

System 961

Chapter 961: Attack on Morgan Town _4

"Adding the Free People in Morgan Town, the peasants in the destroyed manors, and the slaves exchanged by the Lord with the Slave Merchant..."

"Land and labor are precisely what you need the most!"

The manor lords' expressions were subtle, momentarily at a loss for words.

They're manor lords, that's true, but they're not fools!

As soon as Jon Zuck spoke, he wanted to take nearly half of the salt mine's output.

Leaving only forty percent of the profit for them to divide among eight people.

Even if Morgan Town has an abundance of labor and land, what's the point?

If you want labor to exert effort, you must supply them with food.

If you want land to produce crops, you need to cultivate and plant.

Isn't it simpler and more convenient for Jon Zuck to directly take the salt mine's output?

Seeing the others speechless.

Jon's eyes narrowed slightly, his body leaned back, resting on the chair.

"Everyone, do you have objections to this distribution method?"

With Jon's words falling, the atmosphere in the conference room subtly shifted once again.

Tense, oppressive, indisputable.

Zock spoke first again, "Viscount, Zock has no objections."

"Everything follows the arrangement of the Viscount."

A few manor lords couldn't help but roll their eyes, coldly snorting in their hearts.

Jon urged, "If you have objections, speak now."

"If there are no objections, then let's proceed to the next topic!"

Feeling the impatience in Jon's words, the manor lords finally responded.

"Following the Viscount's arrangement."

Jon nodded, "That's good then."

"The next topic is when to wage war against Morgan Town, and the number of soldiers needed..."

"Before proceeding with that topic, I'd like to invite Zok Manor Lord, who has conducted preliminary investigations on Morgan Town, to discuss the situation!"

The manor lords' gazes shifted, looking at Zock Connally.

Zock, without any hesitation, stood up and nodded towards Jon on the main seat.

Then he began speaking to everyone.

"Ladies and gentlemen, according to the intelligence I've gathered, the manor lords in Morgan Town have all been wiped out by Lynn."

"The entire Morgan Town is desolate, almost devoid of the bustle and prosperity that a town with thousands of Free People should have, resembling more of a dead town!"

"According to the spies I sent out, returning several reports."

"Currently, there are only hundreds of farmers harvesting in Morgan Town."

"Aside from harvesting farmers, there is an armed soldiers guard!"

Everyone remained silent, quietly listening.

After glancing at a few manor lords, Zock continued speaking.

"But unlike ordinary armed soldiers, they are a fully armored group of soldiers."

"Based on the initial estimates, the number of fully armored soldiers is over two hundred."

"Not just Morgan Town, the former Frank Manor is also guarded by similarly armored soldiers."

"How many soldiers are in the Manor Castle is not yet known."

"Judging solely from the soldiers on the Manor Castle walls, they certainly aren't fewer than those guarding Morgan Town!"

Zock concluded, "In other words, we will be facing a fully armed group of armored soldiers, whose numbers are unknown!"

Upon hearing this.

All the manor lords' eyes widened, filled with incredulous expressions.

"Fully armed armored soldiers? More than hundreds??"

"This... how is this possible?"

"Hundreds are just the initial estimation, who knows exactly how many armored soldiers there are?"

"The soldiers in my manor only wear Leather and Cloth Armor, how can they possibly fight armored soldiers? Isn't this suicide?"

"So many armored soldiers... This so-called Lord must have exchanged a large amount of high-quality iron ore or armor for fine salt!"

Despite their longing for fine salt.

They are even more aware of the dangers of combat with armored soldiers.

If on open ground, a fully armed armored soldier can easily deal with three to five unarmored soldiers!

While the manor lords hesitated.

Jon spoke to everyone, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the main reason why I have summoned you all!"

"I need to consolidate all your power and crush this Lord conclusively, to eliminate future troubles!"

...

Until late at night.

Manor lords donned in silk brocade exited the Viscount's Castle.

They bore varied expressions, without any conversation.

Arriving at the carriages parked in the castle's empty square.

With the assistance of coachmen and Guards, they entered their respective carriages.

As the coachmen shouted to drive the horses, the carriages moved out of the Viscount's Castle.

In just a few minutes.

The once bustling square with carriages and standing guards quieted down.

The third floor of the castle.

On the balcony outside the conference room.

Jon Zuck and Zock Connally stood.

Watching the manor lords' carriages disappear at the corner of the city street.

Jon's gaze shifted, looking at Zock, he spoke in a deep voice.

"Today's performance wasn't bad, I'll spare you from the tax penalty."

Zock's eyebrows raised, somewhat delighted, "Thank you for your pardon, Viscount!"

Zock felt slightly emotional.

Indeed, the performance in the conference room was worth everything.

Jon casually hummed and continued speaking.

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"Inform them, as soon as spring farming concludes, immediately gather all soldiers from the manor and launch an attack on Morgan Town!"

"At the same time, continue to increase the number of spies infiltrating Morgan Town."

"I need to know exactly how many armored soldiers that Lord has!"

Zock slightly composed his emotions and responded, "Yes, Viscount."

Jon's eyes flickered as he pondered for a few seconds, then spoke again.

"Have you found the merchant responsible for hiring Free People for that Lord?"

Zock hesitated a bit and said, "Apologies, Viscount."

"That merchant named Boer Hansen seems to have sensed something in advance."

"By the time I reached Fisherman's Wharf, he had already sold all the fine salt and left without making any purchases."

Jon furrowed his brow and continued, "What about the other merchants?"

Zock explained, "Viscount, aside from the Boer Merchant, the other merchants are..."

Jon pressed, "Are what?"

Zock sighed and replied, "Are merchants of the Brown Clan from the Merchant Guild."

"On their masts' sails, I saw the 'Sea Black Snake' emblem."

Jon's brow became tightly knit.

As their conversation ended, the third-floor balcony fell silent.

After a moment.

Jon spoke, "I understand, you may leave now."

Standing behind Jon to the right, Zock didn't dare hesitate for a moment.

"Yes, Viscount."

Zock bowed slightly to show respect and then retreated.

On the vast balcony.

Only Jon Zuck was left standing.

The night wind blew through, causing the silk brocade robe on his body to gently sway.

...

Meanwhile, on the other side.

On the city walls, shrouded in darkness.

Soldiers clad in standard plate armor stood upright, stationed between the battlements.

A pair of eyes, gazing through the eye slits of iron helmets, stared intently into the darkness beyond the walls.

Ten meters away from each stationed soldier, a signal brazier was placed.

The fiercely burning wood crackled and sent sparks flying.

It provided warmth, illumination for the soldiers on the walls, and served as a warning to enemies.

High above the walls, flags embroidered with the crossed greatsword and shield emblems.

Fluttered loudly in the Seine River night wind.

On the passage of the walls.

Similarly clad in Sword and Shield Corps' standard plate armor, Danke patrolled with a squad of soldiers.

His gaze scanned over the status of the stationed soldiers while observing the situation beyond the walls.

Luckily.

Outside the walls, apart from the darkness, there was no abnormality.

Danke slightly opened his mouth, taking a breath of cool air.

The next moment.

He spoke in a deep voice, "Stay alert!"

"The enemy attacking Spirit Reef Port is advancing swiftly."

"Report any anomalies immediately."

"Do you hear me?"

As Danke's words fell, neat shouts echoed atop the walls.

"Yes!"

Listening to the resounding voices, Danke nodded in satisfaction.

His gaze turned once more to the space beyond the walls.

Even though Lord Godfrey had already arranged scouts on distant routes and strategic high points away from Spirit Reef Port.

To be safe, the walls still needed soldiers stationed 24/7!

Standing on the walls, observing for a moment.

Danke was about to leave.

In the distant darkness, a glimmer of fire seemed to suddenly appear.

His turning body immediately halted, and he looked over again.

Danke stepped closer to the battlement, eyes slightly narrowed, trying to see more clearly.

He even called over the adjutant following him.

"Sam, over there... is that a flame's glow?"

"Your eyesight is better, look more clearly than I do."

The man named by Danke stepped out, came to the battlement, and looked beyond the walls.

A few seconds later.

After seeing clearly, Sam replied.

"Captain Danke, it's indeed a flame's glow."

Hearing Sam's words, Danke's brow furrowed instantly.

An ominous feeling emerged in his heart.

Danke couldn't help but ask again, "Are you sure?"

Sam nodded firmly, "Captain, I stake my life on it!"

Danke responded, immediately instructing Sam, "Dispatch soldiers to head to Knight Commander Godfrey's residence and to where Lord Lawrence is at Siren's Nest."

"Inform both lords, there's an anomaly outside Spirit Reef Port!"

Feeling the gravity in Danke's words, Sam didn't hesitate and quickly responded.

"Yes, Captain!"

Immediately.

Sam began arranging soldiers to report within Spirit Reef Port.

Danke remained stationed between the battlements.

His eyes staring unblinkingly into the distant darkness.

Perhaps due to the rapid approach.

The flame's glow, from being barely visible at first, had become clearly noticeable.

And it was rapidly approaching Spirit Reef Port.

In such a deep night.

Except for the scouts having gathered intelligence and riding fast horses back.

He couldn't think of any other possibility!

That is to say.

Marquis Polk's army had already entered the scouts' surveillance range!

As Danke stood on the walls, waiting for the torchlight to draw near.

Behind him, on the stone stairs, the sound of running footsteps approached.

Before Danke could turn and look, the slightly breathless questioning voice reached his ears.

"Is it confirmed that it's the scouts returning?"

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Danke turned his head to look.

Only to see Godfrey, wearing a thin robe, striding toward him.

Danke quickly moved to greet him, explaining, "My Lord, it's still uncertain, but I believe it's close to the mark..."

Godfrey responded with a simple acknowledgment and stepped to the breach in the battlements.

Much like Danke earlier, his gaze fell upon the darkness in the distance.

Indeed.

A torchlight was gradually approaching.

The sound of galloping hooves could even be heard, pounding the ground.

Clip-clop~ Clip-clop~

As the flame from the torch grew brighter, the sound of the hooves became clearer.

A nearly frantic shout echoed from beneath the city walls.

"Urgent report! Urgent report!"

"Quickly... open the city gates!"

Upon seeing the soldier on horseback, wearing armor with a greatsword and shield insignia.

Godfrey's brow furrowed deeply, and he said to Danke, "Bring him up for a report!"

Danke promptly responded, organizing personnel to lead the scout up the city wall.

It only took a few seconds.

The exhausted scout was carried up the wall by two soldiers, supported by their shoulders.

Godfrey, who was waiting, glanced at the scout and asked.

"What's the urgent report?"

The scout, face pale, swallowed hard and replied.

"Knight Commander, I was assigned to the elevated point thirty li from Spirit Reef Port as a scout."

"An hour ago, I saw a large marching army in the distance!"

"Countless torches gathered like a river of fire, heading towards Spirit Reef Port!"

Godfrey's brow remained furrowed as he continued to ask, "How far do you estimate?"

The scout thought for a moment, "Knight Commander, about fifty li away from Spirit Reef Port."

Godfrey nodded, "Understood, go rest now."

The scout gratefully responded and was escorted down the wall by the soldiers.

Watching the scout leave, Danke turned to look at Godfrey.

However.

He did not ask any questions but waited for Godfrey's orders.

In front of these ordinary Sword and Shield Army soldiers, he was a squad leader, a Knight Commander Godfrey's aide.

Yet ultimately, he was just an executor.

Godfrey's voice rang out again.

"Aside from this scout, there should be others stationed, right?"

Danke didn't hesitate, responding immediately.

"My Lord, as per your previous teachings, a scout is stationed every ten li."

"Once the enemy reaches the designated location, the scout immediately returns to report."

Godfrey acknowledged with satisfaction, "Well done."

"These measures may seem cumbersome and useless, but they are indeed a summary of my experience..."

Danke bowed slightly in response.

Soon.

Godfrey shifted the topic and continued to ask, "Have the scouts returned and informed Lord Lawrence?"

Danke answered somewhat helplessly, "My Lord, after seeing the flames, I immediately arranged for soldiers to report to you and Lord Lawrence."

"However..."

Godfrey directly interrupted Danke, "No need to say more, I understand."

Danke dared not say another word.

Godfrey continued, "Whether Marquis Polk aims to avoid attention or escape the daytime heat..."

"The fifty li journey will take at least two days, they are two days later than expected!"

Danke nodded, based on their previous estimation, if Marquis Polk gathered vassals and soldiers efficiently.

By now, they should be at the gates!

The later Marquis Polk's arrival, the more advantageous it is for their upcoming defense.

They have sufficient time to construct fortifications and gather and produce defensive tools.

Moreover.

The Sword and Shield Corps soldiers, who have just gone through intensive marching and siege warfare, could rest.

Godfrey said, "Gather all levels of commanders at the castle's reception hall tomorrow morning to discuss the Spirit Reef Port defense battle!"

"It's a matter of life and death, no one may be absent, or face military discipline!"

"Also, send a pigeon message to Marquis Bordeaux City, informing him of Spirit Reef Port's impending situation."

"Inform him that if he wants to occupy Spirit Reef Port in the future, he must continue to send troops for support!"

Listening to Godfrey's almost word-by-word instructions, Danke responded again, "Yes, my Lord, I will arrange it immediately."

Once he spoke.

Danke took a squad of soldiers and ran down the wall.

Atop the city wall.

Godfrey and the soldiers responsible for guarding the wall remained standing.

Godfrey's orders to Danke naturally were heard by them.

Mixed emotions filled their hearts.

Aware that a brutal battle was approaching, they found no escape.

They could only follow the commander's orders and throw themselves into the millstone-like battlefield.

...

The next morning.

Feeling the steady breath on his neck.

The soft sensation of intertwined legs.

Lynn slowly opened his eyes.

Immediately.

Janet's face, still tinged with blush, entered his sight.

At the corner of her long lashes, there was a faint trace of tears.

Lynn's gaze traveled down Janet's face.

The high bridge of her nose, her thin, rosy lips, and the gentle jawline...

Such a delicate face, like a sculpture.

Lynn moved his left hand, extending his index finger to Janet's chin.

A lazy mumble, not yet awake, sounded from Janet's throat.

Lynn's eyebrows raised, his interest piqued.

Not seeing any sign of Janet waking, his fingers gently slid down.

Passing over the fair neck without a hint of flab.

Reaching Janet's collarbones.

The collarbone line was smooth and natural, extending from her neck to her shoulders.

Each curve was perfectly formed.

Lynn's fingers gently caressed the collarbone a few times, then continued downward.

After descending three centimeters, the bony feel abruptly turned into comfort beneath his fingers.

Showing Janet's voluptuous figure.

That sensation, like climbing from a rugged stone mountain to a snowy peak.

A comfortable softness wherever passed.

Lynn slightly turned his head, looking at Janet's face.

Unsure of when, Janet was already awake.

Now, her eyes were filled with excitement and expectation as she looked at Lynn.

Chapter 964: Want Them to Live?

No need for Lynn to give instructions.

Janet, curled up in his embrace, her face was flushed.

She climbed onto Lynn's body using both hands and feet.

Looking at Lynn's unrestrained eyes staring at her body.

Janet's body sank, her face approaching Lynn's.

Their faces tightly pressed together.

Feeling the comfortable softness of Janet lying on him.

Looking at Janet's closed eyes, her eyelashes gently trembling.

Lynn no longer held back.

He opened his arms, wrapping them around Janet's slender waist.

Left hand moving up, right hand moving down, starting to roam.

It didn't take long.

Janet's body underwent a change.

Janet slowly opened her eyes, gently separating her face from Lynn's.

Meanwhile, her body, lying on Lynn, slowly sat upright.

In the next instant.

Janet's eyes opened wide.

An hour later.

With Janet's blushing face serving him, Lynn donned a thin silk robe.

Lynn walked out of the bedroom and into the reception hall.

After eating the breakfast prepared by Kuisi, he left the castle with Red.

Walking down the flat, clean red brick road, through the red brick houses.

Amidst the respectful gazes of the townsmen, Lynn arrived at Lord's Square.

The far eastern horizon was already radiating light and heat.

Driving away the darkness, illuminating the whole world.

Lynn's gaze swept over everything around him.

In the square's open space.

A few farmers were still sun drying and winnowing the barley.

The winter barley he planted last year yielded nine million nine hundred thousand pounds.

Now the sun-drying and winnowing barley and wheat all come from Morgan Town.

Morgan Town's labor is limited.

Rather than having the hired free people sun-dry and process the crops after harvesting.

It's better to transport the harvested crops back to the estate.

Deploying a few hundred farmers from the estate can easily handle the sun-drying and processing work.

More important than sun-drying and processing.

Is to quickly harvest all the crops in Morgan Town!

Because no one knows when the war will break out.

Only by storing enough food can his estate continue to develop swiftly.

After observing for a while.

Finding everything proceeding in an orderly fashion, Lynn felt slightly relieved.

Perhaps because his estate is indeed quite remote.

Even though the Karedi Empire has already waged the war for imperial authority.

Marquises, dukes, even princes have declared war on each other.

But until now.

The flames of war have yet to spread to Morgan Town, to his estate.

This, of course, is a good thing for him.

As long as war doesn't occur, he has more time to arrange the development of his estate.

Engage in agricultural production, artisan production, recruit and train soldiers, improve technology.

To increase the overall strength of the estate.

His estate needs more time!

Retracting his gaze, Lynn strode towards the mess hall not far away.

He had already completed the production and construction plan for the estate.

And it was delegated to every foreman in each industry and workshop.

In agricultural production, Wilbur led about five thousand farmers to cultivate and plant peas and black rye grass.

The peas produced can add to the residents' diets or be used for making concentrated feed for livestock and food for poultry.

Planting peas in the cultivated land can also fix nitrogen, improve soil fertility, and enhance soil structure.

Black rye grass has similar benefits.

With the Simeon family of horse trainers brought by Alan.

Efforts in breeding and reproducing warhorses must be intensified.

Whether in terms of manpower or resources.

Even if it takes a long cycle to breed a warhorse, it must be done.

Because.

Until more advanced machinery is produced.

Warhorses remain the most effective means of transportation and combat tools.

Now what needs to be done is.

While he continuously gains experience, he waits for the estate's production to be completed.

Entering the mess hall, arriving at the kitchen.

Hands tightly gripping two bone-cutting knives, slicing them down on the nearly half-meter thick cutting board one after another.

Thud~ Thud~ Thud~

The deep chopping sound echoed continuously in the kitchen.

[Cooking Experience +1]

[Cooking Experience +1]

[Cooking Experience +1]

...

As the experience increased bit by bit, time flew by quickly.

After dining with Red on the lunch he cooked.

Lynn walked out of the mess hall.

Heading to a bench in the shade not far away, Lynn sat down heavily.

Red, who followed beside him, brought over a water jug, handed it to Lynn, and prompted:

"Master."

Upon hearing, Lynn turned his head to glance.

Seeing the water jug in Red's hand, he took it without hesitation and gulped a few mouthfuls.

The cool and pleasant sensation spread through his body.

It was already early August, the hottest time in the Karedi Empire.

The scorching sun baked the earth.

Even the air seemed ignited, constantly wavering.

The Lord's Square, paved with lime mortar, had cracked like a spiderweb due to extreme drought.

Above the bench where he sat.

The leaves of the several-meter-high tree bore slight curling marks under the sun's exposure.

Chapter 965: Want Them to Survive? Part 2

That is, his territory backs onto the Aladia River.

The breeze that brushed past carried a slight chill.

With a thought, Lynn opened the and scanned it briefly.

The current temperature had already reached twenty-eight degrees.

In a few days, it will reach thirty degrees!

Such weather would be a fatal blow to the townsmen engaged in physical labor!

Lynn shifted his gaze to a guard and issued a command.

"Notify Steward Kuisi to have the foremen managing various industrial workshops keep a timely watch on the workers' conditions and ensure they hydrate and cool down in time."

"Also, starting tomorrow, the working hours for townsmen engaged in outdoor labor will temporarily adjust to six in the morning to noon, and four in the afternoon to seven."

"During the period in between, let the townsmen rest and avoid the heat."

Without external forces for rapid cooling in place,

he could only adjust the working hours.

To avoid the widespread occurrence of heatstroke among the townsmen.

The guard responded immediately upon hearing.

He entered the town to deliver the Lord's orders.

Watching the guard depart, Lynn turned his gaze beyond the territory.

Over a field of barley roots previously burned,

two figures on horseback galloped towards Lord's Square under the sun.

With the sounds of reining in the horses, the galloping horses let out neighs.

After a series of trotting sounds, the horses gradually came to a stop.

Lynn finally saw the faces of the riders.

Boer and Earl, dressed in merchant robes, dismounted briskly and strode directly toward him.

Stopping two or three meters in front of Lynn, Boer and Earl paused.

Bowing, they greeted respectfully, "Master Lynn."

Lynn asked, "Why so hurried, is there something going on?"

Both Earl and Boer,

displayed an urgency and tension in their expressions and movements.

The most crucial aspect was,

that this time Boer had come alone to his territory.

There were no long caravans laden with goods behind him!

Hearing Lynn's inquiry, Earl spoke first.

"Sir, let Merchant Boer explain to you."

Lynn responded, his gaze shifting to Boer Hansen standing to the side.

"Mr. Boer, please tell me what's going on."

Though Boer appeared calm at this moment,

Lynn could clearly see,

a distinct trace of apprehension and fear deep in his eyes.

Even when Boer had encountered the Iron Blood Bandit Corps, he hadn't seen Boer look like this.

After regulating his breathing, Boer bowed again to show respect.

He began, "Master Lynn, something terrible... something terrible has happened!"

"Viscount Jon Zack in Kakasong City has already learned about me recruiting Free People for you at the city's talent market."

"He even dispatched a squad of soldiers to search for me within the city."

"If I hadn't been alert and fled Kakasong immediately,

I'd have been captured and thrown into prison by now."

Lynn instantly frowned.

Before asking Boer to recruit Free People in Kakasong City,

he'd considered the possibility of such a situation occurring.

But,

he hadn't thought it would happen so quickly!

Boer had merely recruited six hundred Free People for him.

Yet this already alerted Viscount Jon Zack, prompting action?

In the next second,

Lynn dismissed this notion.

The Free People in Kakasong City had the right to roam within the region.

Moreover, comparing merely six hundred Free People

to the entire Kakasong City's tens of thousands, this was insignificant.

Outside Kakasong City, stretches of farmland owned by Noble Lords needed Free People for planting and cultivation.

Even a large-scale temporary departure from the city wouldn't be too conspicuous.

With this thought, Lynn narrowed his eyes slightly.

Joan aimed to capture Boer to stop him from recruiting Free People, but that was only part of it.

The main goal was to extract information about him and his territory from Boer.

Because,

aside from merchants like Grayson and Alan, who only visited sporadically

Boer was the most frequent presence.

Beyond that, Lynn couldn't think of any other reason!

First, he sent spies into Morgan Town to gather intelligence,

and now, he's attempting to capture Boer, with whom he trades regularly.

Clearly.

Jon Zuck is utilizing various channels to probe information on him.

Seeing Boer's somewhat apprehensive demeanor, Lynn smiled and acknowledged,

"Mr. Boer, you've had a tough time."

Sensing the goodwill in Lynn's tone, Boer eased slightly, "Master Lynn, you flatter me."

"The reason Boer fled immediately,

beyond avoiding torture by Jon Zuck and withstanding interrogation that might expose information about your territory, Master Lynn..."

"was also to preserve his own life."

Lynn nodded, casting an appreciative glance at Boer.

This was why he always preferred trading with Boer.

When encountering issues, Boer never hid anything from him.

Even when danger loomed, Boer wouldn't think of transferring the danger onto him.

Upon saying this, a hint of regret tinged Boer's voice.

"The only regret is, I managed to trade all the fine salt on the carriage, yet didn't have time to purchase goods or receive those Free People we had negotiated."

Chapter 966: Want Them to Live? _3

"So, we can only leave Kakasong City in a hurry with the coachman and the guards..."

Lynn comforted, "Mr. Boer, there's nothing to regret."

"As long as we are alive, there is always a chance to start over."

"The price of fine salt remains high, and the production in my territory continues daily."

"As long as I remain the lord of this territory, Mr. Boer, you will never need to worry about subsequent fine salt exchange transactions!"

"Besides, Mr. Boer, it's just that this time there was no cargo transported..."

Listening to Master Lynn's words, Boer's eyes couldn't help but widen.

The words of Master Lynn, though simple, made his eyes shine.

Just as Master Lynn said.

As long as Master Lynn remains the lord of this territory, as long as he himself is alive.

With the fine salt owned by Master Lynn, he can always engage in exchange with him!

Given the scarcity of high-quality fine salt, and the substantial profits from selling fine salt.

As a merchant, he will never lack the opportunity to start anew!

Thinking of this.

The previously blocked heart of Boer suddenly opened up.

Boer slightly bowed, speaking with utmost respect to Lynn.

"Thank you for your guidance, respected Master Lynn."

Lynn nodded slightly and asked, "Mr. Boer, what are your plans next?"

Standing upright, Boer pondered for a few seconds, explaining.

"Given the current situation in Kakasong City, it's not advisable to go back in the short term, either for me or for Master Lynn."

"My thought is... to go to surrounding small towns, or perhaps even further to other cities, to purchase goods and transport them to your territory."

Lynn shook his head and earnestly said, "Mr. Boer, if you wish, you can take some time to rest, and spend it with your family and children."

"Ever since trading with me, Mr. Boer seems never to have stopped, right?"

Lynn continued, "If Mr. Boer is accustomed to the hardship of running around and wants to continue acquiring goods and engage in transactions with me..."

"My suggestion is to go to some remote villages!"

"The amount of crops you acquire might not be much, but it will be safer."

"Wait until the situation becomes stable, then make further plans."

The reason for saying these is because Boer's exchanges and trades have greatly contributed to the development of his territory.

Boer is a mature merchant with autonomy, he has his own thinking and measurement.

As for what to do, it certainly has to be decided by Boer himself.

Boer was slightly taken aback.

Despite Master Lynn not explicitly stating it.

But the words have reached such a point, he naturally understood the meaning within.

Master Lynn is going to wage war against Viscount Jon Zack!

Otherwise, when he mentioned preparing to go to other towns to purchase goods.

Master Lynn immediately gave him advice.

To make him stop.

Or go to remote villages!

Because, in the towns near Kakasong City, there are supporters of Jon Zack!

Boer gratefully said, "Thank you, Master Lynn, for your guidance."

Lynn nodded again, letting Boer step down first.

His gaze turned to Early waiting by the side.

Lynn hadn't spoken yet.

Early stepped forward, stood still in front of him, lowered his head and responded, "Master, Early is here."

Lynn said gravely, "In the past few days, have the patrolling soldiers seen outsiders appearing near Morgan Town?"

Early hesitated not, explained, "Master, no spies have come anymore."

"I speculate that Zock Connally Manor Lord might have realized his spies were captured."

"Even if they send again, it's just futile."

Lynn responded, continuing to speak to Early, "Inform Wesley, he must increase the patrol intensity."

"Ensure farmers quickly complete the harvest of crops in Morgan Town."

"And send scouts to some key roads entering Morgan Town for military alerts."

"If a large-scale soldier team is spotted, report back immediately."

"Prevent enemy surprise attacks!"

Early quickly nodded and answered, "Yes, Master."

Lynn finished his words and paused.

A few seconds later.

He continued, "Issue instructions to Rose, mobilize four hundred light infantry from the barracks, dispatch them to Morgan Town Manor Castle, and hand them to Wesley."

"Let him organize these soldiers to arm and defend the Manor Castle."

Early responded again, "Yes, Master!"

Seeing that Master Lynn had no more words, Early bowed after the salute, withdrew, and departed.

While watching Early and Boer riding away on horses, disappearing into the distance.

Lynn's mind remained in contemplation.

Currently, the Manor Castle overseen by Wesley has a total of only six hundred armed soldiers.

Two hundred light cavalrymen, two hundred archers, and two hundred light infantry.

Such a number of armed soldiers.

Is enough to manage the work order of the Free People in Morgan Town.

Or cope with some small-scale bandit corps.

It is sufficient.

But if a massive soldiers' group truly invades Morgan Town, attacking the Manor Castle...

Even with the advantage of the castle's defenses, it's hard to resist.

Nothing else.

If Viscount Jon Zack of Kakasong City mobilizes all his supporter armed soldiers.

A huge army presses on the border, sitting at the city's doorstep.

It would be nearly effortless to seize the Manor Castle overseen by Wesley.

Chapter 967: Want Them to Stay Alive? _4

The gap in the number of soldiers was simply too great.

Sending four hundred more light infantry only brought the total to a thousand soldiers.

Though it's not much.

At least it can enhance the defensive strength of the manor castle somewhat.

If he had learned about Jon Zuck's intelligence from Guard Captain Samuel earlier.

When Jon Zuck summoned supporters and led the troop from Kakasong City to attack Morgan Town.

He would have definitely had Wesley lead the soldiers and farmers to evacuate from Morgan Town immediately.

But things are different now.

Even if Jon Zuck gathers all his supporters' troops.

At most, it would be just over seven thousand soldiers.

And now, he has four thousand two hundred armed soldiers!

Excluding the several hundred soldiers.

Who have yet to be equipped with matching armor and weapons.

All the remaining soldiers are fully armored!

Even though there's a gap of about three thousand in numbers.

But with the advantage of heavy cavalry, archers, and the amount of armor.

If on an open plain.

You could use the archers' rain of arrows, the heavy cavalry's charge tearing through the battlefield, the heavy infantry's frontal attack, the light cavalry and infantry's flanking maneuvers...

It can completely engage Jon Zuck's troops head-on.

But Lynn knows well the cost of training a soldier.

To minimize unnecessary losses and prepare for stronger future crises.

He must be cautious, cautious, and cautious again.

Because.

A small Kakasong City is not his ultimate goal!

Through more than a year of constant effort, he has completed the initial accumulation of his territory.

Since it has come to this stage.

No matter what.

He wants to shake this world with some shock!

Let them know what a real iron beast is!

What does crushing mean!

However, to erupt.

It requires hibernation.

But Lynn believes the hibernation won't last long.

Taking a deep breath of the warm air under the scorching sun, Lynn's strong chest swelled for a moment.

After exhaling evenly, Lynn stood up from the long bench.

He once again plunged into the cafeteria kitchen, continuing to grind the experience for the "Cooking" skill.

[Cooking Experience +1]

[Cooking Experience +1]

[Cooking Experience +1]

...

Until dusk.

Lynn emerged satisfied from the kitchen.

With a thought, he opened the "Heavenly Artifacts" panel for a look.

[Cooking: Level 3 (736/1000)](+)

After grinding the "Cooking" skill for several days, his experience has once again increased significantly.

Closing the panel, Lynn did not take Red back to the castle.

But strolled through the open space in the Lord's Square.

Some townsmen who had finished dinner were chatting while walking when they saw their Lord, quickly bowed in greeting.

Their mouths issued respectful words.

Lynn nodded slightly as a response.

With over twenty thousand townsmen in his territory now.

It's impossible for him to remember everyone.

But with the "Residential Information Panel" and the function to view everyone's personal information.

He can clearly know everyone's information and their current loyalty value.

These townsmen who actively stopped to show respect.

Most have loyalty values over 90%, showing an upwards trend.

Not just these townsmen.

Most of the townsmen in his territory now have loyalty values above 80%.

Including.

The eight hundred Iron Guards from Pan Yan City of the Portlands Empire who only arrived in his territory last month,

All increased to about 50%.

The faster the loyalty value of the townsmen rises, the higher.

This signifies the townspeople's satisfaction with their current life.

And their support for him as Lord.

As Lynn walked.

A sound of footsteps came from behind him.

Steadily and powerfully, from far to near.

Accompanied by the clanking sound of metal dragging across the ground.

Those townsmen who were chatting while walking naturally heard the sound.

They slightly frowned, searching around in confusion.

Within seconds.

Their gaze fell on a brawny middle-aged man, shackled by iron chains on both hands and feet.

Broad shoulders, walking upright like a tower.

Under a thin linen vest, his muscles were knotted like old tree roots.

On his exposed arms, veins bulging.

When the townsmen saw the terrifying scar shaped like a mouth on the middle-aged man's face, they quickly looked away.

Although the middle-aged man kept his head down, eyes on the ground as he walked.

The imposing aura emanating from him made them feel a faint tension.

Two guards brought the middle-aged man to Lynn's side, respectfully calling out.

"Master, Tyrone Ramirez is here."

Lynn turned, scanning the burly man in front of him.

Seeing the iron chains between Tyrone's hands and legs, Lynn spoke.

"Open them."

The two guards hesitated slightly.

But without any doubt, quickly responded, unlocking the iron chains on Tyrone Ramirez's wrists and ankles.

Red, standing guard by Lynn's side, was already in a state of high alert.

As a close guard, he didn't need to concern himself with what Master Lynn did or said.

The only thing he had to do was.

Chapter 968: You Want Them to Survive?

Repel or slay any danger approaching Master Lynn.

Tyrone, who was lowering his head in thought, naturally heard Lynn's words.

A look of surprise flashed across his eyes.

Lynn happened to catch the surprise that flickered in Tyrone's eyes.

He spoke flatly: "Tyrone Ramirez, don't try anything."

"Because... even without the shackles, you are not my match."

Upon hearing Lynn's confident words, Tyrone couldn't help but glance at Lynn.

Their eyes met instantly.

For just two seconds.

Tyrone quickly lowered his head.

He understood that, although there had been no physical confrontation or any battle to decide a winner, Lynn's confident and resolute gaze already told him Lynn was not joking.

A low voice came from his mouth.

"Everything is as Lord says."

Lynn ignored Tyrone's words and asked directly.

"Tyrone Ramirez, I need to know your awareness of your current situation."

Tyrone furrowed his brow in confusion, "Lord, I believe my current situation should be obvious, shouldn't it?"

Lynn spoke gravely: "Tyrone Ramirez, I need answers, not questions!"

Feeling Lynn's change in tone, Tyrone's brow tightened.

However.

This time he no longer questioned but answered.

"My current situation is—Lord's captive."

"To survive, I must offer my loyalty and strength to you, Lord!"

Lynn looked directly at Tyrone and said: "Incorrect!"

Upon hearing this, Tyrone's confusion deepened.

Seeing Lynn clearly waiting for his continued response,

Tyrone began to contemplate.

A few seconds later.

He looked at Lynn and tentatively asked, "Territory citizen?"

Lynn affirmed: "Exactly!"

"Even if you were previously captives sold to me by slave merchants from elsewhere."

"I have stated before, as soon as you entered my territory, you became my territory's citizens!"

Listening to Lynn's confirmed words and looking into his determined gaze, Tyrone fell silent.

Lynn continued: "However, regardless of being former captives or prisoners, you must labor to earn your food and lodging."

"And the 'respect' you keep demanding from me!"

Lynn's tone shifted, "It's not as you said."

"Being formerly Iron Guards of Pan Yan City doesn't automatically earn you respect!"

Tyrone still remained silent but unconsciously nodded in agreement.

He understood.

The Lord's words were correct.

Lynn crossed his arms in front of him and looked directly at Tyrone, continuing.

"I am aware that during this time a few captives have made some small moves."

"But I know it is you who strenuously appeases them, suppresses them..."

Silent Tyrone finally broke his silence.

He quickly said to Lynn: "Sorry, Lord."

"They were once soldiers, accustomed to the rhythm of training and combat, unable to adapt to the current tranquil life..."

"But I, Tyrone Ramirez, assure you, I will not allow them to do anything that damages your territory..."

Lynn looked directly at Tyrone, almost interrogating him: "How do you assure that?"

Tyrone's words came to a sudden halt: "I..."

For a moment, he didn't know how to respond.

Lynn went on: "Even if you gave orders for them to surrender to prevent a pointless sacrifice as the walls were breached, did they feel grateful?"

Tyrone fell into silence again.

"Even if you were trying to keep them alive, did they recall the orders you gave?"

Tyrone remained mute.

Lynn continued: "If one day, they unite to occupy this territory and kill me, their Lord."

"With your strength alone, can you stop seven hundred and ninety-nine soldiers?"

Tyrone shook his head, "No."

Lynn's voice suddenly grew louder, continuing to ask: "Then how can you assure it?"

Tyrone's expression turned somber.

A few seconds later.

His mouth slightly opened, speaking to Lynn: "I... just want them to live..."

Lynn immediately took over his words.

"Tyrone Ramirez, lift your head and look at me!"

Confounded by Lynn's abrupt change in tone, Tyrone raised his head in confusion.

"Want them to live? No problem! I'm giving you a chance!"

"The peasants sold to this place, if they wish to obtain food, lodging, and respect, must exert strength and engage in labor."

"But you captives... in agricultural and handicraft production, you are not even superior to those peasants!"

"I need you to reorganize all captives and become soldiers again!"

"I will equip you with armor and weapons, provide fine food and military camp lodging."

Due to having been sold as captives after experiencing defeat.

Tyrone's eyes contained a trace of lingering gloom, but surprise glimmered through.

If it weren't for Lynn's words echoing in his ears and mind continuously.

He would almost think it was a dream.

Lynn continued: "However, one thing has changed."

"The object of your allegiance is no longer the Portlands Empire, nor is it the former Imperial Prince Weituo."

"It is me, Lynn Blake."

"It is this peacefully thriving territory, growing with more than twenty thousand residents!"

Chapter 969: You Want Them to Live? _6

"Among these more than twenty thousand people, many are just like you, former Free People from the Portlands Empire, as well as citizens from other empires."

"Yet now, they have come to see this place as their home, where they make their living!"

"Some have even started families, getting married and having children!"

Lynn spoke with a voice that wasn't very loud.

But each word seemed to penetrate into Tyrone's ears.

And also reached the ears of the townsmen walking or sitting nearby.

They all looked at Lynn with admiration and reverence.

Without needing Tyrone to respond, Lynn continued speaking.

"Now, you can inform the remaining seven hundred and ninety-nine prisoner soldiers."

"Those willing to fight for the territory, for the residents of this land, and for this Lord..."

"Starting tomorrow, they will no longer need to labor; all will be put into training."

"Those unwilling, can leave tomorrow morning and go wherever they wish!"

With those words said.

Lynn started walking with Red and the Guard, heading back to the distant castle.

Tyrone was left standing there somewhat lost.

His eyes turned, glancing at his now-unshackled handcuffs and leg irons.

Then he turned to look at the Lord gradually disappearing into the distance.

No restraints, no guard escort.

He felt so unaccustomed to the freedom.

At this moment.

A series of light footsteps, accompanied by laughter like silver bells, reached Tyrone's ears.

He slightly turned his head to look.

He saw five or six children, no taller than half a meter, running and playing along the way.

They wore linen robes of uniform style.

Though not exactly fitting, they at least shielded them from the chill of early morning and night.

Their faces were round, full of healthy rosy complexions.

Their eyes, in various colors, were bright and shining.

Despite the grotesque red scars on his face, these children were unfazed.

As they passed by him, they even treated him like a pillar obstacle, running circles around him.

After the children ran off, Tyrone looked around at the townsmen, his expression stunned.

The faces of these townsmen were unlike the residents he saw in Pan Yan City.

Nervous, fearful, panicking...

On the contrary.

They nodded slightly at him, even offering a kind smile.

Tyrone's heart was filled with shock.

They, as prisoners, had been sold by the Slave Merchant to Lynn's territory for some time now.

During this time, he had seen much.

The townsmen worked daily, tirelessly.

But he knew these townsmen's labor was different from other territories.

Because.

Beside them, there were no soldiers guards with thorned whips overseeing them.

Nor would they find whips wildly cracking when the townsmen took brief breaks to catch their breath.

Instead, carts of peppermint water, heated and cooled, were delivered for the laboring townsmen to hydrate and cool down.

Even without the urging of the Lord and soldiers.

These townsmen were diligently working of their own accord.

That was because.

Just as the Lord had mentioned.

No matter where they came from, the townsmen here.

Had already made this place their home!

Taking his gaze away from the townsmen with facial features similar to his,

Tyrone started walking towards the temporary quarters on the edge of the town.

Perhaps because there were no shackles to bind him.

He felt an inexplicable lightness throughout his body.

Tyrone felt that not only had his physical shackles been removed.

But his entire mindset had been influenced by the Lord.

As townsmen approached him, nodding in acknowledgment.

Tyrone returned to the temporary living area for the prisoners.

Under a simple wooden shed made with logs, prisoners gathered around dug-out fire pits.

Though the living conditions were basic.

They had soft straw-covered floors, and food to warm and fill their stomachs.

Their faces, lit by the fire, showed a visible sense of contentment.

Compared to the time when they were captured and imprisoned as war prisoners.

Compared to the time when they were transported by slave traders...

Being able to work separately during the day and rest at night was already a great pleasure.

Standing at the entrance of the shed, Tyrone scanned the faces of former comrades.

In a deep voice, he said, "Everyone! Wake up!"

Tyrone's voice wasn't loud.

But because of his tall and burly stature, and the unique scars on his face.

He quickly drew the attention of those who were conversing or resting with closed eyes.

One curious and bewildered look after another fell on Tyrone.

Feeling the pressure of everyone's gaze, Tyrone's expression remained unchanged.

Several men familiar with Tyrone approached him and asked curiously.

"Commander Tyrone, is something the matter?"

"Yeah, I heard you were taken by the Lord's Guards?"

"They didn't torture you, did they?"

"..."

Tyrone shook his head at them, "No."

A burly man immediately sensed something, and asked quickly.

"Commander Tyrone, your chains... were they removed?"

As soon as he said that, those standing before Tyrone quickly looked.

Sure enough.

The handcuffs and leg irons on Tyrone's wrists and ankles were nowhere to be seen.

A dozen soldiers standing close to Tyrone immediately cast curious glances.

Tyrone, without any concealment, raised his strong arms.

And showed them to all the comrades in the shed.

The curiosity and confusion in the soldiers' eyes grew even stronger.

Looking at the faces waiting for his explanation, Tyrone inhaled the air mixed with the smell of sweat and began to explain.

"As you can see, the shackles on I, Tyrone Ramirez, have been unlocked!"

"From this moment forward, I, Tyrone Ramirez, will no longer pledge allegiance to the Portlands Empire."

"Nor will I pledge allegiance to the Prince Weituo who abandoned Pan Yan City, and is on the brink of defeat."

"From this moment forward, the goal of my allegiance will be my own future life."

"It will be this home beneath my feet, the home that all the townsmen depend on for survival."

"It will be the Lord Lynn Blake—who has given me a second chance at life!"

"Who is there! Who is willing to join me?"

Chapter 970: Swearing Allegiance

The words of Tyrone Ramirez fell.

Aside from the crackling of the campfire wood as it burned, there was no other sound.

The whole shed fell into silence.

He looked at the faces of his former comrades-in-arms, all shrouded in doubt and hesitation.

Tyrone continued, "Everyone, it's time we changed the way we live!"

"Look at the environment we're living in now..."

"Straw as our bed and quilt, the bonfire for warmth."

"The weather happens to be decent right now, but if it rains, how is a shed made of raw logs supposed to shield us from the wind and rain?"

The eyes of the captured soldiers shifted, sweeping over the scene around them.

This newly erected shed had already become a mess after a few days of their living in it.

Even though there was a public latrine in the distance,

there was still a foul smell lingering inside the shed.

"We were indeed defeated once, but on the battlefield there is always a winner and a loser."

"As long as we still have the courage to wear Armor, grip our Weapon, and charge onto the battlefield—
"

"then perhaps in the next war, we will be the victors!"

Seeing the light flicker in everyone's eyes,

Tyrone instantly raised his voice.

"Everyone!"

"The battlefield is our final destination!"

Hearing this, the previously confused and hesitant captured soldiers all had a trace of excitement appear in their eyes.

Tyrone did not stop speaking, but went on.

"I know you're wondering why the shackles on my hands and feet have been removed."

"I also know you're wondering why I, who was taken away by the Lord's Guard, could return to the shed alone without anyone escorting me."

"And I know even better that you're wondering why I suddenly said all that just now."

The captured soldiers couldn't help but nod in response.

Those were indeed the things they were curious about at the moment.

Tyrone explained directly, without beating around the bush.

"It's because the Lord of this territory had a heart-to-heart talk with me."

"He told me that respect is far from something you get just by relying on Negotiation and asking others to give it to you."

"You have to fight for it through your own effort!"

"If Peasants want food, shelter, and respect, they must pay for it with physical labor."

"We, as prisoners of war, if we want food, shelter, and respect, must pull ourselves together and become soldiers once more..."

"To protect this territory, to protect the people living in it!"

"That is the only way to earn respect."

A burly man stared straight at Tyrone and asked,

"Commander Tyrone, right now we're nothing but prisoners of war."

"We have no Armor, no Weapon, and all we do every day is production labor... how are we supposed to become soldiers again?"

The captured soldiers nodded in agreement.

The question that burly man asked was also the question in their hearts.

Tyrone's gaze fell on the burly man, and he spoke firmly,

"The answer to that question was also in the Lord of this territory's talk with me!"

"Lord Lynn told me that as long as I can reorganize you and turn you back into soldiers,"

"he will equip all of us with Armor and Weapons, and provide us with nutritious food and barracks to live in!"

The captured soldiers were visibly moved, their eyes filled with longing.

Seeing how they were all itching to move, Tyrone continued.

"And we will be able to live just like the Townsman in the small town."

"We can find women who like us and whom we like, build families, have sons and daughters, and treat this place as the homeland we rely on to live!"

Obvious anticipation burst forth in the eyes of the captured soldiers.

Tyrone shouted again, "Who is willing to go with me?"

"To fight for ourselves, for this territory, for our future homeland, and for the Lord...?"

His words had barely fallen,

when a loud shout immediately followed.

"I am willing to go!"

The captured soldiers instantly began searching with their eyes,

wanting to know who had been the first to respond to Tyrone.

However.

Before they found the source of that response,

two more powerful voices rang out.

"I am willing to go!"

"I am willing to go!"

These two responses were like flames setting dry straw ablaze.

Wave after wave of loud replies spread rapidly, echoing again and again beneath the entire shed.

"I'm willing!"

"I'm willing!"

"..."

The voices were so loud it was as if they were going to blow the roof off the shed.

They even—

made those Townsmen who were still chatting and resting in the Lord's Square all turn their eyes in unison toward the direction of the prisoners' temporary quarters when they heard the roaring shouts.

In this small town already shrouded in quiet night, it was all the more conspicuous.

A patrol squad of soldiers passed by in the distance, and after a brief inspection, left directly.

Because the Lord had already given them instructions.

As long as the prisoners did not riot, they could be allowed to gather freely.

...

The next morning.

Lynn, who habitually rose early, put on a comfortable and proper long robe and walked out of his bedroom.

After eating the breakfast Kuisi had prepared, he left the castle with Red.

Under the respectful gazes of the Townsmen, Lynn passed by one Red Brick House after another, heading toward the Lord's Square.

However.

Before Lynn could get close to the Lord's Square, a Guard up ahead came running toward him at a brisk pace.

When the Guard saw Lynn, his eyes lit up at once and he immediately quickened his steps.

Coming up before Lynn, the Guard spoke respectfully,