probably gone now, and even if there are any, they would be snatched up immediately, and those tasks are not enough to go around.

Seeing these scenes, Herag quickened his pace, feeling the need to leave here as soon as possible. Otherwise, even with Mr. Larry's help, he might not be able to get out, as, in the face of the war machine, many things are very fragile.

"Teacher! I successfully got promoted." Herag reported his situation.

Larry was as usual, poured him a cup of coffee, and then poured one for himself as well.

"Add the sugar yourself." Larry pushed the coffee through the air in front of Herag.

"Your spiritual power is very stable, and the quality of your magic power is also very high, so I determine that there is no problem in your promotion to a Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, I'm not surprised by that."

Larry then, with a serious expression, said, "Now, to the main topic, pack up and get ready to leave in the next two days. Malcolm, that lunatic, captured a hundred pregnant women, presumably preparing to perform some evil powerful spell."

"Moonlight Forest has already reported this to Augustus Academy, Malcolm's actions severely violate the basic principles of the wizard organizations on the Kala Continent, which is to not allow the mass slaughter of ordinary people."

Herag asked, "If Malcolm indeed slaughtered these hundred ordinary people, what punishment would he face?"

"Sigh, it would just be some financial penalties." Larry sighed.

This is how it is with official wizards, especially powerful ones, rules barely restrain them anymore.

The ordinary people on the Kala Continent are a vital source of fresh blood for wizard organizations, and the wizards' lives actually rely on the production materials produced by ordinary people, so there's always been a rule against mass slaughter.

Malcolm's actions happened to draw the attention of various wizard organizations, but not to the extent that they felt compelled to intervene and stop him.

This will only result in Malcolm facing some financial consequences.

Larry continued, "I predict that when Malcolm's spell takes form, that will be the time when Moonlight Forest and Green Cottage fully go to war."

"So, you need to leave here as soon as possible."

Herag nodded, "Understood, but where should I go?"

This was a question Herag had been pondering these days, with the Kala Continent being so vast, where would be a better place to go.

"I recommend you go to the Doris Kingdom on the West Coast, where the regime is stable, far away from major wizard organizations, you can pass this period relatively peacefully. The only downside is the scarcity of magic potion materials there. But that's the case everywhere, as places rich in magic potion materials aren't far from wizard organizations."

"And the task I'm giving you is to go to the Doris Kingdom and find a magic potion material called Moonstone Grass."

Larry pulled out a map, pointing to a large country on the West Coast as he introduced it.

"I remember you have a Space Ring, right? I've prepared a batch of magic potion materials for you, enough to last you a while. If you lack any basic magic potions, you can self-brew with these materials, and practice a bit." Larry turned and walked to a room by the side, opening the door.

He beckoned to Herag, "Come and have a look."

Herag followed over, and looking into the room by the door: "So many!"

The room was full of magic potion materials, all neatly categorized and placed.

"These are materials for basic types of magic potions, not valuable. I had a premonition that a war might erupt, so I pre-ordered a lot of magic potion materials, now many magic potion materials in Moonlight Forest's magic pharmacy are being sold in limited quantities." Larry explained.

Herag nodded, understanding that if war broke out, something like magic potion materials would definitely be centrally managed and controlled by Moonlight Forest's officials, and the amounts wizard apprentices could buy probably wouldn't suffice for themselves.

"Thank you, teacher!" Herag solemnly bowed to express his gratitude, though Larry made it seem simple, this gift was a generous one, worth an unknown amount of magic stones.

Larry chuckled, "This is nothing, alright, store them in your Space Ring, go back and pack, and when you're ready, come find me, I'll take you out."

Herag chuckled hearing this, he was brought back by Larry, and now to escape the turmoil, he needed to be taken out by him again, forming a cycle.

"Teacher, I'll head back now."

After leaving Larry's house, Herag hadn't walked far when he suddenly met Bessie on the street, she looked as though she was also heading to see Larry.

"Bessie?" Herag greeted her.

Bessie seemed a bit flustered, her gaze avoiding Herag's eyes, she lowered her head and said, "Herag..."

"Congratulations on being promoted to a Third-Class Wizard Apprentice!" Herag congratulated her.

He had heard before that Bessie had been successfully promoted but had not encountered her until now, only sending messages over the talisman stone.

"Thank you." Bessie seemed to have something on her mind and didn't say much more, continuing to walk with her head lowered.

Herag reflected on Bessie's demeanor, feeling something was off.

After thinking for a bit, he suddenly realized what was wrong, "Why is Bessie dressed so alluringly?"

Bessie was wearing a pair of black silk stockings with suspenders, her legs were already long, and the outfit made them even more enticing.

More importantly, when Herag brushed past her, he noticed that under Bessie's robe, she was only wearing a small XX.

Since knowing Bessie, she had always dressed very conservatively, always wearing long pants, and never dressing so seductively.

Herag felt there might be some gossip here but shook his head, continuing on his way, as it had nothing to do with him.

After purchasing some items hard to find outside, he returned home and began sorting out the things he needed to take.

With so many magic potion materials now piled up in his Space Ring, not many large items could be taken, so he decided to bring along those spell model books.

After finishing up, Herag picked up a quill pen and wrote a letter to Lillian, informing her that he would be leaving Moonlight Forest for a while, and might not be contactable for a short period due to certain circumstances.

"I also wonder if I can still send out this letter." Herag felt the letter should still be able to be sent out, as Moonlight Forest had only implemented entry and exit controls. As long as there was a legitimate reason, people could still go out, so the transmission of letters should still be normal.

Chapter 63: Departure

The next day, Herag arrived at Larry's house.

He was wearing light armor, with a longsword at his waist, looking nothing like a Wizard.

This light armor was bought for seven magic stones from the flea market; it's harder than regular armor and has some enchantments that enhance its defense against magic.

Herag planned to act as a Knight after going out; wearing a Wizard robe would be too conspicuous in the ordinary world.

"Ready?" Larry asked.

"Hmm." Herag nodded slightly.

"Follow me." Larry led Herag upstairs.

Herag had only been to the fourth floor before, never above that, so he didn't know what was up there.

Following Larry all the way up, Herag counted silently in his heart. When they reached the eleventh floor, the two stopped.

This floor was a parlor-like guest room, spacious with sofas placed all around.

Inside, there was a fireplace, next to which a wall of firewood was neatly stacked.

"Why come here to go out?" Herag was a bit puzzled about leaving the Moonlight Forest by coming upstairs.

Larry smiled and explained, "Do you want to leave from the east or south road? If you want to, I won't stop you, just be prepared for a fight once you're outside."

"It seems the situation is more serious than I thought." Herag's expression was grave, understanding Larry's implication.

Now the outskirts of the Moonlight Forest were unsafe, and he might encounter people from the Green Cottage once he went out.

"So, we need a different, safer way out: the Flue Network." Larry said, walking towards the fireplace.

"Flue Network?" It was the first time Herag heard the term.

Larry explained, "It's normal that you don't know, as there are only three fireplaces in the entire Moonlight Forest connected to the Flue Network."

"The so-called Flue Network is when many Wizards' fireplaces are connected to the Flue Network. By using flue powder and saying the name of the place you want to go, you can arrive there."

Herag pondered, "Isn't that dangerous?"

He imagined a scenario where someone suddenly emerged from one's fireplace at home.

"That's why Wizards who dare to connect to the Flue Network have a certain level of power. If in the future you find yourself arriving at the wrong place through the Flue Network, be very careful. The Flue Network here has been registered in the Moonlight Forest, and this journey via the Flue Network has been pre-approved by the Forest." Larry took a wooden box from above the fireplace.

He opened the box to reveal a green powder inside.

"To use it, grab a handful of flue powder, stand inside the fireplace, say the name of the place you want to go, then throw the flue powder down. Your destination is called the Violet Cottage, an abandoned wooden house located in the southern Konakani Kingdom, within a forest."

"After you arrive there, head south for two days to reach Violet City. Go further west, and you can get to the Doris Kingdom." Larry described the route he had planned for Herag.

"It's simple, go ahead." Larry patted Herag on the shoulder, indicating for him to move towards the fireplace.

Herag stood in the fireplace, checking to see if he had forgotten anything.

Larry extended the box of flue powder towards him, and Herag grabbed a handful. It felt no different from ordinary sand.

"Remember, it's Violet Cottage." Larry emphasized one last time.

Herag nodded, took a deep breath, and said, "Violet Cottage!"

He immediately threw the flue powder downward, and instantly, a burst of green flames enveloped Herag's body. In the blink of an eye, Herag vanished from the spot.

Herag felt a sudden darkness, and then it seemed as if his head and feet were reversed, as he traversed downward through a black tunnel. After a while, a white opening appeared ahead.

Boom!

Herag felt himself crash into a pile of clutter, causing a loud crashing sound and the sound of a wooden shelf falling to the ground.

He opened his eyes and found himself inside a shabby wooden house, the floor filled with broken sofas, broken chairs, splintered wood, and other debris.

The room was full of dust, seemingly stirred up by his recent crash.

He glanced back and saw a large fireplace behind him, realizing he must have come from there.

Cough... cough...

The thick dust made Herag cough incessantly.

"Dark Energy Shield!"

Herag cast a shield on himself, then squeezed through the clutter, forcing a path out.

With a shield enveloping him, there was no need to worry about getting scratched.

After squeezing out, Herag found himself on the first floor of the wooden house. The stairs leading to the second floor had decayed and broken, with many steps already shattered.

He scanned his surroundings and found the location of the main door, trying to twist it open. Carelessly, he twisted off the doorknob, feeling a bit speechless: "How long has this house been uninhabited?"

He tried pushing the door, finding it entirely immobile, noticing the lock had rusted shut.

Bam!

Herag kicked the door open, stirring up another cloud of dust.

He dashed out rapidly, feeling the cold sensation on his face, and saw the sky overcast with imminent rain.

Looking around, he saw endless wilderness.

The entire center of this wilderness was the Violet Cottage, surrounded by forest at its edges.

Herag took out a map and confirmed that this was indeed the place Larry had mentioned.

"The position of the stars..."

Herag sensed the position of the stars, finding the south and starting his journey.

According to Larry's instructions, he needed to walk for two days to get out, so he had to hurry.

After spending ten minutes crossing the wilderness, he entered the forest.

While trekking through the forest, droplets fell occasionally, and Herag soon found himself wet. Using magic power to repel the rain was too extravagant. Traversing an unfamiliar forest, he dared not waste magic power casually.

Herag would take out his map every so often to mark his position, adjusting his direction and route.

"Time to find a place to camp." Herag glanced at the sky, realizing it was almost dusk.

He found a sheltered spot at the foot of a mountain, with dense trees nearby sheltering most of the rain.

Herag took out a tent from his space ring, tossed it on the ground, and the tent promptly stood up. He only needed to manually secure a few corners.

"It's been a long time since I last hunted." Herag could sense many animal traces in the forest, all common animals.

He pulled out a Fine Steel Bow, something he hadn't used in a long time, yet he had kept it, and now it came in handy.

Chapter 64: Rainy Night in the Forest

Herag took his bow and arrow into the forest, and soon he discovered a wild rabbit.

He bent his bow and nocked an arrow, aiming at the rabbit, and in the next second, the rabbit's head was pierced through.

Now, he no longer needed Shenlan's assistance to easily hit such small animals.

Herag picked up the wild rabbit and found a small stream, where he took out a dagger and skillfully skinned and gutted it, quickly preparing a piece of juicy rabbit meat.

At night, a dense white mist arose in the forest, and the rain intensified.

Herag pulled out a rain tarp from his Space Ring and set up a makeshift shelter under a tree, also collecting some dry wood, wild vegetables, and mushrooms nearby.

He stacked the dry wood he picked up, snapped his fingers, and the pile of wood caught fire. This was a simple use of Fire Elemental Energy Particles.

Since advancing to a Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, Herag could manipulate these various types of Energy Particles to perform some basic magic.

The most commonly used was igniting with Fire Elemental Energy Particles.

This simple absorption of a bit of Fire Elemental Energy Particles naturally wouldn't have any destructive power, but it was just right for everyday life.

Besides that, there were Plant Energy Particles, which could accelerate wound recovery, and these Plant Energy Particles were ubiquitous in the forest.

Herag took out a wooden stick, skewered the rabbit, and roasted it over the fire, taking oil and spices from his bag.

He used a brush to coat the rabbit meat layer by layer with oil, slowly grilling it, as the aroma gradually emerged, dispersing in the forest.

Raindrops drummed on the shelter, making a ticking sound, and occasional small crackles came from the campfire.

Herag closed his eyes slightly, occasionally turning the rabbit. Everything seemed so peaceful and serene.

The tranquil rainy night in the forest made Herag feel sleepy.

But now he couldn't sleep because there were unexpected visitors.

Far away, two people were approaching, and Herag listened to their footsteps drawing nearer.

When the two came closer, the yellow firelight illuminated their faces.

One was a middle-aged man with a Big Beard, wearing armor and holding a Longsword in his hand, which still bore bloodstains. He looked at Herag with a solemn expression.

Beside the middle-aged Knight was a teenager about sixteen or seventeen years old, with golden hair and luxurious clothes, clearly a noble.

"Hello traveler, I am Kieran Banks from the Tasoni Territory, and this is Josh Banks, the second son of the Banks Family. We wonder if we could borrow some fire, as my young master is cold." The middle-aged Knight Kieran spoke sincerely, even with a hint of supplication.

Herag squinted slightly at them: "There's space, have a seat."

"Kieran Banks: Power 4.2, Agility 3.2, Constitution 3.9, full of unknown energy."

"Another Great Knight," Herag thought of Baron Buck, oddly nostalgic.

Kieran and his young master cautiously approached, their movements restrained, seemingly afraid of being misunderstood by Herag.

After they sat down by the fire, Josh shivered near the flames, looking as though he'd been cold for a long time.

"Sizzle..."

The rabbit was almost done, sizzling with oil, causing sparks to fly as it dripped into the fire.

Herag sat up, grasped a rabbit leg in one hand, and pulled out a dagger with the other, beginning to carve the leg.

"Hiss~" Herag felt the heat, struggled a bit to tear off the rabbit leg, then took a big bite.

The rabbit meat was juicy and melted in the mouth, with a unique roasted aroma, leaving an endless aftertaste.

Herag swallowed the piece of meat with satisfaction, feeling very warm.

A pot hung beside the rabbit, simmering wild vegetable and mushroom soup. These wild vegetables and mushrooms were confirmed safe by Shenlan's database.

After finishing the rabbit leg in a few bites, Herag lifted the lid off the pot, releasing a burst of white steam and fragrance.

He took a bowl and spoon out of his Space Ring, served himself a bowl of soup, and blew on it, but it was still too hot to drink.

Kieran's expression became more serious upon seeing him retrieve items out of thin air, looking at Herag with increased reverence.

"Grumble..."

The sound of a stomach growling interrupted, and Herag looked up, seeing it was the young noble Josh.

He chuckled, ignored him, and continued blowing on his hot soup.

"Sir, might we purchase some food from you? We're willing to pay." Kieran requested.

Recognizing Herag as a Wizard, Kieran was cautious with his words and actions, fearing to offend him.

Herag looked up and said, "A rabbit is not enough for me alone, so I'm not going to sell it to you. Aren't you, a Great Knight, capable of hunting?"

Kieran saw that Herag accurately discerned his strength and showed no fear, confirming Herag's identity even more.

He said somewhat ashamedly, "I hadn't considered it. Too focused on fleeing, I forgot to catch some game. Now it's raining, and I can't take my master hunting at night in the rain."

"Uncle Kieran, it's not your fault. You've done well protecting me. Skipping a meal or two is fine. We'll find food tomorrow morning." Josh tried to comfort Kieran.

"Here, Ten Gold Coins, do you want it?" Herag pulled out a thick biscuit from his Space Ring.

"Ten Gold Coins?" Josh looked at the ordinary biscuit, then back at Herag, and immediately replied, "No, I'll give you Ten Thousand Gold Coins."

Herag laughed, "Ten Thousand Gold Coins? Can you carry that much?"

Josh explained, "Once I return to the Tasoni Territory, I'll present Ten Thousand Gold Coins to you without missing a penny."

Reading Kieran's expression and actions, Josh quickly realized this person was unusual, prompting him to think of recruiting him.

"I give you biscuits, and you give me promises?" Herag laughed.

Unexpectedly, Josh grew a bit emotional, kneeling on one knee in the muddy ground, with his right hand over his heart, "I swear on the Banks Family's honor, if we return to Markfield City in the Tasoni Territory, I'll award Ten Thousand Gold Coins to you."

"My name is Herag Merlin. Ten Thousand Gold Coins probably isn't just for biscuits; you want me to help solve the trouble behind you? Sorry, I don't like trouble." Herag shook his head, uninterested in meddling in noble power struggles.

"Mr. Herag, there's a misunderstanding. I have no intention of using you. You only need to ensure our safe arrival at Markfield City." Josh sincerely pleaded.

"Markfield City? It so happens it's on my way. If Ten Thousand Gold Coins is just for escorting you, there's no reason not to earn it. You can lead the way tomorrow."

Herag recalled the map, realizing he was headed there anyway, and with these two, perhaps some matters might even become more convenient.

Chapter 65: On the Road

"Thank you, Mr. Herag!" Josh was overjoyed.

"I'm just doing my job for money. Escorting for a while and getting Ten Thousand Gold Coins, where else to find such good deals? Just hope you won't renege, or the consequences could be severe," Herag waved his hand.

"Rest assured, sir, I will not break my promise," Josh replied sincerely.

After eating and drinking his fill, Herag crawled into his tent to sleep.

Kieran used leaves to make a bowl for Josh, then served him a bowl of soup from the pot.

This was deliberately left by Herag, in exchange for helping him wash the pot, as he was too lazy to do it himself.

Josh didn't mind drinking the leftover soup from Herag, he took a sip and then handed the leaf-made bowl over: "Uncle Kieran, you have some too."

He then broke a biscuit in half and also gave half to Kieran.

Kieran hesitated for a moment but didn't refuse. He hadn't eaten for two days either, and was indeed very hungry, considering there would be battles later on, he decided to eat.

Herag lay in the tent, clearly watching the scene outside.

He wasn't sleeping, but rather meditating while lying down. Now, without the aid of Meteor Grass, he had to work harder on the Meditation Method.

The next morning, the rain stopped, but the fog became thicker.

Kieran was resting against a tree with his eyes closed, while Josh leaned on him asleep, covered with Kieran's cloak.

Herag made no attempt to conceal the noise of waking up, Kieran slowly opened his eyes, first confirming Josh's condition, and feeling relieved once he ensured there was nothing wrong.

With a wave of Herag's hand, the tent, rain cover, and other items on the ground were collected into the Space Ring.

He turned to the pair under the tree and said, "I'm getting ready to set off."

"Alright!" Kieran and Josh stood up obediently, following behind Herag.

Herag took out a map to check the direction before setting off.

"Tell me about your situation," Herag casually said while walking ahead; he had to find out what trouble these two encountered and what the situation was to be prepared.

"I am the second son of Count Remi of Tasoni Territory. A few days ago, Uncle Kieran and I went to the countryside to check on the crops. Everything was going smoothly, but on the way back, we were ambushed. Those people were obviously prepared and even had crossbows! Uncle Kieran protected me and we fought our way out, but all the other guards were killed."

Josh's tone was a bit sorrowful, seemingly angry about the guards' deaths.

"Do you know who did it?" Herag asked offhandedly.

Josh took a deep breath, "Who else could it be, it must be Luqi, my elder brother. He's afraid I'll fight for his inheritance, and there's been no shortage of conflict between us over the years. Now with father getting weaker by the day, he's grown even more anxious."

"Oh." Herag nodded expressionlessly, there's nothing new under the sun, just the same old power struggle drama.

"Are there pursuers behind? This isn't considered the outskirts of the forest," Herag continued to ask.

They'd still need at least a day's journey from this location to leave the forest.

Kieran replied, "There are people from the Thief Guild, an assassin at Great Knight Level, I'm not confident I can protect young master Josh under his hands, so we had to flee."

"Understood, I've already spotted him, he's watching us," Herag glanced southeast and said.

"What?" Kieran immediately became tense.

An assassination by a Great Knight Level assassin, even he couldn't say he could defend it one hundred percent, let alone young master Josh, who didn't have Knight Level strength.

"What are you afraid of, let's go, we have a journey to make," Herag said nonchalantly, looking at the two standing nervously and looking around, slightly exasperated.

"Oh, okay." Kieran realized where they were, there was a powerful Wizard here, so he didn't need to worry too much.

The moment he saw Herag, he sensed that familiar yet mysterious aura; Great Knights don't possess Magic Power, but they have some sensing ability towards it.

The aura on Herag was very familiar to him, as he had encountered powerful wizards with the same aura before.

In the faraway forest, a bald man shivered at Herag's gaze.

"How did he spot me!" Robert was baffled, he was a Great Knight Level assassin, the ace of the Thief Guild.

He always had confidence in his concealment skills, even opponents of the same level as a Great Knight would find it hard to see through his invisibility.

But now, from over two hundred meters away, that young man had instantly seen his position.

"How is this possible!" Robert felt as though he'd seen a ghost.

Most importantly, he didn't dare to make a move.

From Herag's casual glance, he felt a fear emanating from the depths of his soul.

His years of experience on the edge of life and death told him that if he rashly approached that man, he would certainly die.

As an exceptional thief, Robert had always trusted his intuition.

"Can't do this job now, a pity for all those Gold Coins," Robert sighed, looking pained.

Thinking about all those Gold Coins slipping away pained his heart. But pain or not, Robert made up his mind to abandon the mission, at least until that young man parted from the master-servant duo Josh, then he would make a move.

All these years, he survived by relying on his keen intuition and enough caution, with a very sharp sense of death.

"Given up?" From Shenlan's detection, it seemed the person behind them had left and wasn't planning on continuing to pursue them.

The more Robert thought about it, the more uneasy he became. The fear in his heart grew stronger the longer he tailed Herag, prompting him to decisively retreat, even abandoning continued tracking to observe the situation.

"That's some trouble off my back." Herag was indifferent, continuing onward.

He currently had the physical abilities comparable to a Great Knight Level expert, not to mention various Magic aids.

These ordinary Knight Level or Great Knight Level individuals were hard-pressed to pose any threat to him.

Herag didn't mention that the assassin had already left, so Kieran kept his Spiritual Power highly focused all the way, constantly paying attention to the surroundings.

Herag couldn't be bothered to remind him, more people on lookout is a good thing after all.

The trio traveled until dusk, where they could see the plains at the base of the mountains from a distance.

"Mr. Herag, let's rest in the forest tonight, the plains area is too open," Kieran suggested.

Herag nodded in agreement with his suggestion, Kieran's meaning was clear; if there's an ambush, descending would make them targets with no room for maneuver.

In the forest, the terrain is complex, and even if there are enemies lying in wait, there's room to maneuver.

A Great Knight Level expert, in the forest at night, could easily handle dozens of people alone, not to mention with Herag present.

Chapter 66: Palace

The peaceful night quickly passed without the imagined night attack.

After the three of them exited the forest, they walked for two hours before finally reaching a small town.

As soon as Josh arrived here, he instantly exuded the air of a superior. He found the head of the town and arranged a carriage for the three of them. There were originally a dozen sturdy militiamen, but their combat capabilities were worthless to them and were thus declined.

"We're about to reach Markfel City soon. It's the largest city in the Tasoni Territory and also where the main members of the Tasoni Family reside," Josh lifted the curtain, revealing the scenery outside, and introduced the local customs to Herag.

Herag wasn't interested in these, and blandly said, "I'm only concerned if my Ten Thousand Gold Coins will be fulfilled, Master Josh?"

"You're joking, Mr. Herag. There won't be any shortfall in your payment; this amount is trivial for me and can be easily produced." Josh felt uneasy when he heard the address 'Master Josh'.

"Good, it better be so." Herag closed his eyes and continued to rest.

Markfel City was indeed very large; from a distance, you could already see the tall city walls. The city gate was also very magnificent, with a giant domed gate bustling with people and carriages.

The guards at the city gate were clad in full armor, with the Tasoni Family's emblem, a totem of an eagle, printed on their armor.

The guards looked at the carriage from afar, with some uncertainty in their gaze.

When the carriage gradually approached, the guards recognized Josh and hurried to call people over, "It's Master Josh! Master Josh has returned!"

...

Upon learning the news of Josh's return, dozens of guards were immediately deployed to escort Josh and the others back to the Tasoni Family's castle.

The Tasoni Family's castle was located at the northernmost part of the city, with an expanse of buildings that, from a distance, made one think it was the King's palace complex.

The three had already switched to a more refined and robust carriage, surrounded by layers of guarded soldiers.

"These are all my personally trained loyalists." Josh said with some pride, introducing his guards to Herag.

The group stopped in front of the castle, where someone was already waiting at the castle gate.

A man, appearing to be around thirty, with a small mustache, hurried over anxiously, looking concernedly at Josh as he got off the carriage, "Oh! Josh! Thank the gods! You're back safe."

Josh chuckled dismissively, "Luqi, why do I feel you're disappointed that I returned safely?"

Luqi was a burly man but now appeared very gentle, smiling, "My dear brother, what nonsense are you talking about?"

"After learning about your ambush and disappearance, I couldn't eat or drink for a while and mobilized various powers to search for your whereabouts. Fortunately, you returned safely, so father can also be at ease."

Josh seemed to dislike his demeanor, frowning as he asked, "How is father?"

Luqi hesitated, sighing, "Not great, you should go see him."

Josh nodded and turned to Kieran, "Uncle Kieran, please take Mr. Herag to rest and give him the Ten Thousand Gold Coins reward. Mr. Herag, since I just got back, I need to see my father first, I truly apologize."

He slightly bowed apologetically to Herag.

Herag nodded, "It's fine."

Kieran walked in front, bowing and gesturing, "This way, Mr. Herag."

"Who is this?" Luqi curiously looked at Herag, his eyes flickering with a peculiar light.

Kieran said expressionlessly, "Master Luqi, this is Master Josh's esteemed guest, you needn't know."

"I needn't know? I am the eldest son of the Tasoni Family, Uncle Kieran! Since he's Josh's esteemed guest, he's my esteemed guest too. Hello, Mr. Herag. I'm Luqi Banks. If you hear any bad rumors about me, please don't take them to heart and refrain from knowing me through others' words."

Ignoring Kieran, Luqi stepped in front of Herag, introducing himself respectfully and courteously.

"Hello, Herag Merlin." Herag nodded, casually responding.

"Mr. Herag, if you don't mind, how about I show you around this castle?" Luqi asked expectantly.

Herag smiled, "I won't be staying here long, and I have no interest in your Tasoni Family's matters, so you needn't bother."

Luqi burst into hearty laughter, cheerfully saying, "Mr. Herag is quite interesting. It's all the more reason for me to entertain you well as the host."

Kieran blocked him, "Master Luqi, let me handle it."

Luqi smiled insincerely, "Since Uncle Kieran insists, I won't say more."

He apologetically turned to Herag, "I hope Mr. Herag won't find it awkward. My brother has been possessive since childhood, always worried I'll take his things, hahaha."

Kieran ignored the sarcasm in his words, turning respectfully to Herag, "Please follow me, Mr. Herag."

As Herag passed by Luqi, he offered Herag a helpless smile.

"Could Mr. Herag stay overnight, allowing us, the Banks Family, to express our gratitude?" Kieran inquired.

"Of course." Herag wasn't in a hurry to travel. His current purpose was to understand the local customs while traveling.

Larry had tasked him to find Moonstone Grass in the Doris Kingdom; there was no time limit on this task, allowing him to return whenever he wanted.

Kieran led Herag to a grand palace, ornately decorated inside. Upon entering, a gigantic painting, standing 40 to 50 meters tall, of a pot-bellied middle-aged man, caught their eye.

"This is Count Hu En, the biological father of Masters Josh and Luqi," Kieran introduced.

Herag asked with interest, "The two brothers, are they born from different mothers?"

"Yes," Kieran replied concisely.

Herag nodded without further comment. After glancing at the painting, he continued following Kieran forward.

The decorations inside could only be described as luxurious, and Herag noticed many of the wall carvings were made of gold and gems. Picking off a random gem could be worth thousands of gold coins.

"This Count's family is indeed too wealthy; no wonder the two brothers fight tooth and nail."

The palace itself showcased the tremendous wealth of the Banks Family, far beyond ordinary imagination.

"Mr. Herag can stay here tonight, all the guards and servants are at your service; no one will disturb you," Kieran led Herag to a giant door.

Kieran exerted himself, and the door slowly opened, revealing a vast space behind it.

Chapter 67: The Price

Herag estimated that the room behind the door was about five or six hundred square meters. Inside, there was a large bed that could easily accommodate six or seven people.

Meanwhile, heavy footsteps could be heard outside the door as two guards struggled to carry in a golden treasure chest.

The guards brought the chest into the room and placed it in front of Herag and Kieran.

"You may leave," Kieran instructed.

The two guards bowed their heads and quickly exited, never once lifting their eyes to look at Herag.

"This is the ten thousand gold coins promised by Master Josh. Mr. Herag, please check it." Kieran opened the golden chest, revealing a full box of shimmering gold coins.

Herag smiled and said, "Not bad."

He beckoned with his hand and took the entire box.

This box exceeded ten thousand gold coins, and just the box itself was quite valuable.

"Mr. Herag, you may rest here for a moment. If you'd like to go for a stroll, you can call upon the servant by the door. There will be a grand banquet tonight," Kieran continued.

Herag, not being polite, turned and lay down on the soft, large bed. "Alright."

Kieran respectfully retreated, gently closing the door and carefully instructing the two maids at the door.

"The Violet Kingdom truly deserves its title as the largest kingdom in the south. Even a Count here is so wealthy," Herag remarked.

On the map, Tasoni Territory seemed small, and Herag never expected the lord here to be so wealthy.

Herag stayed in the room without wandering around, planning his subsequent route before starting to meditate.

Until nightfall, a maid came and knocked on the door.

"Mr. Herag, it's time to attend the banquet." The two maids at the door were very young and dressed revealingly, causing Herag to look twice at the expanse of white skin.

"Hmm, lead the way," Herag said softly, casually touching a few areas. The two maids just lowered their heads and smiled without any resistance.

After Herag stopped, the two maids led the way, guiding Herag through palace after palace.

"Sometimes, having such a big house isn't a good thing. It takes half an hour just to reach the dining hall," Herag complained somewhat speechlessly.

Though the castle was large, there weren't many people. On his way, Herag mainly saw guards and servants.

The banquet was held in the largest palace, and there weren't many attendees.

Herag roughly counted, finding only over sixty people excluding servants and guards, which was quite few for an aristocratic banquet.

Herag finally saw the person from the giant painting, Count Hu En Banks, who was seated at the head of the long table, with his sons Josh and Luqi on either side, followed by other children and relatives.

"Mr. Herag!" Josh exclaimed excitedly upon seeing Herag. He had changed into an extravagant suit for the banquet, looking noticeably bulkier.

Count Hu En turned to look at Herag after hearing this, rising and smiling, "Thank you, Mr. Herag, for saving my son. The Banks Family will forever remember your kindness."

Herag was seated below the main seat, and the banquet was quiet as everyone ate in silence.

After a simple meal, the usual dance session followed, but Herag wasn't particularly interested.

Count Hu En and his sons came over with drinks again to express their gratitude: "Thank you, Mr. Herag!"

Herag clinked glasses with them, his nose twitching slightly, as if sensing something.

After finishing his drink, he asked, "Is Count Hu En injured?"

Josh said excitedly, "Two months ago, my father was assassinated. Though the assassin failed, my father was left with serious injuries that haven't healed. Mr. Herag, do you have a way?"

"I'm not sure if there's a way, but I do smell something familiar," Herag sniffed again, detecting the scent of dark energy particles.

Josh, growing more excited, promptly said to Count Hu En, "Father, why not let Mr. Herag take a look? The crowd here is too large and nosy; let's discuss this elsewhere."

Count Hu En considered for a moment and nodded in agreement, and they moved to a quieter room next door.

Luqi followed, seemingly also worried about his father's injuries.

Great Knight Kieran stood guard at the door, apparently determined not to let anyone else in.

Herag pulled up a chair and sat down, slowly savoring the red wine in his glass. He had heard of this wine before; it was far beyond his means to afford.

"Mr. Herag, can you save my father?" Josh asked eagerly.

Herag set down his glass. "I can't say if I can save him until I see what the injury is like."

"Father..." Josh looked at his father with an inquiring glance.

Count Hu En hesitated, laboriously removing his outer clothing. After a great effort, he removed two layers to reveal the injury on his waist.

There was a black wound there. Although medicine had been applied to the wound's surface, it still exuded a faint rotten smell.

"I didn't expect the Count's injury to be this severe." Herag moved closer to observe, confirming that it was caused by demonized items. The wound was entangled with dark energy particles, preventing it from healing, rendering ordinary medicine ineffective.

Count Hu En smiled bitterly: "I wasn't long for this world anyway. A few days ago, Josh had disappeared. Now that Josh has returned safely, I can leave in peace."

"Father..." Josh clutched Hu En's clothing tightly.

Herag curiously said, "Leave? It's just a minor injury."

"A minor injury? Mr. Herag, do you really have a solution?" The entire Hu En family looked at him in astonishment.

They had sought countless renowned doctors, none of whom could do anything for Count Hu En's injuries.

They even considered seeking legendary mystics but lacked the means to contact them. How could an ordinary mystic be specially called to treat a minor count?

"I can treat it. What are you willing to pay? I charge a lot for my services." The Banks family was wealthy, and Herag wouldn't miss this chance to make a fortune. He had no qualms about taking money from such aristocrats.

Count Hu En pondered for a while. It wasn't that he was stingy; he was contemplating what would be most suitable to offer.

He already knew Herag was a legendary Mystic, so he needed to offer something that would satisfy him. But what could possibly satisfy a wizard?

"Simple money? Wizards don't seem to lack money, and carrying such a large amount is inconvenient."

"Beauties? That's worthless."

...

Count Hu En thought for a while, continuously shaking his head, finally saying, "Mr. Herag, if you can heal me, the Banks family treasury will be open to you, and you may choose any three treasures you like."

Chapter 68: Eyeballs

"Treasure vault?" Herag asked with some interest, "Does your treasure vault have any good items?"

"Of course." Baron Hu En was quite proud, having great confidence in his own treasure vault.

Herag mused, "Then, I hope your treasure vault can satisfy me."

His words were rather blunt. Though wizards couldn't slaughter regular folk en masse, killing a few was still overlooked.

Count Hu En nodded nervously, but then, thinking of the numerous treasures in the vault, gained some confidence. "It should satisfy him," he thought.

Herag extended his hand, placing it above Count Hu En's wound.

The dark energy particles in the wound began to disperse, and Herag slowly absorbed these energy particles.

Hu En felt an odd sensation; the wound seemed a little better, less itchy and painful.

Since Herag was paid for his services, he didn't settle for half measures, meticulously absorbing all the dark energy particles from the wound, leaving none behind.

Josh and the others stood quietly to the side, observing the process of Herag treating Count Hu En's injuries.

Though they didn't understand what was being done, they could see the blackness on the wound gradually reducing.

They had always assumed the black stuff to be toxins and had never figured out what it was, unable to eradicate it.

Half an hour later, Herag withdrew his hand: "The count's wound is now fine; proceed with normal treatment for external injuries."

Hu En's wound showed no trace of blackness, revealing red flesh with some blood seeping out.

The castle's doctor quickly arrived to reapply medication and bandage Count Hu En's wound.

Even though Herag had some White Sage Healing Potion, it was too wasteful to use on a noble like this.

After the doctor finished treating the wound, Count Hu En heaved a sigh of relief, visibly looking better and with a bit more color in his face.

Herag held a certain admiration for Count Hu En, considering he was just an ordinary person.

The dark energy particles were no boon to ordinary people; having such stuff in the wound was indeed torturous.

Herag had just caught a whiff of anesthesia from the wound, likely used for pain relief.

Hu En, leaning back in his chair, exhaled comfortably, and after a sigh, said, "Thanks to Mr. Herag, I feel much better. Now it's time for me to fulfill my promise."

He stood up, with Great Knight Kieran immediately stepping forward to support him.

"Mr. Herag, this way, please." Hu En led the way.

Josh and Luqi sensibly did not follow, as the treasure vault seemed not an area they could casually enter.

Hu En personally led Herag all the way down to the third basement level of the castle.

In front of a massive, heavy iron door, stood two Knight Level guards, both clad in heavy full-body armor.

Hu En pulled out a wooden box from his pocket, opening it to reveal a bronze key inside.

He took the key to the iron door, inserted it, and gently twisted. Sounds of countless mechanical gears turning came from behind the door.

Click!

With a light sound, the door slowly opened on its own, revealing the passageway beyond.

"You stand guard here, let no one inside," Hu En instructed the two Knight Level guards.

He turned to Herag, saying: "Mr. Herag, please."

Beyond the door stretched a long passageway, lit by oil lamps. Herag followed behind Hu En for a distance, coming to another door.

This door was smaller, yet made of some metal too, appearing very sturdy.

Hu En reached into his shirt, and only then did Herag notice the small key hanging from his neck.

Hu En used this key to open the smaller door.

As soon as the door opened, Herag was greeted by a sight of golden splendor.

Entering the treasure vault, Herag was stupefied.

The enormous storeroom was filled with gold, jewelry, and numerous antique vases, paintings, and the like. Herag even spotted a colossal coral reef.

At this moment, Hu En was spirited, introducing the treasures to Herag enthusiastically: "These are the treasures accumulated by the Banks Family over the years. There are many items even I don't know when they came into the vault. Mr. Herag, as a great Mystic, ordinary riches might not catch your eye; feel free to look around and see if there's anything you need."

Herag nodded and walked ahead; the vault was as large as a football field, cluttered with various treasures, making him dizzy with delight, not knowing where to start.

"This armor set is?" Herag spotted a suit of full-armor in the corner. The material of the armor was special, and he couldn't determine what it was made of.

More importantly, the armor seemed to have some magic resistance effects.

He infused a little magic power into it and was met with resistance. This reminded Herag of Dino's ship, which was built from wood from the Forbidden Magic Forest, also possessing magic resistance, though this armor's effect was somewhat weaker.

"This is the armor of Legendary Knight Goodman's Graf, reputed to have many mysterious effects. Great Knight Goodman was a legendary figure over three hundred years ago - his armor is certainly extraordinary. If Mr. Herag is interested, he may take it," Hu En introduced as he noticed Herag's gaze on the armor.

Herag touched the armor and shook his head: "I'll look around some more."

This armor didn't hold much significance for him, as he wouldn't typically wear such heavy armor. If it was for defense techniques, a Dark Energy Shield would be more practical for him.

As Herag continued forward, he suddenly stopped after a distance, spotting a pair of eyes.

It was a pair of eyes submerged in a glass jar, appearing like a specimen.

The eyes were bright red, and they seemed to be staring at Herag, giving him a slight discomfort.

"What is this..." Herag recognized the shape of the eyes and felt he had seen related information in a book.

"Shenlan, what is this?" he directly asked Shenlan.

"Based on the search, the probability that these are eyes of the Kuluta Race is 98.34%. The Kuluta Race was a species residing in the remote mountainous regions of the Kala Continent, whose eyes turned crimson when emotionally agitated. This color was regarded as one of the world's seven great beauties. Many nobles offered high prices for such red eyes, leading to the massacre of the Kuluta Race, currently extinct," Shenlan replied with detailed information, and Herag, seeing this information, remembered that these eyes were also rare magic potion materials. Although he didn't need them at the moment, they could be useful in the future.

Given they were extinct, it wouldn't hurt to hold onto them.

Chapter 69: Resentful Doll

"This thing is not bad, I'll keep it for now and decide later if I want it." Herag pointed at the crimson eye.

Hu En nodded with a smile and said, "Mr. Herag has a keen eye, immediately spotting this now-extinct Kuluta Race eye."

Seeing Herag choose this made him very happy because this item wasn't very valuable.

Only some nobles who collected human body parts would buy such things, ordinary people couldn't appreciate nor liked them.

Kuluta Race eyes were only popular among nobles two hundred years ago. At that time, nobles were infatuated with this crimson color, which made the price of Kuluta eyes extremely high; only the great nobles had the means to purchase and admire them.

But now this thing is no longer in vogue, and naturally, the price has gone down too.

As for the matter of a race disappearing because of this, no one cared, nor would anyone speak up for them.

"Wizards' hobbies are indeed quite special." Hu En found this matching his imagination of wizards.

Herag continued to walk forward, noting down some things he liked along the way, planning to compare after looking at everything to decide which three items he wanted.

"This necklace is quite beautiful."

As Herag wandered, he saw a necklace. A huge blue gemstone was hanging from it, with two flowers sculpted in gold on top, inlaid with more than a dozen smaller gems.

When Hu En saw this necklace, he hesitated for a moment but then smiled and said, "This is the famous Queen Milani's necklace, known as the Heart of the Ocean, a necklace countless women dream of."

Queen Milani was very famous; even Herag had read related histories.

Queen Milani was the queen of an ancient kingdom a thousand years ago, extremely beautiful, renowned as the greatest beauty of the North. To this day, her portraits are sold at exorbitant prices, with many great nobles spending lavishly at auctions to acquire them.

"I didn't expect her necklace to be here with you. Is it real?" Herag questioned.

Startled by Herag's imposing manner, Hu En quickly said, "Yes, it's real, my father acquired it at a great cost when he was young."

"Alright, this is also good." Herag planned to give this as a gift to Lillian, after all, he had previously taken so many things from Lillian without payment, he should return some gifts.

Hu En felt a bit of pain, but he couldn't take back the words he had spoken. After all, the person in front of him was a wizard; it was already good fortune not being robbed of more by him, let alone daring to go back on his word.

The Violet Kingdom is under the protection of the Wizard Organization, and generally, wizards do not trouble these great nobles. But if Herag bullied him a little, Hu En would have no one to complain to.

Unless Herag completely looted his possessions, the higher-ups of the kingdom wouldn't bother reporting to the Wizard Organization for him.

Herag naturally noticed the flash of pain on Hu En's face, smiled, and continued exploring the treasure trove.

Most were just ordinary treasures; after wandering for a while, Herag discovered a peculiar item.

A pink doll lay quietly atop a pile of gold, made of ordinary cloth material.

In the treasure trove filled with treasures, such a cloth doll stood out starkly, incongruous with everything around it.

Herag's expression became somewhat solemn: "Shenlan, analyze this doll."

"Comparing with the database..."

"After comparison, the doll is most likely a Resentful Doll, a top casting material for many high-level curse magic."

Shenlan quickly provided the result.

Herag frowned: "I didn't expect it to be this thing; no wonder there are so many negative energy particles."

From afar, he could sense the negative energy particles entwining around the Resentful Doll, and the intense malice.

This item is a top casting material for high-level curse magic. What's termed high-level curse magic refers to Level 1 spells, spells used by official wizards.

The Resentful Doll is exceptionally rare and almost impossible to artificially create, only forming in certain special places.

Such places generally harbor many casting materials, magic potion materials, and are invaluable to every wizard.

However, such places generally also present certain dangers, depending on the specific circumstances.

"Where did you get this thing?" Herag asked as he held the Resentful Doll.

This item isn't something ordinary people could come into contact with; Herag hadn't expected it to appear in a regular noble's treasure trove.

"This..." Hu En stuttered as he looked at the Resentful Doll.

"I'm asking you, where did you get it?" Herag impatiently asked again.

Hu En stammered, "This doll is an ominous object, Mr. Herag best not take it."

"You keep an ominous object in a treasure trove? I know better than you what this is. Tell me where it came from?" Herag continued to inquire.

Wiping the sweat from his forehead, Hu En said, "This doll was brought by a thief, said to have mysterious powers, so I bought it and kept it in the treasure trove, nearly forgetting about it."

"A thief? What is his name? Where is he?" Herag sensed that Hu En wasn't telling everything, so he continued to ask.

"His name is Robert, a Grand Knight-Level Thief. I don't know exactly where he is now; you can ask at the Adventurers' Association, he's quite famous." Fearful that the situation wasn't simple, Hu En quickly spilled everything he knew like beans from a bamboo tube.

"A Grand Knight-Level Thief?" Herag suddenly thought of the thief who'd been following him the other day, perhaps it was the same person. There couldn't be two Grand Knight-Level Thieves appearing so shortly.

"Understood." Herag nodded, "I'll take this doll, the Heart of the Ocean Necklace, and the crimson eye."

After speaking, he put away the Resentful Doll, then started to head back, picking up the Heart of the Ocean Necklace and the crimson eye.

Hu En followed behind with a forced smile, not daring to express any opinion. Herag was merely informing him, not negotiating with him.

After selecting the three items, Herag left the treasure trove, with Hu En struggling behind him to push the door shut.

Even that modest-looking door seemed heavier than it appeared, with Hu En's face turning red as he barely managed to close it.

As Hu En closed the small door, he wiped his sweat and gasped for breath, quickening his steps to catch up with Herag before he got too far away.

The outermost layer's main door didn't require his personal effort; two Knight Level guards stood by to close it.

Seeing Hu En anxiously closing doors, Herag found it somewhat amusing, as Hu En seemed very afraid that he would loot his treasure trove.

Herag, though tempted, still maintained reason.

The Violet Kingdom falls under the jurisdiction of the Aluf Swamp, which is also a powerful Wizard Organization.

The strength of these nobles shouldn't be underestimated; if he truly went overboard, they could certainly contact the Aluf Swamp, and he'd be in trouble, as it was someone else's territory; causing trouble wasn't sensible.

Chapter 70: News

"Mr. Herag, will you continue to the late-night banquet or...?" Hu En caught up and asked with his head lowered.

Herag stretched lazily, "I'm going back to rest; I won't be attending the banquet any longer."

"Alright, then I wish Mr. Herag a good rest," Hu En nodded and smiled.

When Herag returned to his lodging in the palace, he found the two maids still waiting at the door.

"Does the master need a bath?" the maid asked with her head lowered.

"A bath?" Herag realized it had been days since he'd last bathed, and nodded, "Yes, you can go prepare it."

"Yes," a maid responded softly and then withdrew to make the preparations.

The room Herag stayed in had a large bathtub, which should be quite comfortable for soaking.

Shortly after the maid left, she returned to report at the door, "Sir, the water is being prepared; it will be ready shortly."

"Hmm," Herag nodded and lay down on the bed.

In this world, taking a bath was quite troublesome. It required boiling water on-site and carrying buckets of it to the bathtub; there were no water pipes or anything like that.

After more than half an hour, four strong guards came with wooden buckets. Steam was rising from the hot water inside, indicating it had just come off the boil.

After pouring the hot water into the bathtub, the guards returned with two buckets of cold water. After pouring one bucket, one of them said, "Sir, please check if the temperature is suitable. If it's too hot, we'll add more cold water."

Herag walked to the bathtub, dipped his hand in to check the water temperature, and remarked, "It's about right. You can leave now."

The guards quickly retreated, but the two maids remained.

Herag turned back, "What are you still standing there for?"

The maids lowered their heads, "We're here to serve you during the bath, sir."

Herag laughed, "I know. What I meant was, why are you still standing? Take off your clothes."

The two maids exchanged a glance, a slight blush on their faces, and then slowly began to undress.

Herag knew they misunderstood him, but he didn't stop them.

...

The next morning, Herag pushed aside the fair arms draped over him and got up to dress.

"It's fine once in a while, but I can't live like a decadent noble," Herag thought after getting up, then meditated for a while to calm his mind and dispel many stray thoughts.

After leaving the room, he immediately saw Hu En and his three sons outside the palace.

"Mr. Herag is awake. Did you rest well last night?" Hu En asked with a smile.

"Not bad," Herag nodded.

Hu En smiled, "That's good to hear. Oh, and Mr. Herag, I'm feeling much better now. The wound has healed a lot; it was difficult before."

"Hmm, it's just a superficial wound now. It won't take long to heal completely," Herag remarked.

"Thank you, Mr. Herag, for saving my father. Josh is very grateful!" Josh expressed gratefully.

Herag glanced at the sky and said, "I need to go out; I'll be leaving in a couple of days, so I won't bother you for long."

Hu En quickly replied, "Mr. Herag, it's no bother at all; we're more than happy to have you here. If possible, please stay longer, and we'll provide whatever you need. By the way, where is Mr. Herag going? Maybe I can help."

He promptly offered assistance, as it was rare for something in Markfield City to be beyond his reach.

"Hmm... alright, I was planning to visit the Adventurers' Association," Herag thought, realizing Hu En might be able to help.

"The Adventurers' Association? What is Mr. Herag planning to do there?" Hu En felt a vague sense of foreboding.

"I'm planning to find that thief named Robert and ask him some questions," Herag said casually.

Hu En laughed, "Such a small matter shouldn't trouble Mr. Herag. Don't worry; I'm well acquainted with the people at the Adventurers' Association. I'll just have to talk to them. But be prepared; Robert is quite elusive and may not be in Markfield City."

"No problem, I just need to know where he is," Herag decided to find this Grand Knight-Level Thief to ask some questions.

Hu En nodded with a playful smile, "I'll go inquire for Mr. Herag right away."

"Then I'll wait for your news," Herag turned back into the room, preparing to continue his meditation practice.

The reason he wanted to find Robert was simple: he wanted to ask about the origin of the Resentful Doll. He needed to know where it came from to make future plans.

If Herag guessed correctly, the source of the Resentful Doll wouldn't just have one type of casting material; there must be other valuable things there.

However, such a place might also harbor dangers that needed to be assessed carefully after gathering more information.

Count Hu En was very efficient. Within just an hour, he personally came to report back.

"Not in Markfield City?" Herag asked, casually popping a grape into his mouth.

Hu En wiped sweat from his forehead, "Yes, I just consulted the chairman of Markfield City's Adventurers' Association. Robert went out a couple of days ago."

"Where did he go?" Herag inquired.

"The information suggests he's on a mission in Storm City, tasked with protecting a noble," Hu En explained.

"Storm City?" Herag recalled the map and realized it was south of Markfield City, outside the jurisdiction of the Tasoni Territory.

"It's under Duke Theodore's domain. If Mr. Herag plans to go, I can write you a letter of introduction," Hu En offered.

Herag gave him a sidelong glance and smiled, "Sure, write me the introduction letter. I'll set off right away."

"Now? So urgently?" Count Hu En was quite surprised.

"I don't have much to do here; if I delay, I might lose track of Robert," Herag decisively began packing his belongings.

Seeing Herag's determination to leave, Hu En remarked, "I'll arrange it for Mr. Herag immediately."

Hu En quickly got Herag a carriage and a robust coachman.

He had also arranged for the two maids who served Herag the previous night.

"No need for the maids; I'm not going out for leisure," Herag refused, having no time to take care of them, nor could he cast them aside once he was tired of them.

For nobles, these maids were just property. Staying in the castle ensured a secure life; outside, once leaving Herag, they lacked even basic survival skills.