

Sixth 91

Chapter 91: Knight's Justice

It's not uncommon for armies to disguise themselves as bandits and rob merchant caravans.

Ordinary adventurers, unless they've reached the level of a Great Knight, have no ability to resist against a well-formed army.

A few volleys of arrows are enough to turn these adventurers into porcupines; the combat ability of an army is not something these scattered adventurers can match.

More importantly, strong individuals exist within the army, and Great Knights are not uncommon.

Since this army dares to come to a place like Dragon Ridge Highland to make a profit, there must be a Great Knight holding down the fort.

"No one is allowed to act without my order." The speaker was Luo Kui, the owner of this caravan and the person with the most authority. All the guards were hired by him.

Luo Kui was well aware that negotiation was the only way out when facing an army.

If they dared to resist, this group of people would certainly die.

The Dragon Ridge Highland is an isolated place; the death of three or four hundred people would go unnoticed, and it would be difficult to investigate who did it.

Even if investigated, what could be done? No one would create a conflict with the army of the Violet Kingdom for these people's sake.

A few minutes later, the caravan finally saw what this army looked like.

They realized that they were already surrounded, and due to the White Mist, they couldn't clearly see how many soldiers there were, but certainly more than their number.

The soldiers on the other side all rode horses; about sixty percent were fully clad in armor, all coldly watching the caravan.

"Greetings, gentlemen. I am Luokui Dome, acquainted with General Tranton, and I hand over military aid annually. Please, can you let us go?" Luo Kui stepped forward with a sycophantic smile.

From the army, a man rode out on a tall horse. As he wore full armor and a helmet, it was hard to see his appearance. He said, "General Tranton? Sorry, we don't know such a person; we're just a bunch of bandits."

Their armor bore no insignia, appearing freshly forged and not yet engraved with the Violet Kingdom's characteristic mark.

Luo Kui continued, "Gentlemen, this cargo is meant to be sold in the Doris Kingdom to turn a profit. How about this: when I return from the Doris Kingdom, I'll personally offer you One Hundred Thousand Gold Coins."

The other man sneered, "Do you take me for a fool? Stop wasting words; hand over anything valuable, and we want the goods too!"

"Can't you spare us some, sir? It's not easy making this trip, and I have a whole family to feed..." Luo Kui pleaded.

"I don't care if you live or die! Right now! Immediately! Hand over the valuables, or we'll take them ourselves!" With that, the man drew his Longsword, and other soldiers pointed their weapons at the caravan.

Luo Kui's face went ashen as he waved his hand to those behind him, "Hand over the goods to them, alas!"

The caravan workers hesitated for a bit, but looking at the army poised to strike, they felt a chill down their necks and quickly turned to move the goods.

"Wait!"

At this moment, a voice rang out, and everyone saw that it was Kaleem who spoke.

He walked out with a solemn face, looked at the leader opposite, and said, "You're Ives, the Knight Commander under Duke Theodore, aren't you? Aren't you afraid that the Duke will find out about your actions here?"

Ives remained silent for a while: "You've got the wrong person."

Kaleem laughed, "Got the wrong person? A few months ago, you approached me at a banquet. How quickly forgotten? I stand here today; if you dare touch our caravan, I promise Duke Theodore will hang you on the gallows!"

The scene was silent; the caravan did not expect Kaleem to have such strong backing and dare to directly threaten the opposing army.

And Ives indeed fell silent, seemingly quite wary of Kaleem.

Herag sighed upon hearing this, "Idiot!"

Luo Kui glanced at Kaleem, his face showing obvious panic.

After a long silence, Ives raised his Longsword: "Everyone listen, kill them... all of them!"

"You!" Kaleem looked incredulous; he didn't expect Ives would dare to overstep his bounds—aiming not only to kill him but also to eliminate everyone to silence them.

Kaleem was furious: "You'll pay the price for this!"

Ives sneered, "It's you who will pay for your foolishness. Remember, these people weren't killed by me; they were killed by you."

His soldiers began to attack the caravan's defensive line, and naturally, the guards wouldn't sit still; they immediately started a defensive counterattack.

They did possess some strength, and for a short time, Ives' troops couldn't take them down.

Kaleem stood at the front of the line, wielding a Giant Sword, wielding it energetically, and with each swing taking a head.

He swiftly cleared the area in front of him, leaving the ground littered with the bodies of seven or eight soldiers.

Before his Giant Sword, these soldiers, even fully armored, couldn't withstand a single strike.

The bow and arrow unit focused fire on him, but Kaleem was also in full armor, and its quality was extraordinary; these Arrows couldn't harm him at all.

Kaleem faced the arrows' volley, slashing one soldier after another with his Giant Sword.

Before long, no one dared to approach the place where Kaleem stood guard.

Ives glanced in this direction, slowly rode over on his horse, then dismounted and walked out from the crowd: "Let me handle him."

Kaleem glared at him, muscles tensed.

He was close to becoming a Great Knight, but not actually one, and compared to Ives, there was still a vast power disparity.

Yet he showed no fear, eyes firm, holding the Giant Sword steadily, ready to attack at any moment.

Ives held a Longsword, slowly walking to stand before Kaleem: "If I were as wealthy as you, I'd be lying at home, not out here seeking death."

"I'm a noble but also a knight; I'll never indulge in a decaying life. Upholding justice is the truth I follow," Kaleem declared firmly, then swung his Giant Sword fiercely at Ives.

This strike was grand and swift.

Ives held the Longsword in one hand, blocking it steadily.

He stood upright the entire time, without a hint of movement, indicating he used only a minuscule amount of strength.

Seeing his strike blocked, Kaleem swiftly shifted the direction of his sword and launched several consecutive attacks.

But Ives easily fended off each of Kaleem's strikes as if he was playing.

Everyone could see that although Kaleem was powerful, compared to Ives, the strength gap between them was insurmountable.

"A Great Knight is far more powerful than you imagine. You've probably never seen the true power of a Great Knight; otherwise, you wouldn't foolishly challenge me," Ives sneered.

Chapter 92: Cruel Slaughter

Ives took a step back, then said, "Now it's my turn."

He took a deep breath, then a rumbling sound came from within, and he transformed into a shadow and charged out.

Kaleem reacted swiftly, almost instinctively moving his Giant Sword, but still, a blossom of blood burst forth.

The next moment, Ives appeared at Kaleem's side, and there wasn't a trace of blood on the Longsword in his hand.

Kaleem glanced down, noticing a bloody hole at his ribs, with blood flowing out.

His heavy Armor was pierced right through; even Kaleem hadn't clearly seen Ives' sword strike.

Clutching his wound, he endured the pain and flashed away from his original position, leaning against the wagon behind him.

Ives praised, "Quite the reaction, or should I say, your instinctive response is impressive. Your eyes probably couldn't catch my strike, but your body's instincts sensed the direction of danger, so you dodged the lethal position and barely survived."

Kaleem spat out some bloody froth, then without a word, clutched the Longsword with both hands and took the initiative to attack, slashing at Ives.

Due to the wound still bleeding, as he leaped, the blood from his wound gushed out more quickly.

This strike was even more powerful than before, and Ives could only parry this attack by gripping his sword with both hands.

The next second, Ives vanished, and immediately after, a wound appeared on Kaleem's left wrist, his Armor again pierced through.

Ives seemed in no hurry to kill him, holding his Longsword and laughing, "Killing you with one sword would be such a waste. After all, for a man of your caliber, I usually don't even get a chance to flatter you."

With that, another slash, and Kaleem's knee was injured again.

Kaleem immediately fell to one knee, using the Giant Sword to support himself upright.

Ives seemed displeased seeing Kaleem in such a state, and promptly struck another blow to disable Kaleem's other leg.

This time Kaleem could no longer support himself, and he knelt completely to the ground.

Breathing heavily, Kaleem didn't utter a word.

"If you had agreed to invest a little money in the project I mentioned back then, not only would you not be dying now, but you'd also get a share of these goods." Ives spoke in a relaxed tone, as if chatting with a friend.

Meanwhile, the battle between the army and the merchant caravan continued.

The caravan's guards were starting to struggle, with defenses in some areas already broken, allowing a large number of soldiers to rush in, killing anyone they saw amidst screams and wails.

"I won't collude with you, has Duke Theodore also joined?" Kaleem raised his head, using the Giant Sword to stabilize himself from falling.

Ives shook his head and said, "Of course not, he looks down on small businesses like this and disdains doing such business."

"Let those..." Kaleem was speaking when his eyes suddenly widened; he looked down to see the blade of a Longsword protruding from his chest.

Ives withdrew the Longsword, coldly watching Kaleem fall weakly as his eyes gradually lost their luster.

He sneered, then shouted to the soldiers around him, "Hurry up, don't let any of them escape!"

Herag stood calmly behind a wagon, wearing Light Armor, still chewing on smoked fish.

Ed squatted on the ground, terrified: "My lord, we should run away!"

"Run?" Herag laughed, "Look around; we're already surrounded, and there are Archers outside. Run out and you'll have your head shot through immediately. If it's a skilled Archer, he'll shoot an Arrow into your eye, and then the Arrow will mash your brain into pulp."

As he spoke, he tore off a piece of fish flesh from the smoked fish and quickly devoured it.

"What... What should we do..." Ed, seeing Herag still in the mood for fish, was anxious as an ant on a hot pan.

Herag naturally wasn't worried, as these people posed no threat to him; he could leave whenever he wanted.

He had witnessed the fight between Kaleem and Ives earlier, and also saw Kaleem's death.

Herag didn't step in to help; if it weren't for Kaleem's foolishness, the caravan wouldn't have lost so many people—there was no way he would rescue him.

Luo Kui, being a merchant familiar with industry rules from years of business, understood that if the goods were left, at worst they'd suffer a huge loss, but at least their lives would be spared, and the people in the caravan would survive.

As long as they're alive, there's a chance to earn it back.

But Kaleem, the fool, recognized Ives and blurted it out publicly.

This forced Ives into killing them all to silence witnesses.

Initially, Ives just intended to take advantage to gain something without intending to kill everyone, as that would only create more trouble for him.

But now, because of Kaleem's blunder, Ives was forced to take the dangerous route of massacre.

Some Adventurers in the caravan saw the situation turning bad and attempted to escape in the chaos.

However, as soon as they sprinted in one direction, a volley of Arrows rained down, turning them into pin-cushions on the ground.

This time, Ives was determined to kill everyone; he wouldn't let a single person escape.

If what happened here became known to Duke Theodore, Duke Theodore would definitely execute him in public to protect his own reputation.

Herag was still enjoying his smoked fish when the line of defense behind him was breached, and a group of soldiers poured in.

They spotted Herag, who was eating fish, and their faces showed strange expressions, then they rushed toward him with various weapons.

Herag sighed, "Ice Shield! Mana Shield! Dark Energy Shield!"

Three Shields instantly enveloped him, the blue, white, and black swirling around, fully encasing Herag.

Herag drew his Longsword and gazed at the soldiers.

He had no intention of using Magic; conserving a bit of Mana wherever possible was prudent—why waste Magic Power when a sword could solve the fight?

The soldiers halted in their tracks, unsure of what to do as they looked at Herag encased in Shields.

Herag didn't care what they thought, charging forward with his sword with incredible speed, toppling a large swath of soldiers on the spot.

The soldiers launched a counterattack, but their swords and blades had no effect on Herag, unable to even crack a Shield.

A round of arrows was also fired, but they bounced off Herag's Shields without any impact.

In just a few seconds, the ground was littered with soldier corpses.

The other soldiers, witnessing Herag's deadly efficiency, began to fear.

Most of them were unaware of Wizards' existence and had never seen Magic firsthand.

Seeing all their attacks ineffective against Herag, a sliver of despair surfaced in their hearts, swiftly followed by thoughts of retreat and withdrawal.

Chapter 93: Miracle

They are just soldiers, also humans, and will have fear. When facing an incomprehensible, invincible existence, they can only choose to flee.

After Herag killed all the charging soldiers, he did not pursue those who fled.

At this time, soldiers from other areas noticed the situation here and began to come over to support.

In their understanding, no matter how powerful the enemy is, as long as there are many of them and they cooperate well, they can take down the enemy.

Even a Great Knight must be wary of the power of an army.

Herag looked at the approaching soldiers, expressionless, holding a longsword heading straight for the crowd.

He was like a tiger entering a flock of sheep, unstoppable. These soldiers were like paper, unable to withstand even a single strike from Herag.

Ed, hiding under the carriage, was dumbfounded seeing this scene. Especially after seeing Herag covered in various colors of shields, he muttered and began to bow, continuously knocking his head on the ground beneath the carriage.

Luo Kui also noticed the commotion here, seeing firsthand how Herag shielded himself and then wreaked havoc.

"Mystic..." This word popped into his head.

Luo Kui had been in the trading business for many years, seeing and hearing everything.

But a Mystic, it was the first time he had seen it with his own eyes. Indeed, as powerful as the rumors said, ordinary people had no chance against him, it was a complete massacre on one side.

In his impression, Herag was just a fallen minor noble who used much of his savings for a chance to join the convoy to Doris Kingdom.

Luo Kui saw Herag carrying a sword, so he observed Herag's hands, finding no calluses at all.

He thought Herag probably had no real skill, the sword being mere decoration, as many nobles do.

Especially fallen nobles who always use flashy decorations to show they haven't completely fallen.

Anyone who seriously trains in swordsmanship would have calluses, a feature easily observed.

When Kaleem said that, Luo Kui felt like he was falling into an ice cavern, almost losing hope when the army broke through the defenses.

Then Herag suddenly emerged, slaughtered everyone, and turned out to be a Mystic, something Luo Kui could not have imagined.

On the other side, as Herag was slaughtering, Ives also noticed him.

"Mystic!" Ives instantly recognized Herag's identity and was shocked.

Having just been surprised by Kaleem, he never expected there was another Mystic in the convoy.

Such figures only exist in rumors, and yet he just happened to encounter one.

Ives initially intended to kill them all, but with another Mystic, he not only couldn't do that but also had to consider if he could survive himself.

"The rest of the convoy must be killed, but this Mystic might just be a coincidence being in the convoy. These Mystics generally don't meddle in the affairs of ordinary people, and even if he knows about this, he probably won't spread it around."

"There is room to maneuver!"

After weighing his options, Ives quickly had an idea.

He moved toward Herag and shouted, "Stop! Show no disrespect to this gentleman!"

The soldiers around Herag were dumbfounded by this, clearly seeing him as the one hunting them!

Hearing Ives' command, they began sprinting away from Herag.

After the soldiers ran far away, Herag also stopped, not continuing the slaughter.

Ives cautiously approached, removing his helmet, and smiled, "Sir, it's our first meeting. I am Ives Brand, Knight Commander under Duke Theodore. I wonder if you are acquainted with the Duke."

Herag replied expressionlessly, "I don't know him."

"Sir, I truly apologize; I didn't know you were with the convoy. It's a grave offense. How about this, to show my apology, all the goods and property of this convoy are yours, what do you think?"

To please Herag, Ives abandoned all interests, only wanting to survive.

Approaching Herag, as a Great Knight, he instinctively felt a great danger, a threat that sparked a sliver of fear from deep within.

"I'm not interested." Herag naturally rejected his offer, wanting only to reach Doris Kingdom as soon as possible.

Accepting the goods would mean implicitly agreeing with Ives and others' massacre of everyone in the convoy.

He had traveled with the convoy, and they had no enmity with him, even taking some care along the way. Although they were paid, there was no grudge.

Ives was stunned for a moment and then said, "Since you are not interested in these, may I know where you are headed? I can arrange someone to guide you."

Herag did not respond but turned to look behind Ives, a look of curiosity on his face.

Ives, seeing him staring behind him, was puzzled and turned around, witnessing an astonishing scene.

The previously deceased Kaleem was now emitting a milky white glow from his corpse.

Herag intently watched, observing many Light Energy Particles automatically flowing into Kaleem's body.

These Light Energy Particles quickly repaired Kaleem's body upon entering.

"Shenlan, check if Kaleem's body has any Demonized Items or other Magical Source."

Herag was puzzled, sensing no magical fluctuations from Kaleem.

Kaleem was an ordinary person with no training in any Meditation Method, yet these Light Energy Particles automatically entered his body and healed him.

If it were a Wizard specializing in Light Element, Herag could understand.

But Kaleem was merely a Knight Level; how could he possibly have such precise energy particle manipulation skills?

"No Magical Source detected." Shenlan responded.

Shenlan's detection matched Herag's observation, with no Magical Source on Kaleem's entire body, yet these Light Energy Particles just autonomously entered his body, healing him.

"Are you the Child of Light?" Herag couldn't find a reason, so he sarcastically remarked.

As more Light Energy Particles gathered, Kaleem was entirely enveloped in the milky white glow.

Ives, witnessing this miraculous scene, felt a tinge of unease.

The surrounding fights gradually ceased, everyone watched Kaleem, now a white cocoon of light.

Kaleem's corpse began to float, radiating a strong white light, yet the light wasn't glaring.

Many people had already laid down their weapons and started kneeling.

In their view, this was a divine phenomenon.

Chapter 94: Light Knight

In Herag's eyes, Kaleem was presently enveloped by a vast sea of Light Energy Particles, his entire being soaked in an ocean of Light Energy Particles.

The wounds on Kaleem's body quickly healed, the injuries closing rapidly, leaving only traces of blood on the surface while he was actually completely restored.

Countless Light Energy Particles infused into Kaleem's body, not only repairing him but continuously strengthening his flesh.

Kaleem slowly opened his eyes, feeling a warm sensation throughout his body.

His consciousness had just awoken from endless darkness, still a bit dazed, unaware of what had transpired.

His body, surrounded by voluminous Light Energy Particles, began to slowly descend from mid-air, eventually landing steadily on the ground.

Kaleem sat up with a puzzled expression, looking at his hands. The marks where his armor was pierced remained, and there was a hole in the armor at his chest where a wound had been.

He touched the wound, finding it completely healed with not even a scar remaining.

"Wasn't I dead? Why is this happening..." Kaleem was utterly confused.

His expression suddenly showed a hint of surprise as he clenched his fist and exclaimed, "I've broken through to a Great Knight?!"

"Shenlan, check Kaleem's body data," Herag said, intrigued by Kaleem's resurrection and curious about his current strength.

"Kaleem: Power 5.1, Agility 4.2, Constitution 6.1, Spirit 2.7, containing unknown Light Energy within his body."

Herag was somewhat taken aback by these figures; they were already more powerful than those of an ordinary Great Knight, and Kaleem had just broken through.

Typically, the stats for an average Great Knight would be around 3 to 4, but Kaleem's breakthrough stats soared directly to the 5 or 6 level.

"It should have something to do with those Light Energy Particles earlier; his body contains Light Energy, which is different from Magic Power and likely belongs to another power system."

Even Herag must now take Kaleem seriously, given his current body data and Light Energy; his true potential is unknown.

The most perplexing aspect for Herag was why so many Light Energy Particles automatically aided Kaleem.

"Handsome, strong, and yet foolish, able to resurrect and become even stronger—this guy must be the protagonist," Herag speculated.

He contemplated this seriously; if something like the World Will truly existed, then Kaleem could very well be favored by it.

Otherwise, it was hard to explain why the Light Energy Particles would automatically save Kaleem, implying that even if not favored by the World Will, Kaleem must have some connection to Light Element power.

"Captain Kaleem, are you alright?" Kaleem's team members immediately rushed over, surrounding him.

They had been fiercely engaged, unable to split themselves to save Kaleem when he fell gravely injured.

The anomaly surrounding Kaleem caused a temporary halt in the battle, offering them a chance to regroup and solidify their formation.

Kaleem smiled and said, "Not only am I alright, but I've now become a Great Knight."

The other members of the Adventurer Group immediately cheered, fully aware of the implications.

Any adventuring group or team with a Great Knight instantly rises to the top tier in terms of strength rating.

After exchanging a few words with his team, Kaleem said, "Enough about that for now, there are still matters to resolve."

He stepped forward from the crowd, looking at Ives: "Ives, I never thought you'd go so far as to kill everyone to silence them."

Kaleem then looked around at the corpses scattered about, his face full of guilt: "It's my fault, too impulsive, careless, leading to their deaths. Ives, I won't kill you; after all, you are Duke Theodore's Knight Commander. I will personally escort you back and have you face the gallows!"

With that, he pulled out the Giant Sword embedded nearby in the ground.

Ives laughed, "Send me to the gallows? You've just ascended to a Great Knight; I've been one for many years, you're still too green."

Despite his words, Ives prepared for battle without delay, donning his helmet and unsheathing his Longsword, fully concentrating on Kaleem.

Kaleem gripped his Giant Sword with both hands, emitting a white glow from his body, even the Giant Sword was shrouded in white light.

"Light Knight! Impossible! You're not with the Light Church..." Ives exclaimed, his face awash with shock.

"Light Knight?" It was Herag's first time hearing the term, as his knowledge in this area was rather limited.

Ives' expression turned grave, feeling immense pressure within.

Kaleem spoke in a deep voice, "So this is the power of a Light Knight? Strange..."

He charged at Ives, the Giant Sword in hand.

Ives reacted swiftly too, both hands gripping his Longsword as he lunged forward.

Kaleem's move was simple, delivering a straightforward, unadorned vertical slash.

However, this strike shone with dazzling white light, dissipating the White Mist, while the sunlight made Kaleem's entire being glimmer brightly.

In the next moment, a cold gleam flashed, leaving everyone but Herag unable to see precisely what occurred.

Ives' Longsword shattered into several pieces, his right hand flying off and landing close by.

"Ah!" Only upon seeing his arm detach and hit the ground did Ives begin to scream in agony.

Kaleem promptly swung the Giant Sword to disable Ives' left hand.

Ives' left hand was grotesquely twisted, clearly with broken bones.

"I said I wouldn't kill you, I'll take you personally to the gallows to atone for those who have died!" Kaleem thrust his Giant Sword into the ground, speaking each word deliberately.

Ives gritted his teeth, looking up with spite and malice in his eyes as he glared at Kaleem.

Kaleem's team quickly gathered around, borrowing chains from the caravan to bind Ives securely, also rendering his knees useless.

Though Ives had the strength to resist, he did nothing, recognizing its futility.

He passively allowed them to tie him up and cage him within an iron cell.

This particular cell was specially made, exceptionally sturdy, sometimes used by caravans to contain Demons, leaving the current state of Ives with almost no chance of escape.

As Kaleem secured Ives, Ives' soldiers, sensing the situation's dire turn, fled in all directions.

Their escape routes suggested none would return to Storm City, probably turning into true bandits instead.

Kaleem did not assign anyone to pursue them; the number of soldiers was too many, and with the caravan's heavy casualties, they were far too overwhelmed to chase them down.

Chapter 95: Substitute

This battle caused heavy losses for the caravan, with as many as sixty-two deaths.

Among these sixty-two, twenty-five were ordinary people, and the rest were all guards who died in battle.

Kaleem's adventurer group lost thirteen people; they faced the most enemies among the adventurer groups.

Because they were well-equipped, the army deliberately allocated considerable forces to deal with them during the attack.

The other adventurers lost twenty-four members, most of whom were on the weaker side.

Adventurers are especially shrewd; most of them wouldn't really risk their lives, focusing instead on surviving safely.

With this mindset, those slightly stronger could generally survive since the battle didn't last long.

Kaleem and Luo Kui commanded the caravan, arranging for their men to handle various tasks.

Kaleem now had considerable prestige; the previous scene had left an indelible impression on these people.

Seeing the matter was resolved, Herag went to find Ed hiding under the wagon and kicked him on the butt: "Get out quickly and prepare to drive us out of here."

Ed promptly climbed out, nodded, and smiled: "Okay, sir."

Since witnessing Herag's incredible powers, Ed held him in reverence akin to the gods.

Kaleem, with his whole body glowing white, indeed looked splendid, but Ed believed Herag was even more formidable.

Herag returned to his carriage and was about to get in when Kaleem ran over.

"Are you Sir Jelant? Thank you for saving us at that crucial moment; otherwise, who knows how many might have died," Kaleem said gratefully.

Herag glanced at him, nodded, and said, "Hmm."

He was curious about the kind of power Kaleem had, but had little interest in the man himself; he didn't like dealing with idiots, so he gave a curt reply and got into the carriage.

To Herag, befriending someone like Kaleem might be even more dangerous than making him an enemy, as who knows when such a person might cause your death.

Kaleem laughed awkwardly but didn't mind: "I guess mystics always have peculiar temperaments."

He hadn't seen Herag in action, but the discussion with adventurer group members made him realize Jelant was a mystic who had just killed many soldiers.

Upon learning this, Kaleem immediately came to express his gratitude.

Three hours later, the caravan set out again, but this time there was much less laughter and more of a somber atmosphere.

Luo Kui sat at the front of the lead carriage, looking worriedly ahead, eyes unfocused.

His long-time business partner had died in the recent battle, and when they found him, only half of his head remained.

"After this run, I'm going back to the countryside to enjoy life..." he remembered his friend saying before they set off.

...

Five days later, the caravan finally left the Dragon Ridge Highland area and entered a plain after descending the mountain.

Ives was still confined in a cage, given only a little water daily and fed once every three days to keep him alive.

As Luo Kui put it, a Great Knight doesn't starve to death so easily.

Ives was extremely weak, having been injured, with his limbs crippled, and starving, his spirit was at rock bottom.

Herag thought they should just finish him off with a blade; keeping him around would only cause trouble for themselves.

Because he accepted Luo Kui's job, Kaleem felt he had to complete this mission and safely escort the caravan to the Doris Kingdom.

He also needed to escort Ives back to Storm City to meet the gallows, and thus assigned two members of the adventurer group to keep a close eye on Ives the entire way.

Upon entering the plains, the caravan encountered more towns, no longer as sparsely populated as the Dragon Ridge Highland.

The caravan's supplies could now be replenished easily along the way, no longer a concern.

Even though the caravan had lost quite a number of people, its defensive strength was still considerable.

Especially after Kaleem's breakthrough to become a Great Knight, the journey saw much fewer troubles.

Some oblivious bandits did try to take a bite of this fat piece but to no avail.

Soon, a month had passed.

Herag sat calmly in the carriage and slowly opened his eyes.

"Shenlan, check my body data."

"Herag Merlin: Strength 3.9, Agility 4.0, Constitution 5.5, Spirit 12.4, Magic Power 100%."

Herag exhaled; the Meditation Practice of the seventh star was complete.

There was a significant boost in all physical stats, partly due to completing the seventh star and the continuous reinforcement from the Dark Energy Particles.

Just three stars left to illuminate all points of the first Array Map. I wonder what effects it will have by then.

His current concern was reaching the Meditation Practice requirement for the Third Class Wizard Apprentice without a Stone Giant's heart to refine Magic Potion.

The Stone Giant's heart couldn't be stored long, and couldn't be prepared while at the academy.

Herag wasn't sure if Stone Giants existed in the Doris Kingdom, and if he met the advancement requirements without obtaining their heart while the academy had no information, he'd have to rely on Shenlan Inference to find substitutes for the Stone Giant heart in Magic Potion Materials.

Magic Potion recipes aren't set in stone, and many ingredients can be substituted, sometimes resulting in even better effects.

Because some materials are extremely rare and not universally applicable, mature Magic Potion recipes need to consider feasibility. So some recipes replace rare ingredients with less effective but easier-to-obtain ones.

This is common in Magic Potion, with Wizards often experimenting with alternative materials in various recipes, where many peculiar formulas are born from such experiments.

Having completed the Meditation Practice for the seventh star, Herag closed his eyes again to start the Meditation Practice for the eighth star.

Ives had a difficult time, as being a Great Knight, his injuries healed quickly.

But with someone always watching him, the moment his injuries nearly healed, they would break his limbs again.

This repeat torture left Ives in a terrible state.

Due to the rare bandit raids on this journey, Kaleem had more energy to keep an eye on Ives.

Ives also sought a chance to escape, but found no opportunities at all.

His injuries would always relapse, leaving no hope in sight.

However, he didn't give up, his will to survive growing stronger, just waiting for the right chance.

Half a month later, in the middle of the night, just two weeks away from reaching Doris Kingdom.

Herag, while meditating, suddenly opened his eyes and looked towards the direction of the cage holding Ives.

Ives was slumped inside, hands hanging weakly, just like before.

Watching him was a girl named Lizi, a member of Kaleem's adventurer group and an ardent fan of his.

Tonight was her turn to guard Ives, a rather boring chore.

Ives had his limbs broken many times, with no ability to escape, leaving no pressure on the guard.

Chapter 96: Bone

Lizi wore her hair in a ponytail, with a longsword strapped to her waist.

She always wanted to learn swordsmanship from Kaleem, but Kaleem used a giant sword, which was not suitable for her.

Despite the boring task, she remained dutiful, pacing back and forth beside the iron cage, occasionally checking on Ives's condition.

This task was assigned by Kaleem, and she was determined to complete it perfectly, not wanting to leave a bad impression on Kaleem.

The clouds were thick tonight, and the moon was hidden behind them, making the night particularly dark.

"Water..." Ives suddenly uttered weakly.

Lizi immediately turned her head and asked, "What?"

"Water... just give me a little water, I feel like I'm dying." Ives said weakly, gasping heavily like he could die at any moment.

Lizi refused, "No, you can only drink water once a day, and you already had it today."

Ives pleaded, "Please, I'm getting weaker by the day. Drinking water once a day is no longer enough. I know my body best, cough... cough... just a little water, or I'm really going to... die..."

He spoke intermittently, exhaling more than inhaling, looking like he was really about to go.

Lizi hesitated, "Kaleem wants him alive to send him personally to the gallows. If he dies now, Kaleem will surely be displeased. Just a little water..."

"Then I'll get you some." She remembered the water bucket was not far away, and people would scoop a ladle of water to drink whenever they felt thirsty.

Lizi went over in a few steps, scooped a ladle of water, and steadily carried it to the iron cage.

The iron cage was small and low on the ground. Lizi held the ladle above the cage and said, "Open your mouth."

"Thank you..."

Ives quietly said before slowly opening his mouth.

Lizi started tilting the ladle, and water began to drip down.

Suddenly, a minuscule dark shadow flashed by.

Lizi's eyes widened in surprise, her beautiful eyes bulging round, then she lunged forward, collapsing on top of the iron cage.

A bloody hole appeared on her forehead, and another on the back of her head, from which crimson blood flowed.

Ives looked coldly at the corpse, glanced around, then laboriously extended his deformed left hand, struggling to hook the keys on Lizi's waist that included the key to the iron cage.

He had been hiding a tiny bone shard in his mouth all along.

Ives usually ate the same food as slaves, which was leftovers from a slop bucket.

The slop bucket had mixed types of food, and one day he found a small bone shard.

After finding the bone, he immediately hid it nonchalantly under his tongue.

The guards watching him never checked his mouth, so the bone had been hidden for more than twenty days and was crucial for his escape.

As Lizi approached to pour water, the moment he opened his mouth, he used all his strength to shoot the bone shard, piercing through Lizi's head.

With experience in concealing his progress in recovering his limbs, he deliberately masked the progress of his left hand's recovery, as a delay of one or two days wouldn't be noticed, merely thought to be the result of long-term injury healing progressively slower.

Although he was crippled and gravely injured, he was still a Great Knight.

Even without the use of his arms and legs, he still had his mouth and chest to exert strength.

To deal with someone like Lizi, who wasn't even a Knight, he only needed functional body parts above his neck.

It was at the moment when he shot through Lizi's head that Herag sensed the commotion through Shenlan.

Ives strained to extend his hand outside the cage, struggling to hook the bunch of keys.

He pressed his whole body against the cage, just to extend his arm a little further.

As he was about to hook the keys with his fingers, they were snatched away by a hand that suddenly appeared.

Ives stared blankly, raising his head to see Herag smiling at him.

"Give me... I'm begging you..." Ives pleaded genuinely this time.

Herag smiled, "Seems like you really want to get out, so focused that you didn't notice me walking up next to you."

"Please..." Ives pleaded softly.

He didn't dare speak loudly, knowing that alerting anyone else would dash all hopes of escape.

Herag spread his hands, "Sorry, I won't meddle in your affairs. I'm stopping you from escaping only because it would delay our travel if you got away."

He didn't care whether Ives lived or died, nor did he care about his escape.

The main issue was that if Ives escaped, Kaleem would surely make every effort to recapture him upon finding Lizi dead, and that would definitely disrupt the caravan's schedule.

If Herag had to travel alone, it would still be half a month's journey, and preparing supplies would also be a hassle.

So to minimize trouble for himself and avoid disrupting the journey, he decisively stopped Ives's escape attempt.

"Kaleem, your captive's trying to escape, and you're still sleeping?" Herag's voice wasn't loud, but it was particularly clear amidst the quiet night.

Several nearby caravans immediately lit up, and some people, disheveled and drowsy, grabbed lamps to get off and check the situation.

Kaleem rushed over and immediately saw Lizi collapsed on the cage with eyes wide in anger, "Lizi!"

He rushed forward to hold Lizi's body, and after glancing at the wound on Lizi's head, he felt his heart sink, knowing she was beyond saving.

"Who did this!" Kaleem roared in fury.

He always treated Lizi like a sister; to him, Lizi was a pure and cute girl whom he took care of in many ways.

With Lizi's tragic death, Kaleem was overwhelmed with anger and sadness.

Ives quickly crawled to the other side of the cage, not daring to look at Kaleem.

"Was it you?" Kaleem noticed Ives's movement in the cage and shouted angrily.

By now, almost everyone in the caravan was awake, and many people approached, with several women gasping and covering their mouths upon seeing Lizi's body in Kaleem's arms.

Ives shook his head frantically, "No... it wasn't..."

"It was Ives who did it; the weapon was probably something bone-related hidden in his mouth," Herag said from the side.

Kaleem glanced at the wound again, then looked at the ladle on the ground and the traces of water, quickly piecing together the entire event based on Herag's information.

"Ives!" he roared, placing Lizi's body aside, then brutally tore apart the iron cage, pulling Ives out like a chick.

Chapter 97: Arrival

Kaleem grabbed Ives and slammed him onto the ground with great force. A clear cracking sound emerged, and Ives was bent; it was apparent that his back had been broken.

Kaleem then punched Ives in the chest, causing him to spit out a lot of blood. It was unclear how many of his ribs were broken.

Kaleem paused, ready to continue, then slowly calmed down.

Herag glanced at him and said, "You asked someone who isn't even a knight to guard a great knight. No matter what, a great knight is still a great knight. How can a normal person deal with that?"

Kaleem nodded, showing a look of remorse on his face: "I didn't consider things carefully, it's my responsibility. Starting today, I'll personally guard him."

"Still guarding him? Just kill him with one stroke and save the trouble." Herag said somewhat speechlessly.

Kaleem said with determination, "I must send him to the gallows and execute him in front of everyone in Storm City, otherwise, I wouldn't be worthy of those souls who died by his hand."

Herag nonchalantly replied, "Suit yourself, as long as it doesn't delay our journey."

Kaleem nodded silently, crouched to pick up Lizi's body, and walked towards the nearby woods, seemingly preparing to bury her there.

Herag returned to the carriage and continued his meditation.

Ives was tied up again by the members of Kaleem's adventurer group, this time even more securely, with his crippled left hand bound behind his back.

They also found a new iron cage, as the previous one was broken by Kaleem, and put Ives inside it.

As Kaleem was digging a pit with a shovel, the adventurer group sent six people to guard Ives.

Kaleem silently dug the pit with the shovel, not saying a word throughout the process. His companions nearby offered help, but he refused, insisting on digging the pit himself to bury Lizi.

The other people in the caravan watched the scene like a farce and went back to sleep after watching.

After that night, Ives's situation became more miserable. The once-daily water supply became twice a day, and meals were given every three or four days.

Kaleem kept his word, staying by the cage and personally guarding Ives.

Kaleem was somewhat dispirited during this time, speaking less, seemingly filled with guilt over Lizi's death, unable to let go.

"What's the point of feeling guilty? You should have dealt with the problem earlier, or else it would harm both others and yourself." Herag shook his head, grumbling in his heart while eating a meal after stepping off the carriage.

The following half-month journey was quite peaceful. Ives had completely lost hope; even the food he ate was checked to ensure no bones or similar items were used as weapons.

Kaleem, to be safe, knocked out all of Ives's teeth, leaving none.

He did this mainly because Herag casually mentioned, "There's no bone in the meal, but he still has some in his mouth."

As soon as Herag said this, Ives stared at him with wide eyes.

Upon hearing this, Kaleem pondered, and soon there were continuous screams from Ives.

After the half-month journey, the caravan finally reached the Doris Kingdom's border.

Brown City is a border city on the eastern side of the Doris Kingdom, with a population of around five thousand.

Although the population is small, the entry inspection is very strict.

Everyone entering must have their identity documents strictly checked; without official entry procedures from the Violet Kingdom, they cannot enter the Doris Kingdom.

Members of Kaleem's adventurer group and other adventurers did not qualify to enter the Doris Kingdom since they hadn't completed the necessary procedures.

After escorting the caravan to Brown City, their mission was considered completed.

After completing some handover procedures with Luo Kui, Kaleem immediately set off with his adventurer group members to return.

Of course, Ives was certainly brought along.

Many people in the caravan were preparing to enter the country and lined up for inspection.

Herag was also in the queue, and the people around him kept a distance, fearing to offend him.

Ed stood at a distance, calling out somewhat sadly, "Sir..."

Herag glanced at him, thought for a moment, then waved to Ed.

Upon seeing this, Ed immediately ran over: "Do you have any instructions, sir?"

"Your slavery documents are with Luo Kui?" Herag asked.

"Yes, sir." Ed nodded, not understanding why Herag was asking this.

Herag pondered and said to Ed, "Help me hold my place in line; I need to take care of something."

Ed obediently got in line, feeling that Herag didn't need him to hold the spot.

Herag would only be gone for a moment, and others wouldn't dare complain or have any opinions upon his return.

Everyone in line here was from the caravan and knew how many soldiers Herag had killed alone.

Herag found Luo Kui and said, "How much for Ed? I'll buy him."

He thought since Ed had driven for him for three months and he was quite satisfied, helping him shed his slave identity before departure would be a trivial task.

Luo Kui was a bit surprised but then smiled, "Since Jelant likes him, consider it a gift to you; no need to discuss money."

He then instructed his men to bring Ed's slave identity documents and handed them to Herag.

Herag was unreserved, smiling, "Thank you then."

After returning to the line, he gave the slave identity documents to Ed: "What must be done to remove your slave status?"

Hearing this, Ed was incredulous and said excitedly, "I... I..."

"Don't get so excited; just tell me." Herag patted his shoulder.

Ed wiped his excited tears: "As long as the master agrees, I can obtain a new identity in a place. However..."

"However what?" Herag asked.

Ed pointed to the slave mark on his face: "With this, others will still see me as a slave, even if I have a legitimate resident identity."

With a slave mark, it's indelible unless the whole piece of flesh is removed.

But Ed's mark was on his face and it covered a large area, so it was impossible to remove it without leaving half a face.

Herag nodded, "I understand, you follow me for now. I'll handle the mark later."

For Herag, erasing the mark wasn't hard; letting Shenlan deduce a random potion formula could yield countless recipes to remove the mark.

Herag wasn't just proficient in alchemy; he also knew typical medicine, which was basic introductory knowledge in magic potion and herbalism.

Shenlan's database stored countless basic medical knowledge, thanks to Herag's effort to input this knowledge while in Nosentan Academy's library.

Chapter 98: Ryan City

Herag would not stay in Brown City, because the border was not so peaceful and the people were quite complicated.

He needed to go a bit further into the Doris Kingdom, and for a carriage, a driver was necessary, Ed was just right.

Herag planned to settle in a suitable place and simultaneously conduct magic potion experiments while inquiring about the Moonstone Grass.

The Moonstone Grass, like Dragon's Beard Grass, is a high-tier magic potion material, extremely rare.

He only knew that the Doris Kingdom produced Moonstone Grass, but was not sure exactly where.

The Doris Kingdom is so large, he didn't know where to start looking for a while.

The queue for the border check was moving very slowly; Herag had waited for more than half an hour before it was his turn.

"Jelant Logan?" The one responsible for the check was a middle-aged man. After carefully reviewing the identity proof and entry documents, he looked up at Herag.

The age and external features roughly matched, and after confirming that there were no issues, he stamped the document, allowing Herag to legally enter.

In this era, there were no photographs; identity proofs only recorded general physical characteristics, and a simple comparison was considered a completed identity check.

This Jelote's physical characteristics were similar to Herag's, and most importantly, they both had black hair.

In this world, black hair was rare, and no one knew where Milo found a nobleman with black hair.

So Herag's identity didn't need much scrutiny; as soon as you saw black hair, it was unmistakably him, a very distinctive feature.

"I also have a slave." Herag showed Ed's slave identity proof, pointing to Ed behind him.

The middle-aged man glanced at Ed and didn't even look at the slave identity proof, directly said: "Hmm, one slave is fine. If there were more, it would involve slave trading, which requires extra tax. You can go in."

Herag took back his stamped identity proof, returned to the carriage, and said to Ed: "Continue driving."

"Yes, master!" Ed was very excited, jumped directly onto the carriage, and grabbed the reins.

The carriage slowly entered Brown City. After Herag bought some supplies at several shops in the city, he left Brown City straight away.

Herag sat in the carriage, holding a map of the entire Doris Kingdom, marked with various cities and major roads.

His destination was a city named Ryan, located at the intersection of several major transport routes, a transportation hub.

Because of its geographical location, Ryan had been a large city since ancient times.

The Doris Kingdom now had stable governance with very few major disturbances.

A stable kingdom leads to population growth and more prosperous businesses.

Ryan had a resident population of seventy to eighty thousand, and all kinds of goods were available in the city, making life convenient.

Brown was not far from Ryan, and the carriage could reach there in six to seven days along a major road.

Herag occasionally lifted the curtain to observe the surroundings while on the road.

He discovered that the Doris Kingdom was indeed unusual, as he rarely saw any displaced people.

There were often villages alongside the major roads, and the villagers seemed to be in good spirits, rarely looking pale or thin.

However, it could also be because these villages were near the main roads, so their basic living security was not a concern.

"The Doris Kingdom, under the jurisdiction of Dream Island."

Herag recalled the information he had gained before departing, the Doris Kingdom was within the jurisdictional range of the wizard organization Dream Island.

Dream Island was the wizard organization Dino belonged to, and Herag arrived at the Kala Continent by his ship.

He had spent several months on the ship and had a pretty good impression of Dino.

The main activity area of Dream Island was at sea, with relatively little contact with other wizard organizations like Moonlight Forest and Green Cottage.

The West Coast of the Doris Kingdom had a long coastline, with numerous ports, making sea trade very prosperous.

Every day countless ships set off from the West Coast, though not every ship could safely return to port.

Seven days later, Herag could hear the bustling noise of a market from a distance.

He lifted the curtain to sit at the carriage head and saw a lively scene.

Ryan City had tall city walls, with markets on both sides of the main road outside the walls.

Countless people were setting up stalls and selling, with people coming and going, creating a din of voices.

Herag observed for a moment; these people's outfits were obviously different and clearly from all corners of the land, hence the varied clothing styles.

As soon as his carriage approached the market area, some merchants came over, holding their goods and began to shout to sell.

"Sir, take a look at the quality fabric!"

"The fine liquor from Cui Feng County, young brother, would you like to try some?"

...

These people crowded around, forcing Ed to slow down, otherwise, he might accidentally run over them.

Selling fabric and liquor was one thing, but a wily-looking uncle with a towel wrapped around his head also came over, whispering: "Young man, I have beautiful girls here, do you want to take a look? I have all styles!"

Herag smiled, pulled down the curtain, and returned to lie in the carriage.

Seeing Herag return to the carriage, these merchants didn't continue to push their sales; they didn't expect a slave driving the carriage to purchase their goods.

The carriage halted at the city gate; Herag jumped down from the carriage, handed over his various documents to the soldiers at the gate.

After a careful check by the soldier confirming nothing was wrong, he was allowed to enter.

Upon entering Ryan City, Herag's first impression was that the roads here were very spacious, wide enough to accommodate three carriages side by side.

Herag first found an inn to settle in; he originally wanted to book two rooms, but Ed insisted on staying next to the carriage.

He said he was afraid things might get stolen from the carriage, but Herag felt it was because Ed didn't think he deserved to stay in an inn room, which didn't match his identity.

In this era, many concepts were deeply ingrained, and Herag knew if he insisted too much on his own way, he might be seen as an oddity, so he might as well adapt to local customs.

Herag came to the first floor and saw the innkeeper was also present.

The innkeeper was a thin middle-aged man, who greeted Herag enthusiastically as he came down: "Guest, are you here to order some food? Let us know what you want, and we'll bring it to your room once it's prepared."

"Hmm, just prepare any two dishes and bring them to my room later. Also, make sure to prepare something for the slave who came with me," said Herag.

The innkeeper listened attentively, quickly wrote it down on a piece of paper, and handed it to an assistant beside him: "Please wait a bit, it will be over soon."

Leaning against the table, Herag continued chatting with the innkeeper: "Do you know where I can rent a house?"

"Are you looking to rent a house? I can help introduce you. I know quite a few people in that area," the innkeeper said with a smile.

Herag nodded: "Yes, then please help with an introduction."

Chapter 99: Magic Potion Experiment

"What type of house would the guest like to rent? I can help introduce the right person to you," the innkeeper said.

Herag pondered for a moment and said, "Preferably a larger yard, in a quieter area, not too noisy."

The innkeeper thought for a moment, "Got it, I'll contact someone for you, and I should be able to take you to see it tomorrow."

"Thank you." Herag placed five silver coins on the table.

The innkeeper smiled as he collected them, "No need to be so polite."

Dinner was quickly served, with a pot of stewed meat. Herag didn't recognize the side dish; it was a type of leafy green vegetable he hadn't seen before.

There was also a plate of pumpkin pancakes, still warm, indicating they were freshly made.

In the middle of the night, Herag noticed that the city of Ryan didn't have a curfew. Even at such a late hour, people were still walking around on the streets, and a few drunkards were making loud noises.

The next morning, Herag opened his eyes.

He sensed that the innkeeper had received someone, who appeared to be the person regarding the house rental.

But since Herag wasn't up yet, the guest waited downstairs.

When Herag came upstairs, the innkeeper immediately approached and introduced, "This is Mr. Jelant, looking to rent a quiet yard here. This is Colun, who has many properties in the western part of the city and can show you around."

Colun wore a headscarf, had a round face, and a large belly, probably weighing nearly three hundred pounds.

When he smiled, his eyes narrowed to slits. To Herag, he said, "Mr. Jelant, I have properties ranging from ten silver coins to ten gold coins per month. Which price range are you looking for?"

"Ten gold coins a month? That's quite expensive," Herag hadn't expected properties to be so costly.

After considering, he said, "Within one gold coin, preferably quiet."

Colun's small eyes darted around, "I understand; I think Mr. Jelant might like this place."

His carriage was waiting outside, and Herag got on to head west.

The carriage passed through several streets and a market area, crossed two main roads, and finally arrived at the destination.

This was a residential district, but the houses had larger yards, and the distances between the yards were relatively far.

Colun explained, "This is the wealthy district. You won't see any vagrants here, and soldiers guard the entrance. Soldiers patrol daily, so you won't have to worry about drunkards barging into your home unexpectedly."

"It's very quiet here. This yard's monthly rent is one gold coin. Although it's somewhat expensive, it perfectly fits Mr. Jelant's requirements. What do you think?"

Herag observed the surroundings; indeed, it was very quiet, with little foot traffic.

He entered the yard to take a look. This yard had three houses, which were clean inside, indicating they were regularly cleaned.

Herag inspected each place and found no issues, so he said, "We'll take this one, rent it for three months first."

Since subsequent arrangements were uncertain, he rented for three months first and would assess later.

Colun didn't expect him to decide so readily, and his eyes crinkled with laughter, "Okay, no problem. Would Mr. Jelant need a maid to do laundry and cook? I can arrange that for just ten silver coins a month."

"Sure, please handle it for me," Herag didn't want to spend time on such matters, so he left it to Colun to manage.

It was just spending some money, and he didn't mind Colun earning a bit more since time was more important to him.

By that afternoon, Herag had completed the paperwork and moved into the yard.

Colun worked quickly, and a woman in her thirties named Judy soon reported for duty. She was from the Ryan slums.

Though not young and pretty, she was skilled at managing household chores.

Herag specifically requested this because he was wary of Colun sending a young, attractive but ineffective woman.

Colun understood immediately and selected Judy, a competent worker, grasping Herag's core needs.

After moving in, Herag designated the largest house as his living quarters.

The other two slightly smaller houses, he assigned the left one to Ed and Judy for their living use; it had four rooms, sufficient for them.

The small right house was marked as off-limits for Ed and Judy, as it was Herag's magic potion experimentation space.

Life quickly settled into a routine. Judy handled the purchasing of supplies Herag needed, while Ed drove the carriage to transport supplies, also tending to the horses daily.

Herag stood in one of the small house's rooms, where magic potion equipment was neatly organized.

As he did in Moonlight Forest, he divided the room into sections for different stages of magic potion refining.

He meticulously followed the experimental protocols taught by Larry, strictly adhering to those standards to date, and having Shenlan likewise rigorously monitor himself.

"100 milliliters of pure water, 30 milliliters of Mist Tree Man juice, 10 grams of Dragon's Tooth Grass powder, 3 drops of Poisonous Violet juice, 5 drops of Mandala juice."

This was a magic potion formula inferred by Shenlan, designed to accelerate Herag's meditation speed, a custom formula tailored based on Herag's constitution and meditation method.

Herag checked the formula, "These are all basic magic potion materials, and I have them."

Before leaving, his space ring contained an assortment of basic magic potion materials from Larry, ensuring no shortage for practice afterward.

Herag prepared the corresponding materials according to the formula.

"30 milliliters of Mist Tree Man juice..."

He retrieved a branch from the space ring, taken from the Mist Tree Man.

To extract the juice, Herag needed to utilize magic power to draw it out.

He picked up a test tube, then began channeling a stream of magic power into the branch to 'pull' the juice from it.

The pale yellow juice quickly seeped from the branch, drop by drop, into the test tube.

Watching the measurement, Herag stopped drawing when it reached just over 30 milliliters and placed the branch back.

"10 grams of Dragon's Tooth Grass powder."

Herag took out a delicate balance scale and a stalk of Dragon's Tooth Grass from the space ring.

Processing Dragon's Tooth Grass powder was a bit tricky. It needed to be thoroughly dried and then ground to powder.

During roasting, the temperature couldn't be too high, or it would deactivate key components of the Dragon's Tooth Grass; too low, and moisture wouldn't be effectively removed.

This issue was easily solved by Herag, who could now manipulate fire energy particles.

He set up a beaker over asbestos mesh, then used magic power to gather fire energy particles to ignite a small flame.

With Shenlan's assistance, he could precisely control the temperature, slowly roasting the Dragon's Tooth Grass.

Chapter 100: Starry Sky Potion

Ten minutes later, Herag timely dispersed the fire energy particles and extinguished the flames.

He took out a medicine pestle and ground the Dragon's Tooth Grass in the beaker into powder, then accurately measured out 10 grams of Dragon's Tooth Grass Powder using a balance scale, placed it into a test tube, and set it aside for use.

For the next two hours, Herag was busy processing these magic potion materials.

After processing them, he began the formal magic potion refining process.

Herag poured the extracted Mist Tree Man Juice into a reaction bottle, then infused magic power until the juice started to emit white smoke.

The white smoke began as thin wisps and quickly erupted into a small mushroom cloud.

At this moment, Herag immediately dripped in Poisonous Violet Juice and Mandala Juice.

The mushroom cloud instantly turned purple and then quickly retracted back into the reaction bottle.

The originally light yellow Mist Tree Man Juice now turned grass green.

Herag then added the Dragon's Tooth Grass powder, continuing to infuse magic power.

This process lasted a little longer, requiring a continuous infusion of magic power for twenty minutes. Although the time was long, the magic power consumption was not much, only consuming 8% of Herag's magic power.

The Dragon's Tooth Grass powder danced in the grass-green solution and began to continuously decompose and merge into the solution with the infusion of magic power.

After twenty minutes, all the Dragon's Tooth Grass powder had dissolved into the solution, and the grass-green solution turned back to light yellow.

Herag shook the reaction bottle, and the solution's color turned sky blue.

"This color is good." According to the refining process provided by Shenlan, the sky blue solution indicated the magic potion was successfully refined.

Herag poured the finished magic potion into a test tube and then said, "Shenlan, check if this magic potion can speed up my meditation."

"Analyzing and checking..."

Herag only needed to infuse magic power into the solution, and Shenlan could begin analyzing the components.

Unlike before, when he needed to apply herbs on his skin to detect components.

"After checking, the potion does not possess the effect of speeding up the primary meditation. The properties of Dragon's Tooth Grass and Poisonous Violet Juice conflicted in this magic potion. Although these two components can complement each other, it's recommended to replace Poisonous Violet Juice with the root juice of Demon Flower."

A few minutes later, Shenlan provided the analysis result.

Herag pondered, "It seems that the deduced formula is indeed not 100% accurate. The characteristics of these magic potion materials vary across different formulas. Without actual experimentation, no one knows the real effect. Even Shenlan's deductions are based on existing data."

He was not discouraged and continued to improve the formula as per Shenlan's suggestions, since he had plenty of Demon Flowers.

Demon Flower is considered a high-tier magic potion material, generally used as the main ingredient, but in this formula, it only serves as an auxiliary ingredient.

If it were regular magic potion research, it certainly wouldn't be crafted like this, but Shenlan's suggestions were tailored to Herag's specific situation.

With so many Demon Flowers in his space ring, it was just right for use.

After modifying the formula, Herag experimented again, and five hours passed by this time.

...

"Shenlan, check if this magic potion can speed up my meditation," Herag said, holding a test tube containing a black-purple solution, which was the result after the improved formula.

"Analyzing and checking..."

Five minutes later, Shenlan provided the result: "After checking, the potion can speed up the meditation speed of the Starry Sky Meditation Technique. The method of use and dosage: mix one milliliter of this potion with two hundred milliliters of pure water, and the subject will speed up their meditation speed after consumption."

"Experiment successful!" Herag felt a bit excited; this was his first self-developed magic potion formula, bringing him a sense of accomplishment.

After the excitement, he quickly calmed down and continued to ask, "Shenlan, does consuming this potion have any side effects?"

"After checking, the side effect is that the subject's X desire will increase; it's recommended to release it appropriately," Shenlan replied.

Herag was speechless: "It's such a side effect; it must be due to the Demon Flower."

After contemplating for a while, he decided to use the potion; the side effect was minimal and almost negligible, and solving it was very simple.

"Shenlan, name this potion Starry Sky Potion," Herag named the potion.

Unfortunately, this potion only works for him.

Shenlan customized it based on his constitution and his meditation method, so it won't be effective if others use it, making it impossible to market and sell.

"Named, recorded in the database."

After naming it, Herag took some pure water to prepare a dose.

The Starry Sky Potion was dripped into the pure water, quickly spreading like ink, turning the entire cup of pure water black-purple in a blink.

He picked up the potion, took a small sip, and held it in his mouth.

"Shenlan, check again if the Starry Sky Potion has any issues or if the results match the previous detection." To be safe, Herag had Shenlan check once more.

"After checking, the results are consistent with the previous ones," Shenlan confirmed.

With the result, Herag swallowed it.

He didn't continue to drink but waited to see if there were any changes.

The body showed no discomfort; he tried meditating and found the meditation speed indeed slightly increased.

Half an hour later, the body was still very normal; all indicators apart from a slightly elevated adrenaline level were normal.

After verifying everything was correct, Herag drank the remaining potion.

In an instant, he felt his perception sharpened considerably.

Herag could sense energy particles at a greater distance, and the number of energy particles he could sense increased.

When he entered meditation, he found that the stars above seemed closer, and his perception was keener.

The cumulative effects of these enhancements mean that his meditation speed increased significantly, at least doubled his previous rate.

In Herag's mind, the eighth star, which originally required four months to complete meditation, according to the original schedule.

But with the current speed, it would only take approximately two months to complete the meditation.

After verifying the potion's effect, Herag hurried to meditate, fully immersing himself.

The Starry Sky Potion's effect lasted for seven hours, conveniently matching the time it took to complete a meditation session.

In the morning, Herag slowly opened his eyes.

The effect of the Starry Sky Potion was exceptionally good, leaving Herag very satisfied.

The only imperfection was a slightly increased heart rate.

Of course, for men who often have more desire than strength, this isn't a side effect at all.

But Herag, with his physical condition, didn't need this effect, and it became a burden instead.

He took a deep breath, forcing himself to calm down.

The side effect was a bit more significant than he imagined, and his mind kept replaying scenes from the night at Count Hu En's, which he found somewhat difficult to suppress.