

Winter 40

Chapter 40: The Power of Authority

"Everyone, stay focused! We're building tunnels that will last for decades, so don't blame me if you cut corners!"

As the comprehensive survey of the mining area was completed, Valentine immediately set the craftsmen to work on reinforcing the tunnels.

Black Birch Wood was cut to standard sizes, and workers carried the heavy beams into the mine.

Each place in the tunnel had a beam firmly fixed to ensure the stability of the entire passage.

Carpenters used large wooden wedges to reinforce the joints and applied resin at the junction points to ensure long-term stability of the supports.

With each Black Birch Wood beam, Valentine lightly tapped it with the mining hammer in his hand to personally verify its firmness.

Meanwhile, the first batch of miners composed of slaves was ready and waiting.

They equipped themselves with simple protective gear and awaited instructions.

Valentine nodded: "Start with the most stable area, do some small-scale mining, and check the condition of the Demon Marrow."

Upon receiving the order, the miners carefully wielded their mining picks, striking the rock faces and peeling off the ore.

With each strike of the mining pick, the purple veins glowed softly, as if the magic power deep within the earth was being awakened.

Soon, the first batch of ore was brought before Hillco, the only alchemy apprentice in Red Tide Territory.

"Test the purity," Louis ordered succinctly.

Hillco nodded and dropped a small piece of Demon Marrow Ore into the test solution.

The liquid glowed faintly with a purple hue, and soon the magic power vibrations swirled in the air.

The color of the solution quickly deepened to a dark purple, a sign of high-purity Demon Marrow!

"Sir, the purity of the ore is even higher than expected!" Hillco's voice betrayed his excitement.

Louis's lips curled into a slight smile, his heart finally at ease.

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As night fell, the candlelight flickered in the study.

Louis sat behind the desk, his gaze fixed on Bradley across from him.

"I want the mining and processing to stay within Red Tide Territory, and the sales to be handled by the Calvin Clan," he stated bluntly.

Bradley was momentarily taken aback, then revealed a meaningful smile: "I understand."

Louis had his reasons for this decision.

He needed the support of his family now and couldn't show signs of independence too soon; he had to offer enough benefits to ensure the family's continued investment.

As long as the family's interests were satisfied, they would provide more resources and protection, allowing him to solidify his position in the Northern Territory.

Moreover, in terms of sales channel control, he was far inferior to the Calvin Clan.

The Calvin Clan's trade routes spanned the Empire and even reached other nations.

If he tried to develop his own sales channels on the same scale, or even lesser ones, it would be nearly impossible in the short term.

Given that, rather than waste his efforts on something he wasn't skilled at, he chose to stabilize the situation and earn money first.

However, the processing technology must be in his own hands.

In the future, if variables such as Duke Calvin's death or internal family changes occurred, he might lose this sales channel.

But as long as Red Tide Territory held the refining and processing technology of Demon Marrow firmly, even if pushed out of the market,

he could still rebuild the market and wouldn't be at the mercy of others.

Bradley glanced at him, a faint smile on his lips.

Of course, he understood Louis's meticulous thoughts but chose not to point it out.

"I will draft a letter according to your instructions and relay it to Duke Calvin," Bradley continued respectfully.

Leaving everything to the Duke's decision, he only needed to play his part without overstepping.

Louis then opened a heavy wooden box, revealing it full of Gold Coins.

There were about one thousand five hundred Gold Coins.

This time, the resources provided by the Calvin Clan included three thousand Gold Coins, which made Louis suddenly wealthy.

However, no matter how many Gold Coins there were, if they couldn't be exchanged for tangible resources to develop strength, they were merely dead assets.

And the most needed resource in Red Tide Territory right now is the population.

Louis closed the box, turned to Bradley, and said solemnly: "I want to exchange these Gold Coins for slaves."

Bradley's eyes flashed with a hint of approval: "It seems you already have a clear plan."

Louis nodded: "Based on the current grain production and reserves, fifteen hundred people are the maximum I can afford."

He wasn't greedy for more, knowing that too many slaves could become a burden and instead reduce the stability of Red Tide Territory.

Bradley: "Leave this matter to me."

For the Calvin Clan's old steward, this was hardly a difficult task.

Bradley simply wrote a letter.

A few days later, Slave Masters from thousands of miles away made the journey to Red Tide Territory, personally delivering a carefully selected batch of slaves.

They were extremely respectful, cautious even during price negotiations, fearful of offending Bradley.

Compared to the last batch of mixed-bred slaves Louis had personally purchased from the black market, these were undoubtedly of much higher quality.

Strong laborers made up the majority, with muscular builds and weathered skin, but their spirits were still quite good.

Among them were also a batch of marriageable female slaves, which would play a crucial role in the future population growth of Red Tide Territory.

But what surprised Louis the most was the price of the transaction.

After exchanging for fifteen hundred slaves, there were still seven hundred Gold Coins left!

"Cheaper than I expected," Louis remarked, looking at the high-quality slaves.

Bradley smiled slightly: "Market prices aren't fixed; it depends on who the buyer is."

The implication was that, for anyone else, even with fifteen hundred Gold Coins, the quality and quantity of slaves they could buy would fall far short of what was achieved.

Yet Bradley merely wrote a letter, which prompted Slave Merchants to travel far, personally delivering the best slaves available.

With deferential attitudes, they even voluntarily lowered prices, all to maintain long-term cooperation with the Calvin Clan.

This is the prowess of the Calvin Clan's old steward?

It's terrifying.

This isn't just about negotiation skills but an intrinsic understanding of "rules" within the core of society.

Louis felt quietly fortunate to be part of the Calvin Clan.

Of course, only by proving his strength within the family does he qualify to truly wield this powerful weapon.

If it had been two months ago, he likely wouldn't even have had the opportunity to touch this authority.

Suddenly, a thought popped into Louis's mind.

If one day he could completely control this influence, harnessing the entire Calvin Clan's power for himself, how splendid would that be?

Louis suppressed that fleeting ambition, looked at Bradley, and said, "Thanks for your hard work this time."

Bradley nodded slightly, his expression still composed and serene: "Serving you is my duty."