

# Terror Infinity

## (无限恐怖)

### Volume 16

## The Lord Of The Rings

Zhttty

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Story Description:

“Want to know the meaning of life? Want to live... a real life?” The world changes when you click YES. In God’s dimension, you have to keep getting stronger, keep evolving to survive one horror movie after another. Do you kill everyone in your way to reach the end as a lone king? Or fight along with your comrades and survive through the support of friends? Everything was just for staying alive. Until you find the secret of God’s dimension. Who is the real enemy?

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 1-1

No one could sense how much time actually passed in the half dreamy state. It might have been just an instant, or it might have been an eternity. When everyone in team China opened their eyes, they were lying on an open field. The sky was pitch black but light brightened the areas around them. They were inside a banquet. However, no one around was about to see them because God just sent them here. It seemed like all these people in the banquet isolated an empty area.

“So this is The Lord of the Rings.” Zheng was the first to wake up. He looked around and said.

The battlefield of the trilogy of The Lord of the Rings spanned an enormous world. The battlefield of the Mummy and Starship Troopers were incomparable in terms of their sizes because the whole world in The Lord of the Rings was the battlefield.

The series had multiple movies similar to The Mummy. However, God only told them of the world they were in and didn't specify which movie. Which meant this mission might span through the whole series. Such a large battlefield could take months to complete their mission.

These thoughts crossed Zheng's mind. He looked back at the supplies they prepared for this movie and they were truly appropriate for this large battlefield.

The other members of the team had also gotten up by this time. Aside from the veterans of team China, there were five newbies on the floor. This movie had a difficulty of fifteen people. That exceeded Zheng's expectation.

“Xuan, deduce our current location by our environment.” Zheng said to Xuan then looked at his watch.

Xuan looked around, but before he got to speak, God's voice appeared in their minds.

“Team Africa and team Northern Ice Land has entered The Lord of the

Rings. Team East America will enter from a random location after three days. Team Celestial will enter from a random location after ten days. Killing a normal member from another team rewards 2000 points and a rank C reward. Killing an unlocked member from another team rewards 7000 points and a rank B reward. Score minus one for each member of the team killed. Score plus one for killing a member of another team. Final score multiplied by 2000 will be rewarded as points.”

Everyone was stunned to hear this announcement. Xuan pushed his glasses. There were actually five teams in this movie. Not only that but team Celestial was also among these teams. They were one of the two special teams in God’s realm.

Zheng took a deep breath and continued reading his watch. He read the mission out. “All five teams arrive at Barad-dûr simultaneously then get transported back to each team’s respective God’s dimension after thirty minutes. All high-tech weapons are ineffective against natives of The Lord of the Rings. Weapons retains effect against other teams.”

Zheng looked at the others with a bitter smile and said. “This movie looks quite complicated. It was already special the last movie when we had a three-way team battle. And now we are having a five-way team battle with one of the teams being team Celestial. Team Africa is also here. We almost wiped them in the last team battle. Not sure what will happen when we meet them again.”

The five people on the ground moved slightly. Then a muscular middle aged man sat up. He was wearing a tight tank top and shorts you would see from people in gyms. He looked rather manly and handsome. A few seconds later, he jumped up and kicked at the person nearest to him, Gando.

Gando was still stunned by God’s announcement and Zheng’s words. It wasn’t until the man’s foot came near his face before he reacted. He had used the dragon’s blood after all so his speed and other physical attributes surpassed this man. He blocked in front with his arms and boom! The kick knocked him down to the ground.

The man seemed surprised but he continued to charge at Gando. His hand reaching for his waist. Just after he took two steps, there was a sharp pain on his waist and he collapsed on the ground. YinKong was standing behind him.

Gando didn't get injured so Zheng didn't care much. Now that the man was subdued, he coughed to get their attention. "I know you have a lot of questions. Sit down and listen. Don't try to attack us or I can't guarantee your safety."

The muscular man's body convulsed for almost twenty seconds. Sweat rained down his face. He looked like he was poured with water by the time he sat up. His expression was filled with fear when he looked at YinKong. It was like this girl was a demon.

The other four people also sat up, two men and two women. One of the men and women were wearing the same school uniforms and their age were similar. The other two was a handsome teenage boy and a woman in her late twenties dressed in revealing clothes. All four people looked around in confusion.

Zheng decided to let Lan do the explanation. 100 points weren't a lot but points were as important as ranked rewards to a psyche force user because they didn't have much combat ability.

The five newbies finished listening to Lan after several minutes. The situation was much better than previous movies since the people around them all had the bodies of a child but their face ranged from kids to elders. They were the well-known Hobbits of The Lord of the Rings, or in another name, the Halflings. The newbies had no choice but to believe with such proof.

The teenage boy was the first to calm down and asked. "Ha, how unbelievable this is! I was discussing hacking with some people on the net then the next moment after I pressed enter I am here. So I have a question, not about the details of God's realm but is our team strong?"

Zheng smiled bitterly and looked at his team. "I thought we were the strongest team aside from team Devil and team Celestial but we are

actually ranked third in this team battle. Team East America is stronger than us and there's team Celestial in this battle. Anyway, you should know why you are here and what this place is. Before I tell you the rules of team China, tell us your names and occupations."

The boy said with a smile. "My name is Hao Tian, a second year high school student and hacker. I also train regularly but I probably can't fare in life and death fights. I am quite smart so I think I can help you in some ways."

Zheng nodded. The muscular man then followed. "My name is Li Shi. I am a private bodyguard. I was training with three other people then came here when I was operating the fitness machine. I thought that YES meant starting the machine. I am trained in close combat and can use most firearms. Ahem. Of course not as good as her." He peaked at YinKong.

Seeing these two people quickly introduced themselves, the woman also said. "My name is Xie Zhen. I am a secretary to a manager in Sina, a famous corporation." She seemed proud of her occupation. Though her attire made her look improper. Noticing the others were looking at her, she smiled charmingly at Zheng.

The two students looked at each other then turned their head away as if they were in a fight. The girl said. "My name is Ai Nana, a student. I am not good at anything. You can abandon me if you want."

The boy panicked and quickly stepped in front of her. He said with a smile. "She had a fight with me, don't mind her. My name is Zhang GuangYan. I am also a student but I have really good memory. Hope I can be able to help you."

The newbies were aware of their situation as soon as they confirmed the environment was real and Zheng didn't lie to them. The veterans could have obtained various enhancements and abilities in who knew how many movies. They knew they were powerless in front of these ten people. Furthermore, since this was a team battle, the other teams were definitely going to kill them if they were found. So they had to rely on the veterans to survive this movie.

That was actually overthinking the situation. Xuan had discussed with Zheng that due to the size of the world, it was easy to hide people. They were going to hide the newbies before the major battles and they would try not to abandon any newbie since their deaths would bring down the team's score. They also had the virus for turning people into Nemesis's, the biggest trump card for team China.

"Then we..." Zheng smiled at the newbies. Suddenly, a middle age Hobbit walked past him. The invisible wall had disappeared and the movie began for them.

They had much less time to prepare than previously. Zheng and the other veterans looked surprised but fortunately, the area remained calm. Xuan confirmed that they were safe so they walked over to the edge of the banquet.

Zheng had to pause telling the newbies to be careful. He had some important things to discuss with Xuan. "Where are we currently at? And what time period?"

Xuan was looking over at the newbies with a smile until Zheng asked him. Then he calmly replied. "We are in the Hobbit's gathering place. Currently safe. The time should be the start of the first movie. The main character's uncle is about to head out. This is his birthday banquet."

Zheng noticed Xuan's expression and quickly called for Lan in his mind. He said through soul link. "Hey, you looked strange. What are you planning? You have to tell me in advance!"

"Nothing." Xuan adjusted his glasses.

"Liar." Zheng was feeling more and more strange. He wouldn't bother guessing what other people were thinking but this was Xuan. He immediately wanted to question Xuan but a sense of danger struck him from the front. Zheng drew out Tiger's Soul from the ring without thinking and took two steps forward. Two men stood by the edge of the banquet.

One of the man was dressed in casual attire. He had a lovely baby face and was smiling peacefully.

The other man's gaze looked sharp. He put a chocolate bar into his mouth and bit it in half.

# Chapter 1-2

The scenes in the movie covered most of Middle Earth. The size of this world could accommodate the five-way team battle.

In the original movies, the Dark Lord Sauron forged multiple rings in an attempt to rule over the whole Middle Earth. He gave the Rings of Power to the leaders of the Dwarfs, Elves, and humans and they would in turn rule their race with the power of the rings, while Sauron created the One Ring for himself that ruled the other rings.

A war between good and evil broke out. The good achieved victory after the sacrifices of many. However, a human high king retained the One Ring due to greed. The One Ring which had its own mind abandoned the king. Many years passed. The ring fell into the hands of a Hobbit, Bilbo Baggins. The Hobbits were fond of an unadventurous, bucolic and simple life and a race that the One Ring couldn't seduce effectively. Thus, the One Ring remained in peace and Bilbo Baggins obtained a long life due to its power.

As time passed, Bilbo gradually felt the power of the ring. Before he became inseparable with the ring, he handed the ring to his nephew, Frodo Baggins. At the same time, subordinates of Sauron learned that the Hobbits had the ring and sent the Nazgûl to seize the ring in an attempt to revive the Dark Lord Sauron. Other forces joined in the fight to seize the ring, including humans, Elves, Undead, Trolls and other races.

The trilogy of The Lord of the Rings was such a massive war.

Zheng sensed killing intent from the front and drew out Tiger's Soul. YinKong, Zero, ChengXiao, Heng and the rest of the veterans were slightly slower than him. However, they all went into defensive positions and brought out their weapons. Lan, Gando and the newbies stood in place until they could see the two people ahead. Two humans among the Hobbits were obviously suspicious.

Both of them were young man. The baby face guy looked calm and peaceful. The chocolate eating one's eyes felt sharp. Though it was the baby face who was sending off signals of danger and killing intent. Zheng

felt that he was a slab of ice. That sensation made him feel in danger. He held Tiger's Soul in hand and as soon as these two people did anything out of the ordinary, he would use instant Destruction to kill them.

Baby face shrugged and smiled. "Don't mind us. We are just testing the strength of the third ranked team. I apologize if we offended you. How about you, Neos?"

Neos gave a cold smile in response. He finished the chocolate bar on hand and said to Zheng. "Pardon my embarrassment in the last team fight. I died before seeing my enemies. I am the leader of team Africa, Neos. I come here with the leader of team Northern Ice Land, Gungnir, in hope of forming an alliance with team China to withstand the incoming strikes from team East America and team Celestial." He turned around and walked toward an area away from the banquet. There were several big tables and over twenty men and women sat around them.

Gungnir smiled at team China then followed after Neos. Neither of them paid attention to team China's reaction.

"That's the leader of team China. He has a self-created ability. The strongest person on my team said he has the power to take on a whole team by himself. I don't specialize in combat so how do you feel about his strength?" Neos said to Gungnir via his mind. He brought out another piece of chocolate and licked it.

As soon as Gungnir turned around, his smile disappeared. There was sweat all over his face. "Incredibly strong. I almost couldn't hold myself from attacking the moment he brought out his sword. Even though I haven't fought him, but I felt like there was a blade in front of me when he stared at me. This man is hiding a devil inside him."

"That makes things difficult. Even though we need to form an alliance in this world, we will eventually fight each other in the future." Neos snapped the chocolate. "If he's really so strong, the addition of that person in their team... If you don't hold back in a fight, who of you would win?"

"My Hie Hie No Mi is only rank A but it's still much stronger than the Goro Goro No Mi user in your team. I am probably at fifty fifty against the

leader of team China. But if his self-created ability is too strong, I won't try to fight him." As Gungnir came within ten meters of the other people by the tables, his expression turned back into a smile.

Neither Zheng nor Xuan wanted to fight two teams under this situation. These two teams entered the movie before them. There was no information on the influence they established nor the ambushes they might have set up. So it was better to sit down peacefully and listen to what they had to say.

"We team Africa entered this world ten days ago from the swamp west of Hobbiton. It took us five days to get out of the swamp. We coincidentally met team Northern Ice Land that entered five days ago from the border of the swamp. Fortunately, we both encountered a snake fifty meters long and had a head that was four meters thick. Our firearms were useless against it so we had to join together. Without that snake, we would have probably got into a fight."

The three teams sat together. There was a total of forty-three people. Both team Africa and team Northern Ice Land lost a person in the swamp. According to them, the first three teams entered this world from a fixed location. They knew team China would enter from Hobbiton. The remaining two teams were going to enter from a random location instead. This fact gave them bad feelings.

Zheng also learned from people he knew in team Africa that they had already experienced four movies after Starship Troopers. One of those movies was The Mummy. This meant that different teams experience movies at a different rate.

Gungnir said with a smile. "We have discovered this situation when we met other teams. We both felt the number of times the other teams experience movies were not right. The stronger teams will get increasingly difficult movies but their rate will decrease. Usually, regular teams would go through two movies when a strong team goes through one. This isn't important. We can gift you this information after we form an alliance. The question now is do you wish to form this alliance?"

Zheng had entered the third stage and simulated HongLu's thinking. Several seconds later, he said. "No problem. An alliance is needed if we want to fight team East America and team Celestial. This is why our teams entered in nearby locations. However, I have a requirement that we will retain our teams' independence. We can exchange information and support each other but only the leaders can command their own team. We won't have situations where the majority is able to force demands on the other team. If that happens, we will be your enemy."

Since team Africa and team Northern Ice Land had already formed an alliance, there might be hidden agreements amount them. Having the possibility where the three teams would vote for their actions was not in the interest of team China. The other teams could put them into baits. This was the only thing Zheng worried about. They had Xuan in the team so the only ones that had to worry about being taken advantage of was them.

Neos and Gungnir looked at each other then both held out their hands. Neos swallowed his chocolate and smiled coldly. "We are allies then. This world is going to be the battlefield of us five teams. The victor will bring back unimaginable points and rewards. There's hope for all of us but I will let you know that team Africa will be the biggest winner among all teams!"

Zheng smiled coldly in return then turned to Xuan who didn't seem to care much. He thought Neos was being overconfident.

Fireworks exploded in the sky and lighted it with gorgeous colors. This was the work of Gandalf. The plot of the movie began.

# Chapter 2-1

It had been a full day since team China entered the Lord of the Rings. Similar to all other movies, God gave them identities in this world. They were adventurers who met Gandalf before. So the hobbits welcomed them when they came to Hobbiton.

“So teams with different rating experience different numbers of movies and difficulties. But didn't team Africa experienced the Lord of the Rings already?” Zheng asked with curiosity.

Neos said with a cold smile. “Yes, they experienced the Lord of the Rings, but it has nothing to do with me.” He stopped after this.

Zheng then asked Snow whom he was familiar with. She began explaining to him.

Team Africa's strength lowered by a lot after Starship Troopers. God rated the team as weak. Fortunately, those who survived were the stronger members, especially Richard who had a self created ability. His ability wasn't included in God's calculation which made the team actually stronger than their rating. The first movie they entered afterward was The Perfect Storm. They got the newbies killed to reduce dead weights then started seeking bonus missions. They actually accumulated a fair amount of points and ranked rewards with two bonus missions.

“The second movie was The Mummy. We were still rated weak. So we entered the movie much earlier than the other team. We stole the two books then immediately revived Neos. Following his plan, we went to search for the Scorpion King's treasure. The result was everyone aside from him died in the final battle against the Scorpion King and the other team.”

Aya took over from Snow. “Fortunately, his plan succeeded. The Scorpion King and the other team all died along with us. We completed this bonus mission in advance with a higher difficulty. He received three times the points and rewards. The points and rewards from the team battle allowed him to revive Richard, Snow and me in the movie. He also

passed the test of the Guide among the newbies. So he's now the true leader of the team."

Zheng was confused to why they recounted their experience instead of answering his question.

Xuan suddenly said. "Is that so. Everyone who experienced the Lord of the Rings died and your leader was chosen again, which means your team can be considered a new team. Does that mean you can't return to any of the previous worlds?"

Neos took a good look at Xuan. He took a piece of chocolate from a box and snapped it. "Correct. All the movies they and I experienced at gone. In other words, we can experience any movie again as long as God considers it to be appropriate difficulty."

Team Africa was resurrected. Several of them had already experienced this world and were familiar with the missions and difficulties. This was the reason the weakest team could form an alliance with team Northern Ice Land.

"Our last time here, we entered from the land of the elves. Our mission was to escort the Fellowship through Caradhras, the Mines of Moria where Balrog resided. We saved Gandalf there and were rewarded with the charms that could avoid being killed with negative points. Our other mission was to survive ten days in Moria so we didn't actually get to other areas of this world. We have to go to Barad-dûr this time, which means we will get through most of the plot from all three movies." Aya said.

The door of a small house not far from them opened. An old man in his sixties walked out. He was dressed in a gray robe and wore a pointy wizard hat. A young hobbit followed behind him.

"But you just arrived, Gandalf." The hobbit said.

Gandalf said something to the hobbit in a low voice then walked toward the players.

The players knew that Bilbo gave the One Ring to Frodo and Gandalf had noticed the particularity of the ring. He was leaving Hobbiton to find

the origin of the ring. He threw a bag toward Zheng before he approached them. Zheng caught the bag and heard a series of clinks. This bag was full of gold coins.

“These forty-three coins are your pay. Protect this child until I return tomorrow night. I will return as soon as possible with magic. However, it takes a lot of time to search the literatures. I will leave this place to you.” He got on a horse then left. His speed was faster than they had thought. In just several seconds, he went out of sight.

“Did you see that speed? It looked like it was out of a movie!” Some young people among the three teams cried. One person even brought out a camcorder. Though Gandalf was nowhere to be seen already.

“Magic, that’s magic. I can’t believe there’s real magic in this world!”

Aside from the few in team Africa who experienced this world, most other people showed surprised. The younger ones started discussing how to learn magic for free and even started dreaming about relics and forbidden magic. It was obvious these were the newbies.

The veterans smiled coldly. They wouldn’t feel surprised even if Gandalf used magic. Any team allowed to enter a team battle would be stronger than people from the original Lord of the Rings movie. An unlimited ammunition Gauss Gatling gun could destroy an army on the field. That was why God nullified the effect of technological weapons against natives of this world and increased the power of the natives. Gandalf was much stronger than depicted in the movie.

“What are we going to do now?” Gungnir asked the other two leaders.

Aya spoke before they replied. “The movie has started. We also received quest from the movie characters last time. They had us escort the Fellowship then God gave the notification shortly after. I wonder if God is going to do the same.”

A stern voice indeed appeared in their minds after her words. “Prior to arriving at Barad-dûr, for each character of Frodo, Gandalf, Aragorn and Gimli that lives, reward 1000 points to every member of the three teams. Deduct 1000 points for each character that died. For every victory the

alliance wins over forces of Mordor, reward 3000 points to every member of the three teams. Deduct 3000 points for every loss. Scoring ends when all five teams arrive at Barad-dûr.”

Aya immediately said. “Right. It was the same. We only had to escort the characters through Moria last time. But now we have to protect people and what’s the matter with the war? There was no mission about the war last time.”

Neos ate a piece of chocolate and was about to speak when Xuan explained before he did. “It’s to scatter the strength of the teams. This is a test on a team. This realm is probably about to end.”

Everyone was shocked, including Neos. “Right. If my deduction is correct, someone in team Devil or team Celestial is about to reach the fifth stage.”

Almost everyone was confused. HaoTian was the only person that looked enlightened.

Zheng asked. “What do you mean? How did you deduce this from just a mission?”

Neos gave a cold smile. Xuan casually said. “The information isn’t just the mission but also the five way team battle. We just encountered a three way team battle in the previous movie and now there’s an even bigger team battle. What does this signify? It means God accelerated the collision between teams. I told you in a previous analysis that God’s goal is to make us evolve and not kill us. The only reason it accelerated the team battles is because someone is about to reach the fifth stage. God’s mission is about to be completed. Those of us who are still so far away from the Saints aren’t that important anymore. So it is increasing the difficulty, increasing our chance of death to push us to evolve.”

Neos bit his teeth and snapped another piece of chocolate. No one paid attention to Neos’s feeling.

Zheng asked. “I think I know what you mean. Are we going to return to the real world once someone reaches the fifth stage?”

Xuan smiled coldly. "Return to the real world? Stop dreaming. God's goal isn't to kill us nor is it for us to live. Evolution is its only goal. The missions regarding the war and protecting the movie characters are a way to make us scatter and learn to fight at multiple fronts in coordination. I told you intelligence is a part of evolution. Such teamwork is a key to forming a team. I am certain that once a person reaches the fifth stage..."

"God will put all the teams in a world. The team that lives in the end, whether it belongs to the team with the fifth stage person, will be the only team qualified to live!" Neos suddenly interjected.

# Chapter 2-2

Due to the main mission, the three teams were bounded together. They could only watch the plot progress as there was nowhere to go with just a short period of free time.

The Hobbits, or halflings, loved food, music, peace, and a leisurely life. Hobbiton was the home to many Hobbits. The three teams totaled to forty-three people. They could eat to their will here with Frodo paying all their expenses due to their identity and the task Gandalf gave them.

The remaining two teams hadn't arrived yet. Hobbiton was a safe area at this time in the original movie so the teams only remained slightly cautious over each other. The peaceful life and delicious food gave the newbies the impression of a vacation in the world of the Lord of the Rings.

"Bunch of idiots that don't understand the horror of this realm. They can enjoy their time now but times of despair will eventually dawn on them. I want to see their faces when that happens." A man with colorful dyed hair from team Northern Ice Land said.

The only hotel in Hobbiton was designed with the Hobbits' bodies in mind. Though there were several tables and chairs prepared for humans and other races who travel over. Only the leaders and one member from each team sat in the hotel while the rest took their food outside.

Gungnir brought that ruffian with dyed hair. Neos brought Aya. Zheng brought xuan. The six of them held their discussion in this hotel. The sunlight outside was turning dark. This was the night Gandalf would return and also the day Frodo would leave Hobbiton with the One Ring.

"We have five main combatants. Two close range, a spear user and a druid. Two long range, an ice magic user and a crossbow user. I can fight in both close range and long range. We also have a psyche force user with psyche scan and soul link and a magical healer that can drain the energy from spirit stones to recover stamina and heal injuries. However, she's only at beginner level and the effects aren't pronounced." Gungnir drank the beer and said.

Neos followed. “We also have five main combatants. Two close range, two long range one with special attacks. You both know enough about our team so there’s nothing to hide. Richard has a self created ability, berserker, that enables him to ignore his injuries and attack in a frenzy. Hawfor has the BB rank of Goro Goro no Mi. He can be powerful given enough energy. Aya can control psyche force bees that are effective against mass enemies. The other ranged fighter is Rose. She has the heart of spider arrow. It shoots an arrow that is guaranteed to pierce the target’s heart. However, she would fall unconscious after one shot and need to get healed in God’s dimension. Her boyfriend Marnie is the special attacker. I have only seen his attack once. This I won’t reveal for now.”

Zheng looked at Xuan then thought for a moment before speaking. “We have eight combatants, actually nine. Three close range, three long range, three with special attacks. I am not going to reveal their names and attacks here.”

Gungnir said with a smile. “Doesn’t nine people sound too many? We are discussing each team’s elites.”

Neos also gave a cold smile. “Are you counting everyone that can pick up a gun? You have fifteen people and ten veterans. So you are saying everyone other than your psyche force user are your main combatants? What a joke.”

Xuan suddenly smiled and took over from Zheng. “If you don’t believe us, we can speak with each team’s power. Every team send three people for a fight and don’t attack the other teams if someone dies in the fight.”

Gungnir and Neos frowned. Then Gungnir quickly responded with a smile. “Relax. We are merely expressing our doubts. We are glad that you are so confident with your team. The next question to discuss are the bonus missions.”

“Bonus missions?” Zheng was confused.

“Yes. Uh, we haven’t told you this yet. Movies that cover such a large world have an uncountable number of bonus missions and there are missions that won’t receive any notification from God but give profits

more valuable than ranked rewards. This is a gem we obtained from the head of a serpent we killed in the swam.” Gungnir brought out a gem emitting a cold air. The gem was white and the size of a pea. It chilled a ten meter area instantly.

He continued. “This is a ice attribute energy stone. You can also exchange it from God, costs about a rank C reward. Magical abilities or weapons can make use of this type of energy stones or create. Ahem. Anyway, there are numerous unknown creatures in such a fantasy world. We might be able to get rewards from killing the creatures or we might be able to learn magic from the wizards. These are rewards more valuable than those from bonus missions. What I want to say is we can combine our forces to complete these missions or obtain these items. Not going to lie. This gem is important to me. I exchanged three of them from God, albeit they are of lower quality. My power gets buffed by 500% as long as I have these gems.”

Zheng glanced at Xuan then nodded. “No problem. We also try to complete all bonus missions we can in a movie. If we encounter a bonus mission or unknown monster, we will work together to kill it. The rewards will be split based on each team’s contribution. Any questions?”

Gungnir shook his head. Neos said. “The distribution isn’t fair enough. How are you going to rate a team’s contribution on scheming? I think it’s better to base the distribution on a team’s overall contribution or else we will abandon the bonus missions. We are the weakest team of the group after all.” His eyes were fixed on Xuan.

Zheng had known that Neos was the strategist in Starship Troopers and that he had a critical flaw. He had too much pride in himself. He was smart but easily swayed by his emotions. Xuan didn’t have such weakness in contrast. Zheng also had absolute faith in Xuan or at least he hadn’t seen anyone escape Xuan’s schemes.

Zheng thought over it for a bit then he was about to agree. There was no way team China was going to get taken advantage off. Then he heard Xuan’s voice in his mind.

“Wait. Gungnir was hiding something in his words.” Xuan calmly said.

Zheng picked up the beer and drank it while he asked. “What was he hiding? Are they scheming us? F\*ck. We need to be prepared to turn on them!”

“No. He hesitated when he said the word create. I suspect they have knowledge of the rune words. Neos also didn’t seem confused nor asked. They probably exchanged information that we aren’t aware of. This agreement will be beneficial to them. Since we are stronger than them and they need us in many situations, you can add the exchange of information as a condition to agreeing. They have to accept it.” Xuan stood up and began walking out of the hotel.

Zheng quickly asked. “Where are you going? The discussion isn’t over yet.”

“It’s over. The rest is the responsibility of the leader. There are something interesting I need to do. I will go talk with HaoTian. If it’s confirmed, then this movie will be really interesting.”

(Interesting? Interesting to Xuan?)

Zheng shivered. Xuan just walked out toward the newbies by himself.

Neos smiled coldly as he stared at Xuan’s back. “How did it go? You discussed for so long through soul link. There should be an answer by now.”

Zheng turned back around and looked at Gungnir and Neos. “We can agree to your suggestion but I need the information from your teams. Of course, I will give you equivalent information in exchange.”

Gungnir smiled. “What do you mean? Didn’t we already tell you all that we know? Anything you are unsatisfied with?”

Zheng simply looked at Neos without speaking. Neos took out a piece of chocolate and unwrapped it. He didn’t put the chocolate in his mouth. “What do you want to know?”

Zheng said. “Information that you have already exchanged with each

other, like creating magical items or rune word combinations. I have said that we will trade you with information of equivalent value. However, I can't forgive you for trying to hide those information from us. Aren't we your allies?" His tone gradually turned serious and his expression turned cold.

Gungnir didn't reply. He looked to Neos with his smile. Neos sighed and ate the chocolate. "How could we not treat team China as allies? We were still discussing about our alliance and didn't get up to information exchange. We have one set of rune word formation. It requires placing several types of energy stones in a specific formation and carving a set of rune words on the ground. Once successfully activated, it will increase the recovery rate of people inside the formation by a lot. Energy recovery rate such as Qi also increases."

Gungnir quickly followed. "We also have one set of rune words that can convert electricity into psyche force."

Neos listened to Zheng and Gungnir while his eyes looked away from the hotel. Xuan was talking to a young man with black hair.

The sky was turning dark. Gandalf was about to be back.

# Chapter 3-1

The infighting between the three teams ended peacefully due to their alliance. Zheng used the energy storage rune words to exchange after discussing with his team. In the end, team China gained another set of rune word combination and an all new use with formation.

“Unfortunately, we don’t have the material to try the effect of this formation.” Zheng said.

His Explosion and Destruction were extremely powerful. No one could come out intact from his attacks in Destruction as of yet but these two abilities had fatal flaws. They consumed huge quantity of his Qi and blood energy and put great strain on his body.

“The Chaotic Unity Qi’s attribute is being neutral. It has one of the highest regeneration rate among all the Qi and can regenerate all my Qi in under ten hours. Blood energy takes a little longer. However, if this formation can really increase their regeneration rate tens of times higher, then I will only need under an hour to recover after using Destruction. That will overcome the biggest restriction of my abilities.” Zheng said excitedly.

They were on team China’s camping area, not far away from Frodo’s house. The other two teams also settled down on a flat area. Zheng handed two documents to Xuan for him to verify their integrity.

“They are real. The duration of this formation is based on the quality of the energy stones used. Rank C energy stones of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth will give a duration of three days and nights. Rank D energy stones only gives five hours but costs five rank D rewards. We should try to find replacements for the stones. It’s too lavish to exchange stones with ranked rewards.” Xuan calmly said and killed Zheng’s excitement.

Zheng opened his mouth but couldn’t utter a word. In the end, he smiled bitterly. They didn’t have so many ranked rewards to exchange the stones, and even if they did, that would be too wasteful.

“Oh right!” Zheng suddenly remembered and said with excitement.

“Didn’t the team Northern Ice Land leader said the serpent gave them a rank C energy stone? That means many monsters in this world have cores or something. We need to slaughter as many as we can in the remaining plot!”

Gandalf returned to Hobbiton by evening of the same day. He rushed into Frodo’s house. Frodo also left the hotel and returned to his house in a wobbling fashion shortly after. The three teams knew Gandalf would learn the true identity of the ring soon. The plot was about to begin.

The newbies didn’t look concerned. The veterans though became serious. Experience taught them the beginning of a movie tend to be peaceful but the more peaceful it was, the more danger was to come. The Lord of the Rings was a fifteen people difficulty, enough to kill the majority of players.

The conversation between Gandalf and Frodo lasted very long. They examined the ring, packed their clothes, and caught Samwise Gamgee eavesdropping on them. Two hours later, the three characters came out of Frodo’s house.

Gandalf immediately walked toward Zheng’s group. There was no bag of coins this time. This old wizard was a lot taller than Zheng. He seemed like six feet.

“I apologize that I may have another task to ask of you. I hope you can escort these two boys to The Prancing Pony in Bree. They might get attacked on the journey. I need you to protect their safety. I will wait for you at the inn as well as give you the pay there. Rest assure that you will definitely feel contented with the pay.” Gandalf took off his hat and said with a serious expression.

Gungnir shrugged, letting Zheng do the talking. Neos kept eating chocolate. Zheng replied. “We accept this task. We will keep them safe until they reach The Prancing Pony. Don’t worry.”

Gandalf took a good look at Zheng then at the people behind. Several seconds later, he walked back to the two Hobbits and said something. The two Hobbits looked over at the players and Gandalf got on a horse then

left.

“Gandalf told us he’s going to look for the white wizard and explain the situation concerning the One Ring. However, he will be waiting for us in The Prancing Pony.” Frodo said.

The way outside Hobbiton was a field of green and lush forests. Many newbies exclaimed at the scenery. It was difficult to find such beautiful sceneries on Earth while they were everywhere in this world.

The Hobbits were small but they were not slow in the forest paths. Their feet looked bigger than a normal person. The newbies in contrast started crying after two hours. Their stamina was worse than the Hobbits.

None of the teams were familiar with the way. Luckily Frodo and Sam were locals. Six hours later, they came to an open area with lots of arms.

“I... I can’t move anymore. Everyone let’s take a rest here.” A fatty from team Africa about twenty-four cried as he dropped down on the grass.

The others looked over to him. Over ten newbies started talking in low voices. Some even sat down like the fatty did.

Hawfor yelled. “Look at you being worse than the Hobbits. Lan even used power word endurance on you. Get the f\*ck up!”

Fatty took off his dress shoes. His socks were torn from friction and his feet were painted with blood. He cried. “I really can’t walk anymore. This is the first time I walked so much. I am not like you veterans that enhanced so many points. You are much stronger than a normal person. What about us? I don’t know about other people but I am only an editor in a news agency. I sit in an office everyday. I never walked so much in my life!”

The Hobbits came over. They were a kind race. Seeing fatty’s feet were wounded, Sam said. “We have indeed walked far. It will be the furthest I have gone away from home if we go past this farm field. It’s ok to break your skin. You will grow callus then you can walk further the next time. Frodo, see if you can find Green Star Grass around here.” Sam began searching the grass.

The group had to stop now that the Hobbits stopped. The veterans also felt tired from walking nearly six hours nonstop. Most of them found a place to sit down. The two Hobbits brought back a large pile of grass and the newbies went over to them.

Zheng breathed out then said to the other two leaders. "We will rest here then. Everyone looks a little tired."

Gungnir nodded with a smile. Neos took out another piece of chocolate. He said as he unwrapped it. "Is this the farm furthest from Sam's house? Then it will be safe here. Fine. Everyone rest for half an hour."

The newbies cheered now that the leaders agreed to rest. Even some veterans went over to the Hobbits since the newbies said the grass had a cooling sensation and got rid of their pain and fatigue. The veterans were interested.

Zheng was looking for a place to sit down when he suddenly heard sound of horses from not far away. A chilling aura spread from the tall grass and a black horse walked out. A knight in black was sitting on the horse.

"Ringwraith! It's a Ringwraith!"

The three people nearest to the grass were newbies. One from team Norther Ice Land and two from team Africa. They were smearing the Green Star Grass juices on their feet when the knight came out and cried. At the same time, a black shadow sliced across and a head flew upward.

## Chapter 3-2

The other two people were stunned as they saw a head flew off. Blood from the person's neck sprayed outward and these two people screamed. They were a man and a woman. The woman displayed much more ferociously even though she seemed like a weak woman in her early twenties. She jumped up and stepped on the man's leg. It wasn't until after she had gone four meters was he able to get up. However, that was already too late. A dark shadow flew across from this back. The man was worse off than the person before. The shadow moved across his abdomen and cut him in halves. He couldn't die off instantly and screamed in misery.

A chill struck everyone watching. The black knight's attacks were sharp and swift. Only a small group of people could see the attacks. And that seemingly weak woman was so sinister at critical moments. Those two men were giving her favors just moments before and in the end, she used one of them as her shield.

The knight's speed and strength was much stronger than that of the movies. Less than ten people out of the three teams could follow the path of his sword. It was a two handed sword emitting black mist. Any grass that came in touch with the mist withered. The two corpses also started to rot from their wounds. This sword had attributes of poison and corrosion.

The knight came out from the bush. He sat on a large, black horse. The horse's eyes were giving off a mysterious red light.

"Is this a joke? How can a Ringwraith appear here? Shouldn't we come in contact with the Ringwraiths after we meet the other two Hobbits?" A newbie from team Northern Ice Land couldn't contain himself and cried.

The qualities of the newbies were displayed at this point when compared to the veterans' composure. Only four newbies remained calm as they stared at the Ringwraith. The rest were panicking and shouting, hid behind the veterans, or simply fell down on the ground. The scene was a mess.

The Ringwraith charged at Frodo. His horse was unbelievably fast. It was four times faster than race horses in the real world. The speed made it seem like it transformed into a shadow. The Ringwraith raised his sword

Clank! An axe blocked the sword. Richard had stood in front of the Ringwraith with a red two handed axe in hand.

“F\*ck! How are we going to survive this journey if you start panicking now? Aya! Poison any newbie who continues to cry and run with your bees!” Richard shouted. He blocked several more attacks with his axe and every time the two weapons met, he was forced a step backward.

Many veterans couldn't react in time due to the speed of the Ringwraith, and Zheng's group was rather far from the location. However, the veterans had been through bigger situations and life and deaths. So when Richard started fighting the Ringwraith, they quickly gathered each team's newbies. Several veterans protected the Hobbits in the center.

After blocking several hits, Richard gave a shout and hacked back with his axe. The Ringwraith was skillful with his horse and with the speed of the horse, he had already moved the horse to the side when the axe came down. Boom! The axe blasted a half meter deep pit on the ground. At the same time, the Ringwraith's sword was already moving toward Richard's head.

Bang! Pah! Pah!

Zero's Gauss sniper rifle, Heng's silver bow, and the green bow from a girl from team Northern Ice Land fired at the same time at the dark sword. The bullet from the Gauss rifle traveled the fastest. A translucent barrier appeared around the Ringwraith as soon as rifle fired. The +3 enchanted arrow and a green arrow arrived almost instantly. The two arrows snapped the dark sword but the broken sword still slashed a long wound on Richard's body. He quickly rolled out of the Ringwraith's attack range. The man with dyed hair from team Northern Ice Land charged at the Ringwraith with a spear in hand. The spear looked translucent as though it was made of ice.

“F\*ck, such heavy force!” Richard shouted.

That was when the others noticed even though his axe was intact but the web space between his thumb and index finger was torn. Richard was a berserker that that focused on raw strength. His body was tough even without entering Berserker. In order to cause such damage, the swings from the Ringwraith was as strong as Zheng in Explosion.

Zheng's heart skipped a beat. He had a bad feeling yet he couldn't know why. He shouted. "All psyche force users scan the area! Zero, your weapon is ineffective against movie characters, stay aware and protect everyone. Heng and the girl with a bow, shoot the horse. ChengXiao, treat the poison on Richard. Everyone else stay on guard. Don't let the Ringwraith get away from the battlefield!"

Zheng couldn't care about overreaching into the other teams' authority at this moment. He subconsciously assigned tasks to everyone here. He drew out Tiger's Soul and leaped at the Ringwraith.

The young man had started attacking the Ringwraith already. His spear was clearly a magical weapon, one rather high ranked. The spear stabbed toward the Ringwraith's head but his movements were just so agile. The spear missed and hit the Ringwraith's robe. The robe began freezing and in under a second, it exploded.

The young man laughed and was about to stab again. Yet the Ringwraith backed into the farm. The man laughed out. "So that's all to the Ringwraiths? I wonder how many points they will reward. Haha. It will be great if there are also ranked rewards." He charged up again.

The sense of danger growing more intense to Zheng. He didn't warn the young man in time when mist started coming off the Ringwraith. The farm field around him withered and the dark sword recovered. By the time the young man was close, the horse turned from a black horse into a skeleton horse. The horse's eyes were red as blood. Its hooves were burning in a crimson flame. Its bones were emitting black mist. The Ringwraith slowly fused with the horse.

"Be careful!" Zheng was still ten meters away from the young man and the Ringwraith. The spear stabbed forward. The Ringwraith pulled the

lead rope and the skeleton horse leaped on top of the spear. It seemed as though the Ringwraith and skeleton horse had no weight. With a swift sound, the young man's head flew upward.

“Explosion!” Zheng didn't attack. The sense of danger peaked when the young man's head flew off. He immediately backed away and entered the second stage. He even activated Explosion.

The Ringwraith didn't go from him and pulled the lead rope again. The skeleton horse ran up a tree as though it defied gravity. It left a burnt trail behind. As it reached the top of the tree, it leaped toward Frodo.

# Chapter 4-1

The stress turned Zheng's eyes red. He was ready to use Soru with instant Destruction then he saw a layer of ice appeared between Frodo and the Ringwraith.

Dong! The dark sword hit the ice wall and a crack spread throughout but it didn't break.

Gungnir stood by the bottom of the ice wall and shouted. "I can't keep this up much longer, f\*cking come and help!" He waved his arms and the crack on the ice wall began to close up. It was very small when the dark sword landed on the ice wall again.

The Ringwraith continued hacking on it again and again. The ice wall's recovery rate couldn't keep up.

"Ice age!" The stress was getting into Gungnir. He was an ability user and couldn't perform well in both close or long range fights. Given how powerful this Ringwraith was, he would instantly get slashed in halves if the Ringwraith got in close range. He lacked reaction speed and combat techniques. The ice wall was the only thing he could do in this situation.

Gungnir crushed the serpent gem in his hand. The temperature in a two meter radius around him dropped substantially. He raised his arm and his arm transformed into ice and fused with the ice wall. Two seconds later, the ice wall extended outward and froze the hooves of the skeleton horse. However, these hooves were burning with fire and broke free almost instantly. The Ringwraith pulled the lead rope then the horse leaped forward.

This was Gungnir's time to show off. The gem provided him with ice energy when he crushed it. He only unlocked the second stage of the genetic constraint and his Hie Hie no Mi enhancement wasn't at the highest rank so he couldn't fully utilize the devil fruit's power unless he use an ice attribute energy stone, which was a rank C reward. The energy stones he had was originally prepared for life and death situations. He could never expect to use one at the beginning of the movie, even if this

one was obtained after he arrived. He decided he had to kill this Ringwraith. He wouldn't take a loss in any deals.

The skeleton horse leaped and Gungnir raised his other arm. Both his arms had transformed into ice. The ice wall on top of him moved like a creature and turned into a ten meter big hand. The hand reached for the Ringwraith.

Bang! It grabbed the Ringwraith and slapped downward. The hand pressed a deep hole on the ground.

Gungnir let out a sigh of relief. He immediately ran over to the hand. The people around him was surprised and followed after. Zheng also came over. He estimated Gungnir's strength then ran toward the two Hobbits.

Frodo and Sam were completely shocked. They had never seen such intense battles in their lives.

Zheng crouched with a smile and looked at them. "We are fine. Don't worry. We promised Gandalf to escort you to The Prancing Pony and we will keep this promise."

The Hobbits nodded repeatedly. They were obviously scared and didn't know what to say. They just continued to stare at the slab of ice.

Xuan walked over to Zheng. "What's your estimate? How much certainty you have in beating Gungnir?"

Zheng replied in a low voice. "I don't know if he can turn his whole body into ice when he uses this ability. If he can, then I will have to burn him with red flame. I only have 60% chance of winning in this scenario. If he can only turn his arms into ice, I can kill him with Destruction."

"Oh." Xuan casually responded. Then he walked toward the huge slab of ice.

Zheng immediately grabbed him and asked in an even lower voice. "Tell me the truth. Are you scheming these two teams? Do you plan to wipe them along with the other two teams? This may sound absurd but I feel like it's something you will do."

Xuan glanced at him. “That’s impossible. We don’t have the conditions to accomplish this. The alliance is necessary or we have no way of taking on team East America and team Celestial. If we are to judge team Celestial based on team Devil, they aren’t a team we can take on by ourselves. But I am surprised you finally learned to be merciless.” He patted Zheng’s shoulder as if he was gratified.

Zheng didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. He was scared of Xuan wiping the two teams with some trap without a word. The rewards from that would be so huge but he was more worried about team Celestial. He asked that question to remind Xuan of the risks and was labeled as merciless.

On the other side, most people of the three teams had gathered around the slab of ice. The Ringwraith and skeleton horse were frozen in the center of the ice. The Ringwraith was still in the position of holding the lead rope and swinging his sword.

“It was so powerful. The Ringwraiths in the movie don’t have much strength but they are so powerful here. They are more like death knights than Ringwraiths.” A teenager from team Northern Ice Land loudly said. He seemed like a veteran and not newbie.

“True.” Gungnir touched the ice and muttered to himself.

(I was trying to crush it but it looks unharmed. The toughness of this armor is stupid. What should I do? I caught it. I am not going to let someone else kill it. But if I use that skill, it will reveal my trump card. That’s not going to go well if team Africa or team China have ill intentions.)

Gungnir looked at the Ringwraith in silence. After a while, he said. “Marvis, bring me Alex’s spear.”

The girl with bow from his team ran over to the corpse of the young man and picked up the ice spear. She didn’t even look at the corpse.

Gungnir smiled at the others. His baby face was indeed charming. Without a word, he stabbed the spear into the ice. A crevice opened up on the ice and let his spear move through. The spear pierced the Ringwraith’s

helm.

Sizz. A dense black mist came out through the crevice. The mist floated upward about ten meters then it dissipated.

“That wasn’t worth it. Only a rank D reward and 2000 points. I used a rank C energy stone.” Gungnir sighed. He even threw the spear onto the ground to express his anger.

The others couldn’t tell if he was acting since he was the only one who killed a Ringwraith. The amount of rewards were only his words. Though no one said anything. He was the one who caught the Ringwraith after all. No one was qualified to complain even if he withheld this information.

“Let’s go. Our resting ends. The Ringwraith’s power exceeded our expectation. This was only one Ringwraith. If the remaining eight appear at the same time, we can only run. We can’t afford to take unnecessary breaks before we reach Bree!” Zheng took a deep breath and said to the group.

He displayed the qualities of a leader in that fight so most people in the three teams subconsciously started walking. Some veterans looked at each other and followed. Then the two leaders also followed. Half a minute later, the group entered the farm field.

What they didn’t notice was Ringwraith’s armor began breaking down into dust but the skeleton horse remained intact. Its eyes still shining a red light.

## Chapter 4-2

“We can safely assume that the movie characters are at least five times more powerful than they are in the movie. Maybe even more. There’s also the possibility this only applies to a small number of characters, like the Ringwraiths. There are only nine of them in the movie.”

The three teams began moving again after they killed the Ringwraith. Even the weakest newbies didn’t complain and ran with all they had. Thanks to Lan’s endurance psyche force ability, everyone was able to keep running and the newbies didn’t lag behind.

The two Hobbits finally said they were tired by evening. So the three teams set up camps by a forest. The Hobbits and newbies stayed within the center of the camp for their safety while the veterans stayed by the border.

The Hobbits then wanted to look for vegetables among the farm fields. The leaders had no choice but to assign several people to protect them. They then started to review the fight earlier in the day.

Neos analyzed the Ringwraith’s strength to the others while he ate his chocolate. When the Hobbits came back with quite a lot of food, he stopped talking.

Zheng looked at the Hobbits roasting the food. Then he frowned. “Unfortunately our biggest danger comes from the Ringwraiths. Going by the plot, these Ringwraiths will keep attacking us until we reach Rivendell, which will take at least ten days. I can take on one or two Ringwraiths. Our teams can take on four to five. However, if the remaining eight came at once, we might lose over twenty people and possibly the two Hobbits. Their attacks are sharp and they have ridiculous speed.”

Neos smiled coldly. “It won’t be dying twenty or so people. We might only have ten people survive. They just have to let six Ringwraiths delay our strongest members. Two Ringwraiths can kill the rest of the group in under two minutes. Remember sci-fi weapons are nullified against them!”

“Right, sci-fi weapons have no effect.” Zheng nodded.

He suddenly stood up and walked over to the two Hobbits. Then he brought out a Sky Stick and said to Sam. "Sam, come over for a minute."

Sam was surprised. He handed the herb he was roasting to a girl next to him then walked over to Zheng.

Zheng grabbed him and stepped onto the Sky Stick. The outcome was just as he expected. The Sky Stick couldn't move like it was depleted of energy. When he put Sam back down, the Sky Stick floated again. Sam whistled at the sight of it.

"Sci-fi weapons and equipments really have no effects on them. This is probably God's mean to prevent us from flying them to Rivendell." Zheng smiled bitterly.

Neos and Gungnir smiled back, though each with different meanings. Xuan said. "The plot changed."

Neos frowned as he ate another piece of chocolate and said. "Right, the plot changed. We are supposed to encounter the Ringwraiths for the first time after we meet up with the other two Hobbits. In the plot, the four Hobbits boarded the Bucklebury Ferry but we won't be able to do the same with the number of people we have. The speed of the skeleton horses also exceeds the original movie." He was sweating when he said this.

Xuan remained calm as always. "We are no longer safe starting at the time we met the first Ringwraith. Furthermore, our psyche force users didn't detect it yesterday. Which means they won't appear in psyche scans. If my guess is correct, the rest of the Ringwraiths will come when we meet up with the other two Hobbits. Maybe one, or two, or even eight."

Zheng didn't look at how the other leaders react, he asked Xuan. "Why are you sure they will appear with the Hobbits? You definitely have a plan to get us through this. I don't know how many people can live with eight Ringwraiths at the same time."

Neos fiercely snapped a piece of chocolate and said. "Because the Hobbits are part of our mission. We will lose points if they die and earn points if they live. So we have to meet them before the Ringwraiths or it won't reflect the difficulty of protecting them. This is probably God's

trap.”

Gungnir stopped smiling and said anxiously. “So what are we going to do? Do we have no choice but to stay here and wait or keep going and encounter the rest of the Ringwraiths?”

Neos didn't reply. He was sweating as he kept devouring his chocolate. He looked like he had gone insane. Zheng stared at Xuan. Given his understanding of Xuan, Xuan definitely already came up with the solution before he said those words. He always had an solution, no matter how risky or crazy the solution might be.

“Since we can't afford to let all eight Ringwraiths attack us, then we will bait them out.” Xuan said calmly.

“What do you mean?” The three leaders asked simultaneously. Neos then snapped another piece of chocolate.

“The elves. The group of elves the Hobbits see at night. There are over a hundred of them and the time is tonight.” Xuan said.

Neos was enlightened. He immediately stood up and said. “That seems like our only chance. Yes, this is the only solution. Zheng, use your Sky Stick and go find the other two Hobbits. They have gotten far from Hobbiton so they should be close to us. Find them and the elves with psyche scan. Then we will have Frodo wear the One Ring to bait out the Ringwraiths and have the elves fight for us. While they were fighting, we will head toward Brandywine River. The Hobbits will be safe after they boarded the Ferry. And since the Ringwraiths chase after the One Ring, we can use our items to get to Bree by ourselves. This is our only chance!”

“Yes. This is our only chance. At least the only chance to escort the Hobbits to Bree without too many casualties.” Xuan wasn't mad at Neos interrupting him.

They discussed some details then informed Lan and Snow. One of them began to search for the two Hobbits and the other began to search for the elves. Zheng went away on the Sky Stick.

As Zheng pondered, he received an image from Lan. The Hobbits were in

a hill not far away. He arrived at them in just a minute with the Sky Stick. The Hobbits were having a barbeque and looked enjoying it.

Without a word, he stepped off the Sky Stick, put it back into the ring then carried the Hobbits in his arms. The Hobbits were completely shocked. He jumped up to a tree while they screamed. Then he moved extremely fast in Explosion with the movement technique. Wind stuffed the Hobbits' mouths as they screamed. After a bit, they had to stop. The three came back to the camps before long.

Frodo and Sam were surprised when Zheng came back with the two Hobbits.

"Frodo!" "Sam!" "Merry!" "Pippin!"

Zheng put the Hobbits down and they immediately ran over to Frodo and Sam.

Merry asked. "Frodo, why are you here? I know. Did these bandits capture you to cook for them? We Hobbits make the best foods."

Frodo replied. "No. Zheng and everyone are good people. They have been protecting us and taking us to Bree. Why are you here? It's quite far from Hobbiton."

Merry and Pippin laughed with embarrassment. They didn't know how to respond.

Snow suddenly said. "Zheng, I found the elves. They are behind that forest and are heading toward us. They will arrive in about three minutes."

Zheng nodded. "Good job. Take care of yourself in a bit, okay?"

Snow nodded. The Hobbits seemed excited and said simultaneously. "The elves?" They immediately started to run in the elves' direction.

Zheng grabbed Frodo at once and said in a serious tone. "Frodo, put the One Ring on. When you see a group on horses run toward you, immediately take the ring off. Get it?"

Frodo was shocked. His hand reached for his chest then he said. "How do you know I have the One Ring? Gandalf told me to never put it on

because it wants to return to its owner. Zheng, I won't put the ring on!"

Zheng said. "Believe in me. Didn't we fight the Ringwraith earlier in the day? We won't harm you. We will take you to Bree safely. You just have to wear the ring for a short while. You will still hold onto the ring. We won't touch it. Okay?"

Frodo had never worn the ring before but there was a voice telling him to wear it ever since he obtained it. He had wanted to try the ring and now that Zheng was saying this with sincerity, plus the rest of the group were around him, he let go of the worry. He slowly brought out a golden ring and put it on his finger.

Sizz. Frodo disappeared. Everyone looked at the spot. They had been notified to start running toward the elves as soon as Frodo came back. This was their only chance of escaping.

About a minute later, Frodo appeared on the ground, panting. His face looked pale. "They are coming. A lot. There are eight Ringwraiths running toward us. They are fast. Almost here!"

Zheng carried Frodo and took a deep breath. Then he yelled. "Run! Run toward the elves!" He took the lead and ran.

They were less than two minutes away from the elves at this point. The Ringwraiths were nowhere to be seen.

# Chapter 4-3

It was less than a minute after they started running when they could see a faint golden glow ahead. The elves in The Lord of the Rings exerted a soft glow in darkness which gave them a sense of mysterious beauty. This was also the best method of identifying the elves. When many elves gathered together, this beautiful glow looked more striking.

As soon as they saw the glow, a chilling air struck them from behind. This air blew up scattered leaves on the ground. They could hear the whinny of horses and instantly felt things were going terrible. The Ringwraiths were too fast. Were these death knights already here?

“Don’t worry. The Ringwraiths are still a few minutes away.” Lan yelled as she ran. “I can’t see it with psyche scan but I can see the withering plants. The traces of withering are approaching. Hurry!”

The group sped up even more as they heard. Ten seconds later, they saw the elves. This group of elves had approximately three hundred. They looked at these forty people with surprise. They elves also born fighters. A hundred of them immediately drew their arrows. The three teams stopped in place and didn’t dare to move.

Zheng shouted. “Corrupted creatures are chasing after us. Aren’t the elves a race of the good? Help us fight off the enemies!”

Noises broke out among the elves. They could see the elves were split into two parties. One believed they should help Zheng’s group while the other didn’t want to get involved. As they argued, the sense of chill was approaching.

“Halt! Have you forgotten the destination of our journey?” A man walked out from the elves.

He had blonde long hair, a fair face, and a pair of pointy ears. The elves quieted down following his shout. He walked a few steps toward the three teams and said. “My apologies, stranger. We are destined to be forgotten. We no longer hold any relation to this world as we are about to leave Middle Earth. We are merely passersby whether this world is evil or kind. I

apologize that we are unable to help you.”

“They are the Ringwraiths chasing after us! Our ancestors had fought alongside you in the Last Alliance. Please help their descendents. We are allies!” Someone behind Zheng yelled. It was a newbie from team Africa, a young man in his mid twenties dressed in a suit. Zheng recalled he introduced himself as a lawyer. No wonder he had his way with words.

The elves fell into silence. The leader of their group sighed quietly. ‘Ally’ was a holy word to the elves. And the name Ringwraiths also struck their hearts. They could still remember the war due to their immortality. Never had they thought the Ringwraiths that had disappeared for so many years suddenly reappeared. This message made the elves feel suspicious.

“It is indeed the Ringwraiths. There are eight evil creatures approaching us rapidly. That evil force belonged to the force of death unique to the Ringwraiths.” The elves’s leader closed his eyes and faced toward the group’s direction. After a while, he muttered.

“You have the One Ring!” He opened his eyes abruptly.

Zheng stepped forward and said. “Yes. We are escorting the One Ring to Rivendell but we were found by the Ringwraiths soon after we left the Shire. We don’t have the power to protect these four Hobbits. That’s why we need your help. We just need you to delay the Ringwraiths for a period of time while we head to Brandywine River as fast as possible. The Ringwraiths can’t cross the river. Then we will head to Bree.”

The elves’s leader sighed. He looked at the Hobbits then turned around to his group. “Let the humans know we never abandon our allies. Never have and never will!” He shouted then picked up a bow from a maid. It was a green bow made of wood.

Zheng took several deep breaths then shouted to the three teams. “The newbies escape into the forest behind the elves. We will come back to get you after we reach Brandywine River. Don’t try run and move in groups. Xuan, Yinkong, that Druid, Richard and ChengXiao, head to the river when you see the Ringwraiths get stopped by us. Get the Hobbits on the ferry and wait for us. I will have Lan support you through Soul Link! The rest of

the veterans attack! Try to kill all the Ringwraiths!”

Neos and Gungnir looked at each other. They both laughed coldly but didn't say anything. They followed Zheng's order and stood in their positions. The newbies had witnessed the attacks of the Ringwraith and quickly ran toward the forest. In under twenty seconds, they were nowhere to be seen.

The elves didn't say anything about it. They had over a hundred archers with two meter long bows. The elves were slender and tall. They averaged 1.8 meters and some were even 1.9 meters tall. Their height supplemented the long bows to give their arrows more power. They were ready to fight by the time Zheng finished assigning the tasks. A third of the elves backed into the forest. These were the non combat elves. The fighters had a quiver hanging by their waist, which could not be described with the word gentle.

“Ready!” The elves's leader yelled.

Zheng and the others sensed the chill growing colder. As the elves's leader yelled 'fire', a Ringwraith charged out from a tree.

This Ringwraith also rode a black skeleton horse. The horse was a size bigger than the previous one and faster. Its eyes weren't shining in a red light but rather they were flames. The Ringwraith's equipments also seem more powerful. He carried a black shield in addition to the two handed sword.

The elves fired a hundred arrows that glowed in a green light. However, the arrows only resulted in clanks as they hit the shield then quickly get corroded by the black mist. These arrows couldn't stop the Ringwraith even a bit.

The Ringwraith first appeared 300 meters away from the groups, then it crossed 100 meters by the time the arrows hit. At this time, a silver and a green arrow fired toward the Ringwraith's head. However, it reacted instantly and the arrows hit the shield.

Heng and the girl archer fired their arrows. They were both using +3 enchanted arrows but their different bows gave the arrows different glows.

These two arrows were much more powerful than the elves's.

The elves's leader quickly glanced at the two players. He drew his bow with two arrows in his hand. The bow came into a full moon. As the Ringwraith crossed another hundred meters, he released the arrows one after the other. The second arrow hit the tail of the first and accelerated the first arrow in a mini explosion. A green light hit that thick shield. Pah! The shield exploded.

The girl archer watched with her eyes wide open. She stared at the wooden bow then back at her own bow in disbelief. While she was shocked, Heng also brought out two arrows and drew his bow to a full moon. He wasn't using the Sirius bow anymore but he was so concentrated at this moment. There was not even a hint of fear in his eyes.

A second explosive shot was fired. Heng's skill surpassed that of the elves's leader. The power of the explosive shot with the addition of the magical bow and enchanted arrows made the arrow's trail nearly invisible to the human eyes. At almost the same instant, the arrow pierced the Ringwraith's head then the head exploded.

Zheng sighed. It had been so long since he last witnessed Heng's technique. The power of this shot could shock and awe their enemies. The other two teams stared at Heng in shock. These were the veterans remaining and they were able to see what happened with the two arrows.

The elves's leader reacted similarly then he yelled. "Stay alert! The Ringwraiths grow stronger with the death of each one. There are seven more. They will only keep growing stronger!"

The players were shocked again to hear that. Everyone felt bitter. This was like a message announcing their despair. The Ringwraiths were already so difficult to overcome in their normal form. Just then, another Ringwraith charged out from that same withered tree. He was even faster than the previous one. Then three more Ringwraiths came out after him. All four Ringwraiths carried thick large shields. They didn't charge recklessly but advanced by moving among the trees with their anti-gravity attribute. The elves couldn't focus their aim.

“It’s time to fight! Everyone bring out all you have or none of us can make it out alive!” Zheng shouted. He raised Tiger’s Soul and slashed at a tree.

The rest of the players also began destroying the trees in front of them. The Ringwraiths could ignore gravity so complex terrains would only add to their strength. Which would make them impossible to defeat.

The elves frowned but with such powerful enemies ahead, they couldn’t say anything about it. By the time the players cleared an eight meter area around them, the first Ringwraith had approached. He was running on top of falling leaves then his sword slashed at Zheng’s head.

Zheng was the strongest in close combat among the three teams. He raised Tiger’s Soul to block. Dong! The force pushed him a few inches into the ground but the Ringwraith was knocked up a few meters into the air. Zheng didn’t pause. He leaped and slashed at the Ringwraith’s left body. It cut off the Ringwraith’s arm and shield.

At the same time, Zheng shouted. “Xuan, I will leave them to you! Bring them away!”

# Chapter 4-4

Xuan responded in a deep voice then picked up Frodo and ran toward the back of the elves. The other three Hobbits looked at each other and followed them. YinKong, Richard, and ChengXiao followed after. A Caucasian man from team Northern Ice Land hesitated a bit before going. These nine people crossed the elves' defense line and into the forest.

Zheng didn't have the effort to care about other people. He attacked with the intention of slashing the Ringwraith in halves but the dark sword defended against the light blade from Tiger's Soul. So after the two weapons clashed, he only cut off an arm from the Ringwraith. As he raised sword for a follow up attack, the Ringwraith pulled the lead rope and the horse jumped back. The anti-gravity attribute proved its usefulness. The skeleton horse stood on a tree's branch.

Zheng also leaped back because three other Ringwraiths charged at him. Neither of them was slower than the first one. He wouldn't stand a chance if he didn't use Destruction against them. And the most important factor was their mobility given the anti-gravity attribute. The Ringwraiths' attacks became unpredictable. If it were a one on one fight on the ground, he could take on the Ringwraiths with just Explosion.

"Heng! Where are your arrows? Give me fire support! Where is everyone else? Hie Hie no Mi and Goro Goro no Mi are all f\*cking high tier enhancements! Are you waiting for the Ringwraiths to close in and get killed?" Zheng was feeling a chill when he fought the three Ringwraiths alone. Just then, three more Ringwraiths came out from the top of the tree.

"Ready!" The elves' leader yelled again. The hundred archers around him were recruited just for the occasion but they could tell these were well trained fighters. The arrows rained down on the nearest four Ringwraiths on the elves' leader's command.

Three of the Ringwraiths blocked with shields. The arrows couldn't penetrate through. The one with missing arm dodged with difficulty. After

the rain of arrows, this Ringwraith and its skeleton horse were turned into hedgehogs. Its helm was nearly destroyed. Everyone heard a wail that seemingly came from the abyss as the Ringwraith fell. Black mist rose to the air. The skeleton horse also wailed and turned into a pile of fire.

“Very impressive rain of arrow. Heng, what’s wrong? Hurry and shoot!” Seeing that a Ringwraith was killed, Zheng yelled with joy.

Everyone was staring at the remaining six Ringwraiths. The Ringwraiths stopped moving. They all looked up to the sky. The mist split into six and flowed into the Ringwraiths’ helms through the openings. Once the mist was gone, the Ringwraiths’ shields grew larger and thicker, their swords were enveloped in a dense mist, so much that they almost couldn’t make out the mist. It seemed like black sword.

The elves’ leader frowned. “It’s just like the records indicated. The Ringwraiths aren’t living creatures. They are monsters existing on the border of life and death. Their lives are connected. When one dies, his power and life will be given to the remaining Ringwraiths. When only one Ringwraith remains, he will be the monster that Sauron wanted. The true Ringwraith will be the strongest general under Sauron.”

The veterans didn’t have time to delve into their questions when faced with six powered up Ringwraiths. They had began to consider backing away since these Ringwraiths weren’t going after them. There was no need to put their lives on the line for little reward. Some people from team Northern Ice Land and team Africa stepped back. Even Gando followed their steps.

“Are you retarded? Do you know what happens if the they seize the One Ring? Sauron will be revived!” Neos was the first to shout out. “What is our mission in this movie? Reach Mordor with all five teams! If Sauron waits there, do you think he will be easier than the final Ringwraith? You won’t even know how you die at that point. It’s better to follow the plot so Sauron never gets the One Ring. That’s the only way we can safely complete this mission!”

The veterans hesitated. Gungnir shouted. “Sci-fi weapon users back off.

You aren't useful here. Everyone get ready to fight with full strength. Zheng, how many Ringwraiths can you take at once? I mean at their current strength.”

Zheng didn't turn around. He was staring at the Ringwraiths. “Two, maybe three. I don't have any way to take more.”

Gungnir immediately brought out an ice energy stone. “I can probably take on one with Ice Age. Hawfor can take one with with Goro Goro no Mi and everyone else's help. We will have to leave the rest to the elves. But f\*ck. It's only the beginning of the movie and we are encountering enemies so powerful. I can't imagine what's going to come.”

Zheng also sighed. He was about to respond then the Ringwraiths suddenly charged at him. Their speed was faster than before, almost reaching his speed in Explosion. They still ignored gravity so he couldn't predict their movements.

Two green and two silver arrows flew toward the Ringwraiths. The elves' leader and Heng fired simultaneously. Then the girl archer and the elf patriarch fired their arrows.

Heng and the elves' leader's explosive shots blasted the shields of two Ringwraiths. A rain of arrows followed. Everyone watched waiting for these two Ringwraiths to get buried by the arrows.

However, the Ringwraiths really did grew stronger. They swung their swords at the incoming arrows. The swords had strong corrosive attribute. The arrows would get corroded on contact. After the rain of arrows, only a few were pierced into the Ringwraiths and their skeleton horses. None hit their fatal spots. The front three Ringwraiths were only fifty meters away from the group.

“Shoot! Shoot!” Zheng defended in front of everyone with Tiger's Soul. He cried with madness as the Ringwraiths were getting close.

Heng suddenly brought out an arrow. He put it beside his lips and blew the arrow. Then he drew his bow. A strong aura exploded from him and shocked the girl archer. Everyone except from Zheng turned their attention to him. Heng released the arrow then collapsed like he was

exhausted.

No one heard the usual sound of an arrow flying through the air nor saw even a trace of the arrow. All they saw was the nearest Ringwraith shattered. The arrow went from the underside of the horse, flew upward and out from the Ringwraith's neck. The Ringwraith shattered in midair before it fell to the ground. This was Heng's final attack, Charged Shot.

"Good!" Zheng knew Heng could no longer fight. However, there were only five Ringwraiths left and two without shields. Without another second of thinking, he used Instant Destruction and Soru. He moved past the shieldless Ringwraiths and to the three behind.

Soru was so fast that he went past first two Ringwraiths in just the blink of an eye. The elven archers shot their arrows again because the Ringwraiths stopped in place while they were growing. Gungnir also crushed the energy stone and charged up. People from both team Northern Ice Land and Africa did the same. No one would give up on these points and ranked rewards.

Zheng used Soru again. He used the force from this speed and leaped from a tree. The tree instantly trembled violently. And Zheng jumped up into mid air. The light blade extended from Tiger's Soul and he slashed at a Ringwraith. But this Ringwraith wasn't frozen in place as he thought. His dark sword blocked in front when the light blade was only two meters away.

Clank! Zheng's hand trembled. The powerful force that came through Tiger's Soul made his hand hurt.

Five Ringwraiths left but their power had become much stronger.

# Chapter 5-1

The force from impact pushed Zheng back half a step but he knew he couldn't back anymore. Their ranged and special ability attacks were behind him. All the other close range combatants went with Xuan. The players behind him and the elves would die if he backed again.

"Ah!" Zheng roared and activated Explosion. He slashed horizontally and cut off the trees these three Ringwraiths were standing on. The Ringwraiths jumped. The anti-gravity attribute allowed them to descend by running on the falling leaves. Three dark swords hacked toward Zheng's head. Just then, a green arrow blasted one of the Ringwraith's shield. The shield exploded and the Ringwraith was sent flying backward.

Zheng skimmed the psyche scan image and saw it was the elves' leader using explosive shot. It was a surprise that the elves could use Heng's special technique. Zheng took the opportunity and jumped. Tiger's Soul crashed into the remaining two Ringwraiths' dark swords. Clank! The light blade shattered and so were the black mist covering the swords.

The Ringwraith that was sent flying abandoned Zheng and charged toward the elves. Zheng couldn't stop him due to the other two Ringwraiths clinging onto him. He entered the second unlocked stage and using Explosion to its full potential. He was giving his best aside from using Destruction. However, it wasn't only his team here. So if he exhausted himself from his most powerful technique and the other teams had ill intentions, the cause of death would be silly. He could only fight using what he had.

The Ringwraiths' strength was lower than Zheng's but their speed was at least on par with his. Their attacks came from the most inconceivable angles. They could stand on a leaf or a branch. The fight was difficult for Zheng and several cuts appeared on his body before long.

The light blade couldn't cut through the dark swords but it cut trees and rocks like tofu. Since the Ringwraiths could stand on any object, Zheng began slashing everything he saw to clear the area. Once he finished, he

would be able to take on these two Ringwraiths. The three of them were distancing themselves from the elves and the other players as they fought.

“These Ringwraiths are too f\*cking powerful. How are we going to kill them like this? And this is only them at five Ringwraiths. If they grow even stronger, are they going to wipe us with just one Ringwraith?” Zheng thought to himself. He felt anxious when he thought of the other players having to fight three Ringwraiths.

The two Ringwraiths stopped in place. Their heads looked upward. This was obviously the action when a Ringwraith died. They were going to grow stronger.

“Let’s just use Destruction!”

At the same time, many of the players and elves were killed. The players were better off as they were prepared for the fight. Kampa and WangXia dragged Heng to the back when the Ringwraiths charged at them. Zero and the others followed. They didn’t have to the power to fight the Ringwraiths so protecting themselves became the priority.

The other two teams did the same thing. Hawfor and Gungnir crushed the energy stones in their hands. Everyone tried to protect themselves. The elves were fearless in contrast. Over half their archers charged at the Ringwraiths with their close range weapons. Their leader drew two more arrows for an explosive shot. They were a real army compared to the players.

A rain of arrows fell on the three Ringwraiths who didn’t have shields anymore. They had to swing their swords to fight off the arrows. The elves leader fired an explosive shot at the nearest Ringwraith. The arrow penetrated the horse’s head and into the Ringwraith’s chest. It was so fast that the sword couldn’t block the arrow in time. Pah! The arrow carried the Ringwraith off the skeleton horse and pinned him onto a tree.

“Chance!” The devil fruit users were overjoyed. The Ringwraith was still alive which meant finishing it off would grant points and ranked rewards. They both charged at the Ringwraith and crushed an energy stone. The power of their devil fruits buffed substantially. An ice and a lightning

attack shot at the Ringwraith. The lightning attack traveled faster. It transformed into a spear and headed toward the Ringwraith's head. But the ice attack was more powerful. It turned into a hand and smashed downward.

The elves didn't expect such attacks from the humans. The elves leader shouted. "Don't kill it! They are going to grow..."

But the spear had already pierced the Ringwraith's head and almost instantly, the ice hand smashed the Ringwraith and tree on the ground. The whole area turned into ice and a stream of mist rose to the sky.

The elves leader closed his eyes and sighed. Then he yelled. "Gather all the forces of nature onto me. We can't kill these Ringwraiths. If they become one, no one can stop them!"

The elves ran behind their leader. They chanted in the elves' language and strings of green light flew toward their leader.

The remaining two Ringwraiths didn't stop. One charged at the devil fruit users. The other leaped over the elves and headed into the forest behind. His shield slowly recovered and it emitted a black aura. This aura corroded any arrows that came near. Soon, the Ringwraith disappeared from sight.

Hawfor looked delightfully surprised but Gungnir was furious. Before they could do anything, the Ringwraith's sword slashed at them. His shield and armor had also recovered. The black aura enveloping the sword grew to three meters in length. It slashed down at Gungnir. Pah! The sword crushed through the ice and continued toward Gungnir's face.

Gungnir was shocked and immediately ran into the ice. He could move between ice at will in his current state. The sword kept going for five meters into the ice before it stopped. It would have split Gungnir in two if he ran just a little slower.

On the other side, the elves leader were gathering the green light from the elves.

The Ringwraith cut through the ice and lightning field. The devil fruit

users were inept with close range combat. They had neither the strength nor speed to compete. The skeleton ran through like a shadow and Hawfor's head separated. Gungnir was crying in fear.

Right at this critical moment, the elves' leader drew his bow and released an arrow of green light at this Ringwraith. The light hit the shield then started to spread outward as if it had life. The shield turned green in an instant. The Ringwraith wailed in pain. He abandoned Gungnir and pulled the lead rope. The skeleton horse jumped back and soon they disappeared among the darkness.

"We can't simply kill the Ringwraiths. If they become one, no one will be able to stop them. He has to return to Mordor to dispel the life force so he can't continue to go after you." The elves' leader seemed like he had aged ten years. He was panting as he said this.

Gungnir fell on the ground seemingly terrified.

# Chapter 5-2

Xuan and four more players were bringing the Hobbits to Brandywine River. They were actually not too far off from the river. Furthermore, everyone was veterans with multiple enhancements. The Northern European man transformed into a white wolf and the rest of the players each carried one of the Hobbits.

Everyone other than Xuan was an elite combatant in their respective teams. YinKong was the only person that could rival Zheng in close combat within team China, although that was in the sense of assassination. ChengXiao was taught ancient Chinese martial arts and he was the only medic in the team. Richard was the strongest member in team Africa with a self-created ability. The last man was a Druid. He looked nothing sort of a powerful fighter. Most importantly, they were all close range fighters. Zheng chose these people to be extra safe.

Carrying the Hobbits slowed them down a bit but the wolf was charging ahead without consideration of the others. As it almost disappeared into the forest, YinKong flicked something shiny from her hand. The wolf flipped over. It turned around and stared at YinKong ferociously with killing intent in its eyes.

“If you leave my sight, I will kill you. If you attempt to attack us, I will kill you. You can try to resist.” YinKong’s gaze was cold. Her hands were in the form of holding a sword. However, this sword was invisible to the eyes.

The wolf growled but after a few seconds, it subconsciously avoided looking into YinKong’s eyes. The coldness from those eyes couldn’t be described in words. It felt that the moment it moved even slightly, death would fall upon it. Then the wolf slowly walked back into the group. YinKong didn’t look at it again and moved on.

Richard was following behind Xuan. He could feel the intense killing intent during that conversation. This wasn’t something a normal person nor a normal veteran could have. Even the stronger players like him and Zheng could not obtain such aura, an aura of disregarding life.

Richard sighed. He continued running behind Xuan until Xuan suddenly stopped.

Xuan said with his eyes closed. "He's here. A Ringwraith broke through their line of defense and coming after us. Furthermore, he's several times stronger than previously."

Xuan's mind had been connected to Lan's psyche scan this whole time. The Soul Link also included Zero. So he was looking over the battlefield at the assassin's perspective. He knew from Zero that the Ringwraiths grew stronger with the death of each one.

A chilling air blew from behind. The neigh of the skeleton horse was getting close.

Zheng finally made the decision as he saw the two Ringwraiths grew again. Explosion couldn't handle these two Ringwraiths anymore. Instant Destruction couldn't kill them either and would strain his body so that he wouldn't be able to use the complete Destruction later on. It was best for him to place all his bets right now and use his most powerful force to kill these two Ringwraiths at once!

As the Ringwraiths stopped in place, Zheng shouted. His Qi moved upward from his navel and his blood energy came down from his head. The two energies met at his heart.

At this instant, Zheng felt the falling leaves froze in midair. He stepped on the ground and charged at the nearest Ringwraith like wind.

His step was so powerful that the ground exploded. A half meter deep hole appeared at where he was standing. In just the blink of an eye, he reached the Ringwraith. Tiger's Soul slashed at the Ringwraith.

The Ringwraith recovered from his trance state as soon as he was attacked. His speed and strength indeed grew stronger. He could still move his sword to block the slash despite Tiger's Soul was coming so fast.

Clank! Zheng's strength within Destruction wasn't a force the Ringwraith could defend against. The light blade negated the black mist enveloping the sword then Tiger's Soul struck the Ringwraith off the

horse. He also lost the anti-gravity attribute at the same time and smashed on the ground

Zheng didn't continue attacking this Ringwraith. Seeing that the Ringwraith lost over half his combat strength after falling off the horse, Zheng used Geppo and headed toward the other one.

This Ringwraith also recovered from the trance state. He raised his sword to block Tiger's Soul but he still sat on the horse after the clash. The skeleton horse wailed. As Zheng readied another attack, he saw the tree the horse was standing on began splitting from the center. The horse transferred the force of his slash onto the tree. The Ringwraith pulled the lead rope. The skeleton horse ran toward Zheng by stepping on the wood chips. The dark sword was aiming toward Zheng's left.

Zheng's speed was faster than the Ringwraith. He could cut the Ringwraith and his horse in halves before the dark sword hit him but the inertia of the dark sword will not disappear. It will continue slashing toward his left arm. As he was about to back off, he saw the other Ringwraith trying to get back on the horse. If that happened, he would have wasted almost three seconds of Destruction without killing a Ringwraith.

Zheng bit his teeth. His right hand swung Tiger's Soul upward and slashed the Ringwraith and skeleton from the center. The dark sword cut through  $\frac{2}{3}$  of his left arm.

"Killed level 6 Ringwraith. Obtained 5000 points and 2 rank C rewards."

Zheng heard a notification but he didn't have the time to think because the other Ringwraith was about to grow even stronger. He had to kill him before he got on the horse to avoid consuming more time in Destruction.

Zheng bent his body like a bow. He stepped on the Ringwraith's half body, which hadn't completely disappeared, and shot himself forward like a cannon. The Ringwraith and skeleton horse was kicked away. The Ringwraith was still three meters away from the skeleton horse but Tiger's Soul was coming down from above.

The Ringwraith's speed at raising the sword to block was faster. He

could move the whole sword in front of him this time but the force from Tiger's Soul smashed the Ringwraith into the ground with a bang. At the same time, the dark sword exploded. Tiger's Soul continued forward as Zheng dropped down and cut the Ringwraith in two.

“Killed level 7 Ringwraith. Obtained 5000 points and 1 rank B reward.”

Zheng finally got to hear the notification attentively. Though it wasn't time for him to feel happy. The first thing he did was exit Destruction. The fight took five seconds. Killing two Ringwraiths within five seconds was like walking on the edge of life and death. He only had ten seconds of Destruction. If his time was over, even a Hobbit would be able to kill him. Some blood vessels busted. He channeled his Qi throughout his body to suppress this injury.

“Got them. That was f\*cking scary. If they got to level 7 with their horses, then it would have taken seven to eight seconds.” Zheng was still feeling anxious.

As he was thinking of their horses, he noticed the skeleton horse was still standing there. It didn't disappear along with the Ringwraith. Zheng got curious. Could the horse give additional points and rewards for killing? He carefully walked over the horse and grabbed the lead rope.

“Obtained movie creature, Skeleton Nightmare. Consumes none Yang energy such as blood energy, psyche energy, or magic. Ignores gravity. A magically created creature.”

“Eh?”

# Chapter 6-1

Zheng looked at the skeleton horse with surprise. To be honest, the horse didn't look disgusting. It was composed of bones but the bones were shiny black. There was not a bit of rotten meat. It was incredibly stylish that no words could describe it. Though the burning flame on its hooves and eyes looked worrying.

Zheng just noticed the black armor covering the horse. A layer of symbols and characters were carved on the armor. The bones of the horse were also carved with these symbols and characters. They looked similar to the rune words Zheng had seen. Which meant this horse was indeed a magical creation and not an undead creature.

“Since God said you can ride it, there shouldn't be any issues I hope.” Zheng muttered. He flipped himself onto the horse. The horse was two meters tall, a lot bigger than regular horses. Its stylish appearance got Zheng excited for a bit.

However, the horse simply stood there no matter how much Zheng pulled the lead rope. Two minutes later, he had to stop in defeat.

“Oh yeah, the Ringwraith was sending his black mist into the horse but there isn't any mist right now. Was that the non-Yang energy?” Zheng suddenly thought.

He immediately channeled his blood energy. The energy moved through his legs and into the horse without any obstacle. Once he channeled 20% of his total blood energy, the horse cried.

The burning flame in its eyes turned to a blood color, the same color as his red flame. Same thing with the flame on its hooves. A red mist came out from its body. The mist looked denser than the black mist from before and gave the horse a feeling of bloodshed.

Zheng pulled the lead rope again. The horse let out a whinny then began to run. It ran straight toward a tree in front then ran onto the tree as if it was the ground. Zheng didn't feel the gravity pulling him downward. The anti-gravity attribute also applied to him. He only felt gravity pulling down

on the horse's back no matter which direction the horse was standing on.

Zheng pondered. The horse moved at a speed between the level 6 and level 7 Ringwraiths. Its speed was probably depended on the quantity and quality of the energy from its master. Zheng's blood energy wasn't a low rank so its speed was not slow either.

He wasn't familiar with this anti-gravity moving but he believed he only need a few to a dozen days of practice to master it. At that time, his strength would see an increase in complex or awful terrains by at least 50%. Even on normal grounds, the speed of the horse could save him from using energy for Explosion and the movement technique.

"Good stuff. Man, got to capture a few more. Wait. We were killing the horses along with the Ringwraiths before. That was such a waste. The value of the horses are on par with the authentic Sky Sticks. Sigh. There are still two Ringwraiths alive. We have to capture these two Nightmares. And Gungnir only froze the first horse when he killed the first Ringwraith. Yes. I have to go seize that one before anyone else." Zheng murmured.

He was aware of the usefulness of the horse. So he would rather be a bandit and seize the horse than giving it away with humility.

Zheng pulled the lead rope and the horse stopped on a leaf. He called for Lan's name in his mind. Soon, Lan replied. "Zheng! Are you all right? I didn't want to bother you when you were fighting. Where are you? I can't see you in my scan but I can sense the waves of your mind."

"You can't see me?" Zheng connected to Lan's psyche scan and indeed, neither he nor the horse was in the image even when he found the withered tree he was standing on.

"Could it be that the mist from the horse has the property of masking from psyche scan?" He immediately thought of this possibility and cried with surprise. This was highly probable.

Lan interrupted his orgasm and said. "One of the Ringwraith got away and went after Xuan's group. Do you have any way to help them? They are in dire danger. The druid had been killed already."

Zheng's heart skipped a beat. A scan of the other group was sent into his mind. On the ground lay a white wolf in halves. Richard was fighting with the Ringwraith in Berserker mode. If it wasn't the Hobbits attracting the attention of the Ringwraith, that dark sword would have killed Richard already.

Xuan was acting strange. He stood by the Hobbits. Every time the Ringwraith was about to land the final blow on Richard, he had a Hobbit put on the One Ring, which would instantly attract the attention of the Ringwraith. The Hobbit then took off the ring after a few seconds to avoid becoming controlled. The next time Richard fell in danger, Xuan would have another Hobbit put on the ring. Still, Richard's movements were getting slower with time as the wounds on his body increased.

YinKong was hiding within the shadows of the trees and attacked the Ringwraith from behind. She managed to slice off the arm that held the shield despite the impressive speed and reaction of the Ringwraith. In return, the Ringwraith cut open a wound on her chest. Blood covered her chest.

ChengXiao didn't have a weapon so all he could do was worry.

Zheng saw the scene through the Soul Link on Xuan. He was well aware Richard was the main force in this fight. If Richard were to get killed, the Ringwraith could finish everyone else in just several swings. YinKong had high attack power but only in assassination and ambushes. She was not as good as Richard on face to face fights.

Seeing that Richard was getting slower. The duration of his Berserker was about to end. Zheng felt anxious. With the attack power of the Ringwraith, it would take him one swing of the dark sword for each person. Zheng didn't want to see three more bodies in halves.

"Please! Don't die! Wait for me! Please!"

He pulled the lead rope. The skeleton horse ran to the top of the tree then it dashed on top of the leaves. It looked like the horse turned into a red shadow as it sped toward the group.

Zheng was panicking. All three of those were comrades that

accompanied him through life and death situations. Even ChengXiao had died with him before. No one had another chance to get revived. They were also non-replaceable members of the team. Team China would not come to this point without them. And team China would lose all hope of chasing up to team Devil without them.

“Don’t die! We promised to fight together until the end and return to the real world together!” Zheng’s eyes turned red from the anxiousness.

Richard had gotten very slow now. The dark sword moved forward and stabbed a hole in his chest. He fell backward. At the same time, the Ringwraith pulled the lead rope and the horse leaped toward the Hobbits. Xuan was right in front of the Ringwraith.

“No!” Zheng roared.

Behind the Ringwraith where Xuan’s vision was blocked, YinKong’s body was becoming blurry. She held the sword with both hands then she swung the sword repeatedly at a speed invisible to the bare eyes. Her whole body turned blurry. As Xuan looked peacefully, the Ringwraith and skeleton horse trembled violently. Once the trembling stopped, they split up into pieces.

## Chapter 6-2

“This is probably considered a self-created ability.” YinKong quietly said.

The three teams suffered huge casualties after the battle. Those remaining were injured and exhausted. Most had lost the ability to continue this fight. The elves looked weak after losing much of their life force. This group looked more like a defeated army.

But at last, they protected the One Ring and the four Hobbits. The elves gave the group three green stones as a token to commemorate their glory before heading toward the sea.

The energy stone expert of the group, Gungnir, identified the stones as wood attribute rank C energy stones. They weren't too valuable but it was better than nothing. Team Northern Ice Land and team Africa split the three stones due to the heavy casualties they suffered.

There was nothing Zheng could say against this decision. Compared to the two teams, no one in team China died, not even the newbies. They attributed this to luck. So while the two teams had negative team scores, team China's score was still resting at zero. Furthermore, several of them killed the Ringwraiths and obtained their first rewards since entering the movie.

The injured people were treated afterward. Zheng's left arm was a third away from falling off. The cut sliced through his bones and tendons. Much of the nerves were damaged. He was fortunate the Chaotic Unity Qi was able to suppress the black mist from the Ringwraith so his wound remained good. ChengXiao just needed to join the nerves on his arm and stick a Charm of the Three Pure Ones on it. The arm would heal in a few days.

Richard's condition was much worse from being wounded by the sword. He didn't have the Qi to suppress the black mist. When Zheng rushed to the battlefield and sent Qi into his body, he was at the brink of death. Thankfully ChengXiao could stimulate his body with the needles then Zheng's Qi was powerful enough to suppress the black mist. Even then,

the large opening on Richard's chest revealed his beating heart. The wound on his artery was fatal. He needed to receive treatment within twelve hours.

There were two medics among the three teams. The medic from team Northern Ice Land could use the energy within wood attribute energy stones to heal. However, the girl only had the beginner rank ability. It consumed a lot of energy and its effect was limited. All she could do was maintain the ability and keep Richard alive. ChengXiao was much more professional. The effect from his needles were on par with the girl's ability. He was also the only one that could conduct surgery on Richard's artery.

"Let's perform the surgery in Bree. The environment here isn't suitable for big surgeries. We need warm water and a disinfected sealed room." ChengXiao said as he pierced needles into Richard.

The rest of the players struck by the Ringwraiths were dead. Their attacks were simply so powerful. You either avoided getting hit or got cut in halves.

Due to Richard's injury, Xuan piloted the Sky Stick and went ahead with him and the two medics. The rest of the group continued to escort the Hobbits. Zheng finally found the opportunity to secretly ask YinKong on that powerful attack.

The Ringwraith only needed a few seconds to kill Xuan and the Hobbits behind him at the time. Zheng was looking through Xuan's vision through the Soul Link. He saw the dark sword striking down from above. Then the light around the Ringwraith bended. When the light returned to normal, the Ringwraith and its horse were split into pieces.

Zheng asked. "What kind of attack was that? Why didn't I see your attack? Was it from using Excalibur?"

Zheng and YinKong were walking on the tail of the group. Zheng sat on his skeleton horse. When the others learned of the Nightmare, they felt so much regret from killing several horses and even left one behind. Zheng went back using the Sky Stick and the horse was nowhere to be seen. It

went away once the ice melted. In the end, he was the only one that obtained a mount.

YinKong said. “The Shining can raise my speed by over ten times for a short period of time. However, it’s different from your Explosion and Destruction in that it doesn’t raise my reaction speed. Which means this speed is only a burden to me instead of a powerful skill. This attack mimicked Rankyoku in Destruction. Since The Shining’s speed is faster than your Destruction and I don’t have as much strength and control compared to you, I changed the vacuum blade into an area of vacuum blades.”

YinKong flicked her arms then said. “Getting the tenacity of muscles in all parts of the body to the same degree as our fingers is an assassin’s basic training. I think you have such experience. The speed from flicking a finger is faster than swinging your arm. It can even break through the sonic barrier which is impossible to achieve with your arm. Similarly, moving your arm is much faster than moving your whole body. When I am in The Shining, the speed of my body increases by ten times and the speed of my arms increases between fifty to a hundred times.”

She entered the unlocked mode. Her arms grew slightly larger. As she entered The Shining, her arms swung at a speed barely visible to Zheng. He could see the light between him and YinKong bending. A force struck him from the front and almost pushed him off the horse. YinKong stopped so he got to stay on the horse. But he was overjoyed.

“That’s the second stage! The second stage! You made a breakthrough.” He grabbed her shoulders and said with a surprise.

YinKong blushed. She pushed his hands off then tightened her coat. Her clothes were broken during the fight and they were outside the city. So she found a random coat and covered herself. This limited her from making any big movements.

“Swinging your arms like this requires tenacious muscle. My muscles can’t sustain such powerful force. If I use this attack with Excalibur at my full strength, the attack will be extremely destructive but my muscles will

become exhausted afterward. Further movement can cause injury at that point. So I can only use it at critical moments. If the enemy escaped it, I will be without any strength to continue the fight.” She sounded a little down.

Zheng said. “It doesn’t matter. This is a self-created ability. It doesn’t count in the difficulty rating. You can also use the attack at 100%. So that was why you could kill the Ringwraith in one attack. Practice more and enhance your physical stats. When you can use it multiple times, even I will not be a match for you. Haha. Oh and how many points you got from the Ringwraith?”

YinKong was looking downward. “5000 points and two rank B rewards.”  
“Really? So the horses really don’t give rewards. It’s unfortunately.”  
Zheng smiled bitterly.

Another person from team China killed two Ringwraiths and that was Heng. Though he killed the earlier level Ringwraiths so the points and rewards weren’t much. Heng was still exhausted from using Charged Shot. A few newbies were half carrying him as they walked.

“Anyway, we passed this stage. It’s also a lesson that we shouldn’t underestimate this world. The movie characters are much stronger than we imagined. How powerful is Sauron when the Ringwraiths are already so strong? The last Ringwraith escaped back to Mordor. He’s the final fusion from nine Ringwraiths. Will we still be able to defeat it the next time he comes?” Zheng was pondering.

He was happy at his comrades growing stronger. YinKong made an improvement and Heng was overcoming his weakness. Team China also became stronger along with the members.

On the other hand, the Ringwraiths’ strike made him worry about their future. Can the alliance of their three teams take on the movie characters, the enemies who were still in the dark, and the two teams that had yet to appear?

They arrived at Bree in the afternoon.

# Chapter 7-1

The surgery for Richard was very successful and with a Charm of the Three Pure Ones, there was hope of fully regaining his strength in several days. Team Africa let out a sigh of relief upon hearing this news.

Team Africa suffered the heaviest in the battle against the Ringwraiths. Their previous leader was killed and the strong member was critically injured. The remaining members were either powerless or relied on special abilities. So when these two close combat forces were killed and injured, team Africa's strength greatly weakened. If Richard lost the ability to fight or died, team Africa would be in a disadvantaged position among the three teams.

Team Northern Ice Land weren't much better off. The negative score from the death of several newbies could kill even some of their veterans. Thankfully this world was full of various bonus missions and other ways to obtain points, so they weren't worrying too much. Gungnir still seemed confident after the death of two close range fighters. It seemed like he could uphold the team by himself. This confidence gave their veterans peace.

All in all, team China obtained the most in this battle. Not only did they kill five Ringwraiths, they also obtained the only Nightmare. The anti-gravity attribute, speed, and its style made everyone envy. Furthermore, YinKong made a breakthrough during the fight and succeeded the technique she had been developing. There was almost no loss aside from the few charms.

After a day and night in Bree, Richard's injury, Zheng's broken arm, YinKong's wound on the chest, and all the other injuries on everyone else were treated. The group still hadn't found the major movie character yet, the Strider who was Aragorn. Neither Gandalf nor Aragorn were here.

The veterans sat beside a round table by the entrance of the bar. The Hobbits and newbies sat inside. This way, the Hobbits and newbies wouldn't get attacked first in case of an ambush.

“We will wait one more day. If Aragorn still doesn’t appear, we will head to Rivendell by ourselves.” Gungnir said to Zheng and Neos.

Neos sneered. “What are you joking? Do you know the road to Rivendell? There are no maps you can buy in this world unless you are prepared for several months journey.”

Gungnir returned with a cold laugh. “Then what do you say? Sit here and wait until the Ringwraith comes? He’s now a monster from the fusion of all nine. Who here can fight him? You? Or that half dead berserker?”

Neos didn’t show any anger. He got out a piece of chocolate. “There are two key problems. First is the direction and second is the relationship between Aragorn and the elves. If we reach Rivendell without a plan, how do you think we would be treated? Once we hand off the One Ring, we will become grunts. Maybe you like to be one but our team wants to the one giving orders. There are still two teams we have to face outside of the mission. Humans have to think further ahead. Do you rather take a little risk now and wait for Aragorn then gain influence from the elves and human kingdom or search for that Rivendell where you don’t even know where it is?”

Gungnir hesitated. He didn’t say anything more. Neos turned to Xuan who was quietly eating mashed apples. He crushed the chocolate and said. “Xuan is it? Aren’t you going to express your opinion? Didn’t you always have a way?”

Xuan raised his head and glanced at him like that was a pointless question then went back to his food. This attitude of ignoring someone made the veins on Neos’s forehead showed up. He would bite Xuan if he wasn’t controlling himself.

Xuan didn’t remain silence though and said. “God won’t issue an impossible mission. It won’t send the Ringwraith to this town at least when it’s only our three teams here. Whether or not we can take on the Ringwraith is one point and if we suffer too many casualties, it will be unfair to the other teams. Because we won’t obtain any influence in this time and become weaker than when we first entered. Just wait. Aragorn or

Gandalf will appear before the Ringwraith.” He continued eating like no one else was around.

Zheng knew Xuan’s behavior but the others didn’t, so this might appear arrogant. Neither Neos nor Gungnir looked good after that. Zheng was afraid the veins on Neos’s forehead were going to bust. No wonder he killed himself from anger in Starship Troopers. He was disciplined enough to be still alive for someone so impatient.

Gungnir let out a sigh of relief. “Then we will wait three more days. If Aragorn still doesn’t come, we will exit the alliance. We will head to Mordor by ourselves. Perhaps we will arrive after the fights are over or we might cross the mountain. I don’t think this place is safe after three days. We won’t stay here with you guys.”

Just as he finished, a man with gray cloak walked in. This was a handsome man with black hair and light blue eyes. He wore a leather armor and carried a two handed sword on his back.

All the veterans had watched the movie so many times before coming in. They were well aware of person with such characteristics, especially appearing at this time. This was probably the person they were waiting for a whole day.

The Strider looked around the bar. He frowned when he saw the group. He took the sword off his back then just stood there. When he noticed the Hobbits, he looked surprise but remained cautious and walked toward them.

“Aragorn, come have a drink.” Zheng coughed and said in a voice that Aragorn could hear. Then he snapped his finger at the bar owner.

The Strider became more cautious. He gave a smile and said. “I am just a normal strider. Have you mistaken me for someone else?”

Zheng also smiled. “Fine, I mistaken you. Strider Aragorn, come have a sit. We are friends of Gandalf. Same for the four Hobbits.”

Aragorn sat down on the empty seat next to Zheng. The bar owner brought him a beer. He drank half the glass in a gulp and said. “I learned

from my elven friends that a group of mercenaries are fighting the Ringwraiths to protect four Hobbits. Some of them killed seven Ringwraiths. So that means there are only two Ringwraiths left.”

Gungnir gave him a smile. “Not two, just one. We killed eight Ringwraiths. The last one escaped back to Mordor.”

Aragorn looked shocked. He looked around at them then at the Hobbits. “If that’s true then you are one of the most powerful fighters among us humans. Only one Ringwraith left? This might be troublesome. I haven’t introduced myself. I am Aragorn. Gandalf told me the Hobbits are carrying that item so I have been waiting for them here. However, I learned from some striders two days ago that the Ringwraiths appeared between the Shire and Bree. I worried for your safety and left to look for you. I never would have thought you killed some many of them.”

Zheng asked despite knowing the answer. “Where’s Gandalf? Shouldn’t he be waiting for us here? Why are you the only one?”

Aragorn smiled bitterly. “He might have encountered some troubles. He went to look for Saruman in Isengard. Something might have delayed him on the way. I will take you to Rivendell. The town is filled with life force. The Ringwraith won’t easily enter it. We will be safe temporarily there. However, that’s only temporary. The final Ringwraith is as powerful as Sauron himself. We don’t know if he will charge into Rivendell.”

# Chapter 7-2

Charge into Rivendell? If the elves were as weak as they were portrayed in the movie, the final Ringwraith could actually enact a massacre in Rivendell. Though the elves weren't weak either. The elves' leader who was merely a side character in the movie could Explosive shot, even if it was only with two arrows. This fact still surprised the players. The arrows the elves used were equivalent to enchanted arrows. There might be more powerful archery techniques in Rivendell.

Anyway, under Aragorn's suggestion, they left Bree on the say day and headed east. The journey to Rivendell was going to be seven days.

Aragorn had a mount. He thought everyone in the group should have mounts but everyone other than Zheng was empty handed. He had no choice but to walk along with his horse. Bree was a little town. There weren't thirty horses they could buy. And of course, Zheng's mount seriously shocked him.

Aragorn yelled. "That's a Skeleton Nightmare! You seized the Ringwraith's mount! Ha. Unfortunately, only wizards can ride them. They were created by wizards in the Second Age. The method has been long lost but Sauron obtained this method and created nine Nightmares for the Ringwraiths after he lost his physical body. Thus, the Ringwraiths were undefeatable to man."

Zheng laughed. He pulled the lead rope and the horse ran at full speed. The crimson mist and burning flame on the horse's hooves and eyes made it seem execeptionally handsome. Many in the group stared straight at it. Aragorn also exclaimed. A mount with such speed and anti-gravity was the dream of every warrior.

And so they advanced toward Rivendell with Zheng guarding the group on his mount. He seemed in love with his current form, holding onto the rope in one hand and a half translucent crimson blade on the other.

Xuan glanced at Zheng with an expression of disdain then he looked over the other two teams' members. It felt like there was something

behind his gaze. Anyone he looked over felt a chill like a prey targeted by a snake.

Nothing happened for three days since the Ringwraith had returned to Mordor. It would take him at least ten days run back. The group wasn't in a hurry as such without the danger. Aragorn acted like he was waiting for someone. He frequently stood on higher places and looked east.

"We are here. So this is The Lord of the Rings's world." This was a handsome man with long hair. He stood on the edge of a cliff and said with a smile. Fourteen men and women stood behind him. Eleven of them looked confused. They asked the people around concerning their whereabouts but the answers were all disappointing.

This was a snowy mountain they were standing on. Cliffs surrounded them. There was seemingly no way to go. It wasn't snowing but the ground was covered in a thick layer of snow. The man standing on the edge wasn't affected by the snow as he stood on top of them instead of sinking down.

"This is troublesome. A five way team battle. Interesting, there's also team Celestial. Hoho." The man turned around. He maintained a smile the whole time but his eyes felt cold as ice. They were like a pair of daggers that could easily pierce your heart.

"ZhuiKong, don't you have any advices? You are the formally acknowledged leader after our previous leader went to team Celestial." A beautiful girl stood with her arms akimbo. Two long swords hung by her hips. She looked like a dual wield user.

ZhuiKong laughed. He disappeared and reappeared behind the girl. A beautiful head lay on his hand. It was the girl's head. She looked shocked, in disbelief, and terrified. A second later, blood sprayed out from the headless corpse.

"I remember I told you to not think of yourself as anyone important to me with a sexual relationship. The burden to killing you is nothing compared to the burden of killing my friends. So you are not qualified to talk to me like this. Where did you get the courage?" He said to the head then brought it closer and kissed it. The eleven people were completely

shocked. They screamed in terror but there was nowhere to run on this cliff.

ZhuiKong flicked his hand. The head turned into a paste then he let it fall off the cliff. There was no blood on his hand. He turned to the other two people who were calm and said with a smile. "Same rules for team battles. Kill all our newbies. Let's see. Negative 11 points. We have to kill eleven people to stay alive. Hoho. The game is only fun when we can test our limits and capacities like this. Isn't it? Why aren't you two talking?"

If one looked carefully, you could see their arms and legs trembling. They were a Caucasian man and a black young man. The Caucasain carried a spear. The black young man carried a circular weapons. After they heard ZhuiKong's words, they roared and leaped at the newbies. Ten seconds later, all the newbies died in their hands. They turned back to ZhuiKong not daring to make an extra sound.

ZhuiKong smiled contentedly. He looked down the cliff. After a while, he said. "Let's first confirm our location. Then we can find somewhere within the plot and wait there or we can head to Mordor and kill everything there. What do you think?"

The Caucasian carefully said. "We, we can find a human town first. If you kill all the creatures in Mordor, the other teams could complete their missions without effort. We can watch how they struggle. Isn't that more interesting than killing?"

"Watching the weak struggle and perhaps grow? That's an interesting scene. Watch the fruit slowly ripen then crush it. Okay. We will look for a human town first and find our location. I am making it clear, don't kill without a good reason on the way. Since we decided to watch a show, we have to follow our rules. Is that right?" He raised his leg and stepped off the cliff. There was nothing on his body other than his clothes. He disappeared in the bottom of the cliff.

The two veterans let out a sigh of relief and ZhuiKong was gone. They gave a bitter smile to each other. The black young man said. "Maybe we are also the fruits he was talking about. This guy became more insane

after the battle against team Devil. Is it really interesting to fight yourself then with that monster that's even stronger than you? Only monsters can understand monsters.”

The Caucasian patted him and said. “Shhh. Don't say anything more. We have confirmed he doesn't have psyche force attribute but it feels uncomfortable talking behind him like this. Sigh. Do our best to stay alive. Even if he kills eleven people, we are still several thousand points down. We have to kill some people from other teams to survive.”

They stopped talking. One person brought out two bottles. He pressed the buttons on them and threw them on the ground. The bottles turned into two gliders with parachutes. They equipped the gliders and jumped off the cliff.

A few hours later, the two found themselves using their communication device. They then walked a long way in the mountain before getting out. ZhuiKong was already waiting for them in the plains. He patted their shoulders with a smile. It looked like meeting up with an old friend.

They knew that once ZhuiKong decided on the rules, he would absolutely follow them. They were safe for now. The black young man finally said. “It isn't easy to get a psyche force user. You killed her too fast.”

ZhuiKong said. “It's fine. God will keep replenishing certain types of members. We will see a replacement soon. Let's go look for a human town.” He began walking at a direction. His eyes were cold as ice.

# Chapter 8-1

Team China, Africa, and Northern Ice Land had been on the road for seven days. Although they knew team East America entered this world, the whereabouts of the team was unknown. Therefore, all the psyche force users in the three teams extended their psyche scans to max range to guard against possible ambushes.

These several days were rather relaxing for everyone otherwise. There was no need to worry about dangers without the threat from the Ringwraith. The sceneries were beautiful. For a while, the newbies had the sense of being on a field trip. The Hobbits were experts in finding wild vegetables and turning them into delicious dishes. The veterans also went hunting with Aragorn. The newbies wouldn't get to taste such food in the cities they came from.

The players obtained many answers concerning Rivendell from Aragorn. The most important was its military strength and the answer gave them relief. Even though the elves were moving away from Middle Earth, their capital still had an army of several thousands. A thousand of those had the ability to shoot enchanted arrows. So the Ringwraith wouldn't be that a catastrophic threat to Rivendell.

As the group approached Rivendell, they encountered a beautiful female elf on a white horse. Zheng was the first to meet her. He was patrolling top of the trees and hills on his Nightmare. When he was a thousand meters away from the group, a female elf appeared on top of a cliff and unsheathed her sword without a word. Then she chanted a spell.

The slope Zheng was standing on trembled. Boulders rolled down from the hill. Thankfully, the Nightmare could ignore gravity. Zheng had it leaped on the boulders and went down along with them. As he was about to reach the bottom, the Nightmare leaped onto the top of a tree.

The female elf charged at Zheng with her sword. However, a man's shout stopped her. Aragorn was running over to them on his horse.

"Arwen, stop. He's a friend, not Ringwraith!" Aragorn shouted from afar.

His horse wasn't a rare warhorse so it took him a while to reach Zheng and the elf. He got off and ran toward the female elf.

The female elf also got off the horse. She stood there and waited for Aragorn to run over. A smile came on her face as Aragorn took hold of her hand.

"These are my friends. They killed eight Ringwraiths and seized the mount from one of the Ringwraiths. They are strong warriors, Arwen. Gandalf entrusted them to protect the holder of the One Ring." Aragorn introduced the group with a smile. Due to the lack of mounts, the rest of the group was still running over from afar.

Arwen smiled apologetically at Zheng. She nodded in acknowledgement then said to Aragorn. "We received message from Gandalf that Saruman has betrayed us. He feared the forces of Sauron and sought power from the darkness. We lost an ally. Gandalf was imprisoned by Saruman but he escaped and is heading toward Rivendell. We should be in time to meet him when we arrive."

Aragorn nodded then said to the players. "My friends, we have to pick up our pace. We have to reach Rivendell by daytime tomorrow."

It wouldn't take more than a day if he were to head there on his mount. However, there were only three mounts among the group which forced those with a mount to walk.

Arwen Undómiel was the elf maiden. Her beauty was exceptional and contained a sense of sanctity. Such a woman was prettier than any movie stars in the real world. She instantly attracted the men and women in the group. As expected, ChengXiao couldn't contain himself the most.

He got a harmonica and performed right in front of Aragorn. The exotic instrument caught Arwen's curiosity which made ChengXiao push his luck further. He grabbed Arwen's hand trying to teach her harmonica. His purpose was clearly an indirect kiss.

The elves were graceful. Arwen refused with a determined smile and pulled her hand back. When Aragorn sat down next to ChengXiao, he immediately became collected. He stopped moving near Arwen and

changed the romantic tune to a one solem and high spirited.

“I don’t want to admit it but I can’t beat Aragorn. I am afraid I will become a monster without my thing if I continue to date his girlfriend.” ChengXiao explained behind everyone’s back.

As an important character and the heir of a king, Aragorn was a great fighter in the movie. In this modified world, his strength increased by quite a margin. He was reaching the abilities of a level 7 Ringwraith without the Nightmare mount.

Aragorn had been using a normal two handed sword. His swings were not much slower than a level 7 Ringwraith. The sword glowed with a white light when he used it. The light came from his body and turned the sword similar to the light blade of Tiger’s Soul. Aragorn was stronger than many of the veterans here.

If ChengXiao were to do anything perverted to Arwen, it would take much effort for Aragorn to kill him.

The addition of a beautiful lady in the group made the atmosphere more lively. The girls had gotten in good relations with Arwen by the time they reached Rivendell.

Two past noon the next day, the group arrived. The peaceful elven town sat on the foothills of the Misty Mountains. The town wasn’t big. Its beauty could not be described in words. It was built by the mountain. Fresh green trees stood throughout the town and many small waterfalls on its outer edge. Any person would exclaim at its beauty when he first saw the town.

The group easily moved past the guards with Aragorn and Arwen on the lead. It took some urging from the two before the rest of the group moved on toward the meeting lobby.

The meeting loby was located on an open platform. Several people had been waiting there, Gandalf and some elves.

The Hobbits were excited to see Gandalf. They ran over with cries like four little children. Gandalf hugged them in a laughter. It seemed like they

could talk on and on forever. The Hobbits narrated the dangers and Ringwraiths they encountered on the journey. Gandalf and the elves looked over to the players in surprise when they heard the group killed eight Ringwraiths.

“Brave warriors, you defeated the Ringwraiths and killed eight of them?” An elf asked.

Arwen replied. “Not only did they kill eight Ringwraiths, they seized a Nightmare from the Ringwraith. The horse perishes plants so I had the guards brought it near the boulders where there are no plants.”

Gandalf and the elves finally expressed their astonishment and looked over in disbelief.

# Chapter 8-2

-Note-I did not reference the movie for the dialogues.

“And so they want us to send three representatives to attend the meeting concerning the One Ring.”

It had been two days since the players arrived at Rivendell. The elves treated them as honored guests. They learned from the elves that normally only ministers from other nations and famed warriors and wizards like Gandalf received such treatment. This was a rare occurrence in the elves’s history for a big group of thirty people to be treated like this.

“That’s all due to our strength.” Neos said scornfully.

“Yeah, because we are powerful, we are needed for the multiple race meeting.” Zheng responded.

Both the honored treatment and invitation to the meeting were the result of their strength. This made the players sighed. Favoring those with power was the same in the real world and in the movie worlds.

The veterans discussed about their representatives. It was still best for the three team leaders to attend the meeting. Though there were disagreements when it came to team China’s selection. Zheng wanted Xuan to go in place of him since they could communicate using Soul Link. Xuan’s intelligence would be useful in these situations where words decided the outcome.

Xuan’s response was, “I have some things to talk with Haotian. The main flow of the plot has been decided. You just have to be in the meeting. Contact me via Soul Link if you have questions during the meeting.” He then went out to look for Haotian.

“I am not being nosey but your actions are making me suspicious. Who is Haotian? How can a newbie get so much attention from you? You are giving me the sense that you either want to play brokeback with him or you are scheming something behind us again. I am not hoping you to stop making schemes but at least tell me in advance.” Zheng was scared for a

moment and grabbed a hold of Xuan. He didn't dare to let Xuan get away. What would happen if he were planning to blow up Rivendell? Of course, that was an analogy but Xuan was very possibly scheming on something big.

Xuan turned his head around and spoke solemnly. "No schemes and no brokeback."

Zheng also responded in a serious tone. "I was just kidding about the brokeback. You swear there are no schemes? Why do you want to talk to Haotian?"

"Because there's something interesting."

"And you said no schemes?" Zheng was enraged. He remembered how he struggled for life because of Xuan's schemes.

"Not a scheme." Xuan said calmly. He had the potential to make people rage.

"Then what are you looking for Haotian for?"

"Because there's something interesting."

In the end, there was nothing Zheng could do. He truly believed anyone that got real with Xuan must be mentally ill. Zheng was so mad he wanted to bite Xuan to death. Xuan walked away with a calm expression. Zheng was afraid a murder might take place if he didn't let Xuan go, a murder because of a scheme.

Zheng stuffed the rage into himself and went to the meeting. The other two people walking with him were worried and almost frightened. They didn't know the cause of that killing intent and thought maybe team China was planning on something big. For a while, they stayed cautious. Neos consumed chocolate nonstop like he was addicted, trying to ponder team China's scheme.

The meeting concerning the One Ring began like this. The players saw several of the main characters in the meeting, Legolas, Gimli, Boromir. These were all main characters in the war that was about to come.

“Strangers and friends from afar, we are discussing how to deal with the forces of Mordor.” Elrond was the host of this meeting. He looked over everyone solemnly then continued. “The fate of destruction is looming in on Middle Earth. No one can be spared. That’s why you must unite. If you don’t unite, no one can escape the destruction!”

Elrond then said to Frodo. “Bring the One Ring forward.”

The four Hobbits were also in the meeting. They sat on the outer edge. Frodo immediately came up to the center and carefully placed the One Ring on the table.

It looked like a normal gold ring and not unique in any way. There was no decorations on the ring. However, it attracted everyone’s eyes the moment it appeared. Anyone that looked at the ring felt the whole world was in front of them. The ring was their world.

Zheng also felt the strangeness. There was a murmuring by his ears when he looked at the ring. The voice urged him to take the ring. It would give him endless strength and power. It would give him eternal life. The voice was tempting Zheng to take the ring in hand.

As Zheng tried to stand up, he sensed danger. The Chaotic Unity Qi circulated his body. His body suddenly felt refreshing and he woke up. He was finally able to take a look at the others and saw everyone other than Elrond, Gandalf and the four Hobbits had stood up. The two team leaders also stood up. However, sweat covered their heads. They were struggling compared to the others.

Gandalf roared in an unknown language. The syllables sounded like they contained infinite power. Light dimmed and a strong force pressed everyone back down on their chairs. Once everyone sat down, Gandalf stopped. Zheng looked at the ring again and the voice was gone.

Elrond let out a sigh of relief. He stared at Gandalf and said. “No one dares to utter the evil spells in Rivendell!”

Gandalf also let out a sigh of relief. He gestured apologetically. “I do not ask for your forgiveness but the voices of evil might soon be echoed throughout the western world. The One Ring is an evil force. We must

completely destroy it!”

Yet, a human knight staring at the ring muttered as he heard the words. “It may not be as terrible as you think. The One Ring is perhaps a gift. It’s a weapon against the forces of Mordor. My father is the Steward of Gondor. He has been battling Mordor all this time. We people of Gondor protected you with our blood and flesh. Let us take the ring. Let us use the power of the ring against Mordor!”

Aragorn finally said. “Wait. You can’t hold control over the ring. No one can. It only had one master since the time it was created, and that was Sauron. No one can become its second master.”

The knight turned to Aragorn with an expression of disdain. “What does a strider know? What do you have to give lesson to a knight of Gondor?”

The elves weren’t happy hearing it. Legolas stood up and said. “He is not merely a strider. He is Aragorn, son of Arathorn, and future king of Gondor. You will pledge your loyalty to him!”

The others stared at Aragorn in shock. No one would have imagined this strider was the sole heir of the largest kingdom of Men. The knight was dumbfounded. “Aragorn? The descendent of Isildur?”

Legolas followed. “Correct. He’s the sole heir to the throne!” His tone sounded very angry.

Aragorn said. “Let’s get back in seat, Legolas.”

Legolas ignored his words and stared at the knight. The knight finally got himself back together then said ferociously, “Gondor has no king and doesn’t need a king!” Before sitting back down.

The room fell into silence. The rest of the people couldn’t speak to the political battle within Gondor.

Gandalf had no choice but to break the silence. “Aragorn was right that we can not make use of the ring. Our only choice is to destroy it. The question lies in how do we destroy it.”

# Chapter 8-3

“How do we destroy it? We destroy it now!”

A strong dwarf shouted. He raised his axe and hacked at the ring. The axe emitted a brilliant red light then both the axe and table exploded. The explosion blasted him away. The other dwarves caught him. Everyone waited for the dust to set. When they looked over at the remains, the stone table had shattered. The broken axe lay among the little rocks. Yet, the One Ring was intact.

Elrond sighed. “It’s no use. No weapon that we have here can damage this ring. It is a ring that reigns everything in this world, a miracle forged in Orodruin. The lava in Orodruin is the only thing that can destroy the ring. We must bring it to Orodruin. This is the only thing we can do!”

The room fell to a silence again. Then the human knight said. “We can’t just head to Mordor like this. There are orcs guarding the gate and countless forces of evil residing there, dragons and Ringwraith. Even the air in Mordor was toxic. The land is eternally burning. Sauron’s eyes patrolled the land. Mordor is a place of death even with an army.”

“Boromir, have you not heard what Legolas said? Mordor is the only place where we can destroy the One Ring and we must destroy it!” Legolas stood up.

The dwarves were discontent. It seemed like the relationship between dwarves and elves were not close. The one who swung the axe shouted. “Are you elves going to bring the ring to Mordor?”

Boromir also said. “Right, what if we failed? Sauron seizes the ring and descends into the world again. Destruction will not be far from it.”

The dwarf immediately said. “I will not allow the ring to fall into the hands of the elves!”

The room turned into a chaos as the three factions argued. Gandalf was dragged into the argument in the end. Things were seemingly going out of control.

Yet, Zheng's mind was not in this room. He was still pondering if Xuan was hiding a scheme. The events happening in front of him were merely scenes from the movie. The more realistic question was if Xuan had a plan. If he did, then Zheng would have to start getting prepared. Be prepared for saving his own life.

“Then, warriors who protected the ring and killed eight Ringwraiths, will you join the fellowship?”

A voice woke Zheng from his deep thoughts. He saw the four Hobbits standing in the center of everyone. Elrond looked to the players and said.

The plot had progressed to the end of the meeting. What differed from the movie was the addition of their group. A group with strong powers that caused the change of plot.

Zheng exchanged gazes with the other two leaders. Gungnir said with a smile. “Of course. As a member of Middle Earth, we have the responsibility to join the fellowship. Let us cooperate again.”

“It's fighting side by side.” Zheng laughed as he looked to the Hobbits. He added, “Fighting side by side, not a cooperation. We are comrades.”

And so everything was set. Elrond advised everyone to rest for two days and refill the supplies, food and weapons, for the upcoming journey. The journey would end at Orodruin, and the fellowship would throw the One Ring into the volcano.

Gandalf finally paid the rewards to the players. A little bag of energy stones. Their ranks ranged from D to C, with two wood attributes and approximately four of every other attribute. The values of these energy stones made everyone feel overjoyed. Gungnir could make use of the Ice energy stones and the rest could be used for the recovery magic circle. The veterans let out a sigh of relief. It was a godsend to obtain these energy stones in a movie with battles after battles.

Elrond also provided the players each with a set of equipment. An elven sword that glowed when in close distance to the orcs, and a chainmail made with a bit of mithril that could defend against regular weapons. Since they had to cross a mountain, there were no horses. The group had

to walk the journey to Mordor or cross the mountain to Rohan and purchase horses there.

However, the swords and chainmail were enough to make the players happy. The elven swords were sharp and could notify the presence of orcs, though this effect would be useless in other worlds. This sword was probably a tier D item. The chainmail were lightweight and tough. Even the smallest girl in the group could walk freely with the chainmail on. These two surprises were such great additions since the group already had to go to Mordor.

Anyhow, onto the next day, which was the day before they left Rivendell. Team East America had entered this world for five days. The time for team Celestial to enter had come.

In the far east to Rivendell, a location much further east than Mordor, was a desert. This place wasn't part of Middle Earth anymore but another continent. A nation also existed in this continent. This nation was an ally of Mordor.

Four men and two women suddenly appeared by the border of the desert out of thin air. As they stepped onto the desert, a blonde woman cried and jumped. "Eww, why are we in the desert? I hate sand. They make my skin rough."

Four people gave a look that they couldn't stand here. A handsome blonde man looked apathetic. He nodded and took in the surrounding. "A desert, and this heat. Seems like we are teleported in a random location. This place should be far from Middle Earth. Uh. Is that God's attempt to protect the other teams?"

"Adam, why would you think that? Are there no deserts in Middle Earth?" A Chinese young man with a longsword asked.

Adam nodded. "There are of course deserts in Middle Earth but judging by the weather, Middle Earth is located near the sea so the weather would be tropical. Even if it gets this hot, there won't be a desert that you can't see its end. The deserts should be small in size. To the east of Middle Earth, much further east than Mordor, should be a place with similar

weather to Arabia. Thus, we can be certain we are thrown in a random location. God wouldn't know how to protect the weak teams otherwise. Its giving them the condition to raise their influence."

A second Chinese man with slightly brown hair stood next to the Chinese young man. He looked like mixed race. "Adam, what do you think we should do? We aren't team Devil and we don't necessarily have to kill all the teams. Our mission is to head to Mordor. Should we go there and see if they are any threats before deciding how to treat them?"

Adam snapped his finger. "That's for certain. Points and rewards aren't useful to us. As long as there are no threats, we don't have the need to raise our rating in God. Plus, remaining in the Good faction is an advantage. Same rules, let's find our location first then we decide on whether to split or or work as a team. Either way, we need to keep in contact via our devices. Our second priority is to scout the three teams. Do you still remember the most important thing for our team?"

The Chinese young man laughed. "Yes. Yes. You have repeated it three times before we come in and at least a few dozen times total. Find the origin of the devil and kill him before he grows to the power of his clone."

Adam said. "Then it's all set. The magical knowledge or items or even the One Ring we can obtain in this world are much more valuable than points and rewards. Try to complete as much as possible. Lina and Songtian come with me."

The mixed race man and the blonde woman nodded. The Chinese young man smiled. "Hoho, then I will go ahead. Enjoy your journey out of this desert. Don't let it end up with me completing all the bonus missions and getting the items." His hands formed a shape. The sword on his back slowly floated to the front.

He stepped on the sword and uttered. "Ji!" In just a few seconds, he was already several hundred meters away. That speed was faster than the Sky Stick.

"Haha, Adam. Enjoy your crawl. I will look for Sauron first and test the item I just got from my sect." His voice slowly faded in the distance.

# Chapter 9-1

The three teams finally began their journey to Mordor. However, there was a mini episode concerning what to do with the newbies.

The mission requested all five teams to meet at Mordor. So inevitably they had the falsified sense that everyone in the teams must enter Mordor but was or was it that only one person from each team was required? As a result, the veterans were forced to carry the dead weights on the journey. Otherwise, they could have just throw the newbies into one of the many unknown villages in this massive world and the other teams wouldn't be able to attack them.

However, as of now, they had to worry about the safety of the newbies. Following the plot, they would cross Moria. The underground city had been taken by the orcs. All dwarves were killed in the battle. There was also a Balrog sleeping in the city. Balrogs were ancient corrupted spirits.

Due to all these reasons, Moria was considered a place of death. The veterans were fine with it since they had to protect the movie characters and the more dangerous the situation was, the more rewards that were to come. They had to enter this underground city. The same thing could not be said for the newbies. The newbies only had a slimmer of chance to live through the city. A normal orc could kill all of them.

“The Ringwraith only chases the wielder of the One Ring. Saruman only attacks the group carrying the One Ring. Which means that if we were to split up from the Fellowship, we can be in a safe position. Of course, that's on the premise that we don't encounter another team. However, this world is so large that it isn't difficult avoiding other teams. We still hope you can give us a few veterans in case we run into patrolling orcs.” Haotian represented the majority of newbies among the three teams and said.

These words gave the leaders some ideas. After a discussion, team Northern Ice Land gave them a veteran, team Africa gave Marnie and Rose, and team China gave Zero, WangXia, Kampa, and Gando. That wasn't to say team China was much stronger but these four people relied

on sci-fi weapons. They wouldn't be of much use in this world aside from team battles. Sending them to the newbies' group could help in case they met the other two teams.

The three teams split into two groups on the first day they left Rivendell. The stronger veterans went with the Fellowship toward Caradhras. The other group would go around to Rohan and wait there for the veterans.

And so, the veterans' group was reduced to fourteen. Four people from team Northern Ice Land, four from team Africa, and six people from team China. These fourteen veterans had all been through many movies. Now that they didn't have members pulling their legs, they could go all out in fights.

"Why am I feeling ominous that Haotian was the one who came up with the idea to split?" Zheng looked to Xuan. He was certain Xuan planned something behind him.

Xuan turned his head around and said. "Illusion."

"Fine, illusion. I hope it's really an illusion or you will be scheming against me again."

Switching away from Zheng, the group had gradually reached Caradhras. They picked up their pace after splitting up with the newbies. On the third day, they reached the highlands.

The time was noon. The Hobbits were preparing food and the rest were either training or analyzing their route on the map. Just then, a flock of crows appear on the horizon.

The first person to notice the crows was Legolas. He was standing on a highpoint with Zheng and looking out. They immediately alerted the rest of the group. Everyone hid in the bushes or inside crevices. Those who watched the movie knew the crows had discovered them. In the end, Gandalf would be forced to cross Caradhras and walk into Saruman's magic, which would push the Fellowship into the underground city.

Gungnir and Zheng hid in the same underground cave. The cave was large enough to fit the skeleton horse. Gungnir glanced at the mount with

envy. Though he knew he wouldn't be able to use it even if he were to obtain one. He said in a low voice. "Do you have any advice to the journey in the underground city?"

Zheng was confused. "Eh? What advice?"

Gungnir coughed. "The information we obtained from team Africa is that saving Gandalf rewards a stone that cancels out getting erased due to negative points three times. We are going to obtain the stones at all cost. What about the other items? Powerful monsters in this world have gems and crystals which are the energy stones you can exchange from God. The octopus the Fellowship encounters before entering the underground city should have at least a C or CC energy stone. Not to mention the Balrog which definitely has a fire energy stone. It might be B or BB tier."

Seeing that Zheng was pondering, Gungnir added. "I think you know of the importance of the magical knowledge hidden inside the worlds as we delve deeper into this realm. As we unravel more of the knowledge, the energy stones and certain minerals become even more important. You need energy stones for magical circles, mithril for rune words. So why would you pass up the ones you can obtain without spending points and rewards? I heard the dwarf Gimli said the tunnel produces mithril and a mineral called Adamant. I don't know what this mineral is used for but nothing can go wrong with collecting it."

Zheng interrupted him. "Why are you saying to me? I don't suppose you think I can seize these items."

"Not seize but obtain!" Gungnir said. "You and I are the strongest members among the three teams. We can sweep over this world even if we abandon all other veterans. I don't know your limit but you are definitely stronger than you are showing since you fought two high level Ringwraiths and seized their horse. My self created ability, Ice Age, needs three ice energy stones to unseal its potential. I am confident I can fight a battle against team Celestial. I have six ice energy stones. I am planning to use Ice Age once in the city to kill the Balrog. Then we don't have to leave the underground city so fast. We can stay until we obtained all the mithril and Adamant. How about a fifty fifty split?"

Zheng's interest was aroused. The energy storage ring improved his effectiveness in fights by several folds. The additional fighting time allowed him to stop counting how much time he had left in Explosion. If he could get a few dozens of these rings, that meant he could stay in Explosion throughout a whole movie. What monster or human could harm him at that point? The most expensive material of the ring was Mithril when exchanging through God. It would totally be worth the effort if he could obtain a lot of Mithril.

“Well then, fifty fifty. As for the points, rewards and the fire energy stone from killing Balrog, whoever kills it gets them. You okay with that?” Zheng finally said after some silence.

Gungnir was overjoyed. “Of course, deal! Let us make a show in Moria!”

The two clapped their hands as a sign of forming the contract, although this contract had no credibility. But given that they both had intentions, they sides still decided to make a big show in Moria. They shouldn't have to worry much given their powers.

The flock of crowd had disappeared beyond the horizon by now. Gandalf's expression looked blue. He confirmed Saruman had gotten his eyes on them. The Fellowship was forced to change their path to climb through Caradhras. The snowy mountain was several thousand meters tall.

The players weren't as nervous in comparison. Their sci-fi items were ineffective against the movie characters but they were still useful. If they fell into danger on the mountain, their transportation tools could get them back into safety. As such, the movie characters were the only ones who objected to the change. Under Gandalf's insistence, the Fellowship began climbing the mountain in the end. They slowly entered the snowy area.

## Chapter 9-2

The knee high snow covered the mountain slope. The snow sipped into their shoes and pants as soon as they stepped on the slope. This didn't stop despite tying up the bottom of their trousers like Aragorn did. To be honest, their armor and equipment weren't suited for climbing a snowy mountain. It was fortunate that everyone here were much stronger than normal people. They could endure such cold for some time.

"I am envy of the Nightmare. It's the best transportation tool in this environment of steep and icy slope." Gungnir started joking Zheng after they formed an agreement.

Zheng seemed the most leisure among the group. The Nightmare prevented him from sinking into snow and no matter how steep the terrain was, nothing provided any obstacle to him. And so he leisurely patrolled around the group.

The others also looked at Zheng with envy which made him feel somewhat embarrassed. So he had to keep himself running on the cliff.

"Hurry, guys! Come look at what I found!" Zheng suddenly yelled. Everyone looked at him nervously but they also gave him weird looks.

"Even though we want to go over but don't you think that's an impossible request?" Lan didn't know whether she should laugh or feel mad.

Zheng was standing on another mountain. They would have to climb across several mountains to reach him. So the distance seemed close, no one else could go across.

Zheng realized this and yelled. "I found dead bodies here. Twelve of them. All frozen. Fortunately, the snow isn't strong here and didn't bury them."

Gandalf replied. "They might be a group of herb gatherers. Snow lotuses grow on top of snowy mountains. Some wizards placed great bounties on this herb. However, due to the White Wolves, gatherers usually go in

groups. These people probably died from a blizzard.”

Zheng’s face looked terrible. He had the Nightmare leap back to the group then said to the other players in a low voice. “They are wearing our clothes. The wounds are caused by blades!”

It took the veterans a few seconds to register what he just said. They all felt shocked. Similar clothes meant the identity of those people. Because the players either came from the real world or through God’s realm, they dressed differently than natives of this world. Their clothes alone could identify them.

“East America or team Celestial?” Gungnir frowned.

Neos shook his head. “It can’t be team Celestial. Even if all the leaders were to join team Celestial, they would only have ten or so people. There are twelve dead bodies here. If some of them are from team Celestial, then most are from team East America. However, it was almost impossible for two teams to randomly appear next to each other in such a large world. So I suspect that all twelve are members of team East America.”

“Why?” Most veterans asked.

“Why?” Neos had a sardonic smile. He brought out a piece of chocolate. “A lot of reasons. Like they didn’t like the newbies or they didn’t want other teams to get the points or an internal fight or the leader was a psychopath. There are too many reasons we can think of. But I’d rather it was due to an internal fight that caused them to kill each other.”

Xuan nodded. “That’s best for our interest. Examine the bodies again, Zheng. And bring four or five back. I need ones where the fatal wounds were different.”

Zheng nodded. In just a few minutes, he leaped back with four bodies. Gandalf and the other movie characters stopped after seeing Zheng brought back the dead bodies. Several of them also grouped up by the bodies.

“Cut. This is caused by a sharp rounded or exotic shaped blade. This wound is from a spear. The spear pierced through the chest. The four

bodies are killed by two weapons.” Aragorn said after examining the bodies.

The veterans weren't as knowledgeable with weapons as Aragorn who had undergone systematic training. Even Boromir came to a similar conclusion and confirmed the cause of deaths.

“Eight other bodies had the same wounds. There is only one exception. A girl's head is gone and it's no where to be found.” Zheng let out a deep breath.

Their expressions changed. Neos looked blue. He snapped a piece of chocolate and said. “This is unfortunate. We better hope we don't get into battle against team East America. Or most of us will die. These deaths weren't due to internal fight but the veterans killed all the newbies. They have many more newbies than every of our teams. I suspect that all twelve are newbies. Which means God rates a team with only three veterans stronger than any of our teams. So those three people are unfathomably strong.”

The three continued their path with unease. As they climbed up the mountain, the snow was getting thicker and thicker. They also encountered several herds of White Wolves. Maybe it was due to the number of people in the group or the White Wolves could sense their danger, they didn't attack this group and avoided them from the distance.

The slope gradually increased and a blizzard was forming. Everyone kept themselves close to the cliff and advanced carefully. Zheng was the only one who wasn't affected. However, the group had gotten slower and slower.

(Don't know if we can climb over this mountain. I can actually carry two people against at a time. If we don't go through Moria, will that change the plot and obtain large amount of points and rewards?)

Zheng looked at the blizzard then at the people below climbing ever so slowly. The snow had gotten to their waist by this point. The dwarves and Hobbits would be in danger if it got any higher.

Just then, a majestic and solemn voice sounded through the sky. It was

the voice of an old man chanting a spell. The pronunciation was difficult to follow but it followed a certain melody.

“That’s Saruman!” Gandalf shouted. The chanting was getting clearer and clearer after the shout. It echoed through Caradhras like the voice of a god or giant.

The blizzard intensified as the chanting continued. The Nightmare hummed as though it feared the chanting. Gandalf immediately chanted a spell. Ten seconds later, he finished the spell first.

Gimli asked. “Did you win? That wizard isn’t a match for you right?”

“No. He’s the chief of wizards. He’s much more powerful than me. I hope my barrier can hold against his magic. I can only pray.” Gandalf said. He raised his staff and shouted. “Come to me, Zheng!”

Lightning struck less than a hundred meters near him and blasted the ground. Then the second, and third strikes of lightning came down like pouring rain. Zheng was scared and immediately jumped to Gandalf. When the lightnings struck the group, a translucent barrier blocked them off. Explosions happened on the barrier. It wavered but persisted.

Everyone gazed up. The lightnings had spanned over the whole mountain top. Each meter thick lightning was followed by thunderous explosions. They felt that their eyes were blinded in this shower of lightnings. Gandalf gave all he had to keep the barrier up. If the lightnings were concentrated on their area instead of spanning over the mountain top, they would all die here even with Gandalf protecting them.

With one last lightning strike, the hellous scenery came to an end. The people in the group finally dared to open their eyes. The road on the mountain had been buried by snow and rocks. The barrier only protected what was inside. There was no more road for them to climb up. The only path left was leading down the cliff.

The lightning cleansed an area with a diameter of several thousand meters.

# Chapter 10-1

The power of magic stunned everyone aside from Gandalf, both the players and movie characters included. So it seemed like the players weren't the only ones who hadn't seen much, such powerful magic was rare to even the natives. This power was beyond what a living being should be able to obtain. It belonged to the forces of nature.

There was a long pause before Boromir yelled. "We must leave this place. If Saruman weren't to summon another attack of this caliber, there's no way for us to survive. We follow the path ahead to the Gap of Rohan. Then pass through West Emnet to my city. We will be safe there."

Aragorn disagreed. "No. Rohan is too close to Isengard. His magic can reach us in this distance. He could even send his orc army out. We can't go through the Gap of Rohan."

Gimli said. "If there's no way up, then take the path down. I have told you many times to go through Moria. The territory belongs to my cousin, Balin. We can pass it safely. I swear."

Gandalf was breathing heavily. He slowly turned to the group. "That magic takes a long time to prepare and consumes a large quantity of energy stones. He can't use it again in a short period of time. However, it wouldn't take long if we stay here like this. You decide, Frodo. Which path are we going to take?"

They were carrying the Hobbits on their backs. The Hobbits were shivering from the cold. They had the weakest bodies and it looked like they couldn't withstand this cold much longer. Frodo looked at them then opened his mouth with great difficulty. "We go through Moria."

No one objected to the decision of the wielder of the One Ring. Zheng wanted to bring them over one by one with the Nightmare. But after seeing the magic, he couldn't be certain that Saruman wouldn't strike them again. He had less than 50% chance of surviving without Gandalf's barrier.

Everyone quickly backed down from the snowy mountain and they

finally let out a sigh of relief. The stress from that environment was heavy. No one was able to relax with Saruman waiting to use his magic on the side.

There was a short path leading from Caradhras to Moria. This path would take them a few days. So in these few days, their minds were extremely focused. They had to avoid being detected by the crows and be prepared for the possible incoming magic despite Gandalf reaffirming them there was no more to come for now. The group arrived at Moria, the lowest point of the valley. Next to the cliff was a pool. Those who remembered the plot knew of the Watcher in the water. This beast would force the Fellowship into the Door of Durin then it would destroy the door.

Gungnir went near Zheng and said. "This will be the first battle in our agreement. The Watcher is certain to contain an energy stone. According to our agreement, whoever kills the beast gets the energy stone and rewards. Okay?"

Zheng nodded. "Alright then. We will both attack as soon as the beast shows itself. But also keep an eye on safety of the rest of the members."

Gungnir said. "Yes. That's why I looked to you for cooperation. My powers tend to spread out to our teams. You can more readily protect them since you are a close range fighter. No one else worth working with me with the power of Ice Age."

Zheng simply smiled in response. Everyone would think their own abilities were the best. His Explosion and Destruction weren't weak either. He didn't bother trying to explain. "I am curious. Even if Ice Age is powerful, how do you fight normally when you don't use energy stones?"

Gungnir laughed. "You are underestimating me. I am a high level Devil Fruit user, especially the most expensive Logia type. It is said that on the fifth stage, I will be able to control all the forces of ice in the world. I could possibly freeze a continent at that time with the unlimited amount of energy. Anyway, let's give our best in this fight."

Zheng shrugged. He followed at the back of the group. They walked toward the wall.

Gandalf was examining the wall. "Ithildin. This is an enchanted metal that only appears in moonlight or starlight. It will also react to certain words." As he was speaking, the cloud cleared up and moonlight shone to the ground.

A trace of silver light in the shape of a door appeared on the wall. There were dozens of special rune words inscribed on the door.

Gandalf let out sigh of relief. He pointed his staff at the silver door and read the words. "Ennyn Durin Aran Moria. Pedo mellon a Minno. Im Narvi hain echant. Celebrimbor o Eregion tethant. I thiw hin."

A Hobbit asked. "What do you suppose that mean?"

Gandalf smiled. "If you're a friend, you speak the password and the doors will open."

His staff remained pointing at the wall and he spoke in an unfamiliar language. However, nothing happened after his words.

Gandalf was surprised. Then he chanted another spell. And again, the door remained shut. He seemed rather annoyed. He walked to the wall and pushed it while muttering to himself. "I once knew every spell in all the tongues of Elves... Men... and Orcs."

The Hobbit asked again. "What are you going to do, then?"

"Knock your head against these doors, Peregrin Took! And if that does not shatter them, and I am allowed a little peace from foolish questions, I will try to find the opening words." He went into a rage and yelled. Then he sat by the wall.

The veterans of course knew the plot and the password. It was simply the word friend in the tongue of the elves. Someone from team Northern Ice Land said. "It seems like a riddle. Just speak friend and it will let you enter." He was about to say it but Gungnir grabbed him.

Gungnir said. "Don't disrupt Gandalf. Let nature take its course. Let nature take its course!" He stressed his last line and shut that person up. The other veterans also didn't say anything. They would eventually enter the door anyway.

Time passed slowly. Gandalf couldn't solve the password. The rest of the group sat on the rocks to rest. The Hobbits were the only ones busy. Three of them were searching for things on the ground. They found a long tree branch then attached a string and worms. They were planning to fish in the pool.

After they cast the bait into the pool, Aragorn came to stop them. "Do not disturb the water. The three of you stay still."

Merry shook his head and said. "We only have rations. Why don't we try to fish for a better meal? What can be there in the water? Mermaids?"

He didn't notice a tentacle swept across the surface of the water. Everyone only saw a shadow. Merry was excited. "See, a big fish! No one had been to this place in such a long time. There's definitely lots of big fish inside. Just you wait for your meals."

"Maybe we are the meal." Aragorn drew his sword. A few seconds later, several tentacles exposed themselves. An octopus like beast appeared in front of them. The beast was over fifty meters in length, much bigger than shown in the movie.

# Chapter 10-2

The octopus shocked most of the group. It appeared all out of a sudden and its entrance was breathtaking. Gigantic objects were always breathtaking to look at. The octopus's body was over fifty meters.

"Uh. This isn't the fish I am fishing for." Merry said. He seemed dumbfounded.

Gungnir was standing nearest to the water. He submerged his hands in the water then pulled out two ice spikes. He threw the spikes at the octopus.

It obviously didn't expect the humans to attack so fast when it just came out of the water. The spikes pierced into its head and a tentacle before it reacted. Despite the sharpness of the spikes, the throw was lacking in power. They only went a few centimeters in before they stopped. The attack did not cause much damage.

The octopus howled in an appalling voice being hit. It quickly went toward the shore. The tentacles swiped at Gungnir. By the looks of it, the force from the swipes would kill him if they hit. Gungnir yelled. "Save me! Zheng!"

Zheng sighed. He realized why Gungnir picked him for the alliance. His attacks were flawed. They required energy stones and they left big openings in between moves. So the attacks were powerful but borne huge risks. Gungnir needed someone to bear the risks.

Zheng didn't avoid his responsibility. He had to do his part since he agreed to the alliance. He stepped in front of Gungnir before the tentacles hit. Tiger's Soul reached out and slashed the incoming tentacles. He raised the sword to attack the octopus's head. The light blade extended to ten meters long. It would cut off a part of the octopus if it hit.

However, Gandalf yelled. "Get away!"

Ice spikes formed in the air next to the octopus. The spikes shot toward Zheng as he swung his sword. If he were to continue with his attack, the

spikes were going to pierce both him and Gungnir for sure. Zheng was shocked. He immediately pulled back the sword to block. The light blade also covered Gungnir's front. All the ice spikes hit the light blade.

Zheng paused as if something struck him. He seemed to have discovered something strange. He stared at Tiger's Soul. But the octopus didn't stop. Its tentacles swept at the two of them from all sides.

Tzz. Legolas and Heng both used Explosive Shot. The arrows underwent an impact on the way then shot into the octopus's body with unperceivable speed. Then they broke their way through the body and out from the other end.

Despite critically injuring the octopus, Zheng was still staring at his sword. Gungnir gave a shout as he charged at the octopus. The water froze with each step he took. He took several steps forward, clenched his teeth then leaped at the octopus's body. He got on the body before the tentacles got him. Its body began to freeze from the point of contact. In just a few seconds, a quarter of the octopus had turned into ice.

Things were straightforward from this point on. The group quickly finished the octopus off now that it was injured and frozen. Gungnir got the kill as he wished. He revealed that he got 3000 points and a rank C reward. There was also a rank C water attribute energy stone in the body which made him smile.

Zheng was still spacing out as he stared at the sword. Xuan sat down next to him. He was eating a white fruit unique to the Lord of the Rings world. Its taste was fragrant. The fruit was white as jade and had recently become Xuan's main dish. "I know of your agreement with Gungnir. Even though you are being used, you won't lose out much due to your strength. It also increases our relationship with team Northern Ice Land. That's why I didn't stop you. I am curious what made you give up on the rewards. I need to know the details as soon as possible. So I can plan accordingly."

Zheng finally shouted with excitement. He laughed out loud and didn't care for the others looking toward him. He took off the Dragonshard necklace then said to Xuan. "Shoot me with your Gauss pistol."

“Oh.” Xuan didn’t hesitate and slid a pistol into his hand. He pointed the pistol at Zheng’s head which scared Zheng’s face white. He was only just raising his sword. “Wait. Wait. At least give me time to prepare. Wait for me to say go.”

He channeled his Qi into Tiger’s Soul. The light blade extended out. Then he said to Xuan. “Go, shoot wherever you want!”

Xuan didn’t know what holding back meant. He fired multiple shots all at Zheng’s head. However, an invisible shield blocked the bullets. The Gauss pistols weren’t as powerful as Zero’s rifle but they were still powerful. They could kill the bugs in Starship Troopers with ease but couldn’t break through Zheng’s defense. Ten shots later, Xuan stopped.

He frowned. “Barriers would show themselves in a translucent manner when attacked. So this can’t be a barrier ability hidden in Tiger’s Soul. The only possibility is that you changed the shape of the light blade and turned it invisible.”

Zheng laughed. “That’s right. When the octopus attacked me, I subconsciously enlarged the light blade. So I thought that the light blade might change its shape according to my will. I tried it and it indeed works. Ha. I am going to be invincible with this. If I cover my whole body in the light blade then attack in Explosion and Destruction, nothing can beat me.”

Xuan put his hand over his forehead. He suddenly felt a strange sensation despite having no feelings. “How much time did you spend shaping the light blade to cover your body just now?”

Zheng thought for a moment and said. “About a second. Less than two seconds.”

Xuan nodded. “How much Qi did it use?”

“About 20%.” Zheng was getting guilty. He noticed the flaw to this method.

Xuan continued calmly. “You said that once your Qi turns into light blade, it will dissipate naturally. You can’t convert it back to Qi. The light

blade lasts less than ten minutes. This means assassins like Zero and Heng counters this ability. They just needed to find that one second vulnerability and you are dead. Furthermore, the light blade is tough but there is history of it being shattered. If your enemies have those type of magical items, you are also dead.”

Zheng’s excitement died down. He smiled bitterly. “I thought this ability is going to be effective but it’s of little value in the end. I was too full of myself.”

“It’s not of little value. Your effectiveness doubles in the ten minutes before it disappears. It’s also a good survival ability. Try to increase its cast speed. If you can reduce the time to 0.5 seconds, the flaw will be gone. You will only have to worry about magical attacks and attacks that are too powerful.”

Xuan wasn’t as harsh as usual. He actually consoled Zheng. This surprised Zheng. Just then, the movie characters called for them. Frodo solved the riddle on the door like he did in the movie. They read friend in the tongue of the elves. The door to Moria finally opened.

# Chapter 11-1

The Lord of the Rings world was similar to many other fantasy worlds. The elves were graceful and fair. The dwarves loved mining. Of course, that wasn't very specific and perhaps unfair to the dwarves. But they were a race that valued minerals and metals. Mining was their hobby.

Moria was the result of such hobby. The underground city spanned through the whole Caradhras mountains. According to Gandalf, they were to journey for five days and nights from one end to the other. This distance was uncommon in both this world and the real world. That was a mine through the mountain dug by people!

"You will soon see the warm welcomes of the dwarves. Haha." Gimli walked at the front of the group. "With burning flame, refreshing beer, and slabs of roasted meat. This is my cousin Balin's home, not a mere mine."

Gandalf raised his staff. It emitted a soft white light that illuminated the mine.

"This isn't a mine. It's a tomb!" Boromir observed the surrounding. His voice was heavy.

Bones lay throughout the entrance. Most of them were remains of dwarves. Some seemed abnormal. They looked like remains of humanoid creatures. Tomb was a fitting description for this place.

"No! No!" Gimli sobbed. He ran toward the remains.

Legolas had kept his calm. He picked up an arrow from one of the bodies, examined it and yelled. "Orcs!" He threw the arrow away then drew his bow at the darkness.

The rest of the crew drew their weapons. Boromir shouted. "That's why we should have gone through the Gap of Rohan instead. That is our only path to cross Caradhras safely."

Gungnir and Zheng met eyes. They both realized things were turning worse. In the movie, the door should have been collapsed by the beast

which forced the Fellowship to head into the mine. However, the door was intact now. The beast was killed. The Fellowship could retreat as they liked and that would render their plans useless.

Gungnir immediately said. “The Gap of Rohan is too dangerous. We don’t have to fight an army on the plains in the mine. Furthermore, if Saruman finds us. He will definitely find us. We would have nowhere to run. The underground city is large enough that we might not be discovered by the orcs if we keep our noises down.”

Gandalf frowned. Zheng ran ahead. Nothing hindered the Nightmare’s speed and he quickly disappeared in the darkness. A minute later, the red burning flames came back. Zheng yelled. “There’s nothing inside. I didn’t see any orcs!”

The movie characters hesitated. Neos said. “Let the holder of the One Ring decide whether we will quietly go through Moria or slip through Saruman’s eyes. Frodo, make your choice.”

There was obviously a trap in his wording. He associated the underground city with calm, which described the current moment. However, there were hidden dangers under this silence. Then he described the Gap of Rohan as under Saruman’s eyes. It was close to Isengard but not as close as he described. Though their situation didn’t allow the others to think too deeply into his words.

Frodo looked over everyone then at the bodies on the ground. “We will go through the underground city. Everyone keep our noises down and there shouldn’t be danger. We can’t hide from Saruman’s magic.”

And so the Fellowship’s path was decided.

Gungnir and Zheng became suspicious. Why did Neos help them without a reason? Neos came over to the two and said in a low voice. “I can guess the deal between you two. As someone that knows it, I ought to take part. The mithril is expensive to exchange from God we our team must get part of the loot. Of course, we aren’t asking for much. A quarter is enough. You two split the remaining three quarters. How do you think?”

Zheng said. “Since you are joining the agreement, you will have to show

your strength. We all have to spare no effort at critical moments and we must protect members from other teams.”

Neos smiled. “Of course. No one from our team will back off when the time comes. I will also join the fight if necessary.”

On the other side, the Fellowship began walking down the mine. The players followed closely behind.

Moria was extremely big. According to Gimli, the underground city was originally a cave. The dwarves found the cave then mined it through the mountains. They built their city inside. The mithril in this city made dwarves thrilled. They used the metal to trade with the wizards, elves and humans for resources.

“The value of mithril doesn’t need to be said. It’s the currently best metal for magic. It’s light and tough. A hundred times more valuable than gold of the same weight. And the most famous metal of Moria.”

Gandalf was walking along the wall. His staff illuminated the wall. A silvery reflection showed the unrefined mithril.

“Ithildin is much rarer than mithril. The ratio is about one to a thousand. The whole of Middle Earth only produces enough ithildin to craft a plate every hundred years. It is the best metal that serves as a vessel of the mind. Wizards towers and the door of Durin that we just passed by require specific words to open. That is where you use ithildin to store a bit of the mind to act as authentication. Weapons that are crafted with slight amount of ithildin will have minor consciousness just like the One Ring. Only the first person whose blood come in contact with the weapon can use it. Other users will not be able to utilize the secrets of the weapon.” Gandalf explained and showed off his knowledge.

These words reminded Zheng. The property of recognizing an owner was similar to the weapons that he obtained in Starship Troopers. YinKong and Heng couldn’t utilize the full potential of the weapons because they were not the original owners. Was there a way to remove this property?

Zheng asked. “Any way to remove this property? I mean removing the

previous owner and have the weapon bound to a new owner.”

Gandalf glanced at him. “It is possible but it depends on the strength of the minds of the two individuals. The One Ring is only an powerful artifact without Sauron’s energy. If there’s a way to remove it from the ring, it will no longer be evil and the elves will not have to leave Middle Earth for their lost of the rings. However, Sauron’s mind is too powerful. Not even god can remove the evil, cruelty, and bloodshed from the ring. We can only destroy it. Is this what you want to do?”

Zheng said. “No. I have several weapons found in ruins that are already bounded to an owner. The residual energy prevents my comrades from utilizing the weapons. I wish you would help us remove the bounds on the weapons if possible.”

Gandalf nodded. “That’s fine. I will help you after we are out of this city. That’s only if the other person’s mind isn’t too powerful or it would require the aid of energy stones and valuable minerals. If it still isn’t enough, there’s nothing I can do.”

# Chapter 11-2

No matter the result, hope was always a good thing to have. These two weapons were at least A tier. YinKong and Heng would gain a substantial increase in power if the weapons could be released from their bounds, which exceeded every reward they had obtained in this world so far.

Zheng was feeling excited as he patrolled the mine. The mine was extremely spacious. Despite its name, it had a height of over ten meters. One could ride an elephant here, not just horses. The elephant just had to ignore gravity.

The first day of journey inside the mine was peaceful. According to Gimli, they were still outside the residential area of Moria. The underground city was so big that they might not run into the orcs. The group let down their guard slightly seeing the peacefulness of the first day. They were not as suspicious to every little thing. Then they set up camps on a flat area, lighted the fire and cooked their meals. After all was set, the group finally got the opportunity to rest.

“So that means you elves have the same Explosive Shot technique? Oh, you guys call it Double Bladed Shot. Strange name.” Heng got along with Legolas because they both used bows and both could use the Explosive Shot technique. Heng was also a kind-hearted person. They exchanged tips about their techniques.

“This technique harms both the enemies and you. I can only use twenty shots at most even with constant regeneration from my life force. My arms will become swollen that prevents me from drawing the bow. If it’s the Triple Bladed Shot, I can only use it three times.” Legolas smiled. The elves were such a fair race that the girls blushed at his smile.

Heng looked at his silver bow. “Triple Bladed Shot? If three arrows are already so difficult, what kind of technique is the nine arrow shot that can pierce through the sun?”

On the other side, Zheng and YinKong were sparring with Aragorn and Boromir. The characters were surprisingly strong due to the altered

difficulty. Aragorn and Boromir could use Battle Qi. Zheng had seen this ability when he fought team Devil. It didn't last as long as Qi nor did it had the healing property, but it had a much higher burst potential.

Zheng wasn't a match for Aragorn if he wasn't in Explosion. Explosion would push his strength above Aragorn by quite a bit. And Destruction would allow him to one shot Aragorn. Of course, since this was simply a spar, neither side used their strongest moves. Zheng couldn't be sure this was Aragorn's limit.

Boromir on the other hand was crying from the spar. It wasn't that YinKong was too strong. She couldn't beat Boromir in a face to face fight without using her self created technique. The invisible property of Excalibur plus was such a great addition to her assassination techniques. Zheng wouldn't fight her so easily. Boromir underestimated her for being a little girl and fell to a disadvantaged position. He couldn't make a come back unless he were to fight a life and death battle.

The four of them stopped sparring before long. Boromir's clothes were in strips. The knight attire turned to that of a homeless. YinKong nodded at Zheng without saying a word then headed to the bonfire. Zheng gave a rather awkward smile at Boromir and said. "Sorry, she's just like this. She always makes the situation awkward. Haha. Don't overthink it. She's not a match if you two were in a battle for life."

Boromir stared at YinKong. After Zheng's words, he smiled but then turned back to staring at her. Zheng had a bad feeling about this.

The group entered a cycle of eat, walk, and rest. Four days passed before they realized it. Gandalf got lost on the way but they came back to their path. The group finally arrived at the gate of Moria. A magnificent palace with pillars five meters in diameters standing on both sides. The pillars were carved with symbols and pictures. There were hundreds of these pillars.

The group walked through the palace. As they passed by a small room, Gimli rushed inside. The rest of the group followed after. Once inside the room, they saw a shaft of sunlight shone down through the ceiling onto a

crypt. Gimli wailed on the crypt.

Gandalf walked over and read. “Here lies Balin, son of Fundin, Lord of Moria.”

“He is dead.” Gandalf took off his hat. His voice sounded helpless. “It’s as I feared. There are no dwarves left in Moria.” He bent down and picked up a book.

The players observed the room. This seemed like a meeting room of the dwarves. There were documents scattered on the ground and maps hung on the walls.

Neos walked through the room. He seemed like he was walking casually but his eyes were examining the map of Moria hung on the wall. After a while, he waved at Zheng and Gungnir. “Take a look. The map labeled the storage room of the dwarves. There are a lot of ores but it also takes a lot of ores to refine into the final product. The dwarves have many years of savings. So we are better off taking these refined metals and minerals instead of taking mining. We can exchange days to come back later if anyone wants to get mithril.”

Zheng and Gungnir looked at each other. They both nodded and agreed with Neos. Neos continued. “The location of the storage room is a bit strange. There might be casualties if we head there without a plan. The task lands on you, Zheng. The Nightmare is the only thing that can go there safely.”

Zheng asked. “You still haven’t told us where the room is located.”

“A room to the side of the Bridge of Khazad-dum, the bridge that collapsed during the escape in the movie. The record here shows there are one kilogram of mithril and two ounces of ithildin. It will be up to you whether we can obtain these.” Neos said.

Mithril was light and had a low density. One kilogram would be the size of the shirt Frodo was wearing. His shirt was made of mithril mixed with other metals. A kilogram of pure mithril was over 30000 points from God. It was enough to craft dozens of energy storage rings.

“Fuck it. No risk no gain. Its like running on flat ground anyway with the Nightmare. The only worry is if the situation become worse than the plot. The powers of orcs and Balrog are also not known.” Zheng sighed.

Something would be worng if God were to let them get past Moria so safely. So the Balrog could be insanely powerful. However, if the Balrogu was so powerful, he wouldn't abandon it for the metals. He wanted to kill it for the energy stone and rewards.

Gungnir could tell what Zheng was worrying. He bit his teeth and said. “If you go get the metals, we will only take a quarter. And we will protect your team members when you are not here. Another thing, Neos and I have no use for a fire energy stone. If we are the ones who killed the Balrog, the energy stone is yours. And if you killed it, you still get the energy stone. Deal?”

“Fine, then...” Zheng agreed but the decision was difficult. A bang brought their attention away before he could say anything else. One of the Hobbits accidentally made a corpse fell into the well. The crash echoed throughout halls. Everyone halted their voices. The echos faded after a long while but then drums were booming from all sides. They could faintly hear the growls of orcs.

# Chapter 11-3

“Orcs!” Legolas repeated. He brought up his bow and arrows. Aragorn and Boromir also readied their weapons. Boromir especially ran toward the gate. However, an arrow nearly scraped the skin of his nose as he reached the gate. One more inch forward and that nose would have been a goner.

Aragorn and Boromir quickly attempted to close the gate. A thought came to Zheng’s mind however and he yelled. “Wait. Let me out!” He jumped on the Nightmare then pulled the rope. The horse neighed as it stood on its two back legs then charged ahead.

Crimson flame was burning in its eyes and on its hooves. Zheng channeled Qi into Tiger’s Soul. The light blade bended at his will and covered him and the Nightmare’s whole body. As soon as they exited the gate, multiple arrows reached the light blade then shattered. Zheng didn’t pause despite seeing the humanoid monsters coming from all sides. He charged into them.

Nah! Nah! Nah! The first orc he charged into busted and all the orcs that came in contact with him all turned to pieces. The light blade might have changed its shape but its power remained. Charging with the Nightmare among a bunch of weak creatures was destructive. Anything that touched him was wounded and anything that he ran over died. He and the Nightmare tackled a path of flesh and blood.

The orcs’ strength was unusually strong. The major characters weren’t the only ones with increased power in this world. The orcs gained increased strength. Zheng estimated their strength was between three to five times that of a normal person. Their speed was perhaps slower than a normal person but the strength was a counter to his tackling. After the Nightmare ran through a few dozen orcs, it was forced to slow down.

“Good!” Zheng shouted. The nightmare leaped. Zheng could see a large number of orcs and several four meter high humanoid creatures charged into the room. He didn’t have the time to think further. The Nightmare

leaped onto a pillar then ran along it. Zheng turned body to the orcs below.

“Go! Kill!” Qi entered Tiger’s Soul. The light blade extended up to twenty meters. The Nightmare charged down the pillar. Zheng placed Tiger’s Soul horizontally and the light blade extended to the side of the horse. Over a hundred orcs and the pillars on on the way were sliced in two as the Nightmare ran. It made a 180 degree turn and ran back. The orcs on the other side were then sliced in two. About a forty meter area around him were laid with corpses and all the orcs dead. The orcs further back were shocked. None dared to approach him.

Zheng took a deep breath. It was fulfilling massacring like this but this tactic would be useless against more powerful creatures like the final Ringwraith. Running head to it would be like asking for death. Another flaw was it consumed Qi extremely fast. He used up 50% of his Qi in that run. He wouldn’t do it in an army without enough storage rings on back up. Only small scale battles like this one was doable.

While Zheng was catching his breath, he heard gunshots coming from the room. It was the sound of the Gauss pistols. Sci-fi weapons were nullified against creatures native to this world. Did that mean team Africa or team Northern Ice Land attacked his team while he was away?

He didn’t continue his fight and had the Nightmare charge back toward the room. Any orcs that couldn’t get out of his way on time was killed. It didn’t take him much effort to get back into the room. What awaited him was a troll swinging a stick at him before he got sight of the players and movie characters. The trolls were four meters tall. Their intelligence was low but their strength was superb. Judging by the sound of the swing, their strength was about twenty times that of a normal person, on par with Zheng in Explosion.

The panic was getting into Zheng. He gave the Nightmare more blood energy. Its speed increased a little more and it ran into the troll’s torso before the stick fell on Zheng. The troll broke into pieces with that tackle. Zheng also took an impact and almost fell off the horse.

Zheng shook his head to get it clear. He saw Xuan shooting at all directions with his Gauss pistols. Each of his shots would shoot down an orc leaping at him. There was a pile of corpses by his feet. After all the orcs were dead, he clapped his hands together. Two empty magazines dropped off then he slid the pistols back to his sleeves. The motion was so smooth as if he practiced it numerous times.

“Eh? Aren’t those the Gauss pistols?” Zheng was dumbfounded. He didn’t realize there were no more orcs coming into the room and all the orcs in this room were dead.

“You are correct. They are the Gauss pistols.” Xuan nodded apathetically. He crouched down to examine the orc corpses. After a while, he went over to check the troll corpse.

“That’s impossible! Don’t sci-fi weapons have no effect here?” Zheng yelled. The other veterans looked over. Both teams had their sci-fi weapon users. If the weapons could be used in this world, they would have a substantial increase in strength and other advantages. They could bring the characters over obstacles with their transportation tools.

Xuan nodded. “Correct. Sci-fi weapons are still ineffective. So I tested combining sci-fi weapons with magic. I had Elrond carved rune words on the bullets back in Rivendell. The bullets contain life forces and enabled their usage.”

“Now that you mentioned it.” Zheng remembered Xuan had a meeting with Haotian. Were they discussing this at the time? Furthermore, if Xuan could use the Gauss pistols this way, then the Gauss sniper rifle could become their trump card against the characters of this world.

Gandalf suddenly said. “Now’s not the time to talk. We have to hurry to Khazad-dum bridge. Everyone follow!”

Zheng was also aware of it. He nodded then ran ahead. Several arrows hit his light blade barrier. The barrier wavered as the arrows busted. It wasn’t that the arrows were powerful but his barrier was running out of time.

Zheng quickly backed into the room and dissipated the light blade. He

recreated a new one before heading out again. Tiger's Soul slashed ten orcs in front before they could react. The rest of the group then followed behind Zheng.

Endless orcs were coming out from all sides and climbing down the pillars. Their number was so huge. There were thousands just in this hall. The players groaned. There was nothing they could do other than keep running. Zheng stayed in front of the group. The mobility of the Nightmare allowed him to kill off any orcs than attempted to come near. He killed numerous orcs in just a hundred meter path. And now Xuan also recovered his combat strength. The gun-kata had no defense but its power was so advantageous in such crowded battles. Many orcs died to the bullets.

According to the movie, the Balrog's roars would come by the time the Fellowship was surrounded by the orcs. The orcs then scattered. However, the roar signaling the wake of the Balrog came before they got surrounded by the orcs.

The orcs immediately stopped attacking the group as if they encountered the most horrifying thing in the world. All the orcs looked back. The path that they just came through was illuminated by a red light. Several streams of fire burst out before the orcs could scatter. The fire consumed an area spanning tens of meters. Inside the fire, a humanoid creature appeared. It opened its mouth and sprayed a beam of fire across. A thousand orcs vaporized to ashes without uttering a sound. The group could sense that terrifying heat despite being so far away.

“Balrog, demon from the ancient ages, a creature that rivals the gods! Run!” Gandalf shouted. He led the group toward the other side of the hall.

The Balrog was skill massacring the orcs as if it didn't see the humans.

# Chapter 12-1

As Gandalf began running after the shout, a voice appeared in the players' minds.

“Balrog, a creature that naturally absorbs energy floating in the universe. Reproductive cycle of 100 years. Birth through embryogenesis. One fetus per cycle. Female Balrogs consume food amounting to five times their weight daily. Favors consuming humans. Releases gas poisonous to humans. They are therefore the biggest nemesis and enemies of humans. Balrogs were wiped to extinction in the end. Killing this non-poisonous Balrog with 30% of its power rewards 8000 points and a rank A reward. Deduct 3000 points off each person if it escapes.”

God's notification this time was puzzling. They had encountered monsters and bosses in previous movies but God never gave such hints. It even told them the origin of this Balrog. Judging by its words, this wasn't the Balrog of the Lord of the Rings world. It was a creature than the saints fought prior to developing God. It used to be an enemy to humans on Earth.

“What does it mean by non-poisonous Balrog with 30% its power?” Richard asked in confusion.

Neos snapped a piece of chocolate and said. “It means that this Balrog fought the Saints who were unlocked at the fifth stage. We are fighting one without poisonous gases and only has 30% its peak strength. God wants us to kill it!”

A veteran from team Northern Ice Land said. “No poisonous gas and only 30% of its original strength. That means this Balrog is pretty much a piece of cake. Huh.”

“Yeah. You can go ahead and give it the killing the blow.” Neos sneered. He finished the chocolate bar on hand then turned around and run. The place they were standing in had gotten hotter.

The Balrog was heinous. Fire followed its hands and feet. It turned an 100 square meter area into an ocean of fire. The orcs were screaming as

they burned into charcoal. The fire gradually changed from red to blue. Anyone slightly knowledgeable knew what it meant. A fire couldn't normally obtain such color without reaching a thousand degree. The players were afraid none of them could withstand the temperature.

“Fuck. Isn't this a little too powerful? And it's only at 30% power without poisonous gas? What is the original Balrog like?”

Everyone thought to themselves. The thousands of orcs behind them were either burned to charcoal or eaten by the Balrog. The impression of this horrendous monster definitely scared the group. No one dared to run up to kill it. Gungnir and Zheng were confident in killing the Balrog with their self created abilities for that rank A reward but considering the collapse of the bridge that was about to come, they quickly ran ahead. It would be difficult to cross the area without the bridge. The fire was falling further and further behind them.

“That was too damn scary. Did such creatures really existed in ancient Earth? And our ancestors actually defeated them? Unbelievable.” Zheng murmured. The feeling the Balrog gave him was immersive. He pondered and didn't think he could defeat it for certain even if he were to use Destruction. And so the next question should be to find the storage room. A bird in hand was better than ten in the forest. Getting the ores and minerals first was better than being greedy about this rank A reward. So he charged ahead with the Nightmare. He moved pass the rest of the group and headed down the bridge. He was the only one who didn't have to worry about the bridge collapsing.

Before long, the view in front became clearer and brighter. Zheng was at the front and saw a huge broken bridge. A smaller stone bridge to the side could still allow people through. However, its appearance was old and worn. He didn't pay much attention to this. With a pull of the lead rope, the Nightmare ran toward the bottom of the bridge. He knew that the third cave to the left under the bridge was the storage room when he saw the map.

Right as the Nightmare took a few steps, an arrow shot toward him. The arrow was neither powerful nor fast. He easily blocked it with Tiger's Soul.

He raised his head to see dozens of orc archers lined up by the wall.

In the original movie, these orc archers presented a lot of difficulty to the main characters. But the wall was so far away that if Zheng were to go over and kill them before obtaining his ores, the rest of the group might get killed by the Balrog. He hesitated for a brief moment. Then he jumped up from the horse and entered Instant Destruction. Several Rankyoku struck the orcs like a gale. They were cut to two pieces before they could react. The one or two that managed to escape wouldn't present any difficulty for the rest of the group. They had Heng and Legolas after all. Zheng fell back to the Nightmare then headed toward the storage room again.

Thanks to the anti-gravity property of the Nightmare, he didn't have to move using Instant Destruction along the broken bridge. The fight against the Balrog was coming soon. He couldn't waste his energy like that. So the Nightmare was such a top tier item. Unfortunately, there was only one. Zheng sighed.

He soon entered a dark room. The flame from the Nightmare's eyes and hooves illuminated it and revealed the metal and bronze bars. There was also a single silver bar placed in the center of the room. Its size was bigger than the normal metal and bronze bars. Next to the silver bar was a glass bottle containing a sand like metal. It was at most several ounces.

Without hesitation, Zheng grabbed the silver bar and glass bottle at once then put them in the Na ring. He looked around to confirm there was no other special metal bars before having the Nightmare leave the room.

Now that he obtained the rare metals, he focused all his attention at the Balrog. The feeling it gave off was overwhelming. He might not be able to take it down even with Destruction. The Balrogs were nemesis of humans in the past after all. Its power wasn't what they could rival at the moment despite being lowered by God. He considered following the plot and escape with the Fellowship. It would cost 3000 points from every person but they would earn thousands of points by the end of the movie anyway. They should stop if they wanted to keep their lives safe.

“But that’s a rank A reward and 8000 points. If I want to grow stronger, I have to walk on the border of life and death. I have to keep growing. Points and rewards are a necessity to this path.” Yet Zheng felt he couldn’t simply resign himself to defeat. His enemy was his clone, a devil. How could there be any chance of defeating someone so much stronger if he didn’t put his life on the line?

“Fuck it! Let the rest of the team keep going. I have to give it a try. With the light blade barrier, I think I can at least escape if I fail to kill the Balrog.” Zheng made his decision. He urged the Nightmare to charge ahead.

The rest of the group had crossed the bridge by this time. The bridge didn’t collapse as vigorously as it did in the movie. The addition of the players might have changed this part. Everyone crossed it safely. The group then rushed toward the other end of the passageway. The way was safe despite the few orc archers on the cliff. Hong and Legolas took care of them. There was no casualty at the end of their run.

After the group crossed the bridge, they entered a large hall. They only had to go through this wall to exit Moria. However, they felt the temperature raised as soon as they stepped into the hall. It was like the whole place was on fire. The heat curled their hair. Everyone sprinted as fast as they could. Ten meters later, they heard a violent roar coming from behind. A blue fire struck out through the wall. The wall exploded due to the extreme heat.

Behind the wall was the Balrog holding a large sword formed by blue fire. It continued roaring. Heatwaves and blue fire were coming through its mouth. The fire on the Balrog was turning more and more intense.

Gandalf said as he was running. “This is a mature Balrog. That’s why the fire is blue. At least it isn’t an aged Balrog or the fire would have turned white. At that time no one could go near it alive. Your body will ignite upon coming close to 100 meters of it. This is the Balrog, a demon of the ancient world. I never expect to see one in Moria.”

The rest of the group was running for their lives and no one paid much

attention to what he had said. The players still had a little comfort because in the original plot, Gandalf was the only one who fell into the chasm. They only had to cross the stone bridge to reach safety.

Unexpectedly, the Balrog roared again. It jumped. Its devilish wings flapped and before everyone realized, it in landed ten meters in front of them. Then a wave of fire struck toward them. The stone bridge was on the Balrog's back.

# Chapter 12-2

“Fuck it! I am going to die here if I don’t risk it!” Gungnir was someone that could let go of things. When he realized the circumstance had come to a life deciding choice, he crushed the three rank C energy stones in his hand without a moment of hesitation. That was a rank B reward. A white freezing air rose from his arm. The air flowed from his arm to his body and enclosed his whole body in ice.

On the other hand, Heng and Legolas initiated the first wave of attacks. Both of them used Explosive shot. Two accelerated arrows flew through with invisible speed and penetrated the Balrog’s body instantly. Heng was using +3 enchanted arrows and Legolas’s arrow was glowing green. The final Ringwraith might not be able to take this attack too, not to mention the Balrog.

The arrows opened up two large holes on the Balrog’s body. It wailed but as a more intense fire burned on its body, the holes were closing by themselves. It seemed like the fire turned into part of its body. This miraculous healing ability surprised the two archers.

Gandalf shouted. “It’s no use. The Balrog is the spirit of fire before it corrupted. Fire is its life. Normal earthly weapons can’t kill it. Only ice attribute weapons are able to harm it but they still won’t be able to kill the Balrog. The only exception is on the peak of the snowy mountain. You have to exhaust all its fire!”

Gandalf showed off his knowledge again. But the Balrog spew a pillar of fire and cut him off. He quickly raised his staff. A faded barrier blocked the fire on its outside. The temperature around however kept increasing. Gandalf was suffering untold misery in the center of it. Yet, he couldn’t step away or else those behind him would be burned to ashes.

A veteran player behind Gandalf also brought out a small and exquisite staff. This young man looked rather soft and gentle. He was also rather quiet in the previous days. He chanted his spell facing at the fire. A few seconds later, the staff sprayed a small cloud of icy mist. Everyone

immediately felt the temperature decreased and let out a sigh of relief.

“My apologizes. The leader took all my ice energy stones so I can’t use any magic level 3 and higher. This ice beam is the only magic I can use to lower the temperature.” He said coyly. Then he repeated the magic a few more times.

Gandalf chanted at the same time. “I am the servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the Flame of Anor. The dark fire will not avail you! Flame of Udûn!” After the chant, a circle of silver ember conjured outside his barrier. The ember began to absorb the Balrog’s blue fire. Gandalf’s expression eased a little bit.

The rest of the group behind him let out a sigh of relief. But Gandalf shouted. “It’s too early to let your guard down! The ember can only stop it for ten seconds. This Balrog is too powerful. It isn’t a creature we can rival. It’s a foe of the gods. I know you are strong, Zheng and your comrades. Use whatever you have or there won’t be any chances left to use them!”

YinKong rushed to Gandalf’s back. She entered The Shining at once. Her body turned blurry and her arms moved in a flurry while holding the invisible Excalibur in her hands.

The light up to two meters in front of her bended along with the sound of strong wind blowing. That was due to a disruption to the balance of air density. The bending of light passed by Gandalf’s barrier and struck right at the center of the Balrog’s chest.

The Balrog bellowed. Its chest and the fire around there began disintegrating inch by inch as the bending light hit it. It was as though countless tiny blades sliced its body. Seconds later, the bending light penetrated the Balrog’s body, taking half its chest along. Fire were spewing from the edge of the hole.

Legolas and Heng looked at each other. Legolas placed three arrows on his bow. Heng’s body formed an arc as he drew the bow to a full moon. The aura he gave off surpassed that of the Balrog’s at this moment. Everyone stared at him with shock. Heng was using his Charged Shot that could only be used once every fight.

Legolas fired his three arrow Explosive shot first. The arrows hit the tail of the one in front with a blast sequentially. The first arrow accelerated to an unbelievable speed. Pah! It hit the side of the Balrog's chest, right next to the hole. Just then, Heng released his Charged Shot. This arrow flew even faster than the Explosive Shot. Heng released it late but the arrow hit the other side of the Balrog's chest at the same time. Their cooperation was so perfect. The two arrows blasted both sides of the Balrog's chest. There was nothing holding his upper body anymore aside from the fire bursting out. The three of them split the Balrog in halves.

The group saw the damage clearly. The Balrog wailed more violently with the separation of his chest. Fire spewed out from the rest of his body like it was worth pennies. Seeing that the Balrog seemed about to die, the group cheered out loud.

Yet Gandalf yelled. "No! The Balrog is getting into a frenzy. This wound won't kill it before exhausting all its fire!"

As he expected. The around on its body burned at an increasingly intense rate. It was the fire that held his body in place. At the rate that it's healing, it looked like the hole on the chest was going to be recovered.

Heng had collapsed on the ground due to exhaustion. YinKong's arms were shaking. And Legolas hid his arm on the back. There was no way they could perform the same cooperation again.

"Thank you for delaying it for so long. Haha! Now look at my performance!" An arrogant voice suddenly said. And at the same time, everyone felt the decrease in temperature. Gungnir broke out of the ice when they weren't looking. His lower body became a cloud of icy mist and floated in the air. The rest of his body was translucent as crystal. It seemed like the body was carved out of ice.

Gungnir laughed. "The authentic version of Ice Age. Leave it up to me! This attack is immensely powerful but it takes too long to prepare and absorb the huge amount of energy. Haha." His body whirled and floated him out of Gandalf's barrier.

The authentic version of Ice Age consumed three rank C energy stones.

So if it wasn't strong enough, those ranked rewards would be so not worth it. Gungnir whirled into a blizzard as he exited the barrier. The temperature in the hall rapidly decreased in just several seconds. A layer of ice formed on the floor and stone pillars. The ice also protected the group inside. It began spreading and in ten seconds, the whole hall that was thousands of meters in area turned into a hall of ice. The only place the ice didn't reach was within eight meters of the Balrog.

Zheng thought to himself as he saw the scene. The self created ability was indeed powerful. Gungnir's whole body had turned into ice so it wasn't a lie when he said he could challenge team Celestial by himself. Zheng exclaimed then felt that he was too over himself when he thought he could take on anyone with Explosion and Destruction. The self created abilities from other teams were all impressive. The difference between self created abilities and exchanged ones were huge. What you could use at 100% potential was the real deal.

Though Gungnir was aware of his fatal flaws. The authentic version of Ice Age required too much preparation in consumables and time. Its duration was short. That was why he created the simple version that used a single energy stone. The power was many times lower but it didn't require any time for preparation and would last longer. But he was an arrow on a drawn bow right now so he had to use the authentic version and finish the fight in under a minute.

The Balrog's power exceeded his expectation. His ice forced the fire back to the Balrog but he also couldn't advance any further. If this persisted, he would be dead after a minute. There was no way to enter the barrier again as it only allowed things to leave. Gungnir clenched his teeth and held his position. As soon as he saw Zheng coming back on the Nightmare, he immediately yelled with excitement. "Hurry up and slice it to pieces. I can extinguish the fire after it gets weakened!"

Zheng rode the Nightmare over and gave him a confirmation. He channeled Qi to Tiger's Soul then enveloped himself in the light blade. Then he extended another light blade from the sword. The Nightmare leaped. He slashed the sword at the Balrog's head.

# Chapter 13-1

Dong! The sword bounced back. The fire formed a solid blue shield above the Balrog. The shield took the light blade. The wound on its chest had completely healed by this time. The Balrog slowly stood up from the ground.

With a roar at the sky, the Balrog's fire grew more intense than ever. A white marble floated out from its mouth then moved to the top of its head. Suddenly, its blue fire began gradually changing its color toward white. The temperature of the area jumped again. There were signs of the ice melting.

“Zheng! I am going to burst the last of my power! I can manage another thirty seconds before I lose the ability to maintain this form. Cut it down to pieces. I will freeze it with the coldest air from Ice Age!” Gungnir's shout sounded more like a wail.

He was the ice at this point and the ice was him. When the fire grew and melted all his ice, he would die. This was the only method of killing him once he entered Ice Age and this was what the Balrog was doing.

Zheng could feel that intense heat from the fire despite protecting himself with the light blade. The light blade could defend against physical attacks but didn't isolate the temperature from him. The high heat pushed him back just then. Hearing what Gungnir just said, he had no choice but to head back to where ice still remained. Then he dismounted.

Zheng spent less than three seconds doing this. The Balrog made its move again. It roared. Mystical rune words and symbols faded into existence at the air in front of it. These rune words were formed by strings of blue fire and looked ethereal. However, Gandalf's expression changed as soon as he saw the rune words.

“Stop him! It's the Roar of the Fire Spirit! The ability releases its essence of fire all at once. We won't live through it!” Gandalf shouted.

He spent all his effort maintaining the barrier so he didn't have the power to do anything else. The hall outside the barrier began exploding

after his words.

Zheng made his decision. A red flame burned from his body. He instantly felt the temperature returned to a comfortable degree. It wasn't as high as before. He stepped heavily and charged up to the side of the Balrog's head with lightning speed. He kicked his leg across. The huge force blasted the Balrog's head. A big cloud of white fire flared on its place.

Zheng felt burning pain on his leg as soon as he kicked. His red flame could not fully neutralized this white fire and it burned his leg in an instant. He was in Destruction at this point. By the time the pain registered, he already jumped up with Geppo. He reached ten meters above the Balrog. When he looked down, his leg was full of bloody blisters.

(That heat is scary. Is this really only 30% strength of the original Balrog? No wonder they were called nemesis of humans. They were nemesis of all living beings.)

Zheng thought to himself but he didn't stop moving. He slammed Tiger's Soul downward. He wasn't using the light blade with this attack but the sword itself. The sword slashed right through the Balrog's chest. The Balrog along with the rune words and symbols were cut in halves.

"Still not enough! Cut it up further then throw the parts over! I won't be able to freeze it at such a high temperature!"

Tiger's Soul smashed into the ground heavily. Bang! It blasted large crevice on the ground. Hearing Gungnir's words, Zheng jumped again. Tiger's Soul slashed across horizontally at the center of the Balrog, further cutting it into four pieces. These pieces were connected by a whitish blue fire. And more white fire spewing out from its head. It looked like the Balrog's head was reforming. Zheng kicked a piece of the body off the connecting fire.

Knowing how strong he was during Destruction, this kick would crush even the pillars into powder. But the Balrog's body was much tougher than he thought. The kick only sent it flying. It was no where close to crushing the body. However, this was good enough. As the body part

disconnected from the linking fire, everyone heard a bellow.

This was the moment Gungnir had been waiting for. As soon as the Balrog's body part flew away, a small blizzard surrounded it. The collision of fire and ice created heavy steam that gradually spread outward. Gandalf's barrier couldn't block off steam and so everyone experienced a sauna. The steam hadn't ended yet when the remaining three parts of the Balrog flew in three different directions. At the same time, several blizzards whirled toward the body parts. Steam filled the hall and no one could open their mouths within that heat.

Zheng had exited Destruction by now. The fight lasted less than seven seconds. He was bleeding blood all over but he still retained 40% of his power. About ten seconds later, the steaming stopped. He slowly walked toward the glowing marble on the ground. He wasn't weakened to a degree that he couldn't walk.

"Damn, that was almost too dangerous, but thankfully." He muttered to himself as he walked. He had received the notification just then. That was why he felt assured to let Gungnir handle the four body parts while he walked toward the fire energy stone.

The energy stone gave off a powerful aura. It seemed like it should at least be a rank A energy stone. If he was lucky, this might even be rank AA. So Zheng wanted to get the stone in his hand before anything else. The real danger was over after all.

"Careful!" Gandalf yelled.

He released the barrier when he saw the Balrog got killed. However, seeing that Zheng was walking toward the fire energy stone, and the stone was glowing brighter and brighter, he immediately yelled. At the same time, he rushed toward Zheng.

Zheng just exited Destruction so he was at his most feeble period. He could only walk for now but Gandalf's words shocked him. He turned his head to see Gandalf ran past him and toward the energy stone. Gandalf picked up the stone while he was still spacing off and chanted a spell in a difficult language.

The energy stone glowed brighter and brighter that even Zheng knew something was off. By the look of it, it seemed to be going to explode. A silver flame from Gandalf's hand tried to wrap over the energy stone but it suddenly flashed in a dazzling light. When the group got their gaze back to Gandalf, his body had ignited. A blue fire was coming out from the energy stone. This fire looked like it was growing in size as if it wanted to form a new Balrog.

"I am the servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the Flame of Anor. The dark fire will not avail you! Protect Frodo, Zheng!" Blue fire enveloped Gandalf but he was still chanting. The silver flame kept trying to contain this stone. At the same time, Gandalf held the stone in his hands then jumped down the chasm. He and the blue fire disappeared from their sight along with his final words.

"No, no!" Frodo yelled, followed by the rest of the movie characters. The players were standing there in shock. Everything that just happened left them stunned. A loud thump and tremble came up from the abyss. The bridge collapsed. The land they were standing on began to fall off inch by inch. The energy stone obviously exploded at the bottom of the chasm. The shockwave trembled the cliffs, including the land they were standing on. And standing nearest to the chasm was Zheng. He fell along with the falling rocks. Then the movie characters and several players fell.

# Chapter 13-2

The cliffs on both sides of the chasm collapsed. The collapses only spread twenty meters in but they caught several movie characters and players. These people rolled down along with the rocks. Beneath them was a burning blue fire and a smaller silver flame revolving in the center.

“Argh!” Zheng responded faster than anyone else. He was also the one nearest to the cliff. He fell further than the rest of the group and was near the fire. A few seconds after he began falling, the heat forced him to leap upward with all his strength. He could still use Instant Destruction despite being exhausted. Geppo pushed him up several meters. He leaped onto land that had yet to collapse.

The others weren't so lucky. First, the three Hobbits fell then Legolas and Aragorn followed. Four of the players also fell right after them, the archer girl, Neos, Heng, and YinKong.

All of these happened in just a moment. The difference in everyone's physical abilities were apparent in this situation. Legolas and Aragorn both brought out their close range weapons and stabbed them into the cliff. They put out a hand to reach for the falling Hobbits. Yet, they only had two people. One caught Frodo and the other caught Merry. The third Hobbit kept on falling. He fell into the still burning fire at the bottom right in front of everyone's eyes. And then he vaporized without a sound.

On the players, YinKong was the fastest. She was five meters away from the cliff. She curled herself up then kicked a falling rock right behind her. The force pushed her toward the cliff like a rocket. Heng was in her path. He fell unconscious after using charged so he wasn't reacting at all. Thankfully, YinKong's reaction and ability saved him from the fate of the Hobbit.

The archer girl was also several meters away from the cliff. She didn't have the agility of YinKong and fell into the fire. She vaporized in the blink of an eye. Neos was lucky to be near the cliff. He grabbed a protruding rock and hung himself there. He wouldn't have made it

otherwise with his ability.

Zheng got his feet on the ground then turned around just in time to see the Hobbit and archer girl vaporized. His heart skipped a bit. Seeing the people hanging by the cliff were still in danger, he immediately tried to enter Instant Destruction to save them. Yet, any movement of Qi and blood energy would put his whole body in excruciating pain. He might fall before saving these people if he were to try.

Zheng immediately yelled. “Gungnir! Turn into ice form and save them!”

But he instantly knew it wouldn't work as he turned to Gungnir. Gungnir was sitting on the ground with a pale gray face. He returned to human form. It was clear that freezing the Balrog's body parts used up all his energy. There was no way for him to save these people.

“Fuck!” Zheng panicked. He shouted to the people below. “Hold on!” Then rushed to the Nightmare.

It was ten seconds after the first explosion by this time. Zheng had gotten near the Nightmare when the ground trembled again as if a second explosion occurred. He cursed again but he didn't have the time to think further. He mounted on the Nightmare and charged at the cliff.

The cliff began to collapse for a second time as expected. Large pieces of rock fell off. Zheng reached the cliff to see the rock holding Aragorn's sword was falling. He grabbed Aragorn's arm then threw him and the Hobbit toward the top. The people up there would catch the two. Without pausing for a moment, he charged downward.

The collapse proceeded quickly. By the time he grabbed Legolas and threw him up, he turned to fear as he saw YinKong and Heng fell off the cliff again. A falling rock hit her hand and knocked her off.

The Nightmare couldn't catch up to the falling speed. Furthermore, the fall would become faster with each second. Redness saturated Zheng's eyes in his panic. These two people were comrades he would exchange with his life. He could stay calm with the death of others but his comrades' death would put a layer of guilt and sadness on his heart for the rest of his life. So he leaped off the Nightmare toward the two without a

moment of thought.

The temperature rose as he came down the chasm. It was fortunate that the blue fire had fallen further than before so YinKong and Heng didn't get burned so fast. Zheng accelerated with Geppo twice. He caught up to them before they fell another hundred meters. He seized the two with an arm and held YinKong close to his chest while he gripped Heng under his triceps. He began another round of Geppo.

Zheng's body had reached a limit by this time. He used so many seconds of his allowed time in Destruction and multiple instances of Instant Destruction. The strength of Geppo could only lift him up less than seven meters now when it would be over ten meters normally. A few more Geppos later, the height of his jump decreased further. His legs convulsed violently.

Zheng almost crushed his teeth from clenching so tight. Blood leaked out from the corner of his mouth. Just then he saw another figure falling down from above. He looked more closely to see that was Neos who was horrified. The rock he was holding on finally broke off. There were several cries following Neos's fall. They came from two girls in team Africa.

Zheng subconsciously reached out with his arm. YinKong was now hanging on him and Heng was under his arm. So he had an arm he could use. But he hesitated the moment his hand reached Neos. Neos was definitely a top tier strategist. He wasn't a rival to Xuan but he was much better than the rest of the people in the three teams. Having someone like that alive would cause huge uncertainties in this world. If he let Neos die here, the rest of team Africa would lose their threat and become a force they could use.

These thoughts crossed his mind in the blink of an eye. Neos was about to fall past him. He closed his eyes with a bitter smile. At the same instant, Zheng grabbed his collar. The momentum dragged Zheng down several meters. Geppo's height also fell to under five meters at this point. Those standing on the cliff saw this with their eyes.

(Argh! Fuck it!)

Zheng squeezed the last bit of his strength to enter Destruction instead of relying on Instant Destruction. He used Geppo one after another to push himself up while carrying the weight of three people. At the end of the last second he had, he got himself onto the back of the Nightmare. The sudden weight of four people bended the Nightmare's legs slightly but the anti-gravity attribute saved them. Once all four people were seated, Zheng grabbed the lead rope. The Nightmare slowly ran up the cliff.

"I applaud your bravery and strength for saving everyone." Xuan sat on the ground with a few fruits in hand. He looked down at Zheng looked crippled. "But I am curious. It was understandable for the first half of your actions. Since the Sky Stick wasn't fast enough to save so many people and the movie characters will turn it off. But why didn't you use it after you saved these three people and was jumping up?"

"Eh?" Zheng opened his mouth wide. He stared at Xuan dumbfounded. Xuan was eating his fruit as though Zheng's idiotic expression was invisible.

"It was such a dangerous moment. I..." Zheng tried to justify himself. After a while without words, he gave a bitter smile. "I am an idiot."

Neos walked over to team China with the support of Aya. He calmly said. "I know you hesitated when you saved me but you did it. There isn't much to be said. I will repay you for this! I will repay you in this movie!"

# Chapter 14-1

Only two movie characters and one player died among the whole group. The casualties were actually extremely low in such a life and death fight followed by a huge explosion. That was an ancient demon they fought. Even one with 30% its peak strength weren't easy to defeat and survive. So three deaths were not that big of a loss.

That was Xuan's natural thought process of thinking by numbers. The rewards were unexpectedly generous this time around. God somehow announced that both Zheng and Gungnir killed the Balrog. Which rewarded both of them a rank A reward and 8000 points. Furthermore, they also obtained one mithril bar and two ounces of Ithildin. The trade was more than fair for only three lives, two of which were movie characters.

As for the rest of the group, both the movie characters and team Northern Ice Land were sad. Lives and feelings weren't something that could be measured by profit.

The archer girl was said to be a kind person. There was a man in the group dating her. He was crying his heart out. The Hobbits lost a friend and the wizard that had protected them all this time. They cried harder than the player did.

The others didn't feel good at the outcome either. Everyone stood there quietly for an hour until the sadness subsided. Legolas tied a rope to an arrow and shot it at the cliff on the other side. Zheng rode the Nightmare and carried everyone over a few at a time. They finally crossed the collapsed cliff. Ten minutes later, the group reached a magnificent stone gate. Gimli told them this was the main entrance to Moria. They were walking along the escape path.

Outside the gate were a set of hills and mountains further away. The terrain ahead was slowly shaping to a plain. They would exit Caradhras with a bit more walking.

Everyone laid on the white rocks after they came out of Moria. No one

wanted to get up for the moment. And sunlight bathed them.

The air inside the mines were stale. The death of the Dwelves meant no one was there to operate the ventilation equipments. The several days inside the mine felt like someone were covering their noses. The fresh air lightened them up and brought energy back to their bodies.

The continuous battles exhausted their mind and bodies. Once they were out of the stressful mines, the exhaustion struck them all at once. They just wanted to lie there and sleep. Zheng and Gungnir expended the most energy out of everyone. Give them a chance to close their eyes and they would fall asleep.

“Get up, we have to keep going!” Aragorn stood up and looked at the sky.

Boromir said. “Give them a moment, for pity’s sake! They are still in a sorrow.” He looked at the Hobbits.

Aragorn sighed. “We have no ability to fight another battle. So we have to find a place to rest and recover. By nightfall these hills will be swarming with Orcs! We must reach the woods of Lothlórien before night. Zheng and his group also can’t fight anymore. We won’t be able to take on a swarm of orcs!”

Boromir knew the weight of these words. He quietly stood up. The group dawdled for nearly an hour before heading down the hill. Their pace wasn’t fast. It was noon now so there were five to six hours before the sun set.

Walking down the hill, the group soon came to a stream formed from melted snow. They drank the water and had their rations. Gimli jumped in to freshen himself up.

Further down and they reached a grassy field. The rocky land ended by the field. The group finally left the hill. It was perhaps three in the afternoon by this time. Aragorn was worried so he repeatedly urged the group to speed up. Their pace went from walking to a jog. Finally, they came to a forest before nightfall.

Golden light beamed through the trees, giving the tranquil woods a

mystical aura. They felt a sense of serenity as they walked through the woods. Gimli was the only one who talked non stop.

“They say that a great sorceress lives in these woods, an Elf-witch, of terrible power. All who look upon her, fall under her spell... and are never seen again.”

People laughed at the story. The movie characters knew that the Dwarves didn't like the elves much.

“Well, here is one Dwarf she won't ensnare so easily. I have the eyes of a hawk and the ears of a fox!”

Suddenly, a notched arrow appeared before his face. It was actually five to be precise. Other bows appeared around the rest of the group. There were elves hidden behind the bushes and trees.

“The dwarf breathes so loud, we could have shot him in the dark.” A commander looking elf walked out and said with a smile. He waved at the archers to put down their weapons. The archers then opened up a path. “Welcome to Lothlórien, the Fellowship of the Ring.” He turned around and walked into the deeper part of the woods.

The group had to follow. They were shocked at first but this should be a safe place since it was the territory of the elves.

Streams connected every part of this land. The elves decorated the boats with delicate ornaments. They felt at ease as they crossed the streams on a boat. Then they reached the camps of the soldiers.

The commander waited for them. He put his hand on the chest and said to Legolas. “Welcome Legolas, son of Thranduil.”

Legolas responded with a nod. “Our Fellowship stands in your debt, Haldir of Lórien.”

The commander then said to Aragorn in the tongue of the elves. “Oh, Aragorn of the Dúnedain, you are known to us.”

Aragorn understood his words and gestured back.

Gimli said loudly. “So much for the legendary courtesy of the Elves!

Speak words we can also understand!”

The commander showed a look of disdain. “We have not had dealings with the Dwarves since the Dark Days.”

Gimli looked angry. “And you know what this Dwarf says to that? Ishkhaqwi ai durugnul!”

The rest of the group sighed and smiled. Aragorn patted Gimli on the shoulder. “That was not so courteous. We are guests here.”

The commander glanced over the Hobbits and the players. He was confused at the attire of the players. Then he suddenly said. “You bring great evil with you. You can go no further.”

The players had no say in the rest of the scene. Aragorn argued with the commander. Yet, he insisted they return the way they came or stay at this place. The rest of the group found a place to sit down. They were tired from everything that had happened. They waited for Aragorn to obtain the opportunity forward.

The commander finally backed after a long while. He said to the whole group. “Rest for a night. I will take you to Lady Galadriel tomorrow. Her will determines whether you can proceed to Caras Galadhon... the heart of Elvendom on earth.”

# Chapter 14-2

The following day, the group ate a filling meal then followed the commander to the elven city in the deeper part of the woods. The roads in the woods were complicated. They crossed both land and water and went from the morning till afternoon before a bright view appeared in front of them. Out of the densely populated trees was a large grassy field. This field was located within the woods. A single gigantic tree stood in the center of the field. It was the size of a skyscraper. Its height reached hundreds of meters.

“Cares Galadhon of the golden woods. Heart of Elvendom on earth.” The commander was carried away as he stared at the tree.

The woods were indeed golden with the setting sunshine shining through it. It gave a kind of holy beauty to the tree in the center and painted the smaller trees as though they were crafted with gold. The group exclaimed at the sight. Though they questioned that the commander brought them here at this hour to specifically see this scene.

The group soon entered the gigantic tree. It was actually formed by numerous trees weaved together. There were stairs, bridges and man made tunnels within the tree. The water was clear. The bottom of the tree looked fresh and clean. It wasn't piled with fallen leaves.

Sunshine couldn't penetrate into the tree. However, it was lighted by the glowing marbles hanging by the structures. The movie characters weren't stunned but it stirred up the desires within the players. Gungnir walked over casually, observed the marbles then walked back to the group. He said in a low voice. “Rank D fire attribute energy stones. There's probably thousands of them in this place.”

Their eyes lit up. Thousands of rank D energy stones. Even though they were all fire attribute, but it might also mean the elves had similar amounts of other attributes. If they could obtain a few hundred rank D energy stones here, it would be an unbelievable amount of wealth.

“Don't take these energy stones. If they are ours, we will eventually get

them.” Zheng pondered and said. He then followed behind the movie characters.

Zheng’s reputation peaked after the battle inside Moria. So his words were like the words of the head of this alliance. Gungnir was acting quite friendly these to him these days. Neos was saved by him. So they naturally agreed to what he said. The rest of the group held their desires back and followed the movie characters.

The metals they obtained were split among the teams. Team China took half the mithril bar and an ounce of Ithildin. Team Northern Ice Land and team Africa each obtained a quarter of the profit. It was a pity they couldn’t get Balrog’s energy stone. By the looks of it, it seemed to be at least rank A or even AA.

Since the group got a taste of grabbing the items outside of the plot, they were thinking of doing the same here. They wanted to at least get some extra energy stones.

The movie characters led them to the core trunk of the tree. They walked up the stairs swirling around the trunk. The glow from the energy stones painted the place into a wonderland.

The group followed the stairs all the way up until they reached the top of the tree. They saw that there was a man made hall. There was a separate set of stairs leading up from the hall. After they all set foot in the hall, two elves walked down from the stairs, a man and a woman. The elves gave off a brighter gentle glow than normal elves. They attracted everyone’s gazes.

The male elf was handsome but he paled next to the female elf. Her beauty couldn’t be described with anything. Her long soft blonde hair lay on her back. A gentle gold glow radiated from her body. No one could get a clear look of her face for some reason. They could only felt her unparalleled beauty.

The two elves walked to the front of the group. The male elf said. “The Enemy knows you have entered here. What hope you had in secrecy is now gone. Tell me, where is Gandalf?”

The female elf observed everyone in the group while the man talked. The

players lacked the respect the movie characters had. They were wondering why they couldn't see the elf's face clearly and so they stared straight at her. When the female elf looked at them, they felt something sounded in their minds. It was similar to connecting to Soul Link but something was different.

The psyche force users noticed the abnormality. They all put up the masking and enveloped their team members. The female elf expressed surprise then she smiled at them before turning to the movie characters.

"Gandalf the Grey did not pass the borders of this land. He has fallen into shadow." She muttered to herself. Then she stared at the group with shock.

Legolas sighed. "He was taken by both Shadow and Flame, a Balrog of Morgoth. We slew the Balrog with great effort but Gandalf sacrificed himself to prevent the Balrog from being reborn. Moria and Khazad-dûm are now taken over by the orcs."

Gimli also sighed. He bowed his head in sadness. The female elf said. "Do not let the great emptiness of Khazad-dûm fill your heart, Gimli, son of Glóin. For the world has grown full of peril. And in all lands, love is now mingled with grief."

Her voice was gentle and peaceful. Gimli and the other movie characters spaced out in her voice. Lan said to the rest of the group via Soul Link. "She's a psyche force user, an incredibly powerful one. She just influenced the characters with her psyche force."

The male elf said. "What now becomes of this Fellowship? Without Gandalf, hope is lost. I do not have faith in you reaching the depth of Mordor without the protection of a wizard. You are likely to fall into the hands of the minions of Sauron."

Aragorn opened his lips but no word came out. The female elf said. "The quest stands upon the edge of a knife. Stray but a little and it will fail to the ruin of all. Yet hope remains while the company is true. Do not let your hearts be troubled. Go now and rest for you are weary with sorrow and much toil. Tonight you will sleep in peace." She casted her eyes at

Frodo. Even while she and the male elf was leaving, she still looked over Frodo. They disappeared to the top of the stairs.

The group finally found a place to rest arranged by the commander. The three teams then gathered together to discuss their next action.

“Based on the movie, we won’t stay here more than three days. This is considering the change we brought to the plot.” Xuan was sitting on a wooden chair. “I know what you are thinking. You want to obtain a large quantity of energy stones during this time. My reply is not possible.”

Xuan continued with certainty. “Despite the quantity of the energy stones here, we do not have the justification to obtain any of them. Perhaps you have forgotten that we currently don’t have the strength to guarantee our own safety. The energy stones are merely material wealth. Don’t forget the threat of the other two teams. There is a reason to God’s every action. Even though those two teams come in the world at random locations, it is still the same world we are in. Given our three teams had such a high chance of encountering each other in the beginning, do you think our alliance can post a real threat to team East America and team Celestial?”

A man from team Northern Ice Land said. “What does that have to do with the energy stones here? It can’t be that getting the stones will make the two teams attack us.”

“No. But there is something more valuable than energy stones here. It’s more useful at least until the end of this movie. Influence! We need to rely on the forces of this world. They will aid us rival the other two teams. The elves are one of such forces. We can’t ruin our influence for just energy stones. That will also ruin the effort we spent to build a relationship with the main characters. The influence we obtain will be over a hundred times more valuable!”

# Chapter 15-1

In Xuan's analysis, seizing or directly requesting energy stones from the elves were foolish. It would lower the movie characters' affection toward them, especially the main characters. Zheng had saved them multiple times in the previous battles. The energy stones alone were not worth it.

“Rather than obtaining the energy stones, it's better to treat them as a warehouse. We don't need to obtain the energy stones in a hurry. Remember that every team can return to their movie worlds after completion of a movie without meeting other teams. We only have to build our relationship with the elves right now. Then we can use items from God's dimension to exchange the specialties of this world. Energy stones, mithril and other rare items. There is no point to be greedy here. Our current goal is obtaining influence and not waste the opportunity of entering this world early.”

Everyone understood this was the case with them. Their biggest enemies were the increased difficulty movie characters, the large amount of minions, and the two teams waiting for them. It wasn't the time to be greedy about the energy stones. Though, everyone still glanced at the energy stones during their rest. The elves were more than luxurious.

The players had free time at night. After a little talk, they decided to go around the city split by teams. They wanted to see if they could discover bonus missions or quest items in the city. There was nothing else to do anyway. Walking around could also be a kind of relaxation.

The three teams were safe inside the city. On the other side, the seventeen newbies accompanied by seven veterans moved along the main roads leading to the Gap of Rohan. This group's strength was worrisome but the One Ring was not on them. They had reached west to the Gap of Rohan. The territory belonged to both humans and elves so the way had been safe for them.

Since they were following the normal path, it would take forty days to go from Rivendell to the Gap of Rohan. Or thirty days if they were to rush

through. The sceneries on the way had been picturesque. There was no such a thing as environmental pollution or removed forests in this world. The scenes attracted the newbies and gave them a sense of being in a travel.

The veterans on the other hand had their hearts clenched the whole time. The weakest of the group was a man from team Northern Ice Land. He only survived three movies but he knew there was no such a thing as a peaceful world. It might seem peaceful now but death could come without any indication.

Kampa and the others from team China had a fever on the way. The fever came and went fast. After it was over, they reached the first unlocked stage. The prototype T virus Xuan manufactured came into effect. There was some delay but the effect of unlocking the first stage was there. The members of team China gained increased strength and reaction speed. The increase wasn't as noticeable as the dragon blood though.

Haotian contacted the veterans of team China five days after they began the journey. He dragged them to the field then said with a smile. "It's a little troublesome but let me introduce myself again. The God and Xian Thieves. I am the Xian, Haotian. Ahem. You don't seem to know me."

They looked at him with a frown. Haotian felt the awkwardness and laughed. "I specialize at stealing valuable items in the real world. Everything from antiques, animals, technology, and even humans. As long as they were valuable and difficult to obtain, they were my targets. I worked with a party in the real world."

Gando sounded like he didn't care. "Oh, so what does it have to do with us? No matter how powerful you are in the real world, you will still struggle to survive here. Being a thief won't make you become powerful here."

"That's not what I meant." Haotian scratched his head then he laughed. "I was just introducing myself again. What I want to say is Xuan gave us a task."

Their expressions instantly changed. Especially Gando who was a victim

to Xuan's schemes and almost died if Zheng didn't backed him in Starship Troopers.

"The task is..." Haotian recalled when Xuan first talked to him. Xuan called out the name of his group and his real name. His heart skipped a beat right there. If he wasn't in such a situation, he would have attempted to kill Xuan.

"It's not necessary to feel such hostility toward me. You wouldn't have forgotten that Section 9 of the National Security has your data? I coincidentally had the authority and habit to read the data there. So I am familiar with you. You are the an genetically engineered human created one and a half year after the first generation of genetically engineered humans. The facility didn't vainly hope for a evolution being surpassing all human limits like the first time. The second generation only had the necessary genetics modified. Unfortunately, the mortality rate was still high. You are one of the twenty that survived and the only one without negative side effects."

Haotian examined him then said with an apathetic tone. "Who are you? I give you thirty seconds."

"The only survivor of the first generation of genetically engineered humans. My name is Chu Xuan."

Haotian's DNA only had two modifications, intelligence and psychokinesis. The purpose of his modifications was to give him sufficient intelligence and combat ability. He was the only one in his generation that lived more than twenty years due to the lack of side effects. Haotian was created to steal the heirlooms that belonged to China, information that was traded in the underground, and technology. These acts couldn't be brought to the surface so his name wasn't anywhere in the official records of the government. He was a person with no history. The only indication of his origin was inside a notebook within Section 9.

"Due to your intelligence and ability, the only support we provided you was information. Yet, you completed numerous tasks that were supposedly impossible. We later learned that you had a partner. The God

and Xian thieves, You are the Xian, so you named yourself Haotian, which means the emperor of Xian. Then who's Adam? The person known as the ancestor of gods. What is his origin?" Xuan said without emotion.

Haotian replied with a bitter smile. "Our rule was to never ask each other's origin. I can't believe it's you, Colonel Chu Xuan. Can't believe you also entered this world. You are the only person aside from Adam that I respect from the bottom of my heart after the cooperations we had. I might have died if it wasn't for your plans."

Xuan nodded. "I have two questions. One, Adam's whereabouts. Two, how did you come here. You can lie but it should be impossible for you to enter this realm with your personality and body. Tell me. How did you do it?"

Haotian scratched his head. "I entered here while I was chasing Adam. He suddenly disappeared into thin air. It was inside a concealed room. A truly concealed room with no tricks. I couldn't figure out how he left the room even if he had intelligence that rivals you. So I investigated the room he disappeared in. There was a laptop on the floor."

"Then?"

Haotian said. "I watched the surveillance videos of that room. He had the bizarre habit of observing his own behaviors. I saw that he clicked on a YES on the screen before he disappeared. I attempted to search for the program but there was no traces left. Then I searched for similar cases from governments over the world. And finally I found your message inside the database of China's biggest military base. You asked Adam's whereabouts, are you looking to kill him?"

Xuan nodded. "Correct. It's risky to let such a dangerous person live. I am going to tell you my plan. You have to..."

# Chapter 15-2

“That’s basically the situation. Ahem. Why did I copy that ice man. Anyway, this is Xuan’s plan. We have to choose whether we want to proceed with it.” Haotian smiled.

The other four people gave him a weird expression. Gando said. “What do you mean we can choose? Do you have anything against the man? We are of course going to proceed with his plan. The plan seems like it has a high chance of success too. Why are you asking such question?”

“Asking such question?” Haotian giggled. He seemed to find it funny. After some time, he said. “You seem to trust Xuan a lot. I never thought someone like him would be worth other people’s trusts. Are you afraid of him scheming you to death?”

Zero and the two others didn’t express anything. Gando said with empathy. “Now that you mention it, it seems that there is indeed a higher chance of him scheming us. Are you a victim too?”

Haotian acted as if he found his soul mate. He grabbed Gando’s hands. “Yes. Did he also scheme you? Haha. You lucky bastard. You’re still alive. Another scourge is born. Haha. Ahem. I mean that everyone understands an officer on the battlefield doesn’t necessarily have to comply with the general. We don’t have to really follow Xuan’s plan to ambush Isen... snipe Saruman.”

Zero said. “You haven’t finishing telling us his plan. Sci-fi weapons have no effect in this world. If we were to snipe Saruman, Heng would be more useful unless there’s a way to let me use the Gauss sniper rifle. Otherwise, I won’t be of much use.”

Haotian brought out a red, long, and slender bullet from his pocket with a smile. It was about the length of a man’s finger. This was a high explosive Gauss sniper bullet except the symbols carved on the shell. They could faintly notice a green light flew along the symbols.

“Xuan gave this to me. He said the bullet can damage movie characters. However, if Saruman used a barrier, we will have to depend on the Eyes of

Death Perception.” Haotian laughed. He opened his arms like a salesperson and the people in front were the fools. “What do you think of the plan? Why do we have to complete such a difficult mission? Why don’t we follow a new plan?”

Zero said. “We would rather believe in Xuan instead of believe in you. At least he was never wrong. He had never done anything wrong since I met him, even though he schemes his team. How do you make us trust you, newcomer? How can you convince us to abandon a correct plan and choose one that might be wrong? Even though Xuan assigned you as the leader of this group, it doesn’t mean you surpass him in intelligence.”

Haotian nodded. “You are not wrong. Let us have a bet. If I win, you will follow my plan. If I lose, we will follow Xuan’s plan and I will take on the responsibility of leading you.”

The four of them looked at each other. Zero asked. “A bet on what?”

“Fight. The four of you against me. You can use any weapon aside from Gando going on flight mode with his robot. You can kill me or permanently disable me but I can’t kill you or cause permanent injury to you. I can only subdue you.” Haotian looked at them with seriousness.

Zheng handed them the storage bag before they split up. Xuan also gave WangXia a small energy storage device the size of a fist. It could only store about thirty percent of Zheng’s Qi but that much was enough to activate the storage bag. WangXia still hadn’t cultivated his own Qi but he could drain the Qi from the device and use it temporarily. The bag had all their weapons, a robot, a Gauss sniper rifle, a Gattling cannon, plasma grenades, mines, and timed bombs.

They naturally had to avoid fighting in front of the other veterans and newbies. A few days later when the group came to a never-ending grassy field, the five people from team China made up an excuse and went away into a mountain valley.

“My plan is quite simple. We follow the first half of Xuan’s plan to snipe Saruman. However, we won’t meet up with their group afterward. Xuan wants us to kill Saruman then inject virus into Saruman’s orcs to turn

them into Nemesis. We would then bring these Nemesis to back the team up. But no! There's a critical flaw to this plan. The influence we have at that point would overlap." Haotian sat on the ground and said.

Tampa, WangXia, and Zero had bruises all over their faces. Gando was lying on the ground convulsing, with bubbles coming out his mouth. Haotian was the only person unharmed.

"Based on my understanding of Xuan, he would definitely try to get his hands on the knights of Rohan. So even if we head over with the orcs, the addition wouldn't change the situation too much. We would be better off doing something else..."

Gando wiped the bubbles off his mouth. "Like? Have you come up with what exactly you want to do?"

"Of course!" Haotian smiled. He crushed a piece of rock with his hand. "Incorporate Saruman's orcs into our forces. Then transform them to Nemesis. I mean to transform them in masses. We only need a thousand Nemesis equipped with weapons and armors. This army would be powerful enough to rival an army of fifty thousand orcs. My plan is to ambush team East America and team Celestial from behind. We will be the other group's saviors. We will be the trump card of team China."

Tampa rubbed the bruises on his face. He asked. "Didn't Xuan only produce eighty portions of the virus? How are you going to make a thousand Nemesis?"

Haotian laughed. "You are underestimating that man too much. How can there be only one plan when it's him? Those eight portions were produced in God's dimension. But, he has several hundred portions cultivating right now. This isn't a greenhouse like God's dimension so the reproduction rate goes down. However, the T virus in the storage bag will finish reproduction by the time we reach Isengard. We may even end up with a surplus of T virus. Anyway, there will be at least five hundred portions. Haha."

"That's basically the situation. Isn't it interesting?" Xuan sat in front of Zheng and said.

Zheng was stunned with his eyes and mouth wide open. He pointed at Xuan but Xuan continued eating his fruit as nothing was wrong. It took Zheng a while before he could speak. “But how could they ambush Isengard with just the few of them? That’s running straight to the enemy base with a white wizard in garrison.”

Xuan nodded. “There won’t be an issue. A normal person’s vision can only reach several thousand meters. He can’t even notice an object the size of him at that distance. And even if he does, it would be merely a small dot. The Gauss sniper rifle has a range of tens of thousands of meters. Zero simply has to stay over ten thousand meters away. His enhanced vision allows him to succeed at this range. As long as they follow my plan, Saruman’s death is inevitable. Even if Saruman survives, they could easily escape with the distance. You don’t have to worry about them.”

Zheng had no choice but to nod. “Fine. We don’t have to worry about them like you said. But I still don’t understand what’s interesting? You have made similar plans in the past. What makes you happy about this one?”

Xuan smiled lightly. “Because Haotian won’t come to support us with the eighty Nemesis as I requested. Based on his personality and behavior, he will request cooperation from Zero and the others. They will incorporate the remaining orcs under Saruman and transform them into Nemesis. The T virus I put in the storage bag is still cultivating. They will mature in thirty days. Haotian should have made this decision by now. That’s what’s interesting. The other four people aren’t familiar with him. So there will be an argument between them. Haotian will use this opportunity to establish his status in the group. That’s the interesting thing.”

Zheng was still confused. “Why? Why do you want him to establish status in the group?”

“To bribe people over...”

Before Xuan could finish talking, a female elf walked down the stairs.

She was Galadriel, the lady of Lorien.

# Chapter 16-1

Galadriel's appearance was quite unexpected. It was past ten at night already. Most people had gone to their rooms to rest. Zheng was curious with what Xuan was planning. That was why he kept questioning Xuan. And now, what were Galadriel looking for?

(She came to us instead of the movie characters. Could it be a quest?) Zheng thought to himself. He stood up and faced Galadriel with a smile.

"Is there anything you need? Lady of Lorien." Zheng asked.

Galadriel was as beautiful as the first time they saw her. Yet, her face was also fogged, hiding her real appearance. She walked over with elegance and sat down naturally. "I should have met you earlier in the day, warriors who faced the Balrog and buried it in eternal darkness. However, the One Ring delayed a lot of time. Please don't take it as disrespect."

Zheng laughed. "Oh, we wouldn't. We are grateful that you can accept us and give us shelter during a time of fatigue and sadness. You are too polite."

Galadriel nodded as a thanks for his acknowledgement. She then looked at the two of them. "I heard Legolas said that you possess powers beyond his recognition, a power strong enough to battle the forces of Sauron. He asked me to give you the rewards you deserve. At the same time, he wished me to persuade you to follow this journey to the end. It seems that he was overthinking. Your courage and strength are to be praised, warriors."

These praises were almost forcing the players to battle Mordor. The good thing was Galadriel knew her way with words. Zheng felt cozy instead of irritated. The softness in her voice was comfortable. Zheng nodded repeatedly with a smile.

Xuan on the side looked emotionlessly. He finished two fruits then said. "If you feel we are worthy of being respected... then stop your magic." The

Gauss pistol slid into his hand and he shot an ornament on her head. He then went back to peeling his fruit as though nothing happened.

Zheng shivered. That was when he finally felt that he was being controlled. The only thing in his mind was Galadriel's beauty and her soft voice. The sound of the gunshot struck his head. The beauty and voice dissipated.

Galadriel was stunned. After a while, her hand reached for the shattered ornament on her head. "Your wills are strong. I am unable to read your minds. The most I can do is influence your feelings toward me... But you. Why don't you seem affected? Don't you feel that I..."

Xuan interrupted him. "Sorry. I don't have feelings."

Galadriel wasn't mad at Xuan. She smiled. "I should apologize. The One Ring is too important. If Sauron gets his hand on it, there is no one in Middle Earth that can stop him. Therefore, I had to know your thoughts. I had never heard of such powerful humans. Your origins are also so sudden. So I had to try. I apologize again. I meant no ill intentions."

Zheng took a deep breath. He restrained the bit of anger he had. "I can forgive your actions but a person's inner thoughts are his private matter, my lady. Please respect people's privacy."

Galadriel slightly bowed. Her smile remained. "I hope my actions do not cause you to think negatively of Legolas. I did not solicit his opinion. Similarly, if you have any requests, please let me know. I will do my best to fulfill them."

A thought came to Zheng's mind. "We have two bounded weapons. The owner of the weapons aren't dead so my comrades can't unleash the full potential of these weapons. Are you unbind the weapons for us? I heard you are a powerful wizard."

Galadriel paused for a moment. Then she shook her head. "Sorry. I am a wizard but I specialize in magic of the mind. Gandalf is the most learned wizard of us all. He walked Middle Earth for many years. In contrast, we elves choose a more peaceful and comfortable lifestyle. The white wizard Saruman also has this ability but he had..." Galadriel sighed.

Zheng also sighed. He wasn't sure if Gandalf really died. If this world continued to follow the original movie plot, Gandalf would return from death as Gandalf the White. When that happened, he could still unbind the weapons.

"Then can you trade energy stones with us? I wish to trade for energy stones with items from our mercenary group." Zheng said.

Galadriel looked at Zheng and Xuan with curiosity. "If you need energy stones for the battle against Mordor, I can gift you a few dozens of each attribute. The quality of the energy stones aren't best. We aren't as wealthy as Rivendell. Most of our energy stones are fire attribute."

Zheng immediately said. "No. The trade isn't for right now. Furthermore, we need a huge quantity of them. A few dozens are too little for us. That's why we wanted to trade and not simply ask for them."

"Huge quantity?" Galadriel frowned then nodded. "The mines Lorien has access to indeed produces energy stones in quantities and not quality. However, taking out a large amount at once is still..."

"A thousand or so is enough." Zheng pondered and said. "Even several hundreds are fine. We can trade with other items, medicine, valuable medicines, liquor, food, even metals in large quantity. How about an ingot of refined iron for a low quality energy stone?"

Galadriel finally turned serious. "Lorien indeed lacks metals. We used to trade for metals with the dwarves but ever since Moria shut off, we can only obtain our metals from Rohan and Gondor. Their metal forging is far from the dwarves. And they recently switched to using hardwood for arrows. A refined iron ingot can trade us for ten low quality fire energy stones or five other attributes. The medicines are also needed for our migration."

"Migration?" Zheng was curious. "The environment here is amazing. The location is out of sight. And the city is inside the woods. It would be a pity to abandon such a beautiful place."

Galadriel's smile was taken by sadness. She muttered. "When Sauron wields the One Ring or when you succeed in destroying the One Ring, the

Three Rings of the Elves will disappear. Our hearts will fall into eternal weariness. The land of the gods beyond the sea is the only place we can achieve serenity. The age of the elves have ended.”

Zheng suddenly asked. “What will it take to prevent the elves from having to migrate? I can see that you treasure Middle Earth. Don’t you feel sad having to leave your home like this?”

Galadriel sighed. “Certainly not. This is the home of the elves but...”

Xuan interjected. “What if we wipe off Sauron’s will from the One Ring? Just like how you unbind bounded weapons.”

Galadriel shook her head. “That’s not possible. Sauron sealed his mind and life in the One Ring. Anyone who wields it will be controlled by the evil inside. The Hobbit is already showing signs of losing himself. Furthermore, no one has a mind stronger than Sauron’s.”

“Then what if we bring the ring out of this world?” Xuan rotated the fruit in his hand. “Bringing the One Ring out of this world. If it’s an item, it would enter God’s dimension normally. However, as a movie character that hasn’t received the ticket to enter God’s dimension... and the realm, he will be erased. And the One Ring will remain.”

# Chapter 16-2

“Is-is it possible?” Zheng cried in surprise. He had been pondering the possibility of a long term trade with Galadriel. However, it was obviously not possible by the time they were to leave The Lord of the Rings world.

Galadriel asked. “What is God’s dimension? Are you warriors from the realm of the gods?”

Zheng scratched his head. He organized his thoughts. “Uh. We will return to another dimension. We don’t know whether or not it is the realm of the gods. However, beings from this world can’t enter it. They will get killed as soon as they enter it. Items on the other hand can move in and out of the dimension. So we can bring the One Ring to that dimension to kill Sauron who sealed himself in the ring. The ring will then rid itself of its malice while protecting the Three Rings of the Elves from being affected. Those rings will retain their powers!”

Galadriel seemed stunned. She pondered for a while before speaking. “I don’t fully understand your words. But you said you will bring the One Ring away...”

Xuan said. “There’s no need to give us the ring. It’s merely a speculation. We will continue heading toward Mount Doom. If we aren’t able to enter the Mount Doom at that time, we will attempt to bring the One Ring back to God’s dimension. It is good if the elves can stay. Otherwise, our trade can only proceed for one to two times. Which isn’t favorable to both of us.”

Galadriel sighed and didn’t speak further. They could see she had taken note of this. The trade with the mercenaries were beneficial to the elves. And if the mercenaries could save the elves from having to migrate, that would be the best outcome. Even if it wasn’t possible, having them bring the ring to Mount Doom and destroy it was also an exceptional contribution to Middle Earth. She thanked them again then left.

Once Galadriel went out of sight, Zheng quickly asked Xuan. “How confident are you with this speculation?”

“Approximately 60%. However, the chance the One Ring getting into our hands is less than 10%.” Xuan shook his head. “The One Ring is a quest item, probably an extremely powerful one. The other four teams are aware of this fact. Team Celestial is probably determined to obtain the ring. Remember that all five teams have to stay together in Mordor for half an hour before we return. A lot of things can happen in this half an hour. It is impossible to avoid encountering team Celestial and team East America during this time. The One Ring is a key tool to us returning to God’s dimension safely. We will likely abandon the One Ring to preserve our team. Of course, if the difference between the teams isn’t huge, the One Ring will be the bait to killing them. Either way, the chance of us getting the ring is slim.”

“Is that so?” Zheng sighed. He patted Xuan’s shoulder. “It’s great if you are always like this. Just let me know before you do anything. Bro, it’s not like I will disagree with you. I merely want to know an outline of your plans. Do you think that’s difficult to you? Ha. Anyway, it’s a win to achieve the trade with Galadriel. And once we finish this world, we will have an endless supply of mithril and energy stones. We may even be able to exchange some time to learn magic from Gandalf. Haha.”

“You won’t understand even if I were to tell you...” Xuan murmured. “Mortal’s wisdom.”

Zheng had entered his room while Xuan murmured.

Morning of the next day. Gimli came to wake the players. He told them Galadriel was waiting by the wharf. She wanted to give the Fellowship a gift from the elves. After he said these words, Gimli quickly disappeared while the players became curious.

Ten minutes later. All the players groomed themselves then headed toward the wharf. All the movie characters were waiting there by the time they arrived. The movie characters were each wearing a cloak that perfectly suited to their size.

After the players got in place, ten elves came up to them. These were the maids of Galadriel they saw the other day. The elves helped them put on

the cloaks. They were told these cloaks could conceal them from being detected by magic and change color to blend in with the environment. The cloaks were magical items. The effects of them was probably equivalent to rank C or higher.

Each player also received a short sword. The swords were imbued with mithril and ithildin. They could bind to the weapons with a drop of blood. The swords enhance the users' powers in a fight. The effects were equivalent to a DD or C magical weapon.

Galadriel walked up to Zheng. "Legolas said you already have a powerful weapon. So we don't have to gift you a short sword. This is a leaf from Telperion that we preserved. The tree that lighted the world has withered but its leaves still contains unbelievable life force. Take the leaf. When it comes to a time where you have to put your life up in a battle, fold the leaf and hold it in your mouth. Its life force will be consumed on behalf of your own. It will protect your life as it melts... For the bravery of our warrior, and for the promise to change the fate of us elves." She gave Zheng a kiss on the cheek.

Galadriel then came over to Xuan. She gave him a smile. "I don't know what I should gift you. A human with no feelings wouldn't concern himself with a gift from the elves. Let me give you a blessing." She chanted a blessing in the tongue of the elves.

(This woman obviously remembers Xuan destroyed her ornament from yesterday... Women remember every bit of resentment.) Zheng thought to himself because Xuan was the only person who didn't receive anything. It was fairly abnormal.

Xuan though looked unperturbed. He took the food from the elves, it was lembas bread. One small bite was enough to fill the stomach of a person. Xuan seemed interested in this highly compressed food.

Zheng was feeling pity for Xuan when Legolas grabbed his shoulder and said. "Don't worry. He got the most valuable gift out of us all. It's a blessing from the lady. The blessing is infused with magic. I don't know what its effect is yet but the blessing will follow him until it unleashes its

effect. The lady will feel feeble for the next several days. Xuan is the most fortunate of the bunch here.”

Zheng finally felt better. He wanted to thank Galadriel but she gave them a smile then left with a male elf.

The group didn't waste time. They loaded the weapons and food on the boats. There were three people on each boat with the exception of Aragorn taking the three Hobbits. The boats sailed down the river. The Fellowship departed on their journey once more.

“We will sail out until we reach a waterfall of Caradhras. The journey will be dangerous. The elves have told us that Saruman sent his army down the shores to attack us. We are facing the orcs from Mordor and the Uruk-hai from Saruman. The Uruks are larger and stronger than normal orcs. They are not afraid of sunlight. They can fight under the most extreme conditions.”

Aragorn yelled to the other boats as he paddled.

The majority of players were caressing their weapons and cloaks. Both of these were indeed magical items. They were valuable even in God's dimension. The veterans were delighted to have obtained them for free. Heng also received ten arrows from Galadriel. His own arrows were enchanted but the arrows from Galadriel surpassed them. These arrows weren't as powerful as enchanted arrows but allowed him to imbue his psyche force into the arrows, which would allow him to adjust the arrows' paths slightly after he fired them. Heng had achieved the three arrow explosive shot. Its accuracy though was less than optimal. These arrows could turn his three arrow explosive shot into his trump card. The charged shot wasn't his only ultimate ability anymore.

Everyone else got their share of reward. The Fellowship sailed down the river and moved further and further away from the realm of the elves. After a turn, they could no longer see the city.

# Chapter 17-1

The river became narrower and narrower as they sailed down. The group had sailed from the tributary into the main river. Most of the movie characters were still thinking of Galadriel. There was no blaming them as the Lady of xx was a powerful psyche force user. Even the players got affected when they weren't being cautious. The good thing was they had their own psyche force users to protect them. The movie characters on the other hand were exposed to Galadriel's influence.

They sailed for a few more hours on the river and had a quick meal on the boat. The shores were still green. Further ahead were white snowy mountains. The water was clear and green like jade. It reflected trees on the shore. The scenery was perhaps not that of the heavens but it was a rare sight compared to Earth. Many of the players lost themselves in the scenery.

One person looking at the strange trees on the shore suddenly yelled. "Hey, look over at the shore. I seemed to have seen a group of people ran by."

The rest of the group immediately turned their heads. The trees were densely populated. They couldn't make out anything behind those trees. Aragorn rowed the boat and said. "Don't make such a big fuss. They are the Uruk-hai. They are chasing us from the shore. That's why we must arrive at the waterfall before they caught up. We will be safer once we reach there."

And so, the group could see shadows of the Uruks on the rest of the way. The boats made several turns down the river. The Uruks would need some time to cross the river. Evening, the group camped on the a place without trees on the shore.

"We will take turns staying on guard. Three people a team, an hour each team. The Hobbits don't have to. We will rest for five hours then head out at dawn. While on the boats, we can take turns rowing and resting. We will have a bigger chance of getting away from the Uruks." Aragorn

pushed the campfire with a stick and said.

The players had no objection and the movie characters too. Something happened during their rest. Boromir suggested the Fellowship to head to Minas Tirith, a city in Gondor, and a post defending against the forces of Mordor. From there, they would regroup then strike out for Mordor.

Aragorn disagreed with Boromir. The two argued over this topic nonstop. It came to a point where Aragorn expressed distrust in Boromir.

That was merely an interlude. The rest of the night was peaceful. The group headed out on their boats as the sun came up the horizon the next day. They sailed down the river again. Several days went by in the same manner. The trees on the shores had become less and instead, stone structures took their place. The terrain turned from plains to valleys.

An hour later, Aragorn suddenly yelled. "Look, the Argonath! Long have I desired to look upon the kings of old. My kin."

Two majestic statues appeared at the end of the valley. It was a miraculous sight for two statues hundreds of meters tall to exist in this world. The statues were carved on the sides of Anduin. Any man would feel minute standing in front of them.

"They are really... splendid!" Zheng loudly exclaimed. The rest of the group also exclaimed.

Imagine that when the boats sailed past the two statues and they were less than the height of the statues' toes. The size of the sculptures could only be described as a miracle. Everyone of them held their breath and gazed upward as they moved past. Long after they had sailed past, the Fellowship still turned their head around. This magnificence could only be experienced and not told.

Aragorn said. "Such an honored, noble and brave person, my kin, surrendered to the temptation of the One Ring..."

The boats sailed past the valley and witnessed the grand sculptures of man. Then they reached a roaring waterfall.

The group disembarked on the shore. They set up a camp instead of

marching ahead.

We cross the lake at nightfall. Hide the boats and continue on foot. We approach Mordor from the north.” Aragorn said as he sorted the gifts from the elves and their food.

Gimli said. “Oh, yes?! It’s just a simple matter of finding our way through Eryn Muiel? An impassable labyrinth of razor sharp rocks! And after that, it gets even better! Festering, stinking marshlands, far as the eye can see!”

Aragorn looked at Gimli and nodded. “That is our road. I suggest you take some rest and recover your strength, Master Dwarf.”

Legolas suddenly came near them and said. “We should leave now.”

Aragorn replied. “No. Orcs patrol the eastern shore. We must wait for cover of darkness.”

Legolas said. “It is not the eastern shore that worries me. A shadow and a threat has been growing in my mind. Something draws near... I can feel it.”

Before Legolas finished his sentence, Merry said. “Where’s Frodo? Frodo is gone!”

Sam was half dozing on the ground. He instantly jumped up and looked around anxiously. Aragorn and Legolas headed into the forest near the shore.

The players knew that in the original plot, Boromir fell to the temptation of the One Ring at this point. He wanted to seize the ring from Frodo. However, the Uruks would ambush them. Boromir died saving the Hobbits and the rest of the Fellowship.

Zheng met eyes with the players. They nodded to each other. There weren’t anything else to prepare for. The three psyche force users had scanned the Uruk’s number and location and sent the images to everyone’s mind. Zheng drew out Tiger’s Soul. He flipped himself onto the Nightmare. The others also readied their weapons or stood up.

Zheng said. “Heng and Xuan stay here to protect the psyche force users. Team Northern Ice Land and team Africa each leave one person behind... The rest of us get ready to fight!”

Aragorn had found Frodo by now. Frodo held out the ring on his palm to Aragorn. Aragorn overcame the temptation and didn't take it from him. Frodo said he would go to Mount Doom by himself and destroy it.

“Ah, how great... kindness and courage, innocence and dream. Reality is cruel but without these noble feelings, it would feel lacking when you crush it. That's why things of beauty are the best when it comes to destruction.” A voice interrupted Aragorn and Frodo.

Aragorn turned around abruptly as he drew his sword. He had activated his battle Qi because that voice gave him the illusion that a blade was placed right on the skin of his back. It gave him goosebumps.

A handsome man stood on top of a tall pillar behind them. He looked at them with a kind smile. There was no trace of threat from that smile. Yet, his eyes were cold as ice.

The pillar was eight meters tall. There were no other structures around. How did he get up there without making any noise? Aragorn didn't sense anything happened. This realization sent a chill down his spine. If this man wanted to assassinate him, he would be dead without a chance to resist.

“Oh, they have come. Well then. Keep this courage of fighting for your friends. We will meet again.” He smiled. His figure moved ever so slightly then he disappeared. It was as though he was never there.

Zheng was running over on his Nightmare.

# Chapter 17-2

Aragorn spaced out staring at the pillar until the Nightmare's clops arrived. He finally noticed the glow on Frodo's sword in shock. That signaled Orcs nearby, or perhaps... Uruks.

Frodo also noticed the sword's change. He said to Aragorn. "The sword..."

"Yes. Foes. Run, hurry and run!" Aragorn glanced at Zheng. He held up his sword then came out from the stone wall.

Uruks were swarming out from the forest. Their number was in the hundreds. The Uruks were fully armed with intact armors, helmets, shields, and swords. Some of the Uruks even carried long bows that the elves used. Aragorn felt bitterness in his mouth but his support arrived. Zheng charged past him and into the Uruks.

This was his first encounter with the Uruks. They were two meters in height, had figures similar to humans but a more fearsome look and extremely muscular. The Uruks were orcs with a sturdier body. The difference between them and regular orcs were like that of a fighter and a girl.

Though Zheng had no fear of this Uruks despite having a vivid look of them. He enveloped himself with the light blade while the Nightmare was charging. As he reached the Uruks, he slashed Tiger's Soul across. A sound of metals torn apart followed. Ten Uruks in the front were cut in halves and their dead bodies lay on the ground.

Aragorn saw Zheng's fierceness but he still yelled to him. "Be careful! These Uruks were converted from elves. They could naturally use battle Qi at a low level but it would be enough to block your invisible blade."

Zheng was surprised. He planned to charge into the swarm as he did in the Mines of Moria. Right as he heard Aragorn's words, he ran through an Uruk and shattered it. The next Uruk summoned a faint glow that belonged to battle Qi. There was a boom as Zheng ran into it. The Uruk was sent flying ten meters back but it stopped Zheng's charge. Uruks now

surrounded him.

The advantage of the Nightmare came into show. Zheng had it leap onto a tree then the Nightmare ran up along the trunk. It didn't stop until it reached eight meters above the ground. At the same time, arrows began to hit his light blade barrier. In just a moment of him pausing there, dozens of arrows hit him. Zheng looked over to the end of the Uruks but they were still coming out from the forest.

“Approximately a thousand. It's going to take a lot of efforts to kill them all. Sigh. If only I have an AOE technique.” Zheng murmured.

Once sci-fi weapons were restricted, the team had limited area of effect abilities. Many of the magical weapons and abilities were not intended for such use. The few that did either required consumables or had other restrictions, like the unparalleled power of Ice Age from Gungnir.

In just a moment, numerous arrows hit his barrier and shattered. Underneath him, some Uruks began to enchant their arrows with battle Qi. His barrier was also wavering. Zheng pulled the lead rope. The Nightmare leaped down. Tiger's Soul swung left and right, adding another dozen corpses to the ground. Yet, the huge number of Uruks quickly covered these corpses. The Uruk's weapons hacked toward Zheng.

The rest of the players arrived. The players and movie characters clashed with the Uruks. But without the Nightmare nor the light blade barrier, they were pushed back by the Uruks in the first wave of attack. Zheng was the only person standing in the swarm swinging his sword.

YinKong was actually running in front, just right behind Zheng. However, as she came near the pillar, a sudden strange feeling attracted her attention. The feeling was foggy. Seeing that Zheng had started fighting, she frowned. Her eyes moved back and forth to Zheng multiple times until the Nightmare ran up the tree. She bit her teeth then chased after the direction of her feeling.

YinKong's heart pounded increasingly fast the further she ran. This feeling she was experience was indescribable. But she knew there was perhaps someone waiting in that direction. The only person that she hated

so much.

As she expected, a few minutes later, the sky brightened up. She came to a cliff. She could see a splendid waterfall underneath the cliff. To the side of the cliff stood a man with long hair.

“Yo, my little cousin. We finally meet again... Of course, to you, it should be we meet again. Hoho. You seem surprised that I am here. Do you have anything you want to say to me?” The man turned around. He smiled at YinKong. His expression was gentle and tender. It was as though he was speaking to his lover.

YinKong clenched his teeth. Her hands gripped so tightly onto the invisible hilt that her fingers were turning pale. After a while, she finally uttered the words. “Go to hell!”

YinKong took two steps forward then slashed the sword downward. There was a rattle. The sword cut through something in the air.

There were several wires invisible to the eyes hung between her and the man. If she charged forward without hesitation, the wires would have cut her up. That death would be a replication of her last one.

The man wasn't angry. In contrast, he clapped his hands happily. “Great! You improved. I learned from my clone that he killed you because you hadn't used that revival chance. He told me of the way you died and the beauty of that death... I couldn't see the shattering of that beauty with my own eyes but just thinking about the moment of your death makes me excited.”

“Zhao ZhuiKong! You ought to die!”

The man was Zhao ZhuiKong. The crotch of his pants bulged as he spoke. It appeared that those words excited him. YinKong on the other hand were enraged that her eyes turned red. Naturally, she wouldn't notice his lower body. She didn't just charge at him this time and took a deep breath instead. “Are you planning to battle me today?”

ZhuiKong showed a bigger surprise. He laughed. “No. You still have room to grow. Your performance today surprised me. You know you can't

stop me if I want to leave so you choose not to waste your energy. Go help your comrades with your perfect strength. Chasing onto me will only disappoint you... I won't kill you now because you have great potential ahead of you. And you don't have a chance to revive anymore."

YinKong stared at him. She quietly said. "I will kill you. I will... for them, for my childhood, for the past I buried... I will kill you!"

ZhuiKong suddenly disappeared and reappeared next to her. He ignored her pale hands that were gripping onto the sword. His hands reached out to the soft white skin of her face. Then he lowered his head and kissed her lips. Blood sipped out the corner of YinKong's mouth from clenching her teeth so hard.

ZhuiKong returned to the edge of the cliff and said to her with a smile. "Be angry, hate, and live on... You are still too weak. When you have grown and the next time we meet, let me see the shattering of that beauty. My little cousin..." He jumped off the cliff, ignoring the fact it was a hundred meters above the water.

YinKong, still clenching her teeth, turned around and ran back toward the battlefield. She didn't even take a look down the cliff. Blood was still flowing out the corner of her mouth and painted her lips red. It made her face so pretty.

(I am still too weak. And he's stronger than the last time I met him... Become stronger! I have to become stronger than him!)

# Chapter 18-1

The battlefield was still in a chaos. No one knew Zhao ZhuiKong appeared. No one knew YinKong met him. Everything happened according to plot. The Fellowship grew with the addition of the players. Yet, the Uruk's number and strength also grew. It maintained a balance of the two sides just as how it was in the movie.

Zheng was charging back and forth inside the swarm of Uruks. At least two hundred died to his sword. The battle Qi could resist some of the damage from his light blade during slashes and charges, but he overpowered the Uruks in pure strength. Once his light blade barrier shattered, Zheng activated Explosion. More blood energy also channeled into the Nightmare.

Zheng killed a good number of Uruks in his normal mode. Now that he was in Explosion, his strength and speed increased by nearly ten times. Tiger's Soul moved without resistance. The Uruks were cut in halves even with their battle Qi. The rate of casualties increased exponentially. By the time Zheng had his mind calmed down, the Uruks were scattering and running away as if they had seen a monster. Zheng felt fatigue in his arms and legs.

The battle wasn't a one versus one after all. This battle was approaching the scale of war. The broken pieces of dead bodies on the ground evidenced he killed hundreds of Uruks. Not orcs but Uruks with battle Qi. Any one of them could rival ten human soldiers. So he was feeling a little fatigue.

"Phuu. Lan. Can you hear me? What's the situation now? Give me the distribution map of the Uruks." Zheng took a deep breath and said.

Lan quickly responded. She scanned the battlefield and sent the image to Zheng's mind. There were still Uruks everywhere from the shore to the forest. And countless dead bodies of them. Zheng killed over three hundred Uruks. On the main road were three hundred more dead bodies. About five hundred surrounding the players and movie characters.

Zheng noticed YinKong coming down a slope. Something happened to her but there was no other person over at her direction. “Lan, what happened to YinKong? Why does she have such expression?” Zheng asked while he chased the Uruks.

Lan paused for a while then muttered. “The Ringwraiths were not the only ones that can avoid the psyche scan... Judging by her expression, she might have met that person...”

It was her personal matter after all. Zheng had doubts and was worried but he got his mind together. The mithril rings recovered his Qi and blood energy. He also meditated with his Chaotic Unity Qi on the Nightmare to recover his stamina. An Uruk appeared in front of him once more. It heard the clop of the horse then Tiger’s Soul crossed its arm and shoulder before it had the chance to turn around.

The rest of the Fellowship were surrounded by Uruks. The movie characters were a rather reliable force. Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli slain their share of the Uruks. They were capable in both long range and close combat. The players on the other hand were a mix of strong and weak. Richard was the strongest with his Berserker technique. He charged through the Uruks with his big axe. He suffered many minor wounds but at the same time his axe crushed through any Uruk along with their shields. Richard had activated Berserker.

ChengXiao was fighting with elven sword. You could tell he undergone systematic sword and combat training. Every attack he did took down an Uruk. After ten times or so, the Uruks realized this man wasn’t an easy target. They showed signs of avoiding ChengXiao. Gungnir though was rather stingy. He didn’t even use the regular version of Ice Age. His attacks consisted of throwing ice shards and defending with an shield. But that also meant he was having a rough time.

Aya was supposedly the only player with an AOE ability. She could summon poisonous bees. However, the bees were ineffective against the Uruks. They seemed immune to the poison. She had no close range combat ability so she ran along with the Hobbits.

Zheng came in on the flaming Nightmare and holding a red sword with style. He slashed through a dozen Uruks in a series of moves. Not one Uruk needed a second slash from him. As he was about to charge into a large group, Aragorn yelled. "Don't worry about us, we are fine here! Go help Boromir. He's protecting Merry. Hurry!"

At the same time, Zheng heard a clarion call coming from afar. Legolas yelled. "That's the clarion from Gondor, hurry!" He fired several arrows at the Uruks next to Zheng and killed them.

Zheng replied. "Be careful! Back away when you can't hold them! I will be back as soon as I helped Boromir!" He turned the Nightmare around and ran up a tree. The Nightmare ran to the top then leaped away and out of everyone's sight.

Boromir was at his limit. He didn't have to protect two Hobbits as in the movie because Pippin died. There was only Merry left. But he still had to protect an extra person, Aya. Both Merry and Aya could fight. So he was at a disadvantage. He couldn't let any Uruk go past him. Though against the endless supply of Uruks, he wouldn't be able to keep them away for much longer even without the two burdens.

"Run!" Boromir yelled with his lungs seeing more and more Uruks came to them. He slain an Uruk and turned around to run.

However, what he saw was the bitter smile of Aya. A hundred Uruks had surrounded them from behind. There was nowhere to run. Boromir was weaker than Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli to begin with. With the two deadweights, he couldn't get away now even if he wanted to.

A 2.5 meter tall Uruk walked out of the group. It was muscular and radiated brighter battle Qi than the rest of the Uruks. It was probably an elite Uruk.

The Uruk stared at Boromir coldly. It brought out an elven longbow. Shockingly, it placed two arrows on the bow and aimed at Boromir. This Uruk could use Explosive shot.

The two arrows came into contact. The first arrow penetrated Boromir's left chest then went through Aya's leg. Both of them fell to the ground.

Zheng arrived to see this scene. The rest of the Uruks were swarming on to Boromir who was laying on the ground. The Nightmare jumped down from the top of a tree and stepped a Uruk into the ground. Zheng channeled Qi into Tiger's Soul. He slashed horizontally, cutting the dozens of Uruks around Boromir in halves.

Zheng took out a Charm of the Three Pures Ones and a Freezing Pill. He threw it behind to Aya without daring to turn his head away. "Attach the charm to him! Don't let him die. When he is about to die, feed him the pill! Take care of yourself!" He pulled the lead rope and the Nightmare charged toward the elite Uruk.

The Uruk had drew the bow to a crescent moon with two arrows aimed at Zheng's heart.

# Chapter 18-2

Zheng's expression paled with shock seeing that the arrows were aimed at his heart. He did not fear normal arrows but the Explosive shot was an exception. Long-term cooperation with Heng had taught him the power of this technique. The light blade barrier was still enveloping his body but he had no faith of it defending this shot. He held out Tiger's Soul in front.

The Uruk leader let go of the arrows. The first arrow reached a speed invisible to the bare eyes after an impact. Dong! A great force passed to him from Tiger's Soul. He felt as if the webbing between his thumb and index finger was tearing apart. The force transferred to the Nightmare and pushed it back a step to buffer.

Zheng quickly looked down at this sword. The arrow penetrated the light blade and stopped at his barrier. It took two layers of protection to stop the arrow and one of the layer shattered. The technique was more powerful than he expected.

"Good thing it's only a two arrow shot. If it's three arrows..." The only person Zheng was aware of that could use the three arrow shot was Heng and Legolas if he were to include the movie characters. So Zheng wasn't so worried about it. Boromir was more worrying to him due to his fatal injuries and there were two people without any combat power.

The Uruks surrounded him after he blocked the shot. These Uruks were same as the ones he killed, muscular and had minor amount of battle Qi. It was troublesome fighting these Uruks. He couldn't slash away dozens as he would against other monsters. A hundred of the Uruks outside the circle surrounding him couldn't get to him. They instead headed to where Merry and the other two people were at.

"Fuck. What is this battle Qi and it can defend against the light blade." Zheng yelled with irritation. He had decided to upgrade Tiger's Soul once this world was over. The light blade alone wasn't able to take on the movie worlds anymore.

Boromir had a hole the size of a saucer dish on his chest. He was manly

enough that he stood up, trembling, as the Uruks struck at the three people. A blade hacked at his head. He radiated with battle Qi brighter than it ever was. His heavy sword cut through the Uruk's upper body before the blade hit him.

“Run! Take the Hobbit away!” Boromir yelled then vomited blood.

Aya only got to attach the charm on his back before Boromir charged into the swarm of Uruks. Aya's leg was torn so she could only say to Merry. “Run, don't let them catch you!” She summoned another swarm of bees but she knew how ineffective they were.

The burst of energy Boromir had didn't last long. The Uruk leader readied his arrow at Zheng since Zheng had killed over a hundred Uruks in under a minute. However, seeing that the only thing standing between the rest of the Uruks and Merry was Boromir, it paused for a moment then aimed the arrows at him.

Boromir looked like a tragic character. Blood was spilling out of his mouth as he shouted. The recovery from the charm though did stopped his bleeding. He was able to slay many Uruks in the meantime. Just then, a huge force struck him on his right chest and sent him flying ten meters. An arrow nailed him onto a tree.

“Boromir!” Merry had ran some distance by this time. He couldn't contain himself as he saw the terrible sight of Boromir and cried. Merry brought up his courage. He held onto a short sword and charged at an Uruk. Yet, how could he be a match to the Uruks? The Uruk seized him onto its shoulder at the encounter. A group of Uruks then followed this Uruk away, leaving behind three hundred Uruks to stop Zheng. The ground was covered with pieces of dead bodies.

Zheng was focused on killing the Uruks around him. Suddenly, there was a rattling sound. A part of his light blade barrier shattered. An arrow pierced into the back of his shoulder. Fortunately, he was fighting with Qi and the arrow's force lessened after it passed through the barrier. The arrow pierced into his muscle then stopped there.

“Fuck! I'm a tiger not domesticated cat!” He glanced at Boromir on the

tree. Aya on the other hand was carried on the shoulder of an Uruk. Merry was going out of his sight. A rage built up within Zheng. The Uruk leader shooting him added to the fire of his rage.

Zheng had the Nightmare ran to a tree and leaped onto its trunk. He stood up on the horse's back then jumped down. Multiple swords were awaiting him below. The Uruks had much stronger strength than normal people but their speed was slightly below normal people's. It was nowhere near Zheng's speed in the second stage of the unlocked mode. He kicked through the opening of the swords and bashed an Uruk's head. The force pushed him back up to mid air.

The Uruk leader fired its second Explosive Shot. As Zheng noticed the two arrows, he immediately entered Instant Destruction. The arrow would reach a force and speed beyond that of bullets once they come to impact. He wouldn't be able to dodge at that point. Zheng used Geppo while he was still in the air to change his direction.

The arrows caused a mini explosion then an arrow with incredible speed missed him by a few meters. It blasted a hole on the trunk of a tree.

Without a moment of delay, Zheng used Soru in Instant Destruction as soon as he landed on the ground. He flashed to the Uruk leader. It was dropping its longbow and reaching for a sword. Zheng grabbed the leader's arm and leg. He gave a roar then tore the Uruk leader in two. Blood, flesh and organs splattered his body. Yet, the Uruk leader was still alive and wailing. Zheng stepped on its body and finished it off.

The rest of the Uruks were about to charge at him but he ran into the swarm instead. He focused all his energy on Explosion and didn't use the light blade barrier. Flesh and blood flew all over the battlefield.

By the time the other members of the Fellowship arrived, all that was left was a ground filled with broken bodies and flesh and Zheng stood in the middle like a demon. Blood covered his whole body. No one dared to move closer to him.

The movie characters were dazzled to see Zheng in this appearance. They knew he was strong but he gave off a rather benign feeling, nothing

like the demonish feeling he was now giving off. Zheng retrieved the slaughtering aura he gave off. The others finally recovered from their shock then they scanned the battlefield. The movie characters cried when they saw Boromir nailed on a tree.

Zheng said to Richard. “The Uruk captured Aya and ran at this direction. Go chase after them. I will see if ChengXiao can save Boromir. The supplies we exchanged coupled with his medical expertise might be able to do it.”

Richard paused for a moment then ran after the Uruks with his axe. He seemed very worried. Zheng then said to Lan via Soul Link. “How’s it over there? Are there a lot of Uruks?”

Lan replied. “We’re fine. Heng and Xuan are strong fighters. Oh and Neos chased after Aya. Is he going to be alright? He’s an intelligence type leader.”

Zheng thought for a bit. “Let him go. He has his plans if he decided to chase. Xuan, this is a turning point in the plot. The movie characters will split into three paths. You have to hurry up and make your plans. I am going to speak with ChengXiao.”

# Chapter 18-3

“Yes, I can save him if we act in time. But I am missing some important surgical tools.” ChengXiao said.

Behind him was an ice statue. The Freezing Pill froze its user to ice after a fatal injury. He would remain frozen until someone releases him. However, he would die soon afterward if that happened.

ChengXiao pointed at the statue. “Gungnir has confirmed this frozen status is an ice attribute energy. Zheng’s Qi or anyone else’s battle Qi can remove the buff. To protect his life, you will have to carefully defrost his wound while keeping the rest of the body frozen. Looking at his injuries, the injuries on his lungs are most severe and next are his arteries. Luckily his heart is fine but the damage on the arteries are still fatal. I brought artificial lungs and blood vessels but...”

“But what?” Aragorn’s emotion was in an upheaval. He thought Boromir couldn’t live but the players gave him hope. He couldn’t contain himself and grabbed ChengXiao by the shirt collar.

ChengXiao held out his hands and said. “I do have all the necessary medical tools. The artificial lungs can work for a hundred years by consuming bio-energy. Artificial blood vessels have the same structure as regular blood vessels, so the transplant is easy. Yet, there’s something we couldn’t bring in large quantity, blood. Blood expires too easily. He has already lost so much blood and will lose more in the surgery. Furthermore, to prevent his body from rejecting the transplants, I will have to use a Gu that consumes even more blood. It’s not possible to proceed with the surgery without enough blood supply. Otherwise, he will not last through the surgery.”

“Blood?” Gimli yelled. “Take my blood. My blood is boiling. I will not frown no matter how much you take!”

Zheng shouted. “Calm down! Aragorn, we are comrades so we won’t let anyone die so easily. The Freezing Pill has an extremely long duration. There’s no need to panic and do the surgery now. I say we go to Rohan

first. There will be a safe and clean place for the surgery. You don't know about blood but humans have different types of blood. We need a large number of donors for blood then choose the ones that are the same type as Boromir's."

Aragorn took a deep breath. He nodded. "I'm sorry. I was too emotional... He's a true warrior. He fought for the people of Gondor, the freedom of Gondor. They are waiting for him in the White City but he may not return."

Zheng slapped Aragorn's shoulder. "No! He will live. We will all live!"

Still, when the rest of the movie characters saw Boromir frozen in ice, their expressions were terrible. At the same time, the scan images from Lan showed that team Northern Ice Land had followed Frodo and Sam. Their group of five were heading toward Mordor. While team Africa chased after the Uruks due to Aya being captured. Zheng could no longer see Richard from where he was standing.

Zheng looked over the ruined battlefield then turned to Xuan. "What should we do now? The other two teams have chosen their paths."

Xuan nodded. "Yes. It seems that they have made their decisions way before this event. Team Northern Iceland have less team members but their leader is strong. So following Frodo is the best choice for them. This path has the least people in the original movie but also the most dangerous. Gungnir is probably planning to kill more monsters on the road for points.

Team Africa also chose a path appropriate for their team. They are the weakest of the three teams. In the movie, the road Merry and Pippin travels is the least dangerous and goes through multiple forces, the Ents, Rohan, Gondor... Neos will definitely choose this path. He wants to obtain the influences of this world.

"We are the last of the three teams." Xuan muttered. "We are the strongest even without Haotian and the Nemesis. So the head on clash of the war is left to us. I have an interesting idea."

(Another interesting idea... I don't know if I want to hear him say this or

not.)

Zheng gave in and said. "So tell me what is it you think is interesting."

Xuan waved his hand. "I won't tell you that easily. Wait for the time to come. I also need to test it. If the conjecture stands, we can take down the follow battles against Mordor without much effort!"

As they spoke, ChengXiao bandaged everyone up. Heng and Legolas were cleaning up the field. The movie characters learned that Frodo, Sam and the three people from team Northern Ice Land left and Merry and Aya were captured. Aragorn immediately decided to rescue the captives when he heard one of them was a woman.

"The Uruks are different from Orcs but both were sexually promiscuous. Women will suffer miserably in their hands. We have to rescue them before the Uruks stop or return to Isengard." Aragorn said with determination.

The group quickly ate their biscuits under Aragorn's request. The three movie characters then followed the traces left by the Uruks. Since Boromir was frozen, Zheng had to get off his mount and tied the statue on the horse. He grabbed the rope to the horse and advanced with the others on feet.

And so team China following the movie characters also chased after the Uruks. Dead bodies of Uruks lay on the ground throughout the road. They were dying in groups of tens. Their bodies seemed to be shattered by a large weapon. It was the strength of Berserker. A few days past tracing after the Uruks.

"Please, you psychopath! I don't want to fucking die with you. Get away from me!"

A young man with black hair standing on a sword yelled. He was wearing thin strips of cloth. His clothe looked like it was cut by a dagger or something sharp. His hair was a mess. His face had several small cuts.

A man with long hair stood on top of a tree underneath him. His clothe looked better but it was also filled with marks of cuts. There was burning

on his face and hair.

The man with long hair smiled. "I can't let you. The story has just begun. If you caught up to them now, the story can't go on anymore. Listen and be a good boy. Watch they ripen the little apple with their blood, friendship, sacrifices, and courage. Don't you feel such a beautiful scene makes you want to crush it? Let them build up their friendship and as they are about to return, kill off all the movie characters. Oh such taste. Even just imagining it..."

The young man with black hair expressed disgust and shouted. "Zhao ZhuiKong you fucking psychopath! Don't treat everyone the same as you. I don't have such disgusting hobby. We are not team Devil. We don't kill everyone in the other teams. I am only going to verify the people in those teams. You really think I am scared to fight you? I didn't lose even when I fought your clone!"

"If you want to fight then..." ZhuiKong nodded with a smile. "The harvesting season isn't here yet. It's not a bad idea to treat my boredom with a fight. XiuZhen (Cultivation) and third stage look quite powerful. Want to give it a try?"

He swung his arm. An object flashed across and at the same time a golden light appeared surrounding the man with black hair. Yet, it still added a bloody mark to the man's face. The wound was not deep but quite visible.

He was enraged and shouted. "I didn't fucking provoke you! What gives you the reason to block me... or did you already confirmed there's someone we want to kill in one of the teams?"

He threw eight little flags down. "Vanquishing formation!"

The flags grew as they traveled. They reached five meters by the time they landed on the ground. The flags surrounded the tree ZhuiKong was standing on, each flag radiated a different color.

ZhuiKong stopped his smile. His gaze was cold. "Do you really want to die? Retrieve this thing or I won't hold back anymore."

“Cauldron of the Eight Trigrams!”

# Chapter 19-1

The black hair young man threw down eight flags then he weaved various patterns with his hand as he chanted. “Qian, Dui, Li, Zhen, Xun, Kan, Gen, Kun.” (Sky, Lake, Fire, Thunder, Wind, Water, Mountain, Earth)

The characters of these eight words gradually emerged from the flags. The flags began to slowly rotate. As his chanting continued, the flags rotated faster and faster. His voice grew louder and airier. It sounded as if the voice came from the sky.

“Purple flame of the Eight Trigrams, I command you...”

He was still chanting. A huge Taijitu was surfacing underneath his sword. The Taijitu faced the rotating flags that were confining ZhuiKong. Purple flame revolved within the Taijitu. They were waiting for the chanting to finish then the flame would descend onto ZhuiKong.

Right at this critical moment, ZhuiKong’s eyes grew cold as ice. A 70cm short sword suddenly appeared in his hand. He slashed at the air in front of him. Black hair quickly dodged to the side. Yet, his arm was still cut in two. There were only a few words left to his chanting.

“Pick up the phone. Pick up the phone. I am his woman...” Just then, a sound came from his chest and interrupted his rhythm. Black hair wanted to force those last few words out but he paused for a few seconds then vomited a mouthful of blood. His face turned pale white. He took out an antique looking phone from his pocket.

“Hello... I get it. Hand the phone to Adam... I am not far from the waterfall of Caradhras... but he makes me rage... understood.” He then threw the phone to ZhuiKong who caught it and placed it by his ear. “Hello, is this Adam? Look time no see. Thanks for letting us go the last time. Or I would have lost two garbage cleaners.”

A calm voice responded through the phone. “There isn’t much to be said. Zheng Zha has to die. I think you have met team Devil. There only needs to be one demon like him. Two would be troublesome even for you. End of discussion here. If you want to play your art of manipulating

people, you can kill Luo YingLong here. He's going to revive in God's dimension anyway as long as his Core remains. However, if I see his Core return to the Sky and Earth Mirror in my hand, it signifies a declaration of war. I will use all our resources to kill you even if we were to let the other three team go. That will let the demon escape but you aren't that much less of a threat from him."

"Is that so?" ZhuiKong pondered for a long while before he said with laughter. "I can't die yet. I can't die before my little apple ripens. Then let's compromise. You can't attack him before the end of the battle at Gondor. Because his strength supports the life of team China and my little apple is in that team... This is my bottom line. If you refuse, you can see the beautiful Core fly through the sky."

He did not hesitate before speaking his words despite being on the ground while LuoYingLong was in the air. LuoYingLong's cheeks turned red. He almost couldn't control himself from attacking.

"Deal. And there's one more thing I have to verify. I heard that man is also in team China. If possible, let him know that I am in team Celestial. Otherwise, this realm will be too unexciting."

Team China of course wouldn't know what was happening far away. Zheng and his group followed Aragorn and the other movie characters. The nine of them rushed their way as they wanted to catch up to the Uruks before they rest. Aya was in risk of getting defiled. That was under the assumption that team Africa failed to save Aya.

They were getting close to the Uruks after a few days of rushed chasing. The dead bodies on the ground never stopped appearing. They had become the marker for their route.

After four days and nights, another morning came. Everyone including Zheng was feeling their bodies unable to keep up. Aragorn had no choice but to agree to rest for three hours. The sun would come up in three hours and they could continue the chase again.

"The sun is in the color of blood. It seems like a massacre happened not that far away last night." Legolas stared at the sun and said.

Everyone looked tired. They had been running for four days without rest, only stopping to eat and drink. Yet, they still hadn't caught up to the Uruks. The Uruks had extraordinary endurance.

Once everyone got up, Legolas handed them each a piece of biscuit. He then went to check the ice statue. That was what he did everyday. He led the group on the road again, following the traces on the ground.

They arrived at an grassy field stretching as far as they eye could see. Judging by the map, they had entered the Rohan territory, a kingdom of cavalries. Rohan's specialties were horses and elite riders. Their force was only second to Gondor among the kingdoms of man.

By noon, everyone was tired. A series of whinny suddenly came from the distance. Their hearts skipped a beat because clops of numerous horses running followed after the whinny.

The group hid behind large boulders to be safe. They saw a group of cavalry charging by. The cavalries were elites. The horses were smaller than the Nightmare but were obviously fine breeds. The size, defense and speed of a horse determined the strength of a cavalry's charge.

"You can see they are well trained. They maintained a defensive formation while running." Xuan answered when Zheng asked about the strength of the knights.

Zheng nodded. "The last question is, can they use battle Qi? If they do, this army would be overpowered."

They cavalries had ran past them. There were about five hundred of them. Some of the knights also were leading extra horses. Aragorn came out of hiding and yelled. "Riders of Rohan! What news from the Mark? You look like you just fought a battle."

When the leader in front stopped, the rest of the knights ran around to his back as if someone were commanding them. They continued to maintain their formation. The leader of the cavalries looked at Aragorn then led his knights over.

Gimli, Legolas, and the players also came out.

The knights encircled the nine of them in the center. They pointed their spears at the group. Nine people seemed so insignificant among several hundred cavalries. The leader entered the circle.

He questioned the group in a cold voice. “What business does an elf, a man, a dwarf, a woman and a girl have in the Riddermark? What do you plan to do with such a strange group!”

Gimli couldn't hold himself back. “Give me your name, horsemaster, and I shall give you mine.”

The leader got off his horse and walked over to Gimli. Their heights were such a contrast. He said in a cold tone. “I would cut off your head, dwarf, if it stood but a little higher from the ground.”

“Cut off your head?” Right as the leader finished his sentence, Zheng's sword was already on his neck. Zheng repeated the question with the same cold tone.

# Chapter 19-2

The riders were startled. Not one of the hundreds of them caught Zheng's movement. His speed was simply too fast and secondly, everyone's eyes were looking at Gimli until the moment the red sword was placed next to their leader's neck. No one dared to move at this moment.

Aragorn and Legolas were also appalled. It wouldn't be as serious a problem if it were someone else holding the sword. They knew how strong Zheng was, someone who took down hundreds of Uruks. The riders were well trained but their numbers here weren't enough for him to kill.

Aragorn immediately stepped in front of Zheng. "This is a misunderstanding... Riders of Rohan, I am Aragorn, son of Arathorn. This is Gimli, son of Glóin, and Legolas, from the Woodland realm. These are friends of Gandalf the Grey and brave warriors of man. We are friends of Rohan and of Théoden, your king. There is no need to point your spears at us."

The leader didn't panic. He waited for Zheng to move the sword away then said. "Théoden no longer recognizes friend from foe. Not even his own kin. Saruman the White has gained control of him." The leader removed his helm, revealing a tired face.

The riders withdrew their spears.

The leader continued. "Saruman has poisoned the mind of the king and claimed lordship over this land. My company are those loyal to Rohan. And for that, we are banished. The White Wizard is cunning. He walks here and there they say, as an old man, hooded and cloaked. And everywhere his spies slip past our nets."

Aragorn let out a sigh of relief. He reapplied the riders mistook them for spies, hence the hostility. He said. "We are no spies. We track a band of Uruk-hai westward across the plains. They have taken two of our friends captive."

The leader pondered. "We encountered the Uruk-hai during the night. To our surprise, it looked as though a terrifying thing was chasing after

them. They continued running after seeing us. We did notice a woman and a Hobbit among them.”

Zheng said. “That’s the right group then. The woman and Hobbit are our comrades. Did you see any other humans?”

The leader shook his head. “No other man. We did not find any woman or Hobbit after the battle. They might have ran or they might have died to our horses. We piled the carcasses and burned them.” He pointed to smoke in the distance, about a few kilometers away on a low ground.

Aragorn met eyes with the players. No one said a word. The movie characters were worried but team China knew team Africa had entered the woods according to the plot.

The leader looked over the nine of them then said something to his adjutant. Several riders then brought over seven horses.

“May these horses bear you to better fortune than the former masters. Look for your friends, but do not trust the hope. It has forsaken these lands.” He put his helm back on then mounted on his horse. He headed through the riders.

The riders departed as fast as they had came. A few minutes later and they were far away, leaving the group of nine and seven horses in the field. Oh, and there was the skeleton horse carrying a frozen statue.

Zheng and Aragorn nodded to each other. They each mounted on a horse. Lan and YinKong mounted on one. Gimli and Legolas mounted one. Then the group rode toward the burning carcasses.

They arrived at the smoking area before long. Several spears stood on the ground, each had a head of Uruk at its end. In the center of the area was a two meter tall pile of dead bodies. The number of Uruks was approximately a hundred. There was no hope of finding any survivor among these bodies. They had to search the weapons and items for traces.

Some time passed, Gimli pulled a charred belt from the weapon pile. He cried. “It’s one of their little belts. They may have been...”

“No!” Aragorn did not look at the belt. He looked to the side and some

tracks. “A Hobbit lay here. He crawled. And a woman crawled over here. Look here, traces of shoes that belonged to man.”

While Aragorn was searching for the traces, team China examined the wounds on the Uruks since they knew the captives were fine.

Zheng looked at a cut off head and said. “Cut by a dull anti-cavalry saber. The charging speed from a horse gives it enough destructive force without a sharp blade. Yet, the head doesn’t look surprised. So it wasn’t killed by the riders charging at the band. This wound has trace of battle Qi.”

He turned around to face the other five members. “I saw Aragorn use his battle Qi. The battle Qi transfers to his sword and increases its toughness. It can even block my light blade. Which means after the riders first charged at the Uruks, they continued to fight them in an arm to arm battle. It had to be battle Qi that allowed him to cut such a clean wound using a dull saber without the speed from a charge... Why are you looking at me like that?”

Aside from Xuan, everyone else seemed stunned. It was as though he was saying bizarre things.

“Well.” ChengXiao said in a serious tone. “It would be normal if Aragorn was the one saying these things. But bro, aren’t you roleplaying too seriously? Do you really believe you are an experienced mercenary in this world? You were an office worker.”

Zheng scratched his head. “We have been fighting with our lives everyday aside from the days in God’s dimension. I can’t not learn these things even if I try to. The consequence from using Tiger’s Soul taught me how to control my strength when using a blade and how slashes function. Battle Qi is also similar to Qi so... I seemed to have become an expert without realizing it. Haha.”

Xuan ignored his laughter. He continued examining the burned bodies and intact heads. “Around 70 to 80 percent of the riders can use battle Qi. The rest might be new recruits. They have excellent capacities. And with battle Qi, these riders can rival Uruks two to three times their number.”

“Right, I also thought about it. If we have a thousand riders and fifty elves that can use Explosive Shot, we won’t have to fear the other two teams. Though these elven archers are rare. They also won’t participate in the war. The other thing is the Nemesis...” Zheng laughed.

Xuan continued after him. “Get it. The Nemesis can retain most of the person’s prior abilities and unlock the first to second stage. It also enhances a person’s body to ten folds his stats. If we can transform the Uruk leaders that can use Explosive Shot to Nemesis, twenty of them would be enough to deter the other two teams. Is this what you were going to say?”

Zheng nodded. “Right, right. No matter how strong they are individually, as a team, or with their influence, a thousand of these riders and twenty of those Nemesis give us the power to go wherever we want. There’s no need to worry about team East America or team Celestial.”

“Oh?” Xuan sneered. “What about the final Ringwraith? Are you certain the Explosive Shot can hit it? What if Sauron is more powerful than the Balrog? Can you kill it with this group? And... what if there’s someone as strong as your clone in team Celestial or team East America? You are too optimistic. I don’t know what kind of feeling this is, but I feel that I might die in this battle.”

# Chapter 20-1

Zheng couldn't figure out the meaning behind Xuan's words. The man was always so calm and confident like not one thing in this world could scare him. Having him as a comrade made them feel safe. Xuan never said anything these kind of words in all the desperate situations they had come through.

Zheng didn't know if he should be happy for him or worry. Logically, this would mean Xuan had feelings but he just didn't know how to express them yet. However, the content of his words were worrying.

(Xuan's death... Hope this is only his illusion. A person who has been dealing with only data and probability mentions feeling is a bad omen by itself. But his death... I have never thought about this happening.)

Aragorn traced the footsteps ahead. Zheng was distressed from Xuan's words. He had no choice but to simulate HongLu's thinking and try to figure out what Xuan meant.

(Theoretically, he is the safest person among us. He is as safe as Lan. I have been paying attention to protect them. They are the cores of the team. Team China's strength and survivability would drop by a half without them. So if Xuan ended up dying, not many in the team can escape death either. It might even end in a wipe.) He was indulged in his thoughts that he didn't notice Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli's expressions turning serious.

Aragorn noticed Zheng spacing out and shouted at him in a low voice. "Be careful! Don't let other things distract you. The trees told Legolas something."

Legolas frowned and said. "Yes. They are saying the White Wizard is approaching. Saruman has come!"

The movie characters tensed up. They knew that only wizards could rival wizards. The thundering magic Saruman used was still vivid in their memory.

Though team China knew the one supposed to be coming was Gandalf. So many things happened on the way but the plot converged to the movie. Gandalf was reborn as Gandalf the White and would meet the group here.

As expected, a white light radiated from deep within the woods. Aragorn looked to Zheng. "You are the strongest person here. Once Saruman begins his attack, you are the only one who can fight back... or perhaps kill him. So do not let him speak, he will put a spell on us. Or none of us will survive."

Zheng nodded without much emotion. The white light loom in on them. The movie characters drew their weapons. Legolas placed three arrows on his bow. The players didn't want to bother getting their weapons out but that would make them appear they were abandoning their comrades. They couldn't help it and grabbed their weapons. They quietly waited for the white light to approach.

The white light came very close. Gimli shouted and threw his axe at the light. Legolas also released his three arrows. Aragorn and Zheng charged ahead, ready to attack. Though Zheng was merely giving an act.

Dong! Dong! The axe and and Explosive Shot hit a translucent barrier. The barrier was so tough that the axe shattered on impact and arrow couldn't pierce through. Aragorn and Zheng's swords were deflected and only left a crisp sound.

"You are tracking the footsteps of a young Hobbits and a group of humans. They passed this way, the day before yesterday. They met someone they did not expect. Does that comfort you?" An old man's voice came from the light.

The voice sounded so familiar that Aragorn became suspicious. "Who are you? Show yourself!"

The bright white light cloaked the old man. Following Aragorn's shout, the light dimmed, revealing Gandalf dressed in white. He smiled at the Fellowship.

The movie characters were stunned. Though the players kept their cool.

Gandalf said. "Down in the abyss, I fought the core of the Balrog of Morgoth. I attempted to seal the creature with the Flame of Udun. The creature realized its fate was determined. It self destructed its life core. The flame consumed me..."

I strayed out of thought and time. Stars wheeled overhead, and every day was as long as the life age of the earth. But it was not the end. I felt light in me again. I've been sent back until my task is done."

The movie characters let out a sigh of relief. Aragorn walked over to Gandalf. "Gandalf! So glad you're back."

"Gandalf? Oh yes. That's what they used to call me. Gandalf the Grey. That was my name. I am Gandalf the White." Gandalf turned to the players. "I saw your origin through Eru's eyes. You aren't people of our world but I trust you will help me complete my task. Brave warriors."

The players were surprised. Zheng asked. "You saw our origin? Is it the world we come from? What is your task?"

"It is of course to destroy Sauron." Gandalf laughed.

Xuan suddenly asked. "Only Sauron? Not the One Ring?"

Gandalf returned with an enigmatic smile. "Eru sees through everything. The One Ring will disappear from Middle Earth but it will not be destroyed. The prophecy says either you or another group of people in Mordor will take the ring away. Sauron will disappear and the ring remains. The three elven rings will retain their powers. The elves can stay in their realm and not leave their homeland. This is part of the prophecy I witnessed.

The other part of the prophecy shows another group that came from the same place as you. They have strong hostility towards you. Eru told me to defeat them or one person in the group will help Sauron obtain the One Ring. Once the ring falls in Sauron's hands, countless warriors will lose their lives. My task will fail."

Gandalf walked along the forest. "There is no need to think too far ahead. War has come to Rohan. We must ride to Edoras with all speed.

Saruman's army is preparing to attack. Our first battle is to defeat his army. The prophecy says the One Ring will remain safe until we defeat the armies of Mordor. There is no need to worry about it. We need to hurry to Edoras."

Zheng asked Xuan in a low voice. "Can we trust him? Is there really a prophecy that can tell our future?"

Xuan replied calmly. "There are gods in this movie world. We can imagine these gods possess strong magical powers. At least the ability to see through nearly all the land and people in this world. When you have nearly perfect information, it isn't difficult to induce the future. Would you actually think my plans are prophecies?"

Zheng stopped for a moment. "Well, your plans... sometimes do feel like prophecies. It's like you know what is going to happen next."

Xuan nodded. "Right. I don't see how things develop but I can induce based on given information and each person's personality. Just like how I am certain Haotian will find the loophole in my plan and try to complete it, and how the other four members will end up following his plan. Once you analyze every detail, then the ending naturally comes.

Similarly, if this god witnessed the power of team East America and team Celestial and saw the hostility they showed toward us, it will come to the conclusion that Gandalf saw. Someone from team East America or team Celestial must have come to us before. It is likely that the person attacked us. We should be prepared for their attacks."

# Chapter 20-2

As the group followed Gandalf through the woods, Gandalf said. “The last time Sauron invaded Middle Earth, the half orcs, orcs and Uruk-hai burned down this land. The ents were forced to participate in the war. They have bodies over ten meters tall. Hundreds of ents buried ten thousand orcs under the land. They took root here to put life back to these woods.”

Aragorn said. “If we can get their help...”

“It isn’t possible.” Gandalf shook his head. “The ents favor serenity. They can stay in the earth for ten years at a time. They can converse for days at a time. As long as no one enrages them, they won’t leave the woods. They have strong power but they remained unknown in Middle Earth.”

The group came to the border of the woods. Gandalf whistled piercingly. It was a magic that spread his sound outward.

The rest of the group stopped next to Gandalf. Xuan brought out several fruits then he stared at Gandalf’s staff as he ate. The staff was changed to a one made of white jade. Symbols and strange pictures filled its exterior.

“Xuan...” Zheng leaned against a tree and asked. He was holding the rope of the horse the Rohan riders gave them. The Nightmare walked by him on its own.

Xuan responded but didn’t turn his head. Zheng continued. “Why are you always eating these things? I don’t see you eat that much when we eat together. But you always have fruits or something colorful in hand.”

Xuan, still not turning his head, said. “Thinking consumes more energy than exercise. Having something to eat maintains the brain’s ability at a flexible state. Neos is a representation of this except he’s too extreme. If you have the time to think about these unimportant questions, I would like to ask you a question.”

Zheng became curious. “Oh, you can always ask me. Not like I will hide anything from you.”

“Good. Are you restraining your own power?” He finally turned around to glanced at Zheng, then immediately went back to Gandalf’s staff. “I induced it from things YinKong said. When we went to Resident Evil for the prototype T-virus, she said you killed several hundreds of evolved Lickers. The heart of slayer is good but it isn’t the key point. Hundreds of evolved Lickers aren’t that easy to take down. YinKong said she can only kill one when fighting face to face. So I could induce your strength. It wasn’t possible for you to suffer so little injuries after killing all those evolved Lickers with Explosion and Destruction. I came to the conclusion that something must have happened at the time. Something that YinKong didn’t see. What is it? I am curious what technique or power you are not telling us. It doesn’t suit your personality.

Afterward in this world, your performance against the Ringwraiths and in the Mines of Moria was mediocre. It’s close to your strength previously shown. You may not believe it but you have more potential than Heng. After Resident Evil and even Starship Troopers you were still pretty much the same. Why? There’s only one explanation, you are intentionally controlling how strong you appear.”

Xuan finished the last fruit on hand then turned around to Zheng. “What are you afraid of? Or perhaps what is that power you are afraid of? I can’t give you suggestions on this. You can only rely on yourself to figure it out. However, I want you to know that there’s a limit to how much strategies can accomplish. The limit lies on the difference in strength. When this strength exceeds the amount the strategy tolerates, the strategy becomes a joke. If team Africa can destroy a starship with one punch back in Starship Troopers, not amount of strategy we have would save us.”

Zheng appeared to be hesitating. He tried to speak but held himself back. After struggling, he said in a low voice. “Give me some time. Believe me... I won’t harm my comrades.”

Xuan didn’t continue the topic. He waved his hand then went back to Gandalf’s staff. A bright neigh answered from afar. The seven horses around them looked uneasy.

“That is one of the Mearas, unless my eyes are cheated by some spell.”

Legolas could see a white horse running over from the distance. Its speed was on par with the Nightmare.

When the white horse came close, they realized it was huge. It was larger than regular war horses by a quarter, the same size as the Nightmare. The white horse was intelligent. It stopped in front of Gandalf and rubbed him with its head. Gandalf stroked the white hair. "Shadowfax. He's the lord of all horses, and has been my friend through many dangers. Let us ride to Edoras!"

The group began their journey again to Rohan. The movie characters appeared much happier now. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli had been bearing the pain of the death of a friend and the pain of being defeated. The return of Gandalf gave them a glimpse of hope, especially since Gandalf gained stronger power. It gave them confidence.

The players were stark in contrast. Xuan remained indifferent to everything. Lan was still occasionally glancing at Zheng. ChengXiao was always optimistic as if there were nothing that would trouble him. He kept attempting to talk with Lan and YinKong and laughing all the time.

Heng was working harder than ever since he came to this realm. He kept asking Legolas for the tips on the three arrow Explosive Shot and practiced by shooting at rocks in the distance. He had the highest fighting spirit out of the team.

YinKong and Heng both seemed troubled. They didn't pay any attention to what the others are talking about.

And so, this group of four movie characters and six players rode for several days through the plain and reached Edoras.

It was a basic city built on a hill. They could induce through the movie characters' conversations that the people of Rohan used to lead nomadic lives. After they settled down, they retained the habits of a nomad. This was a nation with strong military power built on the back of horses. However, they were inferior to Gondor on construction and things concerning normal living.

The group approached the exterior of the city then followed the wooden

walls to the gate. Gandalf and Aragorn gave their names then the small gate opened up. It was only big enough to fit two horses at the same time. The group rode into the city. That frozen statue on a Nightmare immediately received looks and cries from the civilians.

The city though had a low population. The population density seemed scattered when compared to the Shire or the two elven cities they passed by. Gimli couldn't hold his mouth. "You'll find more cheer in a graveyard."

The rest of the movie characters sighed. They climbed the stairs to the hall. After notifying the guards of their arrival, a slightly chubby guard in position came out. "I cannot allow you before Théoden king so armed, Gandalf Grayhame. By order of... Gríma Wormtongue."

Gandalf changed to a gray robe after they came out out the woods. He looked like the Gray Wizard that he was before. With a nod from Gandalf, the rest of the group gave their weapons to the guards. The players handed their elven weapons over. But when the guard asked for the staff, Gandalf responded. "Eh? Oh. No, you would not part an old man from his walking stick?"

He thought for a moment. Another guard pulled his sleeve a bit then he gave Gandalf a knowing look. He walked back into the hall. The group followed.

# Chapter 21-1

Not much was needed to describe how Gandalf saved Theoden. It followed the movie plot where he used the power of a wizard to expel Saruman's control. The process was merely Gandalf waving his staff.

The king of Rohan looked like an eighty year old man. After Gandalf saved him from the curse, his body quickly recovered in a minute. His pale gray face slowly gained hint of blood. And he returned to the look of a middle age man.

Theoden was a strong cavalry. In less than three days, he regained the ability to use battle Qi and ride a horse. The intensity of his battle Qi surpassed that of Aragorn's. He was still valiant despite being passed the golden age of a man. No one could ignore his presence.

The Fellowship and team China spent these several days resting. Theoden fell under control for so long that the political system and army of Rohan were now in a chaotic state. He used the time to recover his body and straighten out the political system. Gandalf felt pressed for time but he didn't put much pressure on Theoden and helped him instead.

Team China didn't only rest during these days. They obtained permission from Theoden then began gathering the civilians in the city. ChengXiao tested blood type of the civilians. He then chose the thirty strongest men, drew enough blood, and finally proceeded the surgery on Boromir.

Zheng defrosted with his Qi. YinKong acted as his assistant. This was a surgery covering the heart and lung under crude conditions. Ten hours later, ChengXiao announced success with an exhausted look. Boromir though had to recuperate for the next several months. In other words, he wouldn't be of use in this war.

The other thing was that Gandalf had agreed to unbind the weapons they had. He decided to do it while they had the free time and the weapons would prove useful in the upcoming battles. The magic to unbind weapons were rather complicated. It needed large quantity of energy stones and he

would be weakened for a few days. That was why he chose to do it now.

Team China originally planned to watch the magic but Gandalf drove them out of the room. He chanted in a strange language accompanied by explosions of lights. They realized this process was much more complicated than expelling the curse on Theoden. The lights lasted for an hour before fading away. Gandalf came out of the room exhausted. He handed the weapons to Zheng, returned to his room, and shut the door. He told them not to bother him.

“He seemed really tired.” Gimli said in a low voice after he saw Gandalf shutting the door.

Aragorn and Legolas nodded in agreement. They turned to the two weapons on Zheng’s hand. The invisible sword revealed itself. It looked plained. There was nothing really distinctive about it. Just a plain two handed sword, except for two lines of engravings on the blade.

The silver bow on the other hand looked fascinating. Symbols and characters exposed themselves on the bow, covering every bit of its body. Strings of silver light flowed among the symbols and characters. Zheng could not feel these light when he held the bow. The bow was attractive when unbound.

Without delay, he handed the weapons to YinKong and Heng. they dripped their blood on the bow. Excalibur turned invisible once more. The symbols and characters on the bow subsided.

Zheng let out a sigh of relief. “These soul bound weapons come with their own abilities. You have to learn to use them during these days. Or it will be too late when the battle comes.”

Heng naturally agreed. YinKong glanced at Zheng without a word, then she left with the sword. She was heading to the gate of the city. It looked like she was going to train outside the city.

Heng sighed with mixed feelings. “Can’t believe she’s girl. She always train so hard like she doesn’t know what tiredness feels like. People from the assassin’s clan are intrinsically different from us.”

Zheng stared at her back then sighed. “No. Assassin’s clan isn’t enough for that... she’s carrying too much. These burden are pressing down on her. She has to struggle with all she has to survive... It still comes down to power. We don’t have the power to seize our fate.”

YinKong’s back seemed so lonely. They almost couldn’t help but want to share that burden with her. Just so she wouldn’t feel lonely.

Several days later, the political system of Rohan came under control. Theoden called for the movie characters and the players.

He told them his thoughts as soon as they met. “Saruman’s army is looming. The scouts returned message that he sent an army of ten thousand Uruk-hai. These weren’t cowardice like the half orcs and orcs. The Uruk-hai will reach us in a few days. We don’t have the force to rival this army. I plan to migrate my people and army to Helm’s Deep. The natural defense of the location will help us defend against the Uruk-hai!”

Gandalf shook his head. “This is but a taste of the terror that Saruman will unleash. He plans to break through Rohan and meet up with the army of orcs from Mordor. The several hundred riders you have will not hold against the ten thousand Uruk-hai even in Helm’s Deep. Ride out and meet him head on. You must fight.”

Aragorn said. “You have two thousand good men riding north as we speak. They were merely forced out of Rohan. Eomer is loyal to you. His men will return and fight for their king.”

Theoden sighed. “They are at least 1500km from here. We cannot get in contact with them. We cannot garrison here and wait for them. The Uruk-hai will slaughter all my people before they will be back. Loyalty is not the issue. I have decided to make for the refuge of Helm’s Deep.”

Gandalf and Aragorn sighed. They knew nothing more could be said.

Xuan said. “Do you have a hundred elite riders? I am referring to ones that possess battle Qi, the most elite of the Rohan riders. These riders also need to be proficient archers.”

Everyone was surprised. Theoden thought for moment before giving an

answer. “These should be a hundred of elite riders aside from the royal guards. However, they can’t fight ten thousand Uruk-hai. Our numbers differ by too many.”

Xuan shook his head. “There is no need to fight, just delay them. You will move slow with the civilians. They will drag out a long line. When that happens, a small group of Uruk-hai can harass you. Instead, we can send out our army to harass their march. The goals of the hundred elite riders are to slow down their march, kill their scouts, burn their supplies, ambush their back line and their camps. They will arrive at Helm’s Deep exhausted.”

The movie characters’s eyes glimmered. Harassing with small groups existed in this world but no one treated it as a serious tactic. Guerrilla warfare was foreign to them.

Theoden stood up. He walked back and forth, pondering on the possibility of splitting forces. He clenched his teeth then said. “We will do just that. Losing a hundred elite riders weakens our defense in Helm’s Deep but they are worth if we can get my people into Helm’s Deep in safety. I have bring my remaining marshals along. Aragorn and Zheng, I need your help. Lead these hundred riders and shield our retreat. Delay the Uruk-hai until all the people enter Helm’s Deep. Then come to Helm’s Deep as soon as possible. Go. Lead the the brave warriors of Rohan to battle!”

# Chapter 21-2

Xuan's guerrilla warfare tactic was to have a hundred elite riders each carry two horses and three days worth of ration. They took off their armors and only had their bow and large number of arrows as weapon. Everyone headed to the battlefield with light packs.

Aragorn questioned. "Will this actually work? The riders lose over half their strength without armors and spears. I don't think these riders are elite anymore if they encounter the Uruk-hai. I don't agree with your tactic."

Zheng laughed. "I get his plan. You might think this is stupid but this type of tactic is terrorizing for the enemies. An ethnic group nearly conquered the world using this tactic back in my world. I can't be certain of the strength of this tactic in this world but it won't be far off."

The movie characters did not understand but the players connected it with the rise of Mongolia. People familiar with history knew the destructive power this tactic brought and so they didn't question it.

The riders prepared themselves in half a day. Gandalf went after the two thousand riders that left. Gimli, ChengXiao and YinKong accompanied Theoden to Helm's Deep. Zheng, Xuan, Lan, Heng, Aragorn, and Legolas headed out with the elite riders to delay the Uruk-hai's march.

Everyone was prepared to battle. Xuan planned to set out at night. They had one last hour of rest. Aragorn somehow got along with the princess of Rohan. She was a blonde, soldierly woman. She carried a sword and was preparing to protect the villagers to Helm's Deep. As she spoke with Aragorn, she blushed mildly. Legolas and Gimli couldn't stop their smiles watching on the side.

Team China was also holding a conversation. Zheng had ChengXiao protect YinKong to his best, even though YinKong was the stronger of the two. Nevertheless, ChengXiao took it seriously. "Protect yourselves. Some of the Uruk-hai could use Explosive Shots, so don't show yourselves and fight face to face. Shield yourselves with the city wall. If the plot changed

enough that you are forced to retreat, don't drill on getting a victory. Your lives are the most important."

ChengXiao laughed. "I know. You are not that old yet why are you suddenly speaking like that? Don't worry. We won't trade our lives for points."

"You're not wrong but..." Zheng was going to say something.

Then Xuan interrupted him from the distance with a yell. "Time's up. Everyone depart!"

Zheng looked at the two of them and said. "Just, be careful." He mounted on the Nightmare then followed after Xuan.

This group had abandoned everything that made them heavy cavalries, the heavy armors, the barding and the spears. The only close range weapon they carried was a broadsword. This group can only be categorized as light cavalries.

In return, they gained swift movement speed. The riders entered the darkness of the night like wind. People in the city could no longer see them.

Lan's abilities shined in this situation. She was inexperienced in riding horses. However, the psyche scan was the most useful ability in this tactic. As dawn of the second day came, the group ran through distance that would have taken them two days. The psyche scan detected the front most group of Uruk-hai. It was a group of three hundred Uruk-hai riding on wargs. These were probably the scouts in the movie.

"Use night arrows..." Xuan commanded.

Xuan taught them basic commands after the group was formed. He also had people painted some of the arrows black. Due to the lack of time, each rider only received ten of such arrows.

The riders came near the camps. The horses were trained so that they wouldn't make any noise. Legolas and Heng fired their arrows. The riders then lobbed arrows at the camps.

The structure of the Uruk-hai army was fairly crude. There were no such positions as lieutenants, marshals. The groups tended to be led by a single leader. But due to their strength, the lack of a structure wasn't prominent.

The first wave of arrows killed dozens of Uruk-hai. Xuan then commanded a wave of fire arrows. It ignited the camps and killed thirty more Uruk-hai. On the third wave, the riders used night arrows again while the Uruk-hai was paying attention for more fire arrows, which led to even more casualties. The Uruk-hai was in a chaos. Only ten of them mounted on the wards and ran out from the camps.

However, what awaited them outside were the riders with their bows ready. Numerous arrows pierce through these ten Uruk-hai. Xuan commanded the riders to lower their bows then had Zheng lead thirty riders charge into the camps. The rest of the riders began retrieving useable arrows.

And so, they wiped a group of Uruk-hai without any casualty. Although ambush was also a factor to the result. It was almost miraculous compared to the riders' previous tactic of charging straight in.

"Get on your mount. March at normal speed. Twenty minutes of eating. Two hours of rest on the horses. Lan, expand the psyche scan its largest size. Rest when you are tired." Xuan commanded then mounted on his horse.

The riders quickly followed his commands. They talked and laughed loudly while they ate. The riders wouldn't fear the Uruk-hai but the feat they accomplished would normally require five hundred elite riders, and not without casualties. This achievement gave them faith in this journey.

Three after noon on the same day, Lan detected another group of 1500 Uruk-hai. This group were carrying loads of spoils. It appeared that they raided a village. Xuan inquired the situation then commanded the riders to ambush the Uruk-hai.

Zheng was nowhere near Xuan's ability when it came to commanding a group of more than thirty people. He was only experienced with small groups. So Xuan naturally became the leader here. Zheng worked under

his commands.

The riders caught up to the Uruk-hai right as dusk fell. Sunlight was dimming but their views were still clear. The Uruk-hai were unrest upon seeing the riders but when they realized the small number, they became careless. Three hundred Uruk-hai raised their spears. And two groups split up to surround the riders.

The riders didn't charge at them as usual. They shot arrows at the split up groups. Three waves of shooting later, a hundred of the armored and shield Uruk-hai fell. This enraged the rest of them. Five hundred Uruk-hai charged at the riders.

The riders stopped shooting and retreated. However, they stopped at fifty meters and shot another wave of arrows. They continued to retreat then shoot. Hundreds of Uruk-hai fell down before they became aware of the situation. Their archers countered, taking down several riders that didn't dodge in time.

Xuan brought Heng and Legolas for times like this. The two of them had greater range and accuracy than the Uruk-hai. They sniped the archers. Any Uruk-hai that came close were shot down by the riders. Yet, they couldn't outrun the horses when they retreated. The Uruk-hai scattered and the riders shot freely.

The time reached two after midnight. The last Uruk-hai died at the cost of four riders. "Get on your mount. March at normal speed. Twenty minutes of eating. Six hours of sleep on the horses. Then we will continue the attacks!"

# Chapter 22-1

For three days and three nights, the name of the guerrilla warfare riders spread through the land of Rohan. All Uruk-hai that had ran into the riders were wiped. Thousands of Uruk-hai lost their lives on the Rohan land and gave birth to the name Hooves of Ghosts. The riders came and went without traces. They were as mysterious as ghosts.

Only forty riders were left at this point. However, these forty were the elites among elites. And because God enhanced the natives in this world, these riders possessed battle Qi and stronger bodies. Three days of battle unlocked the first genetic constraint for seven of them. Ten riders became able to use Explosive Shots. As the teacher, Heng cried unfair to such advancement. Though the riders gained massive combat strength.

The groups' number continued to drop but their combat strength rose. They had killed over four thousand Uruk-hai. One rider began cutting the Uruk-hai's ear after each kill. Soon, the rest of the riders followed this practice. Zheng then handed them bags to hang on the horses' sides.

Non-stop battles consumed everyone's body to its limit. The psyche scan no longer found any Uruk-hai raiding villages nor scouts. It appeared that the Uruk-hai feared this group of riders because they gathered to form an army of 15,000 and marched toward Helm's Deep.

The riders were no longer able to ambush such an army. Furthermore, there was an increased number of Uruk-hai that could use Explosive Shot in the army. Xuan made the prompt decision to retreat the riders to Helm's Deep. The movie characters though weren't too satisfied with retreating. The power of the riders gave them more confidence than ever before. They felt as though they would never lose as long as their horses and bows were still in hands.

Aragorn and Legolas were awed by the tactic. Legolas muttered. "We elves have the best archery techniques. Our horse riding isn't at the same level but we can probably suppress Mordor's army behind their walls if we were to use the same tactic."

Aragorn nodded in agreement. He exclaimed. "Gondor isn't a nation of riders but we have a large enough population that it won't be difficult to select a few thousand elite riders that can use bows."

Zheng responded without paying much attention to them. He was thinking to himself at the moment. These forty riders were a strong force. They might not be too useful in a war but they could change the tide in team battles. The Explosive Shots alone could compensate for the lack of magical weapons, close range combat ability, and sustainability. The first wave of ten Explosive Shots would kill off most players. He wouldn't be able to dodge ten shots without being in Destruction.

(We have to get our hands on these forty riders. The best case is to obtain their control from Theoden. This influence can be a threat to team East America and team Celestial in the upcoming encounters. Or in the least, the riders can reduce their team members in case they are hostile.) Zheng thought as he rode on the Nightmare. He didn't really participate in the battles during these three days because it would consume too much mental stamina to fight without rests. After pondering, he slept on the Nightmare. Xuan took over his lead rope. It didn't matter to Xuan if he got sleep or not anyway.

Time gradually passed. The group arrived at Helm's Deep at dawn. Golden sunlight painted their background as they rode into Helm's Deep.

This was a fortress built in the depth of a valley. The walls were made of solid rocks. There were no crevices among the rocks. The walls were over ten meters tall. This was an impenetrable fortress.

The riders brought out their spoils. The villagers, soldiers, everyone in the fortress cheered at the sight of countless Uruk-hai ears. There were simply too many ears that these riders didn't get to cut off every Uruk-hai. The ears represented the group's glory.

"Over four thousand Uruk-hai killed. Three hundred warg scouts, a thousand berserkers, and three thousand regular Uruk-hai!" One of the rider announced their achievement to the villagers. It was a mean to display their glory and to raise the people's spirits.

Contrast to the confidence shown on the riders, people in the fortress were filled with gloom and unease. They appeared to fear the incoming army. Since there were only several hundreds of guards in the fortress. All the guards and villagers added up to less than a thousand. Yet, this was what they had to hold against over ten thousand Uruk-hai. The chances of them surviving were slim.

Zheng saw Theoden ran down the stairs, followed by Gimli, Eowyn, and two members of team China. Their expressions all showed surprised.

Zheng said. "King of Rohan, please allow these warriors to have a meal and a good sleep. The Uruk-hai are still far from us. They will come after night."

Theoden said. "Welcome back, brave souls. The scouts have told us your deeds, Hooves of Ghosts. I am proud of you bringing fear to the Uruk-hai. Rests and prepare yourselves for the battle at night. Let the Uruk-hai know they are running up against a wall. A wall of steel!"

The riders cheered then headed into the fortress. Aragorn, Legolas and the players followed. They had stronger bodies but they also needed the rests. It wasn't viable to take on the battle at their current state.

A few steps later, Lan frowned. She connected the group with Soul Link. "Zheng! There's someone flying over. He's fast. He will be here in a minute!"

The scan entered everyone's minds. Team China looked up to see a black dot flying across the sky at incredible speed. In just a minute, the dot grew clearer to the eye. It was a black hair young man standing on a sword. He wore a casual attire but his image was clearly a cultivator of the Chinese legends. And his rank was high enough to allow him to control flying swords.

ChengXiao whistled and grabbed the person next to him. "Shit. Look. That's a cultivator technique. Someone actually exchange those overpowered items. Those take tens of thousands of points and even S ranked rewards. These people are crazy. It's scary they can afford those."

Xuan shook his head. "It doesn't necessarily come from exchanges.

There are three methods to obtain cultivator's manuals. One, he possess them before entering this realm. Two, he learned it from movies such as the Legend of Zu. Or he is actually a movie character brought into the team by the players. I wonder which type he belongs to.”

“It's pointless discussing. He's still an enemy.” YinKong gave a cold smiled as she unsheathed Excalibur.

Zheng and Heng recovered from the surprise. Heng drew his bow to a full moon and placed two arrows on it. Zheng got down from the Nightmare. It would hinder him from using Destruction because he might accidentally destroy it.

The young man on the sword was Luo YingLong from team Celestial. He had his pride being the second strongest person in the team, especially a team that consisted of three Caucasians, one black and two Chinese. He fought team Devil twice. During the first encounter, he joined the Zu Sect. On the second encounter, he lost to the demon from team Devil even after becoming a cultivator. And finally, he wasn't able to kill Zhao ZuiKong with the cauldron he just crafted. His pride was on the verge of falling apart. He needed a victory to wipe away the shame.

(I have to defeat the unawakened demon to display the power of Xiuzhen. We will see if the saints' method of unlocking the genetic constraint is more powerful or the Xiuzhen methods we Chinese created! The time of promise with ZuiKong hasn't come yet but we can determine who's stronger!) He howled as Helm's Deep became clear in his sight.

# Chapter 22-2

A light blade slashed downward from the sky. The villagers cried at the sight. The young man standing on his sword floated on the height parallel to the wall. He scanned the people below then fixed his eyes on Zheng. “Zheng Zha! Do you dare to fight me?”

Before Zheng spoke, ChengXiao murmured. “This isn’t several hundred years ago. Who still says lines like do you dare to fight? Why don’t you say I’m general x, announce yourself?”

Lan and Heng laughed. Lan said to everyone through Soul Link. “Be careful, his mental capacity is high. It’s almost at the level of a psyche force user. I feel an unknown pressure for simply being in front of him.”

Zheng responded through Soul Link. “But he’s bold to come to us by himself. Doesn’t he know that each team have their uniqueness? Yet he ran straight to us. Is he bored with life or does he have the power to support him?”

Xuan didn’t even pull out his pistols and said with his mouth. “Don’t worry. There won’t be any problems. This is a hothead or perhaps a Chinese nationalistic youth. Anyway, we aren’t in any danger. This is going to be just an interlude in the movie. He appeared to know you. So your clone must have defeated him. Zheng, speak something to fool him and have him leave.”

The veins in Luo YingLong’s forehead surfaced. He yelled. “Who are you calling a hothead? Who’s the nationalistic youth? Fuck! Speak up if you have something to say instead of murmuring to yourselves. Don’t treat me like a hothead!”

(He’s really a hothead.) The rest of team China exclaimed.

Zheng said. “I am the leader of team China, Zheng Zha. Which team are you from? What do you want from me?”

Luo YingLong calmed himself. A few seconds later, he said. “My name is Luo YingLong, a member of team Celestial. I am here to challenge you!”

He didn't notice the wording he used. Challenge was usually reserved for someone of a lower level challenging a high level or when both sides were equal. His presence currently felt much stronger than Zheng's. Everyone would assume he had the advantage. Yet, he used the word challenge.

But Zheng knew Xuan guessed it right. This person fought his clone. "Don't you feel this is too sudden?" Zheng suddenly asked.

Luo YingLong responded, seemingly confused. "Sudden? What sudden? Why is it sudden to challenge you?"

Zheng scratched his head. "Challenges are without a question fine if we are in the same team. Since spars would not end up with casualties. However, we are in team battle. Are you afraid that we will kill you as a team by coming alone?"

"Kill me?" He laughed out with craze. "Kill me? What gave you the courage to say that? How would you kill me? Sci-fi weapons? Bombs? Plasma guns? Laser guns? Or chop me up with a sword? Look over here. I am a cultivator! How can I not have FaBao (magical items) on me? Like the Golden Silk Vest I am wearing underneath. My ShiFu (teacher) especially crafted it for me. It will bring up a golden barrier when any offensive abilities come near. The Blue Jade Pendant on my wrist will bring up a barrier on fatal attacks. And..." He introduced his magical items and weapons one by one.

(He's indeed a hothead.) Zheng quickly stopped him when he got to his underwear. "Wait. Wait. Back to the point. You said you want to challenge me. My reply is I refuse. This isn't a one on one battle. We are going through a movie. I have a battle coming at night. Don't bother me if you don't have anything important. Go back and learn to use all your items."

Luo YingLong shouted with anger. "Fuck. You are fooling with me, aren't you? I know all my items. There's no need for you to tell me. Did you say you have someone that can kill me? I will see who can break through my defensive items!"

Zheng snapped his fingers at Heng. Heng understood his intention and nodded. He placed an arrow on his bow. The bow was drawn to a full

moon. An overwhelming presence exploded from him as he aimed the arrow at Luo YingLong.

Luo YingLong thought nothing of Heng until that arrow was aimed at him. His expression turned serious. He took the jade pendant off his wrist and held it in his hand. “Shoot the arrow if you can. I don’t know it will injure me but if I lose any of my items... you won’t get away with it. If you shoot the arrow, I won’t forgive you!”

Zheng stopped Heng and said to Luo YingLong with a smile. “Didn’t you say we don’t have anyone that can kill you? Do you really believe you are invincible to show off your strength in front of us? That’s too arrogant.”

Luo YingLong’s face blushed. He yelled back. “Enough with the deviation. We will talk after the fight! Fuck, I have to kill you!”

Just as he was about to attack, a ringtone came from his chest. “Pick up the phone. Pick up the phone. I am his woman...”

His face turned redder. He almost wanted to smash the phone. Everyone else stopped talking and all the eyes were staring at him. He lowered his head then took the phone out. He suppressed voice and shouted. “You vile woman! I will teach you when I come back... Uh. Adam. Okay. I understand... but team China is too... Wait for me to come back.” He then clenched his teeth and roared.

Everyone stared at him in confusion. There were several thousand pairs of eyes at this moment. He couldn’t even raise his head after losing face. The anger continued to build up within him. Finally, he threw the phone onto the wall. Bang! It blasted a hollow. He turned around and flew away on his sword, leaving only an echo of his final line.

“Zheng Zhao! You won’t be always so lucky. We will eventually fight it out! Just you wait... fuck, AHH...” His voice trailed off.

Zheng was baffled and asked the others. “What did he come here for? Just to say this?” But no one knew. Xuan murmured the name Luo YingLong just mentioned, Adam.

On the other hand, the whereabouts of team Celestial’s main forces were

still unknown. All five teams had completely split up in the Lord of the Rings world. But they believed that all the teams would meet at the final battle in Mordor.

HaoTian brought the newbie group to Isengard. What awaited them were countless Uruk-hai. HaoTian coaxed the newbies into believing the Uruk-hai would find them out for certain if they were to cross the path. And instead, where it was deemed dangerous was the safest place. So they were better off staying here. HaoTian and the four veterans began their daily quest of capturing Uruk-hai.

WangXia was the most experienced of the group at this task for being a reconnoiter in the special forces. They captured several Uruk-hai each day and injected them with T-virus. Then they inserted a device into the Uruk-hai's heads to hypnotize them as Xuan had planned.

“Never imagined God has this stuff. Only the U.S. has relevant technology in the real world, and the technology weren't mature enough. It's used as a tool to get people to confess and read through their minds. It's also effective at hypnotizing. Xuan's notes mention that the minds of newly transformed Nemesis are blank. We can alter them at will with this device. Haha. He's simply amazing!” HaoTian laughed.

The four veterans thought that HaoTian wasn't too far away from Xuan.

“Ha. Why are you looking at me with such admiration? Relax. I promise these Uruk-hai Nemesis will be ten times stronger than Nemesis turned from humans! A Nemesis that can use battle Qi. Haha.” His exaggerated laughter echoed through the woods.

Talking about the woods, Merry and the veterans of team Africa were in the woods. They were standing in front of a group of Ents. Neos's plan was to convince the Ents into following his orders and participate in the battle at Mordor. However, the task wasn't so easy.

“Like I said, as long as Mordor exists, they will attempt to burn down the forest. It isn't rational to stay wary every day of your lives. Instead of waiting for the fire to happen before countering, you might as well prevent it. Ally with Rohan, Gondor, the Elves, and the Wizards to crush Mordor!”

He spoke loudly to the Ents but he was unsure of the effect of his words.

An Ent spoke slowly. "But this isn't the war of Ents. It's a war of men and Wizards."

"Has the Wizard not fallen to the control of Sauron? Can you be certain that these woods aren't the next target after the defeat of men? My advice is..."

(This isn't enough. Damn Ents... but they are such a strong force. They have powerful bodies and life magic. I have to seize this force in my hands!) Neos continued his attempts at obtaining the most important influence in this world.

However, team Northern Ice Land right now... A man with long hair stood on top a ground of broken bodies. He played with a ring in hand then laughed. "So that's the use of this ring. Interesting, truly interesting. Let's give it to Sauron. I am looking forward to the reaction when they see he revives. Haha." He turned around and walked out the swamps. The sky ahead of him was red. That was where Mordor stood.

# Chapter 23-1

Zheng slept through the day. Night fell. The sky outside was pitch black. The only lights came from the torches on the fortress walls. Many of the villagers stare at the night sky in this darkness. They knew this would be sleepless night.

The movie characters, the riders, and the rest of team China woke up along with Zheng. Hunger emerged immediately. They thought they could eat a whole cow. -princess-was smart to order preparation of food when they just fell asleep. Roasted meat and biscuits were waiting for them on the tables already. Everyone began to fill themselves up.

Aragorn asked Eowyn. "What time is this? The Uruk-hai arrived yet?"

Eowyn gave him a bitter smile. "They are almost here, only an hour left. There are so many of them, over 15,000. And we have only hundreds here... Oh, yes. Three hundred elves came before sunset. They said Elrond of Rivendell sent them to honor the alliance that once existed between elves and men. But aside from them, we have no other reinforcements."

"Have faith in Gandalf. He will be back with reinforcements... He said he will be back with reinforcements when the sun rises. I have faith in him." Aragorn said.

The six members of team China weren't in such a good mood. In the movie plot, Gandalf would arrive in the morning with reinforcements. They would then defeat the Uruk-hai in a blitz. However, this wasn't a movie. Anything could happen. The increased number of Uruk-hai was an example. Although the Rohan riders were also stronger than the movies portrayed. Two thousand riders were still at a disadvantage. How many Uruk-hai they could kill in this defense might sway the result of the battle.

Zheng paused for a moment. "I plan to use the Anubis Bracelet. My blood energy has been increasing all this time so I can summon at least a thousand Anubis Warriors. They are pretty strong in close combat. As long as their head remains, they can continue fighting. Their three meter bodies are also bigger than the Uruk-hai. They should win one on one. The

only thing I am worried about is if the another team attacks us when I am depleted of blood energy, which affects Destruction. What do you think?”

Xuan shook his head. “The effect from the Anubis Bracelet is nearly negligible. You can’t control the thousand warriors. They will fight on their own once summoned. But we are fighting a defensive war. Archers or soldiers that can follow commands are more useful in this scenario. The Anubis Warriors will only disrupt the formation of our army and accelerate the collapse of the fortress. We can’t use the Anubis Bracelet here. Save it for the battle at Gondor.”

Zheng sighed. “Then what should we do? I can at least fight and assist using the Nightmare. The layout of the defensive passageways are nearly perfect. It will be difficult for the Uruk-hai to break through. What about you guys? One mistake in a battle of this scale could lead to death. How about just fly up with the Sky Stick and attack from up there? Heng is able to do this. How many rune word bullets do you have?”

“My intention isn’t to battle the Uruk-hai head on.” Xuan said. “That’s the most idiotic tactic. The Anubis Bracelet is useless in a defensive battle but another item has great use. You can also use it easily. The Book of the Dead.”

The Book of the Dead recorded many offensive magic. Yet, Zheng couldn’t read any of the writings in the book. The few of the magic he remembered was taught by TengYi. Of course, the third unlocked stage allowed him to simulate TengYi to some degree and deduce some spells using his own knowledge. However, the precision was questionable.

One of the magic TengYi translated could alter the terrain!

Everyone finished eating. The main movie characters and team China headed to the fortress walls. An elf was speaking to Theoden. There were also several hundred elven archers here.

Legolas cried. “The Nighthawks, royal guards of Rivendell. Three hundreds of them. That’s half the royal guards.”

Everyone walked to the elf that was speaking. They exchanged words of gratitude then quietly waited on the wall.

The members of team China sat quite some distance away from the movie characters. They had conversations of their own that were best kept from the movie characters.

Xuan said. "Judging by the hothead's words, they will probably enter the team battle when the plot progressed to the battle at Gondor. That isn't far away. There are a few points we must do. First, we will retrieve the force we sent out to obtain influence. HaoTian is strong in both intelligence and strength. It is also time to harvest the Nemesis. The result of the harvest will depend on his ability. Zero and the other three members should return to the team. Their strengths are useful in a team battle. And lastly, the influence we obtained, archers that can use Explosive Shot..."

Zheng interrupted him. "What are you doing? This isn't some amateur novel where you are going to die in the battle by taking an arrow for me. You speak like you are giving your last words. We are comrades! We can't consider death so readily!"

Xuan nodded and pondered for a second. "Understood. I have explained what needs to be said. If you don't get anything, then ask HaoTiao. A mortal's wisdom confronting another mortal's wisdom. Isn't it another way to grow stronger?"

The premonition felt increasingly inauspicious to Zheng. Before he got to speak, a series of heavy footsteps could be heard coming from afar. The footsteps rumbled without order. Torches gradually showed up in the distance. They formed a field on the horizon and slowly moved toward the fortress. Although there were only 15000 Uruk-hai, they extended throughout the field. The countless torches and rumbling could drive people insane.

The Uruk-hai had arrived. The battle at Helm's Deep commenced.

Zheng glanced at Xuan and said. "You always act on pure reason. Why did you suddenly have premonitions? It's such a human trait. Whatever it is, you at least have to try your best to survive. If you think you are going to die, then there is no hope. Anyway... you said you will unlock the fourth

stage. Aren't you wishing to obtain feelings and senses? Obtain everything that a person should have? Then give all that you have to survive!" He got up and walked over to the Nightmare then mounted on the horse.

The Uruk-hai were the strongest species of the orcs. They had a violent temper. They lusted for blood and killing. They wouldn't run upon encountering strong forces unlike the orcs and half-orcs. In contrast, powerful enemies would excite them. This was a difficult battle. The Uruk-hai would invade the fortress with their overwhelming number. No one knew if the walls could hold them until the morning came.

As the torches came closer, so did the footsteps. The people on the wall could see the army with their bare eyes. The Uruk-hai were armed to the teeth unlike the orcs. Their equipments exceeded even the soldiers of Rohan. Saruman crafted an army of steel.

The Uruk-hai had two meter tall bodies, wore dark armors and helms made of steel. Many carried three meter long pikes. Some carried double-bent swords and bows.

Aragorn was yelling to the elves in Elvish language. Team China couldn't understand him but it was not the time for that. They gripped onto their weapons. The Uruk-hai came closer and closer and finally, they stopped just outside the arrow range.

The battle... commenced.

# Chapter 23-2

The Uruk-hai stopped their advancement. An official looking Uruk-hai stepped onto a boulder. It roared and turned its head. Its voice echoed throughout the battlefield. Then a second Uruk-hai followed. Then a third, fourth... until the Uruk-hai's roars reached every part of the battlefield. They thumped the ground with their pikes and weapons in rhythm. It felt as though the ground was trembling.

An older archer's hands shook, letting go an arrow that was ready on the bow. It killed a pikeman Uruk-hai. The battlefield suddenly fell to a silence for a moment then the Uruk-hai roared with more insanity than ever. The blood instilled no fear but instead drove them to frenzy. The Uruk-hai charged at the wall.

"Ready! Fire!" Aragorn who was standing by the elves drew his sword. He swung the sword and pointed it at the Uruk-hai then shouted.

The elves lived up to their name of Nighthawks. Over fifty of them placed multiple arrows on the bow at once. Some elves enchanted their arrows with a green glow. The first wave of arrows fired. The multi-shots all slain multiple Uruk-hai, clearing an area of Uruk-hai. However, their armors were not made of paper after all. Many arrows were deflected and these Uruk-hai continued charging as though nothing hit them.

Heng stood next to Zheng. He cried with surprise upon seeing the elven technique. "Multishot? Amazing! Wish I can see what techniques they have yet to show. If someone can use the nine arrow shot..."

Zheng casually replied. "You can just wait here if you aren't scared dying. And it will be better if you put your head out from the wall. I saw quite a few Uruk-hai with bows, and crossbows."

Heng hushed but his eyes kept glancing back at the elves. Zheng gave a shout and unsheathed Tiger's Soul. Heng finally began shooting at the Uruk-hai beneath the fortress.

The Uruk-hai finally reached the walls. Aragorn yelled. "Fire at will! Fire at will!"

All the elves and elderly standing on the wall began firing at will. The elves and enlisted villagers totaled to a thousand archers. Arrows poured down like rain. The cries of Uruk-hai and tingling noises took over the field. Only arrows shot by the elves and elite archers could pierce the armor of the Uruk-hai. The rest of the archers were too weak. The rain of arrows seemed crowded but merely half of them were effective.

As the Uruk-hai came close, they began to push ladders onto the wall. Some ladders managed to stay in place. At the cries of men and elves, several Uruk-hai climbed up the wall. Those didn't pull into defense fast enough died to the Uruk-hai.

(City attacks are too straightforward at this age. Weapons, tactics, and army composition are all too simple. Accounts of wars from the Song Dynasty recorded boiling water, rolling boulders, ballista, catapults. There are none of these here. You charge at me and I defend.) Zheng contemplated these questions.

The Nightmare leaped. The light blade extended to its maximum range and slashed across. All the ladders within thirty meters of him were cut in two. The Uruk-hai on the ladder fell off the wall in terrible cries. It didn't seem that they could survive the fall. Yet, there were too many Uruk-hai underneath. Zheng slashed dozens of ladders but replacements came in one after another. A single person's power couldn't turn the tide of a battle.

Dong! Zheng's light blade barrier shattered. He quickly controlled the Nightmare to jump back down. He was staying on the wall using his barrier to defend against the numerous arrows. Then a few Explosive Shots shattered the barrier. The shots came from far away so that was all they accomplished. Though he Zheng stayed a little longer, the rest of the arrows would have turned him into a hive.

"Fuck! That was not over yet!" Those shots angered him. He formed a new light blade barrier over his body then replenished his Qi from the mithril ring. The Nightmare leaped off the wall. The movie characters shouted with bloodshot eyes. They had formed bonds with Zheng. The members of team China also shouted. Except for Xuan who pulled out his

pistols calmly.

Pah! Zheng landed on the ground. The ten-meter fall didn't harm him nor the Nightmare because he landed on the Uruk-hai and crushed them into meat paste. Without even a pause, Tiger's Soul slashed across.

The Uruk-hai weren't using their battle Qi since Zheng's appearance was unexpected. The twenty-meter light blade cut through all the Uruk-hai in a twenty-meter radius. Hundreds or maybe nearly a thousand of Uruk-hai died in this attack. Zheng then charged into the army. Blood and flesh flew all over the area as Tiger's Soul moved.

Gimli yelled. "You are the strongest, luckiest, and most foolish warrior... I will kill you for taking so light of your own live, you bastard!"

Though the movie characters had seen Zheng's strength and were aware of the unique attribute of the Nightmare. They knew that once Zheng couldn't hold out anymore, he would climb back up the wall. This was not the time to ponder more deeply. Aragorn yelled. "Archers back! Front row fighters ready for close range combat once the Uruk-hai climbs onto the wall!"

Zheng's bravery stimulated the soldiers' morale. However, the wall of the fortress was so wide that he had no way of defending every place. Ladders were placed some distance from him then the endless Uruk-hai climbed up. They might not have that many archers but all the Uruk-hai were powerful fighters. It took two men or one elf to defend against one Uruk-hai. Their numbers were building up on the wall. The only place devoid of them were at where Zheng was defending. All other places of the wall entered close range fights.

The contrast among their soldiers became apparent. The ones with battle Qi took one or more the Uruk-hai without fear. On the other hand, the enlisted villagers were victims of slaughters. They could aid with arrows but close range combat forced them back.

The fortress was well designed that despite many Uruk-hai climbed up the walls, the archers on the back could remain shooting arrows. That and the elite fighters in the front finally held the Uruk-hai from advancing.

Four members of team China entered the battle and the tides changed.

Heng had little impact despite having powerful shots. He was only as useful as an elven archer in this battle. ChengXiao's martial art and YinKong's assassination were much stronger than the Uruk-hai with battle Qi. They blocked off over a dozen Uruk-hai at once. However, the one that was most destructive to the Uruk-hai was Xuan.

Xuan stood in the middle of a pack with his dual pistols. The pistols danced around him. Each of his shots penetrated one or more Uruk-hai and even arrows that were shot at him. The Gauss pistols were powerful enough to stop their Explosive Shots. Xuan did not see with his eyes. His Gun-kata followed the trace of all possible incoming attacks.

He shook his hands. Two magazines dropped to the ground. The magazines were still smoking. A hundred Uruk-hai were lying around him. His cool and apathetic expression along with his actions made him seem captivating.

Zheng was fighting among the Uruk-hai but he was paying attention to the wall. He applauded upon seeing the might of Gun-kata. Just then, he saw an Uruk-hai that was holding a torch charged at the wall, the wall where Xuan was standing on.

# Chapter 24-1

Xuan was standing on where it would get bombed in the original plot. This was the turning point of the battle. The Uruk-hai couldn't have broken into this fortress otherwise in a single night otherwise. Zheng discussed with Xuan beforehand and they came up with a solution. Once the wall was bombed, Zheng would use the Book of the Dead to alter the terrain of the area to block the Uruk-hai from entering the fortress.

How could Xuan have forgotten about the bomb? Yet, he was still standing at that section of the wall. Right as Zheng turned around, he saw the Uruk-hai with the torch charged toward sewer under the wall.

“No!” Zheng's eyes were bloodshot. There wasn't even the time for him to dismount. He jumped straight off the Nightmare's back then jumped again midair with Instant Destruction into Geppo. He was flying to where Xuan was.

His speed was still too slow. The Uruk-hai was only four meters away from the wall. Its body impaled with numerous arrows but it made the jump into the sewer before the end of his life. Bang! A seven-meter wide section of the wall was blasted. The explosion was so strong that the shockwave blew Zheng back several meters. This wasn't a primitive bomb made from gunpowder as depicted in the movie. The explosion was on par with their high-explosive bombs.

The instant Zheng landed, he charged toward the exploded area. The Uruk-hai were swarming toward the opening as they roared in frenzy. Then they met the even more frenzied Zheng. His eyes were bloody red and he was growling like a wild beast. The front most Uruk-hai that came near him instantly turned into numerous small pieces. No one could see clearly what he did. Zheng was charging right through the Uruk-hai, hoping to reach the opening first.

The Uruk-hai of course did not consent. They attacked the tiny human (in their eyes). Zheng's hands moved ever so slightly but dozens of Uruk-hai near him were torn apart as if they were killed by a beast. Zheng left a

trail of torn pieces of bodies as he ran. His hands each grabbed a Uruk-hai's head. When he reached the broken wall, he slammed the heads into the wall. The two heads were smashed into tiny pieces.

"Xuan? Are you alright?" He yelled with craze as soon as he entered through the broken wall. A trail of broken bodies lay behind him. Not one Uruk-hai was able to delay him for even a second. The Uruk-hai in the distance hesitated as they witnessed his strength.

Under the broken wall, YinKong and ChengXiao were already there. YinKong carried Xuan out right after the explosion. ChengXiao was forcing medicine into Xuan's mouth. Yet, his gloomy expression was nothing like his normal cheerful and confident self. The bad feeling deepened inside Zheng.

"How is him? I am fucking asking you how is him?" Zheng shouted before he even came close.

ChengXiao shouted back at him. "You just fucking stand there and hold off the Uruk-hai! Trust the doctor when you are wounded... I am the doctor here. Now, shut up!" He didn't slow down as he talked. He took off Xuan's clothes. Zheng saw blood pouring out from Xuan's left chest, where the heart was located. It seemed just like...

"Ah! I will make you pay with your lives! The Uruk-hai! Saruman!" He shouted then charged back to the opening.

Legolas seemed to be hesitating. He wanted to say something but no words came to his mind when he saw the whirlwind of flesh and blood within the Uruk-hai army. He frowned and continued shooting. Back in the elven realm, Xuan once looked for him.

"Yes. I asked Legolas to take me to meet you, Lady of the Wood."

Dawn had yet to come. The Fellowship was going to leave after the sun rose and Galadriel would give each of them a gift. Two after midnight, Xuan woke Legolas up to bring him to Galadriel.

Galadriel said with a sly smile. "Oh, emotionless human. What do you wish to see me for? To apologize for the ornament you broke?"

Xuan replied calmly. “No, to make a deal with you.”

Galadriel was surprised then she laughed. “Your friends have promised a deal with the elves. Are you looking to circumvent them and make a deal with us by yourself?”

“Not that type of trade.” Xuan shook his head. “I wish to obtain something to you. And in return, I will give you the One Ring dispelled of Sauron’s soul. Of course, that won’t be right now. The next time we come to this world...”

Galadriel frowned. She stared at Xuan with seriousness. “Enticing but don’t you think you’re talking about the impossible? If Sauron is so easily defeated, the many races of Middle Earth wouldn’t have given him the title of Dark Lord. It was a sign of our fear. What do you wish to obtain from me?”

Xuan gazed at Galadriel. “I need something that allows a person to revive after death, or to fake a death. It can be an item, or magic... There are dreadful enemies of our team in this world. I am uncertain of our ability to rival them. If we failed, then the One Ring and our deal with the elves will fall through. Tell me, do the elves have such item or magic?”

Legolas felt a sharp pain on his face. An arrow grazed past his cheek and pulled him back from the memory. Xuan also talked to him after speaking with Galadriel. He was told not to tell the rest of team China about the meeting. Legolas agreed and buried the secret in his heart.

(However, will everything proceed as you expected, Xuan? If Zheng forgot about that item, you will lose your life.) Legolas stared at Zheng. He wanted to yell but held himself back many times. When Zheng ran back out of the Uruk-hai, Legolas stopped shooting and fixed his eyes at Zheng.

Zheng was holding the leaf of Telperion in his hand. His whole body was dripping in blood and so was his hand. He stuck the leaf into Xuan’s mouth. The leaf turned into a green liquid in an instant then flowed down his throat.

Zheng let out a sigh of relief. He gazed at ChengXiao. “Hurry and look at his injury. Didn’t you save Boromir even when he had a hole in his chest?”

How could you not save your comrade?”

He was being extremely unreasonable. The injury was the deciding factor on whether the medic was able to save someone. ChengXiao ignored him. His needle moved between the skin on Xuan’s chest. The thread was sewing up the wound. YinKong kept a Freezing Pill in her hand in case Xuan entered critical condition.

Zheng stared as ChengXiao performed the treatment. He also ran out the broken wall again and tore nearly three thousand Uruk-hai to pieces before returning. The Uruk-hai stopped coming to this area. And so the archers on the wall managed to keep them from advancing.

ChengXiao’s hands moved faster and faster. A bit of redness returned to Xuan’s face. The blood coming out from his chest was lessening. However, just as ChengXiao was going to close up the wound, he cried with tears. “Fuck it! I am done with this... What do you want me to do when his heart was crushed. There wasn’t even time for me to treat the wound and no time to give him the Freezing Pill. What do you want me to do...”

Zheng’s expression changed abruptly. He lifted ChengXiao and shouted. “Didn’t you close up the wound? Aren’t blood returning to his face? Didn’t I feed him the leaf of Telperion? Why didn’t you give him the Freezing Pill? Why?”

YinKong immediately forced the pill into Xuan’s mouth. However, there was no sign of him being frozen because he could no longer swallow the pill. YinKong crushed the pill and tried to mouth feed him but it was no use. She felt his pulse on the neck then stood up. “... He’s dead.”

(Adam. Chu Xuan is confirmed dead.)

Zheng lost his strength. ChengXiao fell from his hands. His eyes were completely red and seemed lost. He turned around and walked toward the Uruk-hai army step by step. As he exited through the broken wall, an Explosive Shot flew right at his face. He lifted his hand and grabbed the arrow. Then he roared as he charged into the Uruk-hai army.

# Chapter 24-2

Genome. All members of the same species shared over 99.9 of their genome. People who were blood related had an extremely high similarity in their genome. The similarities among human genomes made up the characteristics of a human such as the body, the mind, intelligence, etc. The minute difference that were less than 0.1 percent made up the facial features, personalities, blood types, etc.

Of course, many of the genes in a human were never activated in a person's life. These genes were remnants of evolution. Evolution of single-celled life, multicellular life, amphibians... and finally man. Many of the genes from the ancient eons were left in our genome. However, what natural selection did not choose to retain weren't necessarily bad genes. Sometimes, the good genes were eliminated first.

If a person gained full control of his DNA, these hibernating genes would be awakened along with the strength hidden within, and similarly, the primitive instincts of killing.

Zheng couldn't remember the time this sensation started. It felt as though the sensation arose when he was fighting one bloody battle after another in Starship Troopers. He kept entering the unlock mode, he kept simulating other people's thinking process, he kept struggling on the brink of death. During that situation, a faint feeling arose. The real awakening took place in Resident Evil. He was filled with killing intent and anger against the researchers. And then when he fought a large number of evolved lickers, he lost consciousness...

By the time his consciousness returned, he saw the majority of the evolved lickers were cut into pieces. While he was unharmed. He realized he made the breakthrough... unlocking the fourth stage of the genetic constraint, control of DNA.

Based on the experience he obtained from that fight, the fourth stage had three phases, early, intermediate, and high. He was in the early phase. In this phase, he could train his body in the most optimized way. He could

awaken hibernating genes left from evolution to adjust his body to the most suitable condition.

At this stage, his need for the higher-level vampire bloodlines from God weren't as urgent anymore because he could optimize his DNA to bring out his full potential.

Zheng was now able to adjust his DNA based on how much energy he had so that his body was more suited for Explosion and Destruction usage and use them at full potential. No wonder it was said that only the fourth stage allowed one to use exchanged abilities in full.

The early phase awakened hibernating genes, optimized the body, and allowed the use of exchanged abilities at full potential. The intermediate phase allowed the evolution and modification of DNA. One could optimize the body to a degree beyond its current best state and allowed the creation of abilities using the information contained inside the genes. The high phase allowed one to control energy within the body at a genetic level. That was only one step away from the fifth stage.

Zheng moved his left shoulder slightly and dodged a pike coming from an Uruk-hai. He then tackled the pike with his shoulder, sending it flying. The pike slapped onto over ten Uruk-hai horizontally. Arms and legs were falling from these Uruk-hai as they came in contact with the pike. Just a tackle from his shoulder was already so powerful.

Zheng reached out his arm and grabbed the Uruk-hai that hit him with the pike. He moved his hands over it. The Uruk-hai was torn to pieces.

The people on the wall looked in shock with their mouths and eyes wide open. On the battlefield beneath them, a killing machine marched into the Uruk-hai army. He wasn't moving extremely fast but any living being that came into five meters of him would get torn to pieces within the next second. Zheng dropped Tiger's Soul. He was growling like a wild beast. All his kills were done by tearing with his bare hands. The Uruk-hai were actually pitiful at this point. The villagers on standing on the wall vomited at this bloody scene.

This was Zheng's reason for hiding the fact he unlocked the fourth

stage. He couldn't control this immense power. The fourth stage was totally different from the third. It was only at this stage that he truly touched upon the source of life. The early stage awakened the remnants of the past but also the frenzy and lust for blood that the simple life forms had when survival was the only thing they wanted. It was a lust without reason. All Zheng wanted right now was to kill everything in sight, the Uruk-hai, the wizard, the humans on the wall, and even the members of team China. He didn't fear anyone with the strength he possessed.

However, the Uruk-hai were nearest to him so he attacked them first. Multiple Uruk-hai were falling to pieces every second. Head, chest, abdomen, anywhere he attacked was cause of death. Zheng licked the blood that got on the corner of his mouth. He entered almost twenty meters into the Uruk-hai army after coming out of the broken wall. Uruk-hai that were charging without fear began to back. They weren't scared but they couldn't understand why wouldn't this man fall. It was as though arrows shot at him avoided him. Pikes that seemingly hit him hit somewhere else. And anyone that came near him naturally fell to pieces. This terrifying scene made the Uruk-hai back.

"Aouh!!!" Zheng suddenly howled. He leaped at the backing Uruk-hai army. The leaped brought him up eight meters. He landed on several Uruk-hai and smashed them to a paste. His reaction speed right now surpassed what he used to have during Destruction. When his act was registered to the Uruk-hai, he had seized a Uruk-hai and torn it apart. Blood, flesh, and organs splashed over him.

Zheng bit a Uruk-hai in front of him on the head. The thought of biting open a head like an apple naturally occurred to him. He woke up from the fourth stage with a shock. A ground filled with broken bodies that couldn't even make out a shape came into his eyes. In front of him were the defeated Uruk-hai army running away. He was over a hundred meters away from the fortress without realizing it. Perhaps he was subconsciously moving at the opposite direction from the fortress since if he stayed there during that state, he might wake up to a ground of broken bodies also.

Zheng turned around and quietly ran back to the fortress. Flesh, organs,

blood, and dirt were hanging on his hair, face, clothes, and in his mouth. He seemed more terrifying than a monster. Some archers on the wall cried in fear as he approached. Half of them aimed their bow at him. His performance was like how the books depicted Sauron. Invincible.

Zheng ignored these archers. He entered the broken wall and saw YinKong and ChengXiao not far away. Xuan was in ChengXiao's arms. The young man with an average look and glasses was as calm as always. There was no sign of pain on his face.

“Right. He couldn't feel pain unless he reaches the fourth stage and obtains what a normal person should have. But...” Zheng walked over to them. He ignored the flesh and blood on him. “Is he really dead?”

ChengXiao nodded. “Yes. Sense his pulse. His heart shattered. Blood no longer flows. After two hours, his brain is also mostly dead. The only thing strange was the leaf of Telperion went down his throat. Did that leaf not account for whether a person was alive or dead?”

“Two hours?” Zheng turned around and looked at the battlefield beyond the broken wall. The broken bodies on the ground amounted to several thousands. It had been two hours since he entered the fourth stage. No wonder the Uruk-hai retreated.

“I can't believe someone like you died like this. I thought you would only die from being erased for scheming God or drag God along with you to hell. You scumbag. How could you die without pain when you haven't gotten your feelings yet?” Zheng sat on the ground with his head lowered. He murmured to himself. Something wet slid down his cheeks. Then he fell unconscious. The battle squeezed every last bit of his energy. He managed to walk back because he wanted to see his bro one last time. These were the last words in his heart before he lost consciousness.

# Chapter 25-1

Xuan's death was confirmed. While the battle was still going on, the team did hear the notification of deducting one point. Zheng was still fantasizing this was another one of Xuan's crazy schemes but it was obviously not. Xuan died. And in such a pathetic way of death.

"The wisest still makes a mistake in a thousand contemplations. Or did he become tired of fighting on? Tired of chasing that almost imaginary fourth stage and chose death?" Zheng sat in a lobby. He silently looked at the people in front of him. Xuan's body was placed in the center.

A whole day passed after the battle against the Uruk-hai army. Gandalf indeed arrived at dawn with two thousand riders. Though what awaited them wasn't the swarm of Uruk-hai they imagined. People had already begun cleaning up the battlefield. The fortress was covered with the scars of war. However, it was the Uruk-hai corpses on the ground that caught their attention most than anything. That wasn't the aftermath of a battle. It was the scene of shredded flesh in a slaughterhouse.

Men achieved victory due to Zheng's terrifying performance. The army cleaned up the battlefield then headed back to Helm's Deep for rest. Gandalf had a conversation with the rest of the movie characters. They decided to march toward Isengard at dawn of the second day. They had to defeat Saruman when he was at his weakest.

Three before midnight, Zheng woke up. The other four members of team China immediately came to him. Everyone sat there without a word, even ChengXiao. Because Xuan's body lay in front of them. Their gaze fixed on Zheng silently. He was the only core of the team after Xuan's death.

Zheng was the heart of team China, connecting the people with differing personalities, values and beliefs. He made these people into a team. There wouldn't be a team China without him.

Xuan was the brain of the team. He gave everyone the belief of surviving even the most desperate dangers. It wasn't a trust toward him because his plans schemed both foes and friends. However, his wit was acknowledged

by every person. As long as they stood on the same line in battle, they never worried about coming to an unsolvable situation. Unless he died.

Which was what team China were facing right now. They knew team Celestial was in this battle. They knew team East America was stronger than them but they were never overly worried because Xuan was there. His plans would save them from a wipe no matter how far behind they were.

No one expected lose him even before encountering the other two teams. Their most important intellectual support was gone. Their strength made a breakthrough but that wasn't a guarantee of rivaling the other two teams. What if the other teams had similar amount of strength?

The silence lasted in the room until ChengXiao couldn't hold it. "Xuan sent HaoTiao and the others off. Did he already know he was going to die back then? There might be a plan that he entrusted to the other group..."

"Fuck!" Zheng was enraged. He lifted ChengXiao and shouted. "Plan? Plan your ass! He's dead! He's our comrade. Even though he had always schemed me. Even though I always wanted to know what he was planning. But I treated him as a comrade within my heart! He's someone I can entrust my back to! What do you think he is? A tool for the survival of team China? Do you believe I will tear you apart?"

ChengXiao stared back without backing a step. He was taller than Zheng to begin with so his presence seemed more intimidating than Zheng. He shouted. "And what was Xuan's original intention? He wanted for the team to survive, to get stronger. If you used the power of the fourth stage in the beginning, he wouldn't have died! Come kill me if you or fucking shut up!"

Zheng slowly calmed down. He let go of ChengXiao's collar then dropped to the chair, looking dejected.

ChengXiao also calmed down. He took several deep breaths. "Do what we ought to do. We still have to live. Didn't you survive by yourselves when Xuan died before? Fuck, enough with the pointless talks... You should have been the one saying this as the leader!"

Zheng gave a bitterly smile. “You’re right to scold me... It’s not that I didn’t want to use that power but I was scared. You saw that I was slaughtering Uruk-hai in a madness but if you were next to me at the time, I would have done the same to you. I had no conscious of my own at the time. All my body wanted was to kill every living thing beside me or fall when I could no longer sustain the fourth stage. It has immense power, I can tear the Uruk-hai and even the Balrog apart but...”

He paid no attention to everyone’s expression and continued. “Things have come to this point, but we still need to do what we ought to do. We will follow Gandalf to Isengard the next morning. If Xuan had expected his death that early on and designated HaoTian as his successor, we will have to trust him. HaoTian will take his place from now on. According to their plan, they should have taken down Isengard by now. We will meet up with them.”

(A leader’s responsibility is to lead the team and survive. Yet, are you really dead?) Zheng placed his carotid artery. It was cold and had no sign of blood flow. (Then is HaoTian’s ability truly as strong as yours?)

In the woods not far from Isengard. HaoTian’s group hadn’t assaulted Saruman yet. The Nemesis were only just waking up. They created three hundred Nemesis that could all use battle Qi. Fifty of them could use Explosive Shot. The Nemesis were almost four meters in height and thrice the bulk of a normal person. It was almost certain each Nemesis could take on fifty Uruk-hai. The Uruk-hai turned Nemesis were much much stronger than human ones.

Zero stood on an area inside the woods by himself. He pulled out a piece of metallic plate then opened it up. A while later, a voice came out from the plate.

“Zero, tell me what happened at the time and the situation during these two days in detail.” The man’s voice was sent directly into Zero’s mind.

Zero let out a sigh of relief. Xuan gave him the item before the team split up. It was used to communicate over the minds, a more convenient phone.

“Nothing strange happened. We all heard the notification of deducting a point. None of us died so it must have been someone in your group. However, HaoTian didn’t assault Saruman as we had planned. He began capturing Uruk-hai in larger numbers and turned them into Nemesis. He still hasn’t mentioned about the assault today.” Zero said through his mind.

“Is that so? Get it.” The voice continued. “What do you think of HaoTian’s strength?”

“Incredibly strong.” Zero replied without hesitation. “I can’t believe a newbie can be this strong. His psychokinesis is very powerful. Almost nothing within twenty meters can harm him. Though if we are to kill him, he would not be able to defend against the Gauss sniper rifle, WangXia’s bombs, the Valkyrie, or even Kampa’s RPG. However, we need enough distance to use these weapons on him. In a close range fight, we will lose.”

“Oh, then what you have to do is...”

“Kampa, WangXia, and Gando proceed as planned. You have to find a time and leave the group. Head to the capitol of Gondor, Minas Tirith. You will see Zheng fighting another person. And you mission...”

“This is basically the situation we are in. I won’t initiate contact from now on. There’s a time limit to my existence. According to Galadriel, I still have twenty days... Then let’s finish off team Celestial in these twenty days.”

The voice faded. It was Xuan’s voice. Zero closed the metallic plate and put it back in his pocket. He walked toward the outer layer of the woods where HaoTian and the other members of team China were training the three hundred Nemesis.

# Chapter 25-2

Due to their time constraint, all five members of team China, Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Theoden, and the remaining riders from their guerilla warfare tactic headed out.

The marshals who returned with Gandalf were initially worried about this group leaving because their king was part of the operation and their enemy was a white wizard. The marshals wanted to accompany the group. However, Theoden was a determined warrior himself. He refused them then the group left immediately afterward. Furthermore, the existence of Zheng in this group would grant them safety. They only had to look out for hidden enemies.

On the way, they encountered multiple waves of Uruk-hai who ran away during that battle. The Uruk-hai were a race famous for their brutality after all. The deserters were aggressive despite the loss they suffered. Seeing as Zheng's group had few in number, any wave of Uruk-hai totaling more than five hundred attempted to attack them. There were a few smart ones that ran upon noticing Zheng in the group. The image he carved into them was terrifying. The slower thinking ones didn't become aware of the situation and charged at the group as they roared. Zheng then slaughtered them.

He swung the blood off Tiger's Soul and said, in a slightly helpless tone. "This is the reason I didn't want to enter the fourth stage of the unlocked mode. The enhancement from the fourth stage isn't temporary. It actually alters DNA. Every time I exit the unlocked mode, part of the DNA that altered in the process never change back. It happens every time and my strength grows with each change... Uh, to give an analogy, this is like the monster with the golden mask. Only that he could alter his DNA at will. That would be mid-fourth stage and he had no limit to his alterations. Which broke the balance of his DNA and overloaded his body. So he died consuming himself at the fight."

The other members were shocked. Heng asked. "So, you are going to grow stronger with each time you enter the fourth stage? How strong can

you get? Like during last night?”

“Perhaps even stronger.” Zheng replied. “But at the same time... it alters my consciousness. Whenever I see Uruk-hai now, I can’t contain the intent to kill them and the desire to kill every last one of them.”

The others frowned since it was Zheng who said these words. It might be insulting but Zheng was a nice guy type of person to them. He wasn’t too soft hearted but he was peaceful when treating normal people who had no malicious intent. They had never seen him so cold blooded. The influence from the fourth stage was huge.

Since the group left, team China naturally wouldn’t leave Xuan’s body in Helm’s Deep. They all wanted to bury his body back in the real world. There was no time to cremate the body so the plan was to carry him on a horse then put him into the storage bag once they meet Zero.

Little did they know that Gandalf had a bag similar to their storage bag. It up opened to a piece of linen. The linen covered Xuan’s body then shrunk to a small bag. When Gandalf was putting it back into his pocket, Legolas asked to safekeep it instead with the reason that magic using might destroy the bag in the upcoming battle against Saruman.

The group march toward Isengard with nothing holding back their pace anymore. All the Uruk-hai they encountered on the way were slain. Each person had two horses to rotate through. The Nightmare didn’t need to rest. And so, it took them less than three days to reach Isengard. They passed over a few hills and a forest. Orthanc finally came in sight. It was a man built tower hundreds of meters tall. At the foot of the tower was a land of water and mud. The water and mud splashed the exterior of the tower. It seemed that the Ents had paved their way through.

They followed the road ahead. A few minutes later, they saw a Hobbit enjoying beer and taking a smoke. As the group approached, the Hobbit yelled and greeted them.

There were many holes under the water so they had to walk slowly. One misstep and they would fall into one of the holes.

Merry said loudly as they came near. “Haha. Welcome to Isengard.” He

pointed to the tower behind.

Gimli, sitting behind Legolas, yelled back. "Hey, you little bastard. We were fighting with our lives in Helm's Deep and you are enjoying food here... and a smoke! How terrible of you!"

Merry laughed. "These are my spoils. Spoils the Ents rewarded me for fighting alongside them. Oh Gimli, the beer is delicious."

Gimli swallowed. Gandalf said. "Hobbit, where are the Ents who defeated the Isengard army? Why are you the only one here?"

Merry replied. "Can't help it. They said I am a burden to carry along. So, they left me here to wait for you and the people of Rohan. Why else would they give me so much of the spoils? I would have starved to death without them."

Gandalf continued to ask. "Where are they?"

"To Minas Tirith." Merry slowly said. "Neos convinced the Ents to head to Minas Tirith with them. The Ents move slow so they didn't wait for you. You just have to hurry and catch up to them. They went east along the woods and said we would meet in Minas Tirith."

Gandalf was rather surprised. Few people knew about the personality of the Ents. The Ents normally wouldn't even bother to speak and not to mention participating in a war. A meeting with them meant several days of time. Somehow, someone managed to convince them to help the human kingdom. It was as rare as the sun rising from the west. Neos had his ways.

Now wasn't the time to discuss further. The White Wizard was still nearby. Gandalf rode the horse forward. The others met eyes and followed him to the tower.

Dead corpses were floating throughout the road. Countless Uruk-hai were killed and drowned in the battle. Saruman's army was gone. He was the only one left.

Zheng had ChengXiao take Merry on the horse. He asked. "Is Saruman still alive? Did any battle happen before you come?"

Merry shook his head. “No. We attacked Saruman in surprise. He didn’t discover us approaching. He attempted to use magic on us but the Ents used a magic that linked their power to the woods. The green lights blocked off Saruman’s magic.”

(No battle took place before? Did something happen... to Zero’s party? Doesn’t seem like it. We haven’t received another notification of death. Was it some other trouble they got into? Or is HaoTian acting mysterious like Xuan always did? Is he scheming something?) Zheng pondered to himself. He followed Gandalf to the tower.

Everyone reached the foot of the tower. Gandalf said. “Saruman. You have been defeated. Come out and see me!” His voice started in normal volume then a second later, the volume grew so loud that even someone up on the tower could hear.

Saruman showed himself on the balcony after a few seconds. He laughed with a hint of insanity. The wizard had lost himself. “Gandalf. You lost. It’s you who lost. Do you really believe I will lose? Haha. The Dark Lord has returned! The One Ring returned to its owner. Humans have no power of rivaling Sauron. We won. We won!”

Saruman roared. He raised a black and red crystal ball on his hand. A scene faded onto the crystal. A pair of flaming eyes formed a humanoid figure in armor. The image zoomed in the figure’s finger. It was wearing a golden ring... the One Ring!

# Chapter 26-1

Team Celestial, a team formed by the leaders of various teams. Everyone unlocked to at least the second stage. And secondly, the members came from different countries. Each person had their own set of perspectives. The member didn't admire each other in the team. Though they were all strong enough individually that no mishap happened to the team. Casualties were rare when the whole team were leaders unless they encountered a change of plot by God. But they had the advantage of sharing the risk over each person at those situations. When strength reached a certain degree, a normal change of plot wasn't enough to kill them.

Since there were Celestials, there were Devils. The first-time team Celestial ran into team Devil, team Celestial had two people in the third stage and the overall team strength was strong. One of the third stage member obtained an S rank enhancement. They chased team Devil throughout the movie world. It took team Devil great efforts to escape. After that, they began to underestimate team Devil.

Several movies later, a blond young man joined team Celestial and the team's situation changed.

This man was Adam. He didn't show off his strength and kept a calm expression. Two movies passed then the members began to realize he could foretell many of the events. Since these members were capable enough to become leaders, they were aware of the existence of people with supernatural abilities in the real world. For a while, they thought Adam had the ability of premonition. Then they began to consult him. Adam didn't hold back with any of their requests. The team reaped large bonuses in the movie worlds. The only Chinese member even become a disciple of the cultivators from the mountain of Zu.

Then, team Celestial encountered team Devil again. However, the battle this time went back and forth as they ran and chased each other. The leader of team Devil was a Chinese man with a pair of bat wings. He took on seven members of team Celestial by himself and destroyed the body of

their second strongest member, cultivator Luo YingLong. And he beat their strongest member, Song Tian, into fatal condition. Furthermore, he killed two members from team Celestial. If it wasn't for the calculations from Adam, the team might have been wiped right there.

Team Devil only lost two weak members. Team Celestial weren't the only team with someone scheming from behind. Such person also existed in team Devil. However, Adam was hiding from the dark and managed to win by half a step. He brought team Celestial back to God's dimension.

Six members remained after the fight. Team Celestial realized stronger people existed at places where they couldn't see and began to stay low profile. They also realized Adam wasn't a fortuneteller but someone with capable intelligence and scheming ability. There was no Guide in team Celestial but he gradually became the leader of the team.

The thing team Celestial wanted most was annihilate team Devil. As players who reached the second and third stages and gathered from Adam's analysis of the realm, they knew that only one team were to return to the real world in the end. If team Devil were to continue growing, their hope of returning was near nonexistent. The second wish they had was to kill the demon's original before he reached the same stage as the clone.

"It's easy to speculate this since the beginning. They were both inside the border of China so they entered team China. My efforts of setting up the scheme over several movies didn't go to waste. And finally, in this five-way team battle, the scheme is closing up. Even with Chu Xuan's intelligence, he shouldn't be able to survive after falling into such a long scheme. However..." Adam muttered to himself in front of two people.

They were a man and a woman. The woman had blonde hair. She was the one that jumped on the desert when they first entered the world. Her name was Lina. The man was a SongTian, a mixed blood and part Chinese. Adam assigned the two of them to follow him. The other three members of team Celestial spread out at different areas of this world. They were to search for bonus missions by themselves since few living beings in this world could harm them.

SongTian looked like a reliable man. He sat in front of Adam and asked. “However? Was his death too unexpected?”

Adam nodded. “Correct. Chu Xuan’s death was too unexpected. Even though we saw his death through Luo YingLong’s phone but the way he died seemed like a joke. Yet, if he wanted to feign death in such a laughable way, he wouldn’t be Xuan. That man won’t be able to come up with such a naïve scheme. So, I thought his death was fake. However, the message was they indeed lost a point. Which means he actually died.

There are two possibilities I can think of. One, Xuan died. He wanted to die so he chose to stand there. We are similar after all. Or two, he didn’t die. He exchanged an ability of enhancement or found a method to exist in the same way as Luo YingLong’s core that allows him to revive after returning to God’s dimension, while the death still deducts a point.

Both possibilities are plausible. We know the location of the two parties of team China. One is heading to Mordor and the other to Gondor. The party going to Gondor is their main force. The one going to Mordor is composed of sci-fi weapon users. They basically pose no threat. Although the sniper with Gauss rifle may be useful, our defensive items can totally block one or two shots. He will die after the first shot. There’s no need to worry about them. What we need to consider is the main force that’s going to Gondor and Xuan who might still be alive.” Adam looked at them without emotion.

He continued to mutter. “This is an overt scheme. Whether his death was real or fake, it stopped the next step of my plan. I originally planned to send SongTian and Luo YingLong to snipe the demon. The two of you together should be fine even against the demon. He has only just entered the beginning of the fourth stage. He has the strength but lacks the control. However, Xuan’s death means that SongTian can’t go attack the demon. You are stronger than Luo YingLong but you don’t have the ability to revive as long as a core survives. If Xuan faked his death, I fear for the outlook of the battle at Minas Tirith. You can’t go. I will send two others to assist Luo YingLong. The battle at Minas Tirith is extremely important and it is the only chance we have to kill the demon.”

SongTian paused for a moment. “The only chance? It can’t be. There is still more to come after the battle. They must come to Mordor or they won’t be able to return. Can’t we kill them all after they arrive at Mordor?”

Adam shook his head. “That’s the reason for Xuan to choose this time to execute his scheme. This isn’t the original movie. They entered the world much earlier than us and obtained the influence from the alliance of man. They will grasp these influences firmly in their hands after the battle at Minas Tirith. I don’t have to analyze it for you. Just think about the movie and you can see the strong forces in this world. The Rohan riders, Gondor infantry, elves, Ents, and the Army of the Dead. If Xuan is still alive, these forces will march at Mordor once man wins the battle at Minas Tirith. Do you think the half-orcs can defend? Even with the Ringwraiths and Sauron, it will much many times more difficult to kill the demon.

Incredible overt scheme. It forced us to hold back at the battle in Minas Tirith. And if we were to go all in, we must be prepared for a wipe. The unknown is always the most terrifying. I am behind by half a step no matter he’s still alive or not.”

Lina suddenly said. “Things can’t be so bad. Doesn’t your plan still have the advantage of scheming their other party? Once those four members of team China died, what can they do in Minas Tirith even with Chu Xuan? Don’t you always say that once strength reaches a certain height, all wits are laughable. We are many times stronger than team China at the current moment. I say YingLong can kill them all by himself. You are too careful.”

Adam looked at her calmly until she blushed. “I am not speaking for that stupid, even though he’s my boyfriend. I am just speaking the truth!”

“I know.” Adam closed his eyes. “I feel I missed a step in my calculation. But what is it? Even if Xuan recognized that HaoTian entered the realm because of the information I sent back to the real world, even if he realized HaoTian’s entrance was all too sudden, even if he was aware of the disadvantageous position he was in by being in the open while I was in the shadow and HaoTian was in the open, what does he have to overturn

the situation? What card does he have that can rival us?

What is Xuan hiding? Or is there someone in team China that's a threat to us?

What is it?"

# Chapter 26-2

What Xuan was hiding wasn't always so important. At least ZhuiKong didn't seem to care when he looked at Adam with a smile.

Adam appeared to care about ZhuiKong. SongTian stepped in between them. A moment of silence followed between the two parties.

Adam opened his mouth. "Zhao ZhuiKong, when my team went to take the ring, you had already taken it. The biggest influence in this world actually fell into your hands. Although I don't want this to happen but you have decided to compete with us in this world, correct?"

ZhuiKong's smile didn't change. He didn't express his position and looked at SongTian. "You also reached the fourth stage? Early phase... how unexciting. If you can't control yourself, just allow yourself to kill like a wild beast. Death is a beauty of its own. Forcefully suppressing your killing desires twists what god has bestowed upon you."

SongTian also didn't express himself as he remained calm. "At least I will be able to fight with you monsters. The future of humans can't be decided by you monsters!"

ZhuiKong shrugged but he seemed to be enjoying this.

Adam waved his hand. "Let's get to business. I will give you a choice. Either we abandon team China and kill you right now or you leave Mordor and don't appear in front of me until the battle at Mordor is over. You can come back no matter who wins."

ZhuiKong raised his head and pondered. After a while, he smiled at the three people in front. "I choose neither. My future should be seized in my hands. You want me to go against my heart by just saying a line... do you really think I will allow this to happen?"

His eyes gradually became sharp. SongTian felt an extraordinary killing intent from ZhuiKong. An antique looking Chinese broadsword appeared in his hand the next moment. It was unknown where the sword came from. It radiated a sense of chill and forced ZhuiKong's eyes to fall on

him.

ZhuiKong gave SongTian a good look then said. "Good... Too bad I am not interested in ripen fruits." A dagger appeared in his hand. It was small and thin. When looked at from the side, the dagger was translucent as a piece of glass. SongTian backed half a step as soon as ZhuiKong had the dagger in hand like he was facing a mighty foe. He held the sword with both hands, getting ready to attack at full force once ZhuiKong moves.

Adam suddenly said. "The person you're interested in... is it Zhao YinKong? What if we keep her alive or hand her to you?"

ZhuiKong stopped. He gave Adam a meaningful look then accepted pleasantly. "Good, just like you said then. I won't come to Mordor before the battle is over. Oh, and save a few newbies from the other teams. You can take the rest." He leaped backward into the woods and quickly disappeared.

SongTian loosened up once ZhuiKong was gone. He was still holding onto his sword and was breathing intensely. "This psychopath reached the same height as his clone. It feels helpless that these monsters are stronger than us pure humans. Is this the advantage of being a mixed blood?" He forgot that he was a mixed blood as he said this.

Lina felt confused and asked. "What's the point of this, Adam? Don't you think that was a waste of time? You called the psychopath over to ask a few questions and almost got into a fight. What are you thinking?"

"Confirmation." Adam said. "I need to confirm what Xuan is hiding. Obviously, it isn't Zhao ZhuiKong. Then what is it? Something that Xuan believes can turn the tide of battle, enough to let him fake death. What exactly is this thing? If the situation becomes dire, we will have to abandon Anaviya and Lekela. Luo YingLong won't die anyway and you two are next to me. We won't get wipe at the worst-case scenario."

Anaviya and Lekela were a Caucasian man and black man of team Celestial. However, it seemed that these two members had a rather low position in the team. SongTian and Lina didn't argue with Adam's decision.

“Then we will stop here... Notify Anaviya and Lekela to help Luo YingLong kill Zheng Zha during the battle at Minas Tirith. At the same time, reduce the human alliance force as much as possible. Mordor winning the battle is the best result... Xuan, let me see your reaction.”

While team Celestial made their decision, a slab of ice floated up from a swamp in the marshes not too far away. The ice cracked. A naked man jumped out at once then he fell on his hands and knees and grasped for air. A long time passed before he stood up. However, he still seemed feeble. He fell multiple times trying to get up. Then his hands reached for the ice slab and climbed. He was barely standing.

The man raised his head and shouted. “I am not dead! Just wait! Whether you are team Celestial or team East America, you just wait! You are no heroes for sneak attacking. Wait for the wrath of my Ice Age! Arghhhhh....”

The mud and water beside him froze as he shouted then they exploded.

“Neos, what are you thinking about?”

The air in the Lord of the Rings world was extremely clean. There was no pollution. Once night fell, they could see the countless stars as they raised their heads. Even the dimmest starlight was visible to the naked eye. Surprisingly, there was also a milky galaxy in this world. It was like a silver ribbon that hung across the sky, beautiful and dazzling.

Neos lay on a boulder and gazed at the starry sky. Somehow, he seemed doleful. Aya, who was paying attention to him, couldn't help but asked.

Neos rubbed his brows. “Aya... I don't know why but I feel that this path might lead to a great danger if we continue.”

Aya was surprised. “Then are we not going to Minas Tirith? The Ents can find their way there anyway. There's no need for us to go.”

Neos smiled bitterly. “It's not so simple. The Ents will become suspicious. We are the ones who guide them there and if we run away, they will not give all they have to save the human alliance. Secondly, the battle at Minas Tirith is important. If we win the battle, the journey to

Mordor won't be as dangerous because we will have obtained enough influence to overwhelm Mordor. Furthermore, if team Celestial and team East America wants to fight us, they are certain to send their members to Minas Tirith. There is no escape. We must head to Minas Tirith. Instead of running away then head to death in Mordor, we might as well give what we have now. If we managed to arrive at Mordor, we will have enough to threaten them... Our team is very weak."

Snow didn't look like she understood. Aya and Richard fell into silence.

A while later, Neos broke the silence. "It's ironic but our hope lies on team China. So, we must be there in Minas Tirith. Else if team China falls, we will lose our advantage to surviving. Sigh..."

"Even if there's danger ahead, we must attend this battle!"

Team Africa's saviors weren't at a good spot either. The road ahead of team China without Xuan was once again clouded. The successor of Xuan that they expected didn't come. Furthermore, the other four members of team China, the newbies, and the veterans of the other teams disappeared. None of the five members remaining were the strategic types. In the end, all they had was Zheng analyzing the situation through simulation.

"I still haven't fully grasp the fourth stage. I am only at the early phase so the simulation is at fifty to sixty percent. I don't know why I have never been able to simulate Xuan. Analyzing at half of HongLu's strength is really suboptimal..." Zheng said to the others.

After a while of analysis and no conclusions were reached, they had no choice but to follow the development of the original plot, head to Minas Tirith and help the human alliance win the battle. This was all they could do now.

Among the five teams, some were on the verge of being wiped, some were having fun the world, some were calculating each other, and some were worried. However, as the plot continued to advance, all the teams placed their eyes at the battle coming up in Minas Tirith. This battle would shake the world!

# Chapter 27-1

Two days passed since Zheng's group returned to Edoras. Their only reward from the journey to Isengard was killing Saruman who had gone insane. Such a famed wizard died to Legolas's three arrow Explosive Shot and Heng's Charged Shot. He didn't even use a barrier. At that stage, he was merely an old man.

The tower began to collapse after Saruman's death. This differed from the movie plot. Gandalf told them it was Saruman's magic that supported the tower and that it would fall to the ground upon Saruman's death.

"It's such a pity to the items inside. According to what you said, a wizard should have a rich collection. The treasures of a White Wizard could rival that of a kingdom. I wonder how many energy stones and other magical items are in there." Zheng said to Gandalf.

Gandalf was rather embarrassed because to him, team China didn't necessarily have to participate in the war against Mordor. His recruitment of them as mercenaries dragged the team into the war. The energy stones he had given them were obviously of too little value for what they had done. Yet, he was not nearly as rich as Saruman since he just became a White Wizard.

Gandalf said. "Once the war is over, I will try my best to compensate you. Don't worry. Your teammate's death won't be in vain."

Zheng answered without paying attention. He was thinking of finding a time to return to the Lord of the Rings world to dig up the items buried beneath Isengard. The tower could collapse but the things inside wouldn't disappear. The treasures were still buried there.

Nothing much to be said about Isengard. The group returned to Edoras. The villagers of course cheered. This was a victory over a battle that was expected to destroy the kingdom. Furthermore, Theoden's consciousness returned and he began bringing back the exiled riders. The number of riders increased to seven thousand in just under a week. Even without counting the injured and sick, there were five thousand capable elite

riders. This was a strong army in this world, enough to pose threat to the half orc army of Mordor.

“Tell me.” Theoden shouted. “Why should we ride to the aid of those who did not come to ours? What do we owe Gondor?”

The others had no words. The players couldn't understand but to the people of this world, allies must fight when the time came. If the other party broke the promise, it was generous already to not break all their bonds. Fighting for such people wouldn't happen so easily. Theoden was only exercising his right.

Gandalf said in an unconvincing tone. “Yet if Gondor falls, Rohan will be next...”

“No!” Theoden stared at him in seriousness. “Our dignity is more important! If Rohan forgets the heartless that Gondor showed and go aid them, our kingdom will no longer have any dignity. We will not aid them unless... the Beacons of Gondor are lit. Let them tell us by themselves, that they are on the brink of death and need the blood of Rohan to save them. Or else, our riders will not leave even if Mordor raze Minas Tirith to the ground!”

This was Theoden's answer. Gandalf had no choice but to ride to Minas Tirith ahead of everyone. He planned to persuade ruling steward of Gondor and have him light the Beacons. The forces of men would then become one. He didn't bring Aragorn along because Denethor was still in control of Gondor. Aragorn going would incite unexpected consequences.

“You must come to Minas Tirith by another road. Gondor's final force lies there. Seize that power... you will what it means to be the king of men.”

(Planning to have Merry sneak in and light the Beacons when he fails to convince Denethor? Isn't this the same as the original plot?) Zheng simulated HongLu's thinking process. The battle at Minas Tirith was of utmost importance. It affected how the team would obtain influence in the remaining time in this world. He had no choice but to accompany Gandalf.

“We need to split here. Lan and I will head to Gondor. We have to protect Gandalf and Merry and secondly, to help Gondor achieve victory. These aren't the key-points. The problem lies in the attacks from the other two teams which we need to be on guard. Although I can't control the fourth stage, it's still extremely powerful. I can pose threat to the other two teams by heading to Gondor... YinKong, Heng, and ChengXiao go with Aragorn. The Army of the Dead in the movie are strong. You have to help them obtain the oath at all cost. Of course, put your lives before anything.” Zheng said in a serious manner.

ChengXiao laughed. “Don't worry. As long as I can still breathe, I will protect YinKong. As to Heng, go back to where you came from. I won't protect men.”

Zheng grabbed him by the collar and lifted him up. “I need you to live, not to see you standing in front of women again. Live on. This is more important than anything. More important than anything... Live on. We will all live on together!”

ChengXiao couldn't help but nodded. After Zheng released his collar, he murmured about him tore his shirt. Though they could see a hint of seriousness in his eyes.

“Well then... meet in Minas Tirith. Let us all live on!” Zheng pulled the lead rope. The Nightmare stood up then ran off.

Zheng and Lan followed closely after Gandalf's white horse toward Minas Tirith and slowly disappeared from the other members.

The Nightmare and the white horse could reach Minas Tirith in three days. All four people were quiet on the road. All that was on their mind was hurry to Minas Tirith and light the 火台 before Mordor sent out its army. So the riders of Rohan would assemble in the shortest time and aid Gondor.

Two days later, Zheng suddenly asked Gandalf loudly. “Do you still have the spatial bag on you? Or have you put it on Legolas?”

Gandalf was focused on riding the horse. It took him a while to register the question. “Uh. I gave it to Legolas and he seemed to have forgotten to

give the bag back to me. Is there anything wrong?”

Zheng paused. He shook his head and said. “No. Nothing. Maybe I was overthinking it.”

Lan, who was in his arms, asked. “What happened? Did you guess something?”

“Uh, just a little feeling. I feel that Xuan wouldn’t die so easily. There was a notification but considering his calculations, this might be another one of his schemes. He schemed everyone of us and made us his chess pieces. And possibly made himself a piece of his calculation... I feel that he might be alive now that I am not seeing his dead body. It simply feels...” Zheng smiled bitterly.

He pulled the lead rope and the Nightmare ran faster. “Anyway, if he’s not dead, something interesting is going to be bound to happen. There’s no point to keep pondering. If he actually died, I have to actively seek more challenges. Or else our team will no longer has any hopes!”

While Zheng and Gandalf headed to Gondor, the people in Rohan didn’t waste any time. Everyone trained themselves. The two people whose weapons were unbounded adjusted to the lighter weight of the weapons and the true powers contained within them.

Excalibur was more than just its sharpness. Its attacks ignored battle Qi. It could annihilate any layers formed by battle Qi instantly. The light blade from Tiger’s Soul would probably shatter upon contact too. However, YinKong still hadn’t discovered the noble phantasm that Zheng described to her.

Heng also discovered interesting uses of his bow. He went to Legolas for help. When he saw Legolas, Legolas was seeing a rider in black rode off. The rider was slender and wasn’t wearing any armor. His horse headed out the city.

“Who’s that? Why does he look so familiar?” Heng muttered.

Legolas seemed surprised by his voice. He laughed awkwardly. “A messenger... that brings victory.”

# Chapter 27-2

Zheng's group had been on the road for three days without sleep. Zheng and Gandalf were physically fit enough to sustain the strain but Lan and Merry had no way of keeping up. The two of them fell asleep leaning against the other's backs. They barely had any rests during this journey. Dawn of the fourth day came. A white city appeared through the morning sunlight.

"The capitol of Gondor, most magnificent city of men, Minas Tirith, City of Kings. It is the symbol of human regime. If the forces of Mordor breached the city, the end of men would be near." Gandalf sighed. He patted Shadowfax and it ran toward the city.

Zheng followed right behind Gandalf. The guards on the wall were excited at the sight of a large silvery horse followed by a skeleton horse. The White Wizard had a high reputation in this world. Saruman's fall from grace lowered his reputation but the majority of men still believed in him as the savior.

In contrast to the White Wizard, the guards were more familiar with and feared the skeleton horse. It was the mount of the Ringwraiths that couldn't be replicated. Seeing the White Wizard being chased by the Ringwraith, a group of archers hurried up the city wall from their camps in a commotion.

The misunderstanding took an hour to dissolve. Zheng dismounted from the Nightmare and handed it to the troops from Gondor. They finally believed that the White Wizard kill a Ringwraith and seized the Nightmare as spoil. No one would believe anyone could kill a Ringwraith with human bodies.

"Feeling helpless?" Gandalf laughed. "The people of Gondor are stubborn as this. They will follow through the end on things they decided on, whether it be good or bad, as long as it is the path they want to walk."

Zheng was rather inexperienced riding a war horse. The Gondor troops gave him the war horse after taking the Nightmare away. He wasn't

worried about not getting it back though. Normal human troops couldn't stop him if he were to use brute force to get it back. Furthermore, Gandalf wouldn't let this happen.

“Let's go and see the steward!”

What followed was a narration of the plot. Anyway, the group went to see the steward but Denethor didn't wish for the assistance of Rohan because he knew the heir of Gondor, Aragorn, was there. Gondor returning to the hands of the king was not what he wanted to see. It would leave him with no place in this kingdom. Thus, Denethor refused Gandalf's advice to light the Beacons.

“Foolish! Truly foolish! Gondor is his but what would he get once Mordor razes it into ground? Nothing! Only death would await him. Why does he not return the kingdom to the king and leave himself a good reputation?” Gandalf marched out from the throne room. He walked to the courtyard. There he could see Mordor beyond the mountains. It was covered in red as if the air was burning.

Gandalf looked in downcast. “We have lost. The end of men is near. Sauron has returned. The One Ring has returned to him. And men are still fighting with themselves for that elusive authority. With such an army, and such regime, how can we defeat the Dark Lord? We lost.”

Zheng patted him on the shoulder. “Don't give up. We made it through so many difficulties and battles already. We won't lose to a worthless Steward. We have the riders of Rohan. We have the Ents on their way. We have a group of allies. The elves will aid us when Sauron comes back. Or they would have to run.”

Gandalf took a deep breath. “We will follow through our plan. Merry.”

Merry was gazing at the red sky. The sight was beautiful yet peculiar. As he turned his head around, he saw three pairs of eyes fixed on him. A bad feeling arose, as if he had boarded a pirate ship...

“Finally, the Beacons are lit.”

A young man with black hair sat on top a snowy mountain. He was

breathing rhythmically. He looked down on the mountain below. The Beacons at the peak of the it were lit. The light was in view to people on the other mountain. And then a second mountain lit their Beacons. The lights came on one after another until they reached the mountains far, far away.

“Well then, is the battle at Minas Tirith going to commence now?” The young man smiled then he laughed aloud. He spoke as though talking to himself. “Zhao ZhuiKong, there’s nothing you can say to stop me now. Fuck you! Wait until I reach Jindan (Gold Core), I won’t fear you even if you unlocked the fourth stage. I will kill you and your clone and that demon...

Xiuzhen (Cultivation) is the strongest power!”

Switching away from the wild young man. When the light of the Beacons reached Edoras, Theoden was decisive at agreeing to send his army to Gondor. As a person in an authoritative position, he knew the two kingdoms were interdependent of each other. The riders of Rohan could not hold out against the forces of Mordor by themselves. Their only choice was to unite with the Gondor infantry and fight the Mordor army together.

“This is an unfortunate news but I must inform you.” Theoden listened to a scout and his expression became burdened. “I sent several scouts to Gondor prior to the battle at Helm’s Deep. One, to request aid, and two, to check if the Mordor forces have begun their attack. Our scouts returned with information of what they saw... The bad news is we will be facing against an army of a hundred thousand half-orcs, orcs, and trolls. This army is beyond anything we imagined, beyond the evil forces in the War of the Last Alliance. We have only five thousand riders. This is all we have...”

Inside the Golden Hall, Theoden mustered his riders without a moment of hesitation. And when the scout came back with the message, the numbers crushed their confidence at once. This wasn’t the real world. Not one war in the history of Middle Earth had such a large evil force gathered together.

“If that’s the case... we will seek new allies!”

A voice came in from outside the Golden Hall. The people in the room turned their attention and saw a cloaked figure walked in. He took off his hood, revealing his identity. The man was Elrond, Lord of Rivendell, and the wielder of one of the three Elven rings.

All people aside from the three members of team China bowed. Elrond said. "Sauron obtained the One Ring once again. His power has returned. He's as powerful as before yet the alliance became weak. Men only have one heir to Isildur. The elven rings are losing their power, forcing us to leave Middle Earth. For men to survive, Aragorn, you must seek new forces."

Aragorn's smile was bitter. "There are none. The Ents have set out. The riders of Rohan are ready. The infantries of Gondor are out of my control. The elves are leaving as the powers of the three rings fade. We have no more allies."

"No. There is an army that has been waiting for a thousand years!" Elrond revealed a sword under his cloak. The sword glowed in a silvery light without activating it with battle Qi. It looked like a silver mirror.

"Reforged from the shards of Narsil. A sword that can only be used by the heir of Isildur. Use it to prove your bloodline." Elrond paused then said in a serious tone. "Seek those who dwell in the mountain. They have been waiting for this over a thousand years. This is the only army that can negate our difference in number and change the tide of battle!"

"The mountain?" Aragorn paused. His face turned pale as he muttered. "Murderers! Traitors! You would call upon them to fight? They believe in nothing! They answer to no one."

Elrond shouted. "They will answer to the King of Gondor! This is your army!"

Gimli asked Legolas, seeing that Aragorn was hesitating. "What's the matter? Why does it seem like he fears the army?"

"Not fear but anger." Legolas sighed. "That army pledged their loyalty to the king of Gondor, but they abandoned their oath when they were most needed. The blood of Isildur was nearly lost. Aragorn became the only heir

to remain. They aren't people of the living. They are deceased men cursed by Isildur. Only when they fulfill their oath will they be forgiven and rest in peace.”

# Chapter 27-3

Although Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli were unclear how they really felt, they still decided to head to the mountain immediately. Anduril will save them from being killed by the Dead even if they failed to gain control of the army.

The three members of team China accompanied them. They knew the strength of the Army of the Dead. In the movie, it was this army that brought victory to the battle at Minas Tirith. It was also the reason Zheng left them behind, and to protect the three movie characters.

“It would be good if we have extra energy stones. This bow can focus energy on the string. You didn’t see it when Legolas used my bow yesterday. He gathered Life Energy on the string, then it formed into thin arrows. These arrows increased the area of impact by up to ten folds. That’s effectively turning the bow into a shotgun.” Heng said with excitement.

The road they crossed was bleak. There were barely any trees in sight. Which in turn brought down their emotion. Heng and ChengXiao began talking in turns to break the dullness. Waiting for YinKong to speak up by herself was like waiting for a donut to fall from the sky after all.

ChengXiao picked his nose. “Aren’t you scared of ghosts? I heard your guts are small.”

Heng blushed and defended himself. “I am not. I am just terrified of blood and being beaten due to psychological issue. I am not scared of ghosts!”

ChengXiao laughed. “Hehe. Speaking big now. Don’t get scared so much that you can stand when they come. That means something happened in your past and left the issue in your heart? I have a cure for your issue.”

Heng was overjoyed and said aloud. “What cure? How do you cure my problem? You aren’t lying, are you?”

“How can it be. We are bros.” ChengXiao laughed out. However, Heng

felt something was off.

“You just have to bathe in blood everyday. Then tear apart ten half-orcs or other humanoids. I promise you will be as fearless as Zheng in less than half a year. Haha.” ChengXiao laughed.

“Fuck you.” Heng cursed at him. He went back to his bow. The metallic bow was extremely stylish and powerful. Much more so than the Sirius he owned. His biggest regret was not knowing the name and origin of the bow.

As they talked, they reached an entrance in the mountain. Numerous skulls the entrance. The skulls had open mouths and a terrified look. Hieroglyphs were carved on the rocks in blood.

“The way is shut. It was made by those who were dead, and the dead keep it. The way is shut.” Legolas read the hieroglyphs.

Gimli said loudly. “What does it mean?”

Aragorn didn't reply. He bit his teeth then charged in. Legolas hesitated for a moment and followed, leaving Gimli and the members of team China standing behind. Gimli turned to the other three. They weren't scared though since they knew the plot. They also ran in and so Gimli was the only person standing there.

A chill wind blew over. He shivered then shouted. “Wait for me! Wait!” He also entered the Paths of the Dead.

It was pitch black inside the Paths of the Dead. They all followed closely behind Aragorn who had the torch. It felt as though the path was leading to the underworld. A unique sensation crept up to them. They felt they were lost. The light from the torch was wavering in front, yet they could not see Aragorn.

YinKong felt she entered an endless corridor. There was no boundaries in this corridor and time was out of her senses. It had the same feeling as the transportation that happened when leaving and returning to God's dimension. It was as if a long time had passed, yet at the same time it was also an instant.

“YinKong, wake up. Aren't you scared of getting sneak attacked sleeping so deep? Little clumsy.”

A gentle and soft voice sounded next to her ear. She opened her eyes abruptly and jumped up. Then she saw a man with a smile standing in front of her. He was a handsome man with long hair, much taller than YinKong. His eyes was that of a big brother looking at his sister.

“Zhao ZhuiKong! Where is this?” YinKong was shocked. Her hands reached for Excalibur wrapped in a piece of cloth on her bag. However, she reached nothing. As she began her second attempt, she stopped.

YinKong frowned. “What am I doing? Eh? ZhuiKong-gege (niisan), where is this place?”

ZhuiKong said with a gentle smile. “It's our training ground. Hurry up. Everyone's waiting in ahead. We are going to hunt a few black bears today. We will have to depend on your speed. Let's go. They are all waiting ahead.”

Following his voice, the images of the environment became vivid. This was the border of a forest. YinKong was lying on a grassy field just then. ZhuiKong began walking toward the forest as he finished talking.

YinKong lifted her foot. Yet, as she was about to take the step, she took her foot back. She lowered her head and said. “ZhuiKong-gege... I can't go to where you are going. But there's a question I want to ask you...”

ZhuiKong turned his back around in a surprise but his smile was still gentle. “Go ahead. As long as I can answer it.”

“Will you... will you always be the brother in my memory?” YinKong asked, her head still lowing down.

ZhuiKong paused in confusion. He walked over to YinKong and gently wiped the tear by the corner of her eyes. “If you are not coming to us, then take good care of yourself... I will always be your brother. Never going to change...”

YinKong bit the tip of her tongue. She felt her mind stopped for a moment then the scene in front changed. It was still dark but she could

make out a faint image. She was standing on the edge of a cliff. Its depth was unknown. If she just took one more step, she would have fallen into this abyss. However, before she recovered from the situation, she saw a person to the side.

Heng was soaked in sweat with his back facing the cliff. If he just backed one more step, he would fall into this abyss. YinKong was seven meters away from him. That shocked her and she immediately ran at him.

Heng felt burning heat and pain throughout his body. What was this? What happened to him?

Right, he was going home with YanWei, the woman he loved the most... Heng opened his eyes with great effort. He saw a man with a blurry face clung onto her body. She was struggling. Next to him was three men beating at him. He felt a violent pain with each punch. Blood was flowing out from his mouth and ears.

(Right, the ruffians caught me. They are beating me. They want to take her away...) The thoughts came to his mind. A punch landed on his eye and he felt the world became painted in red. It was the color of blood. The violent pain also registered from the bruises to his brain. It was as though these people transformed into his alcoholic father. Punch after punch, kick after kick, filling his body with bruises, beating him until his mouth and nose bleeds... (No. I am scared. These blood. They are still beating me...) Heng covered his head and tried to avoid their attacks. However, the beating was like coming from every direction. Soon, there was more blood on his body, trying to dye his clothes red. Heng kept backing away. He backed two steps then he couldn't take another one. Because he saw YanWei was being further and further away from him.

“Run! Heng, leave me and run! I know you are scared of blood and being beaten. Leave me and run! They can't catch you if you take a few more steps!” YanWei suddenly yelled while she struggled.

Heng's conscious was urging him to run. The fear of being beaten was near breaking him down. However, he felt as though he had forgotten something. It was a determination that kept him standing in place, kept

him for backing another step despite the beating he was getting.

“Run! Why aren’t you running? Didn’t you say you will always listen to me? I told you to run! Why don’t you listen? Heng!” The man was dragging her further away. She had to shout.

“I can’t run!” Heng took their punches, he took his fear head on, and faced the woman he loved so deeply. He cried back with tears. “I can’t run! If I take this step, I will tear apart our future with my own hands... I don’t want to run again. I don’t want to never see you again... even if this is an illusion, even if this is a dream. I won’t run this time, YanWei!”

# Chapter 27-4

Sometimes, people change at their root on the tiniest confrontation. Sometimes, people lingered on the same spot only because they hadn't taken that one little step.

Heng took a step forward. When his foot was halfway over the cliff, he took one little step forward. And that brought him back to safety right before he would fall off into the abyss. Which allowed YinKong's hand to strike him on the back and knocked him several meters away. His head bumped into a set of stairs.

Heng woke up after the hit. Though there was a big swollen bump on his head. He jumped up from the ground then looked around in confusion.

It was the same dark path he was in. Pale white skeletons lay throughout the ground. Around him were people with their eyes closed and shivering. Aragorn was the only exception. His sword glowed in a silver light. His lips were moving as though he was conversing with something.

On the other side, Gimli's hands were making the motion of pouring wine into his mouth while moving forward. Legolas was making the motion of shooting arrows and running. In front of these two was the cliff.

Heng and YinKong met eyes then charged at the two of them at the same time. They each grabbed a person then threw him backward. Gimli and Legolas went through Heng's experience. They stood up with a bump on the head.

Legolas said with lingering fear. "That was close. The mental energy of the dead controlled us. They showed us what we want or don't want to see the most. Then use it to lure you to jump off the cliff."

Heng and YinKong looked at each other again and asked at the same time. "Where's ChengXiao?"

Legolas could see further than anyone here due to having the eyes of an elf. He scanned around and found ChengXiao just one step away from the cliff. The man held out his arm with hesitation, but he pulled it back

halfway. Then he wanted to take a step forward but retracted his foot. This went on for a few more times until he woke up by himself with a sigh. The others became curious to his experience.

ChengXiao walked over to them. Heng asked. "What did you see? That was weird."

ChengXiao gave them a long face. "I felt like buried in a land of warmth and tenderness. Beautiful ladies wavered around me. You can't imagine the exquisite beauties there were. Man, they were infinite times prettier than Ms. China or Ms. Earth. Too bad that I like the babyface loli type more. Let me tell you, Heng..."

YinKong smacked his back with her foot then turned around and walked over to Aragorn.

"Help! Heng! I am going to fall. Hurry, this rock feels loose!"

They all came near Aragorn. The glow from the sword allowed them to see the green ghosts. That was when they realized they walked right through these ghosts. Aragorn didn't turn around to the group. He said to the spirit in front of him. "I have told you my comrades will pass the trial! Now, give me your answer. Do you still remember your oath? Do you wish for a place of peace? Answer me!"

Aragorn swung his sword. The ghosts lowered their heads with respect as they saw it. He walked to the King of the Dead. The Dead King laughed. His laughter echoed through the hall. There was no word from him. He and his army began to fade with his laughter.

Aragorn became anxious. He yelled. "You have my word! Fight, and I will release you from this living death! What say you?"

Just then, the sounds of rolling rocks emerged. The group was standing by the cliff. Leading to the top from the cliff was a great hall. The doorway to the hall opened with the sound. Thousands of skulls poured down like a wave. By the looks of it, the skulls would bury them down the abyss. Aragorn had no time to question the ghosts further. He gave a yell and began to run.

The group followed right behind Aragorn to the other side of the cave. Yet, a few steps in and the skulls had already drowned their legs. They gave their best to move forward. The skulls were getting more and more. They finally managed to run into a corridor before being buried. Following the corridor ahead, they soon escaped the cave. In front of them was a mountain. They had crossed the mountain.

There were over ten black ships on the river. A city by the shore was burning in fire. A black ship parked by the city. People were carrying goods onto the ship.

Aragorn fell to his knees in despair. He seemed defeated. These black ships were probably forces of Mordor. Mordor's forces were showing their might while he failed to obtain his support. Such feeling would indeed put anyone into despair.

The three members of team China had no special feeling since they knew followed in the plot. A chilling wind swept by this silence. The Dead King came out from the rocks. His voice sounded hollow. "We fight! The last king of Gondor!"

Aragorn froze in shock until Gimli cried. He pulled himself up using the sword as support. Then he pointed to the black ships on the river. "Our first fight! Annihilate the corsairs!"

The Dead King charged toward the river. His army of ghosts followed after him. Ghosts had no form nor mass and were free from the bound of gravity. They ran down from the mountain. A green color surrounded the black ships.

At the same time, the orc army was near Minas Tirith. The hundred thousand army swept through the outposts in Gondor. When the defeated soldiers made it back to Minas Tirith and delivered the message, Denethor ordered his son, Faramir, to head out with their riders instead of defending inside the walls.

Faramir was Boromir's younger brother. He lost multiple battles one after another while Boromir was still recuperating in Rohan. Not long ago, he let Frodo's party went ahead to Mordor, which led to the ring returning

to Sauron. He blamed himself for giving the ring back to Sauron.

“It’s sad but we have no control over this army. The one in command of the army is still Denethor.” Zheng said to Gandalf. And to him, the riders of Gondor had much better armors than the riders of Rohan. However, they were miles apart in bravery, training, and other aspects. Losing this group wouldn’t impact the battle by too much.

This group totaled to a thousand. However, they had to charge at an army of a hundred thousand because it was the order of the Steward. They couldn’t not follow the order even if it was a suicide.

Neither Zheng nor Lan attempted to change anything. Gandalf went to see Denethor multiple times. Yet, Denethor had gone mad. He couldn’t listen to anyone’s words.

As it had been expected, three riders managed to come back after an hour. Faramir, who survived in the movie, died. The Mordor army was many times more than was portrayed in the movie after all. His death was determined when the wave of arrows rained down.

Zheng and Gandalf sighed. Lan sent Zheng an image of the scan. The orcs, half-orcs, Uruk-hai, and trolls were not far from Minas Tirith and were approaching the city. They carried sieging weapons, catapults, siege towers, and battering rams, unlike the Uruk-hai of Isengard. This was a fully equipped army.

“The battle begins.”

Zheng could see the army with his eyes now. Looking down from the city, the orcs seemed endless.

“Now we just have to wait for our allies. Wait and see how many groups of allies will come.”

# Chapter 28-1

This scene was a true depiction of war. Only twenty to thirty thousand of the orc army in the front could touch the city wall, but the catapults could attack from the distance. Boulders rained down on Minas Tirith.

Zheng couldn't fully defend such a situation. The city was simply too big to defend even though its sides stood against the mountain. It was different from the rectangular shapes the cities in ancient China had where only the front would get attacked and it was different from the small fortress that was Helm's Deep. This was a true city with over ten floors in height and spanned hundreds of meters across. How could he take care of every place by himself?

(If I unlocked the fourth stage, I can simply charged into the orc army...) Zheng and Gandalf stood in a middle level and looked down at the battlefield. They could get a clear view at any change happening below. Multiple times, Zheng wanted to assist when large boulders flew at the wall but Gandalf stopped him.

"Hold. The Ringwraith has come... The final Ringwraith possesses immense power. I don't know why Sauron isn't here but the Ringwraith alone will bring about heavy casualties. You are our strongest fighter in close combat. You must stop the Ringwraith." Gandalf said in a serious tone.

(It's not on the Ringwraith. Three people are watching from the mountain. Two men and a woman. One of them is probably Luo YingLong. Don't recognize the other two but they should be members of team Celestial. How arrogant. They don't care that our psyche force user would detect them, or is it because they are strong enough to disregard my fourth stage?) Zheng didn't want to enter the fourth stage to avoid losing his true self. However, the fourth stage was also is pride. It put him within the top of the ladder in this realm. His strength could at least enter him into top five.

Yet, was this enough to rival the final Ringwraith and the three people

from team Celestial?

Boulders were raining down in decreasing intervals. Many troops died on the wall. Cracks and chips appeared on the wall. Despite that, the orcs still couldn't break through due to its height.

“We have only three thousand troops left. The local forces in the city are still scattered. Denethor is a fool. He doesn't know what he's facing!” Gandalf cursed.

Zheng shrugged with a bitter smile on his face. This city was going to fall if things proceed at the same direction. He noticed troops from both sides with a higher rank could use battle Qi. There were also few that could use Explosive Shot. When had this powerful technique become so cheap to obtain? The numbers that could use the technique were few but they were mostly in the orc army. Even with a only a hundred Explosive Shots, Zheng wouldn't dare to take them head on.

“We can't wait and watch here! Gandalf, I am heading down to help the defense. We don't know when the Rohan riders will come. The city can't fall until then!”

He had no time to worry about the three people from team Celestial. He gave Lan a few advices and urged Gandalf to protect her. Then he mounted the Nightmare and ran down to the wall.

The city was built leaning on the mountain. The roads spiraled upward inside the city. It would take quite a bit of time to move through but the anti-gravity attribute of the Nightmare made the run swift. Zheng was standing on the city wall within just ten seconds.

Tat. Tat. Tat. As soon as he arrived, numerous arrows hit his body. Zheng didn't hesitate as he gave the lead rope a pull. The nightmare leaped off the wall and with a thump, it smashed onto the half orcs and orcs below.

Zheng was well aware of the immense power of the Explosive Shot. It was beyond the defensive capacity of his light blade barrier. So instead of trying to defend or dodge them, he chose to charge right into the enemies. Attacks with normal battle Qi couldn't penetrate his barrier and they

wouldn't be able to hit him with Explosive Shot in such a chaotic situation. It was like a tiger ran into a flock of sheep!

He slashed across as soon as the Nightmare landed, cutting all orcs and half orcs within a ten meter radius in front of him to halves. The light blade from Tiger's Soul wasn't a joke. Any half orc and orc without protection from battle Qi didn't avoid getting slashed.

(These half orcs and orcs are quite a bit weaker than the Uruk-hai. A much lower portion of them can use battle Qi and Explosive Shot. Some of them are even physically weaker than human troops. The only thing scary about them is their number. A hundred thousand... I don't even know how long it will take to kill them if they just stand there and wait for me to come.) Various thoughts crossed his mind but they did not slow him down from charging ahead. He didn't know how many half orcs and orcs he killed. Even the trolls fall at one slash from the light blade. They had great strength but lacked battle Qi. Zheng charged left and right within the army. The orc army near the city wall seemed to be losing their formation.

The three people on the mountain showed signs of interfering seeing this scene but Luo YingLong stopped the other two. He was extremely cool headed unlike how he should have been. He stared at Zheng and said. "It's still too early. His strength is unfathomable. Even if he's not as strong as the demon, he's still the original. Let him spend more energy. The Ringwraith is also going to come. We will finish him off after they wear each other out!"

Zheng had been paying attention to these three people. Lan monitored everything around them with psyche scan the whole time. He would know if anything unusual appeared. That was why he didn't worry too much charging around in the battlefield. He was trying to buy as much time as he could.

Before the orc army near the wall broke apart, a screeching sound came through from above the clouds. The sound pierced into the depth of their souls. The pain felt like a blade dragging on their ears. The majority of troops on the wall covered their ears with their hands and many began to run. The arrows raining down from the wall stopped. The orc army also

found their strength. It was like the screeching sound had no effect on them.

“The Ringwraith! It’s the Ringwraith!”

The troops cried. Zheng saw it through psyche scan. A warrior in black heavy armor sat on a dragon-like creature that was meters long. This was a dragon with two wings from western fantasies. Though it was smaller than the fire breathing dragon they faced in the previous world. In just the blink of an eye, the dragon flew through the clouds and came straight to the city.

Events began to deviate from the movie plot from this point. Gandalf’s chanting echoed throughout the city. And with his voice, a translucent barrier appeared in front of the dragon. Thump! The dragon smashed into the barrier then it began to fall.

Zheng stared with his eyes and mouth wide open. This scene was not a part of the movie. Gandalf was more of a staff wielding warrior than he was a wizard in the movie. He never showed any powerful magic. Zheng never expected him to drop the Ringwraith in just one hit.

While Zheng was thinking, the wall where the dragon fell onto exploded. A group of troops were sent flying outward. There was no chance of them making it back alive. At the center, the Ringwraith stood up, intact. It carried a longsword with a dark glow in one hand and a morning star on the other. It smashed the morning star at a nearby house. The house and the one next to it shattered. Pulverized lime flew in the air. The whole area collapsed.

(That power is terrifying!) Zheng’s heart clenched. He had the Nightmare charge back to the wall without a second of thinking. The Ringwraith’s strength wasn’t at the level of Destruction but it was not far away. If he didn’t stop the Ringwraith, it would destroy the whole city before the orc army broke through the gate.

“Lan! Those people from team Celestial will attack soon! Don’t leave Gandalf! I can’t attend to your safety anymore!” Zheng said to Lan via Soul Link. The Nightmare ran up along the wall. He was less than a hundred

meters away from the Ringwraith.

## Chapter 28-2

Seeing your enemies would always evoke anger. The Ringwraiths originally had nine and now they all died but one. This Ringwraith gained strength as a result. However, the hatred was burned into its heart.

The nine Ringwraiths were once kings who sought the rings for mortal men. Sauronn turned them into beings neither alive nor dead, stripped of freedom and sunk into darkness. Anyhow, they had eight others in similar states who accompanied them. No man could endure such pain and loneliness by himself no matter how evil they became. Thus, the final Ringwraith hated Zheng and his group.

It roared at the sight of Zheng and his Nightmare. The screeching sound was piercing to Zheng's ears. The Ringwraith leaped at him. Its speed and strength were equally immense. The ground cracked at its leap. In under a second, the Ringwraith had crossed nearly the hundred meters between them. Its morning star smashed toward Zheng and the Nightmare.

Zheng felt a sense of pressure approaching from the front. It was almost suffocating. He immediately pulled Tiger's Soul up to block in a shock. Plus, there was still a layer of light blade barrier covering him. The morning star struck through the two layers of light blade and they shattered like glass. But they also slowed down its speed. Zheng and the Nightmare was knocked back ten meters.

The knock back pushed Zheng down the wall. Underneath was the lowest level of the city. Human troops were defending the wall. If the Ringwraith were to enter this area, the wall would fall in just a hit from its morning star. Zheng abandoned his Nightmare before they landed. He jumped off from the mount and headed back onto the wall.

He jumped along the wall using the movement technique and brought himself up the dozens of meters high wall. By the time the Nightmare fell to the ground, he reached the second level of the city, where the Nightmare was looking to jump down. It roared again upon seeing Zheng, the sound piercing his ears, then leaped at him.

(Man, it can use tactics to distract people before it attacks?) Zheng wouldn't let his guards down. He instantly entered the second stage of the unlocked mode and activated Explosion, increasing his speed and strength by multiple folds. The Ringwraith's sword struck at him. He dodged to the side while countering with Tiger's Soul.

Multiple clanks followed. The light blade from Tiger's Soul couldn't break through the dark sword and neither could the corrosive dark glow break his light blade. Their swords clashed together several times. Zheng was pushed back a few steps. His strength was no match for the Ringwraith in Explosion. His speed was also slower than the Ringwraith. The only advantage that kept him from getting killed was his reaction speed.

Seeing the sword wasn't effective, the Ringwraith smashed its morning star at Zheng. The same immense pressure swept at him. He wouldn't dare to take such force head on. The morning star smashed on the ground. Bang! A ten-meter radius of the wall cracked and rocks fell off.

Zheng heard cries from below. There weren't many troops at this area to begin with and after this attack, barely any would remain. The Ringwraith was so destructive that if he couldn't kill it, it would be a matter of time before the city was destroyed.

"All hope for man have lost. The end is nigh." A voice came through from the Ringwraith's armor. The hollowness sounded as though it came through from the underworld. The Ringwraith struck the morning star at Zheng again.

The situation had become critical. There was the Ringwraith destroying from inside the city, the orc army sieging from outside, and the three members of team Celestial waiting for the time to attack. For every second Zheng spent fighting the Ringwraith, their chance of defeat increased by a little. There was no other choice. He had to use his strongest force to kill the Ringwraith in the shortest amount of time!

The process of unlock the fourth stage was metaphysical. He couldn't describe it in words. All the deficiencies that he had, from strength, to

speed, to reaction, to calculation, would become corrected at the genetic level. At the same time, that killing desire hibernating deep in his genes would wake.

“Destruction! Fourth stage!” Zheng took two steps forward instead of dodging the incoming morning star. Tiger’s Soul intercepted it at the chain and caused the spiked head to change its direction. Zheng pressed the spiked head with his fingers then it smashed toward the Ringwraith. With a loud bang, the Ringwraith’s chest was struck a concave and it was knocked into a wall.

As soon as Zheng countered in this unusual manner in the fourth stage, Luo YingLong jumped. He cried. “The fourth stage!? Infinitesimal control? Impossible! Has he reached such a stage already?”

The other two members didn’t look good either. The Caucasian woman asked. “I don’t think we can take him with just the three of us.”

The black man nodded. Luo YingLong’s face looked blue but he nodded. “It will be fine. He hasn’t entered this stage for long and he has barely any self-created ability. It’s the best time to kill him before he grows. If he fully grasped this stage and exchanged an ability to suppress the killing desires, we won’t have a chance to kill him anymore. We have to kill him today!”

The black man hesitated. “Why isn’t SongTian here for such an important day? Or is there danger to this mission?”

Luo YingLong was feeling irritated. He yelled. “How can I know why he isn’t here? Maybe he ran into problem during his training or Adam gave him another mission. Fuck. I am here anyway. I am not at his stage but I am stronger than him. You guys just have to restrict him, I will be the main attacker!”

The man and woman met eyes then nodded. Luo YingLong jumped from the rock he was standing on. A sword appeared beneath his feet then he flew toward Minas Tirith at an extreme speed.

Zheng didn’t waste any time in Destruction after he knocked the Ringwraith into the wall. He charged at it. Tiger’s Soul had no light blade on. He hacked the sword right into the hole. The concave on the

Ringwraith's chest didn't affect it in the least bit. It raised the sword and clashed with Tiger's Soul. A cloud of black mist appeared on its other hand. Then it threw the mist at Zheng.

Zheng took a small step backward while his foot kicked the Ringwraith's arm that was holding the sword. Pah! The strength from Destruction was so strong that the arm exploded. Without a moment of delay, Tiger's Soul slashed toward the Ringwraith's head.

A sense of danger struck his subconscious. Zheng leaped five meters to the left at the same time. A green condensed Qi shot through where he was standing and penetrated the Ringwraith's helm. Who would have thought the final Ringwraith that terrified people of Middle Earth would get killed so easily?

The green Qi faded. Luo YingLong was standing on a sword. He didn't look at the Ringwraith and smiled at Zheng. "You don't mind me killing this right? The rewards are not bad as expected from the final Ringwraith. I don't use them that much but it would be nice exchanging some materials. Zheng! Exit your fourth stage. I don't want to fight a beast without his thoughts!"

# Chapter 29-1

Luo YingLong's shout contained an extraordinary sense. Zheng felt a shock in his brain. He subconsciously exited the fourth stage then leaped backward before he deactivated Destruction.

"You don't have to be so careful. You can easily go back into the fourth stage before my attack kills you given your reaction speed. I just want to have a talk with you right now." Luo YingLong shook his head.

Zheng laughed coldly. "What is there to talk? We will fight if that's what you want! I don't have time to hold a conversation with you here. Your team members are running over. Are you hoping to delay me until they arrive?"

Luo YingLong was surprised then he laughed, almost tearing himself. "You're funny. Those two are merely minor characters. Please. You shouldn't even care about their existence. But are you really him? That aloof, apathetic, and powerful demon... he would never say what you just said. He looks forward to a bunch of people challenging him. Don't worry. I will repay my debts and grudges before our fight. First is the debt I owe you!"

"Repay me?" Zheng was confused. He looked at this hot-headed guy weird. Luo YingLong almost couldn't control his rage and strike him for that weird look.

Luo YingLong took a deep breath and continued. "Fuck. Don't challenge my patience! Let me finish first... to be accurate, I am not indebted to you but to your clone. I don't know why but Caucasians had always been the majority in team Celestial. There were only two Asians and one of them was a mixed blood. Blacks were even fewer in number. I was promoted from a leader after all so the Caucasians didn't really dare to overstep the mark on me. However, me and the mixed blood Asian couldn't escape being bullied. That lasted until we met your clone. He killed the two strongest Caucasians in my team. One of them had a similar ability to me in that even if his body was destroyed, as long as his core exists, he can be

retrieved by team members and get revived back in God's Dimension. However, your clone has a terrifying dark flame that burned the man's soul. I thought I was going to die next but he spared me. He told me... Chinese are outnumbered in this realm. Having another powerful person who survives is going to count. So I survived that battle."

Luo YingLong faked a cough. "Don't assume that I am sentimental. A man should have the courage to bear everything that happened in his life. Your clone won't deign to care about me repaying the favor. And I have nothing to repay him. However, you as the original is still weak. No matter what, I have to repay you once. Then we will leave our lives to fate and fight for our respective teams!"

Luo YingLong looked at the two members flying over on their devices then turned back to Zheng. "Are you feeling that the fourth stage is powerful, but you lose control of your conscious? The strongest person in my team have reached the end of the beginning stage. He regained control of his conscious. I also met two people in mid fourth stage. One of them is your clone... Ahem. Don't look down on me that I am only at the third stage. I am way stronger than you when it comes to an actual fight! There's no doubt."

Zheng asked. "Are you here to boast your strength? Hurry up and speak your intention." He moved Tiger's Soul, getting ready to attack at any time.

Luo YingLong faked another cough to cover the embarrassment. "The beginning of the fourth stage wakes over 90% of a person's hibernating genes. The most powerful of those genes will merge into your original genes and compensate for your deficiencies. As such, you gain abilities and attributes that you otherwise would have to exchange from God. The perfection of your genes gives you powerful enhancements... But there's a question. Which of your genes are the most powerful? Genes from single celled life? From reptiles? From aves? The answer is genes left from the saints who created this realm. Or maybe... genes from the enemies of ancient humans!"

Zheng felt a shock. He was beginning to understand what was happening and why when he first entered the fourth stage, he had

thoughts of killing all humans and descendants of the saints.

Luo YingLong continued. “This is Adam’s conjecture, our strategist. His intelligence is at a really high degree. He believes the saints obtained victory, but they became a completely different species from humans. They had different genes, different powers, and different values. It’s like modifying a fish’s genes into an elephant. The only thing that’s not an elephant will be its mind. When the saints reproduced with humans, they weren’t able to pass down their genes. So, they hid their genes among the hibernating genes. Only when a person reaches the fourth stage will these genes be awakened. However, the enemies of humans could also hide their genes in human genes. Uh. Adam calls them mega atavism.”

He gave a cold laugh upon seeing Zheng’s dumbfounded expression. “Are you so narrow minded? No matter how much you change, you are still you. I disagree with SongTian and Adam’s view. They believe that descendants of human enemies must be eliminated. You awakened the genes of human enemies while SongTian awakened the genes of the saints. But are you really going to annihilate mankind? The most you are going to do is return to the real world and live however you want or become a king. If you’re a psychopath you will be like Zhao ZuiKong, but he’s still just a serial killer. Who would actually want to annihilate mankind without a good reason? A sword is always a sword. It will always depend on its user... Genes are genes. No matter how much power they contain, how much killing desire is within, they are still your tools!”

He had a solemn expression much different from that hot-headedness. At this moment, he was a strong man with thoughts of his own. “What I want to tell you is try your best to overcome the killing desire of your genes. Enemies of ancient humans possess mad instincts to kill. If you can’t overcome it, you will never be able to return once you reach mid-fourth stage. The conscious of your genes will control you. Look at that psychopath ZuiKong. He’s never going to return... This is the first thing I will repay you. Don’t lose yourself to your genes! We have to hurry, those two are going to be here soon.”

Zheng suddenly asked. “You have been acting, right? Acting like a hot-

head who doesn't think. Why do you have to do it?"

Luo YingLong smiled bitterly. "Cultivation brings me success and doom. I am only at the third stage but have already obtained such an overpowered skill. I might even be able to rival the saints one day. Yet, what you don't know is, from the information I gathered in the movies, the deaths of the saints might be related to cultivation... I can't be sure. Anyway, if I seek a more powerful position or if I act smarter with such huge potential, how do you think the brain and strength of my team will treat me? I probably won't make it through three movies. I am still a step behind SongTian. If I died, my core will return to Adam's hand... I will slowly make it through my time. Time is always in short supply for cultivation. I spent most of my points returning to the Legend of Zu. If I didn't smash the cellphone per Adam's order, I wouldn't be able to speak to you like this... Enough with the digression. The second thing is related to your strength and boundary.

It's pretty easy to understand. In cultivation term, the word is enlightenment. A lot of times in training, one accumulates a high level of energy but low unlocked stage hindered him from breaking through to the next level. You have reached a high boundary. The gap between third and fourth stage is night and day. What you lack now is strength!"

Seeing the two members of team Celestial was near, Luo YingLong hurried with his words. "The fourth unlocked stage is also called the stage of infinitesimal control. The awakening of your genes is control within your body. And outside your body, you will feel every minute change of force. You deflecting the morning star was a perfect embodiment of infinitesimal control. Every bit of strength you use in this state will become a hundred times stronger. Your strength is still weak. Rely on infinitesimal control and create your own abilities. Once you can feel the flow of every force, your own abilities will easily come!"

"Then!" A white and a black man landed behind Luo YingLong. He shouted. "Let's fight! Zheng!"

## Chapter 29-2

The first to rush up and initial attack wasn't Luo YingLong. The black man behind him came up front. He roared at the sky. An illusionary black bear emerged next to him. And then a black panther, black tiger, and black elephant. The illusionary animals merged into his body.

(They do look fierce... but why are all the animals black?) This strange thought came to his mind though only for an instant. The black man charged at him like thunder. Ta-ta-ta. The slate ground couldn't stand his force and exploded with his steps.

Zheng had only the time to slash across as the black man approached fiercely. The man countered his sword with a punch. Right before his fist came in contact with the light blade, a panther emerged from the fist and tightly bit onto the light blade. He then struck his other fist at Zheng.

Zheng attempted to pull his sword out of the panther but failed. He countered the strike with a punch of his own. He was cautious and covered his hand with a layer of Qi. Just as he had suspected, an illusionary tiger's mouth emerged around the black man's fist. Its teeth bit toward Zheng's hand. Zheng was shocked and immediately used Instant Destruction followed by a Fist Gun, shattering the tiger. He heard the sound of bones cracked. The black man backed with a cry.

Luo YingLong's eyes brightened as he yelled. "Nice! Is this your self created ability?"

Zheng couldn't find the time to reply for being in battle. He entered the fourth stage the moment the black man backed off. No human troops remained in this area anymore. The unlocked mode was unlike Destruction's short duration. It would be a waste not to use such a powerful power. Although his lack of strength hindered this power, it was enough to deal with these three!

(Making two steps in extremely quick succession will create a resonance of the force on the ground for an instant and in turn generate an explosive power. Speed will increase by over 100%...) The thought suddenly came

into his mind as he saw the black man retreating. He had no time to verify its validity. Zheng used the technique at once. When he exerted the two forces in an extremely short amount of time, the slate under his feet exploded. The counter force pushed his feet. It was at this moment that he finally understood why Luo YingLong said the fourth stage allowed for ability creation. This sense of the flow of force made the feat no longer difficult!

While the black man was retreating, the woman began chanting a spell. A white light enveloped the man. His wrist was healing in visible speed. By the time Zheng charged over, the man's wrist had returned to normal. He roared. The illusionary black bear that entered his body surfaced. The black man's body quickly enlarged and reached three times its previous size when Zheng reached him. He was like a giant with buffed muscle. His fist struck toward Zheng along with terrifying pressure.

Zheng sensed danger before the fist even touched his body. He leaped down to the lower level of the city to dodged the strike. The pressurized air around the fist pulverized the slate ground. A large piece of slate fell off to the lower level.

Although Zheng had no control while in this stage, he still had consciousness. He thought the black man was merely a brute with only strength and not one to be feared. How could someone like him become a member of team Celestial? Team Celestial wasn't undefeatable after all. However, in the blink of an eye, the man's hand was healed and his strength grew. This punch was probably more than he could take.

Luo YingLong showed no sign of helping. He sat down on his flying sword and laughed. "Zheng, I told you. Strength isn't merely your unlocked level nor stats, abilities, or enhancements. True strength is the power to kill your enemy! No matter which stage you unlocked, no matter what enhancements you have, the power than can kill your enemy is the strongest power! Haha. My friend here enhanced four tier A animal souls and Muscle Mass Enhancement of Younger Toguro. He's second to SongTian when it comes to close combat strength and destructive power... Defeat him or you aren't even worth me lifting my hands."

The black man followed Zheng down the level. The panther surfaced on his body while he leaped. He seemed extremely agile. As soon as Zheng landed, the man's fist struck down. Fortunately, Zheng dodged in time. The fist blasted a hole on the ground.

(So this is the true power of team Celestial's members. Such power lives up to the name of the team.) Zheng's mind was thinking but his body was moving by itself. He stepped twice and charged at the black man. Fist Gun struck the man's abdomen. The man wasn't slow to react either, even though he only unlocked to the second stage. His reaction speed was at a high level. The illusionary elephant surfaced as the Fist Gun hit him. There was a thump as though the fist hit a tire. The man was knocked back several meters.

All these happened in just an instant. Zheng was already rushing over by the time the black man landed. Yet, he couldn't get to make his next attack. A beam of light shone down from above. The beam bounded him in the center. The black man struck his palms at Zheng without a moment of hesitation. It was the tiger hovering his body this time.

The black man pushed Zheng into the thick city wall. Following a loud bang, the two of them pushed through the wall, stirring up a cloud of dust. The dust covered up the two of them.

The woman cried with delight. "Great! Binding Light can only bind him for an instant but it was enough to kill him. Hehe. This fourth stage user is garbage."

Luo YingLong glanced at her with a smirk. The Caucasian woman was a newbie to team Celestial. Her powers weren't bad but she was bottom tier in the team. She wouldn't know of the terror of clone Zheng. Luo YingLong didn't bother talking to her because he heard the sound of punches landing on a body from within the dust.

(This Zheng wouldn't really be so garbage? And I spoke so much to him in advance. It seems like a waste of effort. Is he really the original of the demon?) Luo YingLong was having doubts but he didn't show any expression. He continued to quietly stare at the dust cloud. After the dust

settled, the scene wasn't as they had expected where the black man should be beating up Zheng. Zheng was holding on the man's neck and lifted him up.

He had a pair of black bat wings on his back, though the wings were small. His teeth was biting on the man's arm. He tore the man's flesh off and swallowed it. With one hand holding on the man's neck, his other penetrated the man's abdomen.

"Aouuu!" Zheng roared then he pulled his hands. The black man was torn in halves from the middle. Blood and organs splattered Zheng's body.

"Has it begun? Haha. This is the true fourth stage. The powerful genes within the body is awakening. Haha..." Luo YingLong laughed with a sense of madness. His expression was totally different from the person he was. His finger pointed at Zheng then the sword carried him flying toward the wall. It seemed as though he had turned into a green light and he reached the top of the city wall in an instant.

Zheng's bat wings were less than twenty centimeters in length. It didn't look fitting to his body. He instantly raised his head as Luo YingLong flew to his top. His eyes were completely red without any trace of human consciousness. He was a beast that lusted for blood.

Luo YingLong was not surprised and continued to laugh. "Come. Come. I won't bully you with my flight ability since your bat wings aren't grown... Borrowing from the force of heaven and earth! Up!" He clapped his hands together. A faint eight trigrams appeared in between his palms as he opened them. The land spanning a hundred meters around Zheng was pushed off the ground.

# Chapter 30-1

The land in a hundred-meter radius around Zheng floated up fifteen meters. Inside this land was he, Luo YingLong and many half-orcs. Luo YingLong circled the area on his sword. All the half-orcs were shredded into pieces. He then jumped off the sword. There was now only he and Zheng on the land.

“It’s quiet now. Come. Let us have a good fight. The last time we fought your clone, we saved a few Caucasians from him using our numbers advantage. There’s no one to disturb us now. Let me see if the power of your unlocked stage can rival the power of Xiuzhen!” He shouted.

Zheng threw away the broken arm in his hand. He had entered a berserk state but he didn’t leap at Luo YingLong mindlessly. He straightened his posture. His hands reached for his ribs. Following a crackling sound, he pushed a dislocated rib back into its original position.

Luo YingLong curled his lips. “Look at your stupid face. Don’t you know to buy some high-level charms? How can you come into the battlefield unprepared when you are someone that reached the fourth stage? You are strong but the abilities God has are infinite. Some of the abilities are prominent only in offensive stats. I might have to abandon my body if I get surprise attacked by those abilities. Haha.”

Zheng didn’t say a word. After he relocated his bones, he roared then charged at Luo YingLong. Luo YingLong stood there and watched him as though he wasn’t concerned about Zheng. “Slow down. Let me explain my items first. These are crafted from Xiuzhen abilities. The only thing they have to do with God’s Dimension is the valuable materials. And being able to use them is feat of my Xiuzhen. Next, about my abilities, they are also...”

Zheng rushed up to him using the double steps. The movement speed from this technique was extremely fast. Luo YingLong had only spoken a few sentences when Zheng’s hand reached for his face. Qi and Red Flame crossed over around his claw. Boom! A violent fire flared up from his claw. However, before the fire came close to Luo YingLong, a golden light

spanned out from his body and blocked off the fire.

“...they are also Xiuzhen!” Luo YingLong shouted. He lowered his body into a horse stance. His palm struck Zheng’s abdomen. The strike wasn’t fast. However, in the center of the palm was the symbol of the eight trigrams.

Zheng’s other hand intercepted Luo YingLong’s palm. As soon as they came in contact, his hand trembled as though he was hit by an electric shock. The character representing thunder printed onto Zheng’s chest.

“Borrowing from the force of heaven and earth! Thunder shock!” Luo YingLong retrieved his hand. Yet, a glowing golden sign remained on Zheng’s chest. Luo YingLong gave a shout then electricity discharged from the sign. The clothe near it burned to ashes in an instant. The electricity struck Zheng and sent him back over ten meters. He lay on the ground trembling.

“Be careful. The person who falls off the platform loses... Do you know why I lifted the platform? Because not even I can defend against arrows in such quantity, especially shots that came from two arrows simultaneously. I won’t even have the chance to support my items if I take ten of those shots at once. The item will shatter immediately. Hoho. I wonder how strong you have to be in order to overcome the numbers advantage.” Luo YingLong shrugged as he walked toward Zheng.

Zheng stood up after only a while of lying there. He looked almost unharmed aside from the blood by his lips. Luo YingLong knew that his shock attack could electrocute an elephant. The reason Zheng could still stand was probably due to the power of the fourth stage. Infinitesimal control allowed him to restrict or neutralize the electricity with Qi or other forms of energy.

(Activate Destruction to its peak. Focus the attack to a single point. The result of this battle lies on this instant!) Zheng stood in place. His eyes were still completely red. The lust for blood never receded and instead grew more intense as blood flew down the corner of his mouth. As Luo YingLong began to approach him, his Qi and Blood Energy surged

violently.

Luo YingLong sensed the danger and stopped his steps. “What other self created or exchanged ability do you still have? The fourth stage boosts the power of these abilities but normal abilities have no way of breaking my defense...”

Before he finished talking, Zheng roared to the sky. The bat wings suddenly grew. Then. He disappeared from Luo YingLong’s sight.

“What is?”

Pah!

Luo YingLong was feeling the abnormality and suddenly pain registered from his front. He was sent flying backward ten meters. He didn’t even have the time to figure out what happened to his barrier when something weighted down on his chest. He saw Zheng’s knee striking down at his throat. It pressed down on the golden barrier to its extreme. The barrier was almost touching the skin of his throat. One could tell how much force the knee was exerting.

(Destruction at full strength... Modify the third, seventh, and tenth sets of genes. Drain Qi from the Na Ring to repair the body. Drain Blood Energy to maintain Destruction. Body limit after modification... twenty seven seconds!)

“Aou!” Zheng roared with insanity. He didn’t wait for Luo YingLong’s next action. He retrieved his knee then struck Luo YingLong’s face with his fists. His punches broke the sound barriers. Every punch was followed by a sonic boom. The immense force compressed the air around him then the air exploded. Visible shockwaves spread from the center of explosion. In less than thirty punches, Zheng’s clothes became shredded pieces from the shockwaves.

This power once shattered a dragon’s chin. Under the strength and speed of the attacks, the golden light of the barrier was pushed to the other parts Luo YingLong’s body, unable to return to their original location in time. A few dozen punches later, pah! Zheng’s fist hit Luo YingLong’s face. The force passed through him and into the land below.

Cracks spread through the hundred meter platform. Zheng paid no attention to it. His fists continued landing on Luo YingLong's face while the cracking became larger and larger.

“Separate! Borrowing from the force of heaven and earth! Spiral Separation!” Luo YingLong still managed to utter words under such mad attacks, although his words were barely discernible.

Following these words, Zheng felt that his punches were landing on cotton. His strength couldn't touch anything and a spiraling force redirected his fists. However, infinitesimal control wasn't so easily defeated. Zheng stopped punching straight downward. His hands rotated in the opposite direction of the spiraling force. His hands moved so fast in Destruction that he created a spiraling force of his own. The two forces collided then an enormous force struck Luo YingLong in the chest. The force penetrated him and went into the platform. Bang! The platform began to collapse from the cracks.

“Borrowing from the force of heaven and earth! Ten Ton Mountain!”

Zheng used Luo YingLong's ability to his advantage and crushed the platform beneath. He pressed onto Luo YingLong's body and struck several more punches. Luo YingLong vomited a big mouthful of blood then began chanting again. Following the chant, he fell faster than Zheng and disappeared among the broken rocks in the next instant.

Both the orc and human armies were shocked with their eyes and mouths wide open as the platform shattered. The fight was visible from the middle level of the city. The powers they displayed were simply monstrous. It seemed like a battle between the gods and giants in the legends.

Zheng roared again and pushed his arms open, sending the rocks near his body away. He then looked over to Luo YingLong who was standing ten meters away and wiping blood off his mouth.

“The fourth stage is indeed powerful... So this is your self created ability. Also powerful. Along with infinitesimal control, you can match up to my strength...” Luo YingLong's expression turned ferocious.

He shouted. "Then you are qualified to take this attack that I originally prepared it for the psychopath... Vanquishing Formation!

Cauldron of the Eight Trigrams!"

# Chapter 30-2

Any person who reached the fourth stage had his unique combat style. Of course, it wouldn't change principally from before. An archer would still be an archer instead of running up to the enemy with a sword. A caster would still be a caster. They develop further within what they were most skilled in.

To Luo YingLong's knowledge, SongTian excelled at breaking through brute force with techniques, Zhui YinKong excelled in speed beyond comprehension, Clone Zheng excelled in utilizing infinitesimal control to an extreme level. The Zheng in front of him... he wondered what caused him to develop the technique that exchanged damage to his body for a short moment's strength. He could see the increase in strength would be followed by damage to the body that would strip him of continual fighting ability. However, he was unstoppable within his time. "Simply impressive. I probably can't sustain ten seconds for real... Are you a psychopath? How could you have created such an impressive ability. Exerting and destroying your own body to the extreme."

Luo YingLong stood on the flying sword and shot up to the sky. Zheng chased closely with Geppo. The gap between them was only a few meters and it was shortening. Luo YingLong pulled out eight little flags from his pocket. He threw the flags down. The flags grew in the wind. In just a moment, they reached several meters big each. The flags circled Zheng and began descending. Zheng felt the weight of his body increased by a hundred folds. He couldn't help but fell down to the ground.

Luo YingLong finally stopped to catch his breath. He looked down to see the area inside the flags in a mess. Dust whirled as Zheng moved. He was attacking the flags with all his might. Each attack was accompanied by violent shaking of the whole flag. Yet, these seemingly cloth made flags confined him in the center. He couldn't escape from the confinement despite the terrifying power of Destruction.

"Give up! This Fabao (magical item) took me eighty one days of full concentration and numerous valuable raw materials to craft. The

requirement to utilize its full power is Nascent Soul stage. But even at the limited utilization, it can still confine you until your death. I have not seen anyone that can escape from its attack!” Luo YingLong said fiercely, although his hands were forming various signs as fast as he could. He channeled Xiuzhen energy at its maximum output. Zheng’s force would have broken out of the confinement if not for this.

(Man... he’s strong. I underestimated him. His strength has become like his clone, nearly throwing me behind in the race... Damn it!) Luo YingLong felt increasingly irritated. Then he vomitted a mouthful of blood. However, that actually made him felt better.

(He even broke my Dummy Signet. What terrifying destructive force that was... Then he broke my bones by merely grazing past with his fist... Both he and his clone are crazy. What kind of organism did they inherit? Is it the strongest monster that surpassed the saints?) Luo YingLong cursed. He manipulated his Xiuzhen energy to repair his injuries. Once he suppressed the pain, he stood firm. His steps followed the shape of the Triones while his hands formed two signs.

He chanted the spell. “Cauldron of the eight trigrams! Heaven, lake, fire, thunder, wind, water, mountain, earth!”

The characters representing these eight words of truth emerged on the flags following his chant. The trigram figure associated with each character appeared on the back of the flags. The flags began to rotate as the chanting continued. Zheng felt the surrounding pressure grew exponentially and pressed him down in the center of the flags, unable to move. He reacted quickly with great strength as he drew out Tiger’s Soul. Qi channeled into the sword and a layer of light blade barrier enveloped his body.

“Purple flame of Tushita, mystics of the eight trigrams! I command you...”

“Cauldron of the purple flame and eight trigrams!”

The sound of Luo YingLong’s voice grew increasingly distant as he uttered the last word. It felt as though the Xian from the heaven spoke. A

Taijitu appeared beneath him. The Taijitu began to rotate along with the consumption of his Xiuzhen energy. Purple flames ignited on top of it. The flames gathered into globs then dropped down into the flags.

These flames hit Zheng's light blade barrier. One, two. Cracks began to appear on the barrier. Zheng repaired the cracks with Qi the moment they appeared. Infinitesimal control allowed him to utilize his Qi in fine precision. However, he was aware that his death was imminent because the purple flame started burning around him after they fell off the barrier. He activated his Red Flame also, but it only barely blocked the heat. The purple flame's temperature was as hot as the Balrog's flame. Furthermore, these flames did not dissipate. They continued to burn as the flags rotated. A few more globs dropped down and created a sea of fire within the center of the flags!

(Going to die? Am I... going to die?) Zheng's consciousness came back while he was still in the unlocked mode at this life and death deciding moment. However, the situation was already desperate. Death was only one or two seconds away.

Bang! A loud bang echoed. A golden light exploded in brilliance around Luo YingLong. However, this light then shattered. He reached for his chest with his hand and touched it without uttering a sound. His body began to disintegrate beginning at his chest. Two seconds later, his whole body disintegrated into particles. A dazzling light came out from the disintegrated head and flew west.

"That's basically it. Zero unlocked the first stage and has undergone training. The probability of success is approximately 60%. Of course, each person is different when it comes to the actual time of action. Some people can exert their full potential and some can only exert half due to stage fright. However, Zero is one worth placing my trust in. I believed he can make it 100% at that critical moment." A black haired young man with glasses sat in front of another black haired young man.

A moment of silence followed. The other young man said with a sarcastic smile. "You still like to measure human lives with data so much... what do you think comrades are? Data?"

“No.” He answered calmly. “Not data. Humans.”

The other young man was surprised then he laughed. “I lost. You’re always so rational. When are you going to give us a quarrel? Please, show some human nature.”

The man with glasses was Xuan, who died in Helm’s Deep. Yet, he was unharmed as he sat in front of the other black haired young man. And this man was the new member of team China, HaoTian.

Xuan looked at HaoTian in a serious manner. Several minutes later, HaoTian couldn’t help but said. “I get it. Ask what you want. You can find it directly in my head if I don’t want to answer you anyway. Though the information might come out incomplete and might damage my brain.”

“Correct.” Xuan said with certainty. HaoTian shrugged.

Xuan adjusted his glasses. “There are a few questions I haven’t figured out. First. This is your first time entering God’s Realm, correct? How did you team up with Adam who’s in team Celestial? Based on my deduction, you have no means of contacting them in this movie. The only possibility is you two met. However, you haven’t entered this realm at the time. So it must have happened in the real world.”

HaoTian gave a straightforward reply. “You’re right. That’s the case. I lied in the beginning. Adam accidentally entered God’s Realm. He came up with the same method you did. I found out from the records in the Chinese government that you schemed the leader of team China to communicate your information and no one was wiped. The items are also preserved. Adam used the same method. Then I obtained some information about the regions, leaders, team Celestial and Devil. Adam gave me a phone that can contact other users anywhere within the same Earth as you guessed.”

“Oh.” Xuan’s expression didn’t change. Though the people next to him changed their expressions drastically. This scheme was crazy.

HaoTian continued. “Adam met team Devil a few movies after he entered team Celestial. He said he met your clone there and an extremely powerful person. That power almost reached a level where it could ignore

any kind of wit. He didn't want to see his plan fail so we began planning at that time. I went to China and hypnotized myself to enter team China. If you and that other person exist in this team, I would display my strength to gain your trust. The best result is to become an important figure in the team and once we run into team Celestial, we will wipe the team. Then I only have to complete some bonus missions or kill a few unimportant members of team Celestial to survive. I would become the leader of team China and join team Celestial afterward. After that, I will commence our theft plan...

To steal the whole God's Dimension! We are a band of thieves! How could we forgo such a huge treasure? How could we forgo such a story of a battle of wits? Haha..."

# Chapter 30-3

Xuan showed no sign of anger. He nodded, acknowledging HaoTian's words. It seemed that he had known of HaoTian's plan all along.

HaoTian was anxious and asked. "How could you know our plan? It was designed at a place beyond where you can sense. There's no way for you to know. Furthermore, didn't you die? I am certain I heard the notification of your death. The surveillance through the broken cellphone left in Helm's Deep also confirmed your death... Is it a skill that can deceive God? Or is it a device or item that created an illusion on me?"

Xuan nodded. "You're correct that I died. This body currently speaking to you is merely a zombie. The plan began since the information I obtained from Galadriel... Galadriel has a method of preserving the soul because the elves can come back to life once their souls return to Telperion. This method requires the presence of a high elf which I didn't have. So I resorted to rely on the blessing of Galadriel. Secondly, souls can neither speak nor move. I wouldn't have been able to do anything even if my soul continued to exist for twenty days. Something else was required to allow my body to move, to allow my soul to reside in my body, and to protect my body. This was the leaf of Telperion."

Xuan touched his forehead. "I suspected you since your entrance to team China. Your actions were normal, nothing extraordinary. You could be seen as a new comer to this realm, except that you have a little knowledge of it. Unfortunately, you encountered team Celestial in your first movie. You wouldn't have exposed your first flaw otherwise. You showed interest at an action that had no personal benefit to you. Hence I handed all the items to you."

HaoTian pointed at the back of his head and gave a bitter smile. "This thing is your true intention. I pondered over the use of this thing but I never expected it to be a single use item... Then that means the Uruk-hai Nemesis are your baits. Nice scheme! You planned to feign death in the beginning, right? You deceived me so that I would send the message of your death to Adam. His paranoid personality will lead him to assume

your death as fake. As a result, he would not send their strongest member, SongTian, to the siege of Minas Tirith because he and SongTian can easily survive the movie even if they lost the battle. They will find a place to stay until the end of the movie. Thus, team Celestial would lose but not end in a wipe. While team China would be the big winner that overpowered team Celestial.”

HaoTian shook his head. He was wearing a silver metallic circlet. The circlet was the device used to hypnotize the Uruk-hai Nemesis. He used this device without worry after he learned of Xuan’s death in order to gain control of the Nemesis army. As to the other function of the device, it was a part of a bigger device which was in Xuan’s hands. The main device could control and destroy a person’s brain via strong electrical currents. The process of putting it on was fairly complex so it would only work when the wearer was willing to do so or he was captured. Unfortunately for HaoTian, he put it on willingly by himself.

“Partially. The rest of the movie is basically set after this victory when team Celestial was forced to hold back. They can now either confront us with the risk of being wiped or hide until the end comes. Having you put the device on is also a reason. You have a high chance of not doing so if I don’t die. And finally, this was someone’s request.” Xuan said calmly.

HaoTian was surprised and stared at him. “Someone’s request? Telling you to die?”

“No. He didn’t tell me to die.” Xuan shook his head. “He informed me of the number of members team Celestial has, each person’s combat level, and Adam’s location. His only request is for me to create a situation where he can fight SongTian one on one. I think Zhao ZhuiKong is on the way to team Celestial right now. We also have to hurry. It’s time to set out. All Uruk-hai Nemesis, Kampa, WangXia, and Gando, pick up your weapons and wipe team Celestial!”

On a mountain somewhere within Mordor, ZhuiKong smiled at the two people in front of them. These two were Adam and SongTian. SongTian gripped onto a plain looking singled edged Chinese sword (dao) with a stern expression. ZhuiKong held a delicate dagger in his hand. They were

obviously in a stand off despite their contrasting expressions.

Adam touched his forehead and said. "... The dots are connected. Xuan was scheming like I described, correct?"

ZhuiKong shrugged. "How can I know what you psychopaths plan? And I am too lazy to guess what's in your heads. Anyway, since my clone trusts him in team Devil, he should be someone capable instead of those boasting their intelligence. That was why I gave it a try. The end result actually developed to this point. I don't even know how he did it. But whatever... Haha. SongTian, you took an arm from me in the last battle. Take another arm again today!" ZhuiKong laughed with insanity then he disappeared from their sights.

SongTian reacted immediately. He stabbed his sword forward. By this time, ZhuiKong reappeared in front of him. SongTian dragged the sword within the space between them. His speed grew increasingly fast then he slashed downward before ZhuiKong could close in on him. A whirlwind erupted. After it moved past, the ground was shredded. Wind sliced the rocks into pieces.

"Impressive infinitesimal control. Sweeping the wind with your sword. You confined every bit of force inside the whirlwind. SongTian, the power of your aura with swords have grown." ZhuiKong stood on a boulder next to SongTian. His clothes were filled with cuts.

"Same with you." SongTian replied. His clothes suddenly ripped apart as he spoke. ZhuiKong's attack touched him but only his clothes.

ZhuiKong breathed out. "The stages of close combat goes from hitting with a weapon, to using techniques with the weapon, then to using aura. You've reached the stage of the aura of swords. What you need to do is to refine your strength and increased the power of your aura. Let the battle begin. I am getting excited already!"

Adam muttered. "Zhao ZhuiKong, why did you choose to cooperate with team China? Only for an opportunity to fight SongTian? Or is there another intention?"

ZhuiKong replied without turning his head to Adam. "I am an assassin,

not a warrior. Do you expect me to come straight to you and get ganged on instead of finding the opportunity to challenge him? I know you are aware of the potential of Luo YingLong more than anyone else. He's growing every single day. It's only a matter of time before he surpasses SongTian. Although he isn't strong enough to join the battle between SongTian and me right now, I have to admit that magical item he crafted can pose a threat to me. Get it? If the rest of your team don't die, especially Luo YingLong, how can I fight you without worrying? How can I... wipe team Celestial without worrying?"

Zheng didn't die. Luo YingLong suddenly died at that critical moment and the formation went out of control. Zheng felt forces pulling on his body as though they were going to rip him apart. He had to squeeze his body with all his might. He was still inside the fourth stage yet he somehow retained control over his consciousness. At this moment, he entered a profound and abstruse state.

He felt as though he could sense the structure of his DNA. This sensation wasn't expressed in images nor numbers. Yet, the structure was extremely defined. Information regarding each gene appeared in his head, the weak genes, the strong genes, the genes governing bursts of strength, the genes governing endurance, the genes governing energy, the genes governing self-healing...

(It's hot. I need genes that can withstand heat and genes that toughen the body.)

The eight flags stopped rotating. However, the purple flames did not. They flowed faster and faster then flashed in a bright light. The flames exploded.

# Chapter 31-1

The flame from the explosion quickly spread to the nearby orcs. The seemingly dim purple flame had exceedingly high temperature. Any contact with the flame instantly burned the orcs to ashes, and then the ashes burned to nothingness. No word other than terrifying could be used to describe the flame. The good thing was there weren't that much of them that dropped from the Taijitu. The spread stopped at the two hundred meters mark and they consumed all the orcs within the radius. The full power of the cauldron would definitely turn the land in a thousand to several thousand radius into a barren. It was the reason Luo YingLong said he could not utilize the full power of the skill. It was too powerful.

Zheng lay on the ground. His body was burnt and black. Any normal person would have died from such injury. The burn covered over 95% of the body, including one of his eyes. He was more similar to a charcoal than he was human, basically at the brink of death.

Yet, under this state, drastic changes were happening underneath the burned skin. The DNA optimized through this battle became the blueprints, using the Qi and blood energy as the source of energy, the DNA of the dragon a supplement, and the ancient DNA within him as the center, his flesh rapidly reconstructed. Zheng was still awake. He knew that this body would only appear while he entered the fourth stage. The amount of energy required by the body was enormous. He could not sustain the consumption indefinitely unless he were to reach the fifth stage.

(Not dead... I managed to live.) Zheng let out a sigh of relief. Exceptional pain was still attacking his whole body but he immediately recalled what happened. Luo YingLong was attacked the moment before he was going to be burned to death. That attack broke through his barrier. The state of his death was also unique. His body quickly disintegrated to particles. Zheng had only seen such death once... Zero's unique ability, Mystic Eyes of Death Perception!

The Gauss Sniper Rifle could completely annihilate anything, no matter what magical items they had or how strong the person was, as long as you grasped the line of death. The loud gunshot was also the sound of the Gauss Rifle.

(So it was Zero... Where is he? Why is he here at this time? Could it be... Xuan?) Zheng's thoughts naturally came to this conclusion. He wasn't sure but if there was someone who could accomplish this, it must be Xuan! And it was only Xuan that would let his own teammate be a bait while he planned everything behind their backs.

(No matter what, it's safe now. Zero shouldn't have any problem if he doesn't use the Mystic Eyes continuously. Luo YingLong is dead so there's only a woman left. She probably won't dare to show herself. The sniper rifle isn't a joke.) Zheng breathed out then suddenly several arrows nearly hit him before he realized them. That gave him a good scare that it hurt. He forgot where he was in. This was a battlefield. Even without team Celestial, the orcs were not nice characters. He had the ability to kill them, or at least leave at will if he still had the strength but the situation was rather negative. He was lying on the road between the orc army and the city wall. Death was inevitable since he couldn't move a finger.

(Real? I'd rather die to Xiuzhen than to the orcs... The Xiuzhen attacks are truly powerful...) Zheng watched as the orcs approached. Those arrows were a test to see if Zheng had any strength left. The orcs approached him cautiously seeing that he remained lying there. The gunshot didn't sound again. Zero must have been knocked unconscious by the Mystic Eyes. Only ten meters left between the orcs and Zheng.

(How ironic to die like a joke... So death still comes.) Zheng was over five hundred meters from the city wall. Not far, but the troops were barely holding their defense, not to mention having the ability to come save him. Zheng closed his eyes in resign. Just then, the bright sound of bugles came from the distant and grabbed the orc army's attention. They abandoned the charred human and ran outward.

A war horse ran into sight from the horizon. Riding on its back was a middle aged man in full armor. He frowned upon seeing the countless orc

army. There were still eighty thousand orcs left after sieging for such a long time and getting killed by Zheng and Luo YingLong's magical item.

The middle aged man took a deep breath then raised his arm. Numerous riders charged up from behind. These were elite riders. They wore heavy armors and carried spears. Even the war horses were equipped with barding, exposing only their eyes. The riders spanned a section of the horizon, their numbers uncountable.

“Éomer! Take your eored down the left side. Gamling, follow the King's banner down the center. Grimbold, take your company right, after you pass the wall. Forth, and fear no darkness!” The man was Theoden, king of Rohan. He shouted to the marshalls then turned to the riders at his back.

“Arise! Arise! Riders of Théoden! Spears shall be shaken, shields shall be splintered! A sword-day! A red day, ere the sun rises!” The riders raised their spears with his words. Theoden drew his sword then charged. “”Ride now, ride now, ride! Ride for ruin and the world's ending!”

“Death! Death! Death!” He repeated. The riders roared after him, their blood boiling. Theoden shouted. “Forð Eorlingas!” He led the riders in a charge toward the orc army.

The scene of the riders charging was astonishing. The clops of the horses gradually reached sync. The charge gave off such a staggering aura despite having only five thousand riders. Some orcs watched with unease.

Half-orcs had no where near the strong bodies of the Uruk-hai and couldn't use the long lances. They held out their spears against the charge. Their archers rained arrows.

Yet, normal arrows were deflected from the heavy armor of the riders. Only the Explosive Shots were powerful enough to knock them off their horses. However, these were few in numbers. The charge was speedy. By the time a few hundreds fell, they had reached within ten meters of the orc army.

The orcs felt as though a steel wall pushed its way toward them. The riders stepped over their first line of defense. The subsequent riders almost instantly crushed the fallen orcs into a paste. No living beings

could stop the riders from charging. The trolls could stop a horse at the most but the impact would knock them away several meters then they got run over by the following riders. Despite having only five thousand, the riders were like the point of a knife. They easily sliced into the gigantic orc army. The orc army began to collapse under the charge. Thirty thousand had been killed in the charge!

Theoden was exceptionally valiant. The glow of his battle Qi never faded. All the half orcs, orcs, and trolls fell to pieces as he rammed into them. His spear pierced numerous foes. The riders centered around Theoden and charged toward the heart of the orc army.

Just when everyone thought victory was imminent, the ground trembled violently. Everyone heard a strange bugle call. Ten seconds later, massive beings walked into the battlefield from the side. These were elephants dozens of meters in height, much larger than elephants of the real world. There were approximately a hundred of them. Their numbers were much higher than portrayed in the movie.

Zheng didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He thought he might perhaps survive this battle but then the Oliphaunts came. And unfortunately, he was in the way of the Oliphaunts. A hundred of them meant there was almost no chance of missing him. The Oliphaunts walked slow but only relative to their size. Their actual movement speed was similar to that of the riders. Zheng saw one Oliphaunt heading his way. In a few more steps, he would become one with the ground...

Boom! A huge boulder hurled onto the Oliphaunt. It didn't knock the Oliphaunt onto the ground but still struck it off its course. Zheng looked through the corner of his eyes. Hundreds of Ents ten meters in height were coming out from the woods.

# Chapter 31-2

These shocking changes were coming one after another. It seemed as though every type of army was going to make their appearance in this battle. Accompanying the entrance of the Ents were tens of boulders lopped in the air similar to those from the catapults. The boulders crashed into the Oliphaunts. Ten of them immediately struck to the ground.

Riding on top each Oliphaunt were ten humanoids. They recognized the threat of the Ents and turned the Oliphaunts to the Ents. The Ents responded by charging out of the woods toward the Oliphaunts.

The beings from both sides were massive. The Oliphaunts were several dozen meters in height and the Ents ten meters. It might seem the Ents were no match but their numbers tripled that of the Oliphaunts. Their bodies far exceeded the toughness of humans. The massive beings collided into each other after a short dash.

The earth trembled as if an earthquake took place. Ten Ents in the front line were swept away but then thirty more Ents grabbed several Oliphaunts and attempted to flip them over. Species with arms were more agile than those without, at least in the case of close range battles.

The fall of the Oliphaunts stirred up another round of trembling. Zheng had given up in watching the battle of monsters. Whether it be the Oliphaunts or Ents, they would all bring death to him if any were to land on him. It was rather sad that someone who unlocked to the fourth stage, who was at the top of the ladder in the movie worlds lay on the ground in such bad luck, seemingly losing his last breath any second.

“Ho. Is this Zheng? How pitiful do you look... Perhaps you have always been accompanied by bad luck.” A voice suddenly sounded along with footsteps of several people.

Zheng opened his remaining eye abruptly. It was team Africa standing in front of him. Neos was seemingly staring at him with a faint smile, which made Zheng's heart skipped a beat.

(Right, the rings are still on my finger... The flame burned my clothes

but the rings are still intact... Team Africa. No one will know that they did it if they kill me without making a fuss now. And team China will be out of an important member.) Zheng stared at Neos.

Neos brought out a chocolate bar then spoke while he ate. "Richard, pick him up. We are entering the city. Victory for this battle is set. The chaotic battle might spread to us if we stay. We will speak after we are inside the city... What I owe you, I pay you back." Neos turned to Minas Tirith.

(Fuck. Make it clear that you are saving someone instead of showing the face of a murderer. That scared me...)

Shortly after the group climbed up to the wall, a green wave rushed into the battlefield. The orc army and the powerful Oliphaunts were thin as a piece of paper in front of the green army. This was the Army of the Dead. Their speed was extremely fast. Their bodies were illusionary aside from their blades. They moved, ignoring gravity. For a while, the battlefield turned into a green sea. The victor of this battle... was men!

Winning the siege at Minas Tirith did not mean winning another battle. Far away from Minas Tirith, inside the dark gate of Mordor, explosions occurred one after another. Boulders and rocks fell to the ground with each explosion. Several huge explosions later, the mountain broke apart into a landslide, which attracted the attention of Sauron and the orc army.

"SongTian! How many more varieties of Sword Aura do you have left? Sword of Wind, Sword of Earth, Sword of Fire, Sword of Water. Where is that strongest Sword of Gold? Show me!" ZhuiKong shouted with excitement. His body became blurry. It seemed as though he became a ribbon of light that dashed at SongTian. All the boulders on his way broke apart into dust. He left a ploughed trail on the ground.

SongTian looked in a worse condition than ZhuiKong. However, his actions had not slowed down. He stabbed the plain looking sword into the ground. As the ribbon of light dashed toward him, he drew out the sword in lightning speed.

"Earthen hurricane!" The sword came out of the ground, pulling rocks and soil along it. A mini hurricane began to form as the sword whirled in

the air. The hurricane absorbed the rocks and dirt.

The ribbon of light collided with the hurricane, resulting in a violent explosion. Shockwaves spread out and the mountain began another landslide just as before.

By the time the shockwaves and dust settled, SongTian and ZhuiKong looked to the hill not far away. Hundreds of people were running toward them. When these people came closer, they noticed these weren't humans but uncanny creatures. Along with the creatures were Xuan and members of team China.

ZhuiKong smiled at Xuan. "Our business has been clear. What are you looking for me for? Oh, have I forgotten to tell you the cost of interrupting my fight... is extremely high."

Xuan adjusted his glasses. "O, don't mind us. You can continue with the fight. I am only going to kill Adam." He raised his head slightly and looked over to Adam, standing on another hill to the back of SongTian. A Caucasian woman stood beside him. The two of them were speaking to each other.

SongTian was focused on ZhuiKong until Xuan said these words. He turned to Xuan abruptly. His eyes filled with killing intent.

At the same time, HaoTian stepped in front of Xuan and shrugged at SongTian. "I am sorry. I also don't want to be your enemy. How about you don't attack me since we knew each other? Wah..."

SongTian slashed his sword from the distance. An invisible air blade sliced a trail on the ground. However, it ended in a dull sound of impact when it reached a few meters within HaoTian. A mysterious visible wave appeared in front of him and blocked the air blade.

ZhuiKong seized the opportunity and flashed toward SongTian. When he returned to his position, he gained a cut on his chest that was deep enough to see his bones. However, his hand was holding an arm. SongTian lost one of his arms. Fortunately, it wasn't the arm that he used to hold his sword.

“The fun’s spoiled. I wanted to have a good fight with you but it doesn’t seem possible now. You actually dared to move your attention away in a fight with me... Next time. If team Celestial doesn’t get wiped, I will fight you next time.” He threw the arm to his back then leaped off the mountain. His words then came through to the others.

The Nemesis behind Xuan had already readied their bows. The bows were crafted from wood. The bows used by Uruk-hai were too small for the Uruk-hai Nemesis who had heights of several meters. They needed three meter long bows to utilize their potential. A hundred of the Nemesis stacked two arrows on their bows. It was the beginning motion of the Explosive Shot.

ZhuiKong left quickly after seeing this. He didn’t fear any fight with his speed and combat strength and no one had the ability to keep him here. SongTian didn’t hold back with his air blade. It had the power of slicing through mountain but HaoTian blocked it with an invisible ability. ZhuiKong on the other hand didn’t necessarily have more powerful attacks as his assassinations were technique based. He wasn’t certain he could break through the invisible wall in three seconds, while the hundred Explosives shots could kill him for certain in the same time frame.

“So, let team Celestial end in a wipe.” Xuan did not show any courtesy. He didn’t even look at ZhuiKong leaving. With a swing of his arm, the Nemesis drew their arrows to full. SongTian, who was only a hundred meters away, was exposed under the power of the Explosive Shots.

SongTian gave a snort. As he raised his sword, Adam stood up and yelled. “Stop it, Xuan. I admit you won this round... Let’s end it like this. We will stay here quietly until the end of this movie. What do you say?”

Xuan looked at him and the woman behind. “Not possible. Judging by the information I collected previously, are more dangerous than team Devil. Everyone else from team Celestial can live, but you must die. This is indisputable. In order to prevent your team from reviving you, the best course of action is to wipe team your team. There is no settlement to have.”

Adam looked to HaoTian. He quickly shrugged. “Adam, there’s nothing I can do. Don’t look at me like this. Don’t worry. I believe I will soon... I understand Xuan’s personality more than you do. My death is certain no matter what. I merely live a little longer than you. Haha...”

HaoTian was an optimist. It seemed like he wasn’t worried about dying soon. Adam suddenly said. “Fine then. Let’s all die together. The continental oscillator has been planted. The switch is in my heart. Come kill me, Xuan.”

# Chapter 31-3

Xuan frowned. He gave a serious look at Adam.

Adam received it unperturbed and also spoke in a serious manner. “There aren’t actually that much hatred between us. We are only worried by the other person’s development. You worry about team Celestial under my lead and so am I on team China? Furthermore, you have an individual with phenomenal potential just like our Cultivator, Luo YingLong. All in all, we are only worried. There’s no need to come to an end where one side must die. Our true enemies are supposed to be team Devil, who have overwhelming power over our teams.”

Xuan did not reply. He drew out his two Gauss pistols, then slid them back into his sleeves. He repeated the motion several times before he muttered. “Fine. I will let you go. But I need the energy stones you have with you. Don’t tell me there aren’t any. The phone Luo YingLong threw away isn’t in the exchange system. It should be a sci-fi technology built using a design exchanged from God. The phone contained several energy stones. Of course, I can also assume you don’t have energy stones. In that case, I will kill the two people by your side. Kill yourself if you will, we will die with you.”

Adam lifted a ring from his finger after hearing Xuan spoke. “A Na Ring. Your leader should be able to use it. There are some other items aside from energy stones. The total value is approximately a rank S reward.”

The two of them knew the other’s thoughts partially. They were both concerned and tried to put the stress on the other party when in fact, neither person wanted to die. Adam didn’t. Xuan as of now didn’t. Team China possessed the advantage. And as long as Adam’s own life wasn’t threatened, he wouldn’t commit suicide even if team China were to kill the other two members. However, this broke the balance Xuan had in mind...

There was another person in this world. Zhao ZuiKong wasn’t a merciful person. If he guessed it correct, ZhuiKong was now heading to that

direction with the goal... “Keeping them might serve as a turning point.”

Without hesitation, Xuan commanded a Nemesis to walk up and take the ring. He threw the ring to HaoTian. At the same time, everyone from team China heard four consecutive notifications. The newbies were killed. The killer could only be ZhuiKong who just left.

Zheng’s heart skipped a beat as he heard the notifications. They won the battle at Minas Tirith but the clean up and rescues would take more time than the battle. Zheng was among the critically injured. There was not one piece of him still intact. The Charms of the Three Pure Ones weren’t showing their effect. It seemed like such severe injuries could only be treated in God’s Dimension.

Lan found Zero with psyche scan. YingKong then carried Zero, who was unconscious, back from the peak of a mountain. Zero woke after receiving Qi from Zheng. That was when Zheng finally learned Xuan was still alive and what he was doing all along.

“Didn’t die... Don’t worry, he will soon. I am going to beat the shit out of him once we return to God’s Dimension... Or I will straight up murder him. What do you think?” Zheng laughed. He gripped his fist.

Before Zheng finished speaking, they heard the notifications. Four consecutive deaths seized their voice.

Heng jumped off from the floor and yelled. “Four. Four people. Xuan, Kampa, WangXia, Gando. Could it be them?”

Zheng took a deep breath and said. “Not necessarily. It might be the newbies. Xuan has a group of Nemesis with him.”

Heng hesitated. “But isn’t HaoTian the one controlling the Nemesis? What if he freed himself from Xuan’s control. Wouldn’t that be terrible?”

Zheng glared at him. Dude wouldn’t pick something nice to say instead of unfortunate guesses, like Xuan and the other veterans were already killed. Heng noticed he was being pessimistic. He gave awkward laugh then lowered his head.

Zero remained calm. He pulled out a metallic plate from his pocket. The

others saw him opened the plate then closed his eyes without making any noise.

A while later, he opened his eyes. "It's fine. They are alive. It seemed the newbies got attacked. He said they will be waiting for us at Mordor."

The rest of the group let out a sigh of relief. Zheng then said in a fierce tone. "Fuck, these guys make people worried. The next time I see them... The next time I see them..." Zheng sighed heavily and didn't continue.

The battle finally concluded. After the rescues were over, Aragorn led the Army of the Dead to the top of Minas Tirith. Denethor sat on his knees intimidated. Everyone witness his power in the battle. The Army of the Dead signified Aragorn as the last heir of Gondor. He ousted Denethor from the position of steward. He then gave his first order to assemble the army and launch an attack at Mordor.

Unfortunately, the nearly invincible Army of the Dead did not follow. The dead dissipated into the wind. If they had this army, no amount of Mordor troops could rival them, not even Sauron himself.

"The final battle... at Mordor is in two days. Gather rations and infantries stationed at other places. With the addition of the Rohan riders, we will have an army of fifteen thousand. This is the time to attack Mordor!"

Inside the throne room at the top level of Minas Tirith, Aragorn discussed the upcoming strategy with others. Gimli asked. "How many troops does Mordor have remaining? A hundred thousand of their army had been buried here. We should be able to take down Mordor easily."

Aragorn and Gandalf met eyes then gave a bitter smile. Gandalf caught their attention. "Ahem. Mordor still has... uh, an army of approximately twenty thousand. That was a conservative estimate. The half-orcs has strong reproductive capacity. I can't estimate how big of an army he has amassed. He did not participate in the siege, which means there's a bigger army with him. He only just retrieved the One Ring. As the One Ring's power grows, the three Elven Rings will lose their power. His expedition to conquer the continent will begin once he recovered to his peak."

Gimli lowered his head and muttered. "You mean this is our only chance?"

Aragorn confirmed Gandalf. "Yes. Our troops and horses are tired but we must defeat Sauron before he recovers his full power then destroy the One Ring. King of Rohan, does your army require resupplies? Their weapons must have been damaged in the battle."

Theoden nodded. "Wait for the counts before resupplying. Two days are enough rest for the troops."

Seeing as the mood took a downturn, Gandalf said. "Don't feel despair. The Ents agreed to accompany us to the gate of Mordor. They could not enter the burning regions of Mordor but they could smash the gate with boulders, easing our entrance. They can gather their life force to provide our troops with a protective barrier. Our chance of victory is much greater. Sadly, Zheng suffered critical injuries. You would have been the best person to take on Sauron."

The rest of the movie characters nodded. They were well aware of Zheng's strength after fighting together for so long. Gandalf also witnessed his fight against Luo YingLong.

Zheng thought of another thing. His whole body was wrapped in bandage, which made him look like a mummy. It was difficult for him to make any movement. He did the only thing he could, nod at Gandalf and said. "Gather all the force of the Ents at one point? If they can summon... Gandalf, can you take me to the Ents after the council is over?"

Gandalf looked at him confused but nodded.

They recalled the battle and discussed it in details. People walked out from the throne room when evening came. The two kings stayed to have a conversation in private. Gandalf pushed Zheng down the city (Zheng was sitting on a crude wheelchair built by Heng. It was extremely ugly.) Soon, the two exited the city and headed to the woods.

The Ents naturally couldn't enter the city. Disregarding their size, the Ents didn't like stones much. They favored woods, humidity, soil, and rivers.

“Can you try to channel energy into my body? I will take control of this energy. Please don’t worry.” Zheng entered the fourth stage. At the same time, he took out the Bracelet of Anubis.

# Chapter 32-1

It was ironic that life force could be used to summon the Army of Anubis when life and death were opposing powers. Yet, it was life force Zheng used to summon several Anubis Warriors.

Infinitesimal control allowed Zheng to utilize energy in minor amounts instead of letting the Bracelet of Anubis drain all his energy like it used to. Once the life force of the Ents entered his body, he summoned several warriors as expected. Gandalf and the Ents frowned upon seeing these monsters with the head of a dog and bodies of men.

Despite believing these monsters were from evil summons, Gandalf and the Ents agreed to Zheng due to the pressure of the hundreds of thousands of the Mordor army. The Ents would focus their energy to Zheng and had him summon the Army of Anubis.

“The Anubis warriors can stand against even the Uruk-hai with battle Qi. Three meter tall bodies and nearly unkillable as long as their heads weren’t destroyed. They can ignore gravity, although not to the degree of the Army of the Dead. However, an army of ten thousand Anubis warriors could probably break through the Black Gate with ease and bring havoc to the orc army behind it!” Zheng said to Gandalf with certainty.

Gandalf originally opposed Zheng after seeing the strength of the Army of Anubis. He worried most to the possibility of Zheng losing control of the monsters. Ten thousand of these monsters would wipe themselves off from Middle Earth. And then Zheng shut him down with one question.

“Without these monsters, can a fifteen thousand army take down Mordor?”

The answer was... no.

However, under the aid of the Ents, men had a safe retreat. To Gandalf’s knowledge, a majority of the Mordor army did not possess worthy strength. The army was composed of mostly half-orcs. What Mordor could not replenish with the lost of the hundred thousand army were ordnances. Thus, they could view the remaining Mordor army as an army of eighty

thousand. Yet, even at eighty thousand, when given the advantage of garrison, were nothing a fifteen thousand human army could break through.

The decision was difficult but they had no alternative.

Zheng was still wrapped up like a mummy. ChengXiao's techniques were to be praised. He found a pile of green leaves and added some disgusting, translucent caterpillars then mashed them into a viscous liquid. He rubbed the liquid all over Zheng's body, reliving him from the pain that would result in the process of infection. All accomplished in a place without antibiotics, without medical equipments, and without pain killers.

"Don't pull such a face. You don't like a man rubbing all over you. Neither do I like to rub all over a man! Damn it. If I can, I want to touch those massive boobs..." ChengXiao said with feebly.

Zheng didn't know whether he should laugh or be mad. He endured the tingling from the liquid. "Bullshit. My face is wrapped in bandage. Which eye of yours saw my expression? Enough with this. I say, do you feel Heng and YingKong changed a little?"

ChengXiao glanced at Heng then carefully studied YingKong. A while later, he said. "Uh... it seemed that her boobs jiggled when she gripped her sword. Did the cloth wrapped around her boobs loosened?"

"... Forget it. There's nothing I can talk to you about." Zheng closed his eyes. He gave up talking and peacefully endured the tingling pain over his body.

Heng and YingKong indeed changed. Maybe they didn't notice the changes themselves. Heng's eyes were determined when he held an arrow in hand. It differed from how he used to avoid looking the target with his eyes. YingKong's movements were slightly slower. However, the angle of her attacks came from more cunning angles. Zheng could only see with one eye and his injuries limited his view. But he could see the clarity in YingKong's eyes. The hatred... seemed to have disappeared, or perhaps hidden.

What ought to come would eventually come. The group began their journey as soon as they could, carrying along their worry over the other members of team China. Dawn of day three, this fifteen thousand people group embarked on their final journey, marching toward Mordor!

“... So you used a verbal promise of the future as a condition, to recover the woods of Isengard from trees within ten years? Where did you obtain such superb means?” Zheng asked Neos.

Neos replied casually while eating a piece of chocolate. “There are a lot of items that can achieve this in the exchange system. It’s nothing to brag about. Same as you forming a trading deal with the powers of this world.”

That was when Zheng remembered Neos was an intelligent character. He laughed awkwardly. “You know of our trade with the elven Queen?”

Neos nodded. “Yes. Just now. From you.”

Zheng almost wanted to smack himself on the face. He asked in a mutter. “Right, the newbies from yesterday... that wasn’t us. You know? The notifications of the newbies being killed.”

Neos ate another piece of chocolate. “Of course. If your team were to kill the newbies, you would have done it long ago. Or at least when you still have power instead of waiting until you become a mummy. Either someone wants to kill you so he killed the newbies to direct our hatred, or the newbies of both our teams died. It’s simple.”

Zheng had no words in reply. He suddenly noticed he disliked being next to these intelligent types. It was like they could see through everything he was thinking. Not a comfortable feeling.

(I will find a time and put you together with Xuan. Your facial expressions must be fabulous when you can’t even save the color of your undies.) Zheng maliciously thought.

At any rate, the group of fifteen thousand approached Mordor. The terrain became more horrendous which bothered the Ents the most. The burnt ground was unbearable to them. If it wasn’t the promise with men to reach the Black Gate, they would have returned to the woods.

Despite the horrendous terrain, the group did not encounter any obstacles on their way. A few days later, they arrived outside the Black Gate. It spanned over a hundred meters in width and over fifty meters in height. The gate creaked open upon their arrival. A single rider walked out.

He rode a black horse, wore a full helm and armor in black, covering every feature he had and leaving only a grotesque mouth. His teeth disgustingly stained in yellow.

“My master, Sauron the Great, bids you welcome. Is there any in this rout with the authority to treat with me?” The Mouth of Sauron said.

The characters met eyes with each other. Aragorn went up front. “Let the Lord of the Black Land come forth! Let justice be done upon him!”

Gandalf stopped Aragorn. “We do not come to treat with Sauron, faithless and accursed. Tell your master this: The armies of Mordor must disband. He is to depart these lands, never to return.”

The Mouth of Sauron expressed a sarcastic form. “You might have learned my master has retrieved the One Ring. The One Ring will finally rule over Middle Earth. Do you wish to know how my master obtained the One Ring? The two little Hobbits, their flesh was so delicious. Their screams under torture... haha.”

The characters listened in silence. Aragorn took a deep breath then rode his horse forward.

The Mouth of Sauron said. “And who is this? Isildur’s heir? It takes more to make a king than a broken Elvish blade.”

Before he finished his words, Aragorn cut the Mouth of Sauron’s head with a quick, hard, slice. The body collapsed to the ground.

“Sauron!” Aragorn shouted at the Black Gate. “Do you still remember this sword? It killed you once. It will now kill you again! Come. Let us bury you!”

The Black Gate made a dull sound. It was as though multiple gears were turning. And then it slowly swayed open. In under a minute, the gate was

fully opened, revealing an endless army of orcs behind it. The number they could see with their eyes struck terror into their hearts.

Aragorn turned around and looked at his troops. He gripped Andúril tightly. Waiting for the moment to initiate attack.

Not far behind Aragorn...

“Ents. You can focus energy onto me. Let all the Ents send your energy. Thousands? Ten thousands? Twenty thousands? Let’s see how many Anubis Warriors I can summon!”

# Chapter 32-2

The capacity of infinitesimal control was difficult to explain. It was an insight into power, an insight of oneself. Unlocking the fourth stage was the prerequisite of entering such state, even just the initial fourth stage. While in infinitesimal control, you can feel the distribution of force even if you take just a simple step. As you get more experienced, you could utilize the force you used in this step to gain extra speed. Infinitesimal control was absolute precision of control over strength and energy.

Once the Ents' energy entered Zheng's body, he quickly directed it into the Bracelet of Anubis. He pointed to the land in front as he had always done. The empty area standing between the Mordor and men armies began to change. Large number of the Anubis warriors appeared. By large number, there were over ten thousand.

This area no longer had enough room to fit the still appearing army. As their number continued to increase, the Anubis warriors stacked on top of each other. Some climbed onto the cliffs. Their ability to ignore gravity rid them of the danger of being on cliffs.

(Ten thousand... twenty thousand... thirty thousand. They are still coming. Shit, hit the jackpot.) Zheng expended all the life energy that entered his body. An army of forty thousand monsters stood between the Mordor and men armies. The monsters were three meters tall and had the head of a dog and the body of a human. Their bodies formed by sand and soil. They carried a long shaped weapon. The monsters roared.

Zheng controlled the Bracelet of Anubis with his mind. He directed the attack to the sea of orcs in front. An Anubis warrior leaped onto a half orc nearest to it, pressed it onto the ground. The long shaped weapon sliced from top to bottom and split the half orc into halves while it screamed.

Forty thousand Anubis warriors roared then marched at the half orcs with the momentum of war horses charging. The front line ran up the Dark Gate. The orcs wailed with terror. They fired the arrows in their hands but the arrows only pierced through the monsters. A body of sand

did not fear the arrows. A few unlucky ones got hit in the head by Explosive Shots and their bodies turned back into sand.

The half orcs and orcs were weaker than the Anubis warriors. The monsters attacked without fear of death. Their size advantage allowed them to strike from top to bottom. The march did not reach the same destructiveness of the riders' charge but it was not far behind. The formation of the orc army collapsed. Many orcs fell as they screamed... Perhaps they did not fear a battle against men but monsters of sand that wouldn't die brought them fear.

Aragorn and Theoden met eyes with each other then turned to their troops, the riders and infantries. The army shouted their war cries. As the Army of Anubis broke deep into the Mordor army, this was the chance to bring down Mordor, a chance that would never come a second time!

"Warriors of Gondor! For mankind! For the future! For the defeat of the Dark Lord! Charge!" Aragorn charged in front of the army. His riders and infantries followed.

Theoden also shouted. "Riders of Rohan! Bring forth death and destruction! Death!" He also led in front of his riders. The strongest force of this age charged.

Zheng sat on his Nightmare. He did not have the ability to participate in battle. He looked at his team members who were next to him and said. "Lan, have you found Xuan and the rest?"

Lan nodded. "Yes. They seem to be on a stand off with some people. The Nemesis are also there. Let me send you the image."

Zheng said to the others. "Heng, go meet with them. Your arrows are powerful. You might be able to give them some help. YinKong stay here and protect us..."

YinKong said. "No. Let me go. I... want to see someone."

Zheng looked at her with surprise. Her eyes were filled with determination as she looked straight at Zheng.

After a while, Zheng said. "Then... be careful. And bring an end to this

past if you can!”

YinKong nodded. She ran toward the location from the psyche scan image. Zheng led the others to the border of the battlefield. The scan marked a special target there... the Dark Lord Sauron!

On a stand off with Xuan were two members from East America. ZhuiKong wasn't by his team so as soon as they met with the Nemesis, Xuan surrounded them without giving them a word. He completely ignored their threats of ZhuiKong taking revenge on team China.

“That's not a possibility. He has things he need to do. And the thing you need to do is... wait.” Xuan calmly said.

HaoTian gave these two people a look of sorrow. It was not a certainty but he felt that their deaths had been decided. Xuan was waiting for the right time to kill. He was not the kind of person to take his losses without return after losing four newbies to ZhuiKong. Xuan would seize back the points they lost. As to HaoTian himself, death was probably not that far in the future either.

YinKong wasn't aware of what was happening at Xuan's group. She continued running until a familiar figure appeared in front of her. The man with long hair smiled at her.

# Chapter 32-3

YinKong felt an explosion inside her head. A big wave of killing intent emerged all at once. Yet, she then recalled the scene she experienced inside the Valley of Harrowdale. That man with a gentle smile... The him in the past truly cherished her and all his brothers and sisters. That man was the person in front, Zhao ZhuiKong.

He gave YinKong a look of surprise. "Not bad. You learned to conceal your killing intent. We are both assassins. So remember, never show your killing intent before your target dies." He slowly walked toward YinKong.

YinKong clenched her teeth. She stared without a word as he walked past her. The moment their bodies crossed path, she asked. "What are you going to do?"

"To kill your comrades of course. Was there a need to ask?" ZhuiKong kept a smile on his face and said without turning around.

YinKong slashed her sword without a second thought. The invisible sword sliced through his upper body. Yet, there was no feeling of cutting into anything. A second later, she found two fingers placed by her neck. ZhuiKong had moved to her back before she realized. The sword merely sliced through a shadow.

"You are not a good girl to block me. I can't afford to offend the other man but this one is at his weakest. Plus, he hasn't reached the power I was hoping. Death is the best for him. Otherwise, he disgraces that strongest potential." ZhuiKong said, smiling.

YinKong stared coldly. "If you want to kill him... or them, you will have to walk over my dead body! Haven't you wanted to kill me for so long already? Why not just do it now?"

ZhuiKong tilted her head up by the chin. He moved to the front of her then kissed her lips. Strangely, YinKong didn't bite him this time nor expressed hatred. Two lines of tears rolled down her pearlescent face. Her tears couldn't stop as he kissed her.

“ZhuiKong, you had your reasons right? The you that had always protected me and everyone, you had your reasons right?” As their lips separated, YinKong calmly said but the shine on her eyes were dim.

ZhuiKong’s smile faded. Along with it was the coldness in his eyes. It felt complex, unable to express himself in words, and with a hint of vulnerability. This psychopathic assassin actually showed vulnerability.

“YinKong, I...”

As soon as his eyes showed humanity, his body quivered as if he was going through an extreme pain. He uttered one word at a time. After he said only the second word, a wave of frost rose behind him. Several ice spears shot through the frost with a force that aimed to pierce through the two of them!

ZhuiKong’s eyes instantly changed back to sharp and cold. Without turning his head, he grabbed YinKong with one arm and moved a dagger to his back with the other. The dagger quickly blocked the ice spears as they approached him. He used the force from the impact to leaped forward.

The two of them were standing on the hillside. This leap brought him off the cliff that was several hundred feet above the ground. However, ZhuiKong floated down along with the wind. Three seconds later, YinKong discovered his secret. He somehow floated in the wind like a piece of paper, unaffected by the acceleration from gravity. He floated down at a steady speed that wouldn’t damage him upon landing. It was as if he jumped from a two meter high place.

The frost did not stop spreading after they reached the bottom of the cliff. They heard Gungnir’s mad shout. “Come! Come kill me! Didn’t you subdued me and my team with a sneak attack? Didn’t you skinned them right in front of me? Didn’t you castrated me then buried me alive in the swamp? I am here right now! Come kill me!”

This was indeed the voice of Gungnir, leader of team Northern Ice Land. He had used his Ice Age. The skill had limited duration like Zheng’s Destruction but its AOE power way surpassed Destruction. The several

hundred cubic meter area of frost quickly expanded and turned the hillside into a large frozen boulder by the time ZhuiKong and YinKong landed. The roar of the frost was pressing down from twenty meters above the two.

“Fuck! I used up all my saved energy stones! Fuck sustain and surviving! I will kill you first even if I am going to turn into a ghost! This is the strongest power of Logia Devil Fruits! I am nature! Who dares to rival nature?”

Gungnir had obviously gone insane. His voice echoed from the most intense part of the frost. As he continued to release his power, a thick layer of ice covered a thousand meter area, despite Mordor being a place of fire, and being so near to Mount Doom.

ZhuiKong did not showed any concern at the frost chasing after him. He casually walked with YinKong in his arms. But his actual speed was much faster than the frost. The two parties ran with one chasing the other.

ZhuiKong jumped on top of a boulder then suddenly stopped. He smiled at the approaching frost. “I am curious... You mentioned energy stones, correct?”

The frost split up and surrounded the two people instead of sweeping at them. Gungnir’s voice came through. “Correct! I admit I am not qualified to use the strongest power of Logia fruit. The power of the Hie Hie no Mi rivals the force of nature. Only those who unlocked the fifth stage and gained control over energy can possess such power. I rely on energy stones to use this power!”

ZhuiKong nodded. “Oh, good then...” He stomped several times with his foot. The force shattered the boulder he was standing on. At the same time, the frost swept at him and YinKong.

Right before the frost reached the two people, boiling water and steam rose from the ground around them. The water froze upon coming in contact with the frost but it continued coming out as if there was an endless supply. In just two seconds, they heard Gungnir’s wails.

“The fourth stage has an ability called infinitesimal control. Every time I

touched the ground, I can feel what is buried underneath. The rebound force from the ground, the flow of water, the lava. The mountain over there is a volcano. Underneath the ground here is the water from a hot spring. Its temperature is quite high.” ZhuiKong said.

He didn't merely stomp the ground several times as they could see with their eyes. Every one of his stomps was formed by dozens of stomps in continuous succession. The hundred stomps he did created a resonance that shattered the ground. Then the hot spring and steam burst out from around him. His mastery of infinitesimal control was beyond imaginable.

“And then look at how much time you spent chasing. How much energy do you have left? I think you can freeze this area. I am standing in the center. Freeze my feet and I won't be able to run.” He said with a smile.

The frost that was Gungnir collided with the hot water and steam. Each impact reduced the intensity of the frost's coldness by a little. The steam's temperature way exceeded the boiling point of water. This steam was trapped in the ground all this time and its temperature kept increasing. Endless steam burst out from the ground at this opportunity. Even the two people in the middle felt the heat, not to mention the frost that was taking the steam directly.

The frost finally broke through the steam but it could no longer remain its form. Gungnir appeared in front of them with his upper body in human form and his lower body remained part of the frost. ZhuiKong wasn't in the mood to waste time talking with him. He flashed by Gungnir. The next moment, Gungnir's head was in his hand.

“Such a powerful ability... Unfortunately, you don't have the potential. You are also not the cute unripe apple... Yo, YinKong. I will spare your comrades for now. You have to tell him that if he doesn't want to die, grow as fast as he can. He's still too weak.”

ZhuiKong was carrying YinKong with one arm and holding Gungnir's headless body with the other. He threw the body at a spot where the steam was weakest. As the body blocked the steam, he jumped on the body then again. The next moment he had already left this steaming area.

ZhuiKong released YinKong after they arrived at an empty place. He did not look at YinKong again before he disappeared, leaving only his last words.

“Do your best to grow stronger, YinKong... And then I will come back to kill you.”

# Chapter 32-4

Zheng didn't know he just made a roundabout on the edge of hell. YinKong's existence caused ZhuiKong to give up assassination on them. Zheng would not be a match for ZhuiKong given his physical condition at the moment, even if he managed to enter Destruction. Furthermore, what would have come was an assassination. There was probably no one who could withstand ZhuiKong's assassination.

Zheng very luckily knew nothing about what had happened. The situation was under his monitor by relying on Lan's psyche scan. He made contact with Xuan's mind. This was not the time to speak in detail but Zheng kindly informed Xuan he would get beaten up badly.

"Even though I still don't know what you have done or are planning to do. But I can tell you with certainty that you need to be prepared for what I have for you once we return to God's dimension." His tone was sweet rather than vicious. However, this sounded weird when combined with the content of his words.

"Oh." Xuan responded as if he wasn't concerned of the threatening in the least bit. "There are two things I need to remind you. First, Sauron's death. The best case is our team obtaining this reward if possible. Second, about the time. The countdown begins once all five teams gathered at Mordor. Four teams are here. The last team, team Northern Ice Land is probably wiped. Thus, we must seize the One Ring into our hand at this final duration."

Zheng turned serious. "For Sauron... it's going to be difficult. We don't know his strength but it is unlikely he will be weaker than the final Ringwraith. The Ringwraith took me a so much effort to take down. I can't even move now. If Sauron comes... to be honest, I have no confidence in taking him."

Xuan calmly said. "Let Heng and YinKong do it. You always rely too much on your own power. You are only a member of team China. Even though you are worried about the other team members' safety, you also

have to trust them. Begin the attack at Sauron once YinKong returns.”

A rare scene was happening at Mordor prior to their conversation. The enormous Mordor army was being pushed back due to the participation of the Army of Anubis. Tens of thousands of Anubis warriors chased after the orcs. The alliance could only serve as their backup. They followed closely behind the Anubis warriors, finishing off orcs that were lying on the ground and wailing.

The Anubis warriors knew no such thing as fatigue nor injuries. Their only goal was to charge forward and kill all living beings in front. The orc army was gradually pushed away from the Dark Gate. As the army was going to collapse, a giant in full armor appeared in the center of the orcs.

The armor was eight meters in height. The giant wielded a mace. Its body emitted an aura of black mist. Wearing on the finger of its left hand was a ring radiating a dark light. This giant in armor was the Dark Lord, Sauron!

He swung the mace at the incoming Anubis warriors. A black gust swept onto the Anubis warriors and corroded the monsters away in an instant. The corrosion consumed these sand and soil bodies and the dead bodies of orcs lying on the on the ground, leaving an empty land behind. This single attack from Sauron wiped off thousands of Anubis warriors.

“This scene... relived again!” Gandalf gazed at the corroded land in the distance and exclaimed. “History wrote men and elves came together in an alliance. Three elven kings entered the war with the three great rings. Yet, Sauron stopped the alliance all by himself. The alliance was at the verge of being destroyed. If Narsil hadn’t cut the One Ring from Sauron’s hand, men and elves might not exist at this age.”

The movie characters looked toward Zheng with a sense of helplessness. He was the trump card in the plan. His strength shown in the fight against the Balrog and in the battle at Helm’s Deep was beyond the imagination of the movie characters. Thus, it was decided that Zheng was the main force of this battle, the strength to rival Sauron at the chance that he revived.

No one could have guessed that Zheng suffered such severe injuries in

Gondor. He could no longer carry on this responsibility. Yet, Sauron's power struck terror into their hearts. The movie characters could not come up with any mean to take down Sauron.

"If things have come down to this..." Aragorn sighed. "I will lead the attack. Narsil once countered Sauron and it will do so again today! What I need is to cut the One Ring off his hand. My only fear is the corrosion of his aura. It's so powerful that I might not even be able to go near..."

Gandalf gripped his staff. "I can provide you with barrier to block off the corrosive aura. However, this barrier does not stand a chance against Sauron's direct attacks."

The movie characters met eyes. Gimli yelled. "Not to worry! We will all fight with you!"

Legolas nodded. "We came all the way from Rivendell. For what? To bury the Dark Lord... We have come to the final stop of our journey. We will fight until death takes us!"

Gimli sighed. "How ironic this is. A dwarf will die fighting alongside an elf."

Legolas laughed. "What if... he dies fighting alongside a friend?"

"Friend..." Gimli's eyes looked out of focus. He nodded heavily. "Right! He fights to death alongside his friends!"

While the movie characters exchanged words, the Army of Anubis had nearly been wiped. Half the army was lost after killing so many orcs. Sauron's display of power quickly consumed the remaining Anubis warriors. The orc army still had tens of thousands remaining but their courage was shattered at this point. It was commanding presence of Sauron that kept them from fleeing. Their ability to participate in the battle was insignificant. Yet, Sauron exerted such a dominating pressure by himself. The full body armor walked forward. Each stride contained unstoppable force. This pressure forced the army of men to back with each step. They saw clearly how he annihilated the Army of Anubis.

Aragorn watched the army backing off. The Ents stayed outside the Dark

Gate. This battle would be over if they lost their morale to Sauron... And if they failed to kill Sauron, the annihilation of men would be destined once he recouped his power!

“Fight! For our survival!” Aragorn unsheathed Anduril. A bright silvery light glittered on the battlefield. He yelled and the warhorse charged toward Sauron.

“To battle!” Gimli shouted and charged on feet. He was not riding a warhorse.

“For freedom!” Legolas took a deep breath. He stacked three arrows on his bow. The arrows aimed at the center of Sauron’s forehead.

“To bring death to our foes!” Theoden seized a lance from a troop. The lance was nearly four meters in length. He charged toward Sauron on his warhorse.

Aragorn and Anduril were the first to approach Sauron. The silvery light had the ability to disperse the black mist. The corrosive mist could not do any harm to Aragorn. Gandalf also enveloped him in a barrier. Aragorn sliced at the arm wielding the One Ring.

“How long has it been? Heir of Isildur! Do you attempt to kill me again?” Sauron’s deep voice echoed through the armor. His mace was over five meters in length. It moved extremely quick at his swing and clashed with Anduril. Clank! Aragorn felt a powerful force upon his hand. His battle Qi stood no chance against this force. He was sent flying away. The warhorse fell to the ground as blood gushed out of its mouth. The warhorse died under this attack.

Aragorn was knocked away over five meters. Gimli charged up to Sauron before he could pull the mace back. Instead of hacking at Sauron’s arm, Gimli hacked his axe at the joint of the armor. The impact brought forth a clank. He possessed strength above that of men and battle Qi and yet the strike merely left a tiny mark on the armor. The mark was centimeters deep into the armor. However, his hand was also wounded between the thumb and index finger.

“How tough it is!” Gimli exclaimed. Then he felt the pain on his

abdomen as Sauron kicked him away. The kick broke through the barrier Gandalf placed on him. Fortunately, the barrier also reduced the force of the kick. Gimli was sent flying ten meters away instead of reducing the main characters of this movie by a dwarf.

The two people who charged in the front became wounded in just several seconds of the fight, while they didn't cause any notable damage to Sauron. Sauron walked up to Aragorn in two steps and readied his attack. Just then, Legolas released his three stacked arrows at his head.

The power of the first of the three arrows grew exponentially. Its speed way surpassed the limit of what the human eye could catch. Bong! The arrow pierced through Sauron's helm. The helm did not explode even after taking such a powerful shot. Its material was beyond anything they knew. The only damage the arrow caused was a hole the size of the arrowhead.

Sauron showed no sign of being wounded. There was not a bit of delay in his actions as he smashed the mace at the ground, where Aragorn was seemingly going to be turned into a paste. He rolled to the side and dodged the mace by a hair. The mace struck a large hole at the ground, which would have definitely taken Aragorn's life.

Theoden also reached Sauron. Battle Qi exploded from his body. He thrust the lance right at Sauron's back. The lance pierced into the chest and out the other side. Without a moment of delay, Theoden drew his sword then sliced at Sauron's arm.

However, Sauron reacted faster than he expected. The mace turned around and smashed over at Theoden before the sword reached Sauron's arm. The sword shattered instantly. Theoden was knocked away just like what had happened to Aragorn. The difference being the mace struck right into him while Aragorn blocked it with his sword. The chance of Theoden living was slim.

"Ah!" The movie characters and the riders howled.

Aragorn climbed back up and charged at Sauron once more. His face was covered in blood. Gimli spit out a mouthful of blood then rushed behind Aragorn. Legolas stacked three arrows at his bow again.

“Lan, provide us with psyche scan... Heng and YinKong, do you see Sauron? Kill him!”

Zheng yelled from the center of the group. He no longer had the ability to participate in the battle but he could still issue commands as the leader. Coordination of members within the team was his expertise.

Heng took a deep breath. He drew his bow to full. He was only holding one arrow but the presence he exerted exceeded Legolas's three arrow Explosive Shot. The Charged Shot was ready.

At the same time, YinKong appeared not far behind Sauron. Her steps followed a peculiar pattern as she approached Sauron, seemingly without a sound and without having any presence.

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The mace struck toward Aragorn with the momentum of ten ton force. Along with it was the black mist that swept at Aragorn. However, the moment the Charged Shot fixed its target at Sauron, he pulled the mace back in front of his body with unbelievable speed. A magic circle emerged in the air between him and the arrow. The magic circle rotated. The mysterious symbols radiated with a black light.

On the far end of the battlefield, SongTian looked down with complicated feelings. His broken arm had stopped bleeding. However, smoking was coming off the wound as if it was being corroded.

“... Team China. Their potential is even higher than team Devil’s.” He said with worry.

Adam sat beside him. He was doing calculations on a piece of paper. He replied without taking his eyes off the paper. “Yes. Team China has higher potential. Their specializations complement each other. They are still weak but once they grow, they will have a talented individual in every field. Didn’t Luo YingLong said he was killed by a physical bullet from a sci-fi weapon? Even most powerful weapon, Space Compression Cannon, cannot not break through his defensive magical item and kill him in an instant unless there is a unique ability in addition to the sci-fi weapon. If this is the case, the user of this sci-fi weapon must be an individual of extremes in both strong and weak. However, as long as Zheng Zha exists in this team, he will not be held back by his weakness. Similarly, this archer is even more powerful in mid-range distance.”

“So.” Adam raised his head and said in a serious manner. “The only ones worth noting in team China are Zheng Zha and Chu Xuan. Every other member is a typical player who possesses critical flaws. However, their potential does exceed team Devil’s potential in a sense.”

SongTian sighed as he turned to Adam then to the blonde woman behind Adam. The woman was playing with a glob of light. The light changed shapes as she kneaded it like a liquid. It even tried to change by

itself to please her. Luo YingLong seemed rather miserable.

“What about us?” SongTian sighed.

Adam lowered his head again. “We didn’t suffer much loss. Given you and Luo YingLong’s strength, we can quickly gain a large amount of points and rewards by heading back to our previous movies. However, these are not that useful to us anymore. We lost at ‘influence’ this movie. We no longer have the chips to go against team Devil until we can defeat team China the next time we meet. SongTian, be prepared for a long journey. You have to keep growing. Same to Luo YingLong. He might be our strongest force in the future. Stronger than you...”

SongTian turned his head away quietly. “Yes. He has taken off on a different path. If absolute power is Dao (path), we are walking the enlightenment path. We comprehend all that exist to achieve this path. His path is one of force. A force beyond all that exist, beyond the path itself. He will become the path.”

Team Celestial did not react too strongly. Adam’s plan failed in the end but no damage was done to the root of their team. None of the core members died. Even though they obtained little in terms of rewards, they also obtained information of other teams. An accurate perception of team China at their own perspective was especially important. Adam had begun his calculation ever since he obtained these information. He kept his head down at the paper and no one knew what he was calculating.

Team Celestial could still talk to each other. Team East America was left with only two people. ZhuiKong spared Zheng and his group so he went back to Xuan and retrieved two of his team members. Well, for the retrieval, he killed one of his own member right in front of Xuan and left with the head while laughing. His expression and actions sent chills right into people’s guts. Kampa and WangXia pulled out their weapons as a sign of vigilance at once. Gando was shaking from the shock and urged WangXia to take out his robot.

“Relax. I am not in a good mood... I probably won’t kill anymore until the end of this movie. Well then, let us meet again in the next team battle,

team China.” ZhuiKong turned back and gave them a smile. He then left with the other team East America member, who also could barely stand from the scare yet still followed behind ZhuiKong.

Once the two people left, ZhuiKong stopped on a hillside that could see into the battlefield. He stared at Sauron until YinKong appeared. A smile crept up his face.

“Grow. Keep growing. Until we meet again, then...” He covered his face with his hand and laughed. A liquid flowed out between his fingers, just a little that could barely get noticed.

On the other end, Sauron was aimed by two bows. Neither Heng nor Legolas fired yet because the mace blocked the arm that wielded the One Ring. They could not fire even if they wanted to. The riders charged at Sauron without regard for their own lives. Their king had died in this battle. The riders’ loyalty overcame their fear of Sauron.

It was these brave riders who broke the stalemate. Sauron could not move freely as he showed worry of Heng and Legolas. He used non-physical attacks when the riders charged at him. The rotating magic circles were his best defense. They corroded any rider who ran into the circles into withered bones, and then into ashes. Yet, this appalling scene did not stop the riders. As thousands of them charged, Gandalf began his chanting.

Gandalf’s chanting concluded and several translucent barrier walls emerged in the air. The walls collided onto the magic circles. Both of these magics dissolved. The first hundred riders in the front charged at Sauron as they cried, which forced Sauron to use his mace. He raised his hand wielding the one ring. A misty cloud filled his palm. Heng and Legolas fired their arrows at the same time, both targeting the arm that wielded the ring. These two arrows hit the arm one after the other.

The arrows pierced into the black mist enveloping Sauron’s arm. The mist consumed Legolas’s arrow. The powerful corrosiveness of the mist corroded the life force and the arrow at once. Sauron merely trembled for a moment. A large portion of the mist dissipated but no damage was done

to him. However, the following Charged Shot penetrated the arm at a speed beyond the eyes could capture. It then disappeared in the distance.

Heng collapsed after he fired the arrow. He no longer had the ability to participate in the rest of the battle. In contrast, Legolas's arm was shaking but he managed to place three more arrows on his bow and aimed them at Sauron. Sauron lost two thirds of his arm. It was kept on his body by a piece of the armor. The black mist extended down from his arm seemingly in an attempt to repair the armor.

The front line of the riders reached Sauron. Their spears and swords struck his body, causing ding-dongs from the armor. Yet, they were unable to damage Sauron. A black light radiated from the ring he was holding in the air. Black mist surged from the ring and consumed the riders attacking him. The mist kept expanding, reaching the riders and archers further away. Two seconds later, a thousand meter area of the battlefield was covered in the mist.

"YinKong!" Zheng was shocked then he shouted. Qi and blood energy rushed through his body. He seemed to have disregarded his injuries and wanted to charge into the battlefield because YinKong was sneaking behind Sauron. She had been inside the mist the whole time.

Before Zheng could make his next move, he saw the light behind Sauron became distorted. It was the phenomenon of uneven air density, and which was a sign of... The Shining Air Wave!

The movements in the Shining state pushed the black mist away from her body. YinKong attacked at the instant where Sauron's attack reached its peak. The Air Wave sliced off the remaining part of Sauron's arm. There was no time to worry about the corrosion. YinKong jumped into the black mist and grabbed the broken arm.

Then... the half awake and half dreamy feeling struck. As Zheng opened his eyes, the bright sphere of light floated in front of him. To his side, YinKong's left arm was corroding away. Her right arm was holding onto the broken arm.

# Credits

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