

Sixth 71

Chapter 71: The Village

Count Hu En originally planned to arrange a bunch of guards, but Herag thought about it and refused.

The symbolic significance of these guards was greater than their actual function. If he could handle it himself, he didn't need them, and if he couldn't, these guards would be of no use either.

Moreover, within the territory of the Banks Family, few bandits dared to attack their carriages, making the presence of guards somewhat redundant.

Herag finally left only the driver, someone to navigate the roads, allowing him to have some peace of mind.

"Mr. Herag..." Josh hesitated to speak.

Herag was about to board the carriage, turned around and smiled: "Your father can live for a long time yet, there should be not much trouble now."

If the dark energy particles in Count Hu En weren't removed, he indeed wouldn't have long to live, and these two brothers would surely wage a great battle for power and profit.

Now, Count Hu En can live for at least another few decades, so there's no need for the brothers to fight to the death; they can comfortably be noble scions.

Josh seriously nodded: "Take care, Mr. Herag."

Herag's carriage was evidently prepared meticulously by Hu En, inside was a spacious bed covered in soft silk, allowing for comfortable rest during the journey.

Behind the bed, there was a cabinet on the wall, with bottles of red wine inside.

Food and other supplies were stacked in the latter half of the carriage, plenty for Herag and the driver to enjoy.

The driver's name was Sid, nineteen years old, he appeared to be a clever young lad.

The carriage's exterior was luxuriously adorned, especially the emblem of the Banks Family was quite prominent, prompting pedestrians on the street to quickly dodge aside, afraid to approach.

Herag lay inside the carriage, silently meditating.

The seventh star in his mind was slowly forming; Herag completed his meditation practice leisurely every day without urgency.

Until finding a method to effectively speed up meditation, such things cannot be rushed.

Two hours later, Herag slowly opened his eyes.

He stroked his chin thoughtfully: "It is estimated that it will take another three months to complete the meditation of this star, and based on this calculation, it will take more than a year to meet the promotion requirements for a Third Class Wizard Apprentice. This body is fifteen years old, I need to advance to an Official Wizard before eighteen..."

Most Official Wizards are promoted before eighteen; if it exceeds eighteen, the probability of promotion to an Official Wizard is quite small.

Herag temporarily didn't understand the principle; all he could do was to improve his strength as soon as possible and let his spiritual power meet the standard early.

"Shenlan, search for methods to accelerate meditation or enhance spiritual power."

"Searching..."

"165 methods found."

Herag looked at the long list and continued to give instructions: "Filter for methods with no side effects, suitable for me, and achievable at this stage."

"1. Formulate magic potions to assist meditation, accelerating meditation speed."

"2. Formulate magic potions to increase spiritual power, more quickly meeting promotion requirements."

Shenlan provided two methods that seemed feasible at this stage, Herag continued to ask: "Is there a formula for a magic potion to accelerate meditation?"

"The formula requires research and the main body needs to experiment and verify."

"Then simulate the formula for a potion to speed up meditation, how long will it take?"

"Task has been archived, expected to take six hours, estimated to consume 19% magic power."

Herag was a bit surprised: "It actually takes so long, he didn't expect Shenlan to take six hours to complete this task."

"This task involves multiple data calculations and simulations, so it will take longer," Shenlan explained.

Herag planned to let Shenlan complete this task first before simulating the formula for a potion to increase spiritual power, but he didn't have much hope.

Existing potion formulas can also increase spiritual power, but their price wasn't something Herag could consider now.

Magic potions that can directly increase spiritual power are very expensive, Herag didn't think Shenlan could create a cheap version.

Three hours later, the speed of the carriage began to slow down.

They had already left the city, traveling through desolate countryside for a long time.

Sid sitting in the carriage head said, "My lord, I remember there's a village ahead, we can rest there tonight."

"Hmm," Herag lightly responded.

Staying overnight in populated places never goes wrong, in deserted areas anything might happen.

The carriage slowly came to a stop, Sid lifted the curtain, bowed his head and said, "My lord, we're here."

Herag got off the carriage, ahead was a dilapidated village, houses all made of piled-up earth, resembling caves inhabited by primitive people.

Most people in the village hid in their houses, peeking through doors or windows quietly observing Herag and Sid.

At the village's entrance stood an elder with grayed hair, who, upon seeing Herag disembark, trembled and knelt: "Spare us, my lord, we will pay the taxes we owe as soon as possible; we truly can't gather any money now, please grant us some more time."

Herag glanced at him and said: "I am not here to collect taxes; I am merely passing through and plan to stay here for the night. Please excuse the disturbance."

"Not here for that?" the elder laboriously lifted his head, straining to observe the carriage, "But on the carriage it clearly is..."

Sid explained at this point: "Herag is a guest of our Banks Family, merely passing through today."

Only then did the old man realize he might indeed have misunderstood, letting go of some weight in his heart.

"Bring out your best food, my lord is weary from travel, and prepare the best room for my lord to rest," Sid ordered unceremoniously.

The elder looked troubled but dared not defy, quietly saying, "I will prepare it right away."

Herag looked at the impoverished village and thought to himself, what could they possibly prepare?

He reached out to stop the elder: "No need, we have enough food ourselves. From what I've seen, you probably don't have any suitable places here either, I'll rest in the carriage tonight so we won't disturb you further."

"This..." Sid was surprised, considered such arrangements quite natural, unexpected that Herag intended to sleep on the carriage.

He had thought of selecting a pretty girl from these peasants to send to Herag in the evening.

Herag gave him a stern look: "We are only staying here for the night, don't cause an uproar among them, I prefer quietness."

Seeing Herag's slightly threatening gaze, Sid bowed and said: "Understood, my lord."

Herag did not think of himself as a savior, nor could he offer any help to these peasants. This was a societal issue that he alone could not change.

But he couldn't bring himself to absorb the blood of these starving, skin-and-bones peasants when he had food to satisfy himself.

Chapter 72: Simulation

Herag didn't even enter the village; he started settling down at a flat spot near the village entrance.

He took a pot and stove from the carriage, sending Sid to find some firewood nearby, then skillfully lit a fire and started cooking.

In front of Sid, Herag snapped his fingers and a flame sprang to life, making Sid widen his eyes in awe and regard Herag with even more reverence.

Count Hu En had generously provided supplies, including cured meat, butter, cheese, and a variety of vegetables.

Herag made a stew with these ingredients; with spices, it was bound to taste decent no matter what.

"Here, serve yourself as much as you want to eat," Herag said, handing Sid a bowl from the carriage.

Sid was flattered and hastily replied, "Sir, I can just eat dry rations."

"If I tell you to eat, then you eat. Don't make me repeat myself," Herag said impatiently.

Sid nodded, "Thank you, sir!"

Carefully, he used a fork to spear a piece of meat and some vegetables from the pot, then squatted by the carriage to eat.

Herag devoured the entire pot of meat and vegetables. His body was growing ever stronger, and his appetite was increasing.

The aroma of the meal wafted into the village, many villagers smelled it but didn't dare come closer, fearing they might anger the prominent person by the carriage.

Herag had no intention of distributing food, as the supplies were for the rest of the journey, and a shortage would only cause problems later.

He had been in this World long enough to understand many issues stemmed from the era and society, and he didn't have the power to change things.

Several hours later, as Herag was lying reading, the sound of Shenlan's enhancement beeped up.

"Task completed, the formula for accelerating main Meditation speed potion has been calculated, ingredients are as follows: 100 ml of Pure Water, 30 ml of Mist Tree Man Juice, 10 grams of Dragon's Tooth Grass Powder, 3 drops of Poisonous Violet Juice, 9 grams of Dragon's Blood Grass Powder, 5 drops of Mandala Juice."

Herag looked at the formula, contemplating the characteristics of these materials' interactions.

He couldn't experiment at the moment and would have to wait until he had the chance to verify the effects later.

"Shenlan, infer a magic potion formula for increasing Spiritual Power."

"Task filed, expected time six hours and thirty minutes, estimated Magic Power consumption 21%."

After issuing the command, Herag continued to read, with an oil lamp burning inside the carriage, casting a dim light.

Only the sound of insects could be heard outside the carriage, with no human noise. The village lay deathly still, as if everyone knew an important person was at the entrance that night and dared not disturb him.

The next morning at dawn, Herag ended his meditation early, then kicked Sid—who was sleeping beside the carriage—awake, informing him to proceed.

Herag didn't want to linger in that place, feeling that just standing there put immense pressure on the villagers, making the atmosphere very oppressive.

There was a small stove fixed to the floor of the carriage; Herag lit it to brew a pot of coffee. The stove was cleverly designed, with a conduit leading outside the carriage to vent smoke.

Herag still opened the carriage window as a precaution.

After finishing these tasks, Herag waited for the coffee to brew while continuing to read the Spell Model Book of the Dark Energy Shield.

Soon after, the Shenlan inferred magic potion formula for increasing Spiritual Power was completed.

"Task completed, the formula for increasing Spiritual Power potion has been calculated; ingredients are as follows: 100 ml of Pure Water, 50 grams of Star Crystal, 5 grams of Black-edged Sunflower Powder, 4 drops of Hallucinogenic Herb Essential Oil..."

Herag frowned, "These materials are not simple; it seems Shenlan's inferences are still very costly."

He thought for a moment and decided to put the formula aside, as the recipes provided by Shenlan might not be correct, and they required experimental verification.

However, these materials were too expensive, and the experimental costs were high; he didn't have the money for experiments at the moment.

Six days later, the carriage arrived at Storm City's territory.

Along the way, Herag encountered two attempts to intercept him, both by destitute victims of famine trying to rob him because they couldn't find food.

The local Lords didn't care about their lives, so they had no choice but to resort to robbery on the roads.

Herag didn't make things difficult for them; he performed a simple magic, and the destitute victims fell to their knees in pleas.

More interestingly, the local Lords warmly welcomed Herag, clearly having gotten word that an important person was passing through.

Herag looked at the table full of food and drink, remembering the starving, skin-and-bone refugees, and shook his head helplessly.

After entering Storm City's territory, patrol soldiers could be visibly seen, armed to the teeth.

Herag was soon stopped for the first time but passed through smoothly.

The Banks Family crest on the carriage served as an excellent identity proof, not to mention that Herag had two letters of introduction written by Count Hu En.

One letter was for Duke Theodore of Storm City and the other for the president of the Adventurers' Association in Storm City.

Herag didn't plan to find Duke Theodore; the letter was just to reduce potential trouble at critical moments.

His main objective was to find the Adventurers' Association president and then find Robert to inquire about some matters.

After half a day of riding, Herag finally saw Storm City in the distance.

It was a city even grander than Markfield City, with taller and thicker walls.

Most importantly, the city had a sense of ruggedness and history, making one feel instantly like they could see the rich history in the walls.

"Where to first, sir?" Sid asked after passing the gate guard's inspection.

"I heard from Hu En that your family has a base here?" Herag inquired.

Before coming, Hu En mentioned that Herag could settle at the Banks Family base in Storm City, at least to have a place to stay initially.

Sid nodded, "Yes, the family business has assets here."

Herag said, "Then let's settle down first, and then head to the Adventurers' Association."

"Alright!" Sid eagerly drove the carriage forward; he had been in a good mood since arriving in Storm City.

The Banks Family had a diverse business in Storm City, including taverns, casinos, inns, an herb shop, a blacksmith shop, and more.

The carriage stopped at a place called Banks Inn, and soon an inn attendant came out, leading the horses to the backyard for proper feeding.

Herag's room was swiftly arranged; it was the largest and best room available.

"Do you know where the Adventurers' Association is?" Herag asked after securing the room key.

Sid hastily answered, "Yes, I've often come to Storm City to handle business for the master and young master, so I'm very familiar with it."

"Good, you lead the way," Herag nodded.

The horse of the carriage had already been swapped for a strong, tall stallion.

Chapter 73: Robert

The once luxurious and extravagant carriage of the Banks Family didn't stand out much on the streets of Storm City, as such carriages were a common sight, many even more ornately decorated.

The headquarters of the Adventurers' Association in Storm City had a five-story building, with the first floor serving as the quest hall, bustling with people dressed as adventurers coming and going.

"I wonder how Emil and the others are doing." Herag recalled that Emil had also become an adventurer, supporting Jimmy and the others by taking on various tasks.

Back when he settled in the Moonlight Forest, he had written a letter.

However, it was destined to be a long time before Emil could receive it, as the letter needed to cross vast oceans and wait for a ship to pass by Coleson Continent to be delivered.

It might encounter various accidents along the way, and the letter could possibly never arrive.

"Given the time, Emil's child should have been born by now, and I'm still his godfather." Herag felt somewhat sentimental as he remembered these matters.

"Malcolm..."

Herag thought of this person again, astonished that Malcolm, even in the Green Cottage, was a well-known Level 1 Wizard with formidable strength.

Baron Buck falling into the hands of such a person was unfortunate, resulting in the annihilation of the entire family, leaving only Emil as a survivor.

Conduct like Malcolm's on Kala Continent would surely be stopped, but on Coleson Continent, there's no one to manage it, leaving him to act lawlessly.

Herag, of course, wasn't foolish enough to stand up in protest against Malcolm's massacre of ordinary people, as without sufficient strength, he could only avoid Malcolm.

As soon as Herag entered the hall, he attracted many people's attention.

The hall had many adventurers, and Knight Level experts were a common sight.

Herag's naturally emanating powerful aura instinctively made these adventurers wary, adding a touch of apprehension towards him.

Sid proactively sought out the staff of the Adventurers' Association, and soon, he returned with a blonde-haired man.

"Sir, this is Milo Kaler, Vice President of the Adventurers' Association of Storm City," Sid introduced.

Milo nodded, extended his hand, and said, "Greetings, esteemed guest. I am the Vice President here. You can speak to me about any matters you have."

Herag took out Count Hu En's letter of introduction: "This is Count Hu En Banks' letter of introduction."

"Oh, it's addressed to the President, but the President is not present in Storm City at the moment. Since it's a letter of introduction, it's alright for me to look at it; I am temporarily handling all of the President's affairs." Milo took the letter, opened it, examined it carefully, and after verifying the signature, nodded.

"Mr. Herag, please head upstairs, as there are too many people and eyes here." Milo invited Herag upstairs to discuss matters.

The second floor was Milo, the Vice President's office, where Sid stopped at the doorway, standing as a guard.

After pouring Herag a glass of water, Milo said, "Mr. Herag, are you a Mystic?"

"Yes, that's correct," Herag nodded.

Milo smiled and said, "Mr. Herag, please don't misunderstand. According to Duke Theodore's regulations, if Mystics enter the city, we are required to register them."

"Understood, I am aware of the rule." Herag knew the regulation.

For ordinary people, these Wizards were too dangerous, and most large cities had similar regulations.

However, generally, Wizards wouldn't voluntarily register, and local authorities typically wouldn't provoke them—this regulation's significance wasn't substantial.

"Where is Robert now?" Herag straightforwardly asked.

Milo nodded, "He has already been informed. Before Mr. Herag arrived, we received notification from Count Hu En; Robert has deliberately stayed in Storm City during this time to await Mr. Herag."

"Alright, I'll wait for him here for a while. By the way, do you have many Great Knight-Level personnel in the association?" Herag asked, relaxedly reclining on the sofa with his eyes closed.

Milo was somewhat taken aback, then smiled, "There are just three Great Knight-Level individuals in Storm City, and currently, only Robert frequently takes on quests."

Herag roughly knew, "It seems the one following behind that day was Robert; his strength is indeed quite good."

Half an hour later, there was a knock at the door, and a man's steady and powerful voice came through, "Milo, I'm here."

"Robert has arrived; sorry to keep you waiting, Mr. Herag." Milo smiled as he stood to open the door.

When the door opened, Herag looked towards the entrance, confirming Robert was indeed the Grand Knight-Level Thief from that day.

Initially, Robert was stunned upon seeing Herag; his expression fluctuated slightly, then he quickly adjusted, pretending not to recognize Herag.

"It's really him; did he recognize me? No, that day he probably only sensed my presence but couldn't have seen what I looked like. He shouldn't be able to recognize me." Robert's mind raced as he walked over.

"Robert, this is Mr. Herag. He wants to inquire about some matters. You two have a chat; I'll be off to handle the association's affairs," Milo said, having completed his task once Robert arrived.

"Have a seat." Herag stated, sitting on the sofa, taking a leisurely sip of water.

"Alright." Robert felt inexplicably tense; it had been years since he ever trembled when killing, yet he felt nervous at that moment.

He sat on the sofa uprightly, like a child caught doing something wrong.

"Did you acquire this?" Herag brought out the Resentful Doll, speaking candidly.

Upon seeing the Resentful Doll, Robert gasped.

"I...I..." Robert was at a loss, unsure how to respond to the question.

He knew Herag was a mysterious Wizard, fearing an incorrect answer might cost him his life.

"No need to be nervous, I just want to ask where you found it, I won't do anything to you," Herag reassured him.

Robert took a deep breath, calming himself, "I indeed obtained this doll, but I found it."

"Found it?" Herag asked with a hint of skepticism.

Seeing Herag's dubious gaze, Robert hurriedly added, "It's true; it was found. That person was likely a Wizard, dressed in a robe, holding this doll. I thought that something a Wizard clung to even in death must be valuable, so I summoned the courage to pick it up."

"But after I took it, the doll gave me an uncomfortable feeling; it wasn't likely anything good, probably something ominous, so I sold it to Count Hu En. They, those nobles, aren't short on money and enjoy collecting such things."

Throughout, Herag monitored Robert's state, receiving from Shenlan a probability of 99.6% that he was telling the truth.

After a moment of pondering, Herag asked, "Where exactly did you find it?"

Chapter 74: Departure

"Picked it up on the only path leading into the mountains outside Valley Town." Robert said, glancing at Herag as if to gauge his reaction.

He continued, "I really found it, that wizard's death had nothing to do with me."

Seeing Robert's eagerness to explain, Herag knew he was misunderstood, so he said, "I have nothing to do with that wizard, I don't even know who he is, and I'm not here to accuse anyone because of his death."

Only after hearing this did Robert relax and breathe a sigh of relief.

"Valley Town..." Herag had never heard of this place before.

He looked at Robert and asked, "Where is Valley Town?"

"Just east of Storm City, about a three-day ride away." Robert was familiar with these places and spoke without any hesitation.

"Is there anything special about that place?" Herag was a bit puzzled as to why a wizard would die there.

Robert scratched the back of his head, thought for a moment, and said, "Not that I know of, it's just an ordinary mountain town with a relatively small population."

"Are there any special rumors about the place? Ghost stories are fine too." Herag continued to ask.

Robert shook his head, "I'm not too sure about that, I'm not a local. There should be some ghost stories, there's always a few such tales in every place. If you want to know more, you'd best ask the locals."

"Does the Adventurers' Association have any information on that place?" Herag asked.

Robert nodded, "They should, the association usually keeps records of the surrounding areas."

"Don't leave yet, we might need you to lead the way later." Herag stood up, ready to look into the Adventurers' Association's records.

Upon hearing the news, Milo quickly rushed over, taking Herag and Robert to the fourth floor.

The fourth floor resembled an archive, with rows of cabinets filled with files.

"These are records of the surrounding geography, let me see for Valley Town... it should be here." Milo searched through the cabinets and finally stopped in front of one, opened it, and took out a file folder.

Milo handed the file folder to Herag, "This contains all the information about Valley Town for the past thirty years."

Herag took the file folder and pulled out a thick stack of documents.

He sat down on a long bench nearby, slowly perusing the Valley Town records.

Valley Town has a history of over two hundred years, with a population consistently between two to three hundred. From the records, it appears to be a very ordinary town with nothing special about it.

The records note some information from the past thirty years, the most serious being geological disasters like landslides, but nothing seemingly unusual.

"Could it be this isn't the place..."

Originally, Herag suspected Valley Town might be the production site of the Resentful Doll, potentially a resource point, rich in casting materials and magic potion materials.

Places like this usually have some strange occurrences, which for ordinary people would be supernatural events.

However, this Valley Town was too ordinary, without any anomalies.

"Vice President Milo, do you know anything about this place?" Herag asked after reviewing the materials.

Milo thought for a moment and said, "I'm sorry, I'm not very familiar with it, it's just an ordinary town."

"A wizard died there not long ago, did you know?" Herag asked Milo.

Milo was a bit surprised, "A wizard? I hadn't heard about that."

Herag glanced at Robert, "That's what he said."

Robert explained, "I did indeed find a dead body out there on that mountain path, with that doll in its hand, but I can't confirm if it was a wizard. I judged it based on the attire. But I haven't heard any follow-up news from there either, so it might not even be a wizard..."

Milo queried, "That can't be right, whether the deceased was a wizard or not, I haven't heard of anyone dying in Valley Town. When did you find the body, Robert?"

"About two months ago," Robert replied truthfully.

Milo shook his head, "Impossible, for the last two months, I haven't heard of any deaths there. Unless Robert was the only one who saw the body, and someone disposed of it before anyone else could notice."

The Adventurers' Association is typically very informed, and with Valley Town's small population and only one path leading out of the mountains, any death on that path would surely be discovered and reported by the locals.

Yet, the Adventurers' Association had no information whatsoever in this regard.

"Finally, something out of the ordinary," Herag thought this might be related to a mysterious event or simply a human-created incident.

He stood up and said, "Robert, come with me, lead the way to Valley Town."

"Alright." Robert nodded, not daring to refuse.

Herag had Shenlan record the Valley Town information but found no valuable insights yet.

He returned the file folder before heading downstairs. To Sid, who was waiting below, he said, "I'm going out for a while, you should go back first."

"Sir, don't you need me to accompany you?" Sid eagerly offered his assistance.

Herag shook his head, "You're too weak; if anything happens, I won't have time to look after you. You should go back first."

Herag's blunt remarks left Sid awkwardly scratching his head, "Then I'll be going back now, sir."

Milo arranged two horses and prepared some dried food and water for Herag and Robert.

Though Storm City was some distance from Valley Town, and despite their great strength, the duo still needed basic supplies.

Without delay, Herag mounted the horse and headed towards the city gate, with Robert close behind.

In the city, Herag had to maintain his speed, but once outside, he gave the horse a hard kick to the flank and dashed off.

After leaving Storm City, they soon entered the mountains.

The terrain here was nothing but vast stretches of mountains, slowing their pace considerably. They were either climbing or descending, unable to gallop freely as they did on flat ground.

Two days later, Herag and Robert arrived at Valley Town.

A mountain path encircled the town, known for its Heaven's Edge formation.

As Herag walked along the path intending to enter, a squirrel on a nearby tree jabbered incessantly.

"Shut up!" Robert found the squirrel annoying and scared it off with a few threats.

The squirrel was indeed frightened, and with a few leaps between branches, it disappeared.

"Sir, I found the deceased here that day, lying on his back, clutching the doll tightly. I had to exert some effort to pry it from his hands," Robert recounted the events of that day.

Chapter 75: Valley Town

Herag glanced at the spot Robert was pointing to, right at the valley entrance, at the mouth of the One-Line Sky Canyon.

"Why did they die?" Herag pondered over this question, not rushing to go inside.

The squirrel's cry just now bothered him; animals usually have very sharp senses, and that was a warning cry.

Of course, it could also be warning its companions of these two outsiders.

"Shenlan, check if there's anything unusual around." To be cautious, Herag had Shenlan perform a comprehensive scan of the surroundings.

"No anomalies detected."

"No Magic Power flow detected."

"No Magic Power residue detected."

...

Herag scrutinized Shenlan's detection results; everything appeared normal.

He glanced at the valley and took a step inside.

Nothing unusual, and nothing happened.

Herag closed his eyes to sense, finding the free Energy Particles around were very normal, with no special fluctuations or flows.

The light in the Heaven's Edge was relatively dim. The cliffside at the roadside was somewhat damp, with water flowing down in some places.

Herag followed the mountain road, quickly passing through the canyon area of the One-Line Sky Canyon, finding the view ahead wide open.

A small town sat on a distant hillside with wooden houses quietly nestled among the mountains, occasionally seeing people walking by.

The town entrance had a small tavern. When Herag entered, there weren't many people inside, only three people split between two tables, with Butter Beer on the tables.

As Herag and Robert entered, the tavern, which had been filled with conversation, quieted down.

The two sitting together looked like hunters, while the man sitting alone seemed like a blacksmith from his clothes.

When the two hunters saw Herag and Robert, they frowned, appearing wary of them.

The two picked up their glasses and drained their Butter Beer in one go, then left without saying a word.

The blacksmith glanced at the two of them, smiled, and took a sip of beer.

His glass still had more than half full, indicating he wasn't planning to leave soon.

Herag went over and smiled, "Mind if we share a table?"

The blacksmith was a Big Beard uncle, he laughed, "Of course not, you're new faces here. Are you here for business?"

Herag pulled out a chair and sat down, telling the bartender, "Two Butter Beers, please."

After ordering, he turned back to the Blacksmith Uncle and said, "I won't beat around the bush. I'd like to ask if you know about a death on the mountain road outside, around two months ago."

"Two months ago?" The Blacksmith Uncle stroked his beard thoughtfully, "No, I don't think so. This is a small place. If someone died, we locals would surely know, but I haven't heard of such a thing."

He took a sip of beer and continued, "This place is usually very peaceful, rarely any murders. There aren't many people here, connections are simple, and as far as I know, there's seldom deep hatred."

The beer Herag ordered soon arrived, two large, full mugs.

He wasn't accustomed to it at first, but got used to it after drinking more, mainly because there weren't many options.

After taking a sip, Herag said, "Hmm, we just heard about it, so we came to ask."

The Blacksmith Uncle realized, "I see, then the news must be wrong. You know how it is, some stories drift far and deviate from the truth."

"Hmm, we'll ask elsewhere later," Herag nodded.

The Blacksmith Uncle continued, "You must be from the Storm City investigation team, I guess you came to investigate after hearing about a murder. You'll likely be making a trip for nothing. I've been here for years; there couldn't have been a murder without me knowing."

"Investigation team? Storm City no longer has such an organization. Now it's the Adventurers' Association handling these matters," Robert interjected.

The Blacksmith Uncle said in confusion, "Adventurers' Association? It seems I've fallen behind on the news, hahaha."

He laughed, taking a big gulp of beer, exhaling contentedly.

After chatting with the Blacksmith Uncle for a while, not gaining any valuable information, Herag paid the bill and prepared to leave the tavern.

"Thanks!" the Blacksmith Uncle thanked from behind. Herag also covered his share of the beer.

Herag pushed open the tavern door and found it had already turned dark outside.

This place had no street lights, so except for some houses in the distance with their lights on, the roads were completely dark.

"Robert, have we been inside for that long? If I remember correctly, it was only afternoon when we entered." Herag noticed something was off.

He got no response from behind, and when he turned around, Robert, who had followed him out, was gone.

Herag turned back into the tavern. The lights were still on, the Butter Beer on the tables remained, still bubbling.

But there was no one inside the tavern.

The Blacksmith Uncle was gone, and so was the tavern owner.

Herag checked around with Shenlan's feedback, the entire tavern was empty, deathly quiet without a sound.

Picking up a Butter Beer mug, Herag found nothing unusual; the Butter Beer seemed normal with nothing strange about it.

Taking a deep breath, Herag walked out of the tavern.

Lights still glowed on distant houses, and silhouettes could be seen behind the windows.

Stumbling in the dark, he headed towards a house; it seemed there was more than one person inside.

Reaching the door, he faintly heard conversation and a woman's laughter inside, as if an old couple were whispering at night.

He knocked on the door, and instantly, it fell silent, a deathly stillness.

No one questioned him, and no one came to the door.

Herag's knocking seemed to have pressed a pause button on the world, and the people inside seemed frozen, without making a sound.

After a while, he heard the dull sound of something being dragged behind the door, and the harsh noise of a hard object scraping the ground.

Bang!

A muffled sound suddenly erupted, Herag listened intently and it sounded like an axe hacking into flesh.

Bang!

Bang!

...

The sound of the axe swings had a rhythm, slow and steady, reminding Herag of butchers slaughtering livestock.

Bang!

The door suddenly shivered, something behind it seemed to be violently battering it.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The whole house started shaking; whatever was behind the door was clearly accelerating its assault, desperately trying to break out.

The door's quality was unexpectedly high, the entire house trembled from the pounding, yet the door remained unmoved.

If it were an ordinary wooden door, it might have shattered in one or two hits.

Herag felt a foreboding premonition, sensing a strong danger behind the door.

Get away from here!

Instinctively, this thought surfaced, and he quickened his pace to leave the house.

Chapter 76: Footsteps

Herag saw through Shenlan's environment monitor that there was nothing behind the door, no one at all.

Yet the whole house continued to shudder violently, and the banging behind the door grew stronger.

"There were definitely people just now." Herag had seen through Shenlan's monitor that there were indeed two people inside the house, a man and a woman.

But at some point, these two people disappeared without a trace, and Herag couldn't sense it; he didn't find out from Shenlan's feedback when they had vanished.

"Better retreat first."

After thinking it over, Herag felt it was too dangerous to stay and decided to turn back, intending to leave via the mountain road.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

As Herag walked forward, he suddenly heard footsteps behind him.

He immediately stopped, and the footsteps behind him also came to a halt.

"Who's there?" Herag looked back, seeing nothing but emptiness, and Shenlan hadn't detected any living presence.

"Dark Energy Shield!"

"Mana Shield!"

"Ice Shield!"

Herag applied three shields to himself, feeling a bit more secure in his heart.

Not noticing anything unusual, he continued to walk forward.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The footsteps behind sounded again, and Herag felt that there was indeed a "person" pressed close behind him; he could even feel the breath from behind blowing on his neck.

But when he turned around, there was still no one there.

The 3D model of the surroundings floated in Herag's vision; he carefully checked every area, finding no second person present.

He quickened his pace, simply rushing forward, and the footsteps behind also sped up, seemingly pursuing him closely.

"Something's wrong!"

Herag suddenly stopped, frowning as he looked at the surrounding scenery.

Turning around, he saw the road leading to the foot of the mountain, and in the distance at the foot of the mountain, he saw the One-Line Sky Canyon.

"Why am I at the top of the mountain?"

Herag found that at some point he had reached the mountain top, the area with the densest houses in Valley Town.

The house he had knocked on earlier was midway up the mountain, not far from the tavern.

Herag remembered clearly that he was heading toward the foot of the mountain, so how did he suddenly end up at the top?

He stood in place for a moment, then continued to walk downhill, and when passing by that house, he found it particularly quiet inside, with nothing banging on the door.

Herag deliberately detoured to walk away from that house.

Passing by the tavern, the lights inside were still on, with not a sound to be heard.

Herag peeked inside and saw the butter beer mug on the table still in place, unchanged.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The footsteps behind never stopped, and Herag never figured out where the sound was coming from.

So far, he hadn't encountered any danger, suspecting that his own footsteps might be echoing in some way, yet the feeling of being shadowed by someone never disappeared, and his neck still felt occasional breaths.

"I definitely need to brush up on necromancy knowledge when I get back; facing such scenarios leaves me with too few options."

Herag didn't panic, guessing that he had probably encountered something like an evil spirit.

Necromancy is a vast field, encompassing all sorts of knowledge, and many wizards specialize in it.

Heaven's Edge was again right ahead; just a few more steps on this mountain road would lead him out of Valley Town.

But...

"Just as I thought..."

As expected, Herag found himself at the top of the mountain again; he hadn't sensed when the surroundings had changed, not at all aware.

"The positions of the stars..." Herag closed his eyes, sensing the positions of the stars above.

The star positions hadn't changed much, differing little from usual; Herag could still clearly sense their presence.

"Seems like the road down the mountain won't work."

Herag turned to look deeper into the town, where there were no streetlights, only the resident's homes were lit.

But after the recent experiences, he dared not knock on doors to seek out locals.

He walked forward, intending to check out the situation in other places, and the footsteps behind instantly sounded again.

"The garden?"

Herag discovered a three-story house, with lights on inside and voices and the sound of a violin emanating from within.

There was a garden on the ground floor of the house, and from a distance, Herag felt that the plants in the garden seemed familiar.

He slowed his pace and approached stealthily, the footsteps behind echoing loudly.

The garden had many sunflower-like plants, but at this time, the flower heads were drooping back, facing away from the street outside, making it difficult for Herag to see the situation clearly.

He drew closer, finally seeing the garden's situation through Shenlan's detection.

"So many are Demon Flowers?"

Herag was shocked; the entire garden was full of Demon Flowers, the main ingredient for the Dawn Potion, which he had only recently dealt with as tricky magic potion materials.

The footsteps behind Herag startled these Demon Flowers, causing them to raise their heads, each revealing coquettish female faces.

The Demon Flowers all smiled seductively at Herag, their heads and stems swaying slowly like women's waists.

Protected by the Dark Energy Shield, Herag was immune to the Demon Flowers' allure.

Without saying a word, he retrieved a herb shovel from the Space Ring, jumped into the garden, and began digging.

"Ah! Ah! Ah!"

With each shovel strike Herag made, the Demon Flower in front would start to scream.

But the screams were peculiar, not screams of pain, but rather akin to that kind of moaning, and the expressions on the faces in the flower heads grew stranger.

Herag excavated the soil beneath the Demon Flower, then grabbed the roots and slowly pulled them out.

As he grasped these roots, the Demon Flower trembled all over, its cries growing louder, as if the root area was particularly sensitive to them.

Soon, the Demon Flower convulsed slightly, its long roots going limp, collapsing onto Herag, the expression on the flower face...

Herag glanced at it, wrinkling his brow slightly with disdain as he peeled the Demon Flower off himself, then placed the entire plant into the Space Ring.

After finishing one, he immediately proceeded to dig up a second.

Demon Flowers are a valuable commodity, sellable for quite a few Magic Stones.

Herag paid no heed and planned to uproot the entire garden of Demon Flowers.

Soon, the place was filled with rising and falling cries.

Midway through digging up sixteen, movement occurred inside the house.

He turned his head and saw a window next to him opened unnoticed, and a woman was staring at him through the window, wide-eyed.

To be precise, it was a woman's head, her eyes fixed on him.

Chapter 77: Violin

On the windowsill was a woman's head, with a headless corpse behind it.

The headless corpse held a violin in its left hand and gently caressed the head with its right hand.

Herag stopped digging, stood up, and locked eyes with the head, the scene falling into silence.

All the Demon Flowers closed their eyes, their flower heads drooping.

The headless corpse raised its left hand, placed the violin on its shoulder, then lifted the head and slid it along the strings, blood dripping down the strings, strands entwining around the violin.

The woman's head seemed to be immersed in the enchanting music, closing her eyes with a smile, savoring the violin's melody.

In Herag's eyes, a mass of Negative Energy Particles began to gather by the window.

Without hesitation, he fired three Corrosive Arrows at the headless corpse playing the violin.

When the Corrosive Arrows struck, the hit area of the headless corpse rapidly corroded, making sizzling sounds.

The woman angrily opened her eyes, pain etched on her face.

Herag raised his hand, his ring flashed, and a Small Fireball Technique quickly formed, then flew towards the opposite side.

The violin's music quickly resumed, the headless corpse's right arm suddenly swelled, transforming into a massive arm with red fur in mere moments.

The arm was larger than the headless corpse itself, looking quite incongruous.

The Small Fireball Technique exploded upon impact on the giant arm, the surface quickly burning, emitting a stench of scorched meat.

Soon after, the violin resumed, and the headless corpse swung its arm, punching towards Herag.

The distance was too short, and Herag had no time to avoid it; the fist struck his Three-Layer Shield, sending him flying a few meters to the ground.

He quickly adjusted his stance upon landing, rolled to dispel most of the force, then drew his Longsword.

The Shield protected him, leaving him almost unharmed.

Herag glanced at his Shield's status; the outermost layer, the Ice Shield, had taken significant damage and could likely only withstand one more such attack before shattering.

"Wind Elf's Blessing..."

Herag used another Demonized Item, boosting his agility by two points.

He focused intently on the headless corpse and accelerated towards it.

The violin sounded, and the arm swung once more.

This time Herag had enough time to react and plenty of space to maneuver.

With the aid of Shenlan, he easily dodged this strike.

The headless corpse's movements were somewhat clumsy, taking time to retrieve its fist after each attack.

Seizing this opening, Herag closed the distance to the headless corpse and struck at the violin with his sword.

He noticed that countless Negative Energy Particles surrounded the violin. Every time the violin sounded, the headless corpse would move, indicating that the violin was likely commanding the corpse.

The Longsword struck the violin, producing a metallic clash.

Herag was not surprised; he had anticipated the violin might be quite hard.

Holding his sword with both hands, he began furiously hacking at the violin, clanging sounds filling the air.

The violin was clearly not invincible, as sword marks appeared on it after a short while.

Herag grasped the violin, then slammed it forcefully to the ground.

The music ceased abruptly, but Herag didn't stop, wildly smashing the violin.

He slammed it on the ground, against the wall, turning the scene into an act of sheer violence.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The loud noise was reminiscent of a construction site.

Herag didn't know how many times he smashed it until he stopped, realizing the violin's strings were all broken, and the body was heavily damaged.

He tossed the violin on the ground, stamping it hard underfoot.

"Corrosive Arrow!"

"Small Fireball Technique!"

...

Herag cast several more spells until the Negative Energy Particles dissipated from the violin before stopping.

Looking up, he saw the headless corpse beside the window had slumped weakened against the sill, the giant right hand returning to normal.

The right hand's clothes were torn, revealing a pale arm beneath.

"It should be dead, right?"

Herag glanced at the battered violin on the ground, feeling as though he had used excessive force to kill something.

The Demon Flowers in the garden quietly lifted their heads to watch him. When Herag turned, they averted their eyes, as if he were truly terrifying.

Seeing no anomalies around, Herag resumed digging with his shovel, with more than ten Demon Flowers left to excavate.

Soon, the garden echoed with cries anew.

An outsider would probably mistake it for some indecent party in this open-air garden.

About half an hour later, Herag finished digging up all the Demon Flowers in the garden, collecting forty-two in total.

Glancing around, he confirmed there was nothing else of value in the garden before preparing to leave.

The town was filled with houses, and this garden was merely the ground floor garden of one such house.

Herag continued forward, the sound of footsteps again trailing behind him.

This time, much more cautiously, he felt that every house with lights on might hold something inside.

Solving the violin didn't mean he could deal with other items, so it was prudent to act cautiously.

Following the town's path, he noticed something peculiar: the number of houses seemed to have increased.

He distinctly remembered that the Valley Town he glimpsed from the mountainside hadn't had this many houses.

"Master! Finally found you!" Robert's voice abruptly sounded from behind.

Herag turned to see Robert breathlessly calling out to him.

"Don't come near me yet." Herag drew his sword, aiming it at Robert as he moved closer.

Robert awkwardly retreated: "It was abrupt of me. Master, it's truly me, not some foul thing in disguise."

"Where did you just go?" Herag coldly inquired.

Robert was puzzled: "I'm not sure either. I remember we were drinking in the tavern, then suddenly you vanished, and I ended up in town looking for you, but this cursed town was empty."

"Then I knocked on a house's door, and before I knew it, I was inside it. I panicked, tried to open the door to leave, but it was locked tight as if bolted shut."

"I even tried the windows to escape, but they were locked and incredibly sturdy, beyond my ability to break them."

"When I was desperate to get out, suddenly I was in the street again and saw you up ahead."

Chapter 78: The House

Robert hurriedly explained, fearing that Herag might cut him down with a sword on a whim.

Although he was a Great Knight, he had witnessed Wizards in action more than once.

He had no means to counter those eerie spells and could only allow Wizards to have their way.

Robert never considered counterattacking a Wizard; he only thought about how to survive if Herag made a move against him.

Herag carefully analyzed what he said, sensing that Robert wasn't lying, yet he felt there was something amiss that he couldn't quite pinpoint.

"You said you were trapped in a house, which one?" Herag questioned.

Robert glanced around, recognizing the nearby house for a moment, then said, "It's this house."

Herag turned to look; it was also a three-story building, with no lights on inside.

He stepped back a few paces, distancing himself from the house.

"Did you hear footsteps behind me?" Herag retreated a few more steps, and the footsteps followed.

Robert's expression was somewhat frightened: "I heard them, but I didn't see anything behind you."

"I think something has set its sights on me." Herag sighed, a bit helpless.

He glanced at Robert: "We'd better leave here quickly, there's something wrong with these houses."

Robert had suddenly entered after knocking on the door, and couldn't come out no matter what, and Herag guessed it would be the same result if he knocked.

What puzzled him was why Robert came out inexplicably without doing anything, just in time to encounter him passing by.

"Hmm?" Herag noticed his surroundings suddenly lit up.

The house beside them suddenly lit up, emitting a soft yellow glow from the windows.

Herag tried to look inside through the windows but could only see a field of yellow light.

Shenlan's scan showed that the entire house was empty.

Of course, Herag didn't believe there was truly nothing inside; Shenlan couldn't detect non-living entities like Evil Spirits, a conclusion he reached from past experiences.

He believed it was due to his own lack of knowledge in this area, so Shenlan didn't have effective detection methods to discover the presence of Evil Spirits.

At the same time, Herag felt that Shenlan was no longer an ordinary gene chip from a previous life.

As he became a Wizard and his strength grew stronger, Shenlan's functions gradually began to change, becoming much more powerful than a typical gene chip.

"Go!" Herag growled at Robert, then dashed out first.

The moment the lights came on in the nearby house, a sense of malice assaulted him, and he figured whatever was inside would be troublesome, so he wanted to flee immediately.

Seeing Herag's urgency, Robert also realized the seriousness of the situation and quickly followed suit.

"Hmm? Where did he go?" Robert suddenly found that Herag had disappeared after running a few steps ahead.

Robert looked around, unable to find any sign of Herag, and a chill surged through his heart.

...

After running a few steps, Herag found himself inside a house.

He surveyed the surroundings to confirm he was on the first floor.

Herag walked to the window and looked out, seeing Robert standing outside, looking around in confusion.

By observing the street scene outside, he confirmed that he was in the house that had just lit up.

Herag checked the doors and windows; the window locks could be opened, but no matter how hard he pulled, the windows wouldn't budge.

Bang!

He picked up a chair and smashed it hard against the window, but it didn't move an inch.

Herag tried hacking at it with his Longsword, but not even a scratch was left on the window.

Seeing this, he temporarily gave up trying to break the window.

Herag went to the door and found that it wasn't actually locked; the doorknob could be pressed down, but the door just wouldn't open.

No matter how much force he used, he couldn't open the door.

After trying for a while, Herag gave up, not wanting to waste his energy; it was clear there was no conventional way out.

Outside, Robert occasionally glanced inside, but he didn't seem to see Herag, though Herag could see Robert from inside.

"Looks like I'm in the same predicament Robert was in; he inexplicably came out back then. What are the hidden rules?" Herag began to ponder.

He glanced at the room's furnishings; it was just an ordinary residential home with nothing special.

Herag wandered around the rooms on the first floor; the first floor consisted of the living room and kitchen.

"What's on the second floor?" Although Shenlan's scan showed the second and third floors were empty, that didn't mean there weren't other things present.

He cast three shields on himself and began to ascend the stairs.

The entire house was pitch black, and Herag relied on Shenlan to see the interior.

Though the lights had just come on, Herag saw that there wasn't a single lamp on the first floor.

As Herag ascended the stairs, the footsteps behind him continued, the rhythm of two sets of footsteps following each other closely.

Just as he reached the second floor, he stopped in his tracks.

In the middle of the second floor was a dining table with a plate on it, containing a human arm.

Judging from the wound on the arm, it had been forcibly torn off, still dripping blood, clearly freshly torn.

"Why does this hand seem so familiar?" He looked at the arm, feeling as though he'd seen it before, it seemed familiar.

Herag approached a bit more, noting the neatly placed knife and fork beside the plate, while the chair was slightly askew.

It seemed as though someone had just been sitting there about to eat, but had suddenly left due to some matter, not even having time to put the chair back in place.

Herag didn't touch the table or the arm, and continued on to other rooms on the second floor.

Soon, he found a bedroom on the second floor with a large leg hanging by the second-floor window, blood still dripping down, creating a puddle on the floor.

In the bedroom, Herag found some items that appeared to belong to an ordinary resident's bedroom.

"A family photograph?"

On the bedside table, Herag found a family photo; it showed a family of three, a couple and a young daughter.

But strangely, the three people in the photo had no faces.

Their facial features weren't blank spaces, but absent, just a flat facial surface.

The room was very quiet, with the sound of dripping blood, drip, drip, clearly audible.

Herag looked back at the leg again; the arm had no clothing, but this leg had tattered fabric hanging on it.

"Is that... it looks like Robert's pants."

Recalling the fabric hanging from the leg, Herag noted it looked very similar in color and material to the pants Robert was wearing.

"But wasn't he outside?"

Chapter 79: Family

Herag recalled the arm on the dining table outside, suddenly realizing that it looked a lot like Robert's.

Because of using a dagger for years, Robert had noticeable marks on his hand.

"No wonder it looked so familiar..."

When Herag saw that arm earlier, it felt familiar, but he didn't connect it to Robert right away.

He had just seen Robert out in the street from the first-floor window, so how could he be dismembered in an instant?

Herag put down the photo he was holding, didn't touch the leg, and turned to leave the room.

The arm on the dining table was still there; Herag glanced at it as he passed by and then left.

He continued to the other two rooms on the second floor, where he also found a hand and a leg.

There were also some photos in these rooms, both group photos and solo ones. Without exception, they all had no faces.

Herag strolled through the second floor, finding nothing else, so he went up the stairs to the third floor.

He recalled that outside, he remembered the third floor should have an attic-like structure.

Upon reaching the third floor, Herag found it was indeed a low attic where you had to walk slightly bent over to avoid hitting your head.

As he bowed his head, he noticed something and stopped.

On the floor was a long trail of blood, extending all the way to the windowsill at the far end of the attic.

Following the blood trail with his eyes, Herag found a severed head placed beneath the attic window.

"Robert..."

He carefully identified the face; there were several terrifying wounds on it, making it almost unrecognizable.

Herag observed for a while: "The wounds look like they were made by an axe, very deep."

The skin and flesh at the wound had rolled back, exposing the white bone underneath.

"Did you die so tragically?"

Herag scratched his nose awkwardly; after all, it was him who asked Robert to lead the way, and now that Robert died so horribly, he felt somewhat guilty.

Dying in such a place, Robert's remains couldn't even be taken out.

"I should think about how to get out of here." Herag shook his head. He was in danger himself and hadn't found a way out.

If the dead Robert were real, then he probably wasn't far from danger himself.

Despite being a strong Great Knight Level, Robert was silently taken out.

Herag scanned the attic, which was full of clutter, nothing else.

He was looking for the axe, the murder weapon used on Robert, but so far, he hadn't seen it.

After searching the attic for a while and finding nothing, Herag started heading downstairs.

He had been all around the house but found nothing else.

"If Robert is dead, then part of his body is still missing. Where did it go?" Herag was puzzled.

Thinking as he descended the stairs, he returned to the first floor.

Herag went to the window to see if Robert was still outside, but as he approached, he found a face pressed against the window.

Robert was pressing his face against the window, looking hard inside, seemingly searching for Herag.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Suddenly, a heavy banging sound came from upstairs, as if someone was hitting the door with something heavy.

A chill rose in Herag's heart as he clearly felt a huge threat from something upstairs.

"I have to get out of here quickly!"

His heartbeat quickened, and the feeling of impending doom grew stronger.

The banging from upstairs abruptly stopped, and the house became quiet again, yet Herag felt a sudden chill around him.

He turned to see a little girl on the stairs leading to the second floor, wearing a red plaid dress, holding a doll quietly.

The girl's face, like in the photos, was featureless, but Herag could feel her gazing at him.

"She's smiling?"

Herag suddenly felt that the little girl was smiling at him.

Then, suddenly, a mouth appeared on the girl's featureless face, revealing white teeth with some red filaments between them.

Herag felt no warmth from this smile, only a chill down his spine.

In his hand, Fire Elemental Energy Particles quickly gathered, and a Small Fireball Technique was about to form.

The little girl seemed not afraid at all, showing a horrific smile as she gradually walked down the stairs towards Herag.

At this moment, Herag noticed that the doll in the little girl's hand was also a Resentful Doll.

"Could the Resentful Doll in my Space Ring have come from here? That Wizard got this thing but died outside of Valley Town..." Herag noticed the Resentful Doll in the girl's hand, although its appearance was different from the one in the Space Ring, both were top-level curse technique casting materials.

But now he had no time to think about acquiring the Resentful Doll, his mind was racing to figure out how to escape.

Just then, there was a noise at the door.

The sound of a key opening the door came from the entrance, causing the little girl to stop in her tracks.

The key inserted into the lock, and then turned with a click, and the door opened.

A big bearded man stepped in with an axe hanging from his head.

The axe was embedded in his forehead, deeply cleaving into his head.

Yet he seemed unaware, and upon seeing Herag, showed a delighted expression: "It's you! Thank you for treating me to a Butter Beer."

"Blacksmith Uncle?" Herag was taken aback, surprised to see the Blacksmith Uncle he had met at the tavern.

But now the Blacksmith Uncle was clearly different from when he met him in the tavern, besides the axe in his head, his eyeballs had turned a pale gray.

His facial skin was also abnormal, presenting a bluish-green hue, not quite human-looking.

The Blacksmith Uncle chuckled warmly, although his facial skin seemed stiff, making the smile look wooden and spooky.

He looked at the little girl with feigned anger: "Go back! Don't be rude to our guest!"

The little girl, holding the doll with both hands, trembled slightly, seemingly very frightened.

She turned and ran up the stairs in small steps, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

The chill enveloping Herag disappeared too, making him feel much lighter and breathe a sigh of relief.

"You should leave here; you shouldn't have come." The Blacksmith Uncle said, seeing the little girl upstairs and turning back.

Herag nodded: "Thank you!"

Clearly, the Blacksmith Uncle had helped him, without whom he couldn't imagine what that terrifying little girl would do to him, he had no confidence dealing with such a thing.

The Blacksmith Uncle sighed: "Alas, few in the town can remain lucid. Haha, can't even be called people."

He forced a smile, looked up, and said: "You should go quickly. I can't guarantee when I'll lose my mind, it will be dangerous then, hurry and go!"

Chapter 80: Magic Potion Field

The Blacksmith Uncle looked anxious, as if he recalled something and urged Herag to leave quickly.

Herag nodded and walked to the door, turning back to ask, "Blacksmith Uncle, do you know how to get out?"

The Blacksmith Uncle paused, thinking for a moment with a pained expression. Holding his forehead, he said, "I've forgotten a lot, but I know if you stay until dawn, you'll be able to leave. Most importantly, stay away from these houses, don't get close!"

"Ah!" He clutched his head in pain and squatted down, as a large lump suddenly bulged out from his back, unknown what it was.

Seeing this, Herag turned and ran, closing the door behind him.

Bam!

The next second, a loud noise came from behind the door, and Herag felt the entire street tremble.

"Robert?" Herag glanced around but didn't see Robert.

He remembered clearly that Robert was just outside the window, but was gone when he came out.

"Could it be that he was frightened away by the Blacksmith Uncle?"

Herag suspected that when the Blacksmith Uncle opened the door, Robert must have run off after sensing the danger, considering it's impossible for a living person with an ax in their head to open a door like nothing happened.

He couldn't be bothered to worry about Robert anymore, hoping that Robert would have good luck to escape this ordeal.

Herag glanced down the mountain, which had already been proven to be inaccessible, so he turned and ran north where there weren't any residential houses.

Since the Blacksmith Uncle advised staying away from houses, there must be a reason.

Herag's own experiences also confirmed that there was indeed something in each of these houses, and none was easy to deal with.

However, there are indeed many good things here, a whole garden of Demon Flowers, and the Resentful Doll in the little girl's arms, these are all valuable items.

Herag sighed, still lacking strength. If he were strong enough, he'd simply snatch the Resentful Doll from the little girl's hands, daring her to resist would earn her a punch.

But for now, he could only flee in defeat.

Once again, Herag employed the Wind Elf's blessing to hasten his escape from the town's residential area.

While he was running down the street, as he passed each house, the lights would turn on, followed by various noises.

Herag neither looked nor listened, charging headlong to the north.

Once he successfully escaped the residential area, he realized he was drenched in sweat, unsure if it was from fear or exhaustion.

The malice emanating from those houses exerted immense pressure on him, creating a sensation of confronting death itself.

To the north was a small grove and some cultivated fields.

As Herag arrived, a gust of wind blew by.

The breeze brushed against his face, making him feel much more at ease.

He sniffed, "This smell... seems like the fragrance of Dragon's Beard Grass."

Dragon's Beard Grass is a valuable Magic Potion material, used in the creation of various High-tier Potions, among which the most famous is called the Earth God's Favor.

The Earth God's Favor can greatly enhance a wizard's earth element affinity over a short period, with a broad range of uses.

If an earth element wizard uses it during advancement, it can significantly increase their success probability.

Upon consuming the Earth God's Favor, when using earth element spells, the effect greatly improves, as if the surrounding earth elements serve you, requiring only a bit of magic power to mobilize a lot of earth element power.

This kind of high-tier Magic Potion material, much like the Resentful Doll, is extremely expensive.

Herag wasn't sure of the specific price, as he had no previous means to engage with such items.

Now, as Larry's student, he could sell these to Larry. The price could be lower, but the safety is assured.

Larry himself would face no issues selling these items on the market, as owning such items is normal for an Official Wizard, allowing him to earn more from the price difference.

The Resentful Doll in the Space Ring, Herag planned to sell it to Larry later; he didn't specialize in the Curse Technique, so he had no chance to use it.

Herag glanced at the distant fields, which were planted with many "crops."

As he got closer, he saw that the outer fields were planted with a good amount of Dragon's Beard Grass, making Herag's mouth water.

Herag cast three Shields on himself, then began carefully digging out the Dragon's Beard Grass with a shovel.

The stamens of the Dragon's Beard Grass have a long, thin red tongue, which is somewhat aggressive, capable of piercing several holes in a regular person with no problem.

But to a Wizard Apprentice like Herag, one Shield was enough to defend against the Dragon's Beard Grass's attacks.

Herag squatted in the field, with the surrounding Dragon's Beard Grass frantically poking him with their tongues, the tongues hitting the Shield sounding like pitter-pattering rain.

After about half an hour, Herag dug up all seven Dragon's Beard Grass plants from the field.

The quantity wasn't as much as the Demon Flower, but their value far exceeded it.

The adjacent fields were also planted with many Magic Potion Materials, many of which Herag couldn't name, having only studied the Basic Introduction to Herbalism and not yet taken more advanced courses.

He even worried that his digging method might be incorrect, potentially damaging some Magic Potion Materials.

But since he was already here, he couldn't just leave it. Even if some were damaged, it was unavoidable.

Herag moved to another area with the shovel, slightly increased his speed in digging these Magic Potion Materials, while concentrating his spiritual power and staying vigilant of the surroundings.

He hadn't forgotten where he was; it was a creepy place where danger could appear at any time.

If he became too engrossed in digging Magic Potion Materials, he might not even notice when danger approached.

Another hour or so passed, and Herag was still digging up Magic Potion Materials.

Looking up, he saw the field was extensive, with no way he could dig it all up overnight; there were just too many Magic Potion Materials.

"Did someone plant these?"

Herag was a bit confused since these Magic Potion Materials seemed deliberately cultivated.

Because many Magic Potion Materials were classified by type in different fields, and the planting areas were neat and organized, completely unlike wild growth.

"If it was artificially cultivated, it must have been done by a wizard. To cultivate such a large area of Magic Potion Materials in a place like this, the wizard must be very powerful. It seems that the wizard isn't here now, or else I'd be in big trouble."

Herag felt a bit apprehensive, thinking that if the wizard happened to return now, he'd surely be in for some serious consequences.

"I'm just picking up, not stealing..." he comforted himself.

"Shenlan, how long until dawn?" Herag asked.

"About an hour and a half, but due to the special environment, it might not be accurate," Shenlan replied.

Here the environment is special, and Shenlan could only provide time estimates based on normal patterns. But everything here is filled with mystery and uncertainty; even if the sun rose from the west, Herag wouldn't be surprised, as the sunrise time couldn't be inferred with ordinary logic.