

Winter 38

Chapter 38: Bradley Arrives at Red Tide Territory

Though it was already spring, the Northern Territory still had a bone-chilling cold wind that even a thick cloak could not ward off.

"Sir, we're almost there." A knight reined in his horse and quietly reported to the elder at the front of the team.

Bradley nodded slightly, his expression unchanged, silently riding on across the permafrost.

This team traversed the desolate land of the Northern Territory, silent and wordless.

Not because they were without complaints about the task, but out of respect for Bradley.

He was the old steward of Duke Calvin, holding a high position; his status within the Calvin Clan was no less than some noble branches.

Even if the knights had questions, they dared not speak casually in his presence.

Along the way, they passed through several Pioneer Lord territories, all in ruins and desolation.

Even Frost Halberd City, home to the Northern Governor's Mansion, appeared to these Southerners as nothing more than a shabby military outpost.

No one expected the Red Tide Territory to be any different.

Nor did Bradley.

In his mind, Louis was just one of the Duke's more than twenty offspring, with average talent and an honest, even somewhat dull personality.

Neglected from a young age, a few months ago, the Duke sent him to this harsh, cold land to fend for himself.

Yet now, in a letter to the Duke, he wrote that the territory's management was orderly, showing good development momentum, and even discovered valuable Demon Marrow Ore.

Bradley was skeptical about the letter's content.

Could a young man under twenty, with virtually no resources, manage a wasteland so well?

It seemed too exaggerated.

Moreover, Demon Marrow had always been a highly scarce resource in the Ironblood Empire, depending almost entirely on imports from the Jade Federation.

And now, a large amount was discovered in his Pioneer Territory?

There probably was some exaggeration.

But regardless, he came, without any grievance or slackness.

Because he was Bradley, the most loyal steward of the Calvin Clan.

He had to see if this young lord could fulfill everything he described in his letter.

If Louis showed potential worth developing, he would give his full support.

If Louis disappointed him, he would withdraw all support without hesitation.

In the cold wind, the outline of the Red Tide Territory gradually emerged.

On a mountain path in the distance, Louis rode a black warhorse, wearing a thick wolf fur cloak, his jet-black hair fluttering in the wind.

He bore quite a resemblance to the Duke, though less imposing and more delicate.

At his feet stood a lithe Ice Wolf pup, exuding a wild, untamed air.

This scene subtly elevated Bradley's assessment of Louis.

At least he was much better than the useless young lord he had imagined.

The knights were also surprised, expecting to meet a downtrodden young lord trapped in a barren land; instead, they encountered someone so calm and composed.

He had even tamed an Ice Wolf.

Louis rode forward, respectfully saluting Bradley: "Mr. Bradley, you've had a hard journey. Welcome to the Red Tide Territory."

Bradley reciprocated with the proper etiquette of a steward, his attitude not warm but flawless nonetheless: "You're too kind, young master. The Duke sent me with some support, hoping to lend you a hand."

"My father's concern is etched in my heart."

Bradley silently observed Louis, his impression of him slightly changing.

After all, maintaining such noble composure in this barren and harsh Northern Territory was not easy.

Louis rode slowly, surveying the team and supplies Bradley brought, his heart slightly moved.

Three Elite Knights, ten Official Knights, thirty Apprentice Knights.

Dozens of craftsmen, doctors, and other talents.

Carts of food—wheat flour, dried meat, pickled vegetables.

Seeds of cold-resistant crops, dozens of Black-Horned Oxen, Cold-land Sheep, Cold-Resistant Warhorses...

He initially had little hope for his father's support since this son was not highly valued.

But now, it seemed this batch of supplies far exceeded expectations.

The old man sure spent some gold coins, although this was just a tiny bit of the Calvin Clan's wealth.

Bradley spoke in a flat tone: "Young master, this isn't much—consider it a chance for you."

He paused, repeating the Duke's original words:

"If you manage the territory well, the family will increase its investment, but any incompetence will result in immediate withdrawal of all support."

Louis just smiled slightly: "I will cherish this opportunity."

As Louis examined the support, Bradley was also observing the Red Tide Territory.

At first glance, stepping onto this land seemed no different from other Northern territories—barren, desolate, lifeless.

Bradley nodded to himself, just as he expected.

But as they ventured deeper, his expression became increasingly subtle.

The first sight was spans of lush crops and plots of land under cultivation.

The residents were full of vigor, sweat mixed with soil on their faces, not a trace of complaint, only hope.

Something was off. How was this achieved?

In other Northern pioneer territories, most were still in the sowing stage, but Red Tide Territory's crops were nearing harvest?!

The new cultivation work was even progressing simultaneously.

What did this imply?

It meant Louis was far ahead of other Pioneer Lords in agricultural management.

Bradley noticed the rows of semi-buried longhouses by the roadside, simple but all recently built.

Clearly, these were completed recently.

In other words, Red Tide Territory not only solved its survival problems but expanded its infrastructure in a short time.

This feat even surpassed some territories developed over several years.

As they went along, Bradley saw more and more things.

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Every detail made Bradley furrow his brow deeper.

But what really startled him were the residents they passed along the way.

The looks they cast at Louis contained genuine reverence!

It wasn't the fear of the nobility, nor was it gratitude toward a benefactor, but a belief nearly akin to piety.

"This kid, is he a born ruler?"

Bradley's heart shook slightly, beginning to re-evaluate this seemingly insignificant young master.

Arguably, Louis's control over the Red Tide Territory was even more comprehensive than the Duke's governance in the South.

He claimed competent governance in his letter, but now it seemed he understated it!

Everyone underestimated him, but it seems everyone judged him wrong.

Perhaps he might not inherit the Calvin Family, but his future achievements would undoubtedly be significant!

Thinking this, Bradley's lips curled slightly, feeling oddly pleased.

"At least it won't be boring in the Northern Territory."