

System 981

Chapter 981: I Am Starting a War_6

Red explained with a grave expression, "Lord, no, I only instructed the guards to inform Rose to gather the soldiers."

Lynn responded, "I understand."

He shifted his gaze, once again looking towards the rear of the formation.

Standing at the forefront of the seven hundred ninety-nine Pan Rock Iron Guards, Tyrone was watching his fellow soldiers behind him.

He shouted, "Begin forming ranks, align yourselves!"

Receiving Tyrone's command, the Pan Rock Iron Guards began to move with short, steady steps.

Swish, swish, swish~

With rhythmic quick paces, the Pan Rock Iron Guards shrank from a marching column into a lined formation.

In less than half a minute.

Seven hundred ninety-nine Pan Rock Iron Guards were fully aligned in formation.

Such orderly, swift, and accurate execution of commands.

Only soldiers like the Pan Rock Iron Guards, with systematic training, can achieve this.

Under the gaze of Lynn, Red, Rose, and others.

Tyrone strode from the rear of the formation, passing his fellow soldiers, to the very front.

Finally, he stood three meters before Lynn.

Tyrone shouted loudly, "Lord, the eight hundred Pan Rock Iron Guards have assembled! Please issue your orders!"

Just like the resounding marching steps just heard.

Tyrone's words echoed through the forest and mountains.

Despite the fierce scars on Tyrone's face, Lynn looked directly at him and said deeply.

"Commander Tyrone, I did not instruct you to assemble the Pan Rock Iron Guards!"

"I remember the orders I gave you were...to lead them in training and restore their combat levels!"

Tyrone remained calm, continuing loudly, "I understand, my Lord."

Lynn frowned slightly, waiting for his explanation.

Tyrone explained, "I know our Lord wants us to restore our previous combat levels through training and possess powerful combat ability."

"But my Lord, the eight hundred Pan Rock Iron Guards need war!"

"This is not just my request, but the request of all the Pan Rock Iron Guards!"

"In the eyes of our Lord, we are nothing but a group of prisoners of war who surrendered and abandoned our posts to survive."

"We are not worthy of pledging loyalty to you, my Lord!"

"Therefore, to prove our determination to pledge loyalty to our Lord."

"We petition our Lord to allow us to join in the imminent war."

"Please grant us your favor, my Lord!"

After speaking, Tyrone's strong body bent low, performing a soldier's salute.

The unified voices from the Pan Rock Iron Guards at the rear echoed at the same time.

"Please grant us your favor, my Lord!"

Lynn remained silent, his gaze passed over Tyrone to the rear of the formation.

On those faces, in those eyes, filled with anticipation and longing.

Full of craving and yearning for war.

Lynn returned his gaze to Tyrone, stating.

"Commander Tyrone, there are not enough armors in the territory to equip you all!"

Hearing this, Tyrone's face revealed a look of joy.

He quickly replied, "My Lord, we do not need armor, only that you provide each of us with a weapon."

"Then we can join the battle!"

Lynn frowned again.

After a few seconds of silence.

Lynn looked at Rose beside him, asking.

"Are there enough weapons in the barracks to equip eight hundred soldiers?"

Rose, waiting patiently beside Lynn, had been observing the entire process.

Upon hearing Lynn's inquiry, Rose quickly responded.

"Master, there are!"

"Previously, the weapons seized from the destruction of Frank Manor are all stored in the warehouse."

"They have not yet been sent to the Blacksmith Workshop for melting and remanufacturing."

Upon hearing Rose's response, light visibly brightened in Tyrone's eyes.

Lynn nodded, saying, "Arrange personnel to transport the weapons out and equip the Pan Rock Iron Guards with them!"

Rose promptly responded, "Yes, Master."

Immediately.

Rose called upon a few soldiers, gave them a few instructions, and the soldiers immediately retreated and got underway.

Sitting on the back of Ink Shadow Horse, Lynn addressed Tyrone and the Pan Rock Iron Guards at the rear.

"I can agree to your request, allowing you to join the upcoming war!"

Lynn continued, "But I must inform you in advance, I can only provide you with a weapon each!"

"Without the protection of armor, facing the enemy's rain of arrows, facing their cavalry charge, you are living targets!"

Tyrone's expression shook, shouting.

"The battlefield is our final destination!"

The Pan Rock Iron Guards at the rear echoed in unison.

"The battlefield is our final destination!"

Lynn gave Tyrone and the Pan Rock Iron Guards an appreciative look.

"Very well."

"I permit you to join the upcoming war!"

Having received Lynn's permission, joy and excitement appeared on the Pan Rock Iron Guards' faces.

The Lord said he doesn't like verbal pledges of loyalty.

Then.

They will rely on their actions, their performance on the battlefield, to prove the authenticity of their pledge of loyalty.

Lynn gave Tyrone a glance, cautioning.

"Even without the protection of armor."

"For as many Pan Rock Iron Guards as you take out, you must bring them back!"

"From the moment I receive your loyalty, your lives no longer belong to you!"

Standing before Lynn's warhorse, Tyrone looked at Lynn, his eyes filled with gratitude and admiration.

His voice almost trembled with emotion.

"Yes, my Lord!"

Because from the words of the Lord before him, he heard their concern!

This feeling he had never sensed from anyone else's words before.

Lynn replied, sending Tyrone back to join the Pan Rock Iron Guards.

He gazed over the Pan Rock Iron Guards at the rear.

Perhaps because he had agreed to their requests.

Or perhaps because they felt the concern in his words.

The loyalty value of the Pan Rock Iron Guards was visibly rising at a noticeable speed.

Previously, he did have concerns.

Deploying most of the armed soldiers from the territory for external warfare.

Leaving behind seven hundred ninety-nine Pan Rock Iron Guards led by Tyrone.

This was an unknown risk to his territory.

Tyrone's request with the Pan Rock Iron Guards to join the external war.

Exactly resolved his concerns about the potential risks from the Pan Rock Iron Guards!

Waiting for the soldiers to use double-wheeled carts to deliver the weapons and fully arm the eight hundred Pan Rock Iron Guards.

Lynn tapped his Ink Shadow beneath him, which understood, and began to walk slowly.

A deep voice emerged from Lynn's lips.

"Perhaps, you all wonder why I suddenly issued the call!"

"Summoning a total of three thousand eight hundred soldiers beneath the city walls."

The soldiers raised their heads, eyes wide, looking directly at their Lord.

Lynn's gaze swept over them, he called out solemnly.

"Now I can tell you—I am declaring war!"

Chapter 982: March with Me

Clip-clop~ Clip-clop~

Mo Ying stepped with its strong and powerful hooves on the smooth surface laid with limestone mortar, making crisp sounds.

The soldiers' gaze followed their leader slowly.

Upon hearing the words 'I will start a war' from their Lord.

Their eyes widened slightly, showing varied expressions.

Lynn tightly gripped the reins in his hand, and continued speaking.

"Perhaps, you wonder, clearly having just harvested the crops in the fields, the warehouse is stocked with vast amounts of grain."

"Perhaps, you are confused, clearly having the protection of the city walls and Weng City, the territory faces no danger at all."

"Perhaps, you are baffled, clearly capable of living peacefully within the territory."

"Why do I still assemble you to wage war externally!"

Some soldiers nodded involuntarily.

Lynn ignored their expressions and shouted.

"Now, I can answer you."

"The current safety and stability of the territory are just temporary!"

"Outside the territory, there are still many forces coveting the land we live on."

"Nearby, the Manor Lords in Pulder Town, Rasio Town, Bo Xi Town, and Alba Town near Morgan Town."

"Further away, Viscount Jon Zack in Kakasong City."

"Even farther, the Imperial Authority battle ignites, the flames of war spread..."

The soldiers lifted their heads, watching their Lord with heavy expressions.

They knew what the Lord spoke of were the crises the territory was facing or about to face.

He was not fearmongering merely to motivate them to fight.

Lynn's gaze once again swept across the faces of the soldiers.

"Therefore!"

"As crises quietly breed, as undercurrents surge beneath the calm surface, we will strike with full force!"

"Utterly nip the crisis in the bud!"

"You can see this war as an external expansion."

"Or understand it as a defensive war for the safer and more stable future development of the territory!"

The soldiers said nothing.

They only continued to stare wide-eyed at their Lord.

Lynn continued: "But there's one thing I need to tell you in advance."

"This war is not like the past, where the opponent is only one or two Manor Lords."

"This time, we will go to war against eight Manor Lords and one Viscount!"

"The combined enemy forces total as high as seven thousand! Perhaps more!"

"And our combined forces are just five thousand!"

The soldiers were moved, their eyes filled with an eager excitement.

Looking at the expressions of the soldiers, Lynn nodded in satisfaction.

Despite the numerical difference, these soldiers showed no hint of tension or fear.

Instead.

Their faces were full of expectation and longing for war.

Lynn continued: "Perhaps, you might unfortunately die in this war."

"But I can promise you..."

"Kill ten enemies, be promoted to Small Banner, and awarded one acre of arable land!"

The soldiers were excited, breathing heavily.

They naturally understood the promotion to Small Banner.

Master Lynn's military merit promotion system had clear stipulations.

But it was never stated that promotion to Small Banner would also come with an acre of land!

"Even if you die in battle, your bodies will be brought back to the territory, buried in this land you survived on."

"Your names will be carved under the Lord Statue, honored as 'warriors' for everyone to remember from now on."

"Your families will be well treated, continuing to live with honor as family of warriors!"

Lynn pulled the reins, guiding Mo Ying to the forefront.

He roared, "Now, who is willing to fight for this land, for yourself, for your Lord...?"

Just as Lynn's voice fell.

Thunderous roars of response surged from the soldiers' mouths.

"!! !! !!"

"I..."

Listening to the resonating echoes in the mountains and forests, seeing the excited faces of the soldiers.

Standing at the front of the Pan Rock Iron Guard formation, Tyrone's body trembled uncontrollably.

He knew that the Lord was currently adjusting and boosting the soldiers' spirits.

But even he was affected by the Lord's words.

Kill ten soldiers, be promoted to Small Banner!

And gain one acre of land!

This...

Fallen soldiers will be honored as warriors, carved under the Lord Statue, remembered by descendants!

Even the families of fallen soldiers will be well treated!

One could say.

As their Lord, Master Lynn had thought of everything for the soldiers!

Living soldiers receive status promotion and land.

Fallen soldiers also gain honor, without any worries left behind.

Such a military system, such leadership abilities...

Even he had never heard of it before!

Lynn glanced at all the soldiers, nodding in satisfaction.

To wage an external war, whether under the guise of expanding territory or self-defense.

Needs to be given a rightful cause for this war.

Only then can the soldiers' fighting spirit be galvanized, enhancing their combat skills!

[Hint: Commander's Roar skill successfully activated, boosting morale of entire army, soldiers' Attack Power and Defense increased by 10%, lasting 2 hours]

Glancing at the text panel, Lynn willed it shut.

Chapter 983: March With Me Part 2

Lynn raised his right hand, and the soldiers' unified response immediately ceased.

Just a few seconds later.

The rectangular formation of 3,800 soldiers fell into silence.

So quiet that everyone could clearly hear their own heartbeat!

Lynn moved his right hand, tightly gripping the hilt of his one-handed sword at his waist.

With a scraping sound of metal, the blade was drawn, pointing straight to the sky.

Lynn pulled the reins with his left hand, changing directions, and swung the one-handed sword forward with his right.

He shouted loudly, "March with me!"

Lynn suddenly flicked the reins in his hand, and Mo Ying charged towards the outer gate of Weng City's walls.

Red, Rose, and the soldiers around them were invigorated.

They urged their warhorses underneath them to trot forward, following closely.

The formation of 3,800 soldiers passed through the Inner City and city walls, marching on the well-paved red brick road.

Thanks to the red brick road laid by Avery and the stonemasons.

The soldiers' formation moved swiftly and steadily.

With the clanking of armor pieces echoing through the grassy wasteland.

From the front team's fifty light cavalry, to the Pan Rock Iron Guard at the rear.

The marching formation stretched for two to three hundred meters!

Despite the night falling at that moment.

But by the faint light of the sky.

You could clearly see the phalanx of 3,800 soldiers converging like a black tide.

Marching towards the distant outpost fortress and forest.

As they passed the edge of the woods and the outpost fortress, the soldiers patrolling on the top saw such a long formation.

And in the ranks, the lord on a tall horse, flanked by Lord Rose and Captain Red.

Their expressions were solemn, bodies standing straight, saluting from afar.

Not just them.

The dozens of soldiers stationed in the outpost fortress, upon hearing the heavy and orderly footsteps outside, all nervously came to the gate.

They thought a large-scale enemy force had broken through Morgan Town's defenses, evading the patrols within the forests.

Reaching their stationed outpost fortress.

About to launch an attack on the walls.

However.

When they saw the direction in which the soldiers were marching, and noticed that the soldiers were clad in the same armor as themselves.

The stationed soldiers' expressions changed from nervousness to surprise.

Such a massive force, almost mobilized entirely.

Clearly not just for defending Morgan, but heading to war!

They did not dare hesitate, immediately rushing out of the outpost fortress.

To clear the road of cheval-de-frise and spiked barricades for the advancing troops.

After completing all these tasks, the stationed soldiers stood in place.

Saluting this troop and their lord.

Riding atop his warhorse, Lynn glanced approvingly at them as he passed.

Instantly.

The soldiers stationed there stood even straighter.

Even a mere approving glance from their lord was enough to put great pressure on them.

Moreover, their hearts were filled with excitement and enthusiasm.

A lord commanding four to five thousand soldiers and twenty to thirty thousand townsmen cast an approving glance at them.

This was an honor unto itself!

Waiting for their lord to lead the army past the outpost fortress.

They stood tall, their tense expressions slightly relaxed.

Watching the army fade into the distant darkness of the forest, disappearing entirely.

Only then did they withdraw their gaze, exchanging a few glances amongst each other.

As they worked together to move the cheval-de-frise and spiked barricades, they chatted excitedly.

"Did you see that? The lord just cast a glance my way!"

"What do you mean your way? Clearly, it was aimed at me!"

"Alright, alright, what are you arguing about? The lord was looking at me!"

"Chaz, you really are shameless! Hahaha..."

"Speaking of which, when can we also charge into battle with the lord, like they do?"

Amid their joyous discussion, a voice carrying authority interrupted them.

"Why think so much? Even if we're just stationed at the outpost fortress now, we're still the lord's soldiers."

The stationed soldiers all fell silent, respectfully acknowledging.

"General Banner, sir!"

The middle-aged man, addressed as General Banner, continued speaking.

"Different positions require different townsmen to fulfill!"

"Some townsmen become farmers, responsible for planting in the territory."

"Some townsmen become artisans, responsible for the production in the workshops."

"Some, due to their physical prowess, are selected to be soldiers, or like the lord's soldiers, combat the enemy directly."

"Or, like us, stationed at outpost fortresses."

"If an enemy intrudes into the forest, attacking the walls, we are the first line of defense, and we light the wolf smoke to warn the watchtower!"

"As long as we fulfill the lord's requirements, diligently and responsibly doing our duties, it is enough!"

Dozens of stationed soldiers responded in unison, feeling enlightened.

"You are right, General Banner!"

"We will heed your teachings..."

The General Banner nodded slightly, withdrawing his gaze from the stationed soldiers, looking towards the distant dark forest.

Chapter 984: March With Me (Part 3)

On his face, there was a distinct trace of worry.

Once war is waged, casualties are inevitable!

...

Alba Town shrouded in the night.

On the walls, oil lamps burn brightly, illuminating the Connelly Manor residence.

As the oil lamps burn, wisps of black smoke rise and stain the walls, already blackened by smoke, even darker.

The entire hall on the first floor is filled with a faint smell of burnt feathers.

At the main seat of the several-meter-long dining table, the Manor Lord Zock Connally sits firmly.

At this moment, his cheeks are puffed, as he chews large bites of the roast beef in his mouth.

Perhaps it's because he stuffed too much beef into his mouth.

Causing Zock to have crimson juice trickling out of his mouth with each chew.

The maid standing beside him sees this.

She hurriedly picks up the silk handkerchief in her hand, carefully wiping the juice from his mouth corners.

During the wiping, Zock's gaze unconsciously falls upon the young maid's front.

Because she wears a low-collar linen robe, a hint of roundness intrudes into Zock's eyes.

He's still chewing with his mouth.

But his brow raises, and his right hand gently lifts.

The fleshy right hand directly lands on the rounded high swell behind the maid.

Nervousness and panic make the maid take a step back.

In an attempt to evade Zock's right hand.

Feeling the soft comfort in his hand disappear briefly, Zock instantly frowns.

No need for Zock to speak, a middle-aged man waiting on the side immediately shouts.

"You dare to dodge? Are you tired of living?"

"You're a maid purchased by Master Zock, hence you're the Master's property!"

"Whatever the Master wants to do to you, he will do!"

Listening to the sharp words from the middle-aged man.

The maid's heart is filled with terror, and she instantly kneels on the ground, pleading for mercy.

"Master, please forgive me, I won't dare again..."

Seeing the maid's eyes flash with tears due to excessive fear, Zock remains silent.

His eyes glance at the maid's body moving back and forth due to pleading, the round whiteness almost bursting forth.

And in her kneeling posture, the high swell behind becomes more apparent.

Watching the maid's movements, the middle-aged man standing behind Zock asks.

"Since you dare not anymore, you should know what to do, right?"

The maid's body stiffens slightly, but she dare not hesitate.

She slowly stands up, stepping towards Zock.

Just like before, she stands beside Zock.

She even proactively lifts Zock's right hand, placing it on the rounded high swell behind her.

Feeling the familiar softness return.

Looking at the maid's fearful yet obedient expression.

Zock's heart is full of indulgence.

This is the power of a Lord!

With exceedingly little expense, purchasing young and beautiful maids.

Even without needing him to speak, his steward guards would arrange what the maids should do.

These maid slaves, of course they can resist.

But.

Resistance, death!

The right hand exerts force, and the gentle comfort becomes more pronounced.

Looking at the maid's gradually reddening face, Zock's interest surges.

Without any politeness, he pulls the maid into his embrace.

Letting her sit on his lap, his right hand moves, starting to wander.

The three maids standing by naturally witness this scene.

They're afraid to speak, continuing to serve Zock as he dines at the table.

A few minutes later.

After drinking the wine handed by the maid, Zock lets out a satisfied burp.

Under the gaze of the middle-aged man and several maids.

He suddenly lifts the maid who's already overheated, her face flushed, towards the staircase not far away.

Until the figures of Zock and the maid disappear around the staircase corner.

The middle-aged man finally retracts his gaze, looking at the remaining maids, his words almost a warning.

"I'll say it again, we are all Master Zock's property!"

"We survive with food and warmth, thanks to the Master's grace and charity."

"In return, all we must do is satisfy the Master's needs!"

"Whether mentally or physically!"

"If anyone dares to resist again, perhaps causing Master Zock displeasure, not even a God could save you!"

"Did you hear?"

The maids respond nervously, bowing hurriedly.

"Maid has heard, Steward Land."

Land Philip snorts coldly, continuing.

"Good that you've heard.

"Quickly clean up the dining table and prepare the hot water for Master."

"Master usually likes to soak in a hot bath after invigorating his body."

The maids respond again.

No further words, they start clearing the tableware on the dining table.

Watching the maids start bustling.

Listening to the faint sound of body collision from upstairs.

Land can't help but exhale a warm breath.

He's grateful that Master Zock is in good spirits today.

Otherwise, the maid dodging Master Zock's right hand.

Would be enough for Master Zock to hang the maid directly on the wooden gallows alive.

Because the dignity of the Manor Lord cannot be violated by anyone!

As Land supervises the maids cleaning the table.

Firm footsteps sound from the manor residence's entrance.

Land turns his head to look.

Only to see a burly man wearing Chain Armor, entering the door, striding towards him.

Chapter 985: March With Me (Part 4)

Rand raised his eyebrows slightly and asked the burly man.

"Walter Rick, Guard Captain, returning to the manor so late, is there something urgent you need to report to the master?"

The burly man Walter rotated his large eyes, glanced at Rand, and spoke in a deep voice.

"I have important matters that I need to present to Master Zock, please notify him."

Hearing Walter's words without a hint of politeness, Rand didn't get angry.

Instead, he smiled slightly, "Walter Guard Captain, your timing is a bit unfortunate."

"The master has just returned to his room with the newly purchased maid to rest."

"He might not meet with you anytime soon."

"If you don't mind, you can tell me what you need to report, and I will help you..."

Before Rand could finish his sentence, Walter spoke.

"No need."

"Since the master has just retired, I will wait outside the manor."

"As soon as the master is done resting, be sure to notify him first that Walter has urgent matters to report."

After finishing his words.

Walter swung his linen cloak behind him and walked directly toward the front door.

Watching Walter's back as he walked out of the manor's front door, sitting on the distant bonfire's wooden logs.

The smile on Rand's face instantly vanished, his eyes squinting slightly.

Time slowly passed by.

Until half an hour later.

The sound of the door opening and footsteps echoed on the second floor.

Waiting downstairs, Rand immediately stepped up the stairs.

As he climbed to the second floor, Rand glanced at the flushed face and staggering feet of the maid passing by him.

Retracting his gaze, Rand walked towards Zock's bedroom.

Arriving at the bedroom door.

Rand knocked on the slightly ajar wooden door and spoke.

"Master, the hot water for the bath is ready, would you like me to arrange for the maid to assist you now?"

His voice dropped for two seconds.

From behind the slightly ajar wooden door, Zock's somewhat feeble voice responded.

"I'll rest for a while, then go over."

Rand raised an eyebrow and responded with a smile, "Yes, Master."

After responding, Rand stepped back.

Descending the stairs, he returned to the first-floor reception hall.

Before he could catch his breath, Walter's burly figure re-entered the manor's front door.

His stern gaze swept over Rand, his voice still low.

"Did you notify Master Zock for me?"

Feeling the unfriendly tone in Walter's words, Rand still smiled.

He spoke with helplessness, "Sorry, Walter Guard Captain."

"You should know the master has always had good health."

"Plus, just having purchased a young and pretty maid, how could the master be easily finished?"

Walter's thick eyebrows furrowed tightly, in a deep voice he said.

"I'll find him myself!"

The next second, Walter stepped toward the stairs in the reception hall.

However.

Before he could take two steps, Rand blocked him directly.

Walter impatiently reached out his right hand, trying to push him away.

Feeling the solid strength on his shoulder, Rand stared at Walter and almost warningly shouted.

"Walter! Are you crazy?"

"I've already informed you, the master is resting."

"Breaking in like this to meet the master is disrespectful!"

Walter's right hand grasping Rand's shoulder suddenly hovered in mid-air.

Rand felt slightly relieved.

Though an ordinary person, he was naturally no match for Guard Captain Walter.

In fact.

With just a casual flick of Walter's right hand, his body would crash into the nearby chair.

His status might not earn Guard Captain Walter's regard.

Possessing military command authority, Walter naturally has a high opinion of himself.

However.

He is Rand Ramsey, the butler of Master Zock!

If respect cannot be obtained, then he will find a way to achieve it.

Just as Walter hesitated.

A voice of inquiry sounded behind them.

"What's going on?"

Rand and Walter turned their heads quickly at the sound.

Seeing Zock in a thin robe standing at the railing on the second floor.

His eyes swept over the two of them.

Walter was about to speak.

Rand showed a servile smile and responded.

"Master, Walter Guard Captain said he has urgent matters to report to you."

"I was just trying to understand..."

Walter heard this and furrowed his brows.

His eyes fixed on Zock, waiting for his answer.

Zock glanced at Walter and spoke.

"I'm about to take a bath, if you don't mind, then come in and report."

Walter promptly bent over and responded, "Of course, Master Zock!"

Zock acknowledged and walked toward the bathroom.

Blocking Walter before, Rand moved his body, giving way to the path.

Rand's face still bore a smile as he spoke.

"Walter Guard Captain, indeed the master was resting just now, as his butler, I need to consider from the master's perspective..."

"But now, you can go up to meet the master and report."

Walter glared at Rand, snorted coldly, and walked past him directly.

Rand turned his body, watching Walter's back ascend the stairs, entering the bathroom Zock had just entered.

He finally withdrew his gaze.

His facial expression turned cold, his smile vanished.

Walter stepped heavily onto the staircase, arriving on the second floor.

Chapter 986: March With Me (Part 5)

Looking into the distance.

He saw the room emitting wisps of steam, and without any hesitation, he stepped forward.

Entering the open door of the bathroom, Volker took a glance around.

Inside the spacious bathtub.

Due to lack of physical training and indulging in excesses daily, Master Zok's somewhat plump body lay within.

Beside Zok, two young maids crouched.

Like him, the maids wore nothing.

Relying solely on the gently rippling hot water of the bathtub to cover their snowy peaks.

Walter only glanced briefly before lowering his head immediately.

He respectfully addressed, "Master."

Zok, enjoying the maids' massage, was busy exploring the maid's body with his right hand.

Even though he had just finished exercising with a young maid in the bedroom.

But it couldn't satisfy the desires of his fingers...

Upon hearing Walter's voice, he asked.

"Tell me, what matter requires an immediate report?"

Walter wasted no words and immediately reported.

"Master, the spies dispatched to Morgan Town returned not long ago."

Closing his eyes, Zok immediately opened them.

He propped his right arm on the edge of the bathtub and looked at Walter with some surprise, asking.

"You mean the batch of spies that went missing earlier?"

The first team of spies he sent out had been missing for nearly ten days!

Until now, there was no information.

Neither alive nor dead!

Upon hearing this, Walter, with a trace of apology in his voice, said.

"Sorry, Master Zok, it's not the batch that went missing."

"The second batch of dispatched spies returned..."

A look of disappointment appeared on Zok's face as he leaned again against the bathtub wall.

Retracting his right arm, soaking in the hot water, and exploring between the maid's legs beside him.

Zok asked casually, "Tell me, what did the spies bring back?"

Walter explained, "Master, the returning spies reported to me."

"Compared to before, the patrol intensity in Morgan Town has increased significantly."

"Each patrol team's numbers have increased from five at the beginning to ten now."

"And the interval between each patrol team is only five minutes."

"Meaning the last patrol just passed, and the next patrol follows immediately!"

Zok, still with closed eyes.

His fingers had already explored deeply into the maid's body.

Despite the maid's flushed face, trembling uncontrollably, casting resentful glances toward him.

Zok did not stop at all.

Because of the bathtub's concealment.

Walter, standing eight or nine meters away, naturally didn't know what was happening in the bathtub.

Seeing that Zok had no words, he kept his head down and continued to report.

"Master, besides the increase in patrol teams, the soldiers on the Manor Castle walls have noticeably increased!"

"Like the patrol teams, all soldiers wore uniform strange steel armor!"

Zok remained unmoved, his right hand continued repeating the same actions.

Walter continued speaking: "Worried about being discovered and captured by the patrol teams."

"The spies only dared to watch from afar."

"They roughly estimated the number of soldiers in Morgan Town and the Manor Castle..."

"The number of fully armed soldiers is at least over four or five hundred!"

No sooner did Walter finish speaking.

The maid crouching beside Zok couldn't suppress a cry.

"Ah~"

At the sound, Walter raised his head slightly in surprise.

In the bathtub, the maid's face was entirely flushed, quickly lowering her head, saying to Zok.

"Sorry, Master, please forgive me for my rudeness..."

Zok didn't mind one bit; he even grinned and said.

"No need to be nervous, I absolve you!"

Upon hearing Zok's explicit direction, the maid's panicked expression gradually eased.

Only then.

Did Walter finally understand why Zok hadn't spoken.

A movement of his right hand, he let the bent maid stick closely beside him.

Only then did Zok look toward Walter afar, asking.

"Four or five hundred fully armed soldiers?"

"Walter, Guard Captain... don't you think that's a bit exaggerated?"

Walter furrowed his brow slightly, asking somewhat puzzled.

"Master, you mean..."

Zok's right hand slipped through the maid's nape, lying on her shoulder.

The drooping right hand placed precisely on the maid's prominent roundness.

His right palm slightly tightened, and the maid couldn't help but cast resentful glances at Zok.

Zok was utterly unperturbed, continuing to speak to Walter.

"Connelly Manor has been passed down through generations."

"Until now, it only has fifty chain armor soldiers, thirty leather armor soldiers."

"The rest of the soldiers can only wear simple cloth armor, or nothing at all!"

"Even the Viscount Jon Zacks from Kasong City has only a thousand fully armed soldiers."

"A previously unheard-of Lord, unbeknownst to what schemes, wiped out the Morgan Town Manor Lord..."

"How can he have four or five hundred fully armed soldiers?"

"Is buying quality iron without cost, or acquiring armor without needing Gold Pounds?"

"Even if his territory has a salt mine, do you know how many Gold Pounds four or five hundred sets of standard armor cost?"

"Unless, besides a salt mine, his territory also has an exploitable iron mine!"

Chapter 987: Join Me in the Campaign _6

"Moreover, he has enough blacksmiths to smelt iron ore into iron and then forge it into armor!"

"Otherwise, how could he own four or five hundred sets of armor?"

Walter instantly fell silent.

As the Guard Captain of the entire Connelly Manor.

With his status, he naturally knows that within the range of Morgan Town, there are salt mines.

This is also the fundamental reason they are investigating Morgan Town.

Just as Lord Zock mentioned,

A lord unheard of suddenly emerged.

Not only did he annihilate all the manor lords in Morgan Town,

he even has so many armored soldiers!

Of course,

this might also be the reason why this lord named Lynn could wipe out all the manor lords in Morgan Town!

However,

in terms of obtaining five hundred sets of armor, this cannot be achieved!

Even if the lord named Lynn's territory is blessed by the heavens.

Has both an open-pit salt mine and an open-pit iron mine.

But from uniform excavation, to blast furnace smelting, to forging production...

Which step does not require a large workforce?

The most critical point is,

Iron smelting and armor forging is far from achievable with just a large workforce!

It also requires smelting and forging technology!

If as Master Zock said, it's impossible for Morgan Town to have four hundred fully armed soldiers...

Then, conversely.

The spying team he sent to Morgan, are they lying to him?

Walter feels this is even less likely!

Because the previous batch of people like Bader mysteriously disappeared, most likely captured or killed by Lynn.

He deliberately sent out his trusted subordinates.

They couldn't be lying about the number of fully armed soldiers in Morgan Town,

involving Master Zock and even such big figures like Viscount Jon Zuck of Kasong City!

For a moment,

Walter didn't know what to say to Zock in the bathtub.

After a moment of silence,

Volker's eyes lit up, and he said insightfully,

"Master Zock, to ensure the reliability of the information brought back by the spies, I want to personally lead people to Morgan Town for further investigation."

"Please allow me, sir!"

Zock glanced at Walter, praising.

"This is the most correct and wise decision!"

"Walter, do you know why I promoted you to Guard Captain?"

"And entrusted you with the entire manor's security?"

Walter shook his head doubtfully.

Zock smiled slightly, explaining, "Because of your meticulousness and your serious and rigorous work ethic."

Walter nodded humbly, responding.

"Master Zock, you praise me too much."

"Swearing allegiance to you as Guard Captain, naturally, I strive for your interests."

"Otherwise, what difference would that be from a traitor?"

Zock nodded contentedly, "Well said!"

"Is there anything else to report?"

Walter didn't hesitate, continuing.

"The recruitment of soldiers in Alba Town is ongoing."

"Until now, 150 Free People have been recruited."

"They are willing to become your soldiers, sir..."

"However, there's one point I'd like to confirm with you, sir."

"There's no remuneration for recruited soldiers, only daily food supply?"

Zock in the bathtub replied.

"Yes, Guard Captain Walter, do you think there's a problem with such hiring terms?"

Walter quickly explained, "Sir, as your Guard Captain, I have no issues."

"However, those Free People who wish to be employed believe no remuneration is worse than going back to farming."

"This way, they can earn enough pence to support their families..."

"Moreover, some Free People who agreed to be employed at your manor unilaterally broke the hiring agreement and returned to Alba Town."

Walter changed his tone, continuing.

"Sir, I mean, if there continues to be no remuneration."

"Let alone recruiting more soldiers, even those already recruited will gradually leave."

"As for what to do, Walter follows your orders, sir!"

Listening to Walter's narration, Zock in the bathtub, kneading something round and soft in his hands, couldn't help frowning.

Recruiting soldiers, providing them food is already his utmost capacity.

Furthermore, providing daily wages...

Such expenses are indeed too much for his territory.

Nevertheless,

if under the leadership of Viscount Jon Zuck, they manage to seize Morgan Town and occupy the salt mine in Morgan Town,

even if their eight supporters share four percent...

It would still be an extremely substantial income!

With this thought, Zock said to Walter.

"Inform those Free People, I, Zock, can offer them two pence daily wages."

"If they dare ask for more, they can get as far away as possible."

"And from now on, don't expect to lease land or labor from Connelly Manor!"

Walter bowed in response, "Yes, sir."

Zock kneaded the softness vigorously in his hand, eliciting a sound of pain from the maid.

Zock continued speaking to Walter.

"Is there anything else?"

Walter respectfully said, "Sir, for now, there's nothing else."

Zock nodded, "Then you may leave."

"By the way, call up Land the steward."

Walter bowed again in response, then turned and left.

Though the next second, a shy moan from the maid echoed in the bathroom.

He was unfazed.

Exiting Zock's bathroom, stepping down the stairs, Volker arrived in the ground-floor hall.

Without needing to search, Land approached with a smile on his face.

"Guard Captain Walter, can you tell me now what you reported to our master?"

Walter glanced at him casually, speaking in a deep voice.

"The master wants you to see him."

Land raised his brows, immediately curious.

"Me? Did the master say anything?"

Walter directly ignored Land's words, stepping past him, leaving the manor house.

Remaining in place, a flicker of anger passed through Land's eyes.

He snorted coldly, "Someday, your Guard Captain authority will be mine!"

Thinking of what Walter said,

He hesitated not a moment, striding up the stairs ahead.

Chapter 988: Blitzkrieg

Only a dozen or so steps, Land quickly climbed up, immediately feeling somewhat out of breath.

Reaching the entrance of the bathroom, he listened to the sound of Master Zok and the maid playing inside.

Land's heart relaxed slightly.

Although Guard Captain Walter didn't tell him the reason why Master Zok asked to see him.

But from the cheerful atmosphere in the bathroom, it was obvious that it wasn't anything serious.

Land regulated his breathing, put on a customary smile, and with a firm step, walked into the bathroom.

The air was filled with steam, and there was a lingering scent of incense.

Land quickly scanned the bathroom with his eyes.

In the bathtub, Master Zok was being attended to by two maids, soaking in the bath.

One of the maids was even being held on Master Zok's lap.

Master Zok's hands were roaming over the maid's body.

It was clear.

The sounds of playful banter he heard were from the mouths of the maids.

Taking in the scene, Land quickly lowered his head, speaking with pure deference.

"Master, Guard Captain Walter informed me that you have business with me..."

Hearing Land's words, Zok in the bathtub didn't turn his head at all.

His eyes remained fixed on the smooth, fair complexion of the maid in front of him.

Words sounded from Zok's mouth, calm and indifferent.

"Slap yourself thirty times, and then you may leave."

Hearing Zok's words, Land, standing five or six meters away, was immediately taken aback.

He asked, somewhat confused, "Master... Did Land do something wrong?"

It wasn't just Land.

The two maids attending to Zok also wore looks of surprise on their faces.

Zok's tone shifted, almost as if questioning, "What?"

"Is my word not effective?"

"If you're unwilling to slap yourself, then I can only order the guards to come..."

Startled, Land hurriedly began to explain.

"Master, you misunderstand, Land... Land will slap himself now..."

As his words fell, Land slowly raised his hands.

He looked at his palms, his arms trembling slightly, but he couldn't bring himself to act.

Zok glanced at him, "I don't like repeating myself!"

Feeling the coldness in Zok's words, Land dared not hesitate any longer.

He swung his right hand, striking his own cheek.

Slap~

Perhaps due to the excessive force, the crisp sound echoed in the bathroom as soon as his hand landed.

A scarlet handprint instantly appeared on Land's cheek.

Feeling the swelling and burning pain on his cheek, Land's breath quickened, eyes bulging.

A strong hatred surged in his heart.

Clearly, Master Zok was in a very good mood.

He had just returned to the bedroom with a young maid he purchased.

Now, he was frolicking with the maid in the bathtub...

But why did Master Zok want him to slap himself?

And a full thirty times at that?

Walter's face immediately flashed in Land's mind.

During the time after Master Zok went upstairs, only Walter had met with him.

It must be him who said something bad about him to Master Zok!

Thinking of this.

The hatred in Land's heart toward Walter grew even stronger.

Even with his heart full of hatred, he dared not hesitate in his actions.

Because it was a direct command from Master Zok, the Manor Lord.

Even though he was now the butler of Master Zok's manor.

He was still just an asset owned by Master Zok.

Not to mention slapping himself, even if he were to be hanged on a gallows, it would be lawful and legitimate!

Slap~ Slap~ Slap~

Land used both hands alternately, striking his own cheeks continuously.

After eight or nine slaps.

Land's cheeks began to swell and turn red, with streams of blood trickling down from the corners of his mouth.

Land's body trembled uncontrollably.

In the bathtub, Zok wrapped his right hand around the maid's waist, placing it on her back.

While kneading, enjoying the comfort his palm felt.

While waiting for Land to finish slapping himself.

After about a minute.

The crisp sounds of slaps in the bathroom finally stopped.

By this time, Land's cheeks were swollen, as if he had stuffed two buns in his mouth.

His eyes were filled with tremors, tears streaming continuously, and with his body trembling endlessly...

He looked like a completely different person from the one in the first-floor hall earlier.

Upon hearing the sounds stop, Zok turned his gaze towards Land, who was far away.

Despite Land's condition.

Zok's expression remained unchanged.

He asked in a low voice, "Thirty slaps, finished?"

A somewhat muffled response came from Land's swollen mouth.

"Mas... Master, finished."

The two maids attending to Zok couldn't help but cast a peculiar glance at Land.

That glance was filled with ridicule and indifference.

Because they had suffered enough from Land's coercion and harshness!

Zok continued to ask, "Do you know why I asked you to slap yourself?"

Land's eyes were full of confusion, and his swollen mouth moved a few times, trying to respond.

Yet he found that due to the excessive force of the slaps, his whole cheek was numb.

He had to exert all his strength to open his mouth and respond.

"Master... What did Land not do well?"

Zok shook his head, speaking coldly, "No, you did very well."

"It's just because you did too well, you overstepped your bounds..."

Chapter 989: Blitzkrieg _2

Land was filled with tension and for a moment, he didn't know what to say.

Zock continued, "Because you did so well, so well that I, as the Manor Lord, felt like I had no authority whatsoever!"

"If it were just within the manor grounds, it would be one thing."

"But... you even dared to covet the military power of the manor..."

Hearing Zock's words, Land was startled, a strong sense of crisis appeared in his heart.

Despite the dampness of the bathroom's stone floor, Land immediately knelt on the ground.

He anxiously replied, "Master, Land knows he's wrong."

"Please, Master, for the sake of the decades I've served you, forgive Land."

Zock looked coldly at him without uttering a word.

Land bent his body and quickly kowtowed.

"Master, please forgive Land..."

Thud~ Thud~

The sound of collisions echoed in the bathroom, one after another.

Even though piercing pain shot through his forehead, even though dizziness swirled in his head.

Land still didn't dare to pause for a moment.

Master Zock's words were decisive and resolute; clearly, he had gathered detailed information from elsewhere.

No matter how eloquently he spoke now, it would merely be a defense.

Compared to the physical pain, he was more keen on staying alive.

Watching Land repeatedly kowtow, Zock had no intention of stopping him.

He spoke calmly, "If not for the decades you've spent at Connelly Manor."

"You would have long been hanged on a gallows by now..."

Land's kowtowing did not cease.

Until he heard Zock say, "Enough, my estate still needs you to manage it."

Land's repeated actions finally came to a halt.

His hands were on the wet ground, breathing heavily.

At this moment, his face was swollen, covered with clear overlapping palm prints.

His forehead, from continuous kowtowing, was split open, with blood continuously flowing.

Receiving Zock's instruction, Land's body trembled, responding with a relieved difficulty.

"Land... Land thanks Master for his forgiveness..."

Zock's right hand continued to roam over the maid's body.

He responded indifferently, "Leave."

Land bowed his head in response, struggling to stand up slowly, bowing toward Zock in the tub, before exiting the bathroom.

Just as Land left the bathroom and was about to close the double wooden doors for Zock.

The sounds of Zock and the maid's frolicking rose again in the bathroom.

With a 'click', the double wooden doors gently closed.

Land glanced around the area.

Perhaps because it was nighttime, there was no sign of anyone within the manor mansion.

Only then did he step weakly to the stairs.

His hands gripped the handrail, suppressing the pain on his face and forehead, continued breathing heavily.

Thinking back to the scene in the bathroom earlier, he still felt frightened.

If he hadn't continuously kowtowed, hadn't kept pleading to Zock.

He wouldn't have died, but he would have been skinned alive!

Fortunately, he survived!

Land's mind quickly thought.

Where exactly did he slip up, leading Zock to be suspicious of him?

To gain the military power in the manor, he did a lot.

He believed that everything he did was foolproof.

Guard Captain Walter?

Just a brute with a body full of muscles.

How could he possibly know?

Zock figure it out on his own?

Just a Manor Lord who only loves to toy with women.

If it weren't for being born in Connelly Manor, inheriting the lordship.

Land thought, Zock's mindset wouldn't even allow him to survive to adulthood!

After a round of thinking, Land still couldn't pinpoint the root cause.

However.

After what just happened, Land knew.

Even if he continued to be Zock's butler, managing the manor's affairs.

It would be hard to gain Zock's trust...

Even though Zock chose to forgive him this time.

But any future unexpected incidents in the manor, Zock would undoubtedly suspect him first!

Land's eyes shifted rapidly.

He had to consider an escape plan!

Suppressing his inner thoughts, Land walked down the stairs towards the first floor of the manor mansion.

Arriving in the reception hall on the first floor, Land's eyes shifted.

Looking through the wide-open windows of the manor mansion, he looked at the bonfire outside.

Walter was with a few guards, sitting by the bonfire, chatting and laughing.

Occasionally grabbing the wine sack in hand and drinking merrily.

At this moment.

Land's hatred for Walter reached its peak.

Why could Walter enjoy such leisure with the guards?

While he had to manage every little thing in the manor mansion for Master Zock?

Every day before dawn, he had to get up to arrange everything.

From morning till night, only when Master Zock went to bed could he finally sleep.

This had repeated for decades!

Why could Walter come out unscathed from the bathroom where Master Zock was?

While he almost died in there.

Why did Walter gain Zock's trust?

While his painstaking efforts and decades of service were depleted just moments ago!

Walter, outside of the manor mansion, seemed to feel Land's resentful gaze.

He looked up, his gaze passing through the wide-open window, seeing Land inside the manor mansion.

Chapter 990: Blitzkrieg _3

Upon seeing the barely discernible face of Land, Walter's face clearly showed a touch of astonishment.

But the next second, the corner of his mouth lifted.

Walter raised the wine pouch in his hand in the air.

Under Land's gaze, he withdrew his arm and gulped down a mouthful of wine, letting out a satisfied belch!

Land snorted coldly and with measured steps, headed towards the room deep within the manor estate.

But he could still hear the bursts of laughter coming from outside the manor estate by the bonfire.

Like a parasitic bone worm, it kept echoing in his ears.

Until Land's back disappeared, the entire reception hall on the first floor fell into a silence.

Only the wall-mounted oil lamps, not yet extinguished, continued to burn.

Under the gentle night breeze, the red-orange flames flickered gently.

...

On the other side.

The marching troops, like a torrent of steel, were advancing rapidly under the night.

Each soldier holding a torch in their hand.

Using it to illuminate the somewhat dim road ahead.

Riding on Mo Ying, Lynn turned his gaze, scanning the surroundings.

The marching troops had passed the Outpost Fortress, and the road paved with red brick had come to an end.

Among the tree-covered mountains, there was only a muddy and gravelly mountain road left.

Even the mountain road was worn down by traveling merchants constantly driving carts to his territory over the past year or more.

Otherwise.

Given the location of his territory, just a wasteland covered in weeds.

How could there possibly be roads accessible to carts?

However.

If this external war allowed him to completely control Morgan Town.

He could arrange for Avery to pave the road between the Outpost Fortress and Morgan Town with smooth red brick.

In military terms, it would facilitate the rapid march and large-scale mobilization of troops.

If the enemy attacks Morgan Town or the Manor Castle.

He could immediately dispatch troops for rapid support.

Meanwhile, the red brick paving could also ensure logistical supply transport for future military campaigns.

With a flat red brick road, even in terms of information transmission, it would speed up the cavalry returning from Morgan Town to the territory!

Economically and in trade, the red brick road could provide merchants with more convenient transport conditions.

Even.

It might attract more merchants to come to Morgan Town, to his territory, to conduct trade activities!

Of course.

This was just a preliminary idea in his mind.

The threat from Jon Zuck was not yet resolved.

Both Morgan Town and his territory faced potential threats.

Even if he had plenty of stonemasons, he certainly wouldn't immediately put them into infrastructure construction outside the territory.

Because if the enemy launches an attack on Morgan Town and breaches it.

The paved red brick ground would allow them to reach his walls from Morgan Town in no time!

Suppressing these thoughts, Lynn looked at Rose on the warhorse beside him.

He instructed: "Arrange for the messenger to immediately head to the Manor Castle and inform Wesley to prepare food."

"The marching troops will enter the Manor Castle for dining and rest!"

Rose, without the slightest hesitation, responded, "Yes, master!"

Seeing that Lynn had no further instructions, Rose immediately called over a soldier and began to relay Lynn's orders.

In just a few seconds.

The messenger, along with two soldiers, urged their horses to outpace the advancing army.

Holding high their illuminating torches, they galloped into the darkness ahead.

The distance from his territory's walls to Morgan Town was a hundred and sixty li.

At the current marching speed, it would take at least until tomorrow night to reach the Manor Castle!

This was with three thousand eight hundred soldiers, without carrying too much extra supply baggage, and with fairly level muddy gravel roads.

If the convoy also carried supply carts and siege machinery.

To reach the Manor Castle where Wesley was stationed, it would take at least another week!

This was just within the range of Morgan Town!

If they wanted to go to a more distant battlefield to wage war, unless all soldiers were cavalry.

Otherwise, restricted by distance, the army would need to spend a significant amount of time traveling to the war.

Not only were they limited by distance and time.

The longer the marching army travels, the greater the corresponding consumption of provisions becomes!

With low food production, high transport losses, and inefficient supply delivery.

Thus.

With limited transport speed, unless they fought along the way to sustain themselves.

Otherwise.

It would be very difficult for a large-scale army to sustain a prolonged campaign!

Just like Morgan Town, where his territory was located, for an army to march to the Kaldi Imperial City—Triumph City!

Based on the normal marching speed of a mixed army of cavalry and infantry carrying supplies.

Without longboat warships or a large number of horses as transport vehicles.

Over four thousand li of distance, crossing plains, mountains, rivers, etc.

The army would need to march for at least three to four months.

Or even longer!

Therefore.

Launching a large-scale war or conducting an expedition is not easy.

Often, due to the excessive distance of the march.

Leads to the depletion of provisions, or deep isolation, causing an expedition's failure.