The Genius Son-in-law of the Swordmaster Household—Blessed by Authority

Chapter 7 : Sword Selection Ceremony (1)

Sword Selection Ceremony (1)

'I will head to the main estate of Hisperion and participate in the Sword Selection Ceremony.'

The Sword Selection Ceremony was a ritual to bestow upon oneself a sword befitting one's destiny.

There, Ian had to confirm Yuriah's life or death for certain.

Meeting the destined sword that he failed to receive in his previous life was only a secondary goal.

'First, I need travel expenses.'

To get to the Hisperion main estate as quickly as possible from here, he would need to use the warp gate.

And the usage fee for the warp gate was quite expensive.

'Let's loot the bandits' wallets first. Then the storage.'

Thankfully, this place was a bandit hideout filled to the brim with stolen goods.

If he looted the bandits' spoils, there would be more than enough to cover all the travel expenses to Hisperion.

'Maybe I'll even find a useful weapon or elixir.'

Even the saber the bandit boss used earlier looked like a decent quality piece.

Of course, compared to the finest swords Ian had wielded in his previous life, it was trash not even worth kicking aside, but if he sold it along the way, it would help cover expenses.

Ian first moved toward the bandits' corpses.

Just as he was about to reach for one of the bodies' waists—

"Young master!! Look what I found!"

Sophia's excited voice rang out from behind.

Turning around, he saw Sophia hopping over, her skirt full of all sorts of ingredients.

"Eat first! Eat! There's even fish, your favorite, young master!"

"Oh. Fish."

Delicious, and nutritionally excellent.

You found something good.

At the sight of the fish, his stomach, unfed for three or four days, began to rumble.

Anything would taste amazing right now, more so than ever before.

"Alright, let's eat first."

"Hurry and take some! My arms hurt!"

"... Fine."

* * *

— Munch! Munch!

After quickly devouring three days' worth of hunger with Sophia, Ian started searching the bandit hideout in earnest.

He planned to take everything that might be needed to reach the Hisperion main estate.

"Sophia, go check the lodgings for anything valuable there. A bag would be good too, to carry the food."

"Yup!"

While Sophia took the lodgings, Ian rummaged through the bandits' corpses.

— Clink.

He quickly found five coin pouches.

'Are the other guys' wallets in the lodgings?'

He washed his dirty hands at the well and entered the bandits' lodgings, finding Sophia struggling to move the wardrobe.

"Hup! Hrrrmph!"

"What are you doing?"

"Hnnng!! Young master! I think there's something under here! Help me out!"

"Under the wardrobe? Move aside."

"It's really heavy! I can't do it alone!"

"Okay, so just move."

"I said you can't do it alone!"

— Scrraaaaape!

"... Huh?"

When he used his orc strength, the wardrobe slid aside as if it weighed nothing.

"Wait, wha, at?"

Sophia blinked her big eyes.

Even she, trained by heavy laundry duty, hadn't been able to budge it, but the spindly arms of a boy who hadn't even hit puberty yet had moved it so easily?

"It, is this aura? Or, or magic? What is it! How did you do that?!"

Strictly speaking, it was neither; it was orc strength, but Ian didn't bother to explain.

"There's a hatch in the floor. Lucky find."

What Sophia had found was a hidden door in the floor.

"But it's locked. Where's the key... I'll go look!"

"It's alright. I've got this."

"Huh?"

— Clack! Clack! Clack! Crack!

"?"

After Ian tugged at the lock several times, it came right off.

"Brute force works."

"... Wow."

Sophia's jaw dropped.

"I should retire from forehead-flick contests with you, young master."

"Let's see what's inside."

Ian flung open the trapdoor.

With the scent of musty dust came a display of small treasures.

A money pouch as big as a hip, a small blackwood box, a dagger inlaid with jewels...

"Wow... A lot of these look expensive."

"Yeah, not bad."

Ian handed the large money pouch to Sophia first.

"This is for you."

"W-what?!"

Sophia opened the pouch.

"Oh, my!"

Inside was a pile of shimmering silver coins and expensive gold coins.

A quick glance revealed a sum comparable to Sophia's annual wages.

"Y-young master! This is too much! There are even gold coins... At least 250 gold? Maybe over 400 gold! Oh my!"

"Take it. It's yours."

If memory served, Ian had borrowed quite a bit of money from Sophia around this time.

Even the carriage he'd been using before being kidnapped by bandits was bought with money borrowed from Sophia.

Since Ian was treated as invisible at home, he had to sneak food like a thief just to eat, let alone be given an allowance.

Each time Ian went to Sophia with a shameful expression asking to borrow money, Sophia never scolded him, but quietly lent him what he needed.

Even now, he was truly grateful to her.

Without Sophia, Ian would have collapsed long before meeting Yuriah.

"Let's call that even for all the money I've borrowed so far."

"T-too much! That's more than my yearly pay!"

"Then you can pay for our expenses on the way."

"T-then, I'll just hold onto it for now... I'll just buy a few snacks!"

"... Use it however you want. It's yours."

All Ian needed right now was money to get to the Hisperion main estate.

Of course, money allowed for buying better elixirs and weapons, but with the Authority of Projection, Ian had no reason to covet coin.

If he needed something at a shop, he could just copy it with his power.

'Paying for everything is far less efficient than using the power directly.'

He had no intention of limiting himself in saving Yuriah and the world from demonkind.

Always, he would choose the path of utmost efficiency.

'It's not like the shop owner actually loses their items when I copy them, and it's all for saving the world from demons anyway... Mhm...'

To be honest, saying he felt zero guilt would be a lie, but he could carry that much remorse for efficiency's sake.

'So what matters to me isn't money, but mana.'

Ian reached for the blackwood box under the floorboard.

'And these kinds of boxes usually hold elixirs needed for mana.'

Carefully opening the case, sure enough, a clear fragrance wafted up as a round elixir was revealed.

'Just as I thought.'

"Wow! What a nice smell! What is that?"

"It's an elixir."

A fairly high-quality one at that.

'With a cheap energy circulation method, it'd take at least a week to assimilate.'

That's just how much mana was condensed within.

But if he used Heavenly Dawn Technique, the ultimate energy method learned from Yuriah, it wouldn't even take half a day.

'One's defenseless during energy cultivation. The bandit boss must have kept it here, waiting for the right moment to consume it.'

He'd better use this tonight.

By extracting mana from the elixir while projecting Sophia's dantian, he could restore his own damaged dantian to some extent.

"I'll take this."

"O-of course, it's yours, young master! And this money too!"

"That's for you, I said."

The last thing left was the dagger inlaid with jewels.

'This one looks useful too.'

A straight, sharp blade.

Judging by the maze pattern etched into the blade, it wasn't just common steel.

'That's tower-forged alloy steel, which boosts enchant effectiveness.'

And the jewel set in the hilt.

'There's an enchant bound within.'

Examining the rune script in the gem told him it kept the blade sharp and durable.

'This will come in handy for a while.'

For someone at the beginner's level, unable to infuse aura into weapons, this was a perfectly usable tool.

'Sophia could use this as well. Can I duplicate it now?'

[The user's mana is insufficient to project this item at present.]

'... Let's try duplicating it after gathering mana tonight with Heavenly Dawn Technique. Guess I've got a full night ahead.'

Ian sheathed the dagger and tucked it at his waist.

"Sophia. Grab a weapon for yourself too. Not something heavy and big—small and light."

"Yup! Th-this one should work..."

Sophia grabbed a hand axe from the shelf.

"That'll do. All we need now is to find a bag and get out. Oh! I should grab that saber the big guy had, too."

"Yup!"

* * *

Having gathered everything they needed, Ian and Sophia left the bandit hideout and cut through the forest.

Soon, they found a paved road and, following the signs, headed towards the main Hisperion estate.

By nightfall, they reached a small village suitable for spending the night.

Ian and Sophia could finally enjoy some real rest.

— Flop!

"Huuaaaghh... It feels like my body is melting..."

Freshly washed, Sophia melted onto the bed with a satisfied sound.

"You did great. No wonder, after being locked in that hard warehouse for three or four days."

"But you seem totally fine, young master... Huhh... Zzz..."

The moment Sophia lay on the bed, she melted right into sleep.

It was as if she'd been hit by an anesthetic.

'I'd better finish my tasks and sleep too.'

Tonight's to-do list:

First: Project Sophia's mana circuits and dantian.

Second: Take the elixir found at the bandit hideout.

Third: If energy remains, duplicate another enchanted dagger obtained at the hideout.

'Alright. Let's get started.'

Ian sat cross-legged on the bed, gathering aura needed to project Sophia's circuits and dantian.

In less than ten minutes, his battered dantian filled up and pain began to flare.

'Now.'

— Tense!

Ian stared at Sophia, focusing his will to project.

"Huuu..."

Oblivious to the world, the shape of Sophia's mana circuits and dantian came into focus through the power.

It was reminiscent of a star constellation.

The dantian in her lower belly looked smooth as fine porcelain.

'It's a curious sensation.'

Not seeing or touching, yet still perceiving the shape of Sophia's dantian and circuits.

'Just this morning, trapped in the bandit warehouse, I didn't have enough mana to project.'

Now that he'd maxed his battered dantian with Heavenly Dawn Technique and his new mana circuits, what would happen?

'Let's try projecting now.'

[Projecting target's dantian and mana circuits.]

- Krak!

'Ugh!'

A stabbing pain tore through his lower belly and the aura he had built up over ten minutes drained away like the tide.

[Projection interrupted due to insufficient mana.]

[If you wish to continue, please supply more mana.]

The projection broke off from lack of mana.

'Whew... Of course it doesn't finish in one go. Still...'

[Projection progress: 3.1%]

He had succeeded in projecting part of Sophia's dantian.

'Good. Just keep transferring a bit at a time like this. As I move bit by bit from the dantian, the amount I can project at once will gradually increase.'

If he had only used Heavenly Dawn Technique, this would have taken at least a week.

Projection required aura, transferring required aura, and if repeated, the mana circuits could overheat and would need resting periods.

But Ian had a special method.

— Clack!

He opened the blackwood box from the hideout, taking out the elixir.

A clear fragrance tickled his nose.

'Let's use this to power through the sluggish beginning.'

He would draw mana from the elixir while projecting.

Normally an impossible feat, but as one who had reached the realm of Swordmaster in his previous life, such focused aura control was no big deal to Ian.

'The Authority of Projection uses the body's innate mana without channeling the circuits, so there's no danger of overheating. I can continue projecting as long as there's mana in the elixir.'

Only one regret...

'I would like to project the elixir itself if possible.'

But he would have to use the unprojected elixir now.

'Trying to project the elixir in this state would be greedy. It would take at least three days to do it.'

Besides, he could always find more elixirs in town if needed.

If projection was required, he could do it then.

'Now, let's begin without regret.'

Ian tipped the fragrant elixir into his mouth.

— Crunch!

— Gulp!

By dawn tomorrow, his dantian would be at least five times larger than today's.

And the healing of his mana circuits would progress that much faster.

To Lady Yuria!!!