THE DARK KING

BOOK 01

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The Dark King

(黑暗王者)

by

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Synopsis

Disaster outbreaks which ends the civilization we know.

Sleeping in the cold storage for three hundred years Dudian wakes up into a new “world”.

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The Dark King - Book 01

Chapter 1 - Frozen For Three Hundred Years

Rainy season...

In an instant, gloomy black clouds enveloped the sunny sky. The slum dwellers doing their daily activities immediately went back to their houses in fear as rain started pouring down heavily.

Rainwater began to accumulate and spread rapidly in the streets of the slums, immersing the poor houses to their limit. The drainage system that had been unrepaired for ages was not doing its job as the entire outer wall of the slums became a vast expanse of rainwater.

In the Meishan orphanage.

Near the door, a woman in her thirties led a dozen children ranging from seven to eleven years old to carry sandbags that had been prepared, stacking them on top of the threshold in hope of blocking the raging floods.

“Dean, come over to help!”

“It’s useless to call him, he’s a fool.”

“Really!”

A few sweating boys, exhausted from holding sandbags saw a

little boy standing quietly not far from the window. Even though they were angry, they knew it was useless. They could only bite their tongues and continue handing sandbags to be sent to the door.

The little boy looked seven or eight years old. His thin, but tall frame made him look more similar to an eleven-year-old. The most conspicuous detail was his color. He was very white, maybe even a bit morbidly pale. His skin color caused the other children to envy him, as everyone else was dark due to exposure to the bright sunlight.

Dudian sighed in his heart. Although he had left the cold storage for more than three months, his body had yet to recover enough to lift anything.

It was exceedingly difficult for him to stand, let alone carry sandbags to block the rain.

However, such a situation could be regarded as fortunate. After all, the Institute had just made the very first freezer when the disaster spread to China. As there was nowhere enough time for an experimental change, nobody knew about this type of failure. It was already a miracle that he was able to sleep in the freezer for three hundred years.

Nevertheless, he did not feel happy.

He survived, but his parents and sister stayed down and had to face the terrible disaster. Even if they had been miraculously lucky

and survived, they would have long been buried in the dust after three hundred years.

In this vast, new world, he no longer had loved ones. He would have to face this new world alone.

Although he grieved, he did not despair because he knew his parents had given him a second chance at life. He would not allow himself to go down easily. He would not just live well and get by, but also do what it takes to make his deceased family proud.

Fortunately, God finally sheltered the human race. When Dudian had just climbed out from cold storage, the first thought that came to mind was that he was the only person alive on the earth. Only when he walked out of the garbage dump of the cold storage warehouse did he find that humans were not yet extinct. Only a few people seemed to have survived the disaster, but the human population had grown to a decent size after three hundred years of development.

Unfortunately, technology and civilization had long been destroyed by the disaster. Dudian could not find a trace of any symbol of the old era of science and technology. The loss of knowledge about the electric power added difficulties to basic life.

The storm outside the window gradually came to a stop as Dudian was lost in his thoughts.

All the people in the house felt relief as they watched the water level behind the sandbags dropping. Exhaustion seeped into them

as if they had just experienced an everlasting battle. The middle-aged woman raised her head to observe the dark clouds gradually scatter to reveal a sunny sky and said: “Get ready to go to the cafeteria for dinner.”

The children’s eyes lit up as soon as they heard the word “eat”. Their previous fatigue was instantly swept away as they scurried back to the room, put on their wax-grass shoes, and lined up in an orderly manner.

“Dean, get ready to eat.” At this time, a voice called out to Dudian. The voice came to him from a seven-year-old boy. He patted Dudian shoulder and pointed in the direction of the canteen.

Dudian remembered this boy named Barton. Barton was one of the few children in the orphanage that was well-intentioned. As the language had changed in the past three hundred years, Dudian did not understand it and stood silent from the time that he entered the orphanage, causing everyone to think that he was retarded or had brain problems.

So naturally, he was placed into the group of the deformed children with Barton.

The children at the orphanage were generally divided into two factions. The first were those abandoned by their parents. The second were those who were abandoned by their parents due to physical deformities.

Dudian nodded and followed Barton to the lines by the column. Just as Barton was about to tell Dudian to first put on the grass sandals, he inadvertently looked down. Seeing that Dudian had long been wearing a light green pair of sandals, he could not help but feel stupid.

Plastic had yet to be invented in this world. Wax-grass shoes and clothes became the most common form of rain gear. This natural variation of grass that could been found everywhere had a fine convex layer of wax that effectively blocked radiation rain and thus became an essential household item.

Everyone carefully walked alongside the threshold before the narrow half meter high stone paved trail. Although the rainwater only came up to their ankles, even the strongest of them would inevitably become seriously ill if they feel into the water.

Because of the limited seating available, the best seats in the cafeteria were immediately seized by those healthy children. Dudian, Barton, and the rest of the deformed kids had long ago become accustomed to their tables in the back corner made from several stacked stoner.

“I heard that a doctor and construction worker have come this time for the adoptions”

“Aunt Dai said to seize this opportunity and put on a good performance”

“It would be awesome if you could be adopted by a doctor.”

“I would rather be adopted by the construction worker. There might be a chance to climb the giant wall of Silvia and see the outside world.”

Barton and several other children whispered and chatted. None of these children looked normal. Some were missing an ear while others had scarring on half of their faces.

Dudian’s eyes flashed as he heard their words, but he kept silent.

“Unfortunately, Dean’s brain is no good. Otherwise he would definitely be selected by those people with that kind of appearance and body.” Barton sighed suddenly as he looked at Dudian with regret in his eyes.

The other children looked at the unresponsive Dudian, all shaking their head.

Other children also looked at the unresponsive Dudian but just shook their heads.

Long ago they agreed that no matter who got adopted, they would do their best to come back and help the rest of the children. On the surface, Dudian was no double the most promising candidate to be adopted, but his chances were very low with that type of brain problem. His situation was even worse than the deformed kids, such as the one with a face full of lumps. Although they might look scary, they were at least physically and mentally able enough to find a job in the future.

At this time, Leng Heng, a thin child seated close by, heard Barton's words and contemptuously said, "They are a bunch of mutilated things, yet they still want the opportunity to be adopted."

His words immediately attracted the attention of others. Disdain and disgust filled their eyes as they fell on Dudian, Barton, and the others.

Relative to the deformed children, they are physically sound but abandoned people.

Dudian did not say anything as he quietly glanced at these people. Although he is still a child, his heart was much harder than most adults.

Mo Yang's eyes gazed at Dudian.

"Look at this fool. He won't understand even if you call him."

"No wonder he was abandoned. A fool!"

"You wanted to be adopted? Why don't you just obediently wait until you turn thirteen years old and they throw you into the mine as manual labor!"

These children did not attempt to hide their contempt and

disgust. Instead, it was a form of pleasure for them.

As the food was given out, the middle-aged woman lightly shouted, “Quiet down! Do you not want to eat?”

Hearing this, the arrogance on their faces quickly took on looks of innocence as if nothing happened.

...

The next day.

Silver-gray clouds gradually stretched out to let the sun spill down onto the slums.

In the rainy season, this type of good weather was rare.

Today was also the long-awaited big day for the children of Meishan Orphanage – Adoption day!

All of the families booked in advance for the chance to come to the orphanage on this day and pick a child.

Although it was early in the morning, Dudian still got up on time. This world may no longer have alarm clocks, but his biological clock had never been wrong. After getting up, he quickly cleaned up his bedding and washed his face with simple filtered well water. As he picked up his clothes by the pillow to get dressed, he

suddenly found a purple handkerchief within the cloth.

Dudian was startled and could not help but think of that cold night when he was led to the orphanage by a little girl. Unfortunately, the sky was too dark to see each other's appearances. In the past three months, he learned that only those in the upper reach of the outer wall were able to afford this type of fine cloth.

The handkerchief was left to wipe the dirt off his face.

Dudian put the handkerchief away and left for the open space outside the orphanage.

Although the only parents in his mind were his biological ones, he wanted to get adopted as soon as possible. If he reached the age of thirteen without getting adopted, the orphanage would give up on taking care of him and send him to the Meishan Chamber of Commerce to be used as permanent free labor. Meishan Chamber of Commers is the controlling body of the mine. As free labor, he would be forced to work until he died of exhaustion or old age. He would never again have the opportunity to see the light of day.

On the same day, all the children of the orphanage washed themselves, dressed in their nicest clothes, and were neatly put in a line.

Nobody would bear to be near you if you were covered in a bad odor.

This is what the aunt controlling the orphanage told them.

As all the children stood in line, the adults walked up and observed the children who they might potentially adopt as their own under the care of Diana and the other orphanage workers.

Under the guidance of Aunt Diana, the children and workers knew not to speak of the deformities. Wu Yuliu's eyes were full of innocence, desire, and hope as they welcomed the grown-ups. Her eyes were so teary that some of the adults could not help but feel sad or bear to not choose her.

Soon, the thin and tall Dudian became the focus of all the adults' attention. His skin, as pale as snow, was too eye-catching. His temperament differed vastly from the surrounding children. This child had a very calm and extravagant aura surrounding him.

The adults were surprised as they did not expect an orphanage in the slums to have such a good seedling.

For a time, many of their hearts were wavering.

Chapter 2 - Manor

The other children were sensitive to this change. An eight or nine-year-old petite little girl immediately said, “He is Dean. His brain is always in a daze and he cannot speak. Please do not take offense.”

She was young, but the brutal living environment forced her to quickly mature into a clever and crafty individual. She did not show a hint of jealousy, only pointing out Dudian’s defect as if helping. In a sense, it was the smartest move for her.

“Yeah, yeah!”

“Uncle and Aunts, he really can’t talk!”

The other children quickly echoed her response.

Barton and the several deformed children living with Dudian were shocked upon hearing the little girl’s words. No one expected her to say such a thing. An ugly look flashed across Barton’s face upon hearing the other normal children point out Dudian’s defect. Nonetheless, he would not dare speak up for Dudian for fear of leaving a bad impression on the Aunts and Uncles.

Dudian also glanced at the little girl. He was slightly surprised in his heart. She left a very positive impressing on him during his past three months in the orphanage. She was one of the few in the normal children faction that seemed to possess a good character and a kind heart. Out of all of them, this girl in particular was very

gentle. Even Barton and the other deformed children showered her with mouthfuls of praise in private.

Because Dudian originally had a good impression of her, he remembered that her name seemed to be…. Lisa?

Sure enough, he understood that he was still too naïve.

At this time, as if enlightened by Lisa's words, the eyes of the adults revealed a trace of 'understanding'. With such a figure and skin so clean and delicate, who could bear to abandon such a child? Many of them looked at Durian with pity.

Lisa and the rest of the children were relieved upon seeing the adult's reactions.

"Aunts and Uncles."

Without any warning, a tender voice sounded from the crowd. The voice caused both the children and the grown-ups to be surprised. Suddenly, all the children's' mouths gaped as if they had just seen a ghost. Those words were spoken by Dudian!

These three months in the orphanage, Dudian stayed silent every day in order to listen and observe, learning simple words and pronunciations. Pronunciation and language class was mandatory even in this old and rusty orphanage due to the many children who were not even one year old. Although he did not join in their conversations, he learned much by eavesdropping.

The people around him assumed he was just dumb. They would even attempt to communicate with him using hand signals and gestures. Nobody took the initiative to find him for a chat so he simply did not bother to speak to anyone; happily silent.

“I do not have any problems,” Durian said quietly in an immature voice.

He did not directly accuse Lisa of lying in order to get revenge. There was no need to be so superfluous.

The adults who were a little surprised seemed to understand something as they pointed wistful gazes to Lisa. Unexpectedly, they found similarly surprised looks on the faces of the children and staff.

For a time, many of the adults frowned.

One of the sturdy, middle-aged men said, “Look at their faces. It seems none of them knew you could speak. Can you tell me why you would want to hide that?”

One of the taboos of adoption was a lack of sense of security with a child. Nobody would want to adopt a child whose mind was filled with crafty thoughts and unwilling cleverness.

Dudian knew that he finally had the attention of these people and calmly said, “I did not deliberately hide anything, but my

character is naturally introverted. I did not speak so they labeled me as dumb."

Hearing his words, the coldness in their eyes gradually melted. They understood that most orphans in such circumstances would develop an introverted personality.

"Even if you are introverted, your voice is not quiet. Nobody ever heard you say a word?" A woman in the crowd questioned with a suspicious look on her face.

Aunt Dai interrupted without giving Dudian a chance to respond. "In this child's case, he loves to clean. We specifically assigned him to a separate room. There was no chance for him to communicate with the other children."

Hearing these words, Barton and the other children were all slightly confused. They could not figure out why Aunt Dai would lie. There was no orphanage where a child enjoyed a room to himself.

Dudian immediately understood. In this point, today's orphanages and the orphanages of his past were similar. They would cover up the flaws of the children as much as possible in order to increase their chances of being adopted. If these adults knew that Dudian was admitted only three months ago, no one would be willing to adopt him even if he was in perfect condition.

Every seven-year-old child would have memories and would certainly remember their biological parents. Nobody could guarantee that he would not leave to find his real parents once he became an adult.

Understanding things to this point, Dudian's mind slightly sank as he noticed Lisa and the other children of the normal faction seemingly ready to speak out at any time. Aunt Dai also noticed this and severely glared at Lisa and the few children that were ready to speak, terrifying them into silence.

In this orphanage, Aunt Dai controlled their life and death. As long as she got involved, their chances of being adopted could turn to zero.

Dudian knew he had no special charisma. The reason Aunt Dai helped him was so that he would be adopted and be one less expense for the orphanage.

"So that's the way it is..." The fat woman looked at Dudians pale, snow white skin with a sympathetic and puzzled face. "Son, I will pick you up and you will be my child."

At her words, Barton and several other children were pleasantly surprised. They looked so happy as if it was them that were getting adopted.

As Dudian heard this, he looked at the fat woman's face and hands. He noticed her rough fingers and could not help but frown slightly. Just as he was about to refuse, another person suddenly

laughed. “I find this child quite pleasing to the eye. I think, with my status, I would be more suitable to be this child’s parent.”

Everyone looked at this mediocre middle-aged man and the faint smile on his face.

The fat faced woman frowned and spoke in a cold voice. “I’d like to hear who you are, big man!?”

The middle-aged man smiled faintly and said, “I am just a small family gardener for the Mel family.”

The children did not show much of a reaction, but the surrounding people could not help but change color as they whispered. “Mel family? Is it that Mel family?”

“Aside from the Mel family, which other Mel needs a gardener?”

For a time, all eyes were focused on the middle-aged man with a tinge of awe.

The fat woman immediately paled, bowing her head in silence.

“How about it, boy?” The middle-aged man was very satisfied with the response and smiled at Dudian as he asked.

With this, Lisa and the other children started to pick up on the clues. One by one, intense gazes of jealousy and envy were directed

at Dudian. To be adopted with such good conditions, how could they not be jealous?

Dudian frowned slightly. After thinking a little, he shook his head and responded. “I am sorry, Uncle. Thank you for considering me, but I hope that my parents could be doctors so that there is sense of security.

He was refused!

The middle-aged man was immediately stunned. He did not think Dudian would refuse! He visited a lot of orphanages looking for children. Those children would become excited as soon as it was mentioned that they were being adopted by the Mel family gardener. None were able to stay as calm as Dudian or speak in such an orderly manner.

Soon, the man woke up from his trance.

Dudian, of course, also picked up on the clues and was able to discern the status of this gardener from the expression of the other adults. He knew that the “Mel family” must be an influential force.

Dudian, on the other hand, did not want to be stuck in a manor.

Chapter 3 - The New Beginning

“Doctor?” Suddenly, a young woman dressed in a gray gown asked Dudian: “Child, I am a doctor. Are you willing to be my son?”

Dudian noted this woman in his mind once he heard her take the initiative to speak. Originally. he held an adventurous attitude by refusing the gardener. The other were afraid of offending the gardener of the Mel family so they did not dare to choose Durian. This doctor’s identity seemed to hold some weight.

What Dudian did not know was how are rare doctors were in this world. Although it was still a civilian occupation, it was an exceedingly rare one.

In a manner of speaking, it could be classified as a senior occupation. With the Mel family’s gardener present, those with basic civilian occupations would not dare to choose this child, but compared to a doctor, a mere gardener was only at the level of ordinary civilian jobs such as minors and tailors.

Dudian had a good impression of this young woman. Her cheeks were framed by soft lines. Shallow dimples appeared on her face as she vividly smiled. The way she looked at Dudian was as if a mother was looking at her son. His cold heart began melting under her gentle gaze as he nodded. “I am willing.”

The middle-aged gardener’s face turned unsightly, but as he looked at the young woman, he held back and did not say a thing.

He secretly felt sorry for Dudian. After all, Dudian was very young and sort-sighted. Doctors are good, but not every child of a doctor had the ability to learn their parent's trade. The occupation itself had a very difficult entry barrier and required a lot of energy and dedication. If Dudian could not succeed, he would be left as a low-level nobody.

Gardening, on the other hand, was different. You would be able to start as long as you had a good memory. As a gardener for the Mel family, Dudian would be living far away from the slums. In the future, he would be able to inherit the gardener's place. Working for the Mel family and staying at their home is the dream of many commoners.

'Ah, how unfortunate, how unfortunate!'

The middle-aged gardener shook his head.

The normal children's expressions turned ugly as they saw the doctor choose Dudian. Barton and the other deformed kids were much better, albeit a little jealous. Nonetheless, Dudian stole a valuable opportunity, causing the rest of the children to hold resentment and envy in their hearts.

Dudian held an auspicious smile on his face. He was one of the few in the orphanage that caught the doctor's eyes. Moreover, his calm attitude and the look of his clean white skin cause made people feel more comfortable around him.

Aunt Dai turned to the young doctor and said, "Dudian has

always been very well behaved here. We hope that you take good care of him and wish the two of you lead a happy life.

"I will", said the young woman as she smiled. "It fills my heart with joy."

Aunt Dai instructed the woman next to her. "Mina, take them to apply for the household registration procedures."

The woman called 'Mina' waved at Dudian and the young woman with a laugh. "Come with me please."

"Go on Dean!"

"Dean, do not forget us!"

"Remember to come back and see us!"

Barton and the rest of the deformed children cried out reluctantly.

"I will be back, but do not be discouraged," said Dudian as he remembered how he was taken care of by then for three months. "Maybe you will all be adopted by the time I return."

Although they knew in their hearts what the results would be, they still laughed.

As he was getting ready to leave, Dudian suddenly heard the middle-aged gardener's voice. "I will choose you." Dudian could not help be look, only to see him pointing at Lisa. He smiled and spoke. "Little girl, you have quite the clever mind. How about being my daughter?"

Lisa stared at him with a look of disbelief painted on her face.

She looked around at the other healthy children around her.

After a glance, Dudian withdrew his gaze from Lisa and faced Aunt Mina. He left with Mina and his soon-to-be mother shortly after.

He and the other children of the orphanage will soon live in their own respective homes. Perhaps they would never meet again.

...

The household registration procedures for the orphanage were very timple.

First, verify the identity of the adopting parent. Second, verify the occupation of the adopter to prover their capability to support the child.

The purpose of these verifications was to determine whether the adoptive parent met the requirements set by the law.

If you did not work or if your wages were too low, you would not meet the specifications for adoption.

Third, a contract would have to be signed to confirm the adoptive relationship.

Finally, and of course most importantly, the money had to exchange hands!

In this world, adoptions were an orphanages main source of income. In the past, the registration procedures would be finished with the signing of the contract. No money was involved. But in this new day and age, it was different. Adoption was the same as selling a ‘product’. The only difference being that it was now legal for orphanages to ‘sell’ children.

Dudian had never seen the new world’s money. As his ‘mother’ took out a thick stack of green notes, the only noticeable difference he could discern was the picture of the giant wall of Silvia printed above. It seems as if the city of Silvia was covered by this giant wall.

As Dudian watched his ‘mother’ handing the stack of bills to Aunt Mina, things became clear. Why else would children be accepted into the orphanage so easily? The orphanage selflessly provided food and shelter for the children, knowing that they would be adopted in a few months and bring in a large sum of money.

Dudian sighed. He felt as if he finally understood the difference between the new era and the old one: Survival of the fittest. Either adapt to this world or be crushed under it.

Once the payment procedure and signing of the contract was finalized and put away, the young doctor bent over to caress Dudian's hair.

As he looked at her pale brown eyes, he knew that this woman would be the only person he would be able to rely on in the future. He was silent for a moment before speaking, "May I call you Aunt Ju?"

Jura was slightly confused.

Mina spoke as she heard Dudian's words. "Do not bend the rules. She is you mother now and you must be good to her. Do not disappoint the reputation of our orphanage.

Jura smiled as she stroked Durian's hair in a gentle manner. "You can call me Aunt Ju until you are able to get used it.

A trance of warmth flowed to Dudian's face as he softly said, "Thank you."

He was grateful for her gentle temperament because he knew that once adopted, his life and death would be entirely up to his adopted parents. He had already heard from the other children that in this world it would be legal even if the parents decided to

kill their child!

Jura smiled. “Let’s go back and take you to your new home.

...

Jura’s home in the neighborhood...

All of the inhabitants of this neighborhood had ordinary jobs, but the environment here was totally different from the slums he was used to. The air was much fresher and he could no longer sense the rotten odor of the slums.

Even in this huge residential area, Jura’s living conditions belonged to the more upscale lifestyle. The price of land here was twice as high as the slums due to its distance from the slums in the north and closeness to the commercial area in the south.

Anyone living in the commercial or military area was one with either a large amount of wealth or influence. The cost of housing in these areas amounted to an astronomical figure that most people could not earn in a lifetime.

Each area had a high wall barrier. The gates that divided Silva only opened once a day. The gates of the residential area in the south did not face the gates of the slums in the north.

This meant that people in the residential area were free to go to the slums, business people were free to go to the residential area,

but residents of the slums could not. The status of the dwellers of the slums was nowhere near enough for them to access the upper scale areas.

Chapter 4 - The Dark Night

Jura pulled out a ring of keys and unlocked the door.

Dudian started taking note of the room, knowing that this is where he would be living here for some time in the future.

“Dean, come in.” Said Jura from behind a small closet door. She appeared suddenly swinging a pair of adult cotton shoes in her hands as if to tease him.

Dudian was startled, but also relieved. This was another one of the conditions for adoption; Marriage.

“Come, I’ll bring you over to wash up.” Jura warmly said.

Dudian expected to be able to soak in a bath, but we quickly disappointed. The result was Jura soaking a towel in warm water and using it to help wipe his face and arms. This way of bathing was exactly the same in the orphanage.

Nonetheless, the color of this water was much purer.

What Dudian did not know was that even the nobility of the world used this ‘dry cleaning’ method for bathing. People generally believed that the water would weaken their bodies and harm their immune system. Even members of the aristocracy that were plagued by hypochondria would only bathe once or twice a year.

After washing, Dudian was given new clothes to replace his rags as Jura made him more familiar with his new home.

Things were as expected as Dudian looked around the house. There were no scientific or technological items found, not even a simple alarm clock. The only trace of the former era he could find was a fairy tale only seen in the books. The story itself seemed to originate from the European medieval period where not even the steam engine was created yet.

As he thought of all he had seen these past three months, Dudian became more and more convinced in his heart that this post-disaster world's civilization should have just developed into the bronze age. They barely knew how to use metal.

This discovery caused some ideas to emerge within his mind.....

The evening sky once again darkened. The chilling air seeming as if it was inviting the rain to come again.

Jura was worried Dudian might be afraid of darkness so she lit an oil lap early on. She was filled with an amazing feeling every time she saw his face lit up by the flickering flame.

"It's going to rain again. What about Uncle?" Dudian said as he glanced out the window.

Jura smiled at this boy's worries and said, "Uncle has a lot of

work to do these days so he will not be coming back tonight. Are you hungry?”

“What’s for dinner?”

“Good boy. I’m going to let you taste this craft of mine. I guarantee you will love it.” Jura said with confidence.

...

In the blink of an eye, a month had passed.

Dudian met his new father, Gray. He was a tall, thin middle-aged man. His looks were quite ordinary, but he had a gentle character. Gray was a tailor by profession. The sewing machine in the house was used by him. ‘Black Snow’ season was coming so he brought his sewing machine from the factory to the house, as there was no heating at the factory.

They had apparently discussed the adoption of a child beforehand. However, Gray was surprised at Dudians good extraordinary looks when they first met. Aside from the introverted personality, Gray greatly approved of him.

As another common storm of the rainy season was pouring down, Dudian had the sudden urge to use the restroom. He got out of bed, put on his shoes, and gently opened the door to leave. He was passing by his ‘parents’ when he heard their voices. “So late, why have they not gone to sleep yet?”

Suddenly Dudian's heart jumped.

Apparently, this world did not consider noise when building houses. He heard subtle voices from the room.

"Do you really want to do this?" Dudian heard Jura's hesitant voice sounding from inside.

"I know you are quite taken with this child. To tell the truth, I am as well. I can't bear to part with him. However, this is a rare opportunity. If the Avril house has a good impression of him, we can move to the business area to find better jobs. If you still feel lonely, we can adopt another child. It's quite the good deal."

"It's not the money I'm worried about. If he goes to Avril house and refuses to speak, they will bully him. There are two types of people in this world... I once saw a doctor get into a large family and only became a servant and... and..."

"A deathly silence struck the room before Gray continued. "Jura, you know that he was just an orphan in the slums. Even if we didn't adopt him, he would be adopted into another family as a serf. Also, a servant's life in the Avril house is an enviable position to many people."

"But—"

"This is decided. There is no more room for further discussion."

Silence fell upon the room once again.

The small figure in front of the room had his head down. He lightly clenched his hands into a fist and then slowly loosened them. He dragged his body back to his room as if he were a corpse. Even his previous intention of a restroom break was forgotten.

Dudian was listening to the rhythmic sounds of the rain splattering outside as he sat on his bed. His heart felt pained. Although he had only been with the couple for a month, Jura had always meticulously cared for him. It touched him the bottom of his heart. He never expected those feelings to be shattered in a matter of seconds. It was as if the world was mocking him and throwing his heart back into disarray.

He suddenly felt very lonely.

He began to miss his harsh and gentle mother and father, as he reminisced about he would always pinch his sister's ear.

"Why...?" He wanted to cry for a moment.

He clenched his fists while an idea slowly began to surface in his mind. "Since he was never going to see his parents or sister again... then... then let this strange new world.....

Nobody knew that on this one rainy night, a small figure slowly made up his mind to alter the gears of history forever.

Chapter 5 - The World Of Darkness

The next morning.

Gray sat on a stool near the table. He was holding the residential area newspaper mailed in the morning. There were information about recent news about various parts of the neighborhood, as well as number of recruitment advertisements into various factories. Jura was busy in the kitchen making breakfast. She brought up meals to the table, everything was the same as usual.

Dudian's biological clock sounded, waking him up from sleep. He folded his bed, washed his face and went over to kitchen. He greeted Jura couple with simple "good morning" and took a sit near the table to began to eat the breakfast.

At this time, Jura carried Dudian's share and put it opposite to him. As Dudian tasted the meal, Jura asked with a slight smile on her face: "how's the taste?"

"A bit spicy," replied Dudian, "I like spicy food."

"That's good." Jura smiled.

Gray then put down the newspaper, looked over the table towards Dudian. "Dean, your aunt and I have chosen a marriage for you. You have to be prepared today. So dress up well and because we are going to meet some people."

Due to the requirements of Dudian, Gray and Jura have temporarily accepted to be addressed as “Uncle and aunt”.

After last night’s situation, Dudian’s mind has calmed down. Pretending to be an innocent kid without any awareness he blankly asked: “What is the affair?

Jura looked at Dudian and whispered to Gray: “You see, I said Dean is still small. We could wait for a few years more.”

“Age of thirteen, is the legal age of marriage.” Gray looked back at her. There was a bit coldness in his eyes and said: “Let’s just get him engaged for now. Being a few years ahead won’t harm no one.”

Jura saw her husband mind firmly decided on marriage no longer said anything.

“We’ll take you to a nice big sister,” Gray said to Dudian. “It’s a great opportunity for you and do all you can to get her approval. So that you can eat a lot of good food every day , wear good clothes and never go hungry. Do you know what I mean? ”

“Really? I will!” Dudian replied with calm mind. Moreover he had a surprised look on his face which made it look like more realistic.

Gray’s face turned in a big wide smile, said: “Really good. Dean is

a good boy. Alright decided, eat first."

Soon, all of them finished their meals.

Dudian made a great "eager" performance. As a result Gray had a relieved look.

"Come over Dean. First put on new clothes." Jura took Dudian to the cabinet where a brand new black suit, bright red tie, and shiny shoes were placed. She let Dudian change. After he was dressed, eyes of Jura and Gray could not help but lit up. Dudian's pale snow-like skin and black eyes were giving him an aristocratic feeling.

"What a beauty!" Jura laughed heartily.

Gray's heart was overjoyed: "Excellent, let's go!

"Ah!" Dudian tried to look very excited and astonished.

After locking up the door, Jura came over to hold Dudian's hand and asked Gray: "It's a bit early. Can we find carriages?"

Gray smiled and said: "Here, in vain. But I was told in Avril house that they will send a carriage to pick us up". At the same time "da da da" and hoof sounds came up from corner of the street. A carriage with golden ornaments turned over and came up to stop

just before them. On the roof of the carriage was a silver-white flag with a white flower engraved on it which was flag banner of Avril house.

The driver was wearing a black high-heeled hat and a black suit. He jumped out of the carriage smiled and said: “Gray and Jura, the lady has been waiting for you.” He leaned his chest sideway, to invite them into carriage, demonstrating noble aristocratic manner.

Gray heart jumped and began to flatter: “how can we make Miss Ivy wait. It would be very rude, on to the carriage!” He quickly held Dudian’s hand and in a forced manner got them into carriage.

At this time, the coachman seemed to have noticed Dudian. His eyes flashed with a trace of the color of surprise, but immediately resumed his polite smile.

Da da da … …

After Dudian’s family sit in the carriage, the driver shake off the rope, the carriage began to ride.

Dudian was silently watching at the buildings passing by, as well as the pedestrians who were passing by the roadside. Most of them had surprised and awe-inspiring look at the carriage. At this time Gray and Jura did not speak, and no longer asked Dudian anything, worried about falling into the ears of the driver and later spread to Avril home.

Carriage reached south side of the giant wall in a smooth drive. The young guard at the gate made a ‘fist against chest’ salute as soon as his eyes detected the flag on top of carriage’s roof. He made way for them to pass instantly. Later on he calmed down and restored his work, continuing to check those who want to enter the business district.

This is the business district?

Dudian looked at the clean street outside the carriage. The road was clean and pedestrians had beautiful clothes. Immediately, the difference with the residential area could be felt. As in comparison with the slums, it was like the difference between heaven and hell, without any exaggeration.

Soon, the coachman parked the carriage in the street at the end of an exquisite elegant building. Dudian saw that on the building hung a cardboard piano sign, painting was very realistic. He couldn’t but wonder how the piano was retained in this poor and incomplete world.

The carriage stopped at the main entrance. Then a black suited young man walked quickly out of the mansion, looking down the carriage to Gray and Jura. He smiled and said: “Miss has waited for a long time, please come with me.” Leading the way.

Gray had an inexplicable tension in his heart as it was absolutely impossible to see the magnificent buildings at the residential area. Straightening his back a bit and holding Dudian’s hand Gray

walked in front.

As soon as Gray couple went into the hall, their eyes were attracted by agate jewel-like brilliant oil lamp light. Jura performance was better, as she was invited to cure people in the business district several times. She was slightly calm. For Gray, it was the first time to come to such a place. Dudian through holding his hand, felt the man was slightly nervous. As his body was slightly trembling. He could not help but shook his head in mind.

Sound of music was echoed in the hall. Dudian, at first glance, saw the hall is extremely spacious. Many people sat there to eat snacks, listen to music, whisper to chat. They had very gorgeous dresses. Fabric of clothing, dress lines and materials seemed much better than the ones used in residential area. Especially the color contrast was much more visible.

Black suit Young man gently made a gesture toward the inside of a separate room.

Dudian looked to see two figures sitting there. A middle-aged beauty woman, about 30 years old. She had a tailored delicate skirt and very mild look on her face. Next to her was sitting an 11-year-old girl, fair complexion, a brown hair, oval face, although not yet mature, but definitely a beauty.

The little girl also noticed the face of the Gray family, eyes swept over the two adults and fell on the body of Dudian, eyes flashed a trace of surprise.

At this time, that middle-aged woman stood up to greet Jura with

smiles: “Dr. Jura the last time my family master’s illness was cured thanks to you. Today he has a business to deal with so he won’t be here.”

Gray said, “Mr. Avril is busy man”

Middle-aged women replied with a smile: “First sit.”

“Yes, yes.” Gray immediately opened the chair and sat down. Perhaps he was too tight to begin with so the chair’s foot knocked on the ground a bit forcefully. People who were sitting close by immediately raised their eyebrows and began to softly chat.

Jura sat down too. The middle-aged woman’s eyes fell on Dudian body, her eyes also passing a trace of surprised color. As if relieved looked over to Gray, smiled and said: “This is your adopted child, really white.”

Gray replied to praise Avril house’s daughter: “Your house lady is too beautiful. So small, delicate and beautiful. She looks very smart. She has inherited your beauty.”

Middle-aged beauty woman smiled, suddenly said: “on to the marriage … …”

Gray body tightened, Jura looked a little nervous.

“If Annia doesn’t have reprisal, it would be so.” Middle-aged woman was unexpectedly straightforward.

Gray and Jura glanced towards each other in surprise.

At this time, the little girl looked at Dudian and suddenly spoke:”I want to go out with him.”

Middle-aged beauty woman seems to have expected her words, smiled and looked to Gray and Jura.

Gray responded, even said: “Dean, accompany Miss Annia to go out. Remember to take care of Miss Annia”. He patted Dudian’s shoulder, to give him encouragement.

At this time, Annia got off the seat, turned and walked toward the outside, did not look at Dudian, did not stop waiting for him.

Dudian looked at Gray and Jura whose eyes were filled with encouragement and hope. His heart was very quiet. He said “hello” to middle-aged beauty and turned around to keep up with Annia, leaving the hall.

“The child is quite sensible.” Middle-aged woman looked at the back of Dudian, smiled and said one.

“Fortunately… …” Gray whispered in low tone.

…

To the outside of the street. Annia looked at the black suit

servant and waved her small delicate hand: “Do not have to follow, I will walk in the vicinity”

“Yes, Miss.” Black suit young servant replied.

When he left, Annia continued to walk in front, did not look back, and did not speak with Dudian, as if she was alone. Dudian had learned to endure loneliness, quietly followed behind her. By observing the buildings on both sides of the street, from these local customs, he could infer the world’s approximate standard of living and technological level.

After a long walk.

Annia suddenly stopped. Dudian was looking around and walking so he almost hit her back. Only to smell the fragrance of fragrant flowers, floated from her clothes, quickly took a step back to get distance between them.

At this time, Annia turned her body. Because of the age advantage she was slightly higher than Dudian by half head. Her beautiful white oval face, without the slightest expression, quietly overlooked Dudian.

There was a feeling of indifferent aura from Annia. Dudian had a faint so quietly looked up at her.

Seeing Dudian’s calmness, Annia’s eyes flashed a trace of surprise, but soon returned to the cold expression, said: “Have you

ever heard of opera?

Dudian suddenly was surprised for a moment. He did not think she would suddenly come up with irrelevant topic. Subconsciously answer no by moving his head. Annia did not give him the opportunity to speak, continued: “You heard about music styles? ”

No. Dudian was about to say.

“Do you know ballroom dance?” Annia tone of indifference, did not give him the opportunity to answer.

Dudian had come to understand that this is not a polite question but filled with undisguised contempt. He silently watched the girl.

“Do you know how to ride the horse?”

“Do you know swordsmanship?”

“Do you have ideals and pursuits?”

Annia asked six questions in one breath, then looked at Dudian calmly, and said: “If you are a clever child, you should already understand that you and I are not the people of the same world”.

Dudian quietly looked at her beautiful face, did not expect such a sharp or even mean words to come up from mouth of a child who is three or four years older than him.

Chapter 6 - Perfect

“There is no common language between us.” Annia indifferent eyes swept over Dudian’s face and continued: “If your mother didn’t help to cure my father’s disease, we would have never met. Do not try to think that by virtue of this kindness, you can climb over the social barriers and join our family. I, Annia, will not marry an incompetent husband and lose face.”

“Although you desperately imitate elegance and noblesse while pretending to be an aristocratic gentleman, you cannot hide away your roots in from of real aristocracy! Civilians are not nurtured from birth and lack noble blood. Practicing for a day or two cannot cover up your natural stature.”

Annie looked at Dudian coldly. “You may look clean, different from those smelly neighborhood workers, but it is not anything surprising. The ideas that I would ever fancy you, let you into our Avril house, or help your parents join the commercial district are nothing but a joke! It is only wishful thinking on your part.”

“My father’s kindness to your family is out of politeness. It does not mean they should act shamelessly and throw away their self-respect! You cannot even grasp the severity of the consequences!”

Dudian quietly watched and waited for her to finish.

After saying so much in a single breath, she could not help but frown seeing that Dudian’s calm expression did not change at all. Again, with a cold face, she continued. “I said all of this so that you

may understand that you are not good enough for me, and I would never allow you to be my husband. Stop fantasizing about unrealistic dreams!”

Dudian still quietly looked at her and spoke. “Finished...?”

Annia sneered. “Finished. If you have anything to say, go ahead.”

Dudian laughed and looked in to her eyes, softly speaking. “First of all, I must thank you.”

Annia expression turned to one of confusion and disbelief.

Dudian ignored her reaction and continued. “First, thank you for rejecting me! This way I can avoid being in conflict with my parents.”

Annia had a doubt in her heart. Was his father not trying to stuff him into their house?

“Second, thank you again. Thank you for letting me know that even a little girl like you cannot be ignored.”

Annia’s brows pricked up. She matured early in comparison to the other kids who were still playing around. She already had her future planned by the time she was eight years old. Nevertheless, this child in front of her spoke in an old-fashioned tone, as if he had experience a lot in life.

When she was ready to speak again, Dudian turned his body to leave. He didn't pause or look back. "Maybe I am not competent with a sword, nor am I a fine equestrian, but I do have my own ideals and ambitions!"

She was not able to react until his shadow had disappeared from sight. Never would she have expected such actions from this small child. He even dared to leave first! Her red face displayed the anger in her heart. However, her excellent childhood education and training allowed her to quickly control her emotions. She grit her teeth and stamped her heels. She moved to keep up with her fastest speed while maintaining a lady's composure.

As Dudian return to the hall, he slowed his pace down so that Annia could catch up. He paused and did not look back. Soon, Annie reached his back with her aristocratic lady-like grace. "Wait a minute! If the adults ask, tell them that you have someone else that you like."

Restarting his pace, Dudian replied, "Why would I do that?"

"If I have not guessed wrongly, your father should have already agreed to the marriage," he said indifferently. "But you did not. That is to say that, if I agree we are getting married, aren't we?"

Annia's aggressive expression suddenly paled. If Dudian chooses to agree, her father would go on with the marriage. Today, she and her mother planned on deliberately put pressure on the Gray couple so that they would not ask for her hand in marriage.

“How did you know?!”

“You pretty much told me.” Dudian said lightly.”If you have the option to decline then you can simply reject the marriage with a ‘no’. Moreover, you would not have to say so much or even threaten me. Your mother, on the other hand, is a bit tricky though. I think she will be able to get a direct refusal from my adoptive parents.”

Annia was shocked. Dudian had repeated the plan she and her mother had come up with almost word for word. For a moment, she felt as if she was completely seen through by this little boy who was still as calm as the moment she met him. However, she did not regret her choice. After a moment of silence, she continued, “If I decline, I am worried that your parents will go to my father.”

Dudian shook his head slightly. “No, as long as your refuse this ‘marriage’, things will pass. Everything would have been very simple, but instead you made it more complex.

“How would you know?” Annia frowned. She was irritated by Dudian’s confident tone.

“You overestimated their guts and underestimated their self-awareness,” explained Dudian. She was not convinced and did not expect too much, but had to have the patience to try.

Annia frowned, thinking for a bit. “Why do you not just say there is another girl who you like?”

“Are you not a noblewoman? Do you not understand the fact that you can refuse, but I cannot?” said Dudian as he looked directly at her.

Annia looked at him and smiled in realization. “By my refusal, you want them to assume that you were just not good enough for me so that they are not angry with you.”

Dudian knew his plan was seen through, but he felt no embarrassment. “Anyway, I have already told you what you should do. I am in no position to decline, so think of the consequences on your own!” Finished speaking, Dudian went towards the entrance without waiting for Annia.

“You…!” Annia only stared at his back. She angrily stamped her feet and followed into the mansion.

“Welcome back, Miss.” The black suit servant was relieved when he saw Dudian and Annia appear. His face sported a huge smile.

Annia was indeed of noble birth. After a few steps, her anger was replaced by calmness.

…

A carriage bearing the banner of a white flower drove through the commercial area to the residential area. Dudian’s family alighted from the carriage and proceeded to their home as soon as

the carriage stopped.

Jura looked at her husband's gloomy face. Holding Dudian's hand, she opened the door.

"What a lame excuse!"

"Clearly they despise our identities! Aristocrats... haa.... group of hypocrites!"

At home, Gray vented the anger in hear heart.

"Hush!" Jura said. "You have to whisper; don't let anyone else hear you!"

Gray stifled up, sitting quietly in bitterness. Speaking ill of the aristocracy was a massive crime.

"Dean, go back to your room and rest. You must be tired. I'll call you out for dinner." Jura said to Dudian.

Gray looked at the child. His lips slightly moved, but he did not speak. Although his heart was heavy, with these months together, he knew that Dudian was a good kid that would never day anything impolite. He could only blame himself and his wife for setting their sights too high. Dudian nodded and went up to his room.

…

After four long months, the rainy season had finally ended and revealed the sunny skies.

Gray looked at Dudian who had woken up early. He smiled and said, “Dean, various schools will be starting soon. Would you like to go to school to learn reading and writing?”

Chapter 7 - Radiation Values

Dudian nodded slightly. Before mentioning school, Gray had expressed his hope that Dudian would inherit his sewing skills and become a good tailor. Dudian had a goal so he directly had refused Gray.

Gray and his wife were not angry. It is a good thing for children to have their own opinions. They were not serfs. So, it is plausible for them to have a child with an assertive personality.

“Unfortunately, the medical field is just too difficult to get started in,” Jura said with some regret. Dudian was a clever child, but unfortunately, it was too late to begin studies to become a doctor.

“Well, what do you want to study?” Gray smiled.

Dudian looked up at them and spoke, “The law!”

“Law?” Gray hesitated a bit. “Dean, do you know what sort of career that is?” Jura asked.

“I know it is one of the three major civilian occupations. Lawyers also have more prestige than doctors.” Actually, Gray had brought a career table to Dudian. It had information regarding job descriptions and qualifications needed to work in each field. This table had helped Dudian gain a better understanding of possible

career paths and their respective benefits.

"I just want to be a bit clear. The law school is the hardest to graduate from. It's even more difficult than studying medicine. You need very flexible thinking and logical ability. Although you are a smart boy, keep in mind the difference between law school's level of difficulty compared to what you had in orphanage. It is very difficult to graduate from law school and become a qualified official."

Dudian looked straight at him insisting, "I want to study law no matter what."

Gray frowned slightly. This was the first time Dudian was so persistent in front of them so he didn't know how to refuse. Ever since Avril house refused the marriage proposal, Gray and Jura had begun to accept Dudian as their 'own' child. Thus, they didn't want to hurt his feelings.

"If the kid wants to study then let him do it. Even if he can't enter the court in the future, being an ordinary lawyer is acceptable too. At least he will be familiar with the law. He won't knowingly break the rules and can lead a peaceful life.

Dudian looked at her while silently thinking, "I want to study the law not to comply, but to break it!"

Gray sighed and said, "Alright."

Dudian's heart flushed with relief. He looked at them sounded a bright, "Thank you!"

When he heard Dudian, Gray's face broke into a smile again as he spoke, "If this is your choice then stick to it. If you want to give up sometime in the future, then you are going to come back to learn sewing with me. A textile worker's wage is good enough to at least feed yourself."

Dudian nodded slightly.

...

After the rainy season ended, the temperatures also picked up a lot.

Three days before school assessment was a special festival called "Prayer day".

Each household in groups goes to the central neighborhood to Cathedral of Vía.

They pray to 'Father the God' to let them safely pass through the next season and help them to avoid plagues and diseases.

It was a grand ceremony.

Gray and his wife went to pray with Dudian. Dudian also first

met the world's leader in faith, Holy Church. There was a bright cathedral built in a residential sub-area. A huge sculpture of the four-winged angel sculpture was built in the middle of the square, with both hands embracing all the believers; full of kindness and harmony.

Three days after the 'prayer day', various schools began their enrollments.

Dudian was led by the Gray couple to law school. They walked for about ten kilometers to reach their destination. Parents and children were bustling in front of the entrance; dressed mostly in simple clothing. Most of them had clear skin color with few others with yellowish skin. There were almost no people with rough skin, which meant that those of lower social statuses didn't even bother to bring their children for the enrollment examination. After all, the law school was a notorious one in Silva, and tuition fees were expensive. Citizens of low status couldn't afford the fees.

"I heard that you not only want to enter the law school, but you want to do so through the assessment."

"Yeah, but if it does not go through I'm thinking about Sewing Institute or maybe Geological Institute..."

"I do not know either. The assessment should be quite hard."

Some parents talked quietly.

“Have the Law School’s assessment begun yet?”

“It should be similar to our medical school assessment,” Jura blinked, bowed to Dudian said, “I remember the test usually asks a few simple things. Our medical college examination was about memory. It should be almost the same here.”

Gray drew over and smiled, “It is up to you now. It depends on your own performance. In case you fail there is nothing to worry about as we can go to Sewing Institute for registration.”

Dudian mind turned with disdain. He would be more than happy if the examination was a simple memory examination. In the old era, children with an IQ range of 120 to 140 were labeled as geniuses. His daredevil sister had 142 IQ. However, his result from IQ test was 168. He would never forget the day that he was accepted to Harvard University at the tender age of twelve.

The siblings IQ was high because of inherited gene from their parents. Both were internationally renowned scientists. If the disaster didn’t break out, they should have gained an international science award with their invention of the “Cold Storage” technology

Now, it was Dudian’s turn to enter as the children before him had gone into to assessment room in succession.

“Parents should stay here. Child, go into the assessment room.” A middle-aged scholar-like person blocked the Gray couple.

“Dean, good luck!” Jura tried to inspire Dudian. Dudian saw the happiness reflect in her eyes.

In the spacious room, Dudian saw a man and a woman. Two middle-aged examiners dressed in black robes lined with complex gold silk embroidery patterns. They looked simple and gorgeous. They saw Dudian, smiled and said, “Child, come over”.

Dudian stepped forward.

“I will ask you a question. You have a frying pan and it can fry only two fish at the same time. To fry one side takes a minute. If I would like to fry three fish, what is the shortest amount of time it would take?” Middle-aged woman smiled.

“Three minutes,” said Dudian without thinking.

The question was not difficult, but both examiners got surprised. Even the cleverest children would need some time to think before answering the question. To answer correctly directly without any time to consider... They had quite a positive impression on him.

“You pass child. You are very smart.” The right middle-aged man smiled, said. “Take this and go next to the physical examination. If there are no problems in physical examination, you can officially begin your studies in law school. He handed a small note to Dudian which had few words written on it.

“There is a physical examination?” Dudian eyebrows wrinkled as

he turned turned and left the room.

“So hard!”

“I answered four minutes and I was told that it was wrong. How come it is not four minutes!? If both sides must be fried, certainly four minutes ah!

“This question... why fish, ah! I do not like to eat fish, and fried fish and the law have nothing in common ah!

“Well, my father is a chef. He could cook three fish in a minute! They did not believe it.”

Dudian went out and heard a few children coming out from next rooms. They were dissatisfied with the examination question. His mouth twitched a little. He turned back to wait in front of the Gray couple as if he had not heard their words

“How did it go?” Gray smiled. He heard the words of the children. Although it is not clear what the specific test was, it seems it was not so easy to pass.

Dudian lightly glanced at him and said, “Passed. Now I need go to the physical examination.”

Gray smiled, but was discouraged as he wanted Dudian to go to Sewing Institute. Nevertheless, the thought of Dudian being smarter than other children enraptured him.

“The physical examination is to detect the value of your body’s radiation. Dean’s skin color is too white so the radiation value is certainly not high. He should pass this one easily.” Jura seems to know something about the physical exam so she spoke with confidence.

After the global nuclear explosion, the world was full of nuclear radiation. The silver-gray clouds in the sky were the result of gathering of large number of nuclear radiation debris. That’s why there is was long rainy season in this world. An extremely dangerous, and even fatal rainy season, that brought illness and death in its wake.

However, Dudian had come out from the cold storage. He had only been here for a few months, so the body radiation value should not be high.

But he was curious... How these people detect the radiation value?

‘What kind of instrument do they use? They haven’t even stepped into industrial era, nor do they even know what electricity is?’

At this time, Jura took him to a room next to a ‘Physical Examination’ sign. There was no line. After all, the people who passed the first assessment were too few. In the room sat a middle-aged woman. She checked the note in Dudian’s hand and spoke. “Alright, let’s go with the test”

Dudian approached the woman. He looked over but did not see any extraordinary instrument. Only a row of glass tubes similar to thermometers.

Middle-aged women checked the note again to confirm, then from the side picked up a clean glass tube. The sharp end of the tube was position near Dudian pinky finger. She smiled and said, “Child, do not be afraid. It won’t hurt.”

Dudian did not expect that a glass tube as small as that was used to detect the radiation value.

Soon, Dudian’s red blood began to penetrate the glass tube. Dudian noted that the glass tube had scales with a hair-width silky red line.

Middle-aged women checked again to confirm there is no mistakes. She could not help but be stunned at Dudian’s result. His skin color was too white, even the same age girls were not so white.

Her eyes revealed a trace of confusion and she spoke to Gray couple with emotion, “The value of such a low radiation level… It’s the first time I’ve seen it. Too incredible! A healthy body such as his would normally only appear in the Commercial District!”

Jura clearly understood the radiometer. Her face was filled shock and then relief. She turned to her ‘lost’ husband, “This is a radiometer, a special apparatus used to test human radiation value.

Dean’s radiation value..... is very low. It is comparable with those aristocratic children.”

Gray knew the importance of human radiation value, but did not care a bit. But when Jura said ‘comparable with those aristocratic children’, his pride suddenly went over the horizon. He touched Dudian’s hair.

Dudian glanced at the red line on the radiometer, suddenly feeling this line twisting slightly. It seems that it was a living thing!

...

In the evening of the day when Dudian registered to law school, In a castle in the commercial district.

A luxury room was covered in diamond mosaics. A shadow-like silhouette in the room was silently looking at the information in front of his desk. “Test results released. There are 27 qualified candidates!”

Chapter 8 - Giant Wall Of Silva

The person near the desk did not rise. The shadow kneeling on the ground who brought the message, respectfully clenched his chest. In the next moment he disappeared leaving only the white letter on the desk.

The stalwart figure's eyes fell on the white paper. Blade-like dense eyebrows were picked a little. Opening his eyes, he briefly glanced at the new document. Suddenly his eyes were focused on detection value in the bottom corner of the paper.

Staring at this figure, he looked for a while. Later on he got up, put the coat on and opened the door.

In the hall, middle-aged housekeeper looked at the master, surprised: "Master, so late, do you have to go out?

"Ah," said the stalwart figure, "Prepare the carriage."

...

"Three hundred years ago, very big scourge came to Earth. Our ancestors fought hard, survived the adversity by strength and built the gigantic Silvian wall to isolate the disaster and keep it outside the giant wall. The giant wall can not be desecrated by the vile creatures, did you know? "Said a white bearded old man in a solemn voice.

Although his beard was white, in fact he was in his early sixties. But in here it has been regarded as a longevity.

Dudian listened attentively. Three days have passed after the registration. This is his first official class today. This old man did not come up to explain the knowledge of the law. But a brief introduction from some well-known things. It seems that the purpose is only to talk about things which children are familiar with so to consolidate their hearts under the faith. The story of Silva's giant wall is know to almost every child. They have listened their parents talking about it once in a while. Only the orphan's didn't know about the Silva's history.

Other children hearing the story are bored. But due to the first time to seeing this white beard elderly, most of them are afraid and avoiding rash decisions.

Dudian was relished hearing white-bearded man talk. These are the information what he most wanted to know at the moment. Seeing the old man to not go into in-depth explanation he could not but raise his hands to ask a question: "Teacher, can you say what is the natural disaster?"

White beard old man and other children were surprised a moment. Nobody expected Dudian to be so bold. To dare to take the initiative to ask question and moreover so well-known thing. Actually some of them were puzzled and couldn't understand why to ask such a question.

Old man saw Dudian's serious and hopefull look. He did not bear to fight the child's enthusiasm, however a thought passed in his

mind “Is this child’s parents did not tell him?”

“There are a lot of natural disasters. Volcanic eruptions, flooding, earthquake splitting and so on,” he replied with a smile on his lips.

Dudian did not give up and continued to ask: “Just these?”

The old man was silent for a moment but continued nevertheless: “These disasters are terrible. Haven’t you listened to your parents talk? The volcanic eruption alone is enough to kill countless people. The dark clouds in the sky are caused by these volcanic eruptions. ”

Dudian frowned slightly. Did not say anything. Though his heart was pensive. Because he knew about the details of the disaster that happened three hundred years ago. It is not simply a natural disaster. Although the old man said that the various disasters have occurred, but all of them were caused by nuclear explosions. Obviously these children did not know the real cause of the disaster and someone blocked the information from inside.

Perhaps to block the information that insider is so influential that maybe even they rule over this post-disaster era.

“Teacher, my mother said it was very dangerous outside the giant wall. If we go out we will die, is it really true?” A little fat kid who saw Dudian asking questions, made up his courage and raised his hand.

The old man looked at children and spoke with a serious tone: “Yes, outside the giant wall devils dwell and plague overhelms. Once out, nobody comes back.

It is thanks to giant wall that we can leasurly sit here to study, eat rice and vegetables. We have to acknowledge and respect the giant wall!”

The “abbot” refers to the person who studies the law. Like Dudian these children are beginning to learn the law. They are referred as trainee of discipline. If you graduate, through the assessment of the trial, will be able to become a priest or abbot. It is a very sacred position. Same in status as nobility. Not only able to freely access to commercial and residential districts, but also to enter into the wall area!

“The devil and the plague ... ...” All children are scared pale. Even if they are small they also know how terrible these two are.

There is a hint of curiosity in Dudian’s heart. He naturally does not believe in existence of so called “devils”.

Nuclear bomd explosions has ‘baptised’ the world. Most probably some of the biological variations have gone extinct or evolved. This explanation is only made up to intimidate the children. Of course, the object of intimidation is not just children but adults too.

This makes him more curious. How is the world outside the giant wall? What is the appearance after the nuclear bomb explosions? Has it become just a virgin forest because there is no one to

develop?

“Time to finish the class.” White beard old man looked at hourglass and said.

The other children cheered at once.

At this time, the door opened and suddenly two young people clothed in black leather armor walked into the classroom. White beard old man was about to question them but as soon as he noticed the black medal on shoulders of those two his face suddenly piled up into a smile, “are you here to take children?”

Dudian was confused as he hear the white-beard man talk. He was vigilant and doubtful at these two peoples appearance.

One of the slim young people nodded. He looked indifferently and spoke: “Now I will say names. Those who I mentioned, stand up. Do you all understand?” His eyes swept the audience.

All the children were instantly tensed up. White beard old man spoke up to comfort the children: “Do not worry. These two adults are guards. Those mentioned by them will have a hope to join the public service. This is an enormous event.”

Public office? Dudian heard Jura talking about it. In short, it is the equivalent of the civil servants of the old era. For a lifetime need not worry about their livelihood. In this world it is the dream of many civilians occupation.

However, Dudian noted the medal on shoulders of two men. After he entered the neighborhood from the slums, he had yet to meet a guard with such medals. The standard leather armor is also different. As he saw teaching staff to be in awe of the officers, a trace of doubt emerged in his heart.

“Locke!” Young officer said out loud.

A weak child sitting on table in front of Dudia said in a weak tone: “Here ... ...”

“Stand up!” Officer shouted.

The frail child jumped up at once.

“Marta!”

“Yes!” A girl quickly stood up.

“Lamyr!”

“Carly!”

Carly who was named stood up. Officer shouted: “Dudian!

Dudian eyes squinted, slowly stand up.

Up to this point including him there were eight children selected.

Chapter 9 - Hunters And Scavengers

“You eight, come with us.” Young officer looked at little Dudian eyes, said coldly, turned away with the companion and left the classroom.

White-bearded old man saw Dudian and other eight did not move, quickly said: “This is your lucky chance. Other people would love to have that chance.” Hearing his words, a tall child who stood out because of his height, with courageous steps took the lead of the eight and left the classroom.

Dudian walked at the end. He was quietly watching the selected children. Trying to contrast and compare the selected ones with the ones left in the classroom. But soon he came to an understanding that there is no common ground at least from color, appearance or any other external feature to distinguish the selected ones from the rest of the students.

No external feature, then the only option left is inner qualification.

He suddenly thought of pre-school physical examination. It was the most suspicious event.

As he was dazzled in his thoughts, the other children had come to the great playground outside the law school. As they arrived here, Dudian saw a black carriage parked in front of the college. The iron bars and a huge rivet were embedded on the carriage giving it an extra strong look. The horses that were pulling the carriage looked

much more magnificent. They were nearly three meters tall and had their bodies covered by helmet and armor. It was as if an amazing beast stood there but not a horse.

It’s was not only Dudian that was surprised. Other children were stunned at sight too.

“Come on, get into the carriage” said the young officer.

All the children hesitated for a moment. The tall child who was going in front of the kids seemingly shouldering the leaders identity asked: ” May I ask, where are we going? ”

Fit officer stared at him coldly and said: “Just get into the carriage!”

At the sharp looks of the officer, the tall childs hairs inverted up and his face turned pale because of fear. He did not dare to ask another question. Carefully avoiding the giant horse, he began to climb up the carriage.

Other children who saw this, silently, followed Locke (the tall child) into the carriage.

The carriage was extremely spacious and more than enough to accommodate the eight children. Dudian sat in the corner. The two children who were sitting next to him had tension on their faces. He quietly looked to the front of the carriage where driver jumped up.

The world was more dangerous than he imagined. Although there was law, it is clear that certain beings are able to ignore the law!

As for human rights.

In the feudal society in which serfs and aristocrats existed, “equality” and “freedom” were never part of human rights. So being delusional enough to believe in rule of law was an outrageous idea.

The carriage galloped away from the College of the Law in an extremely fast speed. The buildings on both sides of the road swiftly retreated out of sight. It was not long before Dudian saw a high wall. The wall was inscribed with a large word. Dudian had learned a lot of words from Jura couple in the past few months. So he knew the exact meaning of the word.

Dudian recognized that this is the residential area leading to the wall of the commercial district. Is this carriage going to take them to the business district?

Other children clearly recognize this point too and then thought of the old white beard teacher. Afterwards the tension in their heart was suddenly replaced by surprise and their faces were full of excited expression.

Every child in the carriage was eager to enter the aristocracy and the rich life of the commercial district.

Dudian was not surprised. To be able to bring out children directly from the law school was an indication that there is a great force behind these people. What was important at this point, is their purpose good or bad for them?

Soon, the carriage flew past the concert hall building where Dudian had traveled previously. See this building, Dudian could not help but think of the little girl's sharp questioning discourse. Suddenly feel a little funny, although he thought he would sooner or later enter the civilian area of the business district, but did not expect just in a month to come back .

Before long, the black carriage came to stop in front of a castle, the black uniformed officer sitting at the front of the carriage jumped down, opened the door and shouted at the crowd: "Get off."

All children obediently got off the carriage.

Dudian was the last one, but when he was just going to get off, the man suddenly said: "finished here" he looked back to the front of the driver position: "shake off the whip, drove the carriage away"

Leaving only the original seven children get off, Dudian felt lost.

Dudian face slightly changed. His heart-beat slightly raised. He opened the carriage curtain to look at the figure of seven children until the disappeared out of his sight.

After a carriage turned over a corner, his line of sight was totally blocked. Dudian turned his face to see the officer sitting in the empty carriage. Many thoughts turned up in his mind.

Escape?

Resistance?

Obviously, he was up to the mercy of the opposite party.

Soon, the carriage stopped in front of a manor. This one was a very vast manor. It was covered by a white lacquer wood fence. An extremely smooth green grass was pruning all over the place. At the moment there were several gardeners who were waterin the lawn.

The door opened and young officer looked Dudian. His cold face turned into a smile: “Little guy, you are quite calm.”

Dudian saw his smile. Dudian was slightly startled and his heart tensed a bit. But he calmed down and directly asked: “Is it because of the radiation values?”

Officer seemed to change to another individual as he previous tone and appearance were nowhere to be seen. Wide smile on his face, he said: “Pretty clever. Yes, its because of the radiation values. They are barely qualified, even through a rough training they could only become “Scavengers”. But you, well, there is a

hope for you to join “Hunters”.”

“The scavengers and the hunters?” as Dudian heard these two words, he was a bit perplexed. Dudian asked: “Who are the scavengers?”

“Come over first.” The man reached out to hold Dudian as he got off the carriage. They began to walk towards the manor: “The scavengers are responsible for the giant wall to develop out of the security zone. They are mainly looking for available resources. ”

“Out of the giant wall?” Dudian was surprised as it was no small matter. It turned out to be working outside the giant wall. That white-bearded old man obviously knew this. Even though white-bearded man told them that there is plague and devils outside the giant wall and nobody could survive there.

Although Dudian did not believe in devils, but there is no doubt that the giant wall is extremely dangerous. At least the air radiation is much higher outside the giant wall. Ah, radiation? Suddenly Dudian, as if sobering up from hangover, come to understand. No wonder the radiation value will be used to distinguish between scavengers and hunters, most of the environment outside the giant wall is extremely bad, very high radiation. If the body itself has too high radiation, outside the wall it will be easy to reach saturation. Only the people with low radiation values could survive out there.

Understanding this point, his heart could not help but suck down the cold lump. People behind the so-called medical examination are responsible for the secret assessment of civilians?

Chapter 10 - Light Physique

“What do hunters do?” Dudian couldn’t help but ask: “Is it dangerous outside the giant wall? What is the danger lurking outside the giant wall?” Lots of terrifying things came into his mind. His face became pale, but fortunately his skin color was white, so his fear was not too prominent.

“You’re smart.” The slim officer smiled and said: “Outside the giant wall is… …”

The man next to him frowned and said:”Fernando, we have not confirmed his identity yet, do not talk too much.”

Surprised for a moment, Fernando shrugged: “Does not matter. His measured radiation value is 0.8. It’s lower than 1 so he probably has the “light physique”.

“We have to do the test. Do not come to an early conclusion!” the second man frowned.

Fernando paused to think for a moment, before he bowed to Dudian and said: “You can only wait until the test finishes so that I can tell you. Nevertheless at that time someone will explain everything to you.”

Dudian heard their conversation and was slightly confused “Light physique? What does that mean? ”

“Wait a few minutes and you will know.” Fernando mysteriously laughed.

All three of them walked into the manor. Several gardeners who were sprinkling the lawn respectfully nodded their heads in salute as the three of them passed by. They walked on the white stone path paved in the middle of the lawn. A giant door, more than 10 meters high, was opened for them to enter. Fernando led Dudian into one of the steeple towers within the mansion. Walking up the steps Fernando led Dudian into a dark room on the top floor.

On their way, all the servants who saw them stood still and respectfully nodded as they passed by.

Dudian looked into the dark room. There were no windows, but instead a small hole just enough to ventilate the room. It was also covered with a black curtain, so it must have been a while since sunshine had infiltrated the room. The air in the room was cold, like the temperature of the early rainy season.

In the center of the room there was a metal table covered on top with a black cloth. Fernando walked towards the metal table. He took off the black cloth to reveal a smooth crystal ball. White chilly air was released from the crystal ball. The crystal ball was actually a sphere of ice.

“Come on, little guy,” Fernando pulled out a sharp knife hidden inside his black leather arm bracer and looked back at Dudian: “Come over.”

Suddenly, Dudian could see that there were very small white insects inside this almost transparent crystal ball. If you did not look carefully, it was impossible to detect.

“These are “light worms”. They can only survive in a cold environment.” Fernando smiled and said: “If you have the light physique, they will not drink your blood.” As soon as he finished speaking, Fernando grabbed Dudian’s little hand and moved it to the top of the crystal. On top of the crystal ball there was a small hole, as if it were a container.

After a stroke of the blade, Dudian felt pain in his finger. A drop of blood dripped from his finger and fell into the hole, slipping inside the crystal.

At this time, the “light worms” that were lying dormant, sleeping at the bottom of the crystal ball, seemed to wake up as if disturbed from their dreams. As if sniffing for the location of blood, they began to slightly move towards the drop of blood.

Fernando’s face changed, while the second man frowned upon seeing this scene.

Dudian thought of Fernando’s words and his heart sank.

They saw the “light worms” quickly climb towards the blood. As soon as they reached the drop of blood, they began absorbing it as if their bodies were sponges. Their small white bodies became tinged with red, but soon after the color quickly dissipated and was restored to white.

“Impossible ah … …” Fernando frowned as he murmured: “Has it been long since they ate something? Are they hungry?

His cut his finger, and dripped blood into the hole.

However, the worms did not even glance at it and moved back to the bottom of the crystal ball to curl up.

Fernando’s face was gloomy. Without a word, he quickly grabbed Dudian’s hand and made a cut. Blood fell into the crystal ball, and the worms began to climb to the top to swiftly absorb it.

“Really, he ain’t!” Fernando seemed to be somewhat discouraged. He loosened his grip on Dudian’s little hand, and also put away his knife.

Dudian frowned slightly. By now he probably already knew the reason. His body was immune to radiation more than the average person. So his body’s radiation content was lower than ordinary people. These people were looking for “hunting” partners, but in his case he had been out of the cold storage for less than half a year. His contact with the world was too short, so the body radiation content was low.

Another young man looked at Dudian indifferently: “It seems your previous family was quite good.”

When Dudian heard his cold voice his mind became

uncomfortable because he understood the meaning behind his words. It seemed these people had already thoroughly investigated Dudian's background. They knew that he was adopted by Jura and Gray. Moreover they knew that he had not been in Meishan orphanage for long. So as to say, they thought that he was the kind abandoned by an aristocratic or rich family. Only these types of families ate and drank things which were filtered and had low radiation.

"I did not expect him to be an abandoned rich kid" Fernando sighed with a disappointed face.

Dudian was quiet and avoided speaking. But his heart was not discouraged. Once you became a hunter, it was necessary to go to those dangerous areas, although he didn't know what dangers laid outside. But he figured it was best to not take those kinds of risks.

The second officer looked at Dudian and spoke in a cold voice: "Little guy. Everything that you saw and heard in here have to be kept confidential. It absolutely must not be exposed, including what you heard about "Hunters", "Scavengers" and everything else. Whatever you heard or saw should disappear from your mind. Just forget everything. Do you get me? "

"These must be the legal restrictions?" thought Dudian. He nodded and said: "I will keep my lips sealed."

The second officer, upon seeing Dudian be so obedient, turned with a slight chill in his eyes as he looked at Fernando and said:"Fortunately, you did not talk to much nonsense in front of him or the only option would be left to 'deal' with the little guy"

Hearing this, Dudiano who had been calm till then, suddenly felt as if cold water was poured over his head. His life was almost ruined by accident? He now knew for sure that the law couldn't guarantee his life. Even if you observed the law word by word to be safe and sound, there were some powers that could end your life as simply as dusting their sleeves.

As if it was their privilege to do so!

This situation made him feel a chilling fear, but he also felt a surge of strong anger!

This anger was caused by his life being threatened and the rules of this world which could be bent according to powerful's will!

Since the law is unreliable, I have to develop my own rules!

Aristocratic privilege? Hunter privilege?

Someday, I will tear all these into pieces!

Dudian's small hands tightly clenched into fists. The two officers did not pay attention to him. Perhaps after they determined that Dudian didn't have the "light physique", they lost interest in communicating or even observing him.

All of a sudden, coldness emerged from deep within Dudian's

eyes. His mind became more mature, more ruthless, and he secretly decided in his heart that he would change his situation and get ahold of an indirect life insurance as soon as possible. Otherwise, if he were to encounter another such scenario, it wasn't certain that he could survive. If he died in such a manner, how was he going to face his parents who granted him a "second life"?

"I'm not able to use guns, but gunpowder seems to be... " Certain thoughts flashed in his heart.

"Hey!" Fernando said with regret: "Go, little guy." His attitude was not as warm and friendly as before.

"By the way, if you are found leaking information about us to anyone, including your parents, then you can't blame anyone but yourself! "

Chapter 11 - Back To Slums

Fernando drove the carriage. They did not stop at the castle for “scavenger’s” castle that Dudian saw. Instead, they continued to the residential district. The carriage, however, halted before the wall that separated the commercial and the residential districts. Dudian would have to get off the carriage and go back on his own.

“Did I fail to become a “scavenger” as well?” Dudian asked directly because he had doubts.

Fernando scrambled back to the carriage, and then impatiently answered, “We already received your results so there is no point in returning to re-check it anymore. You should wait for another few more days and somebody will come over to report. He lashed the whip and the black carriage sped away.

Dudian frowned a little, then turned and began walking down the street towards the Jura couple’s house. Fortunately for him, before he once followed the House of Avril’s carriage before, so he recognized his way back or else he would get lost at this point.

Dudian became very tired by the time he arrived at 108 Lin Kang Street*. His breathing became heavy, his body drenched full of sweat, and his legs sore. Dudian’s body had not recovered properly due to being frozen for so long, so even though the Jura couple’s house was only approximately seven to eight miles away from the wall, it taxed him. As of now, his physical strength was far weaker than what an average child would.

Jura was looking out of the window when she saw Dudian around the street corner. Immediately her eyes lit up, and she quickly went outside with Gray in tow.

“How come that there was nobody to send you off? Why did you return here alone?”

Gray noticed Dudian’s unnaturally fatigued condition. He immediately scooped up Dudian’s worn out, weak little body and hastily re-entered the house. After closing the doors shut, Jura found a cotton towel to wipe Dudian and then asked with a concerned tone, “Are you alright? Did they not like you?”

From Jura and Gray’s reaction, Dudian realized Jura and Gray knew that he was taken from the law school. “How did you know?”

“Earlier, and official came over to inform us that you qualified to join the Guard.” Gray’s face became red as he asked with suspicion, “Did you failed the test?”

Dudian remembered that he had to kept the statuses “Scavengers” and “Hunters” a secret, so he replied, “I passed. In a few days’ time, somebody would be present to report. However, I do not wish to go there, can I refuse?”

If he could make a choice, he preferred to study the law. Dudian had no idea about the current world so he wanted to comprehend few more things before heading outside of the giant wall.

Gray felt relieved. He laughed and said, “Did you not know that many people covet for such positions? Oh, my! Yet, you want to refuse? If you joined to be a Guard, you would not have to worry about eating and drinking for your entire lifetime. The pay is wonderful, and moreover nobody would dare to bully you!”

Jura looked at Dudian softly and asked, “Do you still wish to study the Law?”

Dudian earnestly nodded.

Jura smiled and then said, “If you go over to train, you will also learn the Law. You would not be limited to studying the law, but in fact medicine, geology, sewing, and so forth. It is a comprehensive school.”

“SCHOOL?” Dudian was confused.

There were many people who could not differentiate between colleges and schools! In summary, colleges were specialized, such as Law School, Sewing College, where schools are comprised of multiple colleges, and learn things in-depth.

“There is nothing to worry for! You would learn the Law when you have joined the Guards”. Gray patted on Dudian’s shoulder. He had a wide smile as he continued to encourage Dudian. “I heard that there would be a training camp with elimination. So just concentrate on the camp!”

“Auntie.” Dudian seized the opportunity to speak with Jura, “I would like to borrow some pocket money!”

Jura became surprised momentarily, then smiled and asked, “how much would want to have? I would give it to you! Do not ever talk about borrowing and repaying, for we are family!”

Dudian had prepared beforehand a reasonable answer: “I want to purchase food and return to the slums to visit the children in Meishan Orphanage. I had already intended to borrow from you, visit the orphanage and then later return.”

Jura smiled, and said, “alright”. She took out a wad of green paper notes from her wallet before counting them. She gave Dudian notes equivalent to 100 coins.

Ever since the invention of printing technology ten years ago, Bank of Silva’s management issued huge sums of banknotes. In just few short years, these notes replaced physical coins and have circulated widely to various households in both residential and commercial districts. Everyone gradually grew accustomed to utilizing paper notes for trading purposes. Despite that, people still addressed the amount with the term “coin” even when transactions were done with paper notes.

“Thank you!” Dudian received the notes immediately and put them into his pocket.

Gray observed this and did not mention anything. He told Jura to prepare dinner.

The next morning.

Dudian woke up early, washed himself and ate breakfast before leaving the house. Even though he did not know when the “Scavengers” would send personnel to pick him up, he knew that he did not have to go to law schools for a few days time.

“Sulfur… …” Dudian vaguely recollected the composition of gunpowder. Back then, it was during festive season when his sister informed him on how to make firecrackers at home. He was not interested in gunpowder, so he could not recall the exact formula other than sulfur.

Dudian did not go to purchase sulfur. He hired a carriage and instead went to the slums.

In the slums, Dudian headed directly to Meishan Orphanage. He passed by the orphanage and then went over four more streets to enter a secluded street. Along the way, he smelled the stench of feces.

He also saw rotten carcases of insects. Not long after, he arrived a huge garbage dump. The garbage dump of Silva (city) located precisely in the slums.

There was nothing of value here for anyone.

Because of that, even impoverished individuals would avoid this

garbage dump, because all the items that were disposed here have long rotten.

Dudian, despite standing far away could still smell the rancid fetor of feces mixed with the malador of urine. Silva's excretion problems was solved by directing everything to over here. There were seven to eight garbage heaps that stood like colossal mountains. He could not see what was even behind. He scoured around to confirm that nobody else was around. Dudian approached near to a garbage filled area. He then removed a large piece of debris from the area. Afterwards, he bent down, took out a piece of cloth and began cleaning around a small, black hole. It was large enough to accommodate his small, thin frame. For him to arrive to this place was not of coincidence.

Chapter 12 - Super Computer

Durian removed his coat. At the very next moment he discovered a slightly dry spot on the ground. He used his bare arms and began crawling into the cave. Fortunately, there were no steel nor glass in the garbage dumps. After all, steel is a recyclable material so no poor people would feel extravagant enough to discard it away. As for glass, the poor could not even afford it.

The pungent stench suffocated Durian constantly. It became to a point where he almost threw up everything from inside his stomach. From time to time, he also touched wet and soft objects. In darkness, he could not see anything but in his mind, he had guessed such as lumps of feces, or a rotting body of a rat. Even the poorest of the poor would have avoided places such as this.

Dudian gritted his teeth, crawled for another seven or eight meters and finally touched a hard object.

It was his frozen storage device!

He touched further along the edge of the shell, and soon later found a button to press.

“Fingerprint verification in process...” A mechanical voice echoed in the darkness.

“Click!”, the frozen storage opened. The door of the storage arched the mountain of garbage slightly upwards. However, more thrash fell into the storage compartment, filling up much most of

the free space inside.

Dudian glanced at the door, where a number in red was present.

This was the very year.

It was this that allowed Dudian to know that he regained consciousness after 300 years. The other reason for him to comprehend that a full 300 years have passed by is since the energy tube in the cold storage capsule could only supply energy for a maximum of three hundred years. That time length was the limit.

Dudian went inside and soon clicked a raised button. The click sound echoed once more. A built-in palm-sized screen popped up.

“Eye scanning initiated…”

The previous mechanical voice spoke again as a beam shot unto Dudian’s eyes from the palm-sized screen.

“Verification… authorized”. The mechanical voice resounded. The screen turned into a three-dimensional hologram. There were two options, to start and to exit. Dudian said “Start”.

During the outbreak of the original disaster, Dudian was not only cryogenically frozen.

Furthermore, the cold storage capsule had also a supercomputer

in it. It can be said that this supercomputer was the zenith of the old civilization. It stored information regarding to fields of science, technology as well as social history. These are only information and do not consume much memory. Nevertheless, the supercomputer also included information regarding social, scientific and technological development data from every country, which would have required at least petabytes or even exabytes of storage.

Dudian recalled his father's last words, "Remember, you must rebuild the human civilization... ..."

It was obvious that the frozen storage capsule was built in such a way meant to be used to survive the disaster, but his father also considered the survival of humanity post-disaster. The fallout of the global nuclear bomb would have dealt a devastating blow to human civilization. This supercomputer contained the entire wisdom of the old world!

The basic principles of manufacturing gunpowder as well as firearms, were naturally also included within the data kept.

The world does not have 'electricity'. Fortunately, the remaining energy in the frozen storage capsule was sufficient to operate the supercomputer even though human body could no longer be cryogenically frozen any longer. At the very least, it was enough to maintain the basic operations of the frozen storage capsule. It was enough to study for few months. Dudian did not know what was the exact power consumption, but he estimated that the supercomputer only consumed energy far less than what a laptop would consume normally.

However, Dudian did not have much time remaining to stay any longer. There was no time to come here to study, as it would raise suspicions from the Jura couple.

“I have enough time to learn how to make gunpowder, generators and to check out the tools of the steam engine era”, Dudian said as he lied down on the edge of the cold storage capsule to study.

Dudian resisted the foul stench of feces and rotten animals. His body gradually adapted. His mind was completely focused on the contents that the supercomputer displayed.

“Sulfur decomposition…”

“Electricity augmented steam engine…”

In this small and full of garbage cave, Dudian tried concentrated on learning. Haphazardly, Dudian studied but was not fully absorbed into it. His concept of time was brutal. At dusk, he rubbed his sore eyes and stopped the supercomputer lessons. He felt his stomach burn due to not eating and drinking for an entire day.

“I don’t know when in the future would I come again the next time. If an earthquake occurred and the capsule is uncovered, somebody may take notice and excavate it.” Dudian then made the decision that it was too dangerous for the supercomputer to be here. Previously, he did not bring it into the Meishan Orphanage.

This is because in the orphanage, there was a high possibility that it would have been discovered by the children.

However, the present situation was different. He now lived in a residential area where normally, for residents to have small pieces of metal, people wouldn't care. Even in "Scavengers" training camp, it would not draw unnecessary attention.

With a crack sound, Dudian opened the cover. He used his small nail to eject a tiny, chip. The energy tube was connected to the circuits of the capsule so it was very difficult to dismantle it.

Dudian looked at the tiny chip and sighed. Thousands of years' worth of human history and technological inventions were compressed into this tiny object. If the current powers of this world came to realize the value of this chip, he could not predict how crazy the situation would have developed into.

Dudian carefully put away the chip. He closed the storage's door, and hoped in the future that he would get to access it in the future. He began crawling all the way back to the surface. As soon as he left the colossal garbage heap, he felt as if he baptized from hell and entered heaven. Compared to the air inside, even though everywhere surrounding him was filled with feces and urine, he felt fresh after he climbed out.

He took a few deep breaths and then looked around. He noticed that nobody was around and the coat was still on the ground. He picked up the coat and quickly left the garbage dump.

Not far away from the garbage dump, the earlier continuous downpour from rain water had accumulated into a small lake. Dudian did not bother to regulate for radiation. He put away his coat, and then cleaned his arm and chest. If he could produce a stable supply of power, he would naturally be able to learn from the supercomputer methods to purge radiation from the human body.

Previously, he found an iota of information in the supercomputer. There existed information that documented the methods to purge radiation. However, time was constricted so he did not read about it. After all, even if he did, it would still be practically useless to learn about it.

Soon his body was slightly cleaner. He wiped the sticky stuffs out, especially his left hand that was stained with feces. He had bouts of nausea.

Dudian knew that his hair still exuded a strong foul stench. He had to return home to wash properly, for he would get sick if he continued to use rainwater.

Chapter 13 - Gathering

Dudian returned to the neighbourhood. He spent five copper coins, near the wall to hail a carriage so that he could directly return to the Lin Kang street. Today, time advanced too far, so he did not have enough time to go to purchase sulfur and saltpeter. Moreover, in a few days' time Dudian would have to report for duty at the Scavengers training camp. To maintain secrecy as demanded by the organization, everything that was brought to the camp would be closely inspected so he purposefully avoided the purchase of those materials.

Currently in this world, people only utilised sulfur to make dyes and use it as pesticides. So, it also belonged to the low-risk dangerous goods.

The Jura couple anxiously waited for Dudian to return. The moment he came back, they were relieved. However, because of the strong stench that emanated from Dudian's body, Gray frowned and distanced himself, "What is this foul stink coming off from your body?"

Dudian coughed and said, "the usual smell of slums."

Jura pinched her nose and said "You should wash yourself. Wait a moment, I'm going to bring hot water for you" and then directly went into the kitchen.

Dudian went into the bathroom. He hid the tiny chip in a crack on the corner connecting the floor to the wall. Soon Jura brought

in hot water and asked, “You got to wash properly. Do you want me to help you?” “No,” Dudian quickly refused.

“OK. Slowly wash up and clean properly.” Jura placed the water basin on the ground, then turned to leave.

Dudian looked at the small basin of water. He had a slight smile on his face. He missed the showers of the old era. Unfortunately, in this world, currently even radiation in water could not be filtered out.

At least this held true in residential district, which made Dudian even more fired up in his desire to migrate to the commercial district as soon as possible.

Three days later.

A tall carriage sprang in front of the Jura couple’s house. A strong black horse pulled the carriage. It was two meters high, and was covered with exquisite looking armor.

From the carriage, a youth jumped down. He looked at the house number before he knocked on the door.

The Jura couple and Dudian were having breakfast together. They saw the carriage from the window and suddenly understood the reason a guest had arrived. Jura immediately opened the door and warmly invited, “come in.”

The soft-haired youth took notice that Jura seemed to know the purpose of his visit. Instead of entering, however, he showed the identity card which was a medal that had a double-crossed sword, representing the “Guard” identity. He did not enter the room, but replied: “No. I’m sorry but my schedule is tight. I must take your child here to the commercial district for military training. You must have received the notice prior so please make it fast as I’m in a hurry.”

Jura did not think that he was so anxious and busy, “Dear officer, how long would the child be away for military training?

“The training period takes up three years” he said. “During the three years, he will be able to come back to home only on holidays. However, I suggest that he should avoid doing so and study if he wants to complete his studies in three-year period.”

Jura’s face changed, “So difficult? What if he can’t complete it?”

“You can be rest assured. Even in case that if he is eliminated he will be referred to minor position.” The youth responded in an indifferent tone.

Gray overheard their conversation and his heart felt relieved. He turned around and saw Dudian over there slowly dining. He could not help but croak, “Are you going to prepare?! Do not let the officer wait for you for so long. Come on!”

Dudian sighed. He hated immensely to be interrupted while

dining. Staring straight into Gray's eyes, he could only lay down his rolls, pat his hands, and return to his room. He already folded two sets of changing clothes and received the linen backpacks. Of course, the most important item was his uniform which he received beforehand.

Dudian carried his backpack to the door. He looked up at the youth and said: "Let's go."

Jura worriedly asked, "Have you taken everything? The clothes, the shoes... "

"Everything is in the backpack." Dudian waved and responded by saying "do not worry."

"Be careful when you go there. Do not fight with other children." Jura added.

Dudian's heart warmed. Previously, the last time when they tried to marry him into Avril house, it made his feelings grew cold towards them. However, seeing Jura seemed to be so sincere and caring for him as if for her own son changed these previous cold feelings he had for them. After all, he was adopted. He was grateful for everything that they did for him.

"I will." He answered back. "You have to take good care of yourself too, 'Black Death Season' is coming up and the temperature will go sky-rocket. Ventilate the house a lot or you will catch diseases!"

Jura was a perceptive as well as a sentimental person. She did not know how long would it take to see Dudian again. Tears flowed down her eyes. “Let’s go.” The youth turned towards the carriage. He helped Dudian to put his backpack onto the carriage.

Dudian climbed unto the carriage, and looked at Jura and Gray. He waved his hand, for there was a hint of dismay in his heart. Soon, this strand of feeling was suppressed into the far bottom corner of his heart. His palm gripped the backpack, and cold looking eyes he ‘stared’ towards the future. His soft heart became cold and strong.

…

The carriage sped into the business district. It drove along dozens of streets before gradually entering a small secluded street. The carriage continued to move forward before it came to full halt in front of a huge wall. The huge iron gate was swung open and carriage went inside after that. There was a monstrous sword carving on each sides of the door. On top of the swords there were two words that were engraved.

“Loyalty” and “Guardian”!

“Get off!” The youth ordered Dudian.

Dudian disembarked from of the carriage, silently observing the surrounding environment.

“Come with me.” The youth glanced at him, before he released the reins of the horses, not afraid if the horse-drawn carriage ran away on its own. They walked towards a small door.

After passing through, a huge school field appeared in front of their vision. There was a school building around the field. They passed the field and proceeded into a remote building. As they were passing through the hall they heard a low cry.

The youth, accompanying Dudian, frowned. He opened the wooden door. There were seven or eight children around the same age as Dudian. Now one of the little girls was holding her knees, crying as she squatted on the floor. Next to her stood a few boys with embarrassed facial expressions and did not know what to do.

The youth asked with a cold tone: “What happened here?”

One of the boys was shocked to see the youth, “Mi,Mi, Minnie said she is homesick.”

The youth frowned, “is she?” He came up to the little girl in front, and ordered: “I’m going to give you two seconds. Stop crying and stand up!”

The little girl heard his cold words, timidly stood up as if she feared him. She was trembling and tears were still flowing down her face.

Chapter 14 - Orientation

“Although I am not your instructor, but I loath to see someone crying in front of me.” The youth spoke in a cold tone: “Return to your room in the dorms. You can enjoy crying with no effort.”

The children turned pale, afraid to say anything more. Minnie clenched her fists and clutched tightly at her clothes. She bowed her head low to fight back her tears.

The youth took another glance at the children. He was too lazy to rebuke anything. He walked right up to the counter, opened a drawer and grabbed a string of keys from inside the drawer. “Come with me”, as he said and left the hall.

Dudian immediately went after him to keep up with the youth. The other children picked up their backpacks from the ground and walked following behind after the youth and Dudian.

Along the trail through the woods, the crowd arrived in front of a dilapidated wooden shed. The youth opened the door and said, “This is the place. Pick any empty bed and get ready because by tomorrow morning the special training will begin.”. After finishing his words, the youth threw the keys towards Dudian and then directly left.

Dudian caught three keys in his palm. He stared at wooden shed and then frowned slightly. The wooden shed was most probably intentionally built for them. It could not be compared with the gorgeous and unique buildings in the surrounding areas. Even by

the living standards of slum areas, this building was a relatively poor house to live in.

“Is this how they are going to treat us?” Dudian knew that special training was not going to start by tomorrow. It had already begun right now they first arrived at the wooden shed.

There were three rooms inside the wooden barracks. All three rooms were completely identical to each another. There were four beds in each room. Each bed had mats and some dark stains on the boards. He quickly checked all the beds and picked a relatively clean wooden bed. He laid his backpack on the bed and waited for the others to choose their beds so that he could then exit to find whisk leaves or large weeds to wipe the bed. During this time, the other children had also entered the wooden shed. They were stunned at the sight. Even for the boys it was unbearable to live inside the barracks. Minnie slumped down and cried. The kids grew up in residential areas and have not experienced such a harsh environment before. Instead of wasting his time, Dudian gave the other two keys to the other children. He went outside to find and gather dried whisk leaves. Later, he returned to the barracks to wipe the bed. If he had known earlier that this was going to be happen, he believed that he should have brought a mattress along to cover the bed.

The other children watched as Dudian busied himself with the entire cleaning process. After they stopped wallowing in self-pity, they each began to choose their own beds. One of the children bit his teeth and talked out to rest of them,” Bear with it temporarily, things will certainly get better in the future!” In desperate moments, people always relied on hope to encourage themselves.

As time passed by they began to compromise with the situation at hand and began to adapt to the current condition.

One of the bigger boys went into Dudian ‘s room. He seemed a bit curious about Dudian, “My name is Mason, what’ s your name?”

“Dudian.”

“You seem to not be afraid of dirt.” The child was direct.

“In fact, there are moss-like things over the top of the bed.” Dudian replied.

“What is it?”, Mason asked.

“……It’s nothing.”

Mason scratched his head, for he did not know what else to say. He noticed spots of mildew on the bed board. He recalled how Dudian dealt with the situation. Immediately, he exited the room to the outside to pull out some green grass to wipe the bed, yet there were too many spots of mildew on the bed. No matter how hard he tried to rub it off, the spots remained dark.

Dudian looked at him, and then said: “We have to dry them under the sun.”

Mason was surprised for a moment and then agreed: “We can put

the bed boards outside under the sun to let it dry, so that the pieces do not rot." He called out to the other children.

They mobilized immediately.

Mason looked at Dudian, "Don't you want to dry your bed as well?"

"I cannot move it alone."

"I'll help you then," Mason replied at once.

Dudian, because of his temperament, would not ask for help directly. Nevertheless, he replied:

"Thank you." With Mason's assistance, they took the beds outside of the wooden shed. Not long after, another youth in officer uniform led a group of children over.

The officer looked at the beds in the open space before frowning slightly, but he did not say anything.

Just like the previous officer that came before, he too casually opened a few rooms, let the group of children to pick their own rooms, before leaving the key and then left.

The children looked curiously at Dudian, Mason, and others and then, one by one considered their own bedrooms.

…

“Are these dwellings for the children ready?” Dasha arrived to the window. She wore a white thin silk gloves and held a metal tube. If Dudian was here, he would without a doubt recognize at first sight that it was an old-fashioned telescope. She raised it up to her eye level and began to observe the situation outside the wooden sheds.

“Everything is in accordance with your instructions. The housing environment has not changed. We will stop supplying hot water soon.” Tobu respectfully added on, “I believe they will soon adapt to the pains and hardships. This time, I am confident that we will ‘produce’ more than hundred

“Scavengers”!”

Dasha nodded slightly. Suddenly she saw group of children carrying the beds from inside the wooden sheds out into the wide-open space. She was momentarily stunned as she did not expect the children to act in such a manner. After a while, she placed away the old-fashioned telescope and said. “You must discipline these children greatly. The number of passing children declined year after year. We must improve the teaching methods and tactics to maintain stable number of Scavengers. Additionally, do not forget to eliminate them instantly in case their mental state is not up to par.”

Tobu bowed his head: “Yes!”

...

In the evening, the children worked together to help each other to move the beds back to their respective rooms.

Mason pulled out a bedding from his backpack and laid it on the mattress. Some of the other children looked at him in envy. He laughed back at them and then comfortably lied down, proudly for his ‘foresight’.

Dudian changed his clothes and lied down. He closed his eyelids to revise the knowledge he got from super chip. Unknowingly, he fell asleep. He woke up at 5 am the next morning because of harsh strange sounds coming from outside. Dudian and other children got up and came together to look at the source of the strange noises. They saw a meter-tall birdlike creature with a crooked neck. It emitted a very sharp sound that almost ruptured their eardrums.

Chapter 15 - As Long As You Stay Alive!

For starters, it was an unbearable place to live in, so the children did not adapt well to the new environment. They barely slept. So, when they heard an ear-piercing sound such as this one, it felt as if lots of needles were jabbed to their brains. One after another they got out of the room. The sky was still dark, and the temperatures at night were cold. Most of them could not help but shiver because they went outside still in their pyjamas.

That strange bird called out three time more before it ceased.

Some children wanted to go back to sleep, but it was in vain. “I am now going to give you three minutes to be ready to stand in front of me.” A brown haired brawny person at the height of two-meters howled out loud.

At first, many children were in confusion, but they soon remembered about the special training.

Dudian’s biological clock was disrupted, so he cannot help but to suffer from some headaches. He restrained his emotions, ran back into the room to wear a coat but later he gave up. There was cold water near the door which he used to rinse his face and then later exited the wooden shed and moved towards the brawny man. Only two and half minutes had passed.

The other children gave up on washing themselves but instead hurriedly put on clothes to go out.

They wanted to give a good impression to the instructor so they did their best to be as fast as possible.

But there were others did not change even after three minutes were up; especially the girls who brought along a lot of luggage full of clothes, as they hesitated on what to wear today to look good.

The instructor did not hurry anyone, but quietly waited.

Time went by, about five minutes later everyone was out standing near the instructor.

“Since today is the first day, I set up a special alarm for you to wake you lot up from sleep. However, from tomorrow onwards, I hope that when I come over here I shall see all of you already ready and set to go!”

“Yes!” Several bold boys answered loudly.

The brown-haired man nodded slightly. “Well, today you are five minutes late. So, everyone will have to run five laps around the school field.”

The faces of many children changed. They had witnessed for themselves the huge size of the school field. Let alone five laps, even a full one lap would exhaust them.

“Teacher, why is it everyone that have to run?”

“We arrived well within three minutes!”

“Even if we were late, only some were late for two minutes at most, why is it now five minutes?”

Several boys could not help but spoke their minds loudly.

The instruct replied in an indifferent tone: “First, even if you all were ready in three minutes’ time, you would still had to run three laps around the field. Secondly, you are a group! A collective, if one of you is left behind the rest of you must bear the consequences!”

“Teacher, I am not satisfied!”

“There will always be people dragging their feet, I refuse to follow such a ridiculous idea!”

A few boys suddenly spoke out in anger.

The instructor licked his lips and responded in a rhetorical manner, “not satisfied, are you?” Without waiting for a response, instructor kicked the boy who talked first in stomach. The kick was so fierce that the kid was pushed backwards, he hit few other children and fell in pain.

“You do not agree?” Instructor kicked another dissatisfied boy in the same way as he kicked the first one. Unfortunately for other

boys he did not stop but continued to kick another three or four boys.

As soon as he was finished kicking them, instructor turned around to speak “Here, you don’t ask anything. You only obey the orders! Anyone who refuses to act will be hit by me. I may even kill you.

Believe me, nobody will care.” there was a trace of indifference in his face as he sneered and continued on, “In the previous session I killed one. Unfortunately, you were not here to witness it. It’s better to kill the garbage instead of wasting time and resources to nurture them!”

All the children who heard the vicious words coming out of instructor’s mouth were frightened and turned pale.

Some of the girls had their legs trembling because of the fear. Tears poured out, but none dared to cry.

The instructor gazed at them before saying: “If you fail to finish in ten minutes, then there will be no breakfast!” Then, he suddenly smiled “Those who cannot adhere the collective idea, and those who don’t finish running are the ones who won’t get to eat. I do not want to let any individual garbage pull down the level of the whole group.”

A lot of the sturdy children felt relieved after hearing those words.

Dudian sighed, almost crying in his heart. He knew for a certain, that he would not finish the run within the stipulated time.

Soon, the instructor brought all of them into the school field to begin the run.

However, the school field was too big. Even the children with the best physiques failed to finish in ten minutes. Some were late for a minute, some were late by two minutes and some for four or five minutes. In short everyone lost the opportunity for breakfast.

Some frail girls finished the entire five laps 20 minutes well over the time limit. But Dudian's result stunned everyone else. He lagged thirty whole minutes over the time limit to finish the run.

He won the nickname "undisputable" from other children. Mason and the other two boys who lived in the same room as Dudian distanced away from him as if he was a total stranger to them.

Although Dudian was relatively calm, he could not help but to blush a bit because of shame as he saw all the strange eyes casted at him. He knew for a fact that having slept in a frozen storage capsule for over three hundred years, it had slowly weakened his body. It would take many months to recover from it.

He got tired from walking let alone to run for five laps. The instructor looked towards Dudian but did not say anything.

“Everyone, gather!” The instructor ordered as soon as Dudian finished. This time the instructor’s order was not left deft by anyone. Soon everyone arranged themselves into neat rows.

“First, a self-introduction is in order. My name is Tobu.” The brown-hair instructor continued in an indifferent tone, “For the next three years I will be responsible for your training. I have only one rule which is to obey every single order of mine! Of course, I do not want to raise people who are a group of puppets that listen to orders only. Any questions, except the ones related to my orders, are welcomed”

“Teacher, what is there to learn here? Only exercises?” A boy immediately asked with disturbed look on his face.

Tobu indifferently smiled, said: “If you can learn to stay alive in here, you can graduate.”

“Stay Alive?”

All children became surprised at once.

Dudian’s mind turned cold. He knew that graduating from Scavenger camp was going to be difficult as the situation outside the giant wall was very dangerous to a normal human being.

Chapter 16 - Stupid Questions

“In here, I will teach you how to survive in harsh conditions and environments.” Tobu indifferent replied. “Today is your first day. I will give you rewards if you can answer few simple questions.”

The children’s eyes focused on him.

“The first question.” Tobu calmly asked: “How can we stay alive?”

All of them could not help be surprised for a moment.

How to stay alive?

They never gave thought about it. From young age they were protected by their parents. Afterwards everyone planned to choose their favorite college during the adminissions. Later on they would work to earn and continue on with their lives.

“By making money!” A girl immediately raised her hands to answer.

Other children, suddenly sighed in relief, yes ah! Of course you have to learn to make money if you wanted to live. It was such a simple answer and yet they allowed a girl to take the advantage of situation to answer first!

Tobu still had an indifferent and unimpressed look, he spat out a word: “wrong!”

“To work?” Another boy tentatively spoke out.

Tobu glanced at him, “Wrong! By the way, everyone only has one chance to answer.”

All the children looked at each other.

To make money is not the answer, to work is also not the answer? “Teacher, you just said ‘alive’. Is there any situation to be alive?” A white skinned tender girl frowned.

Tobuu looked at her: “There is no situation to be alive.”

Hearing this, all children cannot help but looked at each other.

Dudian also frowned slightly. His brain fired up to after the observing. The answer should not be tricky. In fact, the answer should be an easy one. “To eat!” He raised his hand.

As soon as the words left Dudian’s mouth the children turned towards him with stunned expressions. It did not take long before ‘puchi’ sounds echoed one after another. All of them laughed out loud.

To eat?

Is there more idiotic answer than this?

“Correct!” replied Tobu indifferently.

Children were instantly stunned and perplexed: “…”

Looking at all the children with stunned expressions, Toby smiled coldly: “The simplest answer. I was worried that no one would answer the question correctly and I will not hand out a reward. In your minds, in addition to lack of water what would more fatal to human life?

All the children had ugly looks. Some were not convinced. But after they experienced Tobu’s previous atrocities, no one would dare to question.

Dudian was relieved. Like other children he thought that the answer couldn’t be so simple but nevertheless his bet won him a reward.

“The second question.” Tobu continued: “How can we eat food?”

All children were again confused. What kind of stupid question is this?

“By making money!” A voice quickly echoed. It was the little girl who was first to answer the first question. This time again she

chose to reply with the same answer. The other children suddenly wanted to stomp. Damn the first time they missed and this time again the chance was robbed by the very same girl.

“Wrong!” Tobu replied.

The little girl was surprised for a moment, so how can anyone eat food with buying it?

Other children were also startled. But soon they quickly raised their hands to attempt to answer so that they would not lose the chance to be rewarded.

“I know, I know. It is by working!”

“I know. My mother!”

“Use the upper and lower teeth to chew!”

The last boy thought of the simple answer that Dudian came up with, and immediately, and responded tentatively as such.

Tobu could not help but look at him, his face showing a trace of ridicule, “Is there anyone who uses their ass to chew on the food?

The boy was embarrassed, his face blushing red as blood.

“All answers are wrong, a bunch of rubbish,” said Tobu.

Dudian did not expect to be last one again to attempt to answer as everyone else gave incorrectanswers. He was lost in thought, as he thought with the previous mindset. According to such logic the first step to stay alive is to eat. So, the first step before being able to eat would have been …

“To find food!” Dudian once again raised his hand.

Tobu looked at him with a light gaze, and then said “Correct!”

All the children were again dumbfounded.

It was that simple?

Was it really, that simple????

“Here is the last question.” Tobu indifferently pressed on, “How does one find food?

All the children cannot help but look to Dudian.

Dudian saw the quaint gazes from the eyes of children focused on him. He felt frustrated. This time, he did not know the answer.

As they saw Dudian turning silent, the other children began to

rack their brain for answers. One after another they raised their hands to answer. The answers were similar to the previous answers.

Especially the girl who kept repeating “by making money”. The third answer was still to make money, it seemed that she won’t stray from her thinking style. Ultimately all the answers were wrong. Soon, after a round of answers, almost nobody else answered correctly.

Tobu looked around and said: “So no one knows the answer to the question?”

Several children who stood near Dudian could not help but look at him, as he was the only one who has not answered.

Dudian felt their gazes, and even felt Tobu’s gaze at him. It seems Tobu purposefully waited for him to answer. But this time he really did not know the answer, nor could he think of an answer as all the other children have said out possible answers that he could already think of.

“It seems that there is nobody here who has the correct answer.” Tobu saw that Dudian did not choose to answer so he no longer waited and then explained: “The first step to find food is to learn to identify food. Today’s first lesson is to teach you to recognize which food is edible.”

Dudian now understood the purpose of the three questions. Through his conversation with Mason yesterday, he confirmed his

guesses. No one knew anything about “Scavenger” special training, for all of them thought that it was just a guard training camp. However, Dudian knew from his previous conversation with Fernando that “Scavengers” had to go outside the giant wall into the wilderness to look for resources. Their own resources to eat and drink would be limited while going out so they had to learn how to survive in the wilderness outside the giant wall.

Understanding food was their first class!

“Teacher, what is my reward?” Dudian saw Tobu had not announced the reward, so he couldn’t help but raise his hand to ask.

Tobu glanced at him and said: “For every correct answer, one would be rewarded with a single breakfast. Congratulations, you get two breakfast rewards. Since today we have passed the breakfast period, so you can only wait until tomorrow to use it”.

A breakfast?

Dudian was stunned. He did not realize yet but in a short period of half a month after the special training, he realized that how valuable those two breakfasts were!

“Now, rest time has ended, so run ten laps around the school field!” Tobu suddenly shouted.

All children cannot help but became startled, their lessons have

ended but now they have to run again?

“The time allocated is half an hour. For every five minutes late, one lap will be added!” Tobu declared the rules indifferently.

“Teacher, do not ah … …”

Some of the children could not help but to cry, but soon took the initiative to run at full speed because

Tobu did not seem to be joking about the extra laps.

Dudian’s mouth convulsed slightly. This rule was simply too ruthless to him. However, he had a faint guessing that Tobu did this exercise to improve their endurance. According to Tobu’s argument and logic, since the children are learning on how to survive then they should not exercise power and strength but speed and durability!

Chapter 17 - Survival Training

Time quickly passed by, and in the blink of an eye three months passed.

During these three months, every day they held long-distance endurance training. In addition, they had to also go through “survival training program”. It was a general term. It referred to methods and tactics that were tried and tested over long periods of time. It was divided into two main categories, namely “foraging” and “collection of resources”!

These were the basic set of abilities that every Scavengers had to master.

“Foraging” is subdivided into “water”, “shelter”, “access to food” and “subsistence”.

In each course, there were wide range of contents. The first is the “Water Source” course, which focused on finding water sources in different environments. These environments are divided into four broad categories: the jungle, the desert, the mountain and the swamp!

Finding for water sources in the jungle were much easier if compared to the other environments. However, organisms lurked in the jungle. Hence, “Survival” course taught the Scavengers on how to avoid these dangers too.

In addition to looking for water, there were water filtering

techniques and different water quality testing methods that were taught and so on.

Without a doubt, Scavengers not only have to survive outside the giant wall. They also need to collect different water samples and then bring them back behind the giant wall to be studied. The entire giant wall of Silva was a huge solid shelter.

In addition to “foraging”, the “collection of resources” syllabus also broke down into four major classes. Huge amount of knowledge were to be studied, namely “mining”, “collecting herbs”, “geological survey” and “exploration”.

Each of these classes would normally had been a separate course by its own right in a college as different specialization on any ‘normal’ situation!

In other words, if one studied in college, one needed only to study one specialized course for three years, and then they can graduate. However, in Scavenger training, all three syllabuses must be mastered in just three years!

Per Tobu’s words, only after mastering everything only then can Scavengers survive in the wilderness.

Dudian found that during the period of those three months, the endurance training and “mining” courses that involved physical training were the most difficult period for him to endure, not the entirety of the eight courses. The first week it took him 30 minutes to run full five laps. In half a month’s time he improved to 20

minutes for five laps. After another half a month his timing further improved to 15 minutes for all 5 laps. After another two months period, he finally achieved the privilege to eat breakfast. Yet he remained as the last child to finish all five lap runs.

Sleeping in the frozen storage capsule for 300 years negatively impacted his physical condition.

However, his willpower was not negatively affected at all.

During the second month of training, he thoroughly recovered from the physical deterioration caused by sleeping in the frozen storage capsule. In normal circumstances, it should had taken another three to four months for the deterioration to be thoroughly recovered from. However, this second month's super-strength exercises accelerated the recovery process. Dudian's speed and endurance improved astonishingly as a by-product of daily training and he was even able to even secure a rank amongst the top ten!

By the end of the third month, he was already in the top three performers!

All the other children took notice of this amazing progress. Especially for Mason and two other boys who lived in the same with Dudian. They gave him a nickname, "mad cow". "The law, the second chapter, the normative role of law ... ..."

In a quiet library, Dudian stood in front of books in the law section. In his hands, he held an introductory law book. Since the

beginning of the third month, he frequented the library for ten minutes every day, which was the longest time he could squeeze out. “Dean, why are you standing in front of the law section? I asked the teacher and was informed that there is an examination today. Pay close attention to revise past knowledge or else you won’t pass and thus be eliminated.” Another child who was reading books next to geology section spoke to Dudian..

Dudian made a hand gesture: “Shh!” He continued to focus reading the basic law book. After ten minutes passed he gently put the book back into its place in the shelf. He turned to the herbalism bookshelf and skilfully took out a book called “Plants”. He quickly flipped over the pages for a review.

After making few confirmations he put the book away and turned to leave.

“Dean!” Mason quickly caught up, and asked: “Do you know what today’s exam is about?”

“I do not know,” said Dudian.

“I hope they won’t test ‘geological survey’. I did not have enough time to study.” Mason’s eyes switched towards Dudian and he smiled: “I could help you out mostly in other things. If you have the chance, how are you going to help me out?”

Dudian snapped back at him: “No tricks. Do not even think of cheating.”

“Oh, come on. We can try to sneakily pass some few answers.” Mason bitterly said: “I do not want to be eliminated. Teacher said that in case we lost the qualifications to be a guard and be eliminated. We would have to pay for the course fee by ourselves. My family cannot afford such a high cost.”

Dudian shrugged his shoulders and said nothing could be done.

Indeed, on the third day of the special training back then, Tobu had said such words. However, for Dudian he has long realized that the training camp was in fact used to train the Scavengers. However, in name it is known as selection for guards. Even in case of elimination, most will still be guardsmen within Silva’s giant wall. As for Tobu’s remarks, Dudian was convinced that it was just a speculation.

Of course, for the other children that was without a shred of a doubt bad news!

It was also due to these words, most of the children who wanted to quit, gritted their teeth and pressed on with the harsh training.

Soon, the two of them arrived to the school field. All of the children were gathered, quietly speaking to each another trying to guess the forthcoming examination.

It was not long before Tobu punctually appeared. As he came over, everyone meticulously stood in neat rows. This was the result of experiencing first-hand the pain of being kicked by Tobu.

However, Tobu did not arrive alone. Beside him, there was a tall graceful girl in her early twenties. Her face was full of mature, sexy charm. It seemed as if she had lost her childish naivety long time ago.

In fact, most of the ten-year-old children knew some aspects of knowledge regarding sex. As in this world, it was the legal age of marriage. After all it was not easy for most people to live up to sixty years of age when radiation was so corrosive.

Tobu coldly smiled and spoke in a consistent low tone: “After three-months of training, you barely gained the basic garbage qualifications to be a guard. Starting today, every six months, we will conduct a final exam. All losers will be eliminated!

Everyone was tense after Tobu spoke.

Dudian also realized that the test is not a simple examination of knowledge and soon Tobu’s words confirmed his idea: “This assessment is very simple. Instructor Kris will send you away to a place where you only need to survive for ten days. If you can survive, you are qualified to continue with the training!”

Chapter 18 - The Desert

“To survive for 10 days?” All children were confused. Although Tobu said it was “simple”, but after three months’ time spent with him they already knew that his concept of “simple” meant; it remotely far from the original meaning of the word. All of them had expected the assessment to be a paper test, but each were worried about which subject would be tested. No one had expected that this time it would be a practical one.

Obviously, to survive for ten days, you must have grasped all the preliminary details of four courses from “foraging” class.

Soon, some calculations were made.

If there is water, the body’s hunger strike limit was around seven days to fifteen days. If the willpower is extremely tenacious, it’s possible for a person to live up to for a month without food. As such, the children only need to find a water source. There was a hope to pass the practical exam!

If the person was lucky enough to find some small amount of food, they would be able to survive ten days without any problems! Such a thought had greatly increased the confidence of many children. Dudian frowned slightly. He was not too optimistic about the situation. If he knew anything about Tobu’s style, then it was that Tobu would never test them with such a simple assessment.

“Children, come with me.” During this time Kris who was standing next to Tobu spoke, “This sister will take you to a fun

place. I guarantee that you will like it."

For some of the big boys, after they heard her words, light shone from their eyes.

"Line up." Kris smiled and turned to lead the way.

Kris led the children who walked side by side as a long team. They arrived over to the school field.There were dozens of black carriages parked near the field. A single carriage was big enough to accommodate seven or eight adults, as for children around probably 10 to 11 of them could cramp into it.

"Get on to the carriages," Kris smiled.

Dudian saw the youth who had arrived to pick him up from his house as a coachman was sitting in one of the carriages.

"Dean, come here," Mason greeted Dudian.

Dudian looked around and before he went inside. In addition to Mason, the other two children who shared the room with Dudian were present in the carriage. Mason had convened them to act together in the test and mutually care for each another. Obviously, as the people from the same room were the most trustworthy ones. "Damn, the curtains are sewn here." Mason tried to lift the drapery to look out.

A bad feeling emerged in Dudian's heart. Is the test venue...

outside the giant wall?

...

Dudian closed his eyes, quietly listening and calculating everything ever since carriage had left the school field about 20 minutes ago. In the beginning, he could hear the voices of passer-by people, but gradually the noises quieted down. After some time, Dudian heard nothing but hoof sounds of horses and crackling of wheels.

This silence lasted for another half an hour. The carriage gradually slowed to a halt and it came to a complete stop.

Dudian slowly opened his eyes: “Twenty-eight turns, three times short stops. The route taken should be to the west direction from the school ... ...”

His mind repeatedly recalled every single previous detail. The carriage sped very fast so it when the carriage turned to the right or to the left, it was obvious. If at the moment Kris knew about what Dudian did, she would be stunned. It was not difficult to do what he did. If enough attention was given any of these children could have done that. However, from the moment the children entered to the carriage to the blockage of the windows, as well as the psychological pressure via possibility of elimination, it was specially designed to put psychological pressure on them. The children were filled with apprehensions and worries, so no one paid any attention to small details the way Dudian did. It showed how calm he was.

The was the most important thing. The calmness of the mind.

The carriage's door was opened. Dudian immediately knew that it the purpose was not to inspect them but they had finally reached their intended destination.

The children quickly alighted down the carriages, eager to look forward to the place which they had to survive for the next ten days. It turned out to be … … a desert!

The sand covered any and every place that they saw. Survive ten days in the desert?

All the children wanted to vomit blood.

Dudian leaped from the carriage to see this endless scorching hot desert. He could not help but sigh deeply. Surely enough, if Tobu said "simple", it can never be so "simple"

"Kids!" With a charming smile on Kris' face she clapped her hands, drawing everyone's attention. "For the next ten days you will be here. If you can't hold on any longer, then just draw an "X" sign on the ground and you will be rescued. Of course, if you are rescued it means elimination. Similarly, it means the costs of the special training will be bore by your family. I believe you know the approximate numbers. If you don't want to ruin your homes, then do what you have to do and survive!"

She stopped for a moment, blinked for a few times and said, “I wish you good luck. By the way, this is the first test and the most simple one.” Then, she turned around to jump onto a nearly three-meter-high dark coloured horse. Dudian had seen this type of horse before. It was the same one as Fernando had used.

Obviously, this also represented Kris’s identity as a hunter!

Dudian narrowed his eyes staring at Kris as she whipped the horse and went away. The rest of the carriages also turned towards the same direction, maintaining the same formation, and left away. Gradually they disappeared into the horizon.

For now, in this huge desert, slightly more than 300 children were present.

“Is this….. how to survive?”

“This is murder!”

“I knew it was not going to be so simple … …”

The children’s anger was directed at Kris who led the carriage away.

“Ladies and gentlemen!” A physically strong, tall child loudly yelled out, “We have to unite! The first thing to do is to find water. If we can find a water source, we can survive. Strength lies in unity!”

Other children who heard his speech did not complain. Some heeded his words while a few others began to think about a way on how to survive for the next ten days. They began to skim through the knowledge that they had gained in the previous three months. Everyone learnt not to ask Tobu for advises, because every time they did with their mouths Tobu only answered with his fists. It was a kind of mental training too. The point was to raise individuals who could critically think for themselves in cases such as this.

“Dean, let’s go with them,” Mason suggested to Dudian. Ever since from day one, Mason and other children in the room were used to consulting Dudian for his views. In their room, even though Mason was the most charismatic person, without a doubt, the most prestigious was in fact Dudian.

“No, the four of us will stay together to form a team.” Dudian shook his head in disapproval.

Macon was stunned: “Why?”

The other two children also were also puzzled. It was an absolute truth that if they grouped together with everyone their strength would increase. Even the core of the course was based on this idiom: in harsh environments, when united then everyone would have a much better chance to survive!

They did not immediately question Dudian.

“It is easy to find water. But do not forget that we are in the desert, not a jungle nor a swamp. Even if we find water easily, it would be scarce. It would only be enough to supply the needs of some and ultimately the unity what you talk about will disintegrate because of uneven distribution of resources”, Dudian directly replied.

Mason and the other two children immediately woke up in realization.

“Let’s go, we have already wasted a lot of time.” Dudian looked around, and then found a direction to move to and left the place.

Chapter 19 - Danger

Mason and the other two children grouped together as one, and immediately tried to keep up with Dudian.

Except for Dudian's small team, there were other two or three medium sized teams. The rest of the children were hesitant. As if adhering to the herd mentality, most of them formed a single large team.

More than 300 people reformed themselves into colony-like teams which gradually dispersed into the desert.

"Why are we headed towards that direction? We are walking facing the sun!" Mason raised his hand to cover his face from the sun rays. It had been less than an hour but his body was sweating non-stop because of the heat.

"We seem to be at least heading in the same direction with the sun," another brown-haired child spoke. His name was Sham. He was one of the four that shared a room with Mason and Dudian. He had a boring character, but as a person he was a diligent child. Just like Dudian, he was the only person to stack his bed.

"Even if we want to avoid competition, we shouldn't have come this way!" Mason responded.

Dudian whispered: "In desert, the difference of climates and temperatures are being extreme. Even though it is "Black Death" season right now, and therefore it is highest possible temperatures

appear during this season. However, later in the evening the temperature will drop to the same level as“Black Snow” season. Therefore, we must head westward as much as possible. It would be the warmest place in the evening.”

The three people heard Dudian as he solemnly explained. Mason bitterly said, “If we went eastward we could have avoided withstanding the sun and heat, even in the case that we couldn’t find water source we would have gained better than harm. Considering the problem of insulation at night as well, how do you know the temperature will drop at night? My feet are burning; they are on fire! How the heck the temperature will drop?”

Sham and the other child named Zach were also very curious. It was so hot right now, so how could it get cold at night?

“You will know once it gets dark.” Dudian did not explain the heat-absorbing and heat-dissipating effects of sand. This kind of knowledge was not taught during the studies in camp so conversing about it would lead to doubt. Besides, the concept of endothermic cooling would not be understood by them even if he took the effort to inform them of it.

“There is surely water to be found, the only thing we have to pay attention to is to absolutely avoid from getting sick!” Dudian solemnly warned Mason, Zach and Sham.

Zach, Sham and Mason were somewhat surprised hearing Dudian’s confident words regarding the issue of water. However, they did not question him, but were very curious, how would he find water in this desert that is full of sand. Where does that

certainty and confidence come from?

It did not take long before Dudian's team had lost sight of other teams. All what they could see were sand that endlessly covered the desert. They could not but become tensed and nervous at the sight.

The only thing that the team-mates could do was to continue to believe in Dudian's judgement. He had never let them down during the training in the camp so they hoped that his judgement this time will be right in the desert too.

"Do you still remember the part where they first taught us on how to find water in the desert?" Dudian stopped, looking around.

"I remember, we first have to look for shady sand and then dig until we find water" Mason said.

Dudian raised his hand and pointed towards the front. There was a hill made of sand. The side which he was pointing at was protected from the sun because of the angle of the hill. The sun could not illuminate that part even in the morning when it rose from the east. Only at noon the sun rays would penetrate the sand but only for a small time. "Let us go there". He stepped forward and took the lead.

As they reached the hill, Dudian touched the sand. It was very cool.

Mason, Zach and Sham were delighted at the sight. They squatted down to prepare to dig.

Dudian waved his hand: “First wrap clothing around your hand, so that stones won’t scratch it.” Then, he tore off a fabric and wrapped around his hands and squatted down to start digging.

Mason laughed: “We are lucky that you are mindful.”

Three of them tore off clothing, covered their hands and began to dig.

It must be noted that three months of endurance training had greatly improved physical strength for the four of them. They had walked for over four or five miles under the scorching sun but they still had enough energy to dig. However, this was also kind of a gamble. Because in event that they could not find water after digging, they would not be able to support their bodies to find the next possible place to dig for water.

Thus, even Dudian felt nervous. Especially, after digging for half a meter depth they were still touching soft sand.

“Let’s end it here! We should move on to the next place.” Dudian decisively stopped. If they did not touch wet sand in this phase even if they dug for three or four meters, there was a high possibility that they will not find water. “We have done so much, so why give up now?” Mason asked.

Dudian replied with a sullen face: “We can’t gamble and hope to win now. Follow me, let’s move on” Finished speaking, he turned to move out and walk forward.

Mason and Zach were full of doubts. They were unwilling to move on. Sham stood up and said: “Let’s go. What Dean said was right. We can’t gamble now.” Then he ran over to keep up with Dudian’s pace.

Mason and Zach sighed, they shook their hands on their knees to remove the sand.

Now, when God closes a door for you, he won’t open another one but He will release the dog at you. Suddenly Zach screamed out loud, jumped half a meter high and hurried towards Dudian.

Dudian and Sham turned back towards Mason and Zach. They suddenly saw a two-meter-long snake drilling out from the sand. Its skin was brownish, the scales reflected under the shining sun. All of them felt their bodies turned cold.

“Run!” Dudian was the first to recover. He roared loudly, turned and ran away.

The rest of the team members tried to keep up.

Mason panicked and his feet stumbled. A Plop sound echoed and he tumbled onto sand.

Dudian was running in front but when he heard the sound he could not help but to look backwards.

He saw Mason on the ground and there were a bit more than ten meters between him and the snake. Snake was twisting its body as if swimming on the desert sand. The situation became precarious, he turned back towards Mason and rushed to him.

Sham and Zach were surprised for a moment. They also witnessed Mason's fall. They saw the twisting body of snake and their faces became extremely ugly and they become hesitant.

At this point, Dudian rushed to the front of Mason, grabbed his arm, and growled: "Stand up!

Mason managed to climb up and look back. There were two or three meters between him and the snake. If it jumped it would be able to pounce its body onto him. Mason was too scared, he hurriedly retreated.

Suddenly snake leaped towards Mason, it opened its mouth showing two sharp fangs.

Chapter 20 - Alchemist

At this moment, a gray shadow flashed by Mason and knocked the snake onto the sand.

“Run!” Dudian growled.

Mason recovered and ran away in a hurry.

Dudian looked at snake which began to twist its body towards him. He turned to run away as fast as possible. His jacket was tightly wrapped around his hand. Previously he hit down the snake thanks to the help of jacket which protected his hand from possibly bitten by the snake.

Sou! (I assume it’s the sound made while passing Mason)

Dudian quickly overtook Mason and went to the front. In endurance training his results were the best compared to his dorm-mates.

After fleeing for a few hundred meters, Dudian looked back, but he saw Mason and rest keeping up with him. There was no trace of the snake, probably it should have realized that it failed to hunt so it decisively gave up on them. After all, in such a harsh environment even animals tried to avoid useless consumption of energy while hunting down the prey.

Dudian was relieved and said: “Stop running. It has stopped

chasing us.”

Mason, Zach and Sham looked at the rear and noted that the snake has stopped chasing after them. The next moment they felt deeply tired, their throat were dry. They were thirsty and the weather was awfully hot. “It scared me.” Zach had a lingering fear as he patted his chest.

“Let’s take a break, I’m exhausted,” Sham breathed rapidly while panting.

Mason heard the words of the two, suddenly looked up to the Dudian. He slightly nodded to Dudian and said: “Dean, this time you saved my life, after what ... ...”

“Do not speak.” Dudian patted his shoulder, “Save your energy. Zach, sham we are not going to stop. It’s possible for snake to continue to catch up with us while crawling under the sand. We do not know if we are out of its hunting range. Moreover, it’s getting late. We must find water as soon as possible, otherwise it will be very difficult to get past tonight. “Then, he continued to lead the way in front.

Mason looked at Zach and Sham. He shook his head right and left in disapproval and followed Dudian.

Zach and Sham looked at each other. Recalling their hesitation in the previous situation they bowed their heads, without saying anything and followed Dudian.

Dudian and the crew continued to walk in westbound direction. All what they saw along the way was sand and dry clods. Except Dudian, other three could not help but to wonder, if they went in another direct would they be able to find water?

However, at the insistence of Dudian, they did not change the direction.

By dusk, they were walking forward with a pace slower than a turtle. Their bodies were sweating, they were tired, their faces were tanned red.

“Found it!”, Dudian’s sound echoed.

Mason, Zach and Sham’s faces were as numb as corpse’s. However as soon as they heard Dudian’s voice hope burst out of their dried eyes.

“Where?” Mason hurriedly asked.

Dudian raised his hand and pointed with his index finger. There was a small slope in front. Not far from the slope, there were some dry green grass and cactuses, which were common plants of desert.

“Plants, plants!” They cried in excitement.

Dudian’s face also formed a smile, and said: “If there are plants then there must be water!” All of them ran towards the plants at the same time but Dudian warned them, “Be careful, there may be

something lurking here.”

Mason and other two nervously looked around.

It was not long before Dudian began to dig the moist sand beneath the green grass. After digging the sand to the depth of one meter, finally they got to see water. It was little and mixed together with sand.

“It’s dirty. How can we drink it?” Macon and other two were dumbfounded.

Dudian did not speak. He placed the jacket that he previously used to beat the snake onto ground. He used both his hands to scoop up the water that was mixed with sand and poured onto the jacket. Next, he twisted the jacket as hard as he could. He knew that jacket was made from wool. So, he used it to filter the water. As he continued to tighten the coat, the clean water began to flow out.

They felt thirsty for whole day. This simple, filtered water tasted as delicious as heavenly nectar for them.

Dudian drank a few mouthfuls of water. He did not continue to drink more, but wet his lips with water, and then climbed up, said: “Do not drink too much. It’s more than adequate if the basic consumption of the body is met.

There was admiration in Mason and other two children’s eyes.

“This grass is edible.” Dudian pulled out the green grass. He kneaded the roots of the grass from the wet soil. Later, he broke them off. There was no outflow of colored juice so he immediately bit and gently chewed on it. A faint sweet taste diffused from the roots of the grass and it filled his mouth. It was a bit jerky but he chewed carefully and then swallowed it.

The other three saw Dudian and broke off the grass to eat up.

“so bitter!”

“It’s so hard to eat!”

Zach and Sham were unhappy with the taste but still chewed and swallowed the grass.

Dudian looked up to the sky and said: “Tonight we should sleep here. We should collect some dry wood to make fire to last through the night. Also, one of us should stay on guard duty throughout the night. Let’s pick the one who should stay up for guard duty tonight right away so that he can sleep immediately.”

“I volunteer to be on guard duty tonight,” Mason said. “If you go to sleep, we won’t know what to do.”

Dudian nodded, “Then you go and rest. Zach, go and collect dry wood. Sham, come over with me to build a shelter, we will find some stones.” With his leadership, all of them began to get busy

with their allocated jobs.

...

Outside the desert, there was a solitary pub.

Because of the erosion of desert, the pub was half-run down. The doors and windows have been repeatedly patched with wood. Right at this moment, a man and a woman was sitting in the pub, drinking iced wheat beer.

“Three hundred and sixty people are to be assessed. How many can stay alive tonight?” Kris asked while she was using dagger to gently fiddle with the ice inside the wooden cups.

Tobu indifferent smiled and said: “Absolutely more than you think.”

“Is it?” Kris raised her eyebrows in teasing manner: “Wanna make a bet?

“Are we gambling?” Tobu showed interest.

“How many people can stay alive after ten days,” Kris squinted, “I bet two hundred children.”

Tobu smile and replied: “I bet three hundred students”

“Oh?” Kris squinted at him. “You seem to have confidence in your students. But this time you will lose.”

Tobu sipped the beer from the cup and then asked: “How come?”

“Haha … …” Kris covered her lips with her hand and said: “Did you not know, this desert used to be a part of territory held by the Ryan family a decade ago? It was one of the six most prosperous families in the commercial district. Unfortunately, they were done in by an evil alchemist. The thing is not only the family was destroyed but it’s territories underwent complete desertification by that alchemist’s evil forces.”

“That was ten years ago, I know, because I was there.” Tobu replied.

Kris giggled, and continued on, “But you do not know that evil alchemist who was later killed by the Holy Church left a few things behind in this damned desert. Now there are other evil alchemists who are quietly gathering here. The thing is the Holy Church has seen through their little tricks and knows about everything.

Tobu’s face expression suddenly changed, “What exactly do you mean?!”

“The Holy Church is ready to wipe out those evil alchemists that reside in here. But the problem is that they are very well hidden. If the church sends a bright knight over, suspicions will be raised. Therefore, to lure those rats out from their nests another plan was made. It was done on purpose that the Scavenger’s examination

site relocated to here. These children will be used as bait to lure them out. Also, I believe those alchemists will fall into this scheme, as they won’t try to miss the opportunity that is in front of them! “Kris said with a smile.

Chapter 21 - Night Attack

Tobu's pupils shrank. He banged on the counter and retorted, "Are you the one behind the idea of using my students as bait?"

Kris shrugged and replied, "I'm not so bold to do that, for I'm aware of your temper as we are old acquaintances. This arrangement was planned and decided by above, all we can do is to obey."

Tobu's angry voice echoed, "Using a group of children as bait, ah! Is this how the Holy Church had plan to lure the alchemists?"

Kris' face slightly changed and she spoke in a low voice," Criticism of Holy Church, even in private, is a major criminal offense. Stop spouting nonsense. In case, if they managed to apprehend an alchemist, it will be a great feat for them. Even in the future, if they are eliminated from joining the guard or qualified to become part of the Scavengers, this experience will be a valuable asset for them.

You know that building a meritorious service is not an easy job!"

"Well, do I have to thank them for this opportunity?" Tobu sneered sarcastically.

Kris replied in a helpless manner, "Whether you are pleased or ungrateful, it will not change the fact that the current situation as such. Besides, if the assessment site changed at the last moment, suspicions would arise. These alchemists have a broad network.

Moreover, after graduation, either as a guard or as a scavenger they will be fighting on the front lines. They will face alchemists in one way or the other, and nobody would be able to shelter them at that point. It's a valuable experience for them!

Tobu frowned but didn't continue to argue. Instead he turned over to the old man behind the counter: "Old Luo, another cup!"

"So much angst! Maybe I should give you more ice?" The old man behind the counter laughed.

Tobu stifled but did not say anything.

...

Night time arrived.

As the sun set, the temperature in the desert plummeted. Sand is a poor heat insulator so the heat quickly dissipated. Dudian and Sham set up a fire covered by several stones to keep the flame in control. They used old dried plants to start the fire.

They had managed to find enough firewood to keep the fire burning for the entire night.

"I'm hungry ... ..." Zach patted his stomach.

Dudian lied down near the edge of fire. He closed his eyes and

said, “Ten days will soon be over!”

Zach smiled and soon closed his eyes.

Mason sat next to the fire and laughed, “Get a good sleep.”

“It’s too difficult. At first, it was only hunger, now in addition we have suffer cold weather too.” Sham clutched his clothes as he lied closer to the fire.

Mason smiled. From time to time he picked up firewood and fed it into the fire pit. Per Dudian’s instructions, the person keeping the night watch, had to constantly keep the fire burning so that beasts would not come close.

Late at night, the temperature dropped further. From time to time a gust of wind blew. Even sitting next to the fire, Mason also felt cold shivers. His legs were slightly trembling. Because of frequent jitter and restlessness, he suddenly had an urge to pee.

He looked at the other sleeping children. He stood up and walked away. He untied his pants to pee. In the darkness, a dry palm suddenly stretched out and grabbed his throat.

Mason’s pupils contracted. His heart began to beat violently and his eyes displayed fear. He saw a wrinkled face in the darkness. It looked at him and spoke in a slight husky voice: “Good. Do not scream!”

All the hairs on Mason's body were erect. He wanted to call for help but nothing came out of his mouth as his throat almost snapped from the force of the palm. Nevertheless, because his body moved, few sounds echoed out in the darkness. Sand splashed from under his feet. Dudian's eyes suddenly opened. He slowly woke up as he tried not to disturb the silence.

He grabbed a stone that was close by to fire.

Not enough!

The distance was too far!

Mason was desperate.

Now, the owner of the hand also noted Mason's action. Coldness swept through his eyes. He raised his other hand. Through the illumination of the weak fire, Mason saw the shape of a dagger.

Sou!

Bang, a sound resonated. Mason's mind was completely blank. Dudian has used the stone to hit the dagger. Dudian began to loudly shout as soon as he saw the dagger drop, "There are enemies, wake up!"

Zach and Sham immediately woke up as they heard Dudian's voice. They each grabbed a stone and nervously watched their surroundings.

Dudian stared at the stature of the slim figure in the darkness. He was always a shallow sleeper, especially in a dangerous environment such as this one. He immediately woke up and opened his eyes, grains of sand splashed onto his face. He didn't see Mason so he grabbed a stone in case of an emergency. But when he turned around to look he saw the breath-taking scene. He threw the stone at a whim and didn't expect it to hit the wrist of the figure.

"Damn!" The old man who was dressed in black robes screamed. The dagger which he held fell to the ground. His wrist trembled slightly because of the severe pain. Angrily, he pushed the struggling Mason away. He took out a small green bottle from his chest. He opened the bottle and curling green smoke began to float out of it. Without losing an extra second he threw the bottle at Dudian's direction.

Green smoke immediately floated.

Dudian's face changed, and hastily covered his nose. He wanted to remind Zach, Sham, and Mason to be wary of the green mist but he was unable to speak as smoke drifted close to him at fast speed. Plop, sound echoed as Mason was enveloped by the green mist and fell.

Dudian's pupils shrank. He fell and played dead.

He did not see but heard two bodies fall. He assumed that Zach and Sham also inhaled the green mist. He got curious about the

mist, was the green mist a poison or was its purpose to just to make them fall unconscious.

His heart thumped fast,full of tension and doubts. Is this one of the assessment? If so, he believed that, in exception to those large groups, other small groups will be eliminated!

Was the purpose of the assessment to have everyone unite?

Many thoughts passed in Dudian's mind. He could not help but regret. Perhaps the intention behind the assessment was not about surviving for ten days but to see whether they unite together.

"Damned little devil!" At this point, Dudian heard the footsteps of the old man.

"They made me waste a bottle of lost souls elixir." The old man spoke to himself. Dudian did not know what to make out of his words. He grabbed sand in his hand, ready to move at any time.

At that moment, Dudian felt a dry palm grasping his foot. It felt as if there was no meat but just bones grabbing at his foot. He secretly thought about attacking the old man in event the other side wanted to kill him. However, the old man seemed not interested in killing him, as he yanked his ankle and dragged him forward.

Dudian's heart sank. He couldn't bring himself to decide.

Attack?

Or continue to wait for the opportunity?

Chapter 22 - The Creator

Dudian slowly opened his eyes. From the fire that shimmered, he saw the old man dragging him into the darkness.

His eyes flashed but he gave up on the idea of attacking. Throwing sand at the old man's back would not achieve any effect. Instead he would lose the chance of attempting a surprise attack. Furthermore, he had been dragged out for three or four meters. The best he could do right now was to grab a stone that was nearby the fire pit. But the stones placed near the fire pit were burning hot. Even if he grabbed a stone, he could only probably casually throw it without aiming properly.

"I can't step into his lair." Dudian knew that he was in great danger right now. Many ideas spun up in his brain. He had to do something before being dragged into the lair. After all, he was not aware if there were anyone else in the old man's lair. He did not want to be left in the mercy of the old man.

The old man went back to the place where Mason previously wanted to urinate. He bent down to pick up the dagger.

Dudian decided that the right moment had arrived. His gaze fell on the side of the fire pit where stones laid. He grabbed a stone. It was scalding hot but he could still bear the pain. He stood up and using the strength of the momentum threw the stone the best he could.

Bang!. The stone did not hit the old man's head but it hit his

back.

The old man cried out in pain, and then stumbled but didn't fall. He turned around to see Dudian running away. Never he would think that he will be tricked by a kid not once but twice. He angrily burst, "I'll kill you!". He made a flinging motion with his right hand. Something flew out of his gown's large sleeve.

It hit Dudian.

Dudian slammed to the ground. His back was in pain. A pain so bitter that he almost fainted. His heart was in a loss: "The old man should not be so fast to catch up, was it a stone?"

He reluctantly looked back, his pupils tightened immediately.

He saw a scene that was completely beyond his imagination. A snake like being which was attached to old man's sleeve was flickering in the light of the fire. It was as thick as baby's wrist and more than 3 meters long. The cuff was completely torn. Impressively, the external body part was attached to old man's shoulder and lied rooted there.

What was horrifying though were the blood veins that were bulging on his arm's surface. It looked strange, hideous and disgusting.

Two words emerged out in Dudian's mind: "biochemical transformation!"

Born into a family of scientists, Dudian knew that biochemical transformation did exist. Except, back in the older days, experiments such as this were taboo. Any biochemical human experiments were illegal. In World War II only, they were publicly used as weapons of war.

He heard his father and sister conversed about experiments of such nature. But he would never expect to see this incredible scene in a world which did not even reach the standards of industrial revolution.

It shocked Dudian. The contact point of old man's shoulder and the transmutation grew for a few centimeters. The new section was stained with large number of silky tissue fluids.

Old man stared at Dudian: "The little devil, I will not kill you so easily. I will cut you into tiny bits.

Actually you shall become part of my experiments!" After he finished talking, he took big steps toward Dudian.

Dudian's face turned pale. At this moment he finally realized that the situation was not part of the assessment but a real danger. He wanted to get up but back pain was so bad that he couldn't move.

Moreover, the previous time when the old man had used the green fog, although he tried his best to hold his breath, but it [had] still affected him. His limbs felt weak.

“Want to run?” old man looked at him ferociously. He used his big hands to grab at Dudian’s hair and dragged him away.

Dudian grasped onto the old man’s wrist in pain. It felt like his scalp would be torn out. The man stopped dragging him. They were in front of a pit which Dudian had seen before.

“Roll in!” Old man kicked Dudian’s body into the pit.

Dudian rolled down. Along the way his body hit rammed a few stairs. His arms and back were in extreme pain. A few breaths later, his body hit the ground. He saw the place illuminated dimly. He was in an underground chamber.

At the same moment, the old man climbed down the ladder.

Dudian looked up and notice that the entrance to the chamber was covered in wood. Most probably one of them passed through the top of the shelter and alerted the old man.

He smiled wryly. Wherever plantation was dense, there would also mean abundance of water. Logically that would make the most suitable location for a shelter. He should have thought about it.

The Old man didn’t even care to look at Dudian but quickly paced to a table not far from the entrance.

There were lots of pills and vials on the table. He mixed and poured few of them into a glass of water and drank it.

Dudian looked around. He saw few cupboards standing next to each other. There were large glass bottles sitting on the cupboards. Some of them had human hands, while one had a woman's head inside it. The rest of the bottles contained hearts, lobes and other organs.

Old man noticed Dudian's eyes, "Don't be hasty. I'll find a big container for you too."

Dudian face became ugly, and said: "The Holy Church said that people like you have sold their souls to the devil, right?"

Ricky old man scoffed and said: "The devil? The Holy Church would use the creator and the devil argument to fool the world. When I am done with my experiments, I will be the Creator!"

"What experiments?" Asked Dudian. Naturally he was not interested about the experiments. He wanted to use the conversation to buy some time to restore his physical strength, and even to think of a way to get out.

The Old man sneered: "Don't even try to attempt to escape. Do you know what this is?" He opened a drawer and took out a small crossbow.

Dudian's face changed, the situation was already stacked against

him. However he didn't give up. He grit his teeth as he continued talking," Why would a creator use the murder as a tool?

"Well, It is the wisdom of the Creator, it is not possible for you to understand," the old man replied with a sneer, "great alchemy will cast immortality and you should feel honored to be the material to my experiment."

"Alchemy?" Dudian hesitated.

He had some knowledge about the introduction to the Alchemy. It could be said that it was the foundation to chemistry which originated in Egypt. Conversion of a base metal into gold was one of the aims of alchemy tales.

However, the holy grail of alchemy was to create the 'Philosopher's stone' or 'Sage's stone'. According to the legend it could turn a person into an immortal!

In history, there have been many great people who were exposed because of their practice of alchemy.

Even the famous physicist Newton was an alchemy enthusiast.

"Are you an alchemist?" Dudian looked at the old man with alarm. "Isn't alchemy just about turning metal into gold?"

Old man squinted his eyes and replied: "I did not think you knew so much. But there are two alchemist factions. One school studies

the basic materials to manufacture the ‘Philosopher’s stone’ to gain the eternal life. The other group, including me, study the living things to create ‘life’, to become the Creator!”

Chapter 23 - Retaliate

Dudian understood how the old man's arm had become like that. Most of the experiments done by the alchemists were carried out on their own bodies. Though from the results it was clear that the experiment had failed. The additional limb seemed to follow the nerve system signals for taking action. But each action taken has to paid by a corresponding price. Otherwise such a body mutation in an era such as this was definitely an unstoppable war weapon.

Old man seemed to want to rest, so he spoke to Dudian in a cold voice: "Go there". Old man's palm touched the small crossbow. He wanted to give the impression that if Dudian refused to move, he would immediately shoot.

Dudian stoop up. In this life and death moment he was anxious and his mind was in mess. He took deep breaths so that his mind would calm down. His body trembling, Dudian began to move towards the table that old man was pointing to. It was a large table. On it edge there were number of tools used for cutting. Some of them were stained with blood which had not been washed clean.

Dudian heard sounds coming from his left side. He turned to see a large cage. There were more than a dozen snakes twisting inside the cage. Obviously these were the other captured materials for the experiments.

Old man did not urge Dudian, but quietly watched him. As if the hunter was watch the prey attempting its final struggle. When he saw Dudian's expression change, his mouth slightly curved into a cruel smile.

At this time, Dudian has come to the table.

“Do you see that chain? Tie your arm.” Old man ordered Dudian.

Dudian looked at few chains fixed on the workbench. Most of these chains and tools were used beforehand in experiments. His eyes flashed but still grabbed the chain and wrapped around his wrist.

Old man’s face reflected trace of disdain and sneer. As Dudian would chain himself up, he would go to cut him alive to death.

Bang!

Dudian squatted down. At the same time he shook the chain and hit the cage. The snakes began to twist and struggle in an attempt to escape.

Old man spoke: “Little devil. You just have to act like a smart ass, don’t you? Do you think you can escape form here? Now, you obediently come out and I will forgive you for once!”

Dudian naturally refused to believe old man’s words. He began to kick the iron cage. He was using the table as a cover from the crossbow that old man held. His aim was to get close to old man so that he will have the opportunity to wrestle him.

Although the old man had an external amputation to his body, it took a lot of willpower and mental exhaustion to command it. Fatal point of using something like that was that it would terribly weaken him.

After a few kicks, the iron cage fall down onto the table. Fortunately one of the doors were opened and a dozen snakes side-wind out of it. Some of them moved towards the darkness, few towards the old man and the most towards the Dudian.

Old man smiles, “There is no difference of life and death to me!”

The next moment, his smile suddenly paused. He saw the serpents that were moving toward Dudian changed their direction. Few of them bent around to move other places but four or five of them moved towards him.

“How … …” Old man’s eyes went wide. He suddenly looked to the table. His face was gloomy: “No wonder he had the courage to shake the snake cage”

Dudian clutched his hand. There is a small bottle of powder. He was spilling it all over his body. He had previously bet on this bottle of powder. It must be something that old man had used while capturing the snakes. Even though the old man refers to himself as ‘alchemist’ but in essence he uses chemical elixirs.

So the old man couldn’t have seized all these serpents unarmed. He had to rely on other things.

The results of his logical deduction was as he had expected. As he was moving towards the table he had seen the bottle of the powder on it. Perhaps it had been to long since someone except the old man had been here. So he had placed many things on casual manner on top of the table. Dudian had secretly grabbed the bottle while moving.

“Humph!”. Old man grabbed a brown robe that was hung on the wall. He quickly draped it over his body. As a result, the serpents who were moving toward him immediately stopped, twisted their bodies and swam to the surrounding darkness.

Dudian understood that the dress was gown in the same powder and most probably was used in catching the serpents.

“Kid, you better be obedient.” Old man was staring at the table. The crossbow was in his hand. As long as Dudian showed his head, he would immediately shot! Although Dudian was a child, but one after another time had created misfortunes. Dudian had made old man feel threatened so he was not going to give any chance to him.

Dudian looked around the chamber. The only way to survive was to subdue the alchemist. He had a dagger but it was far from enough.

He had taken the opportunity to grab the cutting tool from the table which was similar to a dagger.

At this time Dudian saw large number of accumulated bottles and jars on a board near the fallen cage. There were labels stuck over

them. Impressively two of them were sulfur and charcoal!

This was one of the main raw materials of the gunpowder!

Dudian eyes light up. Heart ecstasy suddenly, quickly looked around, but did not see the nitric acid. He was disappointed as sulfur and charcoal was not enough to create gunpowder.

He clenched his fist. He felt as if he acquired a chance to survive but to be slapped back at the same moment.

“I know, you have a dagger in your hand. Ready to fight with me, don’t you?” Old man’s voice sounded again. Dudian’s mind sank. It seemed old man has noticed him taking the tagger. “Are you hungry?”, old man continued.

As he heard him talk, Dudian felt the hunger of the day. His stomach juice was burning up.

However, his heart is a little relieved, at least he has time to continue to think of a way.

At this time, the green mist floated.

Dudian pupils shrank, and quickly covered his mouth and nose. He did not expect the other party would even release this thing in the narrow chamber. Apparently old man had antidote or other kind of measure to respond.

Dudian pinched his nose. His heart was beating fast, knowing that his time is running out. He didn’t stand up in desperation as the other side may have aimed the crossbow at his position. As long as he stood up he would be shot.

He slightly gritted his teeth, clenched the dagger. Looked at powder on his other hand. He was ready to throw it out. An idea flashed in his mind.

Chapter 24 - Desolate

“Little devil, let’s see how long can you hold!” Old man was wearing a dark green mask, only to reveal a pair of cold eyes. He was staring at the table. His fingers were on crossbow, ready to shoot at Dudian at anytime.

Sou!

A shadow suddenly flew out from the table.

Old man’s finger instinctively clicked the trigger of the crossbow. It ejected out a short arrow which flashed quickly but didn’t shoot the shadow. It was nailed at the rear of the wooden cabinet.

At this time, a bottle of powder fall in front of old man’s foot.

His face a changed and quickly looked up to see Dudian jumping up from the ground. He didn’t bypass the work table towards him but to the cupboard. Dudian casually grabbed the bottles and jars and threw them at old man.

Old man’s anger burst to sky. It was very hard to collect all these of experimental material. To see them casually knocked on the ground was making him crazy. He filled another short bow onto crossbow and aimed at Dudian.

However, in his short time to re-fill the crossbow, Dudian had already once again retracted back to the table.

“Damned little devil !” Old man’s angry eyes almost spit fire. He had missed shooting Dudian the second time. If he heard it before that he would feel threatened by a small child, he would laughed at the idea.

“I’d like to see how long you can hold!” Old man’s checked the green fog that was diffusing into the chamber.

“Got it!” Dudian was holding a large glass bottle. It was the bottle filled with sulfur which he had seen before. At this moment he felt suffocated as there was less oxygen as a result of green fog. Unfortunately there was nothing to fire it.

“Damn it! No fire, no fire!”

Dudian mind was in despair. As he was desperately thinking about a way out, his eyes concentrated on the wooden wall where shadows were reflected. “The oil lamp”, he whispered to himself.

“How I haven’t thought about the oil lamp?”, Dudian was in joy.

The despair in his heart vanished. He quickly used fabric torn from his shirt to cover the sulfur bottle. He clenched his teeth. His life and death would be result of the success or failure of this move.

Sou!

Old man saw large group of flying shadows. By nature of self-preservation he shot the crossbow. The short arrow penetrated

one of the bottles. But another one which was aimed at him was not affected. In hurry he raised his left arm to block the oncoming shadow.

Unfortunately for him, he blocked the bottle covered with fabric. It cracked and some of the sulfur fall onto his arm and clothes. He sway his arm which hit the table when another bottle hit the oil lamp and overturned it.

Dudian saw the fabric burning up so he quickly lied down.

Bang! . .

Suddenly sound of thunder-like explosion resounded in the chamber. Few pieces of the wood on top of the chamber cracked and fall down. Dust filled the room.

Dudian felt a massive destructive force hit the table and which was reflected on his body. He felt as if his ribs were going to break. Tears flowed out of his eyes because of the pain.

At this time he couldn’t control his slow and restrained breath. As a result he inhaled large amounts of air. There was flavor of burned sulfur. Moreover he inhaled remnant of the previous green fog. His limbs felt soft.

Top of the chamber collapsed at some parts. The cold wind circulated inside the chamber which rolled out the air filled with smell of sulfur and green mist. He slowly began to inhale the fresh

air.

Dudian immediately began to crawl because there was a big blast in the chamber and nobody knew when it will completely collapse. He did not want to be buried alive.

As a result of the previous explosion, the oil lamp had blown out. At the moment the chamber was immersed in darkness.

Dudian began to move towards the old man's direction even though he couldn't see what was in front of him. He relied on his previous vision to remember the distance between him and the old man. It didn't take long before his hand touched a wet, sticky but hard objects. His face became ugly.

It was the bones of old man.

Although in the dark, Dudian knew that all that he touched were the part of the body that had remained after the explosion. He didn't expect the power of this sulfur explosion to be so terrible. It was not made into gun powder so the reason for it to be so effective should be because of 'dust explosion' principle.

"I killed a human ... ...". Dudian mind trembled. A living human was killed. He had seen the situation of poor in this world and at some point faced the distortion of the law. But to personally kill someone. He did not dare to think about it previously.

He was slightly shaking, he secretly whispered in his heart: "It

was just self-protection. I wanted to protect myself, so it's not a crime... not a crime..." His heart was filled with sadness. The proper laws has long since disappeared from the world so even if it was a crime who can give him a conviction?

In this dark pit which was illuminated by the starlight, he suddenly felt so lonely and desolate. Gradually he let his body relax. The fear in his heart disappeared. Instead a kind of faint indifference was born. He silently looked at the derelict part of the old man's body. His body slowly moved, not to leave but to explore.

He checked the crossbow.

Chapter 25 - Alchemy Notes

Faintly, Dudian once again touched old man's body. Even though there was a fear in his heart, he was not as nervous as he had been previously. He touched down the robe. He found two object wrinkled in robe.

He moved the first object towards the sky to identify it in the star light.

It was a small sickle used to ignite fire.

His heart was pleasantly surprised. He tried hard to use the friction from fire sickle to ignite a small torch. Soon a small fire was used to light the darkness. He clearly saw old man's fractured arm from the elbow. Ribs of his chest were blown and the rest was charred.

Dudian's heart beat fast. He confirmed that old man's chest didn't undulate so he felt more relieved. There were papers scattered on the ground while pieces of the cloth worn by old man's were missing because of the explosion.

As the fire got bigger, Dudian's could see the appearance of the chamber after the explosion. All kinds of equipment were thrown to ground and damaged. Some of the things were buried under the sand which had flowed from outside. He looked at the crossbow which had its strings broken. Obviously it could not be used.

Dudian's mind was distressed. He was preparing to fire the

chamber to completely burn it. Suddenly he saw quite a few books on the other side of the chamber. He got close to the book shelf and the first book to catch his eyes was named ‘Alchemy of Life’.

In addition to ‘Alchemy of Life’, there were several alchemy books. There was a small manual with no name imprinted on it. He took it up and opened it.

“Alchemy Notes?” Dudian was surprised. He checked the content of the manual. It was actually the old man’s alchemy diary.

“Giant wall calendar. Year 287. The Black Snow Season.”

“Today’s experiment is progressing smoothly. Sure enough to create life I have to use humans as experimental materials. The problem is how to find the perfect material…”

Dudian rolled the pages, there were some records of the experimental process and other events. He didn’t look into details, instead hid it inside his cloth. As for the ‘Alchemy of Life’ and the other books, he simply skimmed through. Although the naming of the books were pretty impressive but they all give the feeling of primary biology books.

He did not take these books as they were too thick. It would be hard to hide and they will be easily exposed. From old man’s actions he knew that alchemy in this world didn’t have a good reputation. Or else he would not hide in this desert to secretly do experiments.

Dudian ripped the books, threw them on the flames, and burned the fire. He threw the rest of the books on the body of the old man. Later on he found the oiler, which had fallen to the ground, and poured the oil into the old man. The first thought was to destroy everything.

As the fire spread, Dudian ascended the wooden staircase he had rolled down. He climbed out and looked back. From the gap he could vaguely see the reflection of the fire. He had a hint of melancholy for a moment. He sighed, turned and ran along the route towards their camp.

He came back to see the fire pit burning but couldn't find Mason and the other two.

Dudian refused to sit down and rest, dragged his exhausted body around the ground looking up. Soon he saw traces of traction, immediately followed the sand marks. In a distant he saw a shadow moving.

As he got the closer he saw Zach dragging Mason and Sham.

"Wasn't he affected?" Dudian was confused. Then he thought back. Zach had always been a cautious character. Most probably he had played dead the same way as Dudian had done.

Dudian's heart warmed as he saw Zach struggling to drag Sham and Mason. He tied Alchemy Notes onto his leg with a belt and went after the Zach.

“Who!” Zach jumped in fear as heard the sounds. He released Sham and Mason and nervously bent over to grab sand.

“It’s me,” said Dudian.

Zach heard Dudian’s voice. He was surprised: “You come back? Are you alright? What happened to that monster? ”

Hearing this, Dudian understood that Zach had secretly watch him and the old man while they fought. Moreover he had seen the mutation: “I’m lucky to run away. We should leave quickly.” He grabbed Mason’s arm and saw him still breathing. He was relieved to know that the green fog was not a lethal toxin.

Zach face a white because of fear. He could not help but look behind Dudian as if the monster was gazing at them from the darkness. He shivered and grabbed the Sham and said in hurry: “Run… Let’s not get caught again”

Dudian dragged Sham following in the back. The water was sufficient in that place. Although the old man was dead, but there was no guarantee that there won’t be other alchemists who would come to visit. When they find the next water source, at least he would be more experienced.

…

Half an hour later.

Above the old man's secret chamber, few shadows appeared. The shorter one pulled out a small oil lamp and lit the fire. He looked through the gap down to the chamber. He saw burning fire inside the messy room.

"Has been killed." One of the shadows, a graceful figure seemed to see what had happened. Her voice was full of chill as she continued: "The corpse it ruined. The den is burnt. It seem they didn't want use to trace any clues."

"These beasts and their vicious methods. They are really the apostles of the devil." Another burly figure gloomily said.

"The alchemists have long sold their souls to the devil," he said, "to get the power of the devil at all costs. Killing each other is nothing for them. But they should not fight with each other for no reason. I think there is something very important that made them fight each other. It would be very good if we had come earlier. "

"Look at there! What kind of force was released in here to instantly destroy it? " The previous graceful figure was pointing inside the burnt chamber, and the collapse of the gap, said: "It seems these alchemists had terrible devil power. "

Chapter 26 - Ten Days

“You see, there are footprints.” burly figure suddenly said.

Three immediately look to the side of the sand marks and footprints. The graceful woman’s face changed, said: “It is the footprints of children. Damn, this alchemist was involved in human experiments. I’ve looked down on him.” Then, from the gap created by the collapse, she jumped down.

A moment later, she jumped out from the inside, firmly standing on the stand. If Dudian here, will be stunned. The height of the chamber was at least three meters in height. To jump that high, how strong physically you had to be?

“This one turned out to be a ‘life’ alchemist!” Graceful woman was holding a dark medal. Above it there were three five-pointed stars (★) engraved on it. According to alchemist’s belief system they refused to believe in the Creator or Father. But in the sky over their heads. Some crazy alchemy warlock’s ultimate goal was to refine the stars.

These alchemists diverted into another occupation known as the Star Diviner.

Star Diviners only did divination for person’s fate and destiny. They were hunt by Holy Church too. The reason was very simple. The Father’s will could only be passed to Holy Church. Only the great Pope could understand any attempt on understanding the will of the Father. Anything else was only a speculation by the evil

cults.

“I did not expect him to be a powerful figure.” Burly strong man eyes condensed, “A certified 3 star alchemist should have extraordinary power. To kill him there had to be many other alchemists, or maybe even … … a four-star alchemist!”

Graceful woman’s face was gloomy at this point, ” Order some people to dig this place to get captive children’s bodies. At least their parents should be comforted by this, because they had died because of this assessment.”

“I hope we can identify their appearance.” Short one sighed.

Graceful woman did not say anything.

“You look for clues in the vicinity. I will take the body of the alchemist over to the knights. By the way, check out everything inside the place.” Burly brawny finished speaking, jumped down.

Graceful woman and short shadow as one pulled out their weapons. They went around in search of clues.

…

In the blind of an eye, ten days passed.

Dudian and the other three were leaning against each other near

some desert plants. Limitless sand was covering their vision from all sides. Their bodies were dry because of lack of water, resulting in a sharp increase in their body temperatures.

“Ten days ... ...” Mason was listlessly chewing grass roots and said: “Do we have to back on our own? I have no strength left. ”

“If we haven’t relied on Dean we couldn’t have hold for these ten days. Imagine what would have happened if we were eliminated. Most probably we would have ruined our family’s financial situation. ” Sham said.

Mason rolled his eyes and said: “That I always say. Dean you are my savior.”

Dudian glanced at him, and said, “You know that I am your savior, but you didn’t want to give me a bit of water last night. ”

Mason face reddened, said: “I was too tired and a bit dizzy. As we go back, I will pour water to you everyday. I would even ask my grandmother to serve for you.”

Dudian shrugged. “I do not want to be your grandpa.”

“Do you take me for a cheap person?”

“You have the strength to speak thou” , Zach was sitting on the other side.

“Then you should be the one to go back and tell everyone that we are stuck in here”

“I was wrong. I was wrong. I do not have the strength now. So you should go and inform them! I will owe you!”

“You are nothing but a dirty slut.” Zach turned over.

In ten days four of them had experienced lots of adversities together. Throughout this survival, they long had become like real brothers. They no longer take into account what they tell to teach other. And as a result, Sham, Zach and Dudian had become to appreciate the unknown side of Mason. That is playing cheap.

Tink! Tink!

Suddenly burst of bells sounded.

They turned to see a nearly five meter high camel slowly walking on the desert. It was dragging a 10 meter long plank. There were seven or eight children seated on the plank with wheels.

Dudian was stunned. Nuclear radiation had great affects on the world. But he would have never expected camel’s genes to be inflated by the radiation to such a degree. In addition to its size which was twice the normal camel’s, there were snake like scales covered on its hooves, just like a war monster.

He had previously seen the three-meter-high dark horse. But this camel was immeasurably affected by the radiation in comparison to the horse.

“It is a camel!! ” Zach actually recognized the animal and spoke in surprised manner: “It is the best animal that could be used in the desert, ha ha ... ...”. He wanted to laugh but the wind blow the sand into his mouth almost choking him.

Dudian saw the children on the back of the board. These ones should have passed the survival assessment.

The trial was successfully concluded. He was also relieved. Finally he would be able to go back to have a good rest. He would have a chance to look at the alchemy notes. He was quite curious about the scientists of this world.

“Come you four,” said the woman, sitting on a camel, wearing a veil.

Dudian and others immediately dragged their bodies, moved past the camel and went towards it rear to sit on the board.

“You four survived.” At this time, a thin boy sitting on the board talked to them in a surprised manner.

Dudian looked at him. He remembered the boy to be living the bedroom next door to them. He smiled but didn’t reply to him.

Mason proudly talked. : “I think you don’t know who we are. We are the strongest four man team. A mere ten days to survival in the desert does not even count as anything to us. Maybe twenty five or thirty days would be a bit difficult.”

Sham whispered: “Stop bullshitting if you want us to be friends.”

Zack shrugged: “His nature has been exposed and he won’t turn back from it. ”

Mason laughed hard. His laughter turn the atmosphere of silence on the board a bit onto positive side.

The thin boy sighed and said: “Me and other three flatmates did not stick together. You guys are pretty lucky! ” There were loneliness and regret reflected on his face. After all his flatmates had separated from him, leaving him with others.

Other children who heard his words, were depressed as most of them had faced this kind of a situation.

Dudian did not say anything. He looked up at this woman on the back of the camel’s hump, in his heart thinking about a problem... how did she climbs up?

Chapter 27 - Rewards

Dudian and rest were sitting on the board carried by the camel while they were coming close to the gathering place. There were many students standing high and mighty. Although the overall number of students were much smaller than before, but it was still a very impressive result.

“There are so many people who are qualified!” Mason was surprised.

Most of the children came from variety of families, but at the end of the day they were trained by Tobu. It didn’t matter whether you were weak or a girl, after the training a transformation had occurred on each of them. They had gone through very harsh endurance training before the assessment.

Moreover in the desert survival assessment endurance was only a supporting role. To survive through you had to rely on luck and brains.

“I did not expect so many powerful people.” Mason spoke with some emotion. “I thought we were the only ones to desperately try to survive. Never thought that same conditions applied to everyone.”

Everyone was aware of the difficulties of the ten day assessment. The thought that they had survived, was already a miracle. But overall everyone understood that to finish the course, they could not simply continue with their current efforts. They had to push

themselves ten times more limits.

At sunset the last desert camel came back. All the students who had passed the assessment were gather in attendance.

At this time, a huge black carriage ride over, stopped in front of everyone. Kris and Tobu jumped out of the carriage. Kris turned towards the carriage and opened the door. Students heard tinkling of chains. The sounds were followed by a distorted figure that was pushed down the carriage. It stumbled on to sand.

Tobu and Kris weren't polite in the slightest. They brutally pulled the man's chains to kneel him in front of the students.

Silence fell. There were no sounds but the wind hitting the sand.

Dudian's pupils suddenly crunched as he saw the figure. His fingers tightly clenched onto sleeves and cold sweat oozed down his spine. The figure locked in chains was an alchemist. Moreover this alchemist was in the same faction as the one he had killed. A 'life' alchemist who also had experimented on his own body.

Moreover, the results of the experiment were also terrible!

His body was burly. However after his hip a twisted tail was grown which was wrapped around his body. Alchemist's face was full of meat knots. A scimitar like extremely sharp bone dagger was raising out of his left wrist. But the most appalling sight was on his chest. On the center there were sharp fangs extended.

This, simply could not be longer called a “person”!

Everyone stared.

The children who had never seen an alchemist stared at the ‘monster’ with wide open eyes.

Tobu looked around everyone, indifferent smiled and said: “First of all I have to congratulate you for passing the survival assessment. You can be ravaged by me for the next six months. Secondly, some things should be known to some of you.” He used his leg to kick the burly man onto ground: ” This is. Your parents should have told you about alchemists, the devil’s apostle!”

The children burst into an uproar. No one had expected for an alchemist to appear in front of them. All kinds of evil legends about alchemists emerged in their minds. That kind of a body confirmed the tales – this is the embodiment of the devil!

“This time, in the place where you were assessed ‘alchemists’ were hidden. Resulting in a lot of people accidentally eliminated.” At this time Kris stood out and said “But fortunately there are no casualties. I have to congratulate all of you because most of the students who had encountered the ‘alchemists’ were not scared but rise up against them!”

She raised her hand and said, “There is a Knight of Light with us today!”

All children were burst into an uproar again, full of excitement, after hearing her words.

Knights of light were not part of military career. But they were exclusive knights under Holy Church. A symbol of noble character and pure will. Even the nobility would wish their children to marry a Knight of Light because of their glory!

“There is a Knight of Light!”

“I would have never expected Knight of Light to help to capture this demon. ”

“I’m way too happy! I want to his appearance! I want to meet the Knight of Light! ”

Mason, Sham and Zach were filled with emotion.

All of the students were envious as someone had assisted the Knight of Light while capturing the demon. Think about the excitement of the situation. How great a chance it would have been!

Kris smiled and said: “In total 38 students encountered an alchemist attack. But 17 of them not only failed to surrender to the devil but delayed it until the arrival of the Knights of Light! Especially last night. Lorian not only avoided the alchemist but also secretly left a signal which allowed Knights of Light to

smoothly pursuit the demon and capture it in one swoop!”

“I declare that all the candidates who assisted the Knights of Light in capturing the alchemists will be rewarded with the second military merit at once. This will be recorded under your household. In the future if you become guards, you will begin with a rank of captain and will have a right to become a ‘knight’!”....When she mentioned the ‘knight’ part it referred to the ‘knight’ of military.

Hearing her words, students had envy flushed in their eyes.

Knight and the guard are completely two different levels, ah!

Although the knights of the military and knight of light are not comparable in status, but it is still a favorable status. It’s only slightly inferior to the noble status. If in the future you can become a Knight commander then your status would be higher than of noble family’s. As for the Knight of Light, nobles would kill to have them as guests in their households.

“In addition to what we know ten days ago Knights of Light found several footprints near an alchemist’s secret base. According to their speculation someone was caught by the alchemist, but successfully escaped. I don’t know who was it so please stand out so that I could appoint your military reward. ” Kris suddenly said in sweet tone.

Hearing this everyone was surprised. For a moment they looked at each other.

Dudian’s heart was tightened. He saw Zach and Sham look at him, waiting for his actions. Only three of them know the story.

Looking at the eyes of the three, filled with envy and excitement, Dudian’s heart sank. After they had ran out, he had cleaned and concealed the footprints in worry that some other alchemist may follow them.

When he had killed the alchemist he wanted to conceal his whereabouts because he did not expect Knights of Light will appear. It was to avoid other alchemists. Thinking about it right now, he had done the right thing by hiding their footprints. He had tied the alchemy notes onto his leg. If it was detected by a Knight of Light, he didn’t know what kind of a big crime it was.

Chapter 28 - Judgement

Although Kris said that the military reward is extremely attractive, but Dudian was sensible enough to dispel the idea of claiming. He was not sure what kind of clues were recovered from the chamber of the alchemist by the Knights of the Light. He had used fire to destroy everything but the traces of the explosion would not disappear. If he was taken into a cross-examination, he would inevitable expose flaws.

Moreover, his trousers had the alchemy notes, once searched out, the consequences could be disastrous. He just wanted to stay away from Knights of Light. The farther the better!

“Knighthood opportunity, ah … …” Dudian heart was in pain but bite his tongue to be a bit more sensible regarding his security.

“Dean, very good … …” Zach’s face was full excitement. He was about to go on to talk but saw Dudian’s harsh look so he stopped.

Mason, Zach and Sham could not help but be surprised for a moment. After few months of get along and ten days of survival test they have long been in tacit understanding of each others temper. With a simple look they could understand the meaning behind Dudian’s eyes. They couldn’t help but wonder, this is a golden opportunity. The golden symbol of the highest status that a civilian could reach has been sent to Dudian’s feet and he only needs to take a step forward.

This is the dream of countless people, ah!

However, under the vision of Dudian they came to stop. Three as one did not say anything. They respected Dudian's choice as incredible and puzzled they were. They knew that they could not convince Dudian otherwise, so they didn't want to stop him.

Kris looked at the crowd which was in silence. Nobody had responded. She slightly frowned, at this time, suddenly a voice sounded: "I, I." Short boy holding his hands together, who looked a little nervous came out of the crowd.

Kris was relieved, looked at him deeply, smiled and said: "Congratulations, you will be rewarded by the instructor and it will be recorded on to your household. Now let us appreciate how the Knight of Light is going to punish the demon. "

As she finished talking, a person slowly came out from the previous huge black carriage. His body was clad in silver-white armor. He was a young man with a handsome appearance. He was tall. For most of the onlookers he was full of ungodly charm.

All the children's excitement was exposed on their faces. Relative to the proud aristocracy, civilians were in high regards towards just and benevolent Knights of Light.

Dudian looked at the young Knight of Light. What was he going to do? Was he going to award the child who was posing for Dudian's accomplishments? He had a bit of regret in his heart. If he had known that everything would pass by in a simple manner then he would have stepped forward not matter what. He couldn't

but blame himself for overthinking everything.

He secretly sighed but knew that has missed chance. He can only put it away onto the deep parts of his mind. In any case, being cautious is always good, as for military reward... ... he shook his head, these thought aside. At this time, the young Knight of Light passed by Tobu and stepped in front of the alchemist. There was a touch of smile on his face as he slowly pulled out his sword. The sun was reflected on the blade of the sword.

“I, Melk, in the name of the Father, decides the fate of this devil!”

“Light will eventually expel all the darkness!

He gently talking. In a moment his hands used to momentum to charge sword towards the alchemist’s head.

Alchemist’s head was immediately cut. The blood was spewing out from the neck, his body fell to the ground. Alchemist’s head rolled a few times before coming to a stop. The blood was flowing in to the sand.

In front of the bloody scene most of the children were scared and took a step back. But soon they were excited. Shouting the last words that Melk had spoken: “Light will eventually expel all the darkness!”

One after the another, the words echoed out in the desert.

Dudian did not want to be found strange, so he also followed by gently shouting the words. But in his heart: “Did not any of you saw the blood that flew into the sand, like the rest of us it was colored in red!”

In this world, it is not uncommon to publicly try inmates. Countless people would come as onlookers to the trials of the convicted prisoners who had done great evil. Perhaps in this monotonous world it is kind of an entertainment.

Soon, the man named Melk wiped his sword, turned and left.

Kris and Tobu escorted Dudian and the other children using the black carriages back to scavenger special training ground.

After returning into their bedrooms, everyone felt that this tattered, shabby little room was so valuable and solid.

...

“I heard that this time total of eight alchemists were captured.” Dasha was sitting on a soft chair, she smiled and continue: “I am even jealous of this feats. You have done a great job. I believe that after the special training of this group ends, you will be promoted to the Hunter School. It’s time to go to there to discipline those group of ‘monsters’, they may need your bitterness more than this group.”

Tobu wryly said: “The main credit is not mine. It was the Mel

family's young genius who killed a two-star alchemist! "

"Mel house seems to re-emerge, ah ... ..." Dasha mouth revealed a trace of a smile and said: "I heard that there was another kid who escaped from a three star alchemists clutches and that alchemist was found dead "

Tobu replied: "According to Knight of Light's point of view there had to be a four-star alchemist who had killed him because of the amount of power used in destruction of that place"

Dasha eyes narrowed slightly and said: " It's been a long time that we had detected activities of a four-star alchemist. And even if there was one in the desert, I estimated that including you and those Knights of Lights, no one would come back alive!"

Tobu breathed lightly: "The next time when there is such a thing, I want you to give me a notice in advance. I don't want to be kept in the dark"

"I'm tired," said Dasha and yawned.

Tobu slightly smile. He could only respectfully withdrew.

...

"Giant wall calendar. Year 291. The rainy season.

“The experiment is ready. I have thoroughly grasped the the structure of the human body. Today I will experiment with my own body. Soon I, Rosyard’s name, will be forever engraved in the alchemist hall as the immortal. I will also become the new creator...”

Dudian was secretly looking at alchemy notes when no one was around. This alchemist who experimented and refined his own body had recorded everything. From the scrawl of goose feathers, Dudian could see the trembling once in a while and feel how excited the alchemist had been.

Chapter 29 - The Church Of Darkness

“Failure, what is the reason? Nerves and blood vessels are connected. Everything has been double checked. It should have been a successful experiment. Why can’t I get the same strength as Knight of Light? Where was the mistake made? Ah...”

Dudian thought of the mutation on Rosyard’s shoulder. It was recorded as a failed experiment in the Alchemist Notes. However the thing that caught Dudian’s attention was the phrase ‘the same strength as Knight of Light’. So their purpose was the create their own Knights of Light? No, to be precise, attaining the same level of power of the Knights of Light.

Could it be that Knights of Light are genetically modified and held the power beyond the imagination of ordinary person?

This was definitely an explosive news!

The thing is alchemists would use the surgery to genetically modify their bodies. If Knights of Light are somehow or in someway are modified then The Holy Church is an extremely terrible existence. At least behind the scenes some shady deals occur.

Dudian was shocked. He continued to read.

The Alchemist Notes contained 10 years of experimental experience recorded by Rosyard. After the failure of self-modification Rosyard had become cautious according to notes. So

he would steal children to experiment on. In case he would be successful, he would kill the child. Then he would share the details and results of the experiment with the 'Church of Darkness'. After his deeds accumulated to a certain extent it would be regarded as a meritorious service. He could certify to a higher level (TL: the number stars if you guys remember) and access to greater rights and resources.

It was noted in Rosyard's notes that this 'Church of Darkness' is made up of alchemists, potion masters, puppeteers and other heterogeneous occupation holders of great forces. They were not just limited to people outside the wall but some members of noble families, some civilians from residential areas and slums and even some people from the military were part of this organization. In simple terms, if the Holy Church was standing proudly in sunlight, then the 'Church of Darkness' was the horrible monster lurking in the darkness of the night!

"Holy Church, Military, Church of Darkness...", Dudian murmured. From his current perspective these three forces were like a tripod which were involved in everything that happened within and outside the giant wall of Silva. As of know he didn't know which force would be the best to join, military of Holy Church. For now at least he wouldn't be leaning towards 'Church of Darkness'

"I know way too less...", Dudian sighed. His heart was at loss as he didn't know where to go in the future.

He couldn't stand the constraints that would be implemented by the military.

Holy Church was more inclined towards beliefs and faith. He couldn't face his own conscience if he seek refuge with the Holy Church.

It can be seen from the Alchemy Notes that the various powers gathered within the Holy Church were in nature scientists of different fields. However the group of scientists without law and moral restraint were no different from the devil.

Dudian felt that for a small person like him to climb the world's top would be very difficult. However, he never thought that ascending to the heavens would be an easy feat. In his mind another idea emerged. How easy would it be to live a normal life?

As the idea appeared, he though of the sharp words said by the aristocratic girl. Jura couple's humble posture in front of the nobles was reflected in front of his eyes. He remembered how he had almost lost his life in 'hunter' castle.

He gently closed his eyes and asked himself. Would you be able to live a normal life? What would be standing and your posture in that case? Would you be able to escape the disaster the next time?

No, no!

When his life will be threatened he wouldn't be able to show resistance!

He slowly opened his eyes. There was an unprecedented firmness in his eyes. Even at the expense of freedom! Even if I have to abandon my faith! Even if I have to abandon the compassion! I should live well. If I'm left in the darkness, I will crawl and dig out my own way into the light!

He grabbed a small iron sheet and cut a finger long wound on his arm. He clenched his teeth to overcome the pain. His eyes were becoming increasingly cold as he whispered: "Dudian, feel the pain. You were the one who came up with such a cowardly idea. Are you worthy of the sacrifices that your parents and sister made to give you the only opportunity to survive?"

He clenched his teeth and looked at the blood flowing from his arm as if to keep in mind the pain that he felt. He was quietly warning himself that in the future no matter how many difficulties or obstacles he would encounter, he would never forget his direction. He would never let this world tame him!

Mason, who came back to the bedroom, saw the blood flowing from Dudian's arm. He sent him off to infirmary.

...

Scavengers in training.

Time flew by and in the blink of an eye three years passed.

"Dean the special training is finally over and today is the

graduation ceremony. We will finally be able to go home to our parents" Zach smiled. He was the only dutiful son in the bedroom. Every month he would take a day off to see his parents. Dudian, Mason and Sham only occasionally visited their parents. They usually wrote letters to them.

Dudian smiled. In the last three years his appearance had greatly changed. The color of his skin is not as white as before, but a healthy wheat color because of the exposure into the sun. His height was one meters and sixty centimeters which was one of the tallest within the peers. After all, he was only twelve years old this year.

"Hey, this was the most special bedroom in the dorms. All four of us finished the training! " Macon grinned, exposing two rows of white teeth.

Sham said: "I hope in the future when we will be in military, we would be assigned into same unit. However in case we are scattered, don't forget to come my family's pub... I will treat!"

Dudian and the other two have long heard about Sham's tavern, Mason laughed and replied: "Absolutely!"

"Let's go or we will be late. " Dudian said.

All of them went out to huge school field. There were dozens of students chatting with each other.

Mason sadly said: “Three years ago there were more than 300 people. We are really lucky to graduate!”

“There are people who haven’t come yet.” Sham shrugged: “I had counted before. There are 106 students who would graduate.”

Zach looked at the woods outside the school field: “Who are they and why they are coming to our graduation?”

Dudian, Sham and Mason looked towards the place Zach was pointing. They saw Toby, but there were eight individuals besides him. They were talking and laughing. All of them were dressed in an elegant manner.

Chapter 30 - God's Blessing

All the students were standing on a neat row.

Tobu turned towards the 8 and said "You wait". He went to front of everyone. He exposed a rare smile: "First of all, congratulations. Finally you have turned from a garbage to a true warrior. However, the real test begins from this moment. You will leave this warm cradle, face the real-life death situations"

Most of the students were surprised, as not all of them understood the meaning behind Tobu's words.

Dudian eyes flashed. He knew that Tobu was about to announce their identity as scavengers.

Tobu looked at students with the puzzled expression, said: "From the moment of graduation, you will get a new identity. Not of the 'guard', but of the scavengers! "

"Scavengers?" Everyone looked at each other.

"I know, most of you are hearing about this for the first time. " Tobu slowly said: "I will be straightforward. Scavengers from the perspective of the job level are much higher than guards. Actually on the same level with Knights of military. However knights are loyal to the Legion and the noble family they serve. In my opinion, they are a group of weaklings. While scavengers are the last defense line of humankind!"

Everyone was stunned.

Same level with a Knight?

That is such a renowned status!

Even in their dreams they would not expected to get such a huge return after three years of hard work and persistence!

Tobu looked the excited faces of students and continued in calm tone: “However, the difference between scavengers and knights is that one is in the dark while the other one is in the light. In simple terms, scavengers are behind the scenes! You are not allowed to disclose you identity as a scavengers even to your parents, siblings or lovers. It is a military secret!

“You will be provided with a guard identity as a cover.”

“When you can accumulate enough merits, you will get permanent residence in commercial district.”

After Tobu’s last words, all of their eyes began to glow up in hope. Nevertheless, living in commercial district is every civilians desire!

“Instructor, what do scavengers do?” At this time, dark skinned student asked.

“Your job,” he said, “is to go to the safe area outside the giant wall. Gather all the information and resources outside the giant wall and bring it back here!”

All the children burst into an uproar. They realized that there is no free lunch. No one had seen the world outside the giant wall. But deep in their hearts they knew that there are great dangers outside the wall.

“Instructor, can quit it?”, someone had raised their hand to ask.

Tobu indifferent replied: “Yes, your solatium will be send your house after your ‘death’”

Their hearts turned cold. They were not given any choices.

“You do not have to worry. Although its very dangerous outside the giant wall, but we are not wasting three years of time and resources just to cultivate cannon fodder. The places where you will be sent will be cleaned security zones. As long as you are careful nothing will happen. The death rate of scavengers is not high.” Tobu looked around the crowd and said,” And when you will go out of the giant wall, you will receive the blessing of God. ”

“God’s blessing?” everyone was confused.

Dudian couldn’t help lift his eyebrows.

Tobu lifted his hand and pointed towards the eight people that had come with him: “These eight represent military and seven consortiums from the commercial district. You can choose to join any of them. Afterwards you will work for chosen consortium or military. All the resources that you will collect outside the giant wall can be converted into a great fortune. I remember there was a scavenger who had picked up a strange object outside the giant wall and received hundred thousand gold coins for it!”

Everyone startled, 100,000 gold coins? This is simply the wealth they can not think of!

Dudian did not expect that scavengers could extract commission on the things that they had picked up. It seems it is a good career to get rich. But more easy to get rich, the more risks should be involved.

At this time, the eight people came to the front of the crowd. The youth from the left side was the first to talk: “I’m here on behalf of the military. Anyone who wants to join army, should come over to me to sign the contract. If you join with us you could join the commercial district in the near future”

“I’m from Stirling consortium. We can provide admission to commercial district. Our commission rate is 10%... ” Another gracefully dresses woman spoke.

The others began to introduce their affiliated consortiums and information about contracts.

Dudian came to understand that this training center was supported by those seven consortiums and the military. Military couldn't have supported this large of operations under the noses of noble families. So it seems they have chosen to share both expenses and results.

To his surprise, there is no one from the Holy Church.

At this time, other children have come before the representatives of various consortiums and military to make their selections. All of them more or less are giving the same conditions, because they are competing with each other so there is not much of a difference in the welfare offered.

"Dean, we should choose the same consortium," Mason said.

Dudian nodded slightly.

Sham asked: "Which consortium? Or maybe military?

"You go and check the conditions they give." Dudian said and went towards Tobu and said: "Instructor, which one should be the best to choose?"

Tobu looked down at him. He was impressed with Dudian. Whether it was his improvement by leaps and bounds in the tenacious endurance training at the beginning, his impressive results at examinations or his performance for the last three years. He winked and said: "You have excellent chances with any of the

choices as they will offer you a personal proposal. But in between us, Mellon consortium has a great potential!”

Dudian was surprised as he did not expect that Tobu’s recommendation is not the military but the consortium.

Tobu turned away to leave when Sham, Mason and Zach came up to catch him. Sham said: “We checked all of them. Most of the conditions are similar. Military has the best treatment while their commissions are low. All these consortium have varying conditions but their commissions are higher than military. For example, Lorian just joined Stirling Foundation. They will give him 15% from everything that he will extract plus God’s blessing every month.”

“What!!”

At this moment, excited sounds echoed all around the field.

Everyone could not help but look. Dudian saw the gentleman who represented the Stirling Foundation.

Chapter 31 - First

“It’s Lorian,” Mason said, “what’s he doing?”

His body’s color changed to blue and veins popped up all on his face. Lorian shouted in pain. In a moment, his dark complexion disappeared. It was as if with this roar, Lorian had recovered. His muscles gradually relaxed, veins were hidden. He took a deep breath and looked down at his palm. His face was a bit surprised.

Suddenly, he suddenly a squat and jumped into the sky.

“Wow!”, everyone exclaimed in surprise.

Lorian had actually leaped up two meters high!

Not his head but his feet were at least two meters high off the ground!

The silence was spread within the audience.

All were aghast looking at Lorian. They had gone through hellish training for the last three years. Although their physical condition were many times better than their peers, but all of them had limits. Jumping up for two meters was nothing but a simple nonsense.

However, Lorian had done! He had jumped and broke those

physical limits.

Dudian knew that Lorian's performance throughout the three year training was very good but was way too far from such a super physical condition.

"Is this God's blessing?" Dudian muttered.

Sham heard his words and was stunned: "What?

At this time, the graceful woman who saw the surprise on Lorian's face, smiled and said: "This is the blessing of God. From now on you will get a blessing every month. I hope you will make good efforts to create more wealth for the mankind by giving your best!"

Lorian was agitated. He bent on one knee and spoke in respectful manner: "For life, Lorian will be loyal to God!

The graceful woman smiled, held him up, and looked up to the others: " Everyone will be blessed by God after joining Stirling consortium."

After she spoke, the other children understood clearly that the sudden increase in Lorian's physical power was due to God's blessing. For a time, all the children were stirred up by the spectacle.

"Noni, aren't you so kind?" said the other, a slender man, "We all

supply God's blessing! ”

Grace woman smiled: “The rules did not say that I'm not allowed to take the first step, did they?”

The other man was stifled for a moment but continued to speak out in loud voice: “Anyone who joins our Green consortium will get God's blessing as soon as signing agreement. You will get your share when we return to consortium so do not be worried.”

Hearing this, most of the children were relieved. However the ones who were hesitating moved towards Noni to join the Stirling Foundation.

At this time, is a cry echoed.

Dudian saw a short boy standing in front of Noni. The same things that happened to Lorian, were repeated. He also jumped to reach more than two meters of height.

Children were excited by the thought of having access to such an extraordinary power.

Dudian's heart was shocked. This time he had clearly seen the woman called Noni injecting an old-fashioned syringe. There was pink liquid inside the syringe. She had injected it into the boy's arm which led to the latter's physical power to rise in an instant!

God's blessing, ah! Its clearly a genetic agent!

Dudian was shocked not that they will use gene agents called “God blessing”. But with the technology of this era, how could they produce such significant effect of genetic agents? Extraction of genes is already a nano-level technology. They don’t have microscope, electricity or precise instruments. How could they produce them?

“It’s called God’s blessing. So it must be provided by Holy Church! ” Dudian was brainstorming. He always had felt that Holy Church held great secrets. Perhaps this gene extraction technology is one of the secrets of Holy Church?

“so amazing!”

“It is God’s blessing!”

“Do you know how long it lasts?”

Mason, Zach and Sham were excited. Thought of having power beyond the ordinary person’s capability, had given them an unbelievable ecstasy.

At the bottom of his heart, Dudian was worried as he didn’t know about the side effects of this medicine. He hoped that they wouldn’t be too much.

The alchemists such as Rosyard had given their life to work on alchemy to get results such as this. It was a gene agent, in hands of

alchemists it is devil's power. Only the same thing when appeared in hands of Holy Church, it is just and legal!

"Look, it 's Beiwei!."

"She has chosen the Mellon consortium!"

At this time, Zach and Sham suddenly cried, pointing towards a girl. She was same age as with them. She was tall and white. Her breasts were still budding. She had been able to seize the eyes of many boys. The most attractive thing about her was her exquisite oval cheeks.

Mason blushed and said, "What do you mean?"

Zach laughed and replied: "Come on. Why are you so shy? Don't you like her?"

Mason stared at him, said: "Do you want to be strangled to death?"

"Geez! " Zach look at him in contempt.

Dudian smiled. He knew the Beiwei was one of the most dazzling girls from the training camp. She was Mason's secret crush. Dudian didn't expect her to select Mellon consortium. He thought of Tobu's recommendation and said: "We should choose Mellon consortium then."

Sham was shocked: “really?

“Dean, you still think about everyone.” Zach shook his head.

Mason flushed and cast a grateful look at Dudian.

Dudian smiled and the lined up for the registration.

Soon, it was their turn.

“You are Dudian?” Elegant man seemed to recognize Dudian. There was a trace of cordial smile shown on his face: “I have read your information. The results are very good. You were first on endurance results and comprehensive knowledge. Also you have shown quite impressive performance. Especially a year ago the assessment where you had search for the materials. You were second to find all four required materials. ”

Dudian smiled and said: “Anything special for me?”

“I did not expect you will join our consortium.” Elegant man smiled and said: “With us, you will be the object of seed cultivation. I believe if you had joined another consortium you would have the same options. This is your contract. ” Then, from the bag he took out another contract.

Mason, Sham and Zach were full of curiosity. They stretched out

their necks to look.

Dudian looked, the general content was same with the normal contract. But several of these benefits were better than the normal contract. First, once a month he will be given God's blessing before his mission. In addition to the monthly limit of tasks and missions, he would be given 30% reward on excess materials after the identification.

The most eye catching this was that he also received a temporary residence permit in commercial district!

Chapter 32 - Noble Party

“If I’m not mistaken commission on extra material was mention to be 30 percent. Isn’t that three times our limit?”

“Temporary residence permit for ten years!”

“Wow. If I knew this, I wouldn’t have eaten and slept for the last three years to study and exercise only!”

Mason, Zach and Sham were crying out in envy.

Other children attention was attracted by their loud voices. More students came to surround them and most of them saw the terms of the contract specially made for Dudian. They were looking at contract with envy and jealousy.

Lorian who was next to the Noni wrinkled his brows: “He selected the Mellon consortium. Does this guy know something which I don’t?”

There was a bitter taste in his heart. He asked Noni: “Why is his contractual benefits so high? I was second on endurance results, third on comprehensive knowledge and there was not much of a difference with him”

Noni looked back at him, smiled sweetly: “This is always like that. The first will always have preferential treatment.”

Lorian had an ugly look on his face. He did not care much about 30 percent commission that Dudian had got but ten year period temporary residence permit in the commercial district made him extremely jealous.

“Kid, I see you are not convinced. Although your results are excellent, but this kid called Dudian had the best performance almost in every examination. We value the results of examinations a lot, the results of training’s such as stamina and endurance level are secondary. “At this time, a man standing by Noni lightly laughed.

Lorian’s face darkened when he heard him.

“Are you satisfied with the conditions in this contract? ” The elegant man representing gently asked Dudian in presence of people that had gathered over.

Dudian quickly glanced at the terms of the contract, pondered a moment, said: “It is written that every three months I have to comply with the consortium’s arrangement for a ‘scavenging’ trip. In addition, the rest of the time I have to stay in the consortium for special training. Is it possible to amend this?”

The Elegant men was surprised for a moment. He didn’t expect in the face of such rich welfare for Dudian to negotiate. He smiled and said: “If you feel to tight with the three month trip, then we can add another month. Four months are the limit”

Dudian shook his head: “Even once a month is not a problem.

You misunderstood me. What I mean is I would like to have my own free time."

Elegant man was startled for a moment. He hesitated but replied: "This has to be approved by the people above. I can't make a decision on my own. Especially you will be the object of seed cultivation... "

"Hey, little guy. If they can't comply with your condition in the Mellon consortium, we can in Huasheng consortium." At this time, another burly middle-aged man laughed.

Elegant man face slightly changed, angrily said: "Bolton, stop the foul play!"

"How I haven't thought about it?" Another mature woman smiled: "We Green Foundation can also accept the conditions of Mr. Dean."

Elegant man face changed, biting his teeth he spoke to Dudian: "Well, I promise you!

Dudian was relieved. In his heart he was secretly thanking the other two.

"After we go back to the consortium the contract will be modified." Elegant man said: "I haven't brought God's blessing so it will be provided to you when we go back. For now stand behind me while I register others."

Dudian nodded slightly.

Representatives of other consortiums gave up in regret as they saw the foregone conclusion. Only the burly middle-aged man hadn't given up: "Little man, if they breach the contract when you are back in consortium, don't lose your hope. Come over to Huasheng consortium, as my words will be effective at all times"

Elegant man looked at him angrily, "Bolton, stop with your slanders!"

The burly middle-aged man shrugged, turned and continued to draw other students.

Elegant man's eyes fell on Mason, Sham and Zach. "You are together, right?"

Macon nodded and said: "Yes ah ... erm... give us some benefits to improve the contract."

Elegant man turned silent, helplessly said: "really can not be modified. The rules are set."

Mason looked up and saw no other consortium to compete, to help drive up their own worth. He was disappointed, said: "Well."

Elegant man saw through his move, can not help but be angry.

Soon, all the seven consortia and the military finished with the registration process. Each consortium led their recruited students towards the respective carriages which stood outside the school field.

Dudian opened carriage's curtain to look the school field. This place would be imprinted in his memory forever.

"Goodbye……" He murmured.

Carriage galloped away through bustling area. The pedestrians who saw the flags inserted on the carriages quickly gave way to them for fear of blocking the movement of carriages.

A few moments later, several carriages that belonged to Mellon consortium came to stop on a busy street. Recruiter was the first to jump down the carriage to take the lead. He took them into a huge building. Eight young girls came out to greet him. Afterwards they turned towards the carriages and opened their doors: "Please follow us"

Dudian came of the carriage to the elegant man standing close to him: "Let's go. I'll be the one to take you through the procedures."

Dudian went after him to keep up. Mason and other two followed after Dudian.

The other carriages were led by the girls, and followed.

“After claiming identity cards, you will be the personal of Mellon Foundation. From now on you will enjoy the Mellon Foundation’s welfare, but also will have to comply with the rules of the Mellon Foundation.” Elegant man told while they were walking on a path: “Dean, you are the seed selection of this session. There is a noble party tonight, you can come to attend. You should meet up with the upper class people who belong to our Mellon consortium.”

Dudian surprised a moment, asked: “Is it possible I don’t go?

Elegant men startled back, said: “Why?”

“I want to go back and look for my parents first,” said Dudian.

Appreciation was reflected in elegant man’s eyes: “Its understandable, but don’t be in hurry to meet your parents. This is a rare opportunity. There are lots of people who crave to participate in this party. There will be hunters too.”

“Hunters?” Dudian immediately thought back to three years ago. Fernando and the other one had taken him to hunter castle for test. It was a confidential information back then. However it now appears that although the identity of hunters and scavenger are hidden, but its limited to only ordinary people and normal guards.”

“OK,” said Dudian, coming down.

Mason spoke in envious tone: “What a luck! All the good things are falling onto your foot. I’m going to die of jealousy! ”

“You shouldn’t! When we go back, Dean should treat us for meal!” Zach suggested.

“Agreed!” Sham immediately attached.

Dudian turned a blind eye, ignored them.

“Saying, what is a hunter?” Mason curious authentic.

Elegant man smiled and said: “Let’s go into the hall”. A beautiful woman greet them over there for registration. The elegant man turned towards Dudian and said: “You come over with me”

Chapter 33 - Dinner

Dudian was taken to a luxury office.

There was a tough old man who sat by the table. A pretty young girl was sitting on his leg, holding a burgundy cup full of crimson red wine.

“Peter, when are you going to learn to knock on the door?” The old man patted the girl’s buttocks and motioned her to leave.

Elegant men laughed: “You should lock the door first.”

Old man noticed Dudian who was following at Peter’s rear: “Is he one of the fellows who was picked in this group’s scavengers? Why have you brought him here?”

Peter smiled: “He is the seed of these batch. His contract needs to be modified a bit. You should rest assured, everything is within the scope of permission.”

“Oh?” The old man looked at Dudian with interest, said: “Top of this batch, ha? Kid, you are doing pretty well. If you continue in the same pace you may turn into a good hunter. ”

Peter smiled, and said to Dudian: “You sit first, the new contract will soon be ready.”He turned to the old man: “identity medals and uniforms, please.”

Old man smiled, opened a drawer, pulled out a stack of black uniforms.

Dudian sat down next to the sofa. When he saw the uniform he could not help but think of three years ago. The two officers who took him to training grounds had worn exactly the same uniforms.

“This is your scavenger medal and uniform.” Peter handed to the clothes and medals to Dudian. There were two different medals, said: “In case of civilians you should produce the first medal which will cover your identity as a guard. In case of aristocrats or others, you can use the scavenger medal”

Dudian looked at the two medals. The silver medal engraved with crossed swords was for guard identity. However, the scavenger medal was matte black. The giant wall of Silva was engraved on its outline.

“You are our Mellon consortium’s seed cultivation object.” Peter sat down beside Dudian, said: “Every time after scavenging, the consortium will give you a bright spring which is purchased from the Holy Church. It is a very expensive syrup used to clean your body’s radiation value. As a result, you won’t have to worry about radiation problems while scavenging. The consortium will give you special attention after you accumulate certain amount of points. You may get the opportunity to access the hunter school and as long as you can stick through the training, you can become a hunter!”

Fernando had told him that to become a hunter you had to have a ‘light physique’. He didn’t expect that there are other methods

that could lead to become a hunter.

“I will work hard.” Dudian caught medals and uniforms and replied seriously.

“I’m sure you will,” Peter encouraged.

“How is the status of hunters in comparison to nobility? ” he asked.

Peter laughed: “This depends on level of hunters, but also level of nobility should be taken into account. If you are an excellent scavenger then aristocrats will politely try to curry favor with you. After all, scavengers bring a lot of wealth to aristocracy. It can be said that scavengers are aristocrats favorite workers. But in the eyes of the number of financially influential noble families, scavengers are nothing. Only hunters meet their appetite. ”

Dudian eyes moved: “There are levels in hunting division?

“Of course there are. But it’s too early for you to know about that. ” Peter encouraged: “The benefits of being a hunter are much more than you think. They not only get qualifications for permanent residence in commercial district but if they accumulate enough merits then their future is limitless!”

Dudian nodded slightly, knowing that Peter was throwing a bait. In his heart he was not concerned about permanent residence in commercial district or having qualifications to start his own noble

lineage. These are the appearances created by the rulers of this world. Being a hunter, scavengers, noble or anything else is just a privilege which can be taken away at any time. It's not real power!

It's been three years since he had decided to get the power to control his own destiny. No longer be dominated or trampled!

If he continued on to live a humble life like an ant, one day or other, ultimately he will be trampled to death.

"By the way, in seven days you will have to go to your first task as a scavenger. " Peter laughed: "You have to do well. Your results will determine way too many things that you don't even imagine. Anyway, I would advise you to wash up and clean yourself. At night, I will pick you up. Don't forget aristocrats hate dirt and mess. Comb your hair neatly... "

Dudian nodded slightly, "I'll pay attention to details."

At this time, the door opened and the previous girl came in. She handed the new contract to Peter.

Peter looked at it and handed it to Dudian: "Check , there should be no problems"

Dudian once again went over the contract from start to finish. He saw that the changes had been made on proposed places. He took the pen and quickly signed under his name.

“Alright” Pete closed the consortium’s contract and said to Dudian: “Don’t forget to wear your medal at night. It is your status symbol. If necessary keep it on you at all times. ”

“I will.”

“Ok, someone will take you to a temporary place to live.”

Dudian nodded, turned and left pulling out the door smoothly.

Mason and the other two had received their medals and uniforms. The woman had explained all the details to them. As she saw Dudian coming out of the room, she said: “Come with me. I will take you to your temporary residence.”

…

A small castle was arranged for Dudian and others. The environment was comfortable and clean, with servants and gardeners at their disposal. However, it was a temporary residence for three days. After three days, except Dudian, the other three had to return to their own houses in residential district. Consortium’s carriages would bring them in case of tasks and missions to the required assembly site.

“Dean, can you take us with you?”

Mason and Zach looked at the neatly dressed Dudian. They knew that he was going to attend the aristocratic party.

Dudian turned sideways in front of the mirror, arranging the cuffs. He felt satisfied with his looks. He spoke to the wailing Mason: “Help me Mason. Bring the boots”

Dudian dressed neatly. From the windows he saw an exquisite carriage galloping in front of the castle. He put his medal on his shoulder and left to the door.

“Well, you look pretty handsome.” Peter opened the car curtain to look at him.

Dudian smiled and went into the carriage.

Before long, the carriage arrived at a secluded place in the commercial district. There was very large manor covered by high walls. There were rows of lanterns hung around to light the surroundings. More than a dozen carriages were parked outside the manor.

The banquet had already begun when Dudian and Peter arrived. The faint sounds of melodious music echoing from the estate.

“It looks like we’re a bit late,” Peter smiled, “and remember to be cautious.”

Dudian nodded.

Peter showed his identity and invitations and entered the estate with Dudian. Along the trail to the banquet hall there was dedicated servants to open the door for them. The path was lighted magnificently and the sound of music was slowly drifted out.

“Its ‘Moonlight Beauty’ by master Hayden”, Peters quickly rushed into the hall.

Dudian was about to keep up Peter when his eyes met another tall figure’s. He was wearing a fine silk clothing. There were emerald rings on his fingers.

Middle-aged noble glanced at Dudian. When he saw scavenger medal on Dudian’s shoulder he frowned, “Who told you to come in?”

Chapter 34 - Invitation From The Nobles

Anger was building up. Does he want to tell that I don't belong in here? Dudian was getting to retaliate back when he though of Peter's words and resisted the urge to retort: "Yes, Mr Peter brought me over."

"Peter who?" Middle-aged noble frowned, "Even the scavengers are here. Are there no rules?"

"Mr. Mace?" At this time, a voice resounded. Dudian and middle-aged aristocrat looked together towards the root of the sound. It was actually the tough old man Dudian had seen in the office. He was wearing a black gentleman's suit, besides him there was a middle-aged lady holding his arm. From their affectionate attitude it seemed that they were husband and wife.

At this time, the old man saw Dudian "Little guy. Why are you at the door? Didn't Peter come over with you? "

"Mr. Peter has just entered," Dudian said honestly.

At this time, the middle-aged aristocrat named Mace frowned: "Old Luo, do you know him?"

The old man laughed: "Yes. I met him today. This little guy is this term's seed object from scavengers. He will have to rely on Mr. Mace's care in the future."

“So it is.”. Mace seemed to understand, glanced at Dudian. : “Little guy. You have vision as you have chosen our Mellon Foundation.”

Dudian face was ugly, his fists were clenched tightly under the sleeve.

Old man quickly said. : “Little guy, quickly apologize to Mr.Mace because you stood in front of the door blocking the entrance and then join the party as not to be left out.” Then he winked at Dudian, motioned him to go into the hall.

Dudian looked at Old Luo’s face for a moment. He knew that Old Luo had come to his rescue. But also knew that as long as he didn’t apologize, he would not be able to pass by Mace. At this moment, he realized that there is not right or wrong in this situation. It all depended on each others identity and status. In this world if the one with the power said that yogurt was black, then the weak one should confirm.

The difference between the two sides was depending on the difference of the power held!

He suddenly understood the truth, without power he was no one!

“I’m sorry … …” He bowed his head in an apology. Behind the alluring lights of the magnificent and melodious music, his face was hidden in the shadows. His eyes were focused on the other party’s exquisite boots.

Then he saw the boots move and turn towards the hall.

The old man seemed to look at him, but did not say anything, but also followed.

“These civilians... It does not matter how good you teach never learn the rules...” Mace’s voice echoed in Dudian’s ear and then the old man’s laughter. Dudian still held his head down, clutching his fists. After a long time he slightly rose his head. Looking at the front of the wide manor, he suddenly felt more freedom in the darkness.

At this time, more carriages began to arrive.

Dudian quietly retracted his eyes, did not continue to look at the door and walked into the hall.

The large and spacious hall was illuminated by oil lamps as if it was illuminated by daylight. Large number of servants brought wine and fruits in the hall. The melodious piano music came from the front of the hall. Nobles were standing in small groups chatting together.

After the previous situation Dudian had no mood at the moment to enjoy this rare luxurious party. He walked to an open window and lean against it. He was looking at the hall where people were moving. It was like a flowing picture scrolling in front of his eyes. He felt faint boredom until two black uniformed man appeared on his line of sight. They kind of interrupted his trance.

“Hunters?” Dudian immediately recognized the medal on two men’s shoulders. There was a black falcon engraved on medals which identified them as hunters.

They seemed to be very young, maximum seventeen years old. As they walked, aristocrats took the initiative to greet them. Apparently they were well known figures.

Soon the two hunters came to the middle of the banquet, where a few middle-aged aristocrats stood. The man who Dudian previously had apologized stood there. Besides him there was a fat lady and a slim middle-aged man.

Dudian could not hear what nobles chatted with those two hunters as they walked into the middle of banquet. According to their manners, their identity was high.

“Hunter … …” Dudian eyes flashed slightly, suddenly thought of Rosyard’s Alchemy notes. There was a record which had impressed him. It was about the anatomy of the hunter.

After Rosyard had caused an incident, a young hunter was tasked to find and kill him. Rosyard had prepared potions to control the nervous system in advance and had caught the hunter. He had used knife to dissect the hunter into countless pieces of meat without anesthesia.

Rosyard had found organs and bloods that were different to normal humans body components within the hunter’s body. He was inspired by his findings. It was one of the factors that led him

to be certified as a three star alchemist.

“Hello scavenger.” Suddenly a shadow appeared from Dudian’s left side.

It was a white-haired old man with a kind face. He was using a walking stick. A large jade ring was on his thumb. However the clothes that he wore were more simple in comparison to the others in the party.

“I assume you are the seed from this graduation, as you are able to attend the party. Am I right?” White-haired old man smiled.

Dudian nodded slightly, said: “You are?”

White-haired old man smiled and said: “I am Fulin Ryan. Nice to meet you”.

“Ryan?” Dudian eyes a moved. Three years ago the desert where they were tested seemed to be the territory of Ryan family.

Dudian face noticed the weak changes, white-haired old man with smiles: “I assume you have heard of our Ryan family’s background. But they are stories of the old. Are you interested in being Ryan family’s knight? ”

“Knight?” Dudian was surprised. He had desperately studied in the library for three years to increase his understanding of this era. He had cleared up many things which were alien to him at first.

The so-called Knight is not only a simple title. For a normal person to acquire the title, he had to go through professional training and as well as a strict examination.

"I did not say clearly." White-haired old man continued: "Your name only will be linked to our family. We will provide you with the official knight's salary and you will need to help our Ryan family to explore the wilderness once a year."

Dudian understood his purpose: "I can go for expedition with your family's scavengers without a contract too, can't I?"

"Of course you can." White-haired old man laughed: "This is all private business. Moreover you won't bear the costs of going and coming back from the giant wall. In fact most of the noble families privately cultivate scavengers, though they can't be compared to you in experience."

Chapter 35 - Jenny

Knight's monthly salary was not low. According to Dudian's estimates monthly salary of a knight was more than Jura couple's salary together. Moreover being affiliated with the Ryan family would give him an identity which vast majority of civilians would look up to.

However, he did not immediately agreed. He understood that the higher the pay, means that scavenging outside the giant wall was more dangerous. Although he had heard that scavengers roam only in safe areas, but there is no guarantee that there will be no other danger. Otherwise, why would they be compensated with such a high return?

"I will think about it," muttered Dudian.

Fulin Ryan smiled and said: "If you come to a decision know that our family would be happy for you to join. In addition, if you can't find a place to live, it is not a problem. In our Ryan family there several sets of vacant houses which could be given to you free of charge."

Dudian declined: "Thank you for your kindness. I'll be here for seven days but later I will have to go home and visit my parents. For time being, I'm not planning to live in the commercial district."

"Okay, you are welcome to disturb me if you ever need anything."

“I will.”

After the conversation, Fulin Ryan left to the central banquet to talk with other nobles.

As Fulin Ryan left several nobles came over to find Dudian to talk to him. The conditions proposed by them were not so different by the ones offered by Fulin Ryan and were declined by Dudian one by one.

All of a sudden, melodious music stopped. A loud clapping echoed and people in the banquet came to halt their chatting, eating or drinking to look at the source of the noise.

It was a forty year old middle-aged noble who was clapping. As he saw all the eyes gathered on him, with a slight smile on his face he spoke: “Welcome to the eight’s party set up by Mellon Foundation. I hope you all are enjoying your time in here. It just happens to be be my daughter, Sarah Mel’s, birthday. I hope all of you who are present can give my daughter your blessings. Thank you!”

As he finished talking, a girl in a red skirt slowly began to descent from the second floor. She was twelve or thirteen years old with delicate cheeks. She gracefully stood and slightly bowed.

The nobles who were present began to warmly applause.

Dudian mind was fretting. Before-hands he had inquire about

Mellon consortium. There were more than a dozen noble families of different sizes included in the consortia. However Mel and Burong family were the co-founders and the most influential ones. The girl belonged to Mel family who he had heard before when he was in Meishan orphanage.

Moreover, the Knight of Light Melk who cut the alchemist's head three years ago apparently was member of the Mel family.

This was a proof of how deep and broad the roots of Mel family reached.

"Our Prynne family has prepared an elegant gift for Ms Sarah... " At this time, a young man holding a delicate red gift box came up to Sarah Mel. He gentle opened the box where a pair of white silk gloves laid.

Sarah took a few steps forward and said: "This should be Master Sydney's craftsmanship. I like it. Thank you"

Young man smiled, a servant came up to him and took the gift box.

At this time, the other nobles successively presented gifts with the words of congratulations.

A young man in gentleman's suit laughed and said, "I always heard that you like poetry so I asked Master Tiza to write a poem. I hope you will enjoy.

“Poetry?” Sarah’s eyes light up with joy.

The young man smiled and continued in gentle voice: “These are tears you dropped on the stone. Those hesitant eyes filled with that evening. Who leaked your inner sadness … …”

After a while, a poem finished, said: “This poem is called “a girl’s sadness” specially written for Miss Sarah.”

The audience suddenly applauded enthusiastically.

Sarah had happy smile on her face: “It is indeed the poem by Taiza master. So touching and so moving. I like it. Thank you!”

…

Dudian was listening to those cheers while leaning to the edge of windowsill. His heart was frustrated as he hadn’t brought anything with him. He hoped these people didn’t pay any attention to him so as not to provoke any unnecessary trouble.

Suddenly, he saw a figure run under the window. Dudian cursed himself for being stupid. If he didn’t have anything to gift then why not to sneak away as the other person?

He looked at the nobles whose attention at the moment was on Sarah. Taking advantage of the rare opportunity, he looked outside

the windows and determined that the height was about two meters. He didn't hesitate as he climbed onto window in one move and jumped out of it as if he was a flexible cat.

He walked down the path to quickly leave.

In order to avoid encountering the servants, Dudian walked around the more remote areas. Here were no lights. At the moment it was lighted by rays of the moon and the stars. He walked on the stone path surrounded by trimmed ornamental trees. It didn't take long before he reached a small pavilion. He sat there to wait till the banquet to finish. He would go back then. He was not someone of high birth so his disappearance would not be too noticeable.

Rustle ~!

Suddenly, there leaves shook.

Dudian face slightly changed and he shouted low tone: "Who is there!"

There was no more movement but Dudian knew from the sound of wind that there was a person. After all, three years of rough scavenger training he had gone through many experiences and could determine what were in his surroundings through the voices.

"Come out, I know you're there!" Dudian said.

Before long, a slender figure moved from behind the trimmed ball like tree. Under the illumination of the moonlight Dudian saw a girl who was almost as big as him. It seems that he had seen her before but couldn't figure out.

Dudian relieved, said: "Come out. I have no malicious thoughts. I'm hiding from the limelight. I'll not inform you and you'd better not inform on me. Otherwise it will be bad for both of us."

This girl was nervous at first but as she heard Dudian's talk, she was surprised: "You aren't sent by my father to call me back?"

Dudian knew she had misunderstood so he shrugged: "Of course not, I do not even know you."

The girl looked at him in relieved manner: "You scared me. You said you are hiding, from what?

Dudian snapped: "I haven't brought a gift so I'm here to avoid the embarrassment."

"what?". The girl seems to suspect that she heard the wrong. Thinking about Dudian's words she smiled, 'puchi': "Oh, didn't you know that today is Miss Sarah Mel's birthday?

"Don't 'don't' me!" Dudian shrugged: "I just didn't know."

The girl walked along the slate to the edge of the pavilion. She saw Dudian's uniform and asked: "This uniform. Are you a scavenger?

Suddenly Dudian looked black, and said, "Yes, but you'd better not talk about seeing me over here. Or else I will tell about you too"

"I will not say." The girl smiled and said: "My name is Jenny, what is your name?

Dudian replied, "Dean."

Chapter 36 - “A Tree In Blossom”

“What kind of world is outside the giant wall?” The girl looked curiously at Dudian, “Is there a endless seas and vast expanse of forests as bards tell?”

Dudian turned back to the pavilion, looked for a chair and sat down, shrugging. “I have just been appointed scavengers, and have not been outside the giant wall. But there are seas and forests, that’s for sure.”

“How do you know?” Jenny followed him to the pavilion, sitting on the chair opposite the tea table, wondering, “Did not you say you have not been outside the giant wall?”

Dudian mind suddenly thought of the earth. He have seen the blue sea and forests. and many beautiful scenery. His heart was saddened and he murmured: “Of course, I have seen”.

“Have you seen?” Jenny was surprised.

Dudian recoiled, and said: “It is in the poet’s poem to see. But I believe that those who certainly exist, otherwise, how the bards would know about them? ”

“Do you think so?” Jenny pleasantly surprised, said: “I think so too but my father always said that those are made up by bards. In reality they do not exist. Even if there is something like that we would never step outside the giant wall. He said it is very dangerous outside, is that so?”

Dudian thought to himself. Most probably your father was afraid that you are too curious and would secretly ran to the outside the giant wall to peep at the scene. He said: “The danger does exist.”

“Is it really dangerous?” Jenny’s eyes were a bit disappointed.

Dudian saw her sad eyes, suddenly felt himself as if killed off a good hope. He couldn’t bear to break her heart so he continued: “However, although there is danger but it does not mean that there is no sea and forest. I believe, one day, the danger outside the giant wall will disappear and we will be able to go out and see the mountains and the sea and everything”

Jenny ‘s face shone brightly and said, “Really?

“Really!” replied Dudian in serious manner.

Jenny’s face smiled and said: “I think so too. I had told my father about it before but he told me to give up the idea. He said the outside of the giant wall is unknown place. In addition, he said that only special personnel such as you can go outside the wall, other people are prohibited from entering. ”

Dudian smiled, did not say anything.

“I really want to go outside the giant wall!” Jenny face full of longing. Suddenly, she thought of something looked at Dudian, said: “Since the giant wall so dangerous, why do scavengers go

outside? ”

Dudian thought but didn’t say that this has to be answered by the nobles. However, as the girl’s age is still small, apparently not involved in these aristocratic politics: “I don’t know the reason. Perhaps like you, just want to go outside to see.”

Jennifer looked at him with a trace of admiration: “You are so powerful. Obviously we are same age but you are more brave than I am.”

“Because I’m a boy,” Dudian smiled.

Hearing this, Jenny face turned red. She secretly looked up to Dudian. She saw that he didn’t notice her embarrassed appearance, and her heart was relieved. But her heartbeat was slightly accelerated. How can I and a boy be in a garden alone? If father knew... no! no!... He can’t learn about it.

She was going to bid farewell to Dudian and leave.

“Do not misunderstand. I do not discriminate against women. In our training camp there were many girls. But I think you should still listen to your father’s advice. Outside the giant wall is indeed very dangerous. You just have to wait until those dangers are swept out. Sooner or later you will be able to see the outside world. I believe that day won’t take long!

By the faint moonlight, Jenny looked at the boy’s serious and

confident look. She could not help but startled a moment, subconsciously asked: “Really?

“Uh-huh!” Dudian nodded affirmatively.

Jenny heard his words. It seems as if she was infected by them: “I believe you!”

Dudian smiled and said, “I believe in myself.”

Jenny smiled. “puchi”. Her previous intention to leave has long been missing.: “You know, my dream is to become a” magistrate “. Although the official can not go outside the giant wall, but at least can judge all the bad inside the giant wall. I believe that there are no bad people in the world and if we work together we will soon be able to remove the danger outside the giant wall.”

Dudian smiled and said: “Do you learn the law?

“Of course.” Jenny grinned, showing a proud expression.

Dudian laughed: “I just learned the law.”

Jenny said with surprise, “Have you also learned the law?

“Self-learning,” Dudian added.

“You want to be a magistrate?”

“Well, my goal is as great as yours!”

“Great?” “Yes, our goals are great!”

“how old are you?”

“Just turned eleven.”

“I’m almost twelve.”

The darkness gradually deepened. The more they talked the more they were unaware of how the time flew. They talked about lots of things, from their hobbies to their ages. As well as their views on things. They had way too much in common, as if they had found long lost friends.

“One without ears, one without tail, giggle … …” Jenny clutched her stomach because of laughind hard. She completely forgot to pay attention to the image of nobility, said: “What a strange son. So strange lyrics… It’s fun thou… ”

Dudian said: “It is a children’s song.”

Jenny smiled, thinking how can there be such a strange children’s songs.

Dudian just wanted to say a few more children's songs, suddenly he felt a mosquito bite his wrist. He shot with his backhand to kill it. The sudden sound woke up them from the sweet chat. The looked back at the direction of the banquet hall.

Jenny saw his move, also reacted. She felt bad: "I have to go back. If my father can not find me he will be very angry."

Dudian is also just ready to go back, said: "Then you go first. I will wait a while. Let's not be caught seen together"

Jenny's face turned red. She ran outside the pavilion, suddenly though of something and turned back: "You just said you also heard a lot of nice poetry. I also like poetry. Can you tell me one?"

Dudian was surprised for a moment. She was not sheltered under the pavilion. The moon shines were reflected on her cheek. This moment, she was as beautiful as unreal fairy. His heart was throbbing subconsciously.

He knew a lot of Tang poetry which was classified as Eastern classical poetry. It was totally different from this era's poetry genre.

Suddenly, he thought of the modern poetry which her sister often read:

...

How do I let you meet me,

At my most beautiful moment.

For this,

I beseeched the God for five hundred years,

I asked Him to let us meet in earthly life.

God let me become a tree,

Grown on the roadside that you pass by every day.

…

Dudian remembered that this poem was called “A Tree in Blossom”. He had changed the word “Buddha” to “God” while reciting. After all, the faith of the world is dictated by the Holy Church and there is no Buddhism.

Hearing Dudian quietly recite the verse, Jenny was stunned. After a while she turned around and fled along the trail to disappear in the darkness.

Chapter 37 - Two ‘Blessings’

It was about 10 minutes that Jenny had left when Dudian began to walk through the trail towards the estate. He was reaching the banquet hall when he heard bursts of hearty laughter from far away. It seems the party had finished, as Dudian saw the banquet hall’s door completely open. One after another nobles came out in groups.

Dudian did not expect for his timing to be the on line with banquet’s ending. In his heart he was thankful to the mosquito which had bitten his wrist. He didn’t enter the banquet hall but instead walked down the main road towards the outside of the manor. He used another route to join the main road to close up to entrance of the banquet hall. There was no nobles so he trotted past, pretending to come out from the banquet hall. As if ready to return back home any moment.

He saw the there were only seven or eight carriages left in comparison to large numbers of them that were neatly parked close by to each other when they had initially came over.

Dudian’s heart was relieved when he saw Peter’s carriage standing outside.

He went over but there was no one in the carriage. It was clear that Peter had yet to come out.

Dudian first sat in the carriage, waiting inside.

Before long, Peter drifted back in an extremely drank state. He saw Dudian inside the carriage: “You?... how?... you here? You... me...admired...long ... ” He was in a state where he couldn’t express himself. Peter’s body was shaking. Dudian helped him into the carriage.

Dudian was dumbfounded as he said: “You shouldn’t drink more. Come sit over for a break.”

“Higher ups... orders... in the next must do so ... ...” Peter speak too vague to understand anything out of his speech. However he obediently went inside the carriage and sat down to lean on his right side.

Dudian watched Peter’s nonstop giggling. He sighed, lifted the curtain and said to the driver, “Go back.”

“Yes, sir,” said the coachman respectfully and then shook the rope.

...

They first dropped off Peter and later came to the temporary accommodation castle provided by the Mellon consortia where Dudian got off.

It was late night so Mason and others were in deep sleep. Except the gatekeepers on shift the rest of the attendants, servants and maids were resting. Dudian returned to his room to lie on bed. A

lot of things emerged in his mind that he had encountered in the party. There was both humiliation and anger. He thought about beautiful girls that brought joy to his mind. Gradually he fell asleep.

The following day, early in the morning Dudian just woke up to Peter had come over to the castle carrying a wooden box.

“Good morning, Mr. Peter,” said Dudian greeting him. Dudian was surprised as he didn’t expect Peter who was so drunk last night to be awake and so fresh early in the morning.

Peter smiled and said: “Last night I was way too drunk. Coachman said that you had sent me back home”

“This is how it should be, doesn’t it?.” Dudian looked at the small box in his hand and said, “What’s this?”

Peter put the box on the table in the living room and opened the box. There was a syringe that Dudian had previously seen. He understood that the reason Peter had come was to give him the “God’s blessing”.

“Yesterday you were just transferred over so did not have time to give use it on you. I assume, there is no need for introduction about what this is. Dean, you will get two ‘blessings’. First is on the basis of distribution, the other is your first months quota. The other one will be issued to you exactly this day of next month. “Peter laughed.

“Would you let me take it home and use it myself?” Asked Dudian.

“Of course not,” Peter shook his head. “This is the power of the Holy Church which is the gift of God. The rule is that it must be seen by the witnesses when it is used. I brought it to you so I’m your witness. ”

Dudian regretted as the chance to research the syringe was lost. However, thinking about it he had no proper equipment for the research so there was no way to study it.

“Come on, first,” Peter said, taking the syringe from the box.

Dudian was lacking in trust department so he asked: “This … … no problems, right?”

Peter’s face turned cold: “I’m going to forget what you had said. Do not even think about talking like this somewhere outside. It is same as questioning the God!”

Dudian naturally understand this point so he had to select words tactfully in the future. If he didn’t directly question, there won’t be any problems.

“Do not worry. This is the gift of the God. There has never been adverse reactions since the first scavenger that had used it.” Peter answered.

Dudian did not say anything but was surprised. It was an awe-inspiring moment from a scientists perspective. How did the Holy Church create such a perfect gene agent? Is it possible to mass produce scavengers?

Peter injected the fluid inside the syringe into Dudian's arm. He felt no pain just felt some numbness. Soon, all of the pink fluid inside the syringe was pushed into his body.

Dudian felt a surge of enthusiasm that was spreading into his body and limbs. A violent heat flew to his brain. It felt as if the whole blood inside his body was blown to his mind in a matter of seconds. He roared loudly and the heat began to flow in reverse back to his body and limbs. It felt very painful as it was almost like someone was trying to tear his limbs apart. He bit his teeth to bear the pain.

Soon, this heat like a tide of water faded away. Dudian looked up and immediately felt different. His vision was very sensitive. He could see small details of Peter's face that he was not aware before.

Dudian thought of Lorian's strength, immediately jumped in place.

Dudian felt like flying. With a single jump he had reached almost the level of Peter's head. He fall back to the ground, raising his hand he grabbed a chair. It felt as light as catkins.

"Well, wait a minute and then we can use the second one," Peter laughed.

Dudian looked at the second syringe Peter had picked up, and asked, “Is it going to feel like this every time? ”

Peter smiled and said: “Of course not, the initial injection the effect will be very significant. But your body will get used to it so the effect will be weaker as you get more injections.”

Dudian although expected this, but still can not help but regret. If the effect could be doubled or tripled then simply a monster like existence will appear at the result of using genetic agents of Holy Church.

They were just scavengers and had such terrible power. So what an existence a hunter was?

Soon, Peter injected the second syringe into Dudian’s arm. The heat flowed again from his body. This time it was not as strong as before, and Dudian only felt a slight tearing and the heat flew down.

Dudian looked again, immediately feel their vision clear a lot. He knew that his power had improved a lot. He thought he could barehanded kill a tiger if he had faced it.

“Go ahead and teach the others,” Peter laughed.

Dudian nodded slightly. Mason cried hard.

Before long, all the injection were completed. For a time the whole castle was extraordinarily noisy, everyone wass jumping, experiencing the incredible power they had acquired.

After Peter left, Dudian returned to his room to pack up. He was ready to return to the residential district.

“We can live for free for three days. Are you going today?

“We also intend to go to the busy downtown market today!”

“Why are you in hurry? This is such a rare opportunity.”

Mason and the other two tried to persuade Dudian.

However, Dudian had already made his mind. He bid farewell to them, called a carriage and went to residential district.

As soon as the carriage reached Lin Kang Street No. 108 Dudian jumped out of it. He paid sixty copper coins. His heart was in pain, as the carriage hired in commercial district would charge twice the amount for same distance in comparison to carriage hired in residential district or in slums.

At this time, Dudian suddenly saw another carriage parked by their door. “Are there any guests?” , he wondered.

He bypassed the carriage, opened the door outside the white

fence and was about the enter the house when he hear the voices of outgoing quarrel. He was surprised. He raised his hand and knocked on the door.

Soon, the door was opened by Jura. She looked strangely at Dudian, said: “You are?

After three years of scavenger training Dudian’s appearance has also undergone tremendous changes. His build was a lot stronger than the original, color was not so pale but tanned into the wheat color. As a result Jura actually did not recognize it.

“Auntie, it’s me,” said Dudian.

Jura heard his voice that had changed a little: “You are Dean!”

Dudian lightly chuckled: “The training is over, I’m back.”

Jura eyes suddenly flushed. She embraced Dudian with her arms: “You come back. You finally come back! Your uncle and I feared for you that you were in some kind of trouble... It’s good that you are okay... ...” She immediately pushed Dudian, looked up and down at him. She was relieved as she saw his hands and feet intact.

Dudian’s heart warmed up as he saw her so exaggerated. He smiled and said: “Originally wanted to buy you few specialties from commercial district. I had no money so didn’t buy anything”

“Silly child. You coming back alive and well is a gift.” Jura smiled

and touched Dudian's hair: "The three years have gone by. You are so high, and over there ... ..."

"Do not go too far!" At this point, an angry voice came from the living room. It was Gray's voice.

Jura face changed, and quickly turned back to the living room.

Chapter 38 - Boundaries

Dudian also followed into the living room.

Dudian saw two figures in addition to Gray in the living room. One was obese with a big belly. There were three or four gold rings on his fingers. Another was a slender man wearing a suit. His hair was combed neatly looking like a noble.

“Gray, pay attention to your attitude!” Dudian came in just to hear the slim man’s wailing sound.

Gray clenched his fist tightly, his face looked at him angrily, said: “We have purchased this house. The amount of the tax was written on the contract and it was been paid. For you to raise the origin tax, it is just simply illegal! ”

Obese middle-aged man chuckled, said: “You are a small tailor. Do you even know what law is? This whole Lin Kang street is mine. It is my territory. Whatever I say is the law. Even if you want to go to trial, I welcome you to do so anytime. ”

Gray gritted his teeth and said, “You are thief!”

“Well, this is slander. I have been personally attacked, I can sue you for this!” Slim man spoke in a cold tone.

At this time, Jura looked at the red face of Gray and hurried to hold his hand: “This matter. Give us some time to discuss it. Such a

high tax, we really can not afford to pay. ”

Obese middle-aged man said lightly: “You are sensible. But we had already given you few days. Today is the last day. I will come back at night and I hope you will give me a satisfactory answer” Finished he stood up to leave.

“Wait a minute.” At this time, Dudian stood in front of the obese man.

“Uh?” Obese middle-aged looked at this kid who was up to his shoulder. He frowned: “Little guy, who are you?”

At this time, Gray also noticed Dudian. He saw Dudian’s completely changed appearance, stunned: “Dean? You, you come back?”

Dudian nodded slightly, and then looked up at the obese middle-aged: “With a body like that it would be very hard for you to make trip back and forth. Actually we don’t like to be disturbed in our home.”

Obese middle-aged smiled and said: “Little guy, I heard Gray has adopted a child, is that you?

Dudian did not answer him, but continued: “First of all, according to Land Law, Chapter III, Article VI, a one-time purchase of land and real estate, property tax must be paid off with the housing money. When Jura and Gray bought this house, they had

already paid for it. Or else they would not have got the proof for the property."

"In the seventh verse of the fourth chapter of the law, all the vesting of authority and taxation of the house shall be to the owner of the house, and only the lord of the house shall have the right to reclaim it.

Dudian looked at him, said: "You said that the entire Lin Kang street is your territory? How can you prove it? Even if you want to collect tax you have to go to trial so that a magistrate should look into your proposition. You will have to prove them that you are the lord of the territory to be able to obtain tax contracts, right?

Obese middle-aged was shocked.

The slim one startled a bit, his face fell: "Little guy, what nonsense are you talking? What kind of proof do you want to see?

Dudian looked up at him and calmly said, "If you do not have proof the lordship, please leave and do not bother me any more. Otherwise, I will arrest you as a criminal who infiltrates the inhabitants!"

Hearing this all of them were surprised.

Slim man smiled and said: "arrest me? Little guy, I have been spouting nonsense since the beginning. Be careful or I will send you directly to the guards.

“No need to go anywhere. I am already a guard.” Dudian took out his guard medal and continued indifferently: “As you just talked to me in a way like that, I can sue you for slandering a guard and get you arrested! I think, in the seventh article of the law records, for malicious slander of aristocracy you can be sentenced to three years in prison. There is two years of prison sentence for slandering guards. In case of an attack against the guard, the sentence is death!”

“What do you want?” Dudian looked up at them.

Obese middle-aged and slim men looked at the guards medal. They were speechless.

Jura couples to see this familiar medal, can not help but startled and soon remembered the purpose of training for three years. There was surprise and excitement in their eyes, they didn’t think that Dudian had succeeded!

“You, you are guard?” Obese middle-aged was shocked. It was the first time that he had met such a small guard.

“Are you questioning me?” said Dudian indifferently.

Obese middle-aged man quickly shook his head. Although it was incredible, but he still recognized this medal. He knew that posing as a guard was a big crime.

“It was the first time I saw such a small … … so young and promising guard.” Obese middle-aged smiled drily.

Dudian plain: “This is the proof that you are not really lords. There are lots of guards like me. At the age of 16 years there are lots of guards who join nobility for experience. Afterwards will be transferred to “boundary wall”s between the districts and later on to the giant wall.” The ‘boundary wall’ that he had referred to was known as ‘wall of rich and poor’ by the aristocracy.

Obese middle-aged man was embarrassed: “Here I am, I am really the lord. My grandfather was a great knight, was sealed to this territory, but … …” afterwards he couldn’t continue.

“But this land was awarded by a noble to you knight grandfather. He is gone, so the territory has lost its legitimacy. Perhaps the noble forgot to recover the land so you have continued to lord over the place. It is not legal” he said indifferently, “but I think if you go away, I can reconsider it.”

Obese middle-aged and slim men, as one, immediately bowed and said: “Then we will leave.” Then, he moved away from the side of Dudian around.

Before long, the carriage had left with no trace of both of them.

Dudian looked up at the Jura couple. Three years have passed. There were light wrinkles on their eyes. They were more than thirty years old but in this world living up to thirty was same as being fifty years old in the old era.

Jura couple recovered. They surprised to see Dudian as they did not expect to to solve the previous trouble easily. In a few short words that Dudian had said resolved everything. Gray said: “You graduated! Worthy of my son, awesome! Unexpectedly, my, Gray’s, child will be a guard! ha ha, tomorrow I wiill go to the factory and show off in front of the workers. They will envy me!

Jura white at him, smiled and touched Dudian ‘s hair, said: “You child, all tanned so black! It had been three bitter years.

Dudian smiled and said: “It was nothing. Although, this time I can’t stay for long. After a few days, I will have to go to perform a task. Afterwards I will come back.

Jura stunned for a moment, ” What task? Is it dangerous?”

“No danger, rest assured.”

“That’s good.”

Gray smiled: “When the guards can have any danger? They do nothing but accompany nobles around. Moreover there is Holy Church who protects us from evil demons.

Jura snapped: “I’m just afraid!”

Gray smiled and shook his head, do not say anything.

Later that evening, Jura prepared a very rich dinner to celebrate the return of Dudian and him becoming a guard.

After dinner, Dudian said to them, “Auntie, I want to borrow some money this time.

Jura laughed: “How much do you want?

“Ten silver coins.” Dudian thought that the money should be enough to buy enough materials to make gun powder. He would use it for defense in case of any danger outside the giant wall.

Chapter 39 - Apprentice

“So much?” Jure was shocked.

Gray’s monthly salary was about two silver coins. As for Jura, her salary was slightly higher but only about three silver coins. Unless she visited some rich noble she wouldn’t get extra commission. Ten silver coins was equivalent to their two-month salary in total.

“What are you going to do with that much money?” Gray frowned.

“I need that for my mission needs. At the end of the task, I will give you back.” Dudian seriously said.

Juda and Gray looked at each other, reluctantly replied: “Well, it’s alright. But you have to promise us that you are not going to use this money to do bad things.”

Dudian was relieved. However he was also aware that Jura couple gave him the money because of his guard identity. If his occupation was something else he would not be provided with the money.

The next day.

Early in the morning Dudian went over to Southern Adventurers market in the residential district.

All districts, whether slums, residential or commercial districts, were divided into four regions. East and West regions were always vast in size compared to other regions. Dudian's family lived in Lin Kang street which was located in southeast of the residential district. The so called Southern Adventurers market was a place for civilian to do free trade. Most of the goods that were sold in the area were brought from the outer edge of the giant wall.

The nuclear radiation was intensive in the outer zone in comparison to other areas. So only adventurers were willing to go there. That's how the market was named, in honor of those adventurers. An adventurer was not a long-term career, most of them would retire after few times of risk-taking. They would earn enough money to support the erosion of their body for the rest of their lives.

Dudian was not worried about the nuclear radiation as he had check the information beforehand. Lead was extensively used in making his uniform. It was effective in resisting the radiation. Moreover he had free access to outer edge of the giant wall, it was just not worth for him to go alone to search for materials. Purchasing them was much more time effective.

The market was far away from his house and Dudian was not interesting in losing time.

He spent five copper coins to reach the Southern Adventurers market by carriage. It was a crowded bazaar. There were blankets and carpets covering the ground and were used as booths. Materials were neatly arranged on those carpets by the sellers.

Their noisy voices and shouts of advertisement covered the entire market.

Dudian strolled down the aisle.

Half an hour later, Dudian finally found a few stalls which sold sulfur ore. He was searching for crystal saltpeter too. As for charcoal powder, he could make it on his own and didn't want to waste money to buy it.

The seller was a middle-aged man with dark complexion. His hair was scattered, while there were some red spots on his hands. Most probably he was infected with some kind of a disease while adventuring in the outer edge of the giant wall. He was using long sleeved clothing for cover, but inadvertently his was exposing those red marks while raising his hands.

Dudian knew that man's body radiation level was very high. Most probably he had few years of life left, unless he would get a treatment from Holy Church.

After bargain, they agreed on 1 silver and twenty copper coins. Dudian was going to but all the saltpeter and sulfur ore. Saltpeter was more valuable that costed a silver coin.

"Using all these materials I can make few packs of explosives at best. As I'm going to take food and basic weapons, there is ban to take additional things while I will be on task. Gunpowder isn't that heavy so it should not be a problem. Anyway, there is no point in purchasing more raw materials, this should be enough. " Dudian

was calculating the possible outcomes in his mind.

“Little guy, these things are very heavy. You should either call your family for help or get a carriage. Do you want me to help you get a carriage? ” The seller who had received the money said to Dudian.

“No need.” Dudian replied. Everything was put into linen bags. For a normal person it would be very hard to carry them but for Dudian it felt as heavy as feathers of a bird. He grabbed the linen bags and went away.

The middle-aged man was startled and stared at Dudian with wide eyes as he spoke away.

It was not long before Dudian bought basic tools at other stalls for use in refine the gunpowder. In the eyes of ordinary people the role of these tools were not related with alchemy. For example there was a apparatus used by doctors to grind materials into powder while making pills.

By noon Dudian had bought everything that he needed. He was strolling around the market to see if there was something extraordinary that could catch his eyes. He felt hungry so he turned to leave for dinner.

“Boss. Sell me for a coin, please! It’s just a broken stone.” Suddenly, a tender sound echoed in Dudian’s eyes.

Out of curiosity he turned to look sideways. He saw a boy half head shorter than him who was carrying a linen bag in his left hand while holding a rough black stone size of a large fist on his right hand.

The seller was a thin young man. He shook his head and said: “This is an iron ore. Although the weight is not much, you gotta pay at least twice the amount.”

“Boss, even if this is an iron ore, it is only an ore, not iron. It is so small that even after refining you won’t get much of an iron. ” Boy changed his strategy: “It is so small that smelting factory wouldn’t even need it. No one will buy it. It will just stay here. Sell it to me and you will have your copper coin.”

Thin young man hesitated for a while but ultimately said: “Well. Alright.”

The boy grinned, paid for it and the put the black stone into the linen bag. He turned to walk away.

Dudian was about to go when his eyes caught a small tattoo which was on boy’s wrist. A small black hook pattern was drawn.

“Alchemist’s apprentice?” Dudian did not expect to meet one in here. From Rosyard’s notes he had learn of lifestyle and habits of alchemists. The most impressing thing about them was that every alchemist would have a dedicated tattoo design on their body. It was a sign used by alchemists to identify each other. Without a tattoo no one would be accepted into their circle.

The tattooing method was very basic. They would use powder of some plants and mix it with black water. Afterwards a needle would be used to sketch out the pattern. Moreover even a small dot without no shape or line could be considered as a sign.

Although tattoo's were not only exclusive to alchemists as nobles and Holy Church used them too. But they would avoid using black pigment.

If there was a black color on tattoos, even if you were a noble or member of Holy Church, you would be treated as an alchemist. It can be said that it was an absolute proof used to identify them.

Similarly, if you don't have black tattoos even if you are true alchemists, you would not be recognized by the other colleagues.

Dudian glanced at the direction that boy left. Carrying the linen bags, he quietly went after him to catch up.

Chapter 40 - Tubes

The linen bag that the boy was carrying was small. Obviously he was not as strong as Dudian because it didn't take long before he began to breathe heavily.

Dudian's vision was three times better than the ordinary person's because of "God's blessing". He was trailing the boy from far behind.

"Because of his age, at best he is an apprentice alchemist. It's just who he had bought the materials for. Is it for his own use or to help out his teacher? " Dudian was pondering while walking after the boy. The boy stopped at the junction on got onto a carriage.

Dudian face slightly changed and run after to catch up after them.

The area was bustling with the people so the carriage's speed was not fast. Fortunately, Dudian's body was strengthened because of three years of hellish training and 'God's blessing' so that his stamina was enough to follow after them seven or eight streets. Dudian was having problems with his breath when the carriage suddenly stopped.

The kid jumped from the carriage after he paid for the ride and entered a roadside alley.

Dudian immediately went over, pretending to be passing by the road. He looked at the alley but was startled. It was a dead end

sealed by walls in all three sides. The boy had disappeared.

“Damn it!”

Dudian frowned. He didn’t believe in fairy tales such as existence of magic. So he accept the fact that the boy disappeared just like that. He entered the valley and carefully checked the ground for footsteps.

As it was a sealed alley few people used it. It was dusty everywhere. Garbage was piled up in some parts. Dudian focused his sharp vision and saw stampede footprints on the ground. The trail spread towards the middle of the alley to the front of a wall.

He came closer to the part of the wall where footprints had disappeared. The carefully touched the wall. It was coated and colored to look like the wall. Actually if he hadn’t touched it, he wouldn’t be able to tell the difference.

“Hidden entrance.”, Dudian touched everywhere to feel the hard structure behind the entrance. It was made so that the hidden entrance wouldn’t be exposed by wind or rats.

Dudian noted down the address and went out. If he informed the address of the alchemist’s base to the Holy Church, then as a scavenger, he would receive a lot of financial gains. However he was not interested on such a thing, on the contrary he was ready to join the underworld of the alchemists.

After all, except the Rosyard's notes he didn't have any kind of knowledge regarding the alchemists. Although he had recorded a lot of things in the notes, but many high-level alchemists mastered and learned the information about basic nature of things by heart instead of recording.

To join the alchemist circle, he had to be an alchemist. The first step towards that was to ink a black tattoo.

Dudian took another look at the alley and went back to the intersection. He stopped a carriage and went to the slums. From young age he had learned that he had to be as efficient as possible.

Soon, the carriage came to the slums. The air blowing thick stinky smell hit him as soon as they approached the slums. There was a hint of frustration in his heart. Enduring the smell he went towards a remote place to find a dilapidated small hotel to rent.

In the hotel room, Dudian took out some of the raw material in the linen bag. The first step was to extract the sulfur ore from the sulfur. He was prepared to use the most primitive refining method to heat the sulfur ore and dissolve it. Afterwards he would have to cool the upper layer and grind it using stone wheel to produce sulfur powder.

It was rainy season at the moment. Dudian paid a few copper coins to the hotel's owner so that he could get few pieces of coal from the dusty brazier.

Dudian returned to his room and locked the door. He began to

heat the sulfur ore by burning the coals. After a while he understood that he would need more coal so he went back to hotel owner to buy a big bag of coal.

The melting point of sulfur is not high so it soon melted. Dudian had prepared all the purchased equipment in advance so there was not much of a delay in the production of sulfur powder.

The room was incensed in sulfur smell. Dudian had long prepared and worn a mask. Due to the nuclear radiation masks seemed not to disappear but still widely used even though the technology hadn't progressed at all.

It was true that different environments promote different developments.

According to Rosyard's notes all the alchemists were using masks as they were dealing with all kinds of experiments and inevitable could intake toxic substances. The role of the masks were minimal but still widely available.

By the evening, Dudian finally had enough amount of sulfur powder and charcoal powder. He was ready to produce the gunpowder which was a simple thing given he had all the basic necessities.

"I wouldn't have expect to produce gunpowder in a condition such as this." Dudian looked at his clothes smoldered dirty by coal. He yearned for the future where he would have his own dedicated alchemy room for the experiments.

“I hope I can make a fortune with this trip to the outside of the giant wall!” Dudian wiped off the dirt on his face.

...

In the blink of an eye, seven days passed.

The night before the task, Dudian left his house to commercial district. The Mellon Foundation had sent a carriage to take him and the other scavengers to the headquarters. Mason, Dudian, Sham, Zach and others stayed in a small castle provided for free of charge.

“I heard that tomorrow morning we will start.” Mason excitedly said: “At last tomorrow I will be able to outside the giant wall. Since small age when I heard those horrible stories told about the outside world, I have yearned to see what is it really out there! ”

“I don’t think it is as bad as the stories tell about but it is definitely dangerous.” Zach said.

Sham smiled, looking at things that Dudian had brought with him: “Dean, what are those?”

“Toys,” said Dudian casually, glancing at the small tubes that were filled with powder and ready to explode at any given time.

Chapter 41 - The Passage

The next morning at dawn everyone was up and ready outside the castle.

There were dozens of horses outside the castle. They belong to Black Horse breed which had a strong resistance to diseases and radiation.

“Get ready,” said Peter. He was already on top of a horse and he had the posture of a graceful knight.

Dudian selected a black horse and jumped over to sit on it. If it had been before the ‘God’s blessing’ injection he would have to use a ladder to climb the horse.

“Let’s go!” Pete shouted when everyone was seated on horses. His legs clinging to the belly of the horse, he was the first to move.

Dudian, who pulled the reins, followed.

Even though the horses had massive build and scary appearance, they were very obedient creatures by nature and it was very easy to control them.

The streets were covered with fog . Crisp sounds of horse gallops were heard as they moved through. Under the leadership of Peter, Dudian and other speed off towards the outer edge of the commercial district. As they moved forward they saw the vague

shadow of the giant wall far away in the horizon. The outline was becoming increasingly clear as the distance covered was increased. The giant wall seemed like a creeping monster behind the fog giving people an oppressive feeling.

Outside the commercial district, same as with the residential district, was a large undeveloped and desolate wasteland. It was not suitable for cultivation or for people to settle.

As they were passing by the desolate zone the black horses became restless. As if they were excited and manic because of some unknown variable which made them to run faster. After ten minutes of straight ride, the hazy figure of the giant wall gradually cleared up in crowd's vision. The picture that they saw was deeply imprinted in their hearts and minds.

It was a very tall wall. Almost impossible to see its top. The more close they got, harder it got to grasp its height. It almost reach the clouds. It gave the impression that it was built by gods but no humans. Dudian couldn't differentiate the construction's blocks, like it was a complete natural boulder that was put there to divide the world into two.

This is ... ... the giant wall!

Including Dudian, everyone was shocked as they reached the giant wall. The crowd felt like ants in comparison to the giant walls size.

"Father ...it's too high!" Mason looked up. His neck folded almost

ninety degrees, but still couldn't see the top of the giant wall.

Zach stared authentic: "Did our ancestors build the giant wall? "

Everyone was struck by this great and magnificent project.

Dudian knew very well that it would be an enormous project to build a giant wall like this one. Even in the old days, it would be extremely difficult to built it. Countless amount of time, manpower and resources would be needed for the construction. The outbreak of the disaster was sudden so there was no time to project and implement such a super shelter. He couldn't imagine how the ones who survived the nuclear bombing shower built such an incredible architectural miracle.

"This is the sanctuary of our Silvian giants! Our ancestors and gods came together to build it." There was a trace of pride in Peter's eyes. He turned and looked at the crowd, smiled: "Come with me, little guys. In about 100 meters we will reach the destination. All of you should dismount and rope your mounts."

A heavy iron gate was opened by Peter while echoing squeaky sounds. Peter's arm strength was in an incomprehensible level as he alone moved the giant gate. There was a ladder leading to the underground below the gate.

"Go in," said Peter.

One by one, the newly appointed scavengers went into the tunnel

under the iron gate.

Peter was the last one to go in so he closed the iron gate. Everyone felt isolated and panicked because of the darkness that was surrounding them.

“Aren’t we going outside the giant wall?” The girl in the back timidly asked.

Peter smiled and said, “What are you so afraid of? It seems that Tobu didn’t properly train your courage in the last three years.”

“So we are not going to pass from the top. Are there no passages through the top? ” said Dudian.

“Of course not,” said Peter, urging “Hurry up, everyone is waiting for you.”

Dudian surprised: “There are others?”

“Of course, although you all have graduation from the scavenger camp, but it is the first time that you would be going outside the giant wall. The headquarters had arranged another old-timer team to escort you on your first trip. They are the scavengers cultivated by the families. Their foundation is not as good as yours but they have rich experience from roaming outside the giant wall. Keep your eyes open and learn as much as you can from them.”, Peter said.

Step by step they went down the ladder. They had gone down approximately a hundred or so meters. At last they reached the bottom. In front of everyone there was a spacious underground passage. Both sides of the passage were lighted by oil lamps. There were some patterns on the walls.

“This is the ‘goddess of harvest’.” Peter pointed to the wall, a graceful woman’s picture was carved on the wall, said:” You have a good prayer! I wish you lots of harvest in this trip. ”

Everyone had seen the statues of different goddesses at areas designed by Holy Church in the residential district. They were no stranger to them. Following the Peter they stopped in front of the goddess of harvest, clasped their hands and bowed to make their prayers.

“This is the ‘goddess of the hunt.’ ” Peter pointed to another heroic looking woman, said: “Every time the hunters travel, they will worship the goddess of the hunt to bless them to hunt smoothly.” He then take the lead to go forward.

Dudian, who finished praying, followed behind him.

The spacious passage was extremely long. About two to three hundred meters in length. At the end of the pass there was ladder which took them upwards. As they reached the end of the ladder, Peter opened another huge iron gate and they saw the skylight.

Dudian followed Peter out. There were around 20 people, sitting or standing around 10 meters away.

“At last Peter. Could you be any more slow? ” At this time, a light laughter echoed. A tall, young man in a black uniform wearing two-edged sword and a black mask came towards Dudian’s group.

Peter laughed: “What are you so anxious about? It’s still early!”

Young man’s eyes sweep over the group and said: “I heard in the new batch there is good quality seed. I was told that there is hope for him to become a hunter? ”

Pete raised his hand and patted Dudian’s shoulder and smiled. “It’s him. You gotta take care of him.”

The youth looked at Dudian and laughed: “No problem. We have not much time. We gotta start. When we come back I will find you for a drink, remember it will be your treat!”

“It’s me who always pays anyway!” Peter smiled loudly and looked to Dudian and others: “I wish you well. Remember no unauthorized actions. Do not leave the team. I hope ten days later I will see everyone safe and sound! “Then, turned into the underground passage to left.

Dudian looked back and saw the towering gigantic wall behind him. He did not expect the passage to be underground.

Chapter 42 - No. 8

“My name is Scott, this is my partner, Mia.” As Peter left, the youth in black uniform pointed to a slender tall woman standing next to him.: “I’ll be the captain of the team in the next ten days of scavenging. It’s best in your own interests if you listen to my commands. Otherwise there will be big repercussions and penalties when we come back to consortia”

Mason, Zach and several other boys promised to obediently follow the captain after hearing the punishment part.

Scott said to Dudian: “Little boy, what’s your name?”

“Dean.”, Dudian replied

“You may have potential,” Scott said, nodding slightly. “But do not be proud and blinded by it. The death maybe waiting around the corner. Stay behind me at all times and I’ll tell you what to watch out for”

“So he is going to be teaching me”, thought Dudian. He nodded in to show that he understood.

Everyone heard their chat as their voices were loud enough to echo around. Most of them were envious in their hearts but avoided to speak out.

After all, Dudian was first in the course results. He also received

two blessings, whether it was by force or identity they couldn't shake his position. Moreover three of his closest bedroom brothers were backing him up too. Even if they acted on anger they couldn't bare the consequences by daring to provoke Dudian, Mason, Zach and Sham.

"Well, here's your ten days of dry food and water rations. This time we brought them for you but the next time you should go to headquarters to pick them." Scott pointed to the ground where more than a dozen black backpacks were.

Dudian looked at the black traveler's backpack. Lifted up one and untied the rope. The backpack was filled with 'mud' balls. He had seen them in Jura's house. They were mashed potato balls, the taste was very unpalatable but easy to eat... Actually if you ate one, you will have no appetite to eat the second...

Mason, Zach and Sham followed behind the Dudian to pick the backpacks. They choose the slightly larger backpacks.

Scott saw their selection method and smiled: "No need to make the choices according to their looks. They all weigh the same. They were provided by the headquarters and they are never made mistakes in their portions. "

Mason, Zach and Sham smiled shyly.

"What are those?" At this point, Scott noticed gunpowder tubes at Dudian's waist.

“Little stuff, not worth mentioning,” said Dudian, “it will not bother me.”

Scott nodded and no longer said anything. He looked towards distant 20 consortium scavengers and said: “Come over and prepare for departure”.

Consortia’s scavengers were adults. Some of them older than Scott. However when Scott’s were convened all of them gathered as one. They were supported by the consortiums so they had all the equipment and weapons that Dudian’s group had.

“Scott boss, where are we going today, ah?” A slim young man asked.

“No. 8.” Scott turned to Mia and said: “We should start as soon as possible, right?”

Mia nodded slightly.

Scott began to walk in front while Dudian followed after him: “The place where we are going today has been completely emptied and cleaned of dangers. So you shouldn’t be worried about anything for now and try to save your stamina.”

Hearing this, Dudian and others were relieved. Their tight muscles gradually loosened down and they began to look around the surroundings.

It was wasteland in the vicinity. Previously Dudian noted that the moss had covered the rear of the giant wall which was totally opposite to the desert terrain on the other side.

“Outside of the giant wall is totally different in comparison to my imagination. I though desert will be everywhere.” Mason who was walking behind Dudian spoke out.

Zach smiled and said: “At least we shouldn’t worry about the water problem. As long as we dig a pit then we could get water!”

In front of Scott heard his words, glanced back at him, said: “There are puddles on the ground, you do not have to dig pit. Even if you dig out I’m afraid you wouldn’t be able to drink”

“Uh?” Zach was stunned.

Dudian explained to him: “The radiation level outside is way too high. We can’t drink the water even if it was filtered by the soil. If you want to drink you would at least have to dig tens of meters below so that it would be suitable for the human body. Right now we have enough strength to dig that deep without being worried about our stamina. So do not mix this environment with the one back from training days.”

Zach who had heard Dudian’s words was puzzled.

Scott looked back at Dudian, did not say anything and continued to lead the way in front. It didn’t take ten miles when they came to

place where vegetation was unsubstantial. To be exact they had come out to ruins.

Dudian was perplexed as he saw the ruins.

This ... ... was actually a broken city?

There was a cracked asphalt street in front of him. There were moss and lush vegetation covering the roadside and coming out of the cracks. Broken and dilapidated concrete walls left from the buildings could be seen. It seemed they were remnants of two or three floor shops. Vines and moss had covered all of them. Over the years they had been covered and buried under dense growing plants.

There were broken and scatted clothing in these desolate streets. Obviously over the time of three hundred years, rain dropped over and dust enveloped them. They had turned to black and hard stone-like objects. Only the rough outline of their shapes was left.

Dudian was shocked.

This ... ... was the appearance of an entire ruined city!

Are these the results of the outbreak of the disaster that Earth face three hundred years ago?

Once humanity was prospering, civilization had expanded all over the world ... ... Only the shell body of the original civilization

was left.

His chest hurt and his breath became ragged. There was moist in his eyes.

“Dean, Dean?” Mason saw Dudian suddenly stop, couldn’t help but pat his shoulder.

Dudian recovered and saw Scott and Mia had already walking in the streets. He walked a bit fast to catch up with them. When his feet touched the vegetation which covered the asphalt streets, all sorts of feeling arose in his heart. He thought of his parents and sister. Flame like explosions and their aftermath were passing in front of his eyes bit by bit. He was sad that everyone had died. Also they will never be able to come back. This was the reality, just as the ruins that he saw in front.

“This is area No 9. It had been throughly scavenged.” Scott saw the people behind him did not keep up with his pace so he beckoned: “Speed up we are tight with time... We shouldn’t waste it in here.”

Dudian kept his head down.

Along the way, Dudian saw that the streets have been scavenged very clean. Basically in addition to collapsed concrete walls there was nothing left, no residual items. The streets were spacious back in time, there should be many scrapped cars but there is nothing to see. As Scott said everything that was left have been taken back.

But if the technological products of the old were picked up then why the giant wall's technology is so backward?

Was there a serious corrosion because of nuclear radiation that no valuable object of research was picked?

He followed behind Scott and Mia, as if a ghost, looking at this once familiar world but only silent.

Chapter 43 - Monster

“Was there anyone living in here?” Mason and the others who were looking all over the streets could see the ruins covered by the vegetation. The architectural style was totally different but from these vestiges they could vaguely understand that most of the things were the remnants of broken residential buildings.

“Of course.” Scott looked up at the surrounding ruins and continued: “Our ancestors had lived in this place until the disaster destroyed it. As a result it is desolate now. As everything that is here was made and build by our ancestors, our role is to take back these things to the consortium”

“Where our ancestors lived … …” Mason exclaimed in excitement as he heard words Scott said. Everyone was curiously looking around.

Dudian saw a map drawn on sheepskin in Scott’s hands. He peeked at it and saw the crooked routes sketched on it. In the center of the map a huge square pattern was depicted. ‘The giant wall of Silva’ was written close to it. Outside the giant wall there were outlines of irregular curved circles marked with numbers above them.

“Zero, one … …” Dudian eyes sweep over them. He saw that these numbers were repeated in different places. There was ‘zero area’ at one place and in another one. The numbers went up to seven. Each area were dyed in a different color. The map looked like a rainbow.

Scott saw that Dudian was observing the map: “This is the scavenging map of the giant wall. The outside areas are divided by consortia in advances and marked accordingly by number and color. For example our Mellon consortium’s areas are colored in blood red. The green and yellow that you see close by to our area belongs to others. Green areas area owned by military while yellow refers to Huasheng consortia’s area. Each consortia sends their hunters in advance to clean out the region before sending scavengers”

Dudian nodded slightly as he undertood the meaning behind circles and colors. Zero to seven referred to military and 7 consortiums. He asked:”What is the gray are outside?”

“This is place that hunters haven’t gone through yet.” Scott spoke in a serious tone: “We absolutely can not enter these gray areas. They are extremely dangerous. Even hunters are likely to die in there if they are alone”

“Dangerous?” Dudian was curious, said: “What is the source of danger?”

“Monster!” Scott whispered.

Dudian’s heart jumped, Monster?

At this time, they came up a corner. There was a traffic light which had collapsed on to the street. As everything else it was covered by vegetation and surrounded by vines. It was not collected by scavengers.

“The area No 8 is in front of us” Scott looked at the corner of the street. There was less vegetation in here in comparison to other areas as it was close to the city center. Traces of cracks were one streets that had been caused by the earthquakes.

“From now on all of us should be on alert! ” Scott looked dignified as he pulled out a dagger from his waist: ” The hunters have just cleaned out area No 8. We are the second batch to enter this region. Although the harvest will be very good, but it is likely that we will encounter monsters that weren’t killed by hunters. Be calm and try not to be attacked by monsters otherwise you may get infected.”

Dudian and the others who were new to this felt a little nervous. They took out their weapons as Scott had done previously. Everyone vigilantly began to scan the surrounding environment.

As Scott entered the middle of the street, Dudian saw a new wooden sign on the roadside. There was a blood-red ‘eight’ written on it representing the area number eight under Mellon Foundation.

Dudian vaguely saw a large lump of green vegetation covering an object on another part of the street far away from them. From the shape of object he identified it as a scrapped car.

He was excited at sight. If there were cars then he could find generators too. Naturally in the last three hundred years because of the ultraviolet effects, rain and corrosion most of them would

have turned into scrap metal. But there was a chance that he would find some well-preserved parts. There can be a well-preserved generator at some underground shelter too.

Scott whispered: “These green vegetation are covering some large-scale materials. When we return we have to think of way to take them back. For now the first is to find a foothold to live for the next ten days. So we should get a base camp and the separate to search for the materials.”

They passed by the cars that were covered by the greenery. They were totally unaware of a pale and dry hand that stretched out of the windows of one of the cars that was covered in thick vegetation. It was struggling to catch the crowd that had gone.

...

At the end of the street on crossroads Scoot looked up and picked a slightly complete three story building: “This place should be fine. Let’s clean-up the place” He went towards the building.

“Ah!” A girl’s scream sounded out from behind. She pointed out to the ground close to the building in horror: “Blood! Blood!” She was shocked and trembling.

Everyone looked to see a pool of blood on the ground. Although it had dried up but the color was visible. It was clearly left in here recently. After all rain would have scrubbed it away in the last three centuries.

Dudian's remembered Scott's words regarding the monster. He subconsciously clutched his waist where gunpowder was kept.

Other children were tensed up as they saw the blood pool on the ground.

Scott frowned: "What are you making the fuss for? I've already said that there were monsters in here. Obviously hunters have killed them. Do you expect them to clean afterwards? Do not be surprised as we may see sights like this a lot. Ah! I hate working with rookies!" His patience was clearly not as high towards other as with Dudian.

Mia, who was next to him, pushed forward the door of the building. The door was made up of the glass but had been broken. It seemed to be a shop. Vegetation had spread inside the building.

Dudian entered behind Scott. There was thick accumulation of dust everywhere. After the long time, it had dried and had become as hard as the layer of earth.

Scott with a handle of the dagger poked the vegetation on the counter. There was a glass cabinet. His eyes brightened. Immediately with the hilt of the dagger he broke the glass and grabbed the jewelry that was inside. He wiped the dust above the jewelry with a fabric and exposed the golden luster. There was surprise exposed on his face.

Dudian quietly watched. He knew that Scott will get extra commission from the jewelry that he had picked up. After all,

nobles love gold. Especially the ornaments such as these were very hard to find.

Chapter 44 - Corpse

“It is gold!” Macon and Zach also noted the jewelry in the counter. Their faces showed a bit of excitement.

Scott heard a excited shouts. There was a faint smile on his face as he turned back and said: “I would like to remind you all that although we are a group but the person who picks up the materials keeps it. This is the rule and all the consortiums are very clear about this point. I’m not deliberately bullying you.” Then he pointed towards the twenty scavengers from the consortium.

Mason who heard this had an ugly look on his face. A slim youth from the group consortium scavengers nodded in affirmation of Scott’s words: “He is right. Do not be lazy, as whoever picks up the materials owns it. The one who is capable and have luck on his side will pick up more than others.”

Mason was frustrated as he heard them talk. Scott was the first to find the gold jewelry so it is naturally his. Unfortunately they won’t be getting any commission or royalty.

Dudian was disappointed with the rule too. But soon their spirits rose. In fact for newcomers like them it was a fair rule. In sense it protected them too, at least they wouldn’t share their findings with others. In this case, Scott’s luck was good. As he randomly selected a foothold which happened to be gold shop.

Scott cracked all the glass containers in the room and took out all the jewelry. He piled them in one of the cupboard’s and again

clenched his dagger: “Alright, we should clean up this place” Dudian and others began to clean the dirt in the room. Scott added: “Do not attempt to steal or use other dirty ways to seize the other’s loot. If the owner of the materials is killed in the process of scavenging then the materials that he had picked will belong to the consortia and will not be shared.”

Dudian knew that Scott was telling the newcomers not to be greedy and use crooked methods to acquire materials. He also secretly appreciated the consortium to set such a rule. To a large extent, a rule like this, would make scavengers to avoid killing each other in the wilderness.

Scott and Mia took the lead and walked up the stairs as they finished cleaning the first floor.

The corridor was covered in corrugated thick vegetation. There were few things scattered on it. Dudian’s recognized them at a glance, it was a woman’s shoes and a wallet. It seems riots had occurred while the disaster out-brake.

Consortium’s scavengers followed after them but a middle-aged one collapsed down because of stampede in the stairs. Ha fell on to the ground. Fortunately it was first floor and his body was ‘blessed’ by God so he was not injured. But newcomers were scared the shit out of them because of this sudden occurrence.

Scott looked back and frowned: ” It is extremely dark on the second floor. The windows have long been covered by the vegetation so there is not ventilated and sun can not penetrate inside. As a result the ground is a bit wet, be careful when

walking!”

Scott lit a torch. He carried the torch to walk in front. The corridor was dimly illuminated by the burning torch. He stood before the first room in the corridor. The door of the from was half-covered. Scott gently pushed the door. Suddenly an air was blown outwards that almost extinguished the torch.

Scott had a dagger on his right hands while he lowered the torch a little with his left hand. He slowly entered the room. The floor was cluttered. The chair was knocked onto the ground, the curtain was torn in half, the windows were broken and dense vegetation covered everywhere.

Kacha!

From the depth of the room came a slight sound.

Scott’s face changed and immediately lifted the torch according to his instincts. Dudian saw that it was a bathroom. The curtain had collapsed onto the ground. Two pale withered thighs were hanging out of the bath tube. As the torch’s shine illuminated the surround they saw the thigh’s owner. It was rotten woman’s face which was pointing to them. The sound came from her chest.

On top of her tummy there was a huge black rat that was constantly kicking onto woman’s chest. Dudian’s could observe the scene from the gap of Scott’s arm. His pupils suddenly tightened.

It’s size was as big as a hound. It’s hair was colored black and its tail was as thick as a a finger. It was eating the woman’s body.

“Is the monster!” Scott was the first to react, by throwing the small dagger at it.

The rat that was feeding on woman got aware of the fire behind it. It turned it head towards the fire. It’s eyes were blood red, full of violence. It’s sharp mouth was stained with stick blood. Few very long hairs which seemed to be its beard was fluttering slightly. As if knowing that it would be outnumbered by the enemy it suddenly stepped on the side of tube and jumped outside through the windows.

Scott and Mia’s attacks all come to nothing. Everyone was focused on extraordinary rats movement as they heard Scott’s words.

Scott whispered: “It run away.” Then he level the torch down according to dead woman’s head. It was as if she was staring at him with her pale green eyes.

“Good god,” Mason covered his nose because of the rancid smell.

Dudian had forgotten about breathing. His heart was in shock as it was no trivial matter. In the last three hundred years of the nuclear radiation, the rats which had lived in here from generation to generation had gone through a terrible gene mutation!

His eyes fell on the woman. The other one was naked. Her chest was carved out by the rat. Half of her heart was bitten. However his eyes fell on her eyebrows. There was a finger thick blood hole, which seemed to be… … a bullet shoot?

Dudian was startled but then rejected the possibility of the bullet. Rather more likely it was an arrow that had caused the damage. After all, there was no significant tearing or destruction which had to be caused by the power of bullet.

But he still couldn't understand that if the woman died by an arrow shot, then a person had killed her. "What kind of people will shoot her with an arrow?" Dudian thought. Suddenly the hairs on his whole body stood erect. He had neglected a point while thinking through.

This woman, obviously was in the process of bathing while she was killed!

However, the water supply system in this house, should have long been broken!

Moreover the people in this world rarely liked to wash themselves naked. So even if hunter or a scavenger, they would try to avoid taking a bath in the ten days tasks.

" Was she killed three hundred years ago? Did she die while taking bath? If so… … her body should have rotted!" Dudian was frustrated. Mia crouched down and picked the curtain to cover dead woman's body. Even it was wilderness Mia didn't want

woman’s body to be kept exposed. However when Mia raised the curtain to cover her, Dudian inadvertently saw the woman’s arm… … There were sharp claws!

Instead of nails there war sharp, long, thorny claws. Five spikes slightly bent. It was difficult to imagine being gripped by such a palm. What kind of harm it would cause!

“Mutated humans?” Dudian stared speechless, his mind confused.

Chapter 45 - Undead

“Undead’s corpse!” Scott muttered. He saw Mia carefully cover her face with a trace of a of loss, sighed: “Clean up the room! This thing must be burned otherwise it will be a source to nurture the other monsters! ”

Mia mouth was fretting. She silently got up, looked at this woman rotten face and turned around to clean up the room of other available materials.

Dudian heard Scott’s words. His heart was startled. He couldn’t help but ask: “What is ‘undead’ ? ”

Scott looked at Mia’s back and saw her silently picking up the materials on the ground and table. He sighed and replied to Dudian: “Undead’s are a type of monster which are extremely power and similar to human being. They like the taste of the blood so they will hunt and eat any living being which they detect. They suck the life out of body by eating the flesh and drinking the blood. As more they feed on animals and humans, more powerful they will get”

“How did they come about?” asked Dudian.

Scott sighed: “They were infected by the devil. Before death these undead were human beings. Unfortunately they could not withstand the temptation of power offered by the devil and eventually abondoned their soul for it. Although they gain eternal life and unlimited power, but they loose their personality and

memories. In short they turn to devil's minions."

"Infected?" Dudian naturally didn't believe in the devil story, so he asked more: "Is the infection result of the radiation?"

Scott did not think that Dudian would want to go to the bottom of the hole for the answers. He looked at him and shook his head: "Of course not! Radiation damages the body distorting its shape. But they will never become such bloodthirsty monsters. However in this case, it's the devil that agitates them buy exchanging their soul for power. Moreover it is like a plague disease which can be transferred to other if they bite someone off. It's like the previous 'bone rat' which was a low-level monster that could infect others by biting."

Mutual infection, ha? Isn't this a virus? .

However, where the virus was originated?

Could it be three hundred years ago, after he went into frozen storage capsule other things had happened?

Scott sighed and said: "These 'bone rats' like hiding in the darkness. Hunters would normally ignore them. Although with our power we can kill them but you all should be careful not to be bitten by them. In case your skin is scratched then you will turn into an undead!"

He looked at Mia who was silently picking up materials and said:

“Mia’s husband was bitten on the arm by a rat monster…”

Bang!

The metal object in Mia’s hand suddenly fell onto the ground.

Scott was startled. He didn’t say anything anymore to Dudian. He changed the topic: “We should separately clean the rooms. Remember to be careful. These monsters can smell our body’s odor and blood. Although the ‘bone’ rat ran away but it still is hovering in the vicinity. Be carefully as they hide in the darkness. So check corners and dark places before going in. The best is team up into groups of four so that you can take of each other in case of emergency!”

He was mainly talking to new scavengers. Those consortium scavengers were not as good as the regular scavengers but they had rich experience.

Hearing Scott’s instructions, the people began to scatter away. Mason, Zach, Sham and others were shocked by the terrible appearance of the undead. Moreover the previous ‘bone rats’ huge body had made their minds uneasy. They had never seen such bloody and dangerous scenes! Most of them had forgotten their studies in the training camp and at the moment just to wanted to hold together close to Scott.

Scott looked at these children’s pale faces which was the result of shock. He slightly frowned: “Haven’y your instructors told you that being a scavenger is not a simple job? If you continue to follow

me, you will lose your chance to pick up anything valuable. By the way, there is a quota set by the consortia. If your scavenging results are lower than that for several times you will be expelled from the consortium!”

Expulsion? Mason, Sham, Zach and other turned paler. The fought back the fear in their hearts, clenched their weapons and turned to leave.

Dudian was about to turn away when Scott called out, “You do not have to follow them, just follow me. This time, I will give you one third of everything that I will pick. However the next time you will be on your own.”

“I’d like to go alone. If there’s something wrong I’d call for help!”, Dudian frowned.

Scott looked at him in surprise and said: “Well then, be careful.”

Dudian nodded slightly and turned towards Mason and the other two: “Let’s go!”

Mason secretly gave him the thumbs-up and left the room with them. Dudian saw that all the rooms in the second floor had already been occupied by small teams to be search so he said: “We are going to go to third floor.”

Mason and the other two didn’t object. They had come to unconditional decision that Dudian’s decision would be final say at

all times.

The third floor was also the top floor. Vegetation was sparse. Gray cloudy shadows shone in from the broken windows. The floor was piled with a thick layer of dust while blood was scattered on the walls and the corridor. There were corpses along the corridor. Some were cut at different parts of the body while the others had their heads crushed. There were traces of blade scars on the walls. The hunters had been here and a vicious battle has taken a place.

Dudian noticed that all the corpses had sharp claws instead of fingernails. Although he didn't know where the virus originated from but there is no doubt that to have such amazing effects it had to be created at world's top biological institute. Maybe, not, most likely it was made by 'those guys'...

Mason and the other two swallowed their saliva when they saw the bodies on the ground. During the training they had killed snakes, lizards and other animals. They have cut them into pieces, taken out their organs and seen their blood flow out. But at the end of the day, human is human. Witness a human corpse in front of the eyes was totally different to killing an animal and dismembering it.

Mason, Zach and Sham felt a sense of fear. There limbs went cold as if these dead bodies will suddenly get up claim their lives.

Dudian was equally afraid, but he tried to keep calm. Through illumination of the sunshine he came to the first room in the corridor. The door of the room was open, and the lock was broken.

There was a violent intrusion and traces of the battle that had happened not long ago were still engraved on the walls of the room. There was a pool of blood on the ground and two more corpses. The dead bodies belonged to young man and woman. There complexion was unusually pale. The green veins appeared on their body and their feet were dry and lean. It was as if the body fat was drained and only the muscle tissue was left.

Dudian put on his mask and spoke in a low tone through it: “Do not touch the body. Look around for useful materials.”

Hi eyes swept the whole room. He saw a laptop covered in dust.

Dudian cleaned the dust off the laptop. He gently pressed down the power button. Apparently the spring connecting the button had rotten and was unusable. He took it back so that later on to disassemble it to see what parts were functional.

Chapter 46 - Assault

Mason, Sham and Zach were separately searching for materials in the room, but were doing their best to avoid those two dead bodies on the ground. Even though bodies had no life in them, they were still afraid of them.

Mason and the other two found some metal objects from the room. They didn’t know the roles of the items that they had picked. But according to their logic any metal object must have some kind of value.

Dudian saw them pick up phone, TV remote control, electric lights and other objects. He was wondering that scavengers who find things similar to the one Mason and the other two found should be a lot. Heart can not help but wonder, scavengers who have to find these things should be a lot. How do they evaluate the value of these things?

However when he thought deeply about the issue he did understand that in these three hundred plus years the “normal” ecological environment has changed a lot. So in terms of radiation level, the standards which applied in those days aren’t same as the ones in present times and world. Still there was the question of the value and purpose of the objects which are acquired. Even there are parts that aren’t harmed in one or another way and they are accumulated in the hands of the consortiums then how do they value things if they don’t know the original use of the part?

For an object to resist the nucler radiation it had to be made up of lead, gold or other high-density metal which was why the gold

jewelry under the counter was kept as it.

“Go to the next room.” Dudian glanced around and saw that there was nothing of value. They were the first to come over the area so Dudian wanted for his group to pick the objects of high value. In the future when other raiders will come to scavenge, they would be able to pick clothing, beds, refrigerators or other large objects that would be left for metal to be removed.

Mason and the other two didn’t want to stay in the room for long so they immediately left out..

There were corpses lying on the corridor. It was especially quite.

Dudian looked at a few corpses, feeling that they will suddenly wake up. He suppressed the cranky feeling and opened the door of the second room. He was thinking about the nuclear disaster while he was searching the room. Apparently three hundred years ago when the global nuclear bombing broke out, it was not the only disaster. A terrible virus had began to infect the survivors.

This unknown virus had turned people who were infected into undeads. So for people to survive in highly dangerous zones, it had to understood how terrible and tenacious the virus is.

Dudian was mainly looking for computers, mobile phone and appliances similar to those. After all, in residential rooms those were the things of value.

There was a desktop computer in the second room. Dudian wasn't planning to take the whole machine with himself. He opened it up and took the electric box that was inside. The wires were covered in dust. He touched the main board but it was like a thin layer of paper.

After the long term radiation it had completely deteriorated.

Dudian sighed. Resistors that were on the motherboard were either dried down or swollen into strange shapes.

Dudian slightly shook his head and gave up on the machine. After all this was the first day and there were another nine days to go. He could pick lots of things in the next nine days but he couldn't carry them all as there were limits to much he could handle.

"if there was a truck, the I wonder how much I could carry out...". An idea emerged in his mind. But he soon was discouraged as the computer in front of him had turned into a useless garbage. How would he find proper parts to make a car as everything has deformed into irreparable state? He would need the help of super-computer.

The premise was ... ...to have electricity!

Later on he found a generator, to be precise a wind generator which needed an open field to work. Even if he went to slums to buy such a site, he still lacked the funds to do so.

They went through third and fourth rooms.

The building was completely plundered in less than half an hour. Everyone had stacked their goods on the first floor's hall. They registered their findings with Scott to prevent confusion and theft in the future.

Clearly, in the long history of the scavengers, they had understood that in order to obtain the best interests for participants the civil strife had to be eliminated.

"Now, everyone should go to search the nearby bar." Scott said to crows as he finished registering the products.

Twenty consortium scavengers who were eager for more didn't wait for long and formed groups of four or five and left the shop to nearby ruins in search of supplies.

Scott looked at Dudian, said: "I and Mia will be searching for supplies together. Do you want to go with us? "

Dudian shook his head: "No, I'll go with my friends."

"Don't forget that in case of danger call for help. It's very quite in here so as long as the distance is not too far then we will hear." Scott didn't insist for Dudian to join them but reminded him being vary dangerous situations.

Dudian nodded and turned to call Mason, Zach and Sham three.

They went down the street towards a dilapidated building that was in the vicinity.

Dudian didn't go into every building as he could know that what he could find in those ruins. Soon he found ruin of a small supermarket.

The supermarket was covered by vegetation, but because of its style it still could be identified as a supermarket. He didn't know what kind of disaster had it suffered as it had collapsed from middle down to door. In front of it there were few corpses which seemed to be killed recently.

"So many corpses … …" Mason spoke out. Their faces had turned ugly after they had come to area no 8. There were dead bodies everywhere. They couldn't imagine what kind of a picture those hunters faced when they had come here first.

Dudian's mind was also timid, but still maintained his calm. He passed by the corpses and went towards an entrance to the supermarket. He stepped inside but he saw a dead corpses in that instant. There were eight red spots which emitted low sounds.

"Monsters!" Dudian's pupils shrank as hurried back.

A gray shadow flashed by the entrance and jumped towards Dudian while he was retreating.

Chapter 47 - The First Battle

Dudian quickly fell sideways and rolled to escape the gray shadow's attack. He looked up to a dark haired rat. It was similar to 'bone rat' which he had seen previously but it was a little thinner and small. At the moment it's blood-red eyes were tightly staring at him while it exposed its hideous teeth.

"Monster!" Mei, Zach and Sham cried out loud. Their face turned white while their legs become soft.

Sou!

The mutated rat jumped again towards the nearest Dudian as soon as it landed.

Dudian's hairs were erect. The rat was too fast and he was too late to dodge it. His reaction was slow and instinctively he raised his arm to resist.

Bang. He felt a heavy impact that hit his upper body. Because of imbalance he fall backwards. He was scared so he had closed his eyes when he had raised his arm. The rats small teeth tightly bite his arm. He palm loosened and the dagger fell onto ground.

Because of fear and adrenaline, blood rushed into his mind instantly!

help me! help me!

Many ideas flooded his mind which confused him. His instincts had taken over the reason when he had faced an encounter which impacted his life. The rat wasn't able to bite through the uniform so it began to chew his arm non-stop. A sharp pain came from his arm. Dudian quickly calmed his mind and put to panicky senses at the back of his mind. Everything happened in a time of few breaths.

"Uh, ah ah ... ..." Dudian roared, picked up his arm and severely hit the ground. He grabbed the leg of the rat using his other arm. He kept hitting the ground using his right arm, so that rat's head would be hurt while violently colliding with the ground.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Because of continuous violent crashes and pulling of its leg, the rat didn't stick up till the end but loosened its mouth. Dudian roared and hit it's body to the ground while keeping a firm hang on rat's leg.

"Die!"

He crazily hit the rat again and again while whirling it around. Dudian roared a crazy hit, again and again to whirl hit the ground. The rat's head-bone cracked because of hard collision and blood spilled out. Vicinity was filled with blood.

He didn't know how many times he had hit the rat as Dudian's anger gradually subsided. Tiredness spread all over his arm. He

picked up the dagger from the ground and mercilessly stabbed in to rat's stomach.

Dagger was extremely sharp and it continuously thorn through rats skin. The dagger was stained in blood. Dudian stopped his attack as he saw rat stopped movement. His heart was still thumping fast. There was fear still lingering in his heart as he recalled the previous scene. This was his first time facing a life-death situation. Although he had outlived the nuclear disaster but was like watching a disaster movie through a TV. Experiencing first hand a threat like this was totally different.

Even without a mirror, he could feel that his face at the moment would look extremely ugly. He looked at his right arm. Above the uniform there were few deep dent marks. Fortunately this black, soft material was made of extremely hard substances and had a layer of lead. Otherwise as Scott had mentioned before because of the rate of the infection he would have turned into an undead like Mia's late husband.

"Dean!" Mason cried out in vain.

Dudian looked up at him.

Suddenly Mason rushed out and raised his dagger and cut above his head.

Dudian suddenly woke up from euphoria and thought of the previous eight red spots that he saw in the supermarket.

Puchi! Mason's dagger had thorn a rat and blood was sputtering out.

Dudian quickly looked back and saw that in addition to the rat that was stabbed by Mason another three rats had rushed out from the broken glasses of supermarket. They stared at Dudian and Mason with blood red eyes for a moment. They rapidly jumped towards Mason and Dudian as if they were agile cheetah's.

Dudian's face ugly as he waved the dagger again and again to intimidate these rats. However, simple intimidation did not scare them. One of the suddenly jumped to Dudian's front.

Dudian quickly stabbed his dagger but the blade cut rat's greasy hair. It's outer body was so hard that it wasn't affect by dagger instead t fall down, jumped again and grabbed onto Dudian's chest. Two of it's front claws tried to grasp Dudian's face.

As a beast it instinctively knew the vital parts of its prey.

Dudian quickly grabbed its hair. Because of the armored gloves he wasn't worried about the infection that could contaminate him. However, the rat's hair was extremely hairy. As hard as Dudian tried he could still feel the hair in his hands to rapidly slide away.

One again he was facing a desperate situation.

Suddenly, Dudian roared. His feet straddled and body turned in a very soft posture. He had stood up without using his hands. At the

same time his arm clutched at the last trace of the rat's hair and pushed it aside. Rat flied out.

The rat fall down one ground, made few circles and stopped on to attack once more.

Dudian heart was contracted, muscle tensed and his mental force was at it's highest degree of concentration at the moment. He suddenly kicked.

Bang! Dudian's feet had kicked the rat as if he has expected the attack route of the rat and actually kicked it in the exact position of its flutter. His kick contained the power of his anger and despair. It was a heavy blow which made the rat to fly out, then hit and roll on the ground. The rat was screaming in sharp tone.

Dudian did not stop, instead to the initiative and rushed out!

He went ahead and used the dagger to stab it while the rat has not climbed up.

The dagger tore its abdomen, penetrating it deeply.

The rat fiercely struggled, uttering pierce sharp cries. Dudian's body strength was exhausted but he firmly nailed the rat onto ground. He was not releasing it despite its struggles and screams.

His heart was full of hostility!

Chapter 48 - Death

“Ah !” screams echoed out.

Dudian looked back to see that Mason was outflanked by two rats and threw himself onto ground. Zach and Sham approached in haste to kick the rats. They didn’t attack with daggers, worried that they would injure Mason.

Dudian face changed. He quickly pulled out the dagger and reflexively rushed past.

“Go away!” Dudian roared loudly. His metal boots kicked one of the rat’s head. With a bang sound the rat fall back. Zach used the opportunity to rush up and to kick its head severely.

Sham grabbed the tail of the other mouse so that it didn’t climb onto Mason’s face.

Dudian’s body had adapted to fighting against the rats because of the experience. He pulled from rat’s hind leg and fiercely hit it on the ground. After a few violent hits, its sharp little head was knocked on ground and it’s struggle became weak.

Dudian continuously whirlwindingly hit the rat onto ground. The rat couldn’t find a leverage to break out of his hand.

After ten consecutive times of hit, the rat gradually stopped moving. Its body twitched a few times as blood penetrated out

from its hair coloring the ground red.

Mason and Zach had killed the other rat.

Dudian looked at the rat. He used the dagger to stopped it few more times. He was relieved and sat on the ground. His whole body was exhausted. He felt like his arm was nonexistent because of the pain. He was taking big breathes using his mouth. However the mask's air filter was very slow so felt dizzy and hypoxic.

Mason also sat next to him, his back against Dudian's.

Zach and Sham's state were much better, as they still retained a lot of physical power and stamina. They looked at the ground. The dead bodies of rats were still laying on the ground. They were frightened by the sight.

After a while of rest, Mason threw his hair backwards. He was panting as he talked: "Damn. It almost got my throat. These damn things!"

Dudian 's breathing has gradually got smooth, looked back at him, said: "Thanks to you, I'm.."

Mason snapped: "What the heck man!"

Dudian smiled, no longer say anything.

Zach had a lingering fear: “There are so many damned rats around that hunters haven’t even touched. How the heck do they call this place ‘clean’?”

Sham congratulated: “Fortunately, the uniform’s are tough enough to bites of these rats. If they were torn, the consequences would be unthinkable.”

Dudian looked at the corpses of rats that were in front of him and thought back to their previous battle. His fingers clenched into a fist. Too bad. His performance was too bad. If not because of Mason’s timely intervention, he would have been bitten by the rat that attacked in from rear.

“You have done very well. After all it was the first time you encountered such a fight. Even adults will be scared and panicked if a dog attacked them out of nowhere.” A voice inside of him relieved himself while he was self-blaming himself. Dudian’s strangled the voice within him, biting his lips and making the pain hit his mine. He let his weakness remember the you live only once!

In the face of death almost everything is meaningless. To save yourself you gotta have the power. Only by being powerful he could survive!

He suddenly understood why the scavengers are selected only from the residential areas and slums rather than the people who attend the college selection from the commercial district. Because the mortality rate of the job is too high. Although they encountered danger, it was ‘trivial’ because area no 8 has been ‘cleaned’ by the hunters in advance. If the scavengers would be

collecting in areas no 9 or no 10, the probability of encountering these monsters will be very low.

However, low risk also meant that there will be low harvest!

This is a dangerous job. But it was worth it terms of returns.

It was fair.

Because of the previous combat experience, there was fear of death in Dudian's mind. This time they encountered mutated rats. Would they encounter more terrible monsters the next time? Should they join into a larger force so that their chances to survive increases?

He looked at the broken glass door of the supermarket. There was a feeling subconsciously forcing him to retreat. Soon, he thought of his right arm. He thought of the marks engraved on it. A sudden firmness was reflected on his eyes. Propping the ground he said to the three "Let's go in! Most of them are dead now so there should be a few inside. Perhaps hiding in the dark. We should be careful of them."

Mason, Zach and Sham were surprised as they did not expect Dudian to dare to enter the ruins of this building. They saw the determination in his eyes. They slightly hesitated, then stood up, clenched their dagger and were ready to enter.

at this time...

“Ah ah!” Scream echoed out from the nearby street. It was quit in the these rotten ruins so the sound was especially loud for the environment.

Dudian and the other three were surprised for a moment. He thought of the battle that they had just experience with the rat monsters. As he heard the shrill cry, he thought that the others also encountered something for the first time. He hesitated as he did not know if he should go for help.

Dudian hesitated for awhile as his mind came up with few ideas. He said in a cold tone: “Let’s check it out. If the odds are against us we should withdraw!”

Mason and the other two were hesitant as they heard him talk. They nodded.

They ran along the direction of scream. There were scavengers who came out from other buildings who had ran to the place where screams were echoing out.

Soon, the screams got more noisy and intense as they came up the street corner. Dudian immediately slowed down and made a slight hand gesture. Mason, Sham and Zach understood and slowed down their pace. They walked slowly behind Dudian.

Around the corner, Dudian moved his head out to probe out the situation, suddenly his pupils shrank and face turned ugly in horror.

Center of the street was full of green vegetation. In front of a broken shop two people were twisting on the ground. A man and a woman. However, the figure on top had torn coat, revealing white skin. Instead of fingers there were sharp claws. It was an undead!

A live, undead! . .

This woman undead was on top of the struggling youth. Dudian could clearly see the woman biting and tearing the flesh out of youth's chest. Blood vessel tissues were hanging like the wires from woman's mouth. Blood was constantly spewing out of the youth's chest.

By the youth's feet there was another body of woman who lay there motionless. Seems to have already been killed.

Around 10 meters away from the youth there was another young man standing. He was step by step going backwards, his hands clutching his mouth. It seemed that he was afraid to call out because of the fear.

Chapter 49 - Fatal

“Ah, Aaron, save me … …” At this time, the youth that was being bitten by the undead cried out. His hand was raised as if to reach out to the young man who was retreating backwards in hurry. His handsome face was full of fear and pain! Moreover, there was a desire to live!

The young man, ‘Aaron,’ clutching his mouth, looked down at his close friend. His body was trembling and tears were streaming down his face. He gritted his teach and turned to run towards the exit of the street.

Dudian’s saw that the undead who was feeding on the youth was alerted by the footsteps of the Aaron. It raised its head towards the source of the sound. Suddenly, it stopped feeding and turned to chase after the Aaron. It’s arms were fluttering, body was swinging as if it was drunk and could fall at any moment. However its speed was extremely fast and it quickly caught up with Aaron.

Aaron heard to the sounds of the movement coming from behind. He turned to look and was horrified as the undead was almost catching up with him. He turned back immediately and took out his dagger. The woman diagonally waved her arm and used her sharp claws to attack Aaron. He lifted his dagger to parry against the claw. He was able to block it but was hit to the ground by the heavy force behind the claw attack of the undead.

Dudian’s was extremely shocked by the sight. At the same time he was frightened to death. If the undead had attacked him in his current condition, he would absolutely die. He was lucky that he

hadn’t chosen this street or at the moment he and the other three would have met their end.

As he saw that the youth was gradually overwhelmed by the undead, the idea of withdrawal was sprouted in his mind. At the moment, the idea to go forward to help out the other scavengers, has been left behind in deep parts of his mind. These consortium scavenger have not gone through formal training but had participated in many scavenging expeditions. As a result they had rich experience and got more “God’s blessings” than the newly graduated ones. So their strength should be several times greater than his. If the old timers couldn’t deal with the undead then he was sure to die.

Dudian waved back gently gesturing to back away.

Macon who stood behind the Dudian, although did not see scene but heard the mournful screams and chewing sounds. After all the ruins are too quite and the sound transmission is particularly clear. As he saw Dudian’s gesture, he face chaned. He recalled the earlier attack by the rats and slowly went backwards.

It didn’t took long before another four consortium scavengers came out of the other side of the street. They heard the screams that were echoing out. They quickly rushed out and saw the appalling scene where Aaron’s arm was bitten by the woman undead. Uniform which was normally used as an armor had no resistance against the sharp bites of the undead. The blood gushing out as she bite more and more.

“Kill it!” The newcomer youth’s pupil shrank in horror but he

did not go back but roared loudly: “Kill it!” Then he said to the three fellow companions who were besides him: “We should contain it until Scott and the others come over.”

His companions were also horrified. However, as soon as they heard the youth’s commands they didn’t hesitate but headed towards the woman undead in rush.

The dead woman heard the sound, looked up at them. As previously, she stood up in a weird twisted pose. The were no regular patterns to how she waved her arms. She rushed towards the four youth who had come.

The youth roared loudly and as he was running he jumped to kick the undead. He mercilessly kicked the undead woman and flung her out. She fell onto the ground.

Dudian saw the four of them had appeared so he was no longer in hurry to leave. Instead he continued to observe the scene. His heart was in joy as the youth’s kick had affected the undead. However he didn’t rush out to help them as he was scared by the undead agility which he had observed before.

Mason and the other two probed over the sideline to see the fight and taken aghast.

As the youth kicked the undead the other three scavenger immediately stepped forward to hold the Aaron. He was pulled back and left the battlefield.

The undead's body quickly rose up, made a hoarse roar and menacingly rushed forward to the youth!

The youth was taken back by the mobility of the undead. He used his dagger to cut off the undead. It sliced its arm. But there was no blood that oozed out of its skin. From the cut it could be seen that it was black flesh inside and the blood seemed to be solidified. This had resulted in its body to be extremely hard to be cut. The dagger itself was stuck into the bone.

The youth pupils shrank, holding the hilt, he tried his best to pull it out. But he couldn't and in this short moment the undead woman moved onto him, raised the other arms and attacked his throat. The claw clasped making a pop sound. It had pierced through the arteries on his neck. Blood spewed out spilling on undead's arm.

"Wagner!" Three who were dragging Aaron's body back, saw the scene, cried out in alarm and run back to help him.

Wagner was clutching his neck while his eyes were wide open in shock. He would have never thought that his young life would end in here. He struggled to raise his head to look at the horrifing face of the undead. The light in his eyes gradually dimmed down.

The undead growled and seized his body. It bit on his neck and began to eat his body.

"Monster!" One of the companions, who was a bit chunkier than the rest, cried out loud as he rushed over. Holding his dagger he

rushed over to the corpse of the undead.

The undead pushed the body of the handsome Wagner away and swayed towards the on-coming chunky youth.

“Pease, no, don’t go!” The two group mates shouted out.

His eyes were blood red. As he was reaching the undead he took out his dagger and stabbed. He had successfully pierced the chest of the undead but didn’t seem to hurt it a bit.

At this point, the undead attacked the pudgy scavenger. Puchi. The sharp claw pierced through his chunky scavengers cheek. The tip of the claw pricked from the other side of his face. He felt severe pain and wanted to cry out to ease it. But the next moment he saw the ferocious face of the undead approaching his own face. Instinctively, without losing the momentum the undead bit him on the face.

“Pease!” The companion that was behind cried in grid. The other one pulled him to hastily reced back. He hoped to be able to take advantage of time, as undead was eating the pudgy Pease, to escape as far as possible.

Dudian didn’t think that the four consortium scavengers are not a match against an undead which was alone. The most terrible thing was that even thought its chest was pierced it was not affected the least bit. Do the other side is really an immortal monster?

Suddenly, he thought of the dead woman in the bathroom and other corpses that he had seen while searching for materials. He thought of the common thing in all of the bodies which were the scars on their heads!

It didn’t matter whether it was a sword, dagger or arrow injury. All of them were on their heads.

Is the head their fatal point?

Chapter 50 - Bloodstained

Sounds of footsteps echoed out from the rear. Dudian looked back to see Scott and Mia coming over with a large number of scavengers. Scott and Mia were in front by a difference of a large distance. Their speed was alarming as if their were humanoid cheetahs. They were hundreds of meters away, in the blink of an eye they were in front of Dudian.

“What’s going on?” Scott said hastily.

Dudian saw them and his heart loosened a lot. “Undead!”, he said pointing to the corner of the street.

Scott and Mia’s face changed as they saw two scavengers dragging Aaron who was in coma. They also noticed Scott, their faces suddenly were relieved as they said in hurry: “Help us! There is an undead! Please save Pease!”

Scott and Mia ran past and saw the undead woman eating the chunky youth. Scott immediately draw his dagger and said: “Get ready to fight! Together we will be able to kill it, otherwise it will always pursue the smell we left behind!”

Mia saw the Aaron who was injured and in coma. She asked in a trembling tone: “Is he injured?”

One of them replied: “He was bitten! We rushed him over to help him out!”

Scott's facial expression changed: "Kill him immediately otherwise we will have to face two undeads!"

"This, this ... ..." Both of them heard what Scott said. They were not rookie scavengers and they had known for long time that if the person is bitten by the monster is will be infected and turned into an undead. But personally killing a scavenger who was their companion for a long time, especially a one who was still alive was hard to do.

"Can't we rescue him?" the tall youth looked at Scott, "maybe he can hold on ..."

"Idiot!" cried Scott interrupting his words. He continued in angry tone: "If you want to die then hold on to him. But if you want to live then kill him right away!"

At this time, another young scavenger said: "The undead is coming over."

Scott quickly focused on the undead woman. She gave up the prey in her hands and glanced at the new comers with her green eyes. Taking off in a rapid pace she attacked Scott.

"Very fast!" Scott's mind was surprised but he did not flinch a bit.

Scott made the first move and kicked the undead woman in the

abdomen. She didn't tried to dodge, was hit badly and fell to the ground. Scott seized the opportunity, quickly approached her and immediately kicked her face.

His steel boot was pointed at her jaw as he kicked again.

"Die you devil!" Scott growled, raising a dagger to stab the face of the undead woman. Dagger pierced the center of its face and the undead woman uttered a dry roar. Her body was severely twitching. Her body was struggling while her head was tightly nailed to the ground by Scott. It struggled for a while then gradually stopped moving.

As he saw the undead stopping movement, Scott was relieved and he pulled the dagger out slowly from its cheek bones.

Dudian knew that his previous guess was true, to kill the undead its head to be damaged. At this time, the other scavengers also rushed over to the scene. They saw the bloody scene and were disgusted by it.

Scott turned around and looked over the two young people and couldn't help but shout out in anger: "Do you want to die so bad that you still haven't killed him? If he wakes up, the first to die will be you!" Then he came over towards both of them and looked down at Aaron. He took a deep breath, stabbed the dagger through his throat and cut his head off.

Blood was spewing out as if it was a fountain.

The two youth turned pale, their legs trembling.

Scott looked at them coldly while he cleaned the blood off the dagger: “This is the giant wall’s law of the survival. You no more have your instructors by your side! Either adapt or die!”

Then he looked at the silent Mia and sighed. He ordered the other scavengers: “Light up a fire and burn these bodies. Do no let the smell of the blood lead the others towards this place!”

Scavengers who were newcomers as Dudian, one by one turned pale at the sight of such a real cruel scene. One of the girls was horrified: “I, I want to go home. I do not want to scavenge! I don’t want money…” She finished, turned around and ran crazily.

Scott angrily said: “Catch her and bring back!”

Two consortia scavengers went after to recover her back immediately.

One of the scavengers suddenly opened his eyes widely, trembling he raised his hand, pointing over Scott’s back and said: “Boss, they…they stood up…”

Everyone quickly looked up.

Dudian saw the first youth and the other female scavenger who had been bitten at first were struggling to stand up. The female’s head was fractured from the spine so as she raised her head its

head twisting right and left. However she rapidly adapted to her new condition.

"Damn!" Scott looked ugly, growled: "Everyone get ready to follow me!" He was the first to rush up.

Mia was the first to keep up with Scott and the other consortia scavengers hesitated for a moment, but quickly caught up to them. Some of the newcomers from the Dudian's group stared at this scene and dropped onto ground because of the fear.

Dudian had previously seen Scott's skill so he reckoned that Scott and Mia should be able to solve out the two transformed undead. He clenched his dagger and went up ahead.

Mason, Sham and Zach quickly pulled him back and said: "Are you crazy?"

"I'm going to destroy the other two bodies so that they do not turn into undead," Dodian said.

The three were surprised but immediately said: "We will go as well."

Four of them ran behind the consortium scavengers. They had come by the bodies of the handsome and chunky youths. Dudian looked at the dead body by his feet. He hesitated for a moment but then cut off their necks.

After two blessings, Dudian's body had become twice stronger than an average adult's so he easily cut off their necks.

Dudian's heart was pounding wildly. Although he knew that they were already dead, but the action had brought him guilt of killing people and fear. His hand which was holding dagger trembled. He constantly comforted himself in his heart, suddenly he heard sudden screams that came up from the front.

He saw more than a dozen consortium scavengers, including Scott and Mia, with a face full of panic, turn and flee towards them.

Dudian saw more than a dozen undeads from the gap while the consortium scavengers were escaping.

Chapter 51 - Heartbeat

“This way too much!” Dudian, Macon and the others were scared at the sight.

They were still in a daze. Scott that was running in the front roared: “Run ah!”

Dudian woke up from the daze, quickly turned around and ran. Mason, Sham and Zach followed him.

However at this time their physique and stamina were finally reflected as Scott and Mia quickly overtook the gap between them and quickly passed them. They disappeared from their sight in short amount of time.

At this time, the other consortia scavengers who were behind by a big margin also caught up to them.

“Get out of the way!” A burly youth scream out at Dudian and the other three. He pushed Sham away, who was the last one of the four. Because of the sudden thrust to the side, Sham lost his balance and fall onto ground. Several young scavengers who were rushing over passed over the stumbling Sham.

Dudian heard Sham’s scream and stopped to look back. He saw the scratched Sham was on the ground and wast trying to get up when another youth pressed him down over his head while passing by. All of them were bolting away and trying to use Sham as a bait for a leverage.

Around 100 meters behind there were more than a dozen undeads quickly giving a chase.

Dudian face paled. He clenched his fists and ran back to help Sham. He grabbed his arm and yelled: “Quickly! Up! Up!”

Sham quickly grabbed him. Dudian led his body, pulled him up, and immediately turned to continue to run. The other consortium scavengers had already run in the front, trailing Scott and Mia. They ran in the direction of them disappearing in the corner of the street.

Sham looked back to see a dozen or so bloodthirsty undead’s. His scalp tingled and his legs shook almost tripping again.

At this time, Macon and Zach also turned and rushed over, quickly seized Sham’s body, dragging him forward in rush.

“Go to the right!” Dudian scream as they reached the corner of the street.

The three of them were stunned. But they didn’t have time to ask and could only closely follow the way Dudian had gone to. After a ten or so meters Dudian stopped and grabbed a few pieces of stones from the gravel on the ground. He began to throw the stones towards the direction Scott and Mia had gone to.

Pound!

The stone fell to the ground, rolling a few times and making noise.

At this time, more than thirty meters away from the corner of the street undeads began to catch up. As they reached the corner most of them choose to run after the place where the voices were echoing out from.

However, there is an undead who was aware of Dudian and the others existence. He run after them and another two followed it.

Dudian's face changed and quickly glanced on both sides of the street. He a gate more than 10 meters in front of them. It was a community gate and the door was covered in vegetation: "Come with me!"

As he came up to the door he saw few corpses lying on the ground. The door to the security room had long been corroded because of the moss. From the little exposed window he was able to vaguely see that there was a humanoid shadow in the room. Dudian stopped looking and passed by to the nearest building. He went into the building to see a corpse by the doorstep and another one in the corridor.

Dudian suppressed the fear in his heart and trampled over the dead body to go inside: "Come over!"

The other three saw the corpse by the door. Their faced turned white but fought back the fear and jumped over it. Dudian saw that

another two undeads were coming with the previous pursuer.

Dudian face changed, and quickly grabbed the door. He wanted to lock it but found the the muzzle has long been covered with moss. It couldn't be locked so he gave the idea and went into the building towards the elevator. At the moment the door to the elevator wal half open and was covered with moss and vegetation. There laid a few corpses. Some were dead, some were decaying.

Dudian immediately ran up the stairs, said: "Keep up."

Mason and the other followed behind him.

When he entered the building, he saw the height of the building which was at least fifteen or so stories high. He went straight up the steps and saw seven or eight dead corpses along the steps, along with decaying human bones.

By the sixth fllor Dudian was already exhausted. Mason and the other two were the same. In fact, in the battle with rats they have consumed all of their physical power. At the moment, they were desperately fleeing because of the fear. That was how they broke through their physical limits.

"Argh, Argh!"

At this time, husky roaring sounds echoed out from the bottom floor. Dudian looked down the handrails and saw the undeads climbing up the stairs. But their climbing speed is obviously slow.

However, as Dudian's saw them he face turned ugly and he continued to climb up.

Soon, Doudian came to the location of the twelfth floor. He was breathing raggedly. He heard the unconscious roars of the undeads and from the sound he estimated that there should be three floors of the gap. He was going to continue to go up but Sham pointed to an open door next to him. "Dean", he gasped. "We are going to hide. They should not open the door."

Dudian immediately reacted: "Get in." He was the first to enter the room.

Mason and the other immediately followed him in. Dudian locked the door. The vegetation and the moss had not climbed up because the floor was high. The latch was easily locked. He glanced at the room. The living room was very scattered. The was a corpse lying on the ground. Next to the corpse was a baby carriage where a baby's body laid.

Dudian immediately said: "The sofa... The sofa inside the living room. Move it to the door to block it. "

"The sofa?" Mason and the other two didn't understand but saw the direction of Dudian's fingers. They ran past, lifted the sofa, moved it to the door and gently put it down against the door.

At this time, the roar's from outside getting were more and more clear. Dudian quickly made a gesture to make them stay silent. Standing on the soft, through the cat's eye he looked to the door.

Cat’s eye lenses were very turbid. He saw a few blurred figures appear near the door. The three corpses seem to crawl and continue to climb up the stairs.

Dudian mind was relieved but the heart was still beating. He was separated by a little little distance from the bloodthirsty monster. He felt that the world is static. Only his heartbeat echoed in his ears.

“Argh!”

The door was suddenly slammed. Hoarse sound of roaring came out from the door. It was full of anger and ferocity.

Chapter 52 - Narrow Escape

Dudian was scared. He pushed against the door. The door was old and rusty. After the first punch from the undead it's frame had cracks. Fortunately there was sofa behind the door, because otherwise it would have been broken already.

Mason and the other two were frightened and hurried to the soft to push it. The wooden frame inside the sofa had long been rotten, so after the heavy push of four of them it cracked in the middle.

Bang! The door was broken and limp palms stretched inside casually clutching. Fortunately the undead's bodies belong to adults so they were much taller than Dudian. They couldn't catch him on the first try.

Dudian had forgotten that most of these materials were useless after 300 years of corrosion. He shouted at the others: "Quickly, jump from the window down to 11th floor!"

Mason and he other two were panicking but after three years of training experience they quickly replied: "I'll help resisting them, you should go!"

"Go!" Shouted Dudian.

They didn't want to talk anymore so they directly went towards the window and looked down. The height of 12 floors was too high so they felt dizziness. However there was not escape route but this. Sham looked around the balcony and saw an object attached to the

wall: “If we step on that object and we should be able to get down to 11th floor’s balcony”

It was an air-conditioner box. Mason was the most daring one out of three. Although he was worried but still jumped over.

Bang! Air conditioning unit couldn’t bear his weight. It suddenly collapsed down. He was afraid but was prepared for a situation such as this. That’s why the moment his legs touched the air conditioner’s box he jumped towards the 11th floor balcony. The air conditioner’s box collapsed down hitting other boxes which were vertically mounted under it. All of them fall onto ground making a loud noise.

While Mason had barely caught on to balcony’s outer wall. He climbed into the balcony and looked up at Sham and Zach. There was nothing to be leveraged upon so he loudly said: “Sham you jump first, I will catch ya!”

Sham was the thinnest and lightest out of the three. Looking at the open arms of Mason, he let himself go down.

Mason caught his boddy in hurry, but the inertia of the fall almost brought him down from the balcony. He felt the pain of his arms as if they were going to tear off. But he still held on to Sham.

Sham was frightened and blood had rushed into his head because of the adrenaline. He thought that he was going to die. He looked at the pained face of Mason and felt gratitude towards him. At this time, Zach who was still stuck above hastily said: “Aren’t you guys

ready? I want to jump”

Mason shoved up his arms and said to Sham: “Let’s catch him.”

Sham nodded, both of them opened their arms and said to Zach: “Jump!”

Zach leaped down.

They immediately caught Zach but Mason’s arm was in pain and Zach almost slipped loose through his hands.

Dudian was relieved as heard all three of them jump down. He wasn’t able to withstand the force the three undeads applied to the door. Right now, door was as crisp as a scrap of paper. He abandoned the door and run to the kitchen. Along the way he threw off the TV, tables, wires and other things that he could lift in the living room. He was trying to slow down the pursuit speed of the undeads.

His tactic had worked. Although the speed of these undeads were far more faster than him but their brain didn’t seem to work. The didn’t know how to avoid obstacles and were tripping over while passing TV, tables and wires which were on the ground.

Dudian seized the opportunity. H went to the kitchen and began to throw all the objects that he could utilize. All those plates and wares that were thrown at undeads did minimal damages but attracted them.

Dudian hurried to the bathroom which was next to the kitchen. He closed the door and looked at the toilet's ventilation windows. It was made of aluminum alloy texture, but the edge had long been rotten in the last 300 years of baptism. He put his leg on the toilet and punched the ventilation windows.

Bang! It cracked open.

The window was big enough to accommodate his body. If an adult tried to go through it would be very difficult.

However when he stretched out of the window to look out, the height of the twelve floors made him afraid. The car in the street that was covered in the vegetation looked like a small bread from Dudian's view point. He heard the hisses and roars of undead from behind. He didn't look back but climbed out of the window.

There was only one choice and it was to jump!

There was no air conditioner box after all no one would install an air conditioner outside the toilet. There were two types of white colored water pipes which were used as toilet's discharge pipe.

He jumped towards the pipes and grabbed onto one. In that instant he saw that he wouldn't be able to hold on to pipes as they were cracking in front of his eyes.

Dudian's face became pale, he hastily made a backhand gesture

and plugged out the dagger.

He nailed it onto the wall. The dagger pierced into the wall and his body was hanging on it.

He had seen sword marks made by hunters while killing undeads and other monsters. The walls were no long strong and reliable.

Argh! Argh!

At this time two hideous heads abruptly stuck out of the toilet window. They were using their claws and trying to grab him.

The undeads were frantically pushing out and the soft walls of window stretched and fell off as if they were made of mud. The gap was stretched out enough for both of them to stick out freely. He looked down to see that there was almost a meter of a distance between him and the toilet window of the floor beneath. If he had two dagger he would be able to easily reach the destination but right now he had only one dagger. If he tried to maneuver he would fall down.

He looked at the window which was only half a palm wide. Wanting to jump onto it was extremely difficult and required great courage.

However, as he saw the third corpse to crawl out, he didn’t dare to wait any more. He swayed his body slightly and suddenly let go of the dagger.

It was a free fall. However due to his body's proximity to the wall he stretched his hands out while falling and seized the windowsill. It was a very short distance but he felt like his head was exploded.

At that moment, he felt as if he was reborn.

Dudian looked up and saw that half the body of the undead had already crawled out of the window. He fiercly punched the window and smashed it. The broken pieces of the glass pierced his fist and blood began to drip. He quickly climbed up and drilled down the window.

Sou!

As he went in he felt wind roll at his rear.

Dudian hastily looked down to find an undead that had fallen from the toilet's window down to the ground.

As one had fallen off, the space suddenly was more than enough for the other two undeads. He saw another one trying to attack him from that distance and fall down to hit the ground besides the other undead's corpse.

Dudian was startled. Do they only know how to attack? Don't they have awareness of self-protection?

He though about Scott and the woman undeads battle that had happened previously. Suddenly an idea emerged in his mind.

Chapter 53 - Climbing The Wall

“No consciousness!” Dudian’s heart throbbed, “These undeads are not same as ‘bone rats’. Although ‘bone rats’ are bloodthirsty but they still keep their beastly senses. They know when to hide, attack or escape. Undeads are different. They only instinctively go after the prey. They don’t think about tactics or anything alike… … they are like dedicated machines used to murder!”

“And the machine is incomplete. In addition to attack instructions there are no other skills when they lock onto their preys!”

Dudian’s blood was boiling. He felt that he seized a crucial information that would able him to keep him alive “Only straight attacks. This is the most dangerous thing about them but it is also their Achilles’ heel!”

Mason, Sham and Zach heard the sound of broken glasses and hurriedly came to the toilet and saw the Dudian: “You! How did you come over here?”

Argh, argh!

A husky scream echoed from the window. They heard the roars too.

Mason and the other were frightened. They realized that undeads were above their heads in the toilet. Dudian must have deliberately attracted them over there so that three of them could easily jump

from the balcony.

Their eyes were reddened as these thoughts passed through their minds.

What is friendship?

Still to think about how to save you even in the most critical moment!

Forgoing their own survival!

Although in the previous three years of training Dudian had helped them many times, but they also occasionally helped Dudian too. Four of them always supported each other but... those were assessments. In case of failure, you just left back to your house. In here though, it is a real life and death situation! However to give up his own life to save theirs... They felt their souls shake! They were grateful and moved but also hated their own weak states!

Dudian did not notice the emotional changes of the three. He said that he was safe. They looked back from the windows and saw last undead crawling out of the window from the upper floor.

Dudian was worried that it would retreat back and turn around towards the stairs. So he stretched his arm out and began to gently shake it out of the windows as if to call it out...

The undead saw Dudian shake his arm and began to roar and

struggle crazily. Bang! A large piece of mud-like concrete broke out and fall down.

Dudian brought his arm back in fear of being hit by the concrete.

Undead easily struggled out of the window and following the previous two fall down. It hit the walls quite a few times as it fall down. Bang! A sound echoed in this quiet district exceptionally clear as it hit the ground.

Dudian was relieved. He peeked out of the window and saw the three corpses that were on the ground. They were stacked together. However the one on top slightly moved and staggered. It once again stood up.

Dudian face changed. He did not expect that after such a fall it wouldn't die. After he racked his brain out, he remembered that this undead could be destroyed only by the strike to it head. Even if it fell of from 12th floor, it would only be left with broken bones but wouldn't die.

It shook its dead body and look up at Dudian. Strange screams came out of its mouth and it began to climb up the wall. By using its sharp claws it began to climb the wall as if it was a professional alpinist.

"I am ... ... When did he become a Spiderman ah! " Dudian almost vomited blood. Fortunately he didn't go down or he wouldn't be able to stop them.

They looked from the windows towards the fast climbing undead as their faces became pale because of fear.

Dudian did not panic. After his previous jump from 12th floor to 11th floor he had already felt like he had died and reborn. Moreover he was aware of the weakness of the undeads. He had made his mind not to fear them anymore.

“Give me the dagger” said Dudian coldly.

Mason suddenly understood why he wants to the dagger so he quickly handed it to him.

Dudian was holding the dagger. He was looking at the undead who was climbing upwards. It had the face of grim faced middle-aged man. Dudian’s heart was no longer trembling but calmer than previous times when he had faced undeads. As he saw the undead coming closer his arm stretched out of the window and he suddenly stabbed out the dagger. Puff. The dagger precisely hit and pierced the soft brain of the undead.

The undead lost all of its power in a matter of seconds and fall down.

Bang! It hit the two dead bodies that were already lying on the ground.

The other two undeads were not moving as they had fallen head on to the ground. It had resulted in their skulls to be cracked and

they died on spot. This third one fall on top of them so it didn't die momentarily but was having its last moments in this world.

Dudian's mind was relieved. There was a sudden burst of soreness from his body. From combat with rats to the present, it was a continuous and vigorous exercise. His physical strength was completely overdrawn. He saw on the toilet and watch the Mason and the other two. He gasped with a laugh: "No injuries right?"

Mason shook his head and sighed: "You just saved our lives man!"

"Do not curse me," Dudian laughed.

Their tightened nerves relaxed. One by one they sat on the dirty ground to rest.

"About Scott. Are they going to be alright? " Zach asked.

Dudian thought of the consortium scavengers who used them as bait while trying to save their skins. When the situation was critical he had no time to think. But at the moment he clearly knew that consortium scavengers pushed off Sham on purpose. There was a deep anger rising in his heart and he would love to avenge the previous situation.

Perhaps, his heart is the deepest ... ... evil.

Dudian shook his head slightly, no longer thought about this and

said: “Take a break! We will find them later on”

Sham asked: “How come there are so many undeads around? Wasn’t this area was swept by the hunters? Are they call this so-called cleaning?”

Dudian slight frowned. He also felt puzzled. If only rats were left, he could understand. After all, in a fight they are not that much of a danger to scavengers. However these undeads were different. Their strength was overwhelming. Also degree of difference with them was so big that they couldn’t be covered with numbers. Even if 10 people siege one, there would suffer heavy losses.

“They could have been ignored by the hunters or… … they came from other districts” answered Dudian.

Macon and the other two were startled but did not say anything.

After a short while, Dudian stood up as his body was feeling better. He looked out of the window toward the dagger which he had stabbed onto the wall. He would need it as encountering the undeads without a weapon was extremely dangerous.

He thought for a while and decided to search the house which they were in. The results were not good as most of the goods in here were pieces of torn or broken paper on the ground. He took out a rope and climbed out from the window. He used the robe to grab the dagger after several consecutive attempts and pull it out by struggling a bit as it was pierced onto wall with a large force.

Dudian was relieved to take the dagger. At the same moment he heard Sham ‘s panicky voice: “Dean, come over.”

Dudian hurried to rush out as he heard Sham’s voice. Sham was by the windowsill that was before the street. A dozen of so undeads were staggering and wandering over. They didn’t walk down the street but turned into the district where the they were staying at.

Dudian’s face became pale. Although these undeads were slow in the sloshing but apparently they were after a target. Dudian’s group was looking at them from high altitude so they could see the line that they were walking in on. Undeads were clearly walking towards them.

Chapter 54 - Anatomy

“They are looking for us!” Sham looked at the creepy figures: “Is it our smell? Impossible, we are so far away … …”

Dudian was gloomily staring at the wandering undeads, thinking: “They should not be aware of our presence. If they were then they won’t act so slowly. If it was about the smell then Scott’s group had so many people. They should have left much thicker scent than us. It seem there will be more than a dozen undeads…”

Macon hurriedly looked at him and said, “Dean, what should we do now? If they close down on this place they will notice our presence.”

“Do not panic.” Dudian frowned. Recalling all the previous event he suddenly thought of a neglected issue. “They don’t have consciousness as a result they can’t make rational choices. They would even jump down from a high rise. They don’t have the concept of death and aren’t aware what is dangerous for them. So how do they identify their preys?”

Previously, Scott had said that undead’s are attracted by the smell of blood and would trace accordingly. But if it so, then the bloody smell of the bodies bitten by the woman undead would be enough to attract all of them to that location. Moreover if they were so bloodthirsty and mad for blood then they should attack and bite the hands of other undeads as their claws would have traces of blood on them.

“But, in reality the moment undeads saw us they chased after us completely ignoring the undeads on the ground. ”

“This proves that although blood is a factor in their attraction towards us but there is more to it than blood!”

Dudian’s eyes shone as if he knew everything “Last time the undead woman heard Aaron’s footsteps, gave up eating the scavengers and ran over to kill Aaron. Probably sound is another factor that attracts them!?”

Dudian was not pleased with the conclusion. He slightly frowned, as he felt he was ignoring a very important element that decided decision making of undeads. Scene after scene came in front of his eyes as he analyzed the actions of undeads from previous encounters … He came to understand that it was not sound.

Rather, sound and blood can attract their attention, but… those are not the most important aspects they take into account when they track preys!

The real reason according to Dudian analysis was heat!

According to Dudian’s reasoning that was the main way how the undead’s went after their preys. They somehow could perceive the prey’s body heat. In short, they must have thermal vision! However, some of the undead’s had their eyes pierced so Dudian guessed that there must be some kind of mutated organ within their heads which could automatically perceive the surrounding heat.

Any warm-blooded animal will appear in their perception network.

Although Dudian can not be 100% assure of this speculation. But the information at his hands was limited. He walked towards the window and looked down at the undead corpses. An idea popped up in his mind: “Mason find something hard and throw it somewhere else to see if you sound can distract those undeads. Zach light a torch!”

All three of them were surprised. Although they didn’t know why they needed a torch but distracting the undeads with the sound was a good idea.

Mason went to the room to search up for materials. He from few pieces of mud-like bricks from the bedroom’s wall. He came back to the kitchen and threw the bricks towards the nearby building.

Pop! Bricks fell to the ground and turned into powder.

Sound was spead in the quiet district. The undeads were attracted by the sound. Mason was excited to the effects so he kept throwing farther and farther to lead the undead away.

Dudian’s heart was relieved as he saw the sound was effective to lure the undead. Zach had covered clothing over a stick and had ignited the torch. Dudia immediately said: “Throw the torch out”

Zach was stunned as he couldn’t figure out what Dudian was thinking. But he listened to him and threw the torch out. It rolled in the air and fall to the ground. The fire was almost extinguished.

Dudian saw that undeads turned back to look at the torch which had fallen to the ground. Mason happened to throw another brick resulting in huge noise so they turned back and went after the source of the sound. Soon they left the area to the street where the brick landed.

Dudian felt strange, was his guess wrong? On second thought, at least they were able to lure them away for now.

Mason was at his limits because of constantly throwing stones. The undeads wandered for a while where the stones had fallen and suddenly turned to walk towards the street Dudan and the other three were located.

Dudian and the rest were just feeling relieved when they saw the undeads. They almost shouted out curses.

What’s hell was going on with them?

Dudian was stunned. Why are they so perservering into walking to this area? He looked around but the only thing that came to his mind was that they were the only people present in the area.

“How would … …” Sham stared undeads.

Sham quickly said: “Quickly, continue to throw stones.”

Macon reacted instantly. He rushed inside to buckle bricks from the wall and came back to throw them. Soon the undead who wandered into the area were lured out. Dudian was not happy as the method they used to lure the undeads was not a permanent solution. Maybe over the time they will attract undeads from other areas which would be to their disadvantage.

Dudian wrinkled his brows. How human body attracted these corpses?

“If its heat, then … … Can they distinguish the difference between a flame and the body heat? “, Dudian thought of this point. His face slightly changed. Because in addition to lowering their body heat there does not seem to be another feasible way to avoid undead’s detection.

To lower the body’s heat they had to undress.

However, the intensity of the nuclear radiation in the air was too high. If they took of their clothes the radiation value of their bodies would increase rapidly.

Dudian bowed his to contemplate over the issue. While Mason would throw few bricks when the undead’s would return to the district. He controlled the rhythm of throws so to be more effective.

After a long while, Dudian made a decision and said to Mason and the others: “One of you who is willing should go down with me to carry the undead’s body. ”

Hearing this all three of them were stunned: “Lift them up? What are you going to do with them?”

“The three dead bodies,” Dudian seriously said, “I want to dissect them.”

The quickest way to understand the undeads was to see thoroughly from inside out. Although Dudian had no medical experience and his knowledge of the human body was limited but in such a harsh environment there were limited methods to try. The only approach to understand the undead was to check out their bodies as soon as possible.

“You want to know about their anatomy ?!” Mason and the other two looked at him as if he was a freak.

Chapter 55 - Third

“If you want to...to dissect... Should that not be enough?” Sham pointed to corpse of an old man who was lying on the living room. He seemed to be head of the family who lived in the house.

Dudian shook his head, “I want to dissect the undead to speculate on their behavior. The ones who had been killed by the hunters would be useless. The ones who are downstairs are in much more better condition and by analyzing their anatomy I can see what kind of changes have occurred in them”

“I’ll go with you,” said Zach.

Dudian nodded. He took his dagger and along with Zach went to the corridor.

Soon, both of them came to the ground floor. They peeked out from the door to see tha Mason and Sham had led the undeads away. They softly opened the door and ran to the side where corpses of undead were located. Dudian saw that undead’s head were cracked but there wasn’t outflow of blood. He seized the undead which was on top of the others. He whispered to Zach to grab from the other side.

Zach’s face was pale as no one would be willing to be so close to the bloodthirsty undead. He fought back the fear in his heart. He came forward and grabbed from the other arm of the corpse and they lifted it up.

Dudian was not worried about infection from the dead body because of isolative functions of their uniform. They carried it back to the building.

This corpse was heavier than Dudian had imagined it to be. It looked like a skinny young man but the feeling it gave from carrying it was of a person of three hundred pounds. Fortunately they had used ‘God’s blessing’ and were several times powerful than a normal person or it would be very difficult to move this body.

Soon they reach the 9th floor. The stairs had collapsed in here. Even though they could jump past it but they wouldn’t be able to carry the corpse. Dudian put down the corpse and went into the closest unit. He checked the house and found that there were no rats or other dangerous creatures inside. So they took the corpse in to the unit.

The original owners of the unit had long been dead. There was blood on the ground which had turned into dust. There was corpse of a young teenager and of a woman. Their fleshs had rotted and their remains were colored dark because of the extreme radiation.

Dudian picked few rooten quilts from the bedroom and covered the corpses of the owner. Dudian and Zach swept away the scattered things in the living room and made an open space.

At this time, Mason and Sham who were upstairs had come down as they saw Zach and Dudian weren’t coming back. They were relieved to find them but soon saw Dudian who was beside the undead’s corpse. “Do you really want to dissect it?”

Dudian firmly nodded.

Until today he would stay the heck away from a corpse. He would be afraid even to look at it. Today scales had fallen from his eyes. He was the eyewitness of Scott and others despair. He had seen how the undead bite and eat the living humans. Gradually, he had realized that if you want to survive, no one will protect him. The only help he had was the dagger in his hand.

Dudian used the dagger to gentle stamp the corpse's claw. He saw that the surface of the claw was extremely hard. It felt as if it was made of steel.

. "What kind of a biological evolution it is..." Dudian was apprehensive. There was claw-like growth at the feet of the undead too. In addition both it's hand and feet were covered in a layer of dark cuticles which gave off a hideous look.

Dudian looked at its chest. There was a trace of heart. He took a deep breath and stabbed the dagger down. He pierce from belly all the way up to chest. No blood oozed out. Dudian sighed, to tell the truth he would vomit at a sight like that where blood would sputter out.

Under the gray toned skin there was brown colored flesh and blood. Moreover everything was frozen inside.

Frozen?

Dudian felt that the undead's body was particularly cold. It was ice cold. No wonder that there were no signs of decay.

However, Dudian had seen the corpses of undead who were killed by the hunters. All of them had serious signs of rotting. Especially, the first undead he had seen in the bathroom. Her face and body were completely rotten.

Thinking of this, Dudian looked at the body of the teenager who was still lying in the room. He stepped forward to check it.

Same like the other undeads its head was completely destroyed. It was split from the middle and divided into two. Most probably very sharp and tough sword was used to cut it open. The boy's neck, arms, chest and other parts had different degrees of decay. His skin was swollen like a blister. Dudian gently poked the dagger. It penetrated through the skin as if it was cutting tofu. Dark red blood was revealed.

The smell that it emitted made him feel nauseous. "Why would these undeads after the death would decay and emit the same smell as humans?", Dudian thought.

"Are these corpses really "alive"?"

If it was alive, then why it had no consciousness? It lacked even the basic instincts!

Dudian silently contemplated, then got up and returned to the previous corpse of undead. He opened its eyelids. It had a western stereotype. The pupils were green. There were numerous fibers inside the kernel of the pupil. Is it relying on it eyes to track the prey?

Dudian gently cut its nose, inch by inch. The protruding nose was cut flat, revealing two deep black nostrils. He rolled over its head and cut its ears. He dug a whirlpool around its ears.

Zach and Sham who were close by and watching the process turn pale. Their legs trembled because of the fear. They were not afraid of the undead's corpse but the expression that was on Dudian's face. They will not forget this scene and remember it for many years.

At this time, Dudian hollowed out the undead's ear. It was filled with the thick dust. The ear had long been filled with layer after layer of accumulated dust. Its hearing should be very weak so why it so sensitive towards sound? Does it mean that another organ have evolved and replaced the functioning of sound detection?

Dudian pondered for a moment, pushed its jaw down and looked at undead's tongue. It was torn. It was bitten by itself as if it was eating up a prey. It didn't know how to protect itself and felt no pain at chewing it tongue.

Dudian hesitated as he thought about the way Scott killed the undead woman in the beginning. He had stabbed it in the head and nailed it onto ground. But its body also kept twitching and issued mournful screams. If there was no pain why would it react that

way?

His eyes flashed for a moment. He waved the dagger along the corpse's mouth cutting it from both sides while pushing the jaw down with pressure. Soon, the entire jaw was cut down but there was no trace of blood.

The upper cavity was made of chilled flesh and blood.

Two spare bodies were downstairs so without further consideration he pierced the head from inside with the dagger. Everything inside the head from broken brain to other organs stirred out as he rotated the dagger.

Thud! A hard object fell out from the skull onto the ground. It rolled and stopped a meter or so away from Dudian.

It was a thumb-sized, This is a thumb-sized, spherical dark blue ball.

Chapter 56 - Virus

Dudian, Sham and Zach looked at the dark blue ball. They were confused. A ball falled out of ... a head. It was perfectly spherical. The color was dark blue and it looked beautiful. Obviously it was not result of intracranial tissue sclerosis as it looked like a metal ball.

Only, how could there be a metal in the brain?

Dudian was anxious and doubtful. He didn't take the initiative to touch it but gentle poked the ball with the dagger. It skid as the blade of the dagger touched it.

"so hard!" Dudian was mesmerized. Infection rate through hard objects was slow. Moreover it wouldn't penetrate the way liquids did. He had gloves which could isolate. "Simple touch should be okay", Dudian decided. He moved his hand and picked it up.

The moment he touched the ball he felt a chilling ambiance. The only feeling that came through his finger nerves was cold.

Extreme cold!

He felt like he was holding an ice hockey puck which he just picked from the field. "Is it because of this dark blue ball that the blood and flesh within the undead's body are frozen?", thought Dudian.

Coldness spread along his arm. He felt the temperature of the entire arm was rapidly reducing and it became stiff. He picked the dark blue ball with his other arm. Coldness began to pierce through his other arm too. Dudian felt his body becoming chilly, as if he was walking nude in the ‘black snow season’, exposing his body to snow.

“How the hell does it work? My hands are holding it but my whole body feels cold. I could feel the soles of my feet were numb because of the cold. ” Dudian was surprised. First it felt like playing snowballs in the winter. The hand would be cold but body will be warm. But at the moment he felt the chills all over his body, like he was covered by ice blocks all around.

Immediately, he put the dark blue ball on the ground and rubbed his hands with each other. He felt a bit warmer. Soon his stomach gurgled because of hunger. He hasn’t eaten from the moment they have left the giant wall. He put up with forbearance as there were more important matters at hand than a meal. Suddenly, he thought of a reason.

“Heat absorption!” Dudian awoke, “This dark blue ball absorbs heat! It works like the saltpeter of gun powder. It is not just one of the raw materials of the gun powder but could be used in ice making. In this world the alchemists have only mastered the use of saltpeter in making ice but have not found that nitrite mixed saltpeter can explode...”

In case saltpeter is put into small enough amount of water, it will absorb the heat in the water so the water will become ice.

Obviously this dark blue ball had the same endothermic function of saltpeter which was why he felt his body's temperature decrease. If he holds it in his hand, the ball will absorb the heat along the arm. It won't stop unless it will absorb all the heat within the body. After the temperature of the body reduces to certain extent, the heart naturally will stop to function.

"No wonder! No wonder the temperature of the undead's body is so low and so cold. Dark blue ball is the reason. But where does this ball come from? Why would it appear in corpse's mind? " Dudian mind was full of curiosity. "If it has colonized its brain...Unlikely... It would need very long time and energy to colonize the brain"

"However the corpse was infected with the virus. Although they are variations but at the end they are humans. They were made up flesh and blood. How a hard object like a metal would grow in the brain? That is also strange," Dudian was brainstorming.

Suddenly a figure jumped from the stairs into the room. All three of them were shocked and alerted.

They turned to see that it was Mason so they were relieved.

Mason saw that they were alright so he snapped: "You guys scared me. I almost thought that I've lost you guys!"

Sham scratching his head: "It was you who scared us! I was watching Dean piercing the undead so I forget to inform you.."

Zach hurried: “You have come down so who is gonna throw the bricks? ”

Macon rolled over his eyes and said: “Of course I’m back. I’m exhausted. Decide who will change me”

Sham was looking at the corpse whose head was beheaded. “I’ll go,” Sham said.

Dudian’s thoughts were interrupted by Mason. He continued to think but he couldn’t find clues. He wouldn’t dwell on this topic anymore, surviving was the most important thing right now. His eyes lit up as he looked over at Mason and Zach: “Come with me as a back up.”

They were in doubts as they couldn’t figure what Dudian wanted to do but still followed him down.

Dudian came downstairs to see the group of undeads were faraway. He sneaked out to the corner and used the dagger to cut the heads of two undeads which were still lying on the ground. Carrying their heads he quickly went into the building. He saw Mason and Zach retreat, so he smiled and said: “Nothing dangerous, they are dead.”

Mason was frightened: “You, when have you become so daring?”

“I’m still adapting.” Dudian replied. Returning to the upper floor, he slipt the second head the way he had done before. Now it

was much easier to pierce inside, as the heads of the undeads were ripped apart from the body. As expected, there was another exactly the same dark blue ball inside the head of the undead.

He was going to cut the third head when he thought of a problem. He decided to forgo the previous cutting method. Instead he began to cut through the splits of the skull that had resulted from the free fall. The head slowly broke apart. Soon they saw the full intracranial picture. Most of the brain tissue was frozen. Dark blue ball had sank into the brain in an ovary like place.

However, probably due to the skull crack dark blue ball at the brain tissue was damaged. Dudian carefully rummaged for a while. Soon he came to understand the dark blue ball was in control of the undead's actions.

The so-called, destruction of the head can kill the body of the undead, were based on two principles. First is to destroy the central nervous system in the head so that the head can not control the body. The second is to destroy the dark blue ball's connection to the brain.

In simple terms, this dark blue ball somehow connects to the brain through the ovary. So there was no need to cut the head. As long as a strong enough force is applied to its head this dark blue ball will vibrate within the ovary. In case like that it will lose the contact with the ovary's wall and won't be able to signal the nervous system to take action. Undead will automatically stop to act. It is same as killing the undead.

Dudian was more puzzled as he understood this point. What was

the matter that composed the dark blue ball? Why would grow in undead's brain? Is it manufactured or triggered by the virus?

Dudian picked up the dark blue ball and began to cover it by fabric. He covered layers over layers so it was wrapped into a large fist-sized ball. He hand two of them to Mason and Zach: "This thing can absorb the body temperature. It will help us to lower the temperature down. You don't have to hold it as it will absorb the body heat anyway. The best is to put it into the backpack."

Macon and Zach were surprised to see these wrapped up balls. Mason curious: "What is this?

"I don't know exactly what this is. However, hunters who kill the undeads will dig out their heads for this thing. It should be very valuable. Otherwise they won't turn a blind eye on things like gold."said Dudian. He had seen many all the heads of the undeads had been split but he would have never thought that hunters would split the head to pick this dark blue ball out!

Mason frightened: "Are you sure that hunters kill the undeads for this? "

"maybe."

Chapter 57 - Melting

“This thing has ‘heat-absorbing’ characteristics! It proves that my previous speculation was correct. These corpses are driven and controlled by it. They are induced to our body temperature. That’s why they gradually gather here. They don’t trace their prey by the smell of blood but they track the heat!” Dudian was reviewing the information that he had gathered: “Scott and the rest should attract more undeads as their group would produce more heat in comparison to ours. Moreover there are very large number of undeads and it is by no means were leftovers ignored by hunters. Most probably they had moved over from other regions!”

At the thought of this Dudian frowned. He closed his eyes to picture the map that Scott had. There was a gray area near the are no 8. It had not been cleaned. There were other colored areas which the hunting ground for other consortiums.

Concluding his thoughts, Dudian said to Mason and Zach : “It will help us to lower our body temperature. Soon we will be able to get rid of these undeads. As they won’t track us anymore. Because we have only three of them which means Sham won’t get any for now. We gotta hunt another one and dig the dark blue ball out of its head. That way we will have enough dark blue balls for four of us to use.”

Mason was alarmed: “We will avoid to be traced by them if we this??

“How can we hunt them? They are way too strong. We are not their opponents. ” Zach asked.

Dudian smiled and said: “Humans are the strongest because we are good at fighting but because of the wisdom that we have. We can’t fight hand to hand with undeads but we can use our minds to easily kill them”

“Easy?” Zach and Macon said in a daze.

In three years of harsh training they were taught how to search for prey in the wilderness as well as in a variety of environments. It was all bout how to look for food. But they were not taught how to hunt, because that was the work of the hunters. So although they were trained but in front of problems such as facing undeads they were at a loss. But compared with the other children, their lack of panic was already very rare.

“The easiest way is to use fire.” Dudian smiled and said: “You first find some fabric. As long as the fabric can be lit. The more the better. I will go to replace Sham. I will give you ten minutes to find and gather fabric downstairs in front of the building.”

Macon and Zach’s eyes lit up as they guessed what Dudian wanted to do. They quickly left the room in separate way to search the various floors for combustible materials.

Dudian went upstairs to see Sham still tirelessly throwing stones: “You should rest for a while, I’ll keep throwing the stones.”

Sham replied: “No. Jobs like this, where no brainpower is needed, should be done by us. You are the only one we can rely on

to leave this place."

Dudian laughed: "Macon and Zach are doing everything. After everything is ready we will be able to leave. We only need the east wind."

"What do you mean?" Sham was confused.

Dudian shook his head and said: "Nothing. I'm free till they find everything that I asked for. You should go upstairs and bring some stones over. Do not empty this floor." The he grabbed a stone from the ground. He looked at wandering undeads and found that the number of these undeads had increased by a few. There was a single undead which was wobbling over.

Dudian throw the stone to another place. The undeads were lead to other side of building because of the sound emitted.

Ten minutes later, Macon and Zach had already gathered flammable materials in a circle into an open space in front of the building. Dudian began to throw stones and glass close to the circle where clothing and wood was gathered. The sound echoed out and grabbed undead group's attention. They staggered towards the circle.

Because of Dudian's previous instructions Mason began to act as he saw undeads coming over. He was on the second floor. He ignited the torch and threw it onto the circle. He lighted five torches. Four of them fall onto the circle because of close distance. The flame soon spread to all over the circle. Clothes and rotting

wood furniture was burning together and soon turned into a raging fire.

The undeads came close to fire but avoided it instinctively. However they began to walk around outside the fire circle.

Dudian was slightly dispirited as he saw the scene. He threw few more stones to attract the undeads into the fire. However the sound was not able to attract them.

Dudian ran downstairs in hurry and yelled: “Burn them!”

Mason, Zach and Sham immediately set to implement the spare plan prepared by Dudian in a case such as this. It was simple, burn the undead! The plan was made so that if the undeads didn’t go inside the fire pit. Now, the plan would just be handy.

The three quickly picked up sheets, quilts and blankets that were prepared in advance. They began to throw them at undeads. Although they were not affected by the but were cover in sheets, quilts or blanket. They were walking around the fire pit so the fabrics were ignited by the fire. Soon their bodies began to burn up.

Dudian was relieved as he quietly watched. After some time the flame was extinguished. There were close to a dozen undeads lying by the fire pit. Few who had avoided the flame had fled to few hundred meters away and continued to move on.

Dudian threw rocks at once, led them to a far away distance. He then let the Sham to replace him in continuing to throw the rock. Mason, Zach and Dudian came downstairs. They were ready to get close to undeads when they saw one of them lift it hand a little. They were surprised, didn't the flame burn them up?

"The body is charred, but the dark blue ball can still continue to control them... " Dudian face changed. He asked Mason and Zach to throw more combustible fabrics and wood so that they burn them for more.

Seven or eight minutes later, after a careful observation of the undeads, Dudian threw stones onto their bodies. He was relieved as he saw them no responding to the stones. He took Mason and Zach with him and went down towards the corpses of undeads.

Sham was leading the undeads away by throwing rocks so they came out easily. Their gloves were wrapped in fabric to prevent skin burns. Afterwards, they cut off their heads.

There were total of eight heads which were brought back into the building. Dudian pierced the head and saw that its intracranial tissues had softened and were almost in liquid state. The dark blue ball in its skull was melting. It had shrank from the size of a thumb to a soybean's. After the melt out the liquid was the same as the translucent color of water.

"It can't handle high temperatures? " Dudian frowned.

Chapter 58 - Injured Hunter

Dudian quickly cut open the other head. He saw that the same thing had happened to the dark blue ball. It was melting down. It confused him. Aren't these things absorbing the heat? How come they will melt at high temperatures?

Was it not it's purpose to begin with?

He was puzzled with lots of doubts in his mind. Dudian used the dagger to pick them out from inside the skull. After leaving the intracranial tissue dark blue ball stopped melting.

Dudian's eyes fell on bluish liquid which was melted inside. With the passage of time, intracranial tissue's temperature gradually reduced. Color of these bluish liquid thickened. The next moment, Dudian, Mason and Zach witnessed the horrific scene. These bluish liquid as if having their own minds began to twist and retract to a ball. Slowly they condensed into a dark blue ball!

Dudian was completely shocked.

This scene gave him a sense of de-ja-vu, like ... ... water was frozen into ice!

This dark blue ball seems to have similar structure. But it does not need to wait to freeze until reaching zero degree. It is equipped with high efficient 'endothermic' characteristic.

Dudian looked at the dark blue ball. He felt as if there was an eye inside the dark blue ball staring back at him. It have him a creepy feeling. Although he didn't know what kind of a material the dark blue ball was and why would it appear in undead's brain but it gave him the feeling of an extremely dangerous object. Of course it was an instinct. It may also been the impact of the scene that had occurred in front of his eyes and resulted in wrong intuition.

In any case, Dudian was reluctant to be incontact with this thing too much. He thought to himself that if he had his own alchemy laboratory he would have to study this thing.

This terrible virus let him feel that three hundred years ago when he entered the cold storage he had missed something. Only after a thorough study of the virus, he may get to know a thing or two about it.

Mason looked at Dudian and whispered: "Dean, can we use this thing?

Dudian looked at him and replied: "You can use it but be careful. Isolate it well."

Mason nodded delightedly. He used the cloth to wrap up the dark blue ball.

Dudian also picked up one and the cold feeling came again. There was not difference with the previous experience. He was assured that with the help of this thing they can escape the body sensors of the other undeads.

“Continue to arrange the combustion circle.” Dudian took away all the balls and said to Mason and Zach.

They were surprised: “We have killed enough undeads. We can go around them now. ”

Dudian shook his head slightly and said: “Hunters don’t pick up gold but dig this indicating that the value of this material is higher than jewelry. The more we can hunt better for us. It is a large fortune!”

Both of them reacted to Dudian’s words. They were ecstatic. Zach patted his thigh: “Yes, ah, so to say...we are doing the work of the hunter...ha ha ha...”

Mason laughed: “Fortunately, Dean is smart. We are going to be rich! Although the undeads are horrible but they are dumb. It is easily to kill. After we finish we this batch we should go and find other undeads to hunt! We should not pick anything else. Those tattered metal were not much of a value either!”

Dudian looked at these two who previously were scared the hell out when the word undead was mentioned. After he used wealth to problem them they agreed without thinking about it... These two were blinded by financial gains!

Half an hour later, all the wandering undeads in the area were killed by Dudian and the others by using the fire circle. Including the previous three undeads, their total harvest amounted to 21

dark blue balls.

“Where do we go next?” Mason said excitedly as he was carrying a bag of dark blue balls: “To the gray area mentioned by Scott? That place has not been swept off. There must be a lot of undeads… ”

Dudian silently said: “You’re crazy. Haven’t you seen the streets where hunters had killed so many undeads? Going to the gray are won’t be like here where you can layout the trap and wait for the undead. We will be in siege by the sea of undeads. Do not be blinded by the money!”

Macon recalled the number of corpses he had seen along the way and shivered in fear.

“Dean said that the gray are is too risky. There definitely will be more rats than here. This animal is not the same as the undead.”

Sham whispered: “We should find Scott and rest. They have a map and know the way back. There would be some undeads after them. We have to help them. By the way we can kill those undeads too! ”

Dudian nodded: “Let’s eat something first to add strength.”

Because of the previous ‘hunting’ they hadn’t rested at all. They were tired and hungry. They pulled out the dry food and water from their backpacks and began to eat. After three years of

training they knew how to control their hunger and thirst. Everyone ate a few mouthfuls and drank a little water. They stopped because if they didn't find new food source the stuff in the backpack may not last for ten days!

As they were ready to re-start a figure came running at high speed from the area through the other street.

The figure was extremely fast. As it reached the junction it immediately jumped up and landed on top of the security boot and later to the ground. As soon as it reached the area where Dudian and the rest were, it began to run close to the wall.

And this scene was caught in Zach's eyes.

"Dean, come and see." Zach quickly called Dudian.

Dudian quickly walked past and saw Zach point to the location. There was a youth on the ground near the adjacent building. There was a crossbow on his back and arrows. He was clutching his right arms. It seems he was injured at the moment.

"Hunter?" Dudian stared.

Zach, Macon and Sham froze up for a moment when they heard his words. They were scavengers and the best thing that they were provided with were dagger. This dagger was not meant to be used to fight but to cut the bark or used by scavengers when the need to cut things arise. According to consortium's definition scavengers

do not need to fight. If they met up with monsters the only option is to run. If they can run away it's their own fortune, if not they were just unlucky.

Like cannon fodder on the battlefield. They were not meant to take away the enemy's head and bring victory. Each position was given value according to its functions.

"Hunter?" Mason, Sham and Zach were excited. For scavengers the hunter is an unattainable presence. They were able to compete with the presence of the nobles and qualified to talk with the aristocracy on the same level!

And them, at the end of their lives they will be only scavengers! Good and bad, high and low! It didn't matter how much wealth was created by the materials that they will bring in. They will only be a scavenger. Because they don't have a 'light physique'.

The consortium let Dudian to be a seed scavenger because his radiation value was close to 'light physique' and his special training results were above the top. The consortia was willing to give him the opportunity to become a hunter.

Otherwise, no matter how high the wealth Dudian would create for the consortium, he was destined to die as a scavenger.

Dudian was not happy. Because he had seen the hunters, came outside the giant wall and witnessed the ruins of everything. He had seen the bloody bodies everywhere and he understood the perennial fighting of hunters. He understood why Fernando had

looked at him with eyes so cold. Because in their eyes the life of others is meaningless... They are used to kill. They are nurtured to kill...

"He is our consortium's hunter." Dudian noted the medal on youth's chest and relieved a bit. If it was other consortium's hunter, then they would be 'silenced' if they were exposed.

Dudian and the other were observing the hunter. He had noticed the burning marks on ground not far from the building. There was a trace of joy in his eyes. He went close to the circle and felt the bursts of warmness coming out of ashes. It seems the fire was extinguished not very long time ago.

He glanced at the bodies of the undead on the ground. His eyes were puzzled a bit with disappointment. But he suddenly thought of something and his eyes lit again. He looked around and soon focused on a nearby building. He quickly rushed in.

"He's aware," Mason said.

Zach looked at Dudian, and said, "Dean, he knows that we can do it. It's okay. Will he rob us?"

Dudian mind amazed by the keen observation of the hunter, but also feel the gap between themselves and hunters. With a single glance he instantly had determined their whereabouts which meant that he was a seasoned veteran. He glanced at Zach and shook his head: "He should not. After all they hunt after tens of thousands of undeads. He would disdain the amount we have."

Heard this, Zach three relieved.

At this time, the door was opened and the hunter appeared inside. There was a trace of surprise on his face. It seems he didn’t expect that the people who use the flame to kill the undead were actually children.

Chapter 59 - ‘Undead’ Level Hunting

“You are the new graduates from the scavenger training camp.” Black uniformed youth glanced at the room and saw the charred skulls on the ground. When he saw the appearance of the cracked skulls he began to check out Dudian and the other three with great interest: “Is it your first time? Or have you been scavenging for sometime? You can kill these level ‘4’ undeads. Moreover you know to collect ‘cold crystals’ from their skulls. A little mean it is.”

Dudian was staring at him. He felt his scalp tingling as if a predator was looking at a prey. His heart darkned as he whispered to explain: “We are from the newest batch of scavengers that joined the consortium. Mr Hunter is happened so that we were force to separate from our main force by the undeads. Inadvertently we thought of this approach and were successful at killing these monsters.”

The youth focused on Dudian. He was easily able to see that the boy was the core of this four man group. He smiled and said: “Don’t worry. I’m happy that consortium was able to recruit smart fellows such as you guys. I was hurt and need to bandage my wound. Make a spot and get me some fire.”

Dudian glanced at his right arm, nodded and said to Zach, “You get the fire while I find clean cloth for Mr Hunter.”

Mason, Sham and Zach were excited as it was the first time they were so close to a hunter. They immediately busied up as they heard Dudian’s words. It was as if helping the hunter would be the same as achieving a glory in war.

Hunter was going to the enter the next room when he said: “No! Those things are infected with radiation and germs. How can I use them for bandage? I have a first aid kit in my backpack. You seem like a smart kid, get me the kit”. The hunter went into the living room and sat down. He didn’t care about skulls on the ground. Instead he used he feet to swept the skulls to vacate a place. He put down the backpack and said to Mason: “Open the backpack and find the gauze that’s inside”.

Macon nodded and was about open the backpack when hunter saw that his gloves were stained. He frowned: “Bastard take of your gloves! Do you want to dirty my backpack?”

Mason scared and his face turned red. He quickly took off his gloves, opened the backpack and pulled out the gauze: “Mr Hunter you have disinfectant in here. You should first use it to disinfect the injury.”

“Are you going to teach me?” The hunter sneered and said: ” There is knife and bottle there. Do you see them? The bottle is alcohol. You have been taught about first aid knowledge, right?”

Mason quickly nodded and immediately poured the bottle of alcohol on the knife while Zach lit the torch and burned it. Mason said: “Mr. Hunter you should release the wound so that I can use the alcohol to disinfect it and then remove it.”

“I will do it myself.” The youth grabbed the second bottle. He use his thumb and flicked the cap as it flew out. He loosened his arm

and spilled the alcohol on top. There were bursts of convulsions on his face because of the sudden pain but he still tightly hold back.

Dudian and the other saw his wound. It was made by sharp claw marks and were deep enough to see the bone. His skin had been festering but because of youth's firm grip it hadn't joined the blood flow yet.

The youth caught the red-hot knife and cut off the festering flesh from the wound. Blood flew out as if rain was showering. He bite his teeth and kept silent the whole process.

This made Dudian extremely shocked: "Is this the quality of hunters? Even the soldiers who were baptized in many battlefields won't have such a strong willpower, right?"

As he removed the festered flesh hunter let Mason to help him bandage his arm. In short time, his right arm was wrapped in layers of gauze. The youth wiped the sweat from his forehead. He spat and leaned against the wall while he was slowly breathing.

Dudian looked at him and asked quietly: "Mr Hunter, isn't 8th area has been swept clean? How can there be so many undeads? Did they migrate from the other nearby area?"

"Do not question me!" The youth spoke in an unhappy tone as he gently closed his eyes.

Dudian was startled, immediately shut up his mouth.

A few minutes later, the youth opened his eyes: “I’m hungry. Give me food and water.”

Mason was standing next to him hesitated as he said: “Mr Hunter it is our food. If you eat it, we…”

The youth looked at Mason with cold eyes as he said: “Don’t you want to give me?”

Mason was scared: “I don’t mean we won’t. But, just… ”

“Here is my food Mr hunter. Mason is a bit not sensible. Please don’t mind him.” Sham quickly said and handed out his backpack. He took out all the dry food and water then presented to the youth.

Mason and Zach’s faces slightly changed. Although they admired hunters but it was different went it came to their own interests. They looked at Dudian who nodded back to them meaning that they should go with the acquiesce.

Their mood was slumped but they didn’t dare to show the pain.

The youth looked at Sham: “little guy, you are sensible.” Then, grabbed his delivery of the dry food to eat. He stuttered up as he stretched his other hand: “water.”

Sham quickly handed him.

He drank the water and throw aside the empty bag. He continued to sit and rest for a while. Later on he slowly got up and did few gentle activities with his right arm. He revealed a pleased smile as it seemed that the injury was stabilized. He looked at four of them. His eyes narrowed and pointed to Mason: “Little guy, follow me.”

Mason surprised a moment, “go to where?”

“You will get to know.” the youth laughed.

Mason hesitated and said: “Sir but I have the task … …”

“If I said follow me then follow me. Why so much nonsense?” hunter frowned as he spoke impatiently.

Mason was frightened as he aware that there was something bad coming up. He looked at Dudian.

Dudian also felt a trace of unusual acting by the youth and said: “Mr Hunter, we have great respect towards you. But we have our own tasks and if its not completed we will be expelled by the consortium, I hope you can understand the situation which we are in. However, we are willing to assist and serve you as long as we can be of any service to you.”

“Well, the little guy is able to speak. I now need your help! As I see your feelings are so good then all of you should come with. It will be better with you all.” The youth impatiently waved his

hand.

Dudian's face changed slightly, said: "What can you tell us?" He had said kind words because he thought hunter would deny their help because of pity. After all how can scavenger help a hunter. And if a hunter need their help it won't be an ordinary problem. The hunter's task was nothing but hunter monsters!

The youth eyes narrowed and a trace of hostility flashed past. He though of something and the hostility in his eyes quickly dissipated. He had a smile on his face as he said: "Nothing important. I have found precious materials. I alone won't carry enough so I want four of you to help me out with taking it back to the giant wall. Rest assured, I will inform the leaders of consortium about your help and half of the goods will be yours!"

Hearing this, Mason, Zach and Sham were surprised. Mason asked: "Mr Hunter is this really all?"

"You will not lie to us, right?" Zach was excited.

Only Sham was puzzled as it seemed that there was something wrong. But he couldn't think of any reason, he could only look back to the Dudian.

Dudian knew that hunter was lying as he heard his words. The hunters don't care about gold and what is more precious that gold? However, although the belonged to the same consortium, but he felt that messing with the youth won't result in anything good. Most likely they will be the ones to suffer. The only thing that they

could do right now was to see how everything will turn out!

Chapter 60 - Bait

Dudian and the other three followed behind the hunter and left the residential building. It didn't take long before they came outside the distract where they departed Scott and his group.

Two undeads staggered out from the junction that they were facing. They seemed to feel the body heat from Dudian and rest. They immediately turn around and run towards them in a pace which was accelerating as they moved.

Dudian took out his dagger and stared at hunter's back. If he gave up on them to escape, he would urge Mason, Sham and Zach to run as fast as possible. Because they didn't have enough strength to face them on their own.

However, the youth frowned as he saw two undeads. The next moment he took out a dagger which was placed at the edge of his pant's strap. He ran towards the undeads and was in front of them in matter of a few breathes. His body staggered and twisted as if he was a whirlwind. Puff! Puff! Two sounds echoed out as the heads of undeads were cut off from their bodies and fall to the ground.

Dudian's pupils contracted at the sight.

He knew that hunter's job was to exterminate the monster but he didn't expect that they had such a strength. It was a one-sided slaughter!

The youth dumped the blood off the dagger and inserted back

onto its place. He looked back at Dudian and the other three. There was a faint smile on his face as he waved them to keep up.

Dudian and the other three quickly caught up with him.

Dudian noticed the dagger on hunter's belt was so sharp that their dagger should have to be called a butter knife in comparison to it. He estimated that hunter's blade was made from a better steel. On the other hand his dagger was almost useless after cutting up few dozen undead necks. Most of the blade was just a bare metal now. Only the place close to the dagger's hilt was sharp enough to cut something.

"The thing in their heads ..." Dudian just wanted to bend over to collect the crystals when youth noticed him and lightly shouted: "Do not delay time. Hurry up."

Dudian frowned slightly but still gave up on gathering the dark blue balls. However he fixed the location of the heads in his mind so that if he has the opportunity he would come back to collect them. After all, this thing was not much in hunter's eyes but for them it was a great fortune.

As they continued they met more and more scattered undeads. But the hunter didn't let Dudian and the other three to take an action. On each encounter he took the initiative to behead the undeads. He as much faster than undeads and apparently his close combats skills were over the top. His skills were so good that the undeads didn't have a chance to touch his body lest injure him.

Dudian followed in silence watching and studying hunter's action. In this era where cold weapons were used, the techniques and traditions of combat practices have been perfected. The martial arts shown by the hunter had mesmerized Dudian. He used the knife so perfectly as if he was mowing a grass field with scythe. His actions were neat and perfect. He wasn't affected at all even though he had an arm injury.

Is this the result of life and death situations that he has gone through?

"Mr Hunter. Will you save Scott and rest? They should not be far away from here... ..." Mason bravely asked. Along the way the youth had sheltered them from undeads. So they had come to feel that the hunter's nature was not bad. A good impression of him had gradually birthed out in their hearts. His previous actions has long been automatically ignored.

The hunter replied: "Who do you think I am? Do you thing I work for health care organization?"

Mason was stunned. At this point, the youth's face changed as he looked towards a street. Dudian noted that hunter was looking at the place where they had flew away. Also it was the first place where they had met undeads!

Dudian seemed to fell the ground under his foot faintly tremble. As if a tall building in the distance had collapsed. Afterwards he heard a soft roar.

The youth's eyes narrowed and a trace of blood-thirst flashed past. He glanced at the buildings around them and soon his eyes locked onto the top of the office building in the vicinity. This building has long been covered with moss and vegetation, the windows had dilapidated. There was a little smile on his face as he said to Dudian and the rest: "You wait here. You must not leave without my orders!"

Dudian face changed as he said: "What about you?

"I have something to do. I'll come back immediately." The hunter said in a serious and cold tone: "Do not forget, without my order you are not allowed to leave. I will be ruthless towards anyone who leaves without permission!" His eyes swept over the four: "Don't forget my words. Even if you go back to the consortium, I'll find you and I'll skin you alive!"

Finished, he looked back at the previous location, sneered, turned and left quickly. He was like a dexterous black cat. The first moment he was in front of them and the next he went into office building and disappeared from the four's eyesight.

"This, this ... ..." Mason was frozen, "he just went away?"

Dudian looked at the back of his disappearance. There was an emission of unknown feeling in his heart. He suddenly thought of the bow and arrows on the youth's back.

Tall building, bow and arrows .....

His pupil suddenly shrank. Archers use ambushes. Are they being used as bait by the hunter? What he wants to lure?

“Run!” As he thought of the possibility, Dudian suddenly roared. He quickly ran towards another office building, taking advantage of the time while it would take the hunter to reach the top of the building. They must escape from this place as soon as possible or else will be shot by the hunter on the spot!

He was not confident enough that hunter wouldn’t shot them in case of an undead attack.

Mason, Sham and Zach were stunned and puzzled. They had trusted him for long time so their bodies had subconsciously follow behind Dudian. As he caught up, Mason asked in hurry: “Dean what happened? Why are we running? If he knows... If he knows we... ...”

Dudian had a bit of favor in his heart as he previously saw the hunter kill the undeads to protect them. But that good impression had gone away as of now. He replied in cold tone: “We are likely being used by him as a bait. He is trying to lure out his prey!”

“What bait?” Mason, Sham and Zach were shocked. Soon they thought of the possibility and shuddered.

Dudian went into the building. He breathed gently and looked back at Mason and the rest : “We gotta get to the other side. We must not let him find us!”

Zach's face was ugly as he said: "Even if we escaped him now after we get to the giant wall he won't let us live in peace!"

Dudian answered in cold tone: "Then we will kill him!"

Mason, Sham and Zach hesitated as they heard Dudian. He stared at him in stunned looks.

Mason could not help but said: "Kill him? My God, do you know what you are talking about? He is a hunter! We can't kill him... ... Even if we somehow kill him, then this is a big crime! "

"Dean, are you sure?" Sham turned pale and said: "If you guessed wrong. If he just let us stand there so get a bit private time... Then we ..."

Dudian was a bit startled. He didn't think about the possibility of the hunter to take leak or shit. But... how can he bet on that?

There is only one chance to live. If his speculation was right, continuing to stay there was the same as waiting for their death! The hunter killed the undeads very easily. Obviously if he was using them to lure out something then it has to be some kind of monster which was extremely terrorizing. Basically they would be doomed and would not be able to escape!

Although there are many other possibilities, but this is the best he could think of at the moment... in case he was wrong... then he was wrong!

Dudian thought of the desert assessment three years ago. He had killed the alchemist, Rosyard. He had a bit of hesitation in his heart but settled up in a moment. They had to leave the area. Even if his thinking was wrong, then he will still have a choice. That is, to kill the hunter!

“We have already left that place! Whether my speculation was right or wrong, it doesn’t matter now! We have to kill him anyway! Otherwise we will be suppressed by him or even die in his hands!” Dudian eyes were cold as he resolutely said.

Mason looked at his eyes with some hesitation. After all, anyone who is involved in the action to kill the hunter is a murderer. ‘Murderer’ is a heavy word for people such as them.

Dudian also looked at them waiting for their choice. There was fear in his heart. If they do not choose to participate with him, what he should to?

He did not dare to go on thinking about what he would do in a case such as that. A door in his heart has been opened and a devil has inserted itself. It was whispering evil thoughts.

There were few things that Dudian took as a bottom line. He didn’t want to cross them now.

Roar! .

At this moment, a low roar echoed from the previous location where they were.

Dudian and others took a peek. They were horrified as the blood was drained from their faces.

Chapter 61 - Level 9 Monster

The top of the tall building was dilapidated as it was baptized by radiation and rains for the last the hundred years. Top two or three layers had collapsed and were in ruins. Brian leaped up through the gap of the wreckage of the broken wall instead of walking around to get to stairs. It was the highest ground of the building. He was extremely satisfied with the broken wall cover which was very suitable for ambushes. He felt the hunt will be very smooth.

Roars echoed out which surprised Brian. “Did it came over so quick?”, Brian thought. He quickly adjusted the bow in his left hand with a firm grip. Two arrows were taken out by his right hand with a smooth backhand motion. Arrows were silver in color and reflect his cold eyes. He looked down through the crevice of the cracker wall and saw his prey.

The buildings that Brian saw were half-broken and covered with vegetation. From the corner a behemoth sized black monster came over. Its body length was about five meters. There were black loose hairs stuck to its body. Its head was similar to wolf’s, mouth protruding outwards with two large sharp fangs. Saliva was flowing down through its fangs dipping the hair on its chin.

“Finally! It came out!” Brian’s eyes narrowed as bloodthirsty excitement flashed past, “A rare level 9 monster. After I kill you my magic marks will be able to evolve again. Finally I will master a new ability!”

He put the arrow onto the bow and his eyes glanced away. He

looked at the previous open space where he had left Dudian and the rest. But no one was there. His face changed and eyes become chilly, “Bastards! Damn little bastards! If you had struggled a little in front of it you would have created more output. Even if you would be killed on spot!”

He shook his head as he looked at the street. It seems the monster was smelling to trace the location of preys. Brian’s face was livid, “This thing is not a mindless low-level undead. If I shot at it because of temerity, it will certainly be aware of my location. Moreover, it will also arouse its suspicions.”

He clenched his teeth in vain as he thought of the matter in hand, “These little bastards said that they were separated from other scavengers. If they lead it to that large force there should be a chance to kill it!” As he thought more his eyes brightened with hop. He quickly opened his backpack and pulled out a bottle of yellow vial. He opened the cap and sprinkled a bit of it on himself.

“This amount of vial should be enough to cover up my smell. As long as we are not too close, it is temporarily unable to find me. It should go after those little animals. ” Brian secretly thought out.

...

Dudian and the rest were frightened when they saw the monster jump out of the corner of the building. They had heard stories about such terrifying monsters. They would have never expected them to actually exist!

Dudian said in hurry: “Run! Go up the stairs!”

Mason, Sham and Zach reacted and quickly followed Dudian and walked up the stairs.

“Quick! Hide! Hide!” Sham stammered as he was anxious and almost cried out. Previous undeads in comparison to this black behemoth were like cute little kittens.

Dudian’s face was pale too. As he heard Sham’s words he hurriedly said: “We can not hide! We have to go to the roof to find him!”

Mason whispered: “He, he will not save us! We violated his words … …”

“It is not for help, we are going to kill him! Or we will lead that thing to him. Even if we die we will pull the hunter with us!” Dudian clenched his fists. His heart was filled with fear and a very strong anger. His speculation was right on spot, that bastard really wanted to use them as a bait. They had helped him with the bandage and wound. They even gave him their food and water. Instead of thanking them he acted ungrateful!

Moreover it was not about being ungrateful, but sending them to their death!

Animal!

Dudian had never been so angry.

...

On the top of the building, Brian watched through the broken wall. He the monster suddenly looked at the direction of the high-rise. It was clear that it had found the smell of those little bastards!

Brian's eyes flashed with a hint of the coldness. He secretly thought: "Damned, little bastards. Instead of obedient death you have chosen to run. Do you think that you will be able to save yourself if you fled in to the building? Small pieces of garbage! Dog bastards! "

He knew that Dudian and the rest would die. There was not vials on them to cover their smell. They will be found by the monster. But he was not happy but angry. They would be of little value to him if they died in the building. In the building he could not find the angle to attack. The former open street was perfect as a hunting ground for him. Cramped places such as the building was the worst terrain for a hunter who specializes in the long-range attacks such as himself.

He could imagine the fear of those kids who had went into the building. He began to calculate few odds about them. If it is from the moment that they entered the building when he left the street then they should be located somewhere around 4th to 6th floor. The monster shall catch up to them maximum by the tenth floor.

And he was on the 23rd floor.

He has long noted down the layers of the building as he climb to the top of the high-rise. As an experience hunter, his observation and coping abilities were out of ordinary.

“If the battle happens on the 10th floor...hmm... The distance between this floor and 10th is very far. But I don’t know if it will be able to locate me.” Brian frowned. He was little uneasy in his heart. After all, he only saw a simple message in the hunting manual describing the monster as ‘extremely sensitive to the smell’. But there were no specific details about the range.

Because of this he took out the yellow bottle, poured the vial over his body and evenly applied to all parts of his body. He was thinking and calculating at the same time: “Now, they should be on the eighth floor while the monster should be on sixth floor. I estimate that it won’t take long until they will be eaten by the monster. In case the monster can feel my presence then the only option for me is to jump from here!”

He began to think about the retreat plan. After all he can not pin all his hopes on some monster and four bastards!

Time went by. Brian’s muscles had tightened up. He was simulating the process while calculating the time: “Those little bastards should be dead by now. I have to wait to see the monster leave the building. I can catch up to it!”

He took breath and waited. He heard a sudden roar coming from below and a giant shadow jumped out towards him.

Brian’s pupils shrank as he jumped back in hurry. The claws of the monster hadn’t reached him.

He saw the fragments of the backpacks hangings on its fangs.

Chapter 62 - Hunt In The High-Rise

Whoosh!

Brian had distanced himself with the gap. At the same time as he fell backwards, he saw the monster's claws had touch his former position. The walls were already corroded so after the attack few bricks fall down. The monster growled a few times, turned its head and disappeared from the gap. Most probably it was going to search for a place from where it could come over to get Brian.

Brian was relieved. With a fast move his hand reached the quiver and he took out another arrow. This one was twice as thick as the other arrows. There was a rope knotted on its back. He wiggled his head and aimed at the side of the another four-story building. He pulled the bow string and released it.

Arrow shot down from the top of the building and pierced the solar water heater which was on top of the four-story building. Brian tied the rope over a concrete and went downwards. As his body was falling, the rope immediately tightened.

The concrete was already corroded. Moreover Brian's body weight was pulling it as he swayed down the rope. When Brian was almost reaching the top of the four-story building the concrete broke up. The feeling of free fall came up the next moment but Brian didn't lose himself and grabbed onto the rope. He swing and hit the second floor windows. Glass instantly broke and he smashed into the building. He grabbed his dagger and head back to the front side of the floor.

It didn’t take long for the monster to reach the top of the building. But Brian had already run out of its sight. It lifted its nose, sniffed, looked around for a moment and finally locked on a direction.

About four or five minutes after the monster left, four figures quietly walked out from under a pillar. Their bodies were dirty and covered in blood.

“It should have gone,” Sham muttered.

Dudian looked at the direction the where beast went. His eyes flashed as he whispered: “We have to catch up. We must find that hunter!

“Are you crazy? You want us to catch up with it? It can find the bastard on the roof. It is extremely sensitive to the smell. If we are not careful…”. Mason who was close to him said in a low tone.

“There is this layer of blood cover. Temporarily it won’t be able to smell us.” Dudian glanced at his body which exuded stench of blood.

As they were walking up the stairs he happened to see bodies of undeads in the corridor. It took a whim for him to come up with this idea. That is, they smeared the blood of undeads all over their bodies to cover up their smells and pretend to be dead.

They pulled out the deeb blue balls from the undeads heads and

their body temperature returned to normal and began to rot. The taste and smell of the blood mixed with the rotten flesh was very strong.

Dudian noted that the monster had ignored the corpse of undead which was on the roadside. So he bet on it and took the risk.

In order to disguise completely he made all of them to smudge the rotten blood all over their bodies. Including their faces which was not an exception. However, taking into account the toxicity of the blood, Dudian didn't directly applied it to his face but used a fabric. The blood was spilled onto fabric which covered their faces. Although the blood would penetrate through the fabric but their life was on stake and there was no better option.

Moreover, in order to attract attention of the monster and reduce the weight, they had put all the four backpacks in the first floor. The backpack was stained with their sweat which was way too dangerous to be carried.

Originally, it was a desperate last attempt but they didn't expect it to succeed.

They were not in mood to celebrate their escape from the clutches of certain death because of the bold words that Dudian said. Because of sudden shock they shook their heads.

"We were lucky this time. If we go after it a small accident will lead to our death." Sham also tried to persuade.

Dudian looked at them and said: “If you don’t want to then just stay here and wait for me. You may go and find Scott and others. The hunter must be killed or else there won’t be peace for us!”

This monster had confirmed his speculation, but also to more profound understanding of the hunter’s cruelty. He did not think that such a cold-blooded and cruel person will easily let them disrupt his plan. The next time when they fall into his hands, a simple death would be what they would wish for. Most probably he would torture them to death alive!

Instead of pinning their hopes on each others compassion, it was better for them to cut off the hidden danger!

Mason and the other two were stunned. They saw Dudian who was leaving to catch up to monster. Mason even said: “I have told you before. We four are together in life and death!”

Dudian looked at him deeply, nodded slightly.

At this time, as Zach and Sham heard Macon’s words also stood out and followed after Dudian.

They had got along and helped each other in the last three years. However, as he witnessed them ready to follow him in such a critical moment, Dudian’s heart was filled with warmth. He nodded and said: “Let’s go!”

“You little animals are still alive? ” A cold and chilling voice

echoed out in their ears.

Dudian's pupil shrank as he looked up and saw the hunter who appeared in the shadow on the second floor near the broken window. He ... ... did not even leave? .

Brian was more surprised than Dudian. He didn't expect them to be able to escape from the monster. But when he saw the blood covering their bodies, he suddenly realized that he had underestimated them: "Small little bastards! I will kill you today even if the Father himself came up to beg for your lives,!"

He lifted the bow and instantly pulled the bow.

Dudian's face changed, quickly ran into the building.

'Whoosh', two arrows stabbed onto Dudian's previous position.

"Run, run separately!" Dudian got into the building and shouted.

Mason and the other two were ignorant. They didn't want to kill the other but the hunter had appeared in front of them. As they heard Dudian's words they went towards the second floor.

Dudian saw them running in the same direction and quickly shouted: "Run separately or he will catch up with you guys! He is only chasing after me!" From the previous two arrows shot by the hunter he knew that the hunter's hatred was most concentrated on him.

Macon and the other two discolored: “There is hope if we fight against him together!”

“Listen to me!” shouted Dudian.

All of them were confused. But they had to bite the bullet. So they separated and ran in three different directions.

Dudian looked back at the hunter who had jumped from the second floor. He quickly turned and ran. He knew that if the other side caught up to him, he will die a miserable death. That side parried the horror of the undead, not to mention a mere scavenger!

“The cunning little bastard! You have been undermining my plan!” Brian has long seen through that the other three were listening to the arrangements of Dudian. Even an adult scavenger would stand wherever he would order. They would stand without tampering! The thought of Dudian destructing his plan of hunting the monster made him subconsciously clench his fists.

“Run, Run! I will peel off your skin !” Brian’s inner devil was reflected on his face. He quickly caught up to the stairs. Taking into the account the undeads blood’s smell coming from Dudian and the other three’s bodies, Brian knew that the monster won’t come back for a while. A strong desire to slaughter had ignited in his heart.

He wanted the other side to feel the pain!

Whoosh!

Soon, he came up to second floor. He heard footsteps coming from not far ahead. Should be on fourth floor. He sneered and went up the stairs.

Soon he came to the fourth floor. The previous rapid footsteps had disappeared. He smiled coldly and said: “Hide and seek! I haven’t played this game in a long time. Hide! I will let you taste the despair! You will know what it looks like when footsteps of death are coming towards you step by step... ... ” He pulled out his bow and raised it. He put the arrow and shot it. The arrow passed through windows that were covered in glasses which crashed in that instant. Then a muffled sound echoed.

Chapter 63 - Immortal Hunter?

Brian's brows wrinkled. Quietly he went over to the office's door. He slowly pushed open the vegetation covered door. It was not locked but it issued a slight squeaky sound as it moved. Brian entered the following office and looked sideways. He saw that the arrows he previously shot were nailed on top of the wooden table in the room.

He frowned slightly. At this time, he heard subtle sounds of a movement from the opposite office.

His eyes flashed. Suddenly he took out another arrow from the quiver and it instantly shot past the slim wall. It took less than a breath of time between him reaching the arrow and shooting it. Suddenly a suppressed whisper of pain came from the other side.

"Little bastard!" Brian slightly sneered as he said. He put away the bow and pulled out the dagger. Step by step he walked towards the next office. He kicked open the door. It couldn't withstand the force so it fell the next moment. The dimly lighted room with everything inside was present in his sight. His vision concentrated on the desk that was on the other side of the office. The arrow had penetrated Dudian's ribs and nailed him onto the table. Dudian seemed like a little rabbit which had been caught and struggling to escape.

Brian's eyes were colored red. There was a bloodthirsty feeling reflected in them. He was very confident of his archery skills. The arrow shot by him could penetrate the stone, not to mention soft armor of the scavengers.

“Little bastard! Struggle! Struggle more! Are you feeling desperate now?” Bricked licked his lips as he slowly, step by step went towards Dudian. He wasn’t in hurry and was enjoying the moment.

Dudian was sweating and looked at him in horrified manner: “Do not! Do not! Don’t come over!”

“Scream! Continue to scream!” A chill flashed by Brian’s eyes, “I will destroy you! I will peel you alive! I will eviscerate you!”

As he approached Dudian face’s showed more and more horror. However, when Brian was about 5 meters away from him the panic on Dudian’s face disappeared. Instead a determination was reflected on them. A strong determination to kill the Brian was revealed as he suddenly stood up and throw the dagger which was hidden near his chest under his arm.

Brian was stunned for a moment at sudden attack. But he was, after all, an experienced hunter who has survived through many life and death battles. Instinctively he raised his dagger to block the on-coming dagger.

Brian saw that the arrow which he had shot previously haven’t Dudian at all. Instead Dudian had deliberately caught the arrow with his armpit, resulting in dislocation effect that made Brian think that he was successful.

“Little bastard!” Brian was angry. He was angered by Dudian’s

attack but also for his stupidity as he fell into a mere scavenger's trap. However, he was confident that there was no way for Dudian to get out of his hands so he still kept he cool. "I will unscrew your head! Squeeze out your eyes! You little bastard!", he roared.

However, Dudian didn't panic as he saw that dagger had failed. He began to lift the keyboard, LCD screen, cup, picture frames, flower pot and any other object that was on the table to throw at Brian.

Although these things will not cause any harm but at least could block Brian.

Brian was aware of Dudian's intentions. However he took Dudian's actions as the last stand by his prey because of despair. He enjoyed the scene. He didn't even raise his hand to block the on-coming object. Even those cups or pots wouldn't have any effect because of the hunter's specialized armor that he wore.

At this moment, Dudian vainly threw mass of fabric at Brian.

This cloth was on the table, along with the other things. It seemed that Dudian was just grabbing anything that he could and throwing them at Brian.

Bang! Brian kicked the hard object that was covered with the fabric: "Little bastard! I'll the way you think of these little cunning plans. But do you think that I would fall for the same trap twice? All the other things were covered in dust and moss but this fabric was clearly flipped over. What had you hidden inside?"

Dudian's pupils shrank. He had underestimated the observation skills of the hunter. Powerful physique played only small part in their overall qualifications. The real problem was in their culminated real-life combat experience. Perhaps while hunting the monsters, they have been accustomed to tactics of making traps. Most probably they have long used every possible trap that could be thought of.

"I had underestimated you," Dudian gasped, staring at him coldly.

Brian sneered, "Do you any random person can kill a hunter? Since the other three little animals have escaped, you will bear all of my anger now!"

Dudian sneered and said: "I had underestimated your foolishness, idiot!" Then he instantly jumped to the back of the desk.

Brian was confused because of his action. However he smelled a burning paper. In his peripheral vision under a table there was a tube. There was a faint flame that reached it. The next moment.

Boom!...

A massive explosion happened which swallowed him.

A loud noise echoed out and the whole room shook. The lights on

the ceiling had shattered and fall off.

Although Dudian hid in time, but he still felt the shock-wave even behind the desk. He felt his body thrown out by the shock-wave. He hit a hard object and fall on to ground. Pain spread throughout his body, while there was a buzzing sound echoed in his ears. In a moment, unimaginable amount of pain burst into his mind.

He struggled to open his eyes. His line of sight was dizzy and constantly shaking. He clenched his teeth, raised his hand and slapped his face.

After two or three continuous slaps, gradually his sight was restored. He struggled to stand up and looked up at the location of the previous explosion.

He had incited the hunter's concentration on himself so that he wouldn't detect the gunpowder filled tube. He had used the fabric that he found in the office to ignite the gunpowder. But the problem was that both paper and fabric were covered in thick dust. That's why they burned very slowly even though he had used the dagger to divide the fabric into strips. Because of slow burning he had covered the fabric with the paper from the side. From the beginning his aim was to camouflage the gunpowder tube.

Moreover he had to take risks. Even though the destructiveness of the tube bomb was high, but if the hunter was away from it then it would not have much of an effect. So he took a gamble.

If the fabric burned faster than he expected, he would be the first to be killed by the blast.

If it burned out when both of them were close to it, both of them would die.

It was a big gamble where his life was used a bet. There was no option but to make it.

Dudian felt tired. He leaned against the wall and took big breathes. He grabbed the fabric which was near the wall. He untied it and saw more than a dozen dark blue balls in it. There was a trace of happiness in his eyes as he smiled, but the next moment his body suddenly froze.

Hunter struggled a lot but at the end slowly stood up. His right arm which had faced the explosion had been blown off. The blood was oozing out. He clutched the dagger with his right hand while the hunter looked at Dudian ferociously.

Didn’t he … … die?

Chapter 64 - Beast

Dudian was horrified. He was struggling to stand still as his hands and feet were feeling very week. Even though he wasn't at point blank when the explosion occurred but he had been affected by the massive shock-wave that came up aftermath it.

"Small...Small bastard!", Brian ferociously stared at Dudian. He was bloodstained and he was dragging his right leg while he slowly walked towards Dudian. He raised his left hand and threw the dagger at Dudian's chest.

Dudian had expected the shot so made his best to avoid it by a sideways roll.

Brian's right arm was blown away plus his right leg was seriously injured. As he throw the dagger his body lost the balance and he felt down the place where Dudian previously stood. Brian struggled to get up again but his body had taken its toll so it was very hard for him to move. However, he was able to grab the dagger.

Dudian saw that the hunter was not able to stand up again so his heart was relieved. It seems that although he couldn't kill the hunter but at least disabled him for good. He began to grab anything that was in his periphery and throw it at hunter.

There was no protective gear at Brian's head. If it was normally, he wouldn't feel any pain because of the things that hit him. But now, as right side of his face had been injured, these pots and

leftover's of chairs were inflicting great deal of pain. His body muscles were twitching and more blood was bursting out of his shoulder.

He roared and waved the dagger. Unfortunately for him, he couldn't even reach Dudian's feet.

Dudian was worried that the hunter would suddenly rush at him so he didn't dare to get too close to him. He thought of his own dagger which he had thrown earlier. Although its blade was not usable, but its tip was sharp. He ran back to the get the dagger. As he looked back he Brian had already climb over.

The hunter's ferocious eyes were full of compelling chill. As if he would counter-attack at anytime but was hesitating about the timing. Bang! The floor began to tremble and collapse under Brian's foot.

Brian fell to the third floor. Several desks were crushed by the collapse of the fall and Brian had fallen onto one of them.

Brian's body shook from the pain as he he was lying on the broken pieces of the desk over the floor. The ground under him collapsed and he fell into the second floor.

As Brian's body hit the ground on the second floor it ceased any kind of movement.

Dudian with light footsteps came over the edge of the gap created

by the collapse. He looked down to see that the hunter was not moving. Blood was slowly flowing out from his shoulder and staining the ground.

Dudian was relieved. He slowly retreated away from the gap. He sat down on his butt and leaned against the wall to rest. This building had become useless after three hundred years of corrosion. An explosion such as that had collapsed two floors. If there was a bigger explosion then the whole building would be blown to dust.

Resting for some time, Dudian felt that his physical strength was restored. He gently went to the other side of the office and grabbed the fabric with the dark blue balls.

As he went to the second floor he thought that this explosion may attract undeads, the beast and most importantly other hunters from the consortium, So he had to be quick in his dealings. As he reached the office on the second floor he saw the hunter was still lying on top of the ground. The blood that had oozed out of his body was almost dry and hard.

He walked around the office and grabbed all the scatter white paper he could. He threw them onto hunter and look for more. At the end, when he felt there were enough he went close to the hunter and squat down to use fire sickle to burn hunter's body. Suddenly the hunter, who was supposedly dead, made his last move as he jumped and stabbed the dagger that he held onto Dudian's chest.

Dudian couldn't help but be shocked as all of this was completely

contrary to his expectation. He felt the dagger easily pierce through his soft armor and stab into his chest. The first feeling that he got was extreme cold and then he felt severe pain coming off from his chest.

His eyes opened wide in shock as he looked at the hunter. “Did he played dead? Was he waiting for him?”, many thoughts passed by in his mind.

He had rested for a while and it took him some time to get to second floor from fourth floor. The hunter was able to hold back and play dead for sometime. He was expecting Dudian to get close to him. What kind of faith and endurance does he have?

“Bastard … …” Brian slowly raised his head. His face was extremely pale due to excessive blood loss. But there was crazy hatred reflected in his eyes. He had a self-depreciating, self-mocking smile on his head. His hand left the dagger’s hilt and his face fall down.

“He is really dead.” Dudian saw the expressionless look in hunter’s eyes.

But … … the dagger was stabbed into his Chest.

Dudian grabbed onto the dagger. His whole body shivered. He stood up unsteadily but fell onto his knees. Every move that he wanted to make would affect his chest muscles. Every second was filled with dramatic pain.

“I can not die. Can not die … …” Dudian constantly repeated the idea in his mind. His consciousness gradually blurred, as if he was going to sleep for an eternity. But the voice and facial expressions of his sister and parents emerged in his mind. He remember the last words told to him by his mother and sister as the cold storage closed.

Live well … …

Live well … …

Survive!

He bit his tongue and previously dazed consciousness suddenly restored a bit. He looked down and found that the dagger hadn’t thorn his heart. If it had pierced the heart, he should have died on spot. Perhaps if he could stop the blood outflow, he could survive.

Suddenly strong feeling that urged him to survive poured into Dudian’s heart. He clenched his teeth and got up. He took out the dark blue ball from the fabric. It absorbs heat but also could be used to analgesic and homeostasis the wound.

He went to the back of the hunter and got the first aid kit from his backpack. There was unused gauze, some bottles and jars, some pills and powder inside the first aid kid.

Dudian found the alcohol. While his hand trembled his ignited the fire by using the previously prepared paper heap. Although the

radiation was high but he could manage.

He drank alcohol, bowed his head and blew onto the dagger. Little by little he pulled out the dagger. The pain he felt was so hard that he felt his scalp burst and soul shake. There was an urge to stop but he fought back the pain and slowly took out the dagger. The blood suddenly poured out. It was as if strength was leaving his body.

He began to wrap the gauze around his chest and tightly restrained it. At the moment he couldn't find needle and thread so it was impossible for him to suture the wound. For the time being his wanted to stop the bleeding.

Soon the top of the gauze was colored red. He rolled few more times and put the dark blue ball on the chest to continue to roll the gauze. He hoped that because of homeostasic nature of the dark blue ball the blood flow would stop.

Dudian looked at the hunter's body burning in the flame. There was a chill in his heart as he thought that hunters were not small timers who he could mess around with.

He leaned against the wall to rest, while studying the bottles and jars in the first aid kit. None of the drugs were labelled so he didn't dare to use any of them. Because they were made according to hunter's physique. The effects would be strong. If used wrong it will bring more harm than benefits.

Time went by slowly. Dudian was relieved that the blood outflow

had been restrained by the dark blue ball. However he couldn't move around or the wound would immediately split again.

God didn't favor him once again. Dudian was quietly watching out from the vegetation covered windows. The windows gently trembled as a growl which he was familiar with echoed out. It was the beast that he had seen before.

Dudian's face became pale as he was sitting on the ground trying to recuperate.

Chapter 65 - Hunting The Prey

The floors have been corroded and rot after the test of time.

At this time, the waves of sounds echoed out as stairs had demolished. Dudian looked ugly. He knew that the monster had come after him but it seemed to stay on the second floor for some time. Most probably hunter's corpse had caught its attention.

Bang! Bang! Dudian felt the slight tremors coming of the floor. Seems the sixth floor was broken too. Obviously, five-meter long monster has an enormous weight and it is a big toll on the floor's ground.

Dudian felt the ceiling almost fall off. The tremors caused by the monster was fatal for the long ramshackled building. He clenched the rope and stared to the front.

Bang! He saw the giant black claws breaking the ground. The claw tips waved almost stabbing Dudian.

Dudian was scared. Around five meters away from him the floor crashed and huge grim head stretched out. Big black eyes were staring at him. There was saliva flowing down its fangs.

Dudian jumped out of the window in hurry.

His body was rapidly falling.

Dudian clutched the rope tightly and stopped the movement.

He looked up and saw the beast has climbed out from the seventh flood. It's body squeezed from the narrow space on the seventh floor, looked down at him and was about to jumped out.

At the moment, Dudian was hanging out near the third floor. There was four-story of height in between him and the beast. His hand was about to catch the glass that was in front of him. Suddenly, he felt as if his body and arm were torn open at the same time. He had been stabbed by the hunter which needed a lot of time for its effects to disappear. His finger slipped and he couldn't grasp.

Tears almost flowed out because of the pain. He tired once more to grab. He lost control and fall of. There was a buffer on the second floor. He hit the windowsill and stabilized his body. He didn't dare to life his head, instead he punched the glass and crawled inside.

The moment he crawled in a strong wind blew past. "Whoosh". At the same time cracked growling voice echoed. Dudian quickly looked back. He was horrified at the sight. The windowsill which he was on moments ago had been torn by the beast while falling down. It had hit the ground floor. There were broken glass and meter long stones that were pressing onto its body.

Dudian relieved. Fortunately this windowsill was not strong enough to withstand the beast's weight.

Grim roar's echoed once again. Dudian was surprised and saw the beast going into the building again. Falling down from the seventh floor was not enough to kill it!

Dudian's face was pale. Half of it was because of the fear, the other half because of the excessive blood loss. He was about turn around and run when he felt the tremors coming from the stairs. The monster had climbed up and was about to charge over. He abruptly grabbed the rope that was outside and kept climbing up the rope.

While he was climbing the monster had leaped up and its claws were carving the outer wall of the building. They were directed at Dudian. It was roaring in anger.

Dudian looked down and saw the body of the beast. Because of the fear he began to climb faster and faster while the chest pain was getting more severe. His chest was already covered in red.

Soon, Doudian climbed to the fourth floor while the monster was leveraging by coming after him.

Dudian was scared as he got into windows of the fourth floor in hurry. He rolled inside and didn't care much about the body pain that he felt. He clutched his chest as he quickly ran to the other side of the fourth floor.

The monster jump into the fourth floor. It's claws were deeply engraved into the wall so it didn't fall down. The rope that Dudian had used to climb was swept away by its giant claws.

Looking at the direction Dudian ran it growled and went inside.

However the was a 6-7 meters wide holy in the room. Only the edges of the room were barely enough for a human to walk around. It could only crawl slowly, that's why it couldn't catch up with Dudian.

However, because of the strong blood-thirst it didn't gave up on its prey. It growled and used its claws to grab on to walls. It made few steps before the corridor's wall couldn't bear its weight and collapsed down. Its body fall down with the collapsing wall.

Dudian didn't dare to stay and went towards the stairs to climb up.

The only hope he had now was the cover of the building. The beasts size was enormous. So it would be extremely difficult for it to catch up with Dudian. Especially in such a building where everything was almost rotten to the bone.

Chapter 66 - Trapped In The Shaft

A huge roar resounded close by.

Numerous dust clouds rolled up. Dudian's sight was covered as he jumped up following his gut feeling. He heavily fall down and rolled quite a few times as the floor collapsed. Along the way he violently collided with large number of hard stones. He felt as if his body was going to break at any given minute. Suddenly his head knocked onto a heavy object and he lost consciousness.

He didn't know how long time has past away as he began to wake up. He felt difficult in breathing.

He opened his eyes but everything was plunged into darkness.

He was startled.

"I have not died?", he whispered.

The next moment, the pain that came from his body made to completely awaken from the absent-mindedness. His back was touching something hard. By pushing on his hands he wanted to move his body but an enermous pain hit him.

He didn't dare to move his body. Instead he looked around. There was a weak and faint light coming from the top of his head. He looked up and vaguely saw the place where light was penetrating.

He sighed in relief. After he recovers he could climb out.

He felt a burst of burning in his stomach because of hunger. He though of his backpack which he lost in the previous chase. However, now the priority was to eat something up. As he had eaten once after he had left the giant wall. Yesterday he was escaping from hunter and the beast. It was almost nighttime (dusk) when he lost his consciousness. He didn't know how long he has been in coma. At the best case he had been in come only for a night.

Dudian's palms groped around. He was trying feel the nature of things by touching. Even if he could find weeds he was ready to swallow them.

He smiled wryly in hope that the previous collapse will lead Mason or others to him. "However, wouldn't such a violent sound lead the undeads to him? What would he do then?", he thought to himself.

He suddenly dispelled the idea of calling for help. Instead of rescue he would attract group of undeads. He would be completely finished.

While he was thinking he felt touching some sticky liquid that flowed by him. The building's water should have dried up. Is it the rain water that have penetrated inside the building?

He was very thirsty. Even if radiated, he would want to drink the

water at the moment. As long as to relieve the feeling of hunger and thirst he was even willing to bite the corpse.

He slightly began to move his arm. He didn't want to force it so that not to affect the wounds on his chest. Slowly, little by little he picked up his hand and took it close to his mouth. He was about to lick it when the strong bloody smell penetrated his nostrils.

"is it blood?", Dudian was startled.

At this time, slight movement echoed from the darkness.

Dudian's pupils shrank. For God's sake, do not be... ...

roar!

As if confirming his guess a roar echoed from the darkness. Few stones were smashed and fly over. The grim sounds came about four or five meters away.

The beast!

Dudian's mind almost stopped functioning. "It's still alive!", passed by his mind.

He clenched his teeth. He pushed his palms onto the ground and moved his body bit by bit. There was a pain as if his body was torn. His forehead was full of cold sweat.

He continued for seven or eight times, as a result he moved for two or three meters away. He was tired and was about to collapse.

However, he found out that the roar, although it was non-stop growling but was not approaching him. It seems that... ... it was stuck in the same position.

Dudian had some doubts. Was it really stuck somewhere?

At this thought, he immediately touched his own pocket that carried the fire sickle. It was not lost. His palm was weak but still while trembling he hit the fire sickle. Out of friction the fire burned and lit the darkness.

Small fire began to disperse the darkness near him.

Dudian raised the fire light. The black beast was lying in front of him in a narrow channel. Its neck seemed to be broken and there were large stone scattered all around it. It wanted to crawl out but its body was stuck under the accumulation of stones.

He was relieved. Fortunately it was stuck or he would be eaten up while he was in coma.

At this time, the light burned out and darkness was restored.

But Dudian’s mind was relaxed. He had seen the surrounding

environment. The beast body was stuck in a steel box similar to a container. The only place in the building where such a container existed was the elevator shaft!

Chapter 67 - Kill

Dudian looked at the direction of the beast. It was clear that they were at the ground floor. He had to climb up to leave the shaft.

However, there were obstacles in the elevator shaft.

Although, not far from him there is an open entrance as the elevator door had fallen down.

He made up his mind. He walked towards the broken stone heap and began to climb. A lot of wound began to open up and dull pain covered his body as he climbed upwards.

He didn’t stop but adhered to climb. If he continues to stay here, his body will lose all its strength at some point and he will be left to death in this God damn forgotten place.

Soon, he climbed out of the elevator.

Clouds of light scattered in the elevator shaft. There was dust in the air. One side of the walls and windows were all dilapidated, full of holes.

Dudian look at the direction of the beast. There was a pile of concrete there. On the side a twisted broken steel was exposed. Because of these stones crimping on it, the beast wouldn’t be able to climb out.

He was feeling lucky that his body had rolled after falling down or else he all the pile of stones would have fallen onto him. He had escaped the death!

Half an hour later, Dudian had finally came out of the rubble of the building. There was still a feel of lingering fear as he looked back at the collapsed building.

He hid behind the stones and looked around for a bit. There were no undeads around. He thought that the undeads should have been attracted by the collapse of the building. Most probably have come over here but haven't been able to sense him so gradually scattered and left.

Earlier he had wrapped a dark blue ball in his chest to stop the blood outflow. As he had slept over, it had caused his body temperature to decrease. Most probably because of this he was able to avoid sensors of the undeads.

But at the moment, he had already taken out the dark blue ball and put into his pocket.

He quietly went by a nearby shop. As everywhere else, this shop was covered with vegetation and moss. Dudian's eyes fell on a plant. He took out the dagger from his waist and cut it off. He looked to the juice that was dropping from the plant. It was transparent water. He felt hunger struck him again. He grabbed few piece of leaves from the plant and gently chew them.

There was a slight sweetness that filled his mouth. He quickly ate

a few slices of rough leaves. But he was aware that the leaves may be contaminated with germs or their radiation content may be too high.

After eating the leaves, Dudian felt the burning sensation in the stomach suddenly went down. He didn't continue to eat the leaves but cut the plant from the stem. He sucked the water out.

If the vegetation was able to thrive and survive in a place such as this, then it was an indication that it already had anti-radiation and anti-virus properties.

After drinking some water, Dudian felt a bit more comfortable. Suddenly he thought of the beast that was stuck in the elevator shaft. A trace of coldness flashed in his eyes. He was the culprit that forced the beast into such a situation. As long as it didn't die, there was a possibility of breaking out. Once it broke out, it will be very dangerous for Dudian in the future.

Thinking for a moment, Dudian came towards the scrapped cars that were covered with moss. The front cover was knocked out. The engine was unusable and corroded. He didn't use much effort to take out the gas tank. There was nothing inside as he checked the gas tank with a dry stick.

It was an expected result. But he didn't give up and began to gently scrap tank from inside with the stick. Soon there was a layer of swarthy material on the stick.

He took out the fire sickle and ignited the dark material. It

actually burned!

Dudian was surprised. He went to the other cars and pulled out the gas tanks from all of them. He scrapped inside and gathered a large amount of swarthy material.

Dudian went to the shops and small supermarkets that were close by. He found fabric and clothes. He picked as much as he could and crawled back in to the collapsed building. It didn't take long before he was in front of the elevator shaft.

He was tired and exhausted. He sat by the elevator shaft and rested for a while. He lit the torch. This time he saw everything more clearly. The beast was covered in pile of stones. Only its neck, head and half of its fore-paw was exposed.

Dudian sneered as he stirred the dark oil material, rolled it in the combustible fabrics and wood. Later on he throw them toward beast.

The beast suddenly woke up and opened its eyes as these things knocked on to its face. It growled and grimaced in pain.

Dudian smiled slightly and threw the torch down.

Whoosh!

Torch fall on top of the fabric and fire burned up!

“Roar!!”

The beast body came in contact with the fire. It began to roar up in pain. It head was violently shaking. Stones slightly loosened because of its movement. Lots of gravel rolled down. However it failed in its struggle to move and shaking the stones didn’t help much.

Dudian was completely assure down in his heart as he saw the scene. He was worried that the beast will suffer pain and in madness would use extra force to get out. But after all, the building had collapsed and it happened to be at the bottom. It had suffered a great deal of damage also lost a lot of blood.

The fire illuminated the dark elevator shaft. The beast’s struggling roars gradually dissipated with the flames.

Dudian quietly looked at it. He felt that the life was so fragile. Even such a strong monster couldn’t escape the clutches of death. Perhaps... No... It should only blame itself as it was not strong enough, right?

Dudian slightly clenched his fists. The ambitions in his heart grew as the flames burned and growled more and more...

The flames continued to burn for ten minutes. Gradually they were extinguished. The smell of a cooked meat surged with the hot air.

He didn’t know that how smart the monster was. Maybe it could play dead too?! So for insurance, he picked up a stone and throw it.

Stone hit the beast but it did not respond.

Dudian was relieved. He went down and closely looked at the charred body of the beast. Its body surface was burned. Blood was spilling out.

“It seems that this beast is really different from the undeads. Its head does not had to be cut off to kill it.” Many thoughts passed by Dudian’s mind.

“I’m just interested. Is its head different from the undeads?” Cold light glowed in Dudian’s eyes as he held the dagger.

Chapter 68 - Infection

Suddenly, Dudian thought of a matter that he totally forgotten about. While he was stuck in the elevator shaft his body below his butt had been covered in blood which was flowing there. The blood of the beast!

“Does it contain the virus? The armor should have isolated it. I have not been in contact with it, ah!” He quickly stood up but his legs were numb. At the same time more and more tingling feelings came from all parts of his body.

He clenched his teeth and dragged his body outside to remove the blood. He came up towards the wall which he had used before to climb up.

The beast’s blood hadn’t flown here. He leaned against the wall while slightly breathing. He looked down at his body and check his armor from behind. He didn’t know when it had happened but there were quite a few scratches. The blood had penetrated and infected his body using mostly those scratches. He hadn’t felt anything until he had seen the scratches. Like a leech it had already penetrated his body. He didn’t even feel its existence when he touched the blood on his skin.

Dudian’s face turned pale and there was a trace of regret in his heart. If he didn’t come back to kill the beast, perhaps he wouldn’t be infected.

“Although nobody would expect me to escape the hunter, but I

even managed to escape the beast's attack. Eventually I couldn't escape the retribution of the Heavens... ... ..." Dudian bitterly thought in his heart. People would often talk about karma and they would say "forgive and forget". Perhaps if he didn't come back to kill the beast it would starve to death in here. But now he will be buried in here with the beast.

Dudian was leaning against the wall. Body's sharp tingling made him shiver and unable to climb up. He hoped that this virus won't take his life. He could only hope at this point.

In addition to tingling, he felt his consciousness get blurred and dizzy. He slightly lifted his left hand and touched his forehead. He felt hot and could not help but feel despair.

He thought of himself using the dark blue ball to absorb the heat before getting into the coma. He used his left and and struggled to take out the dark blue ball from his pocket. He used his hand and affixed the dark blue ball to his forehead.

Immediately an icy feeling enveloped him. He was able to think a bit clearer. However, his eyelids felt heave and his eyesight became gloomy and extremely fuzzy.

Suddenly, he felt a slight movement from his chest, as if there was something struggling in there.

He looked down and used his left hand to slightly open the armor. His vision was blurred but he could still see small blood red worms. The gauze was wrapped around his chest. But there were

worms that were drilling into the gauze. His muscles contracted in peristalsic wave to defy the worms. But most of them had drilled almost half the way in.

"Worms, worms ... ..." Dudian's mind at a loss. He raised his hand to grab, but a burning sensation hit his brain. He couldn't even lift his hand. Before he closed his eyes, the last thing that he saw was that the worms finally managed to fully drill into his body.

Thump! Dudian's head fall onto ground. He was throughly unconscious.

His palm was still holding the dark blue wall even though he was in come.

Gradually this dark blue ball melted in his hand. It turned into a light blue transparent liquid which penetrated into his palm through the small wounds.

Darkness! He was not aware of the passage of time.

Dudian once again opened his eyes and his consciousness was restored. He woke up because of hunger.

He was at a loss as he saw the familiar picture of the elevator shaft in front of him. "Didn't I die?", he thought.

He immediately thought of high fever he had felt before losing

the awareness. He touched his head. Body temperature seemed normal. Then he noticed that his swollen palms had been restored.

He quickly sat up and checked his whole body.

There was no kind of visibly external change in the body. His soft armor was dusty and there were a lot of small scratches. He subconsciously looked back at the beast. He saw its charred body still stuck under the pile of stones while its head was cut off.

Dudian speculated: “Was I lucid dreaming because of the high fever?”

“Was I saw tired that I had slept after cutting of the beast’s head?”

Suddenly, he opened his eyes wide in astonishment as he looked around.

Chapter 69 - Fusion

“Its so dark. I can actually see as if it was day!”

Duddian patted his face so that he could feel a little pain. He wanted to make sure that he was not dreaming. He turned to look up but there was no light coming from up. The elevator shaft was still enveloped in darkness.

However, he could see everything very clearly on the ground.

Dudian blinked his eyes quite a few times before he remembered about the worm stuck onto his chest. All the hair on his body stood erect at the thought of worms. He opened his chest in hurry. The white gauze was still rolled and the blood had penetrated it coloring it red. Moreover blood had dried up.

Dudian gently touched the wound but didn’t feel any pain. He immediately unlocked (uncovered) the gauze.

After he peeled off the gauze he saw the scar on his chest. It was a vertical dagger scar which was completely healed leaving only a shallow white scar. In addition, there was half of a finger size blood vessel which was solidified outside the skin.

Dudian’s face changed as he gently touch to bloodstains.

“Those worms haven’t actually drilled into my body, right? Right?”, He panicked as he remember the worms.

Anyone who would be willing for an unknown worms to drill into their body would be a creep.

Dudian thought of his dagger and immediately picked it up. He suspected that the worms might have sojourn in the bloodstains.

Dagger gently pierced the blood-vessel like tissue from which the dark red blood flew. At the same time, Dudian felt an immense pain which passed into his brain. His body trembled, especially the left side of the heart felt most painful. This was a real ‘heartache’.

His hand shook and he immediately stopped piercing. He felt that if he continued it would lead to his death!

as he released the dagger, that pain was relieved a bit. He looked and saw that the scratched blood-vessels were healed in an instant. Actually the speed of healing was visible to the naked eye. It didn’t long before they were back in their original state. Only small amount of blood that was on his chest proved that there was a stab over there.

The pain that he had felt before gradually subsided as the blood-vessel healed.

Dudian’s face turned ugly. “Have they fused with my body? Did I just become one with a worm?”

Ultimately, he couldn’t find courage to continue to pierce the

blood-vessels. He thought that if he could find a microscope in the ruins or based on super-chip's knowledge create one for himself, then he could find the source of the changes on his body. For now he had to place it aside.

This feeling made him a little uncomfortable, but helpless. However, the thought of survival was in itself a great fortune!

"My eyes can penetrate the darkness. Most probably each of those worms had some kind of functionality. They are not worms. Its beyond the concept of virus, bacteria or worm. It is a new variation of the microorganisms. It can live in the other life form's blood!"

Dudian calmed himself as he began to rationally think about everything before the coma. Obviously this bloody worm was from the blood the the beast. Perhaps it was living with it but after it died they followed out with the blood out of their own to... ... find the new host!

This also explained why he turned out differently after the infection by the blood. If it was another virus infection he would turn into an undead which didn't happen.

Moreover there had to be large number of worms inside the beasts blood. Most probably it has been long ago that these worms has produced anti-bodies to protect themselves from the virus and enhance their resistance towards it. They wouldn't want to be corrupted by it as they are a different life form.

Nevertheless, he understood that it was only his speculation. Unless he had the right equipment to research it, he would never ever understand what was really going on.

Dudian looked at his hands and feet. He didn't feel anything strange. He wanted to climb up from here. He used a bit of force to jump to catch onto a stone when he suddenly felt as light as a feather. In a single jump he had already reached the top of pile of rocks outside the hole.

Dudian was stunned, once again he looked at his hands and feet. He thought of something so he bent over to a half-meter large stone. He hold with hands and gently picked it up.

Sure enough it gently bounced up.

He made a swing and was already 3-4 meter high!

And he knew that he didn't use full force.

Three or four meters high was not where his head reached but the soles of his feet. It was way beyond the ordinary human's physical capabilities. Even if you had gone through an extreme hard training for decades, you may not be able to achieve such a non-human result.

"Sure enough, the speed, the power, everything had improved. My eyesight is over the top and I can see in the darkness. But the most powerful change of all, is the smell... ..." Dudian lightly fell.

He closed his eyes to concentrate.

Dudian could feel different smell float into his nose.

As he had closed his eyes, he was able to exude variety of things because of their smells. He was like a radar. He could smell the source and could determine the distance. Even if his eyes were closed, with the smell alone he also knew the surrounding environment!

Dudian opened his eyes. His heart was in shock. This smell enhance was god-like power. He felt as if he was a hound!

” Enhancement of the sense of the smell is completely out of proportion with the other physical improvements. There is just way too much difference. The previous beast also had very strong sense of smell. Could it be that this worms had brought some of the beast’s capabilities into my body? “Dudian was startled. He felt very excited. This sense of smell was a super radar for him. He could smell the undeads and other monsters from the distance!

It was a life-saving gift!

Dudian confidence suddenly burst out, by the addition of this super sense of smell. Now he was assure that he would be able to kill ordinary undeads at a whim. And the monsters as horrible as the previous beast, he would just perceive them in advance and avoid.

Dudian was perceiving countless smells. He smelled something sweet that was distributed from the backpack. The location was twenty-six meters away, in front of the pile of stones.

He grabbed the broken walls and jumped to the top of the building. Originally this place was the second floor. At the moment, all the things in the office were piled in the bottom.

The body injury was healed but he felt very hungry. Backpack had dry food and water, moreover dark blue balls were in it too.

Thinking of the dark blue balls, he remembered that he was clutching onto one before he went into coma. When he woke up and he hadn't seen it. If it was on the ground he would have seen it for sure.

"What happened then?" Dudian looked at his hands. His left palm was sticky. He was preoccupied with the bloodstains on his chest previously so he hadn't noticed it. There was a layer of pale yellow sticky material on his palm. It exuded a stench taste.

So what happened to the ball?

When he thought of burning the undeads, he remember that the dark blue ball melted in high temperatures. So because of his high fever... was the temperature so high that the dark blue ball melted?

Chapter 70 - Release

“It seems that it is the only explanation.” Dudian thought.

“Could it be said that after its melt the dark blue ball could be absorbed by the body? Whether it is the worms or dark blue ball, are they able to enhance my physique?” Perhaps he could get information out of people from consortium after he gets back into the giant wall.

He easily removed the accumulated stones and broken debris as his physical strength at the moment was enormous. He moved the heavy stones very easily. Following the smell he quickly found the backpacks hidden under the stones.

The dry food and water container had crushed under the stone. Although he could still eat the foot but the water containers were dry.

His hunger subsided as he ate the dry food. His physical strength seemed to recover as he ate. In addition he found dark blue balls in another place. Also he found hunter’s bow and arrows.

Dudian grabbed the bow. It was very heavy for a normal person to carry but he could carry it with one hand and not feel tired at all. He gently pulled the bowstring. It was pulled for almost a meter length. Hunter’s bow and arrows were not trivial but very lethal in nature. Although he could not take them back to the giant wall, but at least he could secretly use it outside.

He took the bow, arrows and backpack, while inconspicuously left the collapsed building.

“I don’t know where the Mason and rest are.” Dudian was in the middle of street. He looked at the position of the sun, it was already noon. He checked the place where he had separated with the Mason and other two. He could smell them and immediately he followed the located the smell took him.

The area no8 was not safe and it was infested with undeads. Mason and the other two could face a dangerous situation at any time. Dudian was quickly following after the smell until he reached a track. Suddenly, the smell disappeared as he reached the street.

Dudian could not help but be surprised for a moment and then wryly smiled: “Did these three brats came up with their own methods and eliminated the body odors?”

At this time, the silence of the ruins was torn apart by the sudden bursts of undead growls and roars.

Dudian quickly chased towards the source of the sounds. Soon he reached the street where the sounds originated. Through the corner of a house he checked the street. Around seven or eight people had gathered into a circular formation in front of a shop. The undeads were coming onto them from both sides of the street.

“Scott? Zach?” Dudian identified them.

They were Scott, Mia and four consortium scavengers. Moreover, including Zach there were another 2 newly graduated scavengers.

At the moment, Zach and the other scavenger were protected by the team while they were staying in the middle of the formation. Scott and Mia were holding their daggers. However, Scott's face turned ugly as he checked the approaching undeads. With their skills they were barely able to single out one undead. They could manage to stand on their own maximum up to two undeads. But there were six or seven undeads approaching them. There seemed to be more undeads attracted and coming over because of constant roars.

"Back, back!" Scott whispered.

They receded towards the shop.

The first undead that reached them attacked Scott. Its hideous face made the four consortium scavengers behind Scott turn pale. Scott's hand slightly shivered while deflecting undead's claw attack.

Scott roared, snarling and waving his dagger.

Puff! His dagger had cut onto undead's beck. But the blade was not sharp enough so it got stuck in the cervical spine.

Scott's face changed as he kicked.

Mia was about join him in support but two more undeads rushed onto her. Mia turned around to block. She could stop one of them while the second passed by her and attacked the four consortium scavengers.

The four consortium scavengers were extremely nervous and desperate. One of them waved his dagger to retort but the undead grabbed onto his arm. It pulled the scavenger and bite onto youth's throat. The blood sprayed onto undead's face coloring it red.

The other three scavengers shivered in fear as they continued to retreat. One of them even abandoned them to run away.

The new scavenger boy who was with Zach, stood there his face anxious as he didn't know what to do.

The undead who was bitin the scavenger looked at the boy near the Zach.

"Run!" Scott snarled.

Zach was pale but suddenly summoned all the courage and rushed up holding his dagger. As he was about to reach the undead he bent his body and went for a roll. As he was about to stand up from the roll, he used the dagger and hit the undead's ankle. Thump! Undead's body tripped.

Zach took the opportunity to get up and was about to stab the dagger onto undeads head when another roar echoed from behind.

Zach's face paled as he saw that he was late to block the undead. But a stone flew over and hit the undead's head. It was knocked to the ground as it stopped movement.

Scott, Mia and Zach couldn't help but look towards the source of the stone. They saw a figure approaching quickly as he caught up with the undeads that were rushing over to them.

As he reached the undead he jumped and kicked onto undead's spine. The undead fell down and rolled but he didn't stop and caught with it.

Before the undead could stand up that figure used his foot to hold it while hit it with double-edged fire axe on its head.

Puff! The axe smashed undead's head.

Scott, Mia and Zach were shocked. The three consortium scavengers and the new recruit who had fled into the shop looked back. They were stunned at sight.

Zach saw that the person who beheaded the undead was Dudian.

Without losing a moment, Dudian ran towards Zach. The undead was about to stand up when he threw the axe. Puff! The axe slashed undead's head from back of its neck.

However, it was not enough to kill the undead as it was struggling to stand up.

Dudian took advantage of the time and chased over. He grabbed the haft of axe and swang it to cut undead's head off.

Bang! The undead's head fall off while the axe's haft broke up.

Dudian took a light breath: "Fortunately I caught up!" He didn't use the hunter's bow to shoot because he didn't want to expose himself.

When he saw Zach and the others surrounded, he immediately hid the hunter's bow and arrows under the chassis of a scrapped car. Moreover he managed to grab axe from the fire hose box (fire protection cabinet). Unfortunately, the haft of the axe had decayed so badly that it broke after few swings.

"Dean, is that you? " Scott was horrified at sight as Dudian had killed two undeads.

"Be careful!" Dudian screamed as he grabbed the axe's head and threw it.

Puff! The axe head like a metal brick smashed on the undead's chest which was in front of the Scott. It knocked it down but didn't cause fatal injury.

Scott recovered, hastily stabbed the dagger onto undead's head.

Dudian said to Zach: “hide inside.” He grabbed the dagger of the youth who was bitten by the undead. He turned towards Mia and threw the dagger. It stabbed onto undead’s head which was fighting with Mia.

The dagger pierced undead from its jaw and thrust into its skull.

Undead made “uh uh” sounds twice and fell down.

“Thank you,” said Mia to Dudian as she curiously glance at him. Power shown by him was not on scavenger level but she knew that they were in a critical situation so she didn’t have time to ask.

Chapter 71 - Return

puff! puff!

Dudian with the help from Scott and Mia, quickly killed the few undeads that were coming over.

He smelled the odors of distant undeads so he said: “This place is not safe and we should not stay for long. We have to leave as soon as possible.”

Scott knew that sounds of fighting will lead the other undeads over. So he refused to take a break. He picked up few sheepskin scrolls from his backpack and opened them one by one to find them map and determine their current location: “It’s no longer safe in area no8. We have to go back to area no 9.”, he said to Dudian and rest.

Dudian nodded in agreement and raised his hands to call Zach and rest.

Zaki ran quickly as he was pleasantly surprised: “I knew you will survive.” He wanted to ask many questions. As he saw Dudian blinking his eyes, he stopped but there was a wide smile on his face.

Three consortium scavengers and the new recruit saw that the danger had gone so they followed Zach out together. The new scavenger recruit from the training camp saw another scavenger’s bloody dead body and his expression turned complex.

Mia noticed their eyes as she spoke in disgusted tone: “Cowards! Previously, you should have taken the opportunity to kill the undead while it was biting onto his neck! Instead you run away in fear! You are not even as good as that child! Shameful! ” The child she referred to was Zach who had turned back to fight earlier.

Three scavengers were ashamed as they clenched their teeth. They didn’t dare to answer.

The new boy, his head down, ran towards them. Secretly he glanced at Dudian. He wanted to say something, but changed his mind.

Scott looked at them. He sighed and shook his head. : “Let’s go!”

Dudian nodded as he glanced at the surrounding environment. He secretly took note of the location so that he could come back later to take bow and dark blue balls.

Everyone quietly followed Scott along the edge of the street.

Dudian along the way maximized the benefits from his sensitive sense of smell to the utmost possible. As he would smell group of undeads he would suggest Scott to take a detour. If there were two or three, then he would kill them directly.

Scott didn’t dare to overlook Dudian because of his young age and youthful voice. He knew that something extraordinary had

happened to Dudian. So Scott adopted each proposal given by Dudian about detour options. After half a day of travel, they finally got out of area no 8. They had taken detaours at least for 10 times.

Scott finally relaxed at they came into the area no 9. However, he didn't dare to stay near the border so they continued to move forward. Scott was completely assured down as they came deep into the middle of area no 9.

Inside the area no9, they didn't meet any undeads. Even the monster rats were not present.

In addition to broken stones, they didn't see anything of value through the broken shop's of area no 9.

"At last," Scott breathed out in relief. He was not in hurry as he sat in a clean place to rest.

Mia put her backpack on the side over the gravel. She looked curiously at Dudian: "You have just joined the scavenger group of consortium. I have heard that you were the seed from the camp so you got two blessings. Only, how you got so strong with two blessings? Were you supplied with anything else?"

Scott, three consortium scavengers as well as the new scavenger recruit looked over. They had long been curious about the issue but were surrounded by the undeads. They were worried to speak because it could lead the undeads to them so they held back their words.

There was another reason that tempted the inquiry. But they held back because they were worried that it will result in Dudian's displeasure and he would abandon them in the area no 8.

Dudian had already prepared an answer in advance: "I was in coma. When I woke up, I felt my strength was much stronger than before." It was half-side of the truth.

Scott and Mia glanced at him in doubt.

Suddenly, Mia spoke out the thing which all of them were worried to ask: "You! You have not been bitten by the undead, right?"

Three consortium scavengers who were sitting next to Dudian, immediately stood up, and distanced themselves from him.

Dudian was curious: "If I was bitten by the undead, would not I become an undead?"

Scott's face turned ugly: "But there are different speeds of turning into an undead based on the different injuries. If you are bitten on throat, chest and other parts the effect of the infection will be instant. However if you rub blood over the skin, then the speed of infection will be a lot slow... How long has it been that you have awaken from coma?"

"not long time."

“The slowest infection is usually three days.” Scott looked at Dudian and said: “That is if you are infected, in the next two and a half days, you will completely turn into an undead. If there is not affected afterwards, then it shows that there was no infection.”

Dudian nodded slightly. He was aware that it was not an undead infection.

However, after hearing what Scott had said, there was a bit of uneasiness in his heart. Is the worm counted as an infection?

“We have come out for four days. After six days we will return to the wall.” Scott looked at Dudian in hesitation and said: “We should separate for the time being.”

Dudian looked at them. Except the Zach who had a worried look, the rest had fear reflected in their eyes. It was normal as they were afraid that Dudian could turn into an undead. He couldn’t help but smile and speak soft: “It’s alright, but I would like to borrow your map. I’m afraid I won’t be able to find my way back after the separation.”

“OK.” Scott did not hesitate and immediately agreed.

Dudian looked back at Zach and said: “I will go to look for Mason and Sham. You shouldn’t be worried, nothing will happen to me. Just wait over here!”

Zach eyes reddened as he clenched his teeth and said: “blame me!

We drag you behind, Dean! I'm sorry…"

"What nonsense are you blabbering, we are brothers." Dudian laughed.

Zach could not help but burst into tears and sob softly.

Scott, Mia and others were silent.

Dudian took the map from the Scott and turned away.

…

Dudian immediately ran at full speed and disappeared from Scott and rest's sight. He went along the previous route back to area no 8. He killed the undeads which he met and collected the dark blue balls.

It didn't take long before he reached the located where he had hidden bow and arrows. He took them and dark blue balls from the bottom of the chassis of the car and began to search for Mason and Sham's smell.

Along the way he met few single undeads which he directly killed.

Although his fighting skills were still immature, but with the speed and strength boost he was fully able to avoid undead's

attacks.

However, in case he encountered more than three undeads at the same time he could do nothing but escape. After all, if he was surrounded and caught, then he would be injured one way or the other.

This is horror of the undeads, even hunter's would avoid to venture close to a group of undeads.

Two days later, Dudian finally found Mason's smell in a hidden ruin of a building. Actually, he tracked him down because of the smell of Mason's excrement. It also made Dudian to understand that in the wilderness should avoid going to toilet. In case he couldn't resist, he should bury it under soil and leave as soon as possible not to leave traces.

Dudian brought Mason back to area no 9 and was about to return to 8th area to search for Sharm. But suddenly he smelled Sham's odor in area no 9. He was stunned.

Following the smell, Dudian found Sham. He was alone, roaming in area no 9. Dudian didn't think that Sham would be able to go as far as getting himself back here.

As he saw that all three of them were safe, a big boulder was taken from Dudian's heart. He returned to area no8 to begin his undead hunting plan!

In the blind of an eye, four days had gone by.

Everyone came to the wall as the ten-day period had arrived.

Chapter 72 - Pastor's Blessing

"Two hundred and thirteen, two hundred and fourteen ..."

In a remote office at area no 9, Dudian was counting the number of dark blue balls that he acquired. He had killed a total of 227 undeads in the last few days.

Dudian wanted to apply the method hunter tried to hunt the beast. In short he had tried to use that approach to ambush the prey from the high ground. Although the undead's were attracted by the sound but his archery skills sucked. Out of 10 shots none would be successful. Occasional arrow that pierced the undead's head was a pure luck.

As a result, Dudian decided to exercise his shooting skills for the next few nights.

In 50 meters distance shoots of partial objects, after three days of series training, he was able to hit once in two shots. However, he used to practice on fixed objects and their size was too large. The initial rapid progress was normal but further improvement needed a lot of practice. If he wanted to reach the apex of archery, he didn't know how much time it would take.

After all, the undeads are moving. They don't just stay fixed on a place and wait for Dudian to hit them.

Moreover, shooting the undead was not enough. He must accurately hit their heads!

Although his physique was much stronger and adaptive than the average person's but after a few days of continuous practice he could reluctantly show only slowly wandering undeads. Even in this case, on average one of three arrows would pierce undead's body. To hit their heads, he had to rely on nothing but luck.

This made him painful. If he was able to master archery, then he was confident enough to kill at least three times more undeads!

Dudian looked at the dark blue balls in his possession. He felt good because of his accomplishment but they were a burden at the same time. After all, if he brought all these back to consortium, there will be no small fluctuations.

"It should be alright if I brought only seven of the dark blue balls. I can get to know their monetary value from consortium's perspective too. " Dudian hid the rest of the dark blue balls along with bow and arrows in the rubble.

In order to decrease the chance of them to be found in the future, he hid them in area no 9. It has been scavenged thoroughly so nobody would look for something valuable there. However, area no 8 was consortium's target as the next major area to be scavenged. If he hid them in area no 8 there would be a possibility that they would be found.

After taking lots of valuable things with him, Dudian began to walk towards the edge of the area no 9 along the direction of the map.

The giant wall of Silva was faintly visible as Dudian was getting closer. He felt the charm of the giant wall. Actually, even if the previous beast came in front of this wall it would look like a mayfly in comparison to it. If it tried to attack it, then it would be like mayfly trying to shake a giant tree.

He could just make out the shape of the giant wall in the twilight.

Scott looked at the sunset. He knew that the tunnel will be opened soon. He could not help but look at Mason, Zach and Sham: “You said Dead is still alive. How come he is not here yet? The door will open in about ten minutes. If he can’t reach, he will have to wait until the next time it opens.”

Mason eagerly looked at the distance as he replied anxiously: “He knows about the time. He should not delay his arrival.”

Mason looked at Sham: “You said you saw him. It was four days ago, yeah?”

“I am sure!” Sham solemnly answered. He had heard from Zach about Dudian but he didn’t believe that Dudian will turn into an undead.

Mason looked at him and said, “I hope you are not lieing. It want be good for anyone! ”

Omm! The iron gate propped up as if it was a steel mouth. A

figure came out of the underground passage. It was Peter.

"Well?" Peter had just come out. He saw Scott and others: "How come... Isn't there anyone else?"

Scott was relieved after he saw Peter: "The area no 8 had large number of undeads which had migrated from the other regions." He knew that so many undeads couldn't be overlooked by the hunters. Even if they wanted they couldn't ignore them.

Peter was startled a moment as he suddenly thought of something: "I heard the boss say that there was a monster riot in one of the regions. I did not think that it would be near the area no 8. You guys sure are unlucky..." His eyes swept over them and his face slightly changed: "Where is Dean?"

"He ... could have been infected by an undead," Scott hesitated, still telling his thoughts. Though Zach and others said that they had seen Dudian, but he did not believe it.

Peter's face changed, sighed: "I was very optimistic about him, did not think ... ... Bale, you go ahead, the guards are waiting for you inside it."

Scott nodded slightly. Along with Mia he went inside the passage.

The other three scavengers and newly recruited scavenger followed.

Mason and the other two stood still and didn't move. They anxiously looked at the distance.

Peter knew that the four of them had graduated together and lived in the same dormitory. He stared quietly at the broad and desolate plains in front of him.

Life is so fragile.

He sighed slightly, looked a bit sad.

A very pleasant voice echoed in surprise: "It's him! Dean!"

Peter squinted his eyes and saw a black ball coming from afar. After it closed up the distance, he saw that Dudian was under the ball carrying it.

Peter froze for a moment, he could not help but smile.

Dudian saw that Mason, Peter, Zach and Sham were waiting for him in front of the entrance so he accelerated the pace.

"I knew it! Damn it! I know you would overcome everything!" Mason left his backpack and was the first to rush over at Dudian.

Dudian smiled: "Mason, have I ever told you that you look like a girl when you run?"

“Me? You little prick! Your skin color was sooo white that even the girl were jealous when you joined the training came! ” Mason laughed out loud.

....

Dudian’s face changed to a supercilious look as he came close to Peter.

Peter smiled: “It seems you had a great harvest. Go in, the door will be closed in six minutes. ”

Dudian nodded slightly and went into the passage. Mason, Zach and Sham also brought their backpacks and kept up with Dudian.

It didn’t take long when they saw Scott and the others stopped in the middle of the passage. Moreover there were dozen or so people with Holy Church’s badges.

“Dean?” Scott and others were shocked as they saw Dudian.

Dudian looked at the guards and said, “Who are they?”

Scott recovered, thought of Mason for a moment. Then he understood that Dudian was not infected. Because in the last six days even if there was a slight blood rubbed on his skin he would have turned into an undead.

“They are guards from the Holy Church. It’s a routine check. Each time when we return, they are here to ‘light’ our armor and things that we have collected. Everything has to be transported to the Holy Church in light by the blessing of the priests. It’s for the purification of virus and plague.”Scott explained.

Chapter 73 - ‘Cleaning’ Days

Dudian nodded in understanding. He was not surprised as the concentration of radiation is too high outside the wall. The items that were recovered were full of bacteria and thick radiation. Naturally had go through a clean-up. But what he cared about was the institution responsible for this work turned out to be the Holy Church.

“Your items!” Church’s guard in his early twenties said to Dudian: “And your name!”

“Name is Dean. These are my goods.” Dudian gave them the large fabric that had covered everything he had collected.

The young guard beckoned to the companion who was next to him to pick up Dudian’s huge collection. There was a white mask on his face. He continued: “Good enough but you shouldn’t scrap all the rotten copper and iron.”

It was put onto a carriage. There was a woman guard which tore off a note that had Dudian’s name on it, and posted it above his luggage.

“Next,” the young guard waved.

Dudian thought for a moment and took out dark blue balls from his pocket.: “I have picked up these too. Do I have to give them?”

Young guard was stunned at sight. He looked up and down at Dudian: “Little guy, where did you pick up these?”

“From the head of the undead,” replied Dudian.

The young guard stared at him and asked, “Why would you think about fumbling in undead’s head? ”

“Out of curiosity,” answered Dudian.

The young guard stared into Dudian’s eyes. The latter looked back without a blink. “I shall take it. No value though, your consortium will naturally inform you” Then, meaningfully looked at Dudian and took the seven dark blue balls.

Dudian saw pity and indifference in guards eyes.

Peter had come out from from the passage. Everyone had given the materials that they had collected. So he waved and said: “Everyone on to the carriages!”

“Dean!” Scott opened the curtain of a black carriage and waved to Dudian, “Come here.”

Dudian to saw his invitation but didn’t refuse. He set foot onto the carriage where they were.

He was sitting in the spacious carriage with Mia and another new

boy, the three consortium scavengers rode in another carriage.

"We have wronged you." Scott apologized as the carriage ride away.

Dudian shook his head slightly: "I don't blame you. It's in human's nature to take a preservative and cautious stand when facing the unknown."

Scott was relieved at Dudian's words: "Well, this time you are our savior. After the "Cleaning" days are over, I'm going to take you out for a meal." Scott stopped for a moment: "You age is too small so I can't take you to those colorful places... You know what I mean?!" Scott blinked: "Well if you are in trouble or don't understand anything if its within my powers I will help you out!" There was a solemn expression on his face as he spoke. Obviously everything he said came from his heart.

Dudian smiled. In the beginning, Scott and Mia had tried to help the scavengers when they were attacked by the undead. They could have left easily, but they didn't. Just this, was enough for Dudian to feel admiration for them.

After all, Dudian had experienced the life and death situation. He was very clear how people would despair while facing the death. They would do evil things just for another breath.

Suppressing those evil thoughts could be done by people who had good nature.

Dudian admired them.

“What are these ‘Cleaning’ days? “Dudian was curious.

Scott patted his head, smiled and said: “Oh, I have forgot to tell you guys. Fortunately, that guy Peter does not know or will nag me to death... “He sighed. shaking his head slightly Scott continued:” ‘Cleaning’ days refer to the three day period where our bodies are carefully examined before we can enter the living area of the giant wall. ”

” If the person is infected, it would take three days for the virus to turn them into an undead at the longest time. If in these three days you don’t turn onto an undead, then it proves that you body doesn’t carry the virus and you can return to the living area”

Dudian realized.

Indeed.

It’s alright for the undeads and the beast to roam outside the giant wall.

But once the virus infiltrates inside the wall the results would be much more terrible. There would be no time to identify one by one who is bitten by the undead. The whole area may get infected!

Suddenly, Dudian thought of the “walls of the boundary” between the commercial and residential areas, the slums, the

towering walls and gates. Perhaps its more than just the distinction between the rich and the poor. Originally it was meant to divide the living area into many regions so in case of a virus spreads inside it wouldn't penetrate the whole population. But it could infect the region.

At this time, Scott asked curiously: "Dean, why your strength became so strong? You only get two blessing, but your strength is stronger than me. By the way, I had 19 blessings."

Sitting next him, Mia and the new boy were also curious.

Dudian saw that they have not forgotten about his super-strength. There was a bit of frustration in his heart. Sure enough, people's curiosity couldn't be satisfied, it would never fade.

"The air is still in the wall," said Dudian.

"I didn't get it," Scott said.

Mia can not help smile.

Dudian was embarrassed: "I really do not know. I was unconscious. When I woke up I was like this."

"Well ... ..." Scott saw that he couldn't get anything out of him so he gave up.

Their carriages reached somewhere in the outskirts of the commercial district. This place was at the edge of the living area. But the radiation in the air was a lot thinner. Actually, radiation levels were almost same with the residential area but it was sparsely populated. The reason was that it was forbidden area!

There were old trees on both sides of the street. There were few castles on several hillsides. Dudian's carriage stopped in front of one of those castle. They gradually got off.

The guards opened the castle doors as they got off the carriage. Nearly three meter high dark red horse came out of the castle. It had an aggressive aura.

A young Knight of Light was sitting on the horse. He didn't wear a helmet. He had long green hair which was loose on his shoulders. In short he was handsome. He glanced at Dudian, Scott and rest: "Come with me!"

Scott respectfully nodded. While he was the first to follow after the horse with Mia.

Dudian and rest followed behind them.

Knights of Light belonged to Holy Church. They were much more nobler than the average knight. If a Knight of Light emerged from an aristocratic family, it would honor them in front of the other noble families.

It would dignify the family and give them face.

In addition to the glory of the identity, the Knights of Lights were very powerful beyond doubt. Their main aim was to destroy alchemists, potion masters and puppet masters who indulged in evil experiments. Ordinary knight would need to dismount and salute if they were to see a Knight of Light.

The crowd followed the Knight of Light into the basement of the castle.

“Everyone should get into room. There is everything that you need for three days. Moreover, there is “Book of Light” provided to each of you. Its best to see more. Even if the body is not contaminated you can purify your hearts!” Green haired youth indifferently said.

“Yes, Knight.” Scott respectful nodded as he was already familiar with the rules in here.

The small room in the basement seemed somewhat like a cell. It was made of rough iron pillars. There was a bed, wooden toilet and a clean little table. On teach table there was silver colored book with golden color.

Chapter 74 - News

“You! Come with me,” Young Knigh of Light pointed to Mia who was in the crowd.

Mia seemed to be knowledgeable about where to go so she nodded respectfully.

Mason’s curiosity was inflated as Mia followed the Knight of Light and left.: “Where is she going? How come she is not staying with us?”

Scott laughed: “How to join us? She is a woman and has to stay on the other side in ladies room. She would be taking shower and changing clothes, so women has different quarters.”

Mason’s face turned red as he heard Scott talk.

“Okay. We should take shower and clean our bodies. It won’t take long before they come over to check our bodies!” Scott said as he took of his black uniform stained with blood. He went towards the shower besides the toilet to wash his body.

It was a communal shower.

People avoided in this era to have showers but as they had come back from the outside of the giant wall so they had to go through the process.

Mason and the other two also took of their uniform and began to clean their bodies.

As a result of ten days of activities the body sweat had become sticky and uncomfortable. There were bursts of smell coming out.

Dudian's character was more introverted which was contradictory to his social skills. He had rolled up bad sheets as curtains and hang as a shelter. Afterwards he began to take of his uniform and began to bath.

Dudian would secretly sigh each time he took bath. There were no shower gels which he was used to.

"Look at Dean! "

"He covered everywhere again! We are all men? What's the point of covering? "

"At times, I wonder if Dean is not a girl."

Mason and the other two were booing and laughing as they showered.

Dudian put his head out of the curtain and fiercely said: "Mason, you talk a lot of nonsense. I will tell Beiwei that you secret painted her portrait! Zach, do you remember the time when you took the money? Sham, if you continue with this bullshit, I'm going to ruin your tavern! "

All three of them stopped instantly.

Scott laughed.

...

At the same time, in a secret caste in the commercial district.

A black crow flew into the castle through the window on the second floor. There was an envelope attached to its claw.

The room was very luxurious and spacious. Long carpet covered the floor. There was a large red wooden desk in the middle of the room. Fat, middle-aged man leaned against the chair behind the desk. He was playing around with pencil when the envelope fell onto the table.

He frowned slightly. He tore apart the envelope and took the letter. Faint but dense aroma struck his nose as he read the letter. As he reached the last paragraph of the letter he face changed: “Brian did not come back? How is that possible? He was meant to be a supporting character on the battlefield! How the hell he didn’t come back?”

He stared at the stationery as there was uncertainty in his face.

The consortium sets time to hunters and scavengers that they

tasks. The consequences of the violation is extremely serious. If they don't come back on time then there is 70% probability that they are dead. The remaining 30% is likely that they are at the edge of death, trapped or have encountered with a temporary crisis and failed to return in time.

However, Brian's situation was different.

Because he was not meant to be hunting in the gray area. He was responsible for finishing work at the border. It was a low risk factor task. If he didn't come back on time then the possibility of the death was high!

His hands were trembling as he held the letter while there was anger in his heart. He was responsible for Brian as a hunter. If Brian was dead then his position in the consortium will also be impacted. His earning would fall a lot too.

"If you haven't followed the directions and entered the gray area, then no wonder that you have come back. I won't be able to bear the responsibility!" He murmured. "However, if Brian's body is found in area no 8. It would mean that he was killed by the hunters of other consortia who had sneaked into our territory. That would be our consortium's intelligence problem!"

He immediately raised the quill pen and rapidly began to write the command to be passed out. The matter have to be investigated thoroughly!

After all, even though Mellon consortium was big enough to bear

loss of a hunter, but it was not a trivial matter. Such a strange loss may be related to intelligence loopholes or a spy had infiltrated their consortium!

...

Commercial district. Mellon Foundation Scavengers Headquarters.

Two pieces of information quickly were passed.

The first floor of the headquarters building was responsible for receiving and processing basic information. The second floor was meant for the administration and management dealing with important things related to scavengers. At the moment, two pieces of information were sent to a spacious office in the second floor.

“Information from the Hunter headquarters?” Bearded, 40 years old middle-aged man dressed in a suit whispered as he the information on his desk. Once upon a time he was a housekeeper of Mel family. But as he earned Mel family head’s respect and love he was deployed here to manage scavengers. However, the identity of the man was more greater right now.: “A hunter didn’t come back from the area no 8? Strange, wasn’t the area no 8 cleaned? Only a few undeads would be roaming around. How could a hunter can’t come back?!”

Middle-aged man stared at the stationery and then frowned, “It seems these pricks want to blame us and use as a scapegoat! ”

He had operated scavenger's headquarters for more than ten years. He immediately figured out the meaning behind the words. His face was a bit gloomy. If a spy was detected within scavengers then the scavenger headquarters' staff would suffer a backlash or even punished badly. There was no indispensable man.

He also felt helpless, as loss of a hunter couldn't be compared to hundreds of scavengers who couldn't make up to come back on time.

The middle-aged man sighed and put the letter aside. He open the second the second envelope. There was not much written and the content was very brief, describing everything. He was startled: "Someone turned over 'cold crystals'. Dean...Dean...This name... Isn't he the seed of the scavenger training camp?"

Suddenly he laughed out loud: "This little guy. Quite smart! He is really the seed of the special training! It is worth for consortium to invest vigorous capital to cultivate him."

His previous depressed mood instantly changed. Originally, recruiting Dudian was a happy event for Scavenger Headquarters. Because they had gone through Dudian's resume. His body radiation level was very low. Although not a "light physique" but there was a glimmer of hope for him to become a hunter. Only, they were not willing to invest capital into his training. After this, they would!

If Dudian becomes a hunter in the future, it would be a feat written under his name too!

He put the letter on top of the previous one. If the cold crystals were picked up by consortium scavengers then he would associate it with the death of hunter. Maybe they would even go for a deep investigation. But now the object was Dudian so he dismissed the idea.

First reason he did so because Dudian graduated from the regular scavenger training, but also he was the seed object. No consortium would be stupid enough to send a person with such a potential to become a spy! Secondly, from the beginning, all consortiums and military were prohibited from contacting scavengers while in special training.

Therefore, after the graduation the consortiums could only tempt the graduates by coming up with benefits. But they couldn’t contact them privately. No consortium would break the rules!

Therefore, the only possible group where spies lurked could be the scavengers cultivated by the consortium. The rules were more slack while the consortium itself trained them.

Chapter 75 - Magic Marks

Dudian and the rest had already cleaned themselves and put on clothes. He was sitting on the bed and chatting with Mason.

The basement's door was pushed open as a team of people came in. There were six people. Four guards from the church were escorting two people who were wearing white gowns. They had white masks on their face and were carrying their own medical boxes.

"Everyone is ready to be examined?! Strip your clothes!" One of the guards shouted.

Scott has repeatedly experienced this beforehand. So he took them off as they were ordered. Mason and Dudian who saw Scott followed him by taking off their clothes one by one. Fortunately, both of the doctors were men. Or else they would be shy and embarrassed by being naked in front of the opposite sex.

"Turn to sides."

"Well, turn around."

Doctors stood outside the iron cage and inspected them one by one.

Dudian and others followed their orders and turned their bodies according to doctor's orders.

“What is this injury?” The doctor asked as he pointed to the scar on Mason’s back.

Mason quickly answered: “It is a scratch that happened because of friction when moving things. Its been there for a long time!”

The doctor nodded as he carefully looked at the scar. Later he made a record in the book on his hand: “Scar at the back. Injury time, speculated to be more than four years. Determined that there is no infection. ”

Finished, continue to look at the next one.

“Huh!” Suddenly, another doctor shouted in fear while staring at blood-like red marks at Dudian’s chest. He leaned to the iron pillar to look carefully. He was surprised as he said: “Magic marks?”

The other doctor who heard his words also froze for a moment and immediately turned to check.

Dudian’s heart moved. “Magic marks? Do they know about this?”

Scott who was next to Dudian was stunned as he said: “Magic marks? Dean has magic marks?”

Dudian didn’t think that Scott knew this thing. Looking at his appearance Scott didn’t seem to recognize the red marks on his

chest. Most probably he had heard about ‘magic marks’ thing but never saw any.

Both doctors were staring at Dudian in amazement: “How could you?! You are a scavenger. How will you have magic marks?”

Dudian was also puzzled: “What is the magic marks?

Scott had already noticed the strange looks from both doctors. He heard Dudian’s question and immediately said: “Dean, ” magic marks” appear on hunters. It is the root cause why hunter’s are far stronger than scavengers. Magic marks grant exclusive powers to hunters. It is said that the variety of amazing abilities come with different magic marks. Some hunters can make metal corrode, while other’s can perceive everything in their perspective... All these capabilities are the result of magic marks! ”

He looked at Dudian’s chest and saw the blood-red tissues that were above it: “I did not expect that magic marks looks like this. Dean, you were born with magic marks so no wonder your strength was so strong. You are a hunter! ”

He looked at Dudian with full of envy but he was not jealous. Because he knew that not everyone was blessed with magic marks.

Dudian was stunned.

The blood results aftermath the worms forced drilling are called magic marks?

Every hunter has them?

So, isn't he considered a true hunter now?

Both doctors looked deeply at Dudian, one of them said: "Even though we don't know how the magic marks had appeared on your chest, but it should be related to your body. Is it alright if we test your body?"

Dudian has long been worried about the hidden dangers of the worms so he immediately agreed.: "I'll be troubling you two."

"Do not bother! If the test result are as we expected and confirm you as a hunter then you don't have to be polite with us." The attitude of the doctors were modest and there were smiles on their faces.

Dudian suddenly realized the gap between hunters and scavengers. His heart was relieved too. Since the other hunters have magic marks too, then he would not stand out. As a result there should not be any hidden dangers.

Dudian put his arm out from the gap of the iron pillars to make it easier for doctors to do the check up. One of the doctors pulled out a small glass from the medical box. It was the radiometer.

Dudian understood that they want to test his body's radiation content. So he speculated that the hunters who had magic marks

on them had radiation value lower than normal people was because of them. After all, the biggest difference between hunters and scavengers was their radiation value not strength!

Soon, the doctor extracted blood from Dudian's fingers and dropped onto radiometer for measurement.

Dudian's vision was completely different from his original condition. He saw a small red line that slowly crawled up a bit but then softly slide down. This time he clearly saw that this red line was a hair-like worm!

So each radiometer has such a worm inside?

No wonder, in this era where technology was so behind, to measure the radiation content of human body they were using such mysterious small worms. Most of these worms, even the one that was used to check him in the hunter castle, could induce the radiation levels.

"Soo low!" Both doctors responded at the same time because of radiometer's results. Both were surprised as they dawn over to see the exactly value of the radiation content. "No wonder, there was a magic mark in his body." They secretly thought.

However, they couldn't understand how come Dudian was allocated to scavengers group? Was it the error of the consortium?

They didn't dare to think about the reasons. After all, this matter

is decided on top and had nothing to do with them. As long as they did their job, they wouldn't be concerned with anything else.

"Well, we'll submit the results!" one of the doctors told Dudian politely: "You have a hunter 's body. I believe in short time you will be promoted by the consortium. I would like to congratulate you in advance!"

Dudian saw the change in their attitudes. He was not used to something like that when people sucked up to him. But he thought that this is how the world worker so he didn't think it was hypocritical. He frankly answered: "Thank you two."

Both of the doctors smiled then turned to check the rest. After the recorded the details of the check up they left the basement with four guards.

"Unexpectedly, Dean you even unwittingly became a hunter!" Scott said to Dudian as the doctors and guards left. There was pleasant surprise reflected in his eyes. Moreover it was a heaven-sent opportunity to be in close contact with a hunter. If he could get close to Dudian, then his future will be better than many. Moreover as long as Dudian backed him up a bit in the future his scavenging results would improve a lot!

It was reality. It was the hunter's influence!

Mason, Zach and Sham were equally surprised to find out that Dudian was hunter. They were envious and happy for him.

“We have a patron!... haha... ” Mason laughed out loud.

Zach said: “Did not expect that Dean would mysteriously become a hunter. I suspect that it was because of the coma!”

Sham added: “Dean has long been known as a seed of the training group. As long as he had good performance sooner or later he would have the opportunity to become a hunter. I didn’t think that he would become one know. Still so young, I don’t know what kind of reward the consortium will give to Dean.”

They were excited.

Dudian looked at their happy faces. He touched his chest. It seems that the hunter tried to ambush the beast mostly for the worms. However if that hunter had magic marks, then why would he be after it? Could it be that even if you have magic marks, you can use others to enhance or increase your abilities?

Speaking of ability, he thought of his super smell.

This should be his magic mark exclusive ability.

Dudian thought of Scott ‘s words and asked him, “Do you know what the hunter’ s magic marks are? What are their general ability? Would it be threat to me?”

Scott scratched his head in ignorance: “I only know few things. I heard that there are a wide variety of abilities. It shouldn’t be a

threat to you… To tell the truth I don’t know much. After you are promoted to a hunter status by the consortium, someone will inform you about specifics.”

Dudian thought the same way…

Chapter 76 - Investigations

Outside the giant wall of Silva. Area no 8 belonging to Mellon consortium

Red flag of Mellon consortium was inserted on area no 8's edge marking that it belonged to them. Three figures rapidly passed by the flag. A breeze occurred because of their speed which made the flag wave in air.

They were extremely fast, as if they were not humans but three black cheetahs. They flexibly jumped through the broken ruins of the street. Occasionally large walls of buildings would block their movement, but they would gently step on rocks and climb over as if no terrain or barrier could block them.

Soon, they meet two aimlessly wandering undeads. Their clothes were tattered into fragments which hang over. Their gray skin was revealed.

"Hm!" Delicate woman with a scarlet red hair was leading the group of three. She didn't reduce her speed at all because of the undeads. Instead her speed rapidly increased. Before undeads could react, she was already in front of them.

The next moment, she was standing in the middle of two undeads.

Thump! Thump! Heads of undeads fall to the ground, rolled out as they came to stop.

Two figures who were following the woman followed her. The wind created by their speed blew over the heads of undeads.

“There are still undeads in here. Area no 8 was really upturned!” Youth on the left looked back as his face slightly changed.

The youth on the right had a worried expression as he looked at woman in front. He sighed and said: “I wish to have fun...”

“Do not distract!” The woman with the scarlet red hair yelled: “Gale, do you smell my brother? ”

The youth on the left replied: “No ... Hey!” Suddenly he stopped and looked at the right side of the street as if he was scared of something. He spoke in an alarming tone: “This smell... Is it a beast?”

Woman suddenly stopped, looking back at him.

Gale’s eyes flashed for a moment as he said: “Come with me. Maybe you brother is here. ” He run along the street.

Soon, all three of them came to the front of a collapsed building. Gale concentrated for sometime and then went towards a hole. The woman and the other youth followed him into the hole and passed through a passage.

Gale stopped inside the passage and looked towards the source of buzzing sound which he heard. There was a slight voice coming from the darkness. He raised his hand an lit a wax. Dark corridor was illuminated.

Their faces changed at the sight.

“It really is a level 9 beast! “Gale breathed lightly as if scared.

The other youth mysteriously spoke: “A rare monster such as this would appear in area no 8 and actually died in here?”

Woman carefully looked into his eyes and spoke in a cold tone: “It was burned alive... Hum... Useless death!”

Gale regained his consciousness (he was afraid as he saw the beast) as he suddenly said: “You see, only its head was cut open. We all know that their brains are useless. Moreover, those special body parts were not removed. It seems whoever killed the beast was likely a novice hunter!”

“There are no new hunters who had joined our consortium.” The other youth said.

Woman sneered: “It shows that the hunters from another consortium broke the rules and entered our region. Moreover, they have caused quite a chaos.”

Gale slightly nodded, suddenly he twitched his nose as he said: “I

seem to sense the smell of your brother.”

“Ah?” Woman’s eyebrows lifted the same moment.

Gale’s face became a bit ugly: “Its emitted from the beasts body… I hope… ”

Woman’s tone instantly changed: “Stop blabbering nonsense!”

Gale, holding the flame, went towards the burned body of the beast. The smell was coming from the gap of its claw where a finger thick piece of uniform was stuck.

“This … ” Gale took out the fragment of the uniform: “This is your brother’s.”

Woman’s face changed as her dark pupils gently contracted. Color of her pupils somewhat changed to blood red. She was trembling as she slowly came to the front of Gale. She got stunned while looking at the soft fragment of the uniform in Gale’s hand. She was aware the Gale’s tracking ability by smell was never wrong. Moreover, she also understood that if her brother was caught in the beast’s reach there was no way for him to survive. She knew how everything would end.

“Animal! … …” Her arm’s skin slowly shed as two blood-red machete-like weapons were exposed. She attacked the beast’s neck and cut it off. Dead beast’s body was already rotten and its muscle tissues were extremely fluffy. As she easily cut it off, the rotten

blood sputtered onto her face.

Blood splashed over bloodthirsty insects which were already eating up the monster's carcass.

"Herd of beasts ..." She was not worried about the insects or bacteria which could infect her body.

Gale and the other youth had complex expressions on their faces. They didn't stop her because they thought it was useless.

The woman's face was ferocious as she cleaned the stone rubble from the beasts body. The ripped of the beast's body and tore out the stomach. There was extremely thick rotten smell in the air because of her actions. She took out few digested bone remnants and metal pieces from the beast's body.

"Beasts, beasts ... ..." Scarlet woman repeated the same word. She was in grief so she couldn't think about words to express her feelings.

Gale couldn't bear anymore as she pulled her back: "Be sensible. It is possible that Brian had run away from its claws and he is alive somewhere."

"Get the fuck away!" Woman spoke in a cold tone.

Gale sighed and released her.

She tightly clenched her palms into fists. Her beautiful face was full of hideous expressions as she said: “I want to find the one who killed the beast. A damn rookie hunter. Most probably my brother had fought with it and wounded it. The bastard had killed the beast afterwards... I want to see that bastard dead! Do you understand me? I want to kill him!”

Gale nodded: “We will help you and certainly find that guy. The one who dared to violate the rules and get into our area... He shall not be forgiven!”

The other youth said: “It is impossible that person hasn’t left any clues in the vicinity. We should look for them. Perhaps we can find a lead!”

Gale slightly nodded and pointed back to the entrance of the elevator: “The blood above... It should be left by that man. I remember the smell, we could look around if there are no other clues in here.”

Woman noticed the place where Gale was pointing to. She jumped up and saw the stone where blood had been spilled. The next moment, horrifying scene happened. Black blood vessels looking like the roots of tree began to emerge from her white tender hand. They moved in circles and twists as they reached the stone and touched the top of the dry blood. It was as if they were licking the blood.

Soon, the dried blood gradually disappeared from the top of the

stones.

Gale face slightly changed, but did not say anything. He knew that this was her magic mark ability.

“Both of you should go around and carefully search for clues! ” Woman ordered in cold tone.

Chapter 77 - Letter

Basement of the castle.

Dudian and rest took their time to rest after the doctors left. After all, last ten days were full of tension and they didn't have time to sleep properly. At the moment, all of them were completely relaxed within the cage and soon sounds of snores echoed out.

Dudian did not immediately fall asleep but gently stroked the magic marks on his chest. He could feel his touch clearly. He just didn't know the feeling spread from his fingertips to his brain or from the magic marks. As he touched the magic marks which looked like frozen blood veins, he felt a cool feeling enveloping his body.

His heart began to beat faster.

"This magic marks ... ... if they are destroyed, my life also should be under a great threat. I might even die." Dudian quietly thought. He would have never ever thought that his life will be linked to a magic mark. "Damnit! I share my life with worms..."

He lay in bed, turned around but did not fall asleep. Suddenly he caught a glimpse of "Book of Light" which was on the small table. He took and gently opened it. He squinted his eyes: "Light is the truth?"

"Because of the light plants can grow. "

“Because of the light we can ‘see.’ ”

“Light gives life to people. The creator of light and life, God of Light, The Father will shelter all those who devoted… …”

The few axioms in the beginning were the core of the code. Moreover there were few ‘light’ stories in each passage. They were related to the phenomenons that everybody knew. As everybody took them at face value, no one tried to even refute them! Role of light was too big on life but Dudian felt that the book wasn’t enough to explain everything about life.

The role of light …

If there is no light, there won’t be any life on earth!

They wrote tons of examples such as this.

However, Dudian had a better understanding about science, life and creation so he wasn’t going to believe in the “God of life”. Of course, the role of light couldn’t be ignored…but… What does Holy Church aims to do?

Dudian scribbled and flipped through the book. By the end he generally understood how they recruited believers.

All what they did was to put some natural phenomena known to

all and form their “teachings” around it. The people were ignorant about many things so they would take their words at face value and be convinced.

If the person who read it didn’t have a sound and strong personality then they would be lost in confusion. They would just blindly follow what the “Holy Church” would say.

Once a blind and a devout believer, then their reality will be dictated by the Holy Church.

“There is no scientific basis to any of their explanations. Its all formed on the appearance. Just like the father had told me before. The ancients had intelligence but lacked the tools. They knew the results but didn’t know the reasons. Same is happening in here now.” Dudian secretly said: ” If they had the right tools they could see the origins of many things...”

“Father often said ignorant claims by faithful were made because of backwardness of science and technology. As science wasn’t able to explain the faithful began to speculate.”

Dudian was convinced by his father’s words. Moreover he increasingly determined to choose the alchemist path.

...

Three days period of ‘cleaning’ passed.

Both doctors came up everyday to observe and check the physical condition of Dudian and the others. In fact, an infected person would have some symptoms but there were few tenacious people who would carefully hide their scars and tolerate until the last moment. However, still on the third day the outbreak would occur. But there were few examples like that.

Dudian's new clothing was according to his size and was very fit. Basement's door opened as they were taken out.

"Please, please." A guard from church guided everyone.

Dudian and the rest didn't see the Knight of Light who had received them at arrival. When they were about to exit the gate Dudian heard a voice calling out: "Mr Dean. Who is Mr Dean?"

Dudian looked surprised. A middle-aged gentleman with a black cap and walking cane was calling out his name.

Scott, who was walking down the side, smiled and said, "That's him."

The middle-aged gentleman was surprised as he didn't expect that he would be sent here as a messenger specifically for a boy. But he didn't neglect his job and quietly stepped forward. He took out an envelope from the chest side of his shirt.: "Mr. Dean, This letter is for you"

Dudian looked at stamp and address engraved on the envelope.

Mellon Foundation, Scavenger Headquarters. He understood that doctors had informed them about the magic marks.

He nodded and said thank you. He opened it. The content was very simple: “ Come to the top office in the headquarters and find me...the top?”

Dudian naturally understood what it meant to be top-level. They had to deal with the highest secrecy of scavengers.

“It’s about nominating you as a hunter, and the headquarters is really swift.” Scott smiled, “Congratulations! Maybe the next time I’ll meet you in the wilderness”

Mia who was next to him was stunned as she heard him talk: “What, what? Hunter? Dean?”

Scott laughed: “You do not know it yet but there are magic marks on Dean. He is going to be a hunter.”

Mia stared at Dudian in daze.

Dudian smile and said to Scott: “I have to thank you all for your guidance.”

“Scott.” Scott replied and smiled. He was happy in his heart as he know that Dudian had a positive impression of him.: “I will go with Mia. After a few days, the price of the materials will be assessed by the headquarters. You should go and gather then. ”

Dudian was surprised. The prices of materials have not been assessed yet? But to think of those things, the materials that they have gathered are modern goods. Uses of many things are not known to people inside the wall. It should take time to assess their prices.

Watching Scott and Mia leave, Mason and the other two also bid farewell with Dudian. They together went into the carriage provided by the consortium.

The other three consortium scavengers and the new boy also spoke with Dudian before leaving.

Dudian put away the envelope as he was sent to headquarters in an exclusive carriage only for him.

Chapter 78 - Meeting

Mellon Foundation, Scavenger headquarters.

The carriage stopped before the door of the headquarters. Dudian went down from the carriage and looked up at this huge building. Step by step he went along the stairs and came to the front of the entrance hall. It was extremely spacious inside. There were several consortium scavengers who were in front of a billboard inside the hall, looking out for the latest information.

This bulletin was dedicated to the latest information picked up about the outside world. It was required for scavengers to check them out before going onto missions. There were details about the changes within the areas under the control of Mellon consortium or the other regions in the vicinity. Dudian randomly glanced at the bulletin. There was an information that caught his eyes. “Area no 8 is infested with undeads. Temporary blockade. Scavengers should not enter.”

Dudian knew that in addition to occasional tasks specified by the consortium, scavengers were free to go and search any area under the control of Mellon Foundation. In short, the choice of areas was unrestricted. Therefore most of the scavengers before each trip would come over here to get the latest information about the changes in various areas. It was for them to avoid danger.

Even though these areas have been cleaned, but undeads and beasts don’t follow the rules set by consortiums. Often they break and barge in to areas which have cleaned before. Dudian had survived one occasion such as that.

Dudian didn’t stay for long and went down the hall through the corridor towards the stairs.

“Hey, Dean?” Suddenly a voice came.

Dudian looked sideways. It was Peter who was holding a cup of hot coffee. It seemed he just got out of his office: “Mr Peter.”

“The materials that you have picked up haven’t been estimated. How come you are here?” Peter was perplexed.

Dudian was also stunned. Haven’t they heard about him yet? All of sudden he understood that he shouldn’t tell them about his newly acquired identity as the top management haven’t revealed it yet. As he saw that Peter was not aware of the situation so he euphemistically avoided the topic: “I’ve been ordered to come over. I’m not sure about the details so…”

Peter froze a moment as he suddenly thought of something. He wrinkled his brows and said to himself: “Should not be…ah… Even as a suspect… They are just recruited….” He was puzzled… He spoke in a hesitant tone “I reckon I was looking for you”. “I’ve heard about the area no 8. Few days ago news of hunter’s death came from the hunter headquarters. They are going to thoroughly investigate your group who was in the area no 8. But there is no reason to suspect the new graduates so do not be worried too much.”

Dudian hesitated for a moment as all the hair on his body was

erect. As if he had encountered danger and it was kind of an instinctive alert. Soon he found himself reacting way to much to Peter's words so he quickly restored himself: "I wondered why?! Thanks Mr Peter."

Peter smiled and said: "I have my hopes on you and expect great results! So don't slack and make great efforts!" Then, carrying hot coffee he left away.

Dudian slowly turned after Peter departed. The smile on his face has disappeared and was replaces with coldness. He slightly narrowed his eyes as he thought: "Hunter headquarters should investigate the area no 8 to find traces and clues. I didn't expect them to expand the scope of investigation to include the scavengers who had been in the area." Although he was not afraid but such a big reaction from Hunter headquarters meant that they dealt with this matter very seriously!

He quickly remember the traces of his treatment and thought of an issue. With a magic mark all the hunters get an ability. So are there any other hunters with keen sense of smell as himself?

Thinking of this his fingers clenched into a fist. He made up his mind. Even all the hands pointed at him after the investigation, he would deny his involvement at all times.

He looked at stairs as his calm expression was restored. Step by step he walked up.

Scavenger headquarters had four layers. Each was protected by

the guards provided by the noble families belonging to Mellon consortium. Only nobility had the right to recruit private armed forces, but the quota was limited. That's why different families belonging to consortium divided resources accordingly to their sizes and came up with basic requirements to protect consortium's assets.

The fourth floor was designed as a cloister. There were too many rooms on the corridor so Dudian was a bit lost. He thought of the attendants by the staircase so he went back to them and asked the direction towards 'Mr Dayton's' office. Under their guidance he come to the front of a large red colored door. He gently knocked on the door.

The door opened. A middle-aged man looked up and down at Dudian. He smiled: "You should be Dean. The newly recruited scavenger who joined the consortium. Please enter."

Dudian nodded and entered the room.

The room had splendid lightening system. A sweet aroma floated on every corner of the room. As he stepped inside, he felt extremely soft carpet under his feet. He quickly and accurately glanced at the room. All the tables, chairs, sofa, desk and oil paintings gave a pressing aura and atmosphere of elegance and wealth.

His sighed at the luxury of the room. What caught his eyes were the painting at the top of the room. It was of a huge painting of a woman and a man with strong physique. The most eye-catching thing was that on man's chin side close to his neck there was finger

long deep scar.

The scar's location was shocking. If it deviated half a centimeters more, perhaps the carotid artery would be cut.

"Little guy, come to sit." Middle-aged man looked at Dudian.

Dudian saw his mild attitude so he knew that he wasn't going to be questioned about the hunter's death. He was relieved as he sat down in a couch opposite to Mr Dayton.

"I read your resume. Before the task your radiation value was only 0.8, less than one! " Dayton gently open the book on his desktop: "However, this time as you had come from the outside, normally your body's radiation value had to go up. But in your case it radiation value was reduced to 0.1. Little guy, do you know that only hunter's have that kind of a radiation value?"

Dudian nodded slightly, not unexpected.

"So, you have magic marks. That's why its not surprising to have such a low value. Now, I'd like to know where is your... magic marks? " Dayton smiled slightly, but slowly narrowed his eyes, as if examining every minor change in Dudian's face.

Chapter 79: Crystallization Of The Soul

惧染者 – this phrase is mentioned a lot in the series. The actual meaning of the translation of the phrase is “fearing those who have been contaminated after death”. The closest meaning in English should be the word ZOMBIE. But zombie refers to a fictional undead created through the reanimation of the human corpse. So I went with the first best choice that came to my mind which is using pinyin… Da.da.da… we have juranzhi which includes undeads and zombies of all kinds.

Dudian had prepared standard answers for this case so he followed the previous rhetoric question: “I’m not aware of it myself. I was in coma. I woke up and it was here.”

“Coma?” Dayton was interested: “how come?”

Dudian was calm on the surface. But ideas rapidly rotated in his mind. To detailed question he was going to answer with a simple sentence: “I don’t know”. But he heard from Peter that hunter have investigated the area no 8. He knew that all the hunters has some kind of strange ability. Although he had burned hunter’s corpse, he wasn’t sure that he hasn’t left any traces that would lead back and expose him.

Moreover, a hunter died and another popped out. Both of it were big things and it was easy to associate with each other.

Dudian changed his mind as he though of these issues:: “I saw a hunter fight with a beast. I was scared. I could understand the power of hunter. But that beast. It was huuge and ferocious.”, He clenched his teeth and his body slight shivered. He acted as if he

was still scared of the beast.

Dayton looked at Dudian's trembling legs under the tea table, his eyes showing a bit pondering. The process only lasted for a few seconds as Dayton quickly withdrew his eyes and looked at the book: "That beast was a level 9 juranzhi. It was born out of a parasitic soul worm. In fact your magic marks should be result of the infection by the parasitic worm."

"juranzhi?"Dudian muttered the name of the beast who he had killed. He was a bit surprised and about to ask directly when suddenly was alerted by the mistake that he going to make: "You said that a parasitic soul worm...it...it...it entered my body? Then I...I will..."

Dayton raised his head and smiled: "Do not worry. I said that the magic marks result after the soul worm enters your body. But after it drills into your body it dies. It's just dead. However, its linked to your body. Don't forget magic mark is a deadly location. It is as important as your head and heart. Remember to protect it in the future and for the best don't reveal the location of your magic marks to anyone else."

Dudian was pleased. He was worried that the worm would take over at some point. It was good to know that it was dead! At the same time, as he understood from Dayton's words, everyone has different magic marks on different positions. His was on his chest while the other hunters have in different parts.

"Originally, the headquarters intended to look at your performance. If your performance was good, so in another two

years, you would be able to get a lot of money and there would be a chance for your to study at Hunter Academy. Then you would be qualified to buy a ‘parasite’ which would truly qualify you as a hunters”

“Unexpectedly, you have turned into a hunter ahead of time. Actually, it saved headquarters a lot funds that they were going to spend to buy a ‘parasitic soul bug’. Moreover you may not know but magic marks from juranzhi is very rare. I believe that most of the other hunters would be very jealous of you.”

Dudian said: “I would have to thank the consortium for training me anyway. By the way, Mr Day you said that the consortium buys ‘parasitic soul bug’. From where?”

“This parasite takes the monster’s soul as food.” Dayton did not mind to explain to Dudian: “Generally they will give special power to the monster but at the same time they will die! That’s why the hunters can’t transfer their powers between each other.”

“Although the consortium has the ability to capture the infected monster, but there is no way to find the parasitic soul worms. Unless you will directly feed on the monster that is. But the monster is not allowed back to the well so the only way to get them is to buy from the Holy Church. God of light have bestowed them with a cradle which can save the living parasitic soul worm but the price is extremely expensive.”

No wonder, Holy Church as a religious organization was able to recruit large number of guards and knights. Even all the consortia had to give them face. In addition to the original ‘faith’, they have

strong grasp on many things.

“This is a secret! Your status as a hunter is not publicly available yet so even others in our headquarters are not aware of it. ” Dayton smiled and said: “This is to protect you! I hope you do not wantonly share it in public. The headquarters there will soon send someone over to confirm your identity. Afterwards you will be able to apply for identity procedures!”

Dudian nodded slightly. In addition to protecting Dudian, the real purpose was to protect the news from other consortiums.

“Oh, there is one thing.” Dayton suddenly spoke up: “You have submitted seven soul crystals which are commonly known as cold crystals. The price of each piece is a gold coin. Although your identity is not public yet, but this is in accordance with the proportion give to hunters. If you were a scavenger, then you would only get one silver coin for each.”

“Soul crystal?” Dudian referred to them as dark blue balls. However he was speechless in his heart. The different in proportion between scavengers and hunters was about ten times. He was a seed recruit and had 30 percent proportion. So the hunters had 300 percent more income than a scavenger?

Dayton smiled as he saw Dudian’s surprised expression: “Anyway, you have to go hunter headquarters. I’m going to be straight with you. The scavengers pay 50 percent of the consignment as transportation fees to the consortium. Moreover, cost of material identification, taxes and the other fees are deducted form the rest of the 50 percent. So the amount that is left

to scavengers is not much.”

Dudian was stunned, he could not help but secretly sigh. Consortium was ruthless when it came to making money. Scavengers would go through dire situations, face radiation and life-threatening monsters to find materials and bring back to consortium. At the end they would be assigned with very small part of the overall result. By telling them that they could get a lot profits, was nothing but lie. They were being swindled.

“Businessman with real power never trade but rob!” Dudian felt after hearing all the details.

“What is the crystallization of the soul?” Dudian asked curiously.

Chapter 80 - Juranzhi

“This is confidential.” Dayton faintly smiled: “However, as the one with the qualifications of a hunter I can disclose to you a thing or two. The raw materials for the “God’s blessing” are taken from these crystals for enhancement of the physical strength. The human who is infected would have his/her soul crystallized because of the resentment. As a result a degenerate undead or monster is made up.”

Dudian was confused a bit.

He remembered that after he was branded with the magic marks while he was in coma he was able to absorb the soul crystal and it didn’t hurt.

Was the magic mark the real reason?

“Even hunters can not use them directly?” Asked Dudian.

Dayton shook his head, “can not.”

Dudian was shocked as his heart beat rapidly increased. Hunter’s can’t use the soul crystals? But he can, ah! At least, he absorbed the melting dark blue ball. He hasn’t felt any strangeness in his body. If there was it would have to show itself during the ‘cleaning’ days. Both of the doctors should have detected the signs of infection as they must be experienced.

Magic marks!

Hunter's magic marks are different, so they have different abilities. An idea popped up in Dudian's mind: " I thought that my magic marks real ability was super smell!? But it seems... it is to digest the cold crystals!"

Or, is digestion of cold crystals is only one of the characteristics?

He was excited because if his speculation was true then he could secretly absorb the power from cold crystals. Although a cold crystal is equal to a gold coin which is 10,000 copper coins but power was power.

"You can go to the Ministry of Finance and receive your seven gold coins after you produce your identity card. As for the other materials, after they are inspected and identified in the "Temple of Elements", you will get your share. It will usually take about half about a month at least, maybe even a month! "Dayton smiled.

Dudian asked in curiosity, "Temple of Elements?"

Dayton smiled but did not elaborate: "People from the headquarters should be coming soon. You go and wait outside."

Dudian saw that he did not say much, but also the didn't force for it. He got up and said: "Thank you, Mr. Dayton, then I will leave."

"Ok."

After Dudian left the room, Dayton looked at the middle-aged butler next to him and asked with a light laugh: “What do you think?

“Very smart, great potential for a little guy,” the middle-aged housekeeper said respectfully.

Dayton slightly nodded, sighed, said: “Yes. ah, unfortunately … … after all, he doesn’t have a ‘light physique’. His life is limited and the price of ‘that’ thing is too expensive. Unless the top hunter, he won’t have enough capital to buy a little.”

“Unfortunately,” middle-aged housekeeper nodded.

Dayton gently tapped the pen in his hand on the desktop and spoke out: ” The hunter who died in area no 8. This little guy must know the truth. But he didn’t say anything and we can not torture the truth out of him. Even the hunter’s headquarters would not be reluctant to use torture. After all, there has been a loss of hunter and there is a rare new replacement. Moreover it has magic marks from a rare level 9 juranzhi. They should leave him alone ”

Middle-aged housekeeper nodded slightly, said: “The kid said that he had burned the juranzhi’s body to death. He spoke a little bit in nervous tone, but his eyes were calm. There is no way to disguise it, I suspect, he really burned it to death. ”

He nodded slightly, which he naturally saw. Although Dudian disguised well, but his ability to know people is still extremely

sensitive.

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Mellon Foundation, Hunter Headquarters.

An office in the castle.

Bang! A slender white palm shot onto the table. The owner of the palm is the red head woman with the scarlet armor. She angrily stared at the bald middle-aged man behind the ask. She almost growled: “My brother! My family! There are so many things unclear about my brother’s death! I have checked and there is a recently recruited new hunter in Huasheng consortium. I just want our consortium to pull few strings. I want to go and ask few questions!”

Bald middle-aged looked calm. She was spitting at his face as she screaming around. He didn’t even rub his face but quietly said: “You should be clear, we have no evidence. Even if their hunters secretly sneaked in, we have nothing to blame on them. You have yourself found the remains of his armor in juranzhi’s stomach. His body has been digested with only small residue left. I know that you are angry because your brother has died. But the beast who killed your brother is already dead! What do you want to do? ”

“I want to take revenge !” Scarlet armored woman growled: “Even if my brother was killed by the beast, I will not allow others to pick up my brother’s results. There was no parasitic soul worm next to the beast. There had to be someone else close by. My

brother died in vain and somebody else gains the loot?! I won't allow it! ”

Bald middle-aged replied in calm tone: “I can understand that you can not accept. But to harmd the interests of the consortium, I will not allow. You better not have any little tricks, the consortium will investigate everything clearly and you will get a proper explanation too!”

“I hurt the interests of the consortium?” Scarlet armored woman could not help but laugh. Tears came out as she spoke: “My brother is dead. You tell me, in these years how much interest have he brought to the consortium! Do you think I don't know? ”

Bald middle-aged man knew that he shouldn't have said so. A slip of tongue. He slightly frowned: “I said, the consortium will give you a satisfactory account. If we find that person and confirmed that they belond to other consortium, we will never let this go. You can rest assured but you can not go on take action on your own! If caught by the other consortium, you will suffer a major loss!”

The woman stopped laughing, looked at him mockingly, did not say anything and turned to leave.

At this point, the door of the room was suddenly opened. A guard trot in. He saluted the woman in a respectful manner and then came to towards the bald middle-aged man and said: “Your honor. This is the news from scavenger headquarters.”

Bald middle-aged frowned, but still tore the envelope apart and skimmed through the content.

Middle-aged man was slightly stunned. He looked at woman's back and saw that she didn't notice it. He was slightly relieved as he quickly closed the envelope and told: "You should go now."

Even though there was quite a distance but the woman had heard guard's words. A murderous intention flashed by her eyes as she strode out of the room.

As the woman left, the middle-aged man wrote a new letter and quickly released the order.

Chapter 81 - Conflict

Dudian went down to first floor of the Scavenger headquarter to find the Finance Department to receive the seven gold coins.

The seven gold coins was worth 10 years of savings of an ordinary family which lived in residential district! Even Jura who had a high-paying job was paid a total of only five or six silver coins as monthly salary. A gold coin was equal to ten thousand dollars from the old era's currency. But in this era the salary of the middle class was very low. Dudian would be rich according to today's standards.

And this was just a small part of his scavenging.

Dudian was filled with emotion as he held the heavy and smooth gold. But he was not excited at all. After all, he earned it in a sense in exchange for his life. Moreover, if not because of his hunter identity he could only get seven silver coins.

Therefore, if the scavenger wanted to get rich still he/she had to rely on luck to pick special items while searching for the materials.

"I don't know how much the others thing that I have brought back will amount to." Dudian secretly thought. Although seven gold coins would be an amazing amount for the residential district standards but if he wants to run an alchemy lab this kind of money won't satisfy his appetite.

As he took the gold coins he came to sit in the hall.

It didn’t take long before a stir of sounds occurred in the hall. Dudian looked up and saw a tall figure. A woman who was wearing a scarlet armor pushed the door of the hall and walked in with big steps.

Dudian glimpse over the silver medal hanging on her shoulder. Three years ago he had seen the same medal on Fernando. However Fernando’s was copper while the one she had was silver with two eagles engraved on it.

The staff in the hall and the consortium scavengers who were present also noted the medal on woman’s shoulder. After all, her armor was too eye-catching. It was as if blood flowing down through her body. It was totally different from scavenger’s soft armor and easily attracted attention.

“It’s a Hunter!”

The people in the hall suddenly quiet down as they were carefully watching the woman.

“Let the person in charge to come out here now.” Scarlet armored woman stood in the middle of the hall shouted out.

Two girls who were responsible for the reception looked nervous. One of them hastily promised the scarlet armored woman while the other trot into the next room. Soon, Peter and another old steward came out. They saw the medal on her shoulder. Peter’s face instantly changed. He bent forward and respectfully said:

“Welcome hunter! Would you mind telling us the reason of your visit...”

She lifted her hand and interrupted his speech: “The scavengers who had been to the area no 8. Call the out now!”

Peter and the lean old man were surprised. They looked at each other and caught the meaning in their eyes. Peter respectfully said: “Honorable hunter, they are gone back to their homes. We need some time to gather them.”

The woman said in a cold tone: “Do not dawdle in front of me! I’ll see them before the sunset today... Hum... You wait! ”

Peter was covered in cold sweat: “Yes, yes, absolutely can not delay.”

The woman caught the Dudian in the periphery as he was resting in the sofa. Her eyebrows lifted as she saw him drink the milk tea.

Peter also detected her vision and noted Dudian. He hastened forward and screamed: “Boy, haven’t you noticed the honorable hunter!? Are you stunned? Why haven’t you saluted her yet? Do it and get out!”

Dudian saw a hint of anxiousness in his eyes. He immediately understood that Peter is trying to support him. According to woman’s words the hunter who died in area no 8 is somehow related to her. He frowned slightly as he did not expect the trouble

to be so fast in finding him. But he didn't worry about anything as he nodded towards the woman, then got up and was ready to leave.

"And so on." Woman looked cold at him, said: "Are you a new scavenger?

Dudian paused, looking back at her, "Yes."

"So ... ..." Woman squinted her eyes: "Have you been to area no 8?

Dudian looked at her eyes. There was cold chill concentrated in her eyes. As long as he would nod she would immediately shot and kill him without a slight frown. There was a bit of resentment in his eyes as he said: "Yes!"

Her original brown gray eyes became somewhat dark red as she spoke in cold tone: "Why? Why didn't you die? A garbage like you survives... Why? Why death hasn't taken you?"

Her skin color on the arms became a bit crimson as if congested.

Peter who saw the scene, hurriedly said: "Honorable hunter, Dean is our seed object. The headquarters pay a special attention to his cultivation because he may become a hunter in the future. Please do not be offended with him. If he has offended you anyhow, I'm sure if you give him the chance for an apology..... "

"Scroll!" Woman roared back.

Peter was stunned.

Woman stood up as her eyes were staring at Dudian. Actually she had never left him from her vision. Her eyes were full of resentment, anger and sadness.

Dudian thought she was investigating the evidences. He didn't think that she was seeking for a person to vent her anger on. He saw the strange expression in her eyes. He couldn't help as his heart was moved as he asked: "The hunter who died in the area no 8. What is his relation to you?"

"Shut up!" Scarlet woman angrily raised her hand to beat over.

Dudian face slightly changed as he quickly hurried back his body. He escaped the palm in matter of a breath. He quickly stepped back a few steps to open up a distance. Once again they stared at each other. He knew that if an ordinary scavenger was here they would long be dead because of the palm attack. At least they would be seriously injured. He was very clear that without the power of the hunter, he would face the same fate.

Peter saw the others' palm attack and was scared. However when saw Dudian escape, he was speechless.

Woman was also startled a bit. She looked up at Dudian as the grief in her eyes turned into coldness: "You are a new scavenger. Even if you were blessed twenty times, or even thirty times, you wouldn't be able to react at such a rate. What are you!?"

Dudian’s eyes become cold. Although the woman acted because of her grief, but the palm attack was not concerned about its severity that could cause. Perhaps in her eyes, even accidentally killing a scavenger would only result in few criticisms. Maybe the consortium will take the initiative to shelter her or help her eliminate the evidence and confession to avoid the trial of ruling.

She knew that there won’t be punishment even if she murdered someone.

“Today, this slap, I will write it down.” Dudian said staring at her: “The others give me a good, I will pay ten times. They give me a pain, I will retaliate hundred times!

“Ah?” Woman’s face turned as cold as ice “alone, you dare to threaten me?”

Chapter 82 - Appointment

“Stop!”

A voice echoed out.

Suddenly a burly figure appeared between the scarlet armored woman and Dudian. His hand instantly touched woman’s thigh to stop her using a kick to Dudian. As his hand blocked the attacked, the burly figures face slightly changed because of the power of attack. He made two steps backwards as he resisted the momentum.

The woman also fell to the ground as she was repelled by the man. She coldly looked at the burly figure blocking her sight: “Bud! Don’t stop me!”

Bud slightly frowned and said: “You should stop, Linda. Dean is the new hunter of our consortium. I’m here on behalf of the Hunter headquarters to appoint him and give him his medal.”

Woman’s eyes widened in shock because of Bud’s words.

Peter and the old man besides him were stunned at the news.

Dudian looked at the burly man. If it was not for him the only way for him was to avoid the strike and run outside to the street in order to escape the crazy woman.

“New hunter?” Woman thought of something as her face darkened. Her dark brown eyes completely turned into dark red. Dark red blood vessels which looked like veins on her arms began to twitch as she ferociously said: “So he is the one who picked up!”

“I know you are sad because of your brother death. But I hope you do not make a mistake by attacking the hunter who belongs to the same consortium as us. I hope you are aware how serious the consequences would be. Don’t destroy your future!”

Woman seemed not care about Bud’s words instead stared at Dudian.: “You were there when the monster ate my brother? Why it didn’t eat you? Why?! You are a scavenger! What qualifications do you have to possess magic marks?”

Dudian looked at her indifferently but did not speak.

Woman stared at Dudian but after a moment killing intent had disappeared from her face. The blood vessels that had appeared on her arms gradually hid under her skin. She licked her lips and said: “Little thing. You said you will retaliate with hundred times more? Right?”

Bud who saw the change in Linda was relieved. If she recklessly rushed to attack Dudian he may not be able to block. He turned to Dudian and said: “You are called Dean, aren’t you? Apologize to Linda and everything will stay behind. Moreover, you are potential companions in future tasks. Why should we be more friendly and pleasant towards each other?”

Dudian frowned. Intuition told him that this woman will not stop at anything. She just temporarily held back her intention to kill because of taking into the account the consequences of killing a fellow hunter. Even if he apologized nothing will change. Most importantly, why did he have to apologize?

Just because you brother died, do you think you can go around an freely vent your anger on others?

Even if its about revenge. Your brother was the one who took the iniative to harm us. Would we be allowed to fight back?

“I don’t care about apology. However you are welcome to come to retaliate me at any time! ” Woman spoke in a feminine tone as if she was not the rogue from minutes ago.

Dudian face was cold as he spoke indifferently: “I didn’t know that the hunter who was eaten by the beast was your brother. No wonder you are so angry. I can understand that. After all, his death was not just ugly but also miserable!”

Linda’s eyes suddenly turned cold. Her fingers clenched into a fist as the sounds of bones creaking echoed out. Eventually she released her fist and head back to leave the hall. She quickly disappeared from sight as she went into the crowd.

Bud wryly smiled as he looked back at Dudian: “Little brother, you can really talk.”

“I’m far to weak in comparison to her. She wants to talk with her hands while I can only use my mouth.” Dudian was calm as he replied to Bud.

Bud sighed: “You shouldn’t blame her. Her parents died young, so they had only each other. After she got to know that her brother died, its normal for her to have mood disorders.”

Dudian looked at him strangely and said: “There are lots of orphans who have lost their relatives. Do they have to go and freely vent their anger on innocent people? Her brother was eaten by the beast and she doesn’t want to went her anger on the beasts but instead finds weak scavengers to harm. Isn’t life of the scavenger a life? Can she go around insulting everyone in here just because scavenger’s identity is not as high as her? Moreover after being insulted, we should also sympathize with her because of her loss?”

Bud could not help but be speechless.

Bud slightly shook his head as he didn’t want to continue to talk about this issue. There was a trace of smile on his face as he said: “Speaking of which, you are not scavenger anymore. It was requested by the headquarters for me to give your contract and medals.”

Dudian nodded slightly. He also no longer said anything about the issue but in his heart he had already taken note of the woman. It will not end. She is bound by the rules of the consortium so she may not directly harm him. But secretly she could. Maybe she could find someone else to do it instead of her. He didn’t like to

wait for others to take the initiative to harm himself, so he was going to retaliate at the first possible chance.

“This is the hunter contract. After you sign it you will be an official hunter of the consortium.” Bud took out a document from the bag and handed it to Dudian.

Dudian temporarily put away the plan in his mind. He carefully read through the hunter contract, it was roughly same with the scavenger contract. The only thing that has changed is the welfare and the implementation of the tasks.

Hunters are free to reside in the commercial district. Moreover they will be provide a real estate and license for it for free.

However, according to the contract they don’t have the right to inherit the real estate license. The house will return to consortium’s possession if the hunter was killed on mission.

In addition, each month he will receive ten ‘blessings’! He was a seed from the training camp but he could only get a ‘blessing’ once a month. But this treatment was ten times better. It was surprisingly high.

Hunters can enjoy a discount of 30% in all industries under the consortium. It was the equivalent of VIP-class privileges.

The industries where Mellon consortium was involved ranged from coal mines, real estates, hotels, slaves, transport, chain stores

to many others. So this discount was not a small benefit.

Dudian read through the article. After the welfare part, he check other restrictive terms and determined that there was not much that could restrain his plans. Moreover, unless his signed nothing will be official.

“This is your hunter medal.” Bud handed Dudian a bronze medal with a falcon engraved on it.

Dudian took a look and asked: “She had a silver medal. What was its significance?”

Bud smiled and said: “It seems you are quite careful. She recently became an intermediate level hunter as she reached bloody swordsman level. We commonly refer to them as ‘silver hunters’. In the execution of the missions the caption of the team has to be at least a silver ranked hunter.”

Dudian slightly frowned. If he was assigned together with this woman in the next task, it is going to be very dangerous.

“This is the hunter’s manual, you should check it later on. It has everything related to hunters but remember not to show it to non-hunter personnel. In addition if your medal is lost be sure to find headquarters to apply for the replacement.” Bud handed out a small book.

Dudian reached over and nodded, “I know.”

Chapter 83 - Four Major Occupations

“You have seven days to adjust and rest.” Bud smiled and said: “Seven days later you have to go and report to the headquarters. Although you have magic marks but you lack too much in other areas. Hunters have different positions. Specifics about each occupation is written inside. Consider on your own in those seven days what do you want to be.”

Dudian thought about the word ‘bloody swordsman’ said by Bud earlier on. His heart moved as he nodded said: “I know.”

“In addition, I suggest you better live in the commercial district. The hunters are sometimes called out in emergency situations so its efficient to get them when we know where they are. For example if we detect the presence of a jiranzhi then we immediately need to dispatch hunters to prevent it from running away. So most of the time hunters are usually in the commercial district on standby.”

Dudian nodded as he understood what Bud meant.

Moreover the radiation content in the commercial district is better than the residential district. Nevertheless, he would have to take Jura couple with him to live in the commercial district in a sense to return their adoption grace.

“If there is no other thing then I’ll go first.” Bud smiled.

Dudian greeted him and watched him leave the hall. He looked at

the brochures and medals in his hand. It seems he would get his hunter armor after seven days when he would report to hunter headquarters. It was not urgent anyway.

Peter and the other old man closed the gap between themselves and Dudian. They closely looked at the genuine Hunter Medal in Dudian's hands. However, they still couldn't believe that he had been appointed as a hunter.

Nevertheless, both of them have been working in scavenger headquarters for a long time and their eyes were extremely sharp. Through the previous conversation between Bud and Dudian, performance of Linda, combined with the news that they had, more or less they have guessed the reasons of the matter.

"Dean," Peter smiled in an unnatural way, "I did not expect you to be a hunter, congratulations!"

"Congratulations!" Lean old man also complimented.

Dudian smiled: "It's because you have cultivated me well. I will not forget the care that both of you had shown to me. "

"It's nothing." Peter waved his hand quickly, said: " Its because of your own efforts that you have accomplished the position. I thought it would take few years for you to have an opportunity to become a hunter. I didn't expect it to be so fast."

"Indeed the seed of the camp. Powerful and smart!" Lean old

man’s voice echoed out.

Dudian observed the unnatural actions displayed by both of them. The change in his identity had influenced the others communication style with him way too much. However he knew that it was not good to act impolite towards others because of his status.

These people have been in this business most of their lives. Dudian understood the terrible influence of the system upon the individuals.

He secretly sighed in his heart. He saw the brutality outside the wall. It was also very difficult to integrate into the consortium. It was the sole reason why previously he didn’t want to bow his head in front of the scarlet armor wearing woman. Instead he released all the anger inside of him and spoke out. First, he knew that bowing is useless. Second, he knew that he didn’t want to!

Moreover, he has seen the fragility of life and won’t tolerate other people bullying him. Perhaps, the woman hunter’s character and hostility were same as her brother’s which made him to stand on his own.

“I have something to do first.” Dudian said to Peter and the old man: “I’ll come back to see you guys when I have free time. And, I have three good friends who are scavengers. I would like to trouble you by taking care of them.”

“Give their names to me” Peter grinned.

Dudian nodded slightly and waited for them to take the leave first before going out of the hall.

The others in the hall were envious and jealous. They knew that Dudian would live in a world which they could never ever reach to.

...

“I should get back home.”

Dudian called to a carriage which was docked near the headquarters and went back to the residential district.

On the way back, as he sat in the carriage he read the thin booklet that was given to him. Information was divided into several chapters. The first chapter was about the purpose and responsibilities of the hunters, which Dudian naturally know. In simple terms, the only role that they had was to hunt monsters outside the wall.

The second chapter was all about the types of hunters. The occupations and details about their roles.

The four occupations were respectively: Knight, Warrior, Scout and Archer. All four positions were responsible for different jobs and hunters were focused more on team action. When it came to hunting monster, whether it was efficiency or safety was maximized.

“Knights and warriors are responsible for attracting and attacking monsters from the front. Scouts were responsible of detecting and gathering information about the surrounding environment. Archers were responsible for long-range attacks and support.”

“Its like modern warfare. There is infantry who is responsible for the direct confrontation on the ground. And there are supportive forces such as surprise air attacks or artillery like long-range strikes. It didn’t matter whether it was a large-scale combat or a small group operation, there were three aspects that had to be followed. They were intelligence gathering, direct confrontation and long-range support.”

“These were basic occupations that had to be chosen by the newly appointed hunters. However as they gather more experience and become proficient in the occupation they will have to pass an advanced examination. Likewise they will step up and become intermediate level silver hunters. While at it they will be able to re-select a different expertise!”

Knights advanced to shielded knights, animal knights, etc. The swordsmen also had shielded swordsman and combat swordsman. Previous woman was referred to as ‘bloody swordsman’ because after advancing she had combined her ability with the title. In fact, she should belong to combat swordsman category”

Dudian knew that the hunter whom he had killed earlier belong to archer category. He most probably was responsible for tracking the enemy and long-range attacks.

In the long run, there had been a systematic distribution while developing the hunter teams. So that interests and efficiency could be maxxed up. After all, individuals energy is limited, if everyone in the team specialized in the same category then they wouldn't be effective in fights against a group of stronger monsters.

"Bud let me to consider so I've to decide on a position in advance." Dudian thought, "Knight and warriors are goot at close combat but the number of monsters outside the giant wall stronger than a hunter is just way too much. If they are caught in a disadvantage they have to rely on remote hunter's cooperation to overcome the problem. Scouts are mainly focused on traps and assassinations. They would be the weakest link in the group."

"I have already created bombs which are my secret weapons. However, as I am not strong enough I can't reveal bombs in front of the others. So the best for me is to choose a position which shall grant me individual space where I won't be in contact with the rest of the team as much as possible. "

"Only scouts and archers satisfy the main condition. They are more independent in comparison to the other hunters. As long as I can you the environment to my advantage I can kill any monster on my own. Just like the previous hunter who tried to use us, scavengers as a bait to lure the monster and finish it."

Thinking through the details, Dudian made up his mind that he was going to be an archer.

Moreover, he could come up with and develop new ideas and tactics to be used in hunting, using the knowledge of the gunpowder. If he could add lead powder to the top of the arrow, wouldn’t it be several times more lethal?

Chapter 84 - Area No. 3

Close to the outer boundaries of the Commercial district. Marlin street.

Mel family was influential in this part of the commercial district. Moreover majority of the hunters under the control of Mellon consortium had their housing assigned in this part too. Their estates were concentrated here mainly due to its proximity to the giant wall of Silva. It would be more time consuming to depart from here in case a beast was detected.

At the moment, in a small european-style building in Marlin street.

Linda was sitting in the living room on the third floor. Her face was gloomy. In addition to her, Gale and the other youth were present in the room too. Moreover there was another girl with dark complexion who also sat by their side. They have been through many missions together and part of the same team for a long time. Because of long-time companionship they had profound knowledge of each other. They had got the ‘message’, even though Linda was silent for some time.

“Boss, that kid is really a scavenger? ” The other youth spoke in dubious tone: “It is too bold for a scavenger to have the courage to burn the beast. I would be scared half-dead if I had seen that beast and I have been training for a long time now.”

“It’s because you are mediocre.” Linda looked up at him coldly,

said: “This little bastard graduated at the top from the scavenger school. First in all three assessments. Even though he knowledge is restricted to those petty scavenger trick but climbing to the top in any area is not a small feat.”

Gale deeply nodded in agreement and said: “I heard that this little guy also threatened you. Kinda he will revenge you?”

“Well, he will get revenge on the captain?” Tanned girl frowned and then sneered: ” Ignorance is bliss! It does mean that he can stand on equal footing with the caption just because he became a hunter. Nevertheless, he is a lucky and daring little daredevil. In my opinion, we should get rid of him as soon as possible. If boss thinks that we shouldn’t be involved directly in this matter then we can just hire an assassin and finish him off!”

Linda slowly shook her head and spoke in a cold tone: “There are more than one way to kill him. Alive he has value in consortium’s eyes but dead he is worthless. If I kill him, at most I will face some punishment or they will let me perform a number of missions. But it is not worth it. He is not worthy to sacrifice myself!”

Gale nodded: “Yes, even if we secretly assassinated him now, the consortium will know. Although there would be no evidence, but this would be direct violation of the consortium’s rules. The top will be unhappy and we will be gradually suppressed. ”

“Yes!” Linda nodded.

Tanned girl seemed to understand their thoughts. So she

continued: “That being the case, temporarily we won’t kill him but make his life bitter. It should be ok. We can influence the headquarters not provide him a house in the commercial district. Force him a bit into corner and see how he reacts. In addition, the hunters in the consortium will give you face. As long as you hint out, he will have very uncomfortable time after he will come to headquarters for registration.”

Linda spoke indifferently: “These minor things makes no sense. With such a small means we will arouse his suspicions. This time, we have to wait for the little devil to get to the other side of the wall... I’ll kill him there!”

Gale nodded: “There is no law outside the giant wall so there are no constraints. Dead will die! But this little daredevil just joined the hunter headquarters. He is going to receive vocational training and it may take a few months. Maybe a year or two. We may have to wait for a long time.”

“Don’t worry about that. If I’m not wrong he is going to choose ‘archer’ as his occupation. Because that job and the magic marks that he had inherited from the juranzhi beast are simply a perfect match. His ability is going to be a super smell. Once he makes the choice, I’ll give him an ugly and miserable death! ”

“Oh?” The trio looked at her curiously.

“In case of an emergence even the trainee hunter like him would be sent out of the wall!” Linda coldly looked at Gale: “You know that the number of hunters in the consortium is scarce. So lets say, Gale you have been injured and the other hunters are on task.

There will be a need for a hunter. What would consortium do?”

Their eyes lit up as they heard Linda speak.

“Haha, the boss is clever as always.” The other youth laughed.

Dark skinned girl exclaimed: “Indeed captain is smart. This way if the consortium intends to send him over to another team, as long as we talk to them the daredevil will be hindered. We are going to meet him outside the wall in any case!”

“Yes,” Gale nodded.

Linda spoke: “This thing shall not be mentioned anywhere. We convened today because of our next task. We are going to area no 3. Have a good look. ”

“area no 3?” The other three were surprised.

“Its been known for a long time that the level of monsters in the area no 3 are level 10 or more. I have heard that there have been level 20 monsters sighted there. Of course, if the captain takes the lead we won’t encounter such a beast. But we can kill a number of level 10 beasts and make a fortune! “The tanned girl smiled.

The other youth’s eyes shone as he said: “I heard that on area no 3 a giant infected deer has been detected. It’s body is full with fat, but its skin... Its more expensive than gold!”

Gale slightly frowned, said: “Wealth and risk are symmetrical. There have been a lot of teams who have fallen in area no 3. We can’t follow in their footsteps. ”

Linda nodded: “Yes, but our goal is to find infected beasts anyway. In the area no 3 there should be a great chance to encounter a rare infected beast. If we could hunt it down, then you guys can make your magic marks evolve again! ”

Hearing this, their eyes brightened.

…

Dudian closed the brochure.

The second chapter is about the details of the other privileges of the hunter. The main thing was the details of the occupation which he simple looked at. The carriage had already left the boundary wall of the commercial area and was already in the residential area.

Soon, the carriage stopped in the Lin Kang street.

Dudian got off and took his luggage. As it was consortium’s carriage he didn’t need to pay the fare. He looked at the familiar white colored fence. He had missed the place. He stepped forward and knocked the door.

“Who?” Jura’s voice resounded from behind the door. She opened and saw Dudian: “You came back fast.”

Dudian nodded and entered the house.

It was dusk so Gray also had come from the work in the factory. He had no time in the morning to read the newspaper so he was skimming through it now. As he heard Jura talking he put down the newspaper and rushed over.

Chapter 85 - Launch

Dudian saw the joy in their eyes. There were a few whites scattered between their hair. He felt that he had obligations before them even if he was an adopted son. Although three years ago they tried to 'sell' him of to Avril family but the shadow caused by that situation had long faded away from his heart. 'People are not saints!', his father had told him regularly back three hundred years ago.

"its been a bit more than 10 days but look at you... So thin." Jura spoke in a distressed tone as she looked at Dudian.

"Come in and sit down. We should talk." Gray smiled.

Dudian nodded slightly. He put down the luggage and came to table to accompany them to a chat. As the task was confidential he had to come up with a story.

"You have been promoted by the consortium because of your performance?" Gray was surprised as he heard Dudian talk. 'Its his first task and he gets a promotion? Too fast, right?'

"The consortium assigned a house to me so we can move on to the new place," Dudian said.

Jura was stunned: "They already allocated you a house? That sounds lavish!"

“Geez. Its indeed the Mellon consortium ah!” Gray apparently had heard a thing or two about Mellon Foundation news. He sighed loudly and then slightly shook his head: “But me and your mother have been living in this area for too long. The neighbors are familiar too. Moreover, my work is not far from home so moving to another place is a bit uncomfortable.”

“It so disappointing so. Ah, I will be living alone in the commercial district.” Dudian said in a regretful tone.

“You are approaching the age of marriage and you are already capable of... ah? Wait, what you just said? Live in the commercial district? You are saying that the consortium assigned a house to you in the commercial district?!”

“Yes.”

“You, you ... that, when can we move in?”

“... anytime.”

“Ha ha ... ...” Gray suddenly laughed out loud. Pursuit of his life was to be able to live in the commercial district. He would never expect that such a desire would be realized so unexpectedly.

They chuckled. Jura and Gray looked at Dudian eyes with care and comfort as they never expected Dudian to give them such a big surprise.

Dudian couldn’t help but smile as he saw their happiness. He thought of a matter and took out a gold coin: “Before the task I had borrowed a lot from you so I’m giving back in excess because of filial piety.”

Gray and Jura’s eyes went wide when they saw the gold coin. What kind of a task does he do to earn a gold coin in time of ten days? Their total annual wages couldn’t be compared to the gold coin given by Dudian.

“This is your wage?” It was hard for Jura to believe. She couldn’t help but said: ” What kind of tasks do you do for the consortium? Is it very difficult? You have received the training to become a guard, but its just… ” The years of life experience had taught her that there was absolutely no free lunch under the sun. Moreover wages and risk were directly proportional.

Dudian smiled and said: “No, we do not fight and there is no danger. The thing is the tasks are complex so there is a long and hard training. That’s why most people fail by the end.” He grinned.

Jura looked at him half-skeptically, “Really?

Dudian nodded with certainty.

Jura was assured down as she heard Dudian: “Yes, the abilities. You are really special. The first moment when I saw you, I felt that you were different from the other children… ” As she was talking, she felt Gray’s arm touch her. She looked at him and he winked

back. She should not continue to mention the orphanage, lest she evokes Dudian's painful memories.

Dudian noticed Gray's little trick, but did not care much. Because he knew that although they were good to him but they would never make him forget his biological parents as well as sister. They had occupied a large part in his heart which no on could replace.

"After we move to the new house, I'll help you to get new jobs in the consortium." Dudian said to the two: "Most probably, you will not even need to work but receive the basic salary every month. By the way, don't save much and eat up to your hearts content as I'll be making a lot of money in the future." This was one of the privileges given to the hunters. As long as the consortium wanted they could get many things done behind the closed doors.

Gray laughed: "No, I don't need your pension. Although you are more than us but you can not squander money. You got to keep some for the future wife and children, you know?"

Jura suddenly smiled and said: "Dean, there is this woman who I know for a long time. And few days ago I was talking to her about her daughter. She is so sweet and good. Her daughter is approaching the age of marriage and we plan to make you meet her. What do you think?"

Dudian's face turned red in embarrassment: "This, this ... ..."

"You're nearing the age, too," Gray added.

Dudian was ashamed. His age was twelve and 13 was the legal age of marriage. From his perspective, a person who was 13 was only a kid. Getting married!? That was just too much of a pressure on him.

But in this era people were aging fast. There were diseases, plagues, poverty and other problems that took a lot of life every year. Moreover, as the body accumulated a lot of radiation, so the fertility was lost too as people aged. That was why the marriage age was so early, but he wasn't able to adapt to this condition.

"I'll consider it when I reach the age. " Dudian answered in an authentic tone.

Jura saw the persistence in Dudian's eyes so she helplessly said: " Well if you don't want to then I can't force you. But you really got to see the girl. She is very beautiful. I have seen her, she is definitely a little beauty!"

"I agree with that," Gray smiled.

Jura turned him a supercilious look.

Dudian shook his head again and again in refusal to meet to girl. However, he suddenly remember of the night where he was sitting side by side with the girl in the pavilion of the garden. They were looking up at the gray moon, chatting in the shadow of the night. His heartbeat slightly sped up. He secretly thought: "I wonder what is she doing now? If I went to directly find her, would it be too abrupt?"

He was lost in thought.

...

That night he accompanied Jura and Gray till the late hours of night as they chatted. The next morning, in the dawn, he woke up early and had a simple wash after the breakfast. He called a carriage and went to the slums.

Last night, when Jura referred to the orphanage few names popped up in his mind. Although he had only lived there for a few months and now three years had gone by, there was blurred memory of faces in his mind. He remembered Barton and the others who were by his side when he first came to the Meishan orphanage.

He was well aware of what kind of a treatment they would get if not adopted by the age of thirteen.

Now, he had the qualifications and enough funds to adopt them. Moreover he was ready to start building a few alchemy laboratories and he missed a few hands. In addition to Mason and the other two, those few disabled kids from the orphanage could be his trusted aides.

Chapter 86 - Disappearance

After a long time Dudian had returned to slums. The smell of urine in the air made him nauseous. He was much more sensitive to smell different form his past self. For ordinary people there was faint smell of rot, urine and excrement. But for him it was unusually strong. Sometimes he felt dizzy because of the irritating taste.

Dudian slightly covered his nose, waiting for the body to adapt to situation. Moreover he realized that strong sense of smell was a fatal weakness at the same time!

“In the future, if I face a situation where I’m up against a hunter or beast with super sense of smell then I can deal with it using this approach. The advantage can be turned in a shortcoming. It seems that everything has two sides. ” A thought flashed in his mind as he was walking the street alleys.

Stay long enough in the toilet and the smell disappears. As Dudian walked more the feeling of discomfort gradually faded away. He didn’t directly go to Meishan orphanage but along the path came to the garbage field that he visited three years ago.

As he got close to the dump, Dudian saw that the previous accumulation of rubbish mountains have been leveled to ground. Although he had expected the garbage to be cleaned up but didn’t expect it so soon to be removed.

“I heard a plague broke out in the slums last year. It had caused a

lot of people to be infected. ‘Black dead season’ has just come so the temperature have increased. I assume it has been long ago that the garbage has been cleaned up. ” Dudian was in regret. If he was not selected for scavenger training camp three years ago, relying on the leftover energy in the frozen storage capsule he should be able to learn a lot of knowledge from the super-chip. At that time he couldn’t resist and obeyed the arrangement. It was like the compulsory conscription from the old era, if you didn’t have any influential background you must serve in the army.

“The frozen storage has also been moved away. Most probably it was found out while handling the garbage. As long as the news have leaked to various consortia and military through intelligence network, then they would not have let it stay at hands of others. After all, a metal warehouse of such size would be eye-catching. It should have been moved to somewhere secret to be studied. Fortunately there is not photo of mine inside, or else I would be facing an unneeded trouble. ” Dudian secretly thought.

Suddenly he smelled few odors getting close to him.

This was the advantage of super smell. He could detect the advance of creatures before they were in his eye sight.

He turned around to see two middle-aged and one young man in ragged clothing come out from the back alley. They walked in different directions to outflank him. One was holding a wooden stick while the others had rusty machete and a dirty black stone in their hands. They approached step by step as they were staring at Dudian.

“Little guy!” The one in the middle with disheveled hair spoke out in low tone: ” Be sensible! Surrender your money and clothing! ”

“Three refugees.” He identified them when he saw their dresses. They were the lowest level of existences even in the slums. All of them were homeless. Main reason for their exclusion from the society was the excessive level of radiation accumulated in their bodies. No place would accept them for work as not to affect the health of others.

“Don’t you want to kill me? ” Dudian faintly smiled.

All three of them knew from the fine clothing on Dudian’s body that he was not from their slums. Their aim was to rub the money and leave. If they murdered him, they knew that there will be trail and investigations that would turn the slums up and down. However they didn’t expect Dudian to be so calm and fearless as he face them.

“Kiddo, less nonsense or I’ll waste you! ” Middle-aged man in the middle shouted.

Dudian’s body flashed.

Bang bang bang!

Dudian was lazy to listen to long-winded talk from them. So he took the opportunity to knock them out over the ground. He was

preparing to inquire them about whereabouts of the rubbish when a thought passed by his mind. If the frozen storage was at hands of one of the consortia or military then they would start an investigation relating to find the people who knew about it existence.

He was anxious as he thought of the idea. If he asked about the frozen storage and this people leaked about him in the future, then it was equal to be asking the consortia or military to come over and arrest him. Dudian shouted as he kicked the middle-aged man: “I’m lost. Tell me the way to Meishan orphanage.”

Middle-aged man was panicking. It was hard to understand how such a little kid was able to summon such terrible speed and strength. He didn’t dare to think about anything as there were rumors of mysterious beings from commercial district: “Turn left from here and right after two street. Then ask someone else and you will be informed about the details.”

Dudan turned away to leave. He naturally knew the way to Meishan orphanage. However, if there was a person or force who was secretly observing the area then they would not doubt him. It was just to cover his tracks.

“The energy source to run the frozen storage has long been exhausted. It would be hard for the people who found to study it. But this is the only thing left to me from my parents. If later on I find it whereabouts, then I got to get it back. ” Dudian thought in secret as he walked away from the garbage area.

In about ten minutes, Dudian reached the front of the Meishan

orphanage. Its building was dilapidated, and in the last three years it just got more old and unreliable.

Dudian saw a fat woman cleaning the sparse lawn in front of the orphanage.

“Auntie,” cried Dudian.

Middle-aged woman was surprised as she looked back. She was a bit puzzled: “You are?

“Dean,” Dudian smiled.

She was stunned. There were not so many children in the orphanage. So even three years had passed she hasn’t forgotten the boy. She was impressed when she had seen him the first time. A white skinned child.

She looked up and down at Dudian. The contours of his face overlapped with the boy in her memories, except the skin color. : “Dean?! You are back! How’s it going with your new parents?”

“Very good.” Dudian smiled and said: “I came back to see Barton, Joseph and the rest.”

“Joseph is still in the orphanage, but you won’t be able to see Barton. He was sent to Colin mine last year.”

Dudian frowned slightly. He remembered that Barton should have just turned thirteen years old. Even if he was sent to the mine, he would have to work through the ‘Black Snow Season’. However, saying anything right now would be pointless so Dudian said: “Alright, I’ll go to mine to find him later on. But, I would like to trouble aunt Dai to help call Joseph, Kroen and Barry. I want to redeem their household registration.”

Aunt Dai was startled as she frowned: “Dean, you haven’t secretly taken your parents money? Don’t be confused but if you want to redeem their household registration you must have some background to do so…”

Chapter 87 - Devil's Cradle

Dudian nodded slightly as he was aware of the restrictions. But for his present status, lifting of a slave's house registration was not a problem. Not to mention the Meishan orphanage, his words wouldn't be taken lightly all over the Mel family businesses: "Let them come out while you go through the procedures. I'll take all of them away. "

Aunt Dai spoke in worry: "It would take a lot of money to redeem them. You should know than if more than a silver coin is stolen, people are sent to prison. You can't be silly, ah!"

"This is my own money." Dudian knew that he had to explain the source of his money as they were not aware of his status. He took out his guard medal: "I have been selected as a guard, the monthly salary is very high."

Dai Li stunned, said: "You, you are a guard?

Dudian took the medal, said: "Yes."

Aunt Dai recovered a bit as she looked at Dudian in surprise: "Good. Good! I've taken care of the orphanage in the past few years, you should be one of the most promising kids in here. Well, you remember Lisa, do you? She was adopted the same time as you were. She was adapted by the gardener of the Mel family. But she was clever and was appreciated by the Little Miss of Mel family. She was chosen as her maid. Last year, she came back once and also asked about you. She is good person, so if you have any

difficulties later on perhaps you should find her for help!”

Dudian was surprised to find out that the girl who launched a verbal attack on him years ago had been successful in Mel family. She seemed cute and silly but her true nature was hidden deep inside. However, things have been much better for him in the past few years so he didn’t care to much.: “I may.”

Aunt Dai smiled as turned and went into the orphanage. Soon three children came out. It seems they were sleeping earlier as their eyes were gooey and crusty. They were Joseph, Kroen and Barry.

They were amazed when they saw Dudian.

In the last three years all of them had changed. But because of good nutrition Dudian had the greatest change. His body had a strong development and was totally different to his original thin appearance from 3 years ago. Joseph had also changed. He was a head taller in comparison to three years ago. However his face’s lump was more bloated and he was looked very scary.

Kroen had congenital malformations. His arms had only grown to half the size of a normal. Few of his fingers had stayed as baby fingers.

Barry was in good shape. On surface there was no problems. But Dudian knew that he had sarcoma because of the condensation of radiation in his stomach.

Living in the orphanage, their life experiences were stronger than Mason, Zach and Sham. Soon, they recognized Dudian and quickly approached. Joseph stuttered: “Di, Dean... Are you doing well?”

Dudian smiled as he replied: “I’m doing very good. This time I’ve opportunity to take you back with me. By the way, you don’t have to bring your clothes as I’ll be getting new ones for you. As soon as we finish with the registration we gotta go and take Barton. ”

They were stunned as Joseph stuttered more: “You...You mean... Want... To take us away?”

Dudian laughed: “Don’t you believe me? ”

Kroen was the fastest to strain himself.: “Of course we trust you but Dean. Do you have money?”

“I’ve enough to redeem all of you” Dudian looked at their eyes filled with hope and excitement. He knew that they were eager to leave: “I’ll go and pick the household registration documents.”

Three looked at each other and quickly nodded. Then they turned and ran back to the orphanage.

Dudian came to the front yard of the orphanage and immediately saw the chunky woman, who had helped him with the procedure. She was sitting behind the counter, yawning, listless. There was a dark-skinned boy next to her.

The little boy was quite alert. As he saw Dudian, he gently gestured to the chunky woman.

The chunky woman opened her eyes and saw Dudian walking in. She sat up and smiled. “Excuse me, who are you?”

“I’m here to redeem children.” Dudian said in brief.

Chunky women shook her head: “adoption. To adopt you have to… …”

“I now.” Dudian interrupted her. Everyone had to wait till the so-called adoption day. The purpose was to increase the possible monetary benefits from the adoption.

“We have such a rule … …” chunky women quickly explained.

Dudian was too lazy to listen, took out the guard medal and said: “I know that the rules can be bent. So you better proceed immediately…”

Although, he looked like a youth but has long been polished in the training camp. So his talk resembled more of a nobility rather than a normal guards. The woman replied immediately after some hesitation: “I know… Give me the names of children.”

“Joseph, Kroen and Barry.” Dudian reported the names.

Woman was stupefied after hearing the names but still went with the registration. It didn't take long before the procedures were complete. Each of them cost him two silver coins.

When the woman saw Dudian taking out a gold coin she realized that he was not someone to be neglected.

At this time, aunt Dai came in and saw Dudian putting away the contract. : "How? Finished?"

Dudian nodded slightly.

"They've been waiting for you out there," aunt Dai laughed. "I hope they remembered the kindness and will pay you back."

"You are wrong, this is my gratitude." Dudian replied. He signed the household registration contract and left.

Chunky women looked at the back of Dudian and asked: "Dai sister, who is this man, you seem to know him?"

Dai smiled and said: "Remember three years ago, there was a child called Dean. That's him!"

Woman's eyes went wide: "That's why he was a little familiar. He actually had become a guard?!"

...

Dudian saw Joseph and the others standing in front of the orphanage looking uneasy. They seemed to be worried about the case if Dudian bulged out. He gave them the contracts: “We should go now. This is your own household registration.”

Their bodies slightly trembled as they saw the genuine contracts in their hands. Joseph’s eyes reddened and tears flowed out.: “Dean.. I... I....”

Dudian looked at their appearance filled with gratitude. He was embarrassed as he said: “Oh come on... Stop being so polite... Let’s go Barton still waiting for us.”

“Dean, this, I really want to thank you!” Kroen spoke heavily.

“Well, otherwise, we will have to... like Barton ... ...” Barry tightly clenched his fists.

Dudian smiled, said: “Do not be so nauseating. Let’s go.”

They no longer said anything as they saw Dudian’s expression. Before leaving all four of them looked deeply back at the orphanage. They also saw aunt Dai and the chunky woman by its door. They didn’t know but their lives will be completely different after this!

Similarly, no one knew but in the annals of later generations...

All historian’s will depict the name of this four man crew in scarlet red – ‘Devil’s Cradle’

Chapter 88 - Taking Out

Colin Mine is a company owned by the Mel family. It's controlled by the Chamber of Commerce. It was located in the western suburbs of the slums. Dudian hired a carriage and went away with the three of them.

Carriages were very few in the slums. Usually the people working in good positions at Chamber of Commers or some other factory's management would hire them for easy travel.

It was first time for Joseph, Kroen and Barry to ride a carriage. They were nervous and trembling as if not to tamper with the carriage. They feared that they would dirty the armchairs.

Dudian didn't say anything. He knew that they had gone through very hard times and it was not so easy to adapt. Half an hour later, the carriage stopped in front of the Colin mine. It was the most prominent business in the slums. It had an impressive building built by Chamber of Commerce for its office use.

Dudian was the first to get out of the carriage. He gave the coachman a copper coin as a fare. He called the trio to follow him as he went into the building.

Two sluggish young guards were standing by the door. They stood up but when they saw the children coming over, their lazy look was restored. One of them look up and down at Dudian. After seizing him up: "This is the office building of Colin mine under Chamber of Commerce. What do you want?"

“Tell the top official here to come and see me,” said Dudian.

Two people surprised a moment, one of them turned over and said: “Little brother as the residents if you are here to buy minerals, or maybe on your house master’s orders, then we will be responsible to receive you. As for you wanting to see our president, I’m sorry to tell but he won’t be able to take care of you.”

Dudian took out the guard ‘s medal, said: “You only need to pass the message that I’m representing Mel family”

Both of them were startled as they saw the medal with crossed swords. They carefully looked at it and determined that it was not forged. One of them hesitated before talking: “You wait here while I go to ask them. What’s your name?”

“They don’t qualify to know it. ” Dudian said indifferently.

The guard heard Dudian’s tone but didn’t take it his heart as Dudian had previously said that he had come on Mel family’s behalf. Moreover, he didn’t have the right to intervene on Chamber of Commerce’s business.

Soon, Dudian and the others followed the guard inside.

No other guard stopped them on their way in.

Doudian had seen all kinds of luxurious place and offices in the commercial district. So the hall of Chamber of Commerce's entrance was not anything in his eyes. It was a bit scrappy. He casually looked towards the couches before coming to sit and rest. Joseph, Kroen and Barry followed him in silence.

The trio's hearts were nervous as it was the first time for them being in a luxurious and clean place such as this.

Soon, guard came back with a tall woman.

The guard saw Dudian and rest sitting on the couch so he respectfully said something to the woman who was behind him.

The woman looked at Dudian but her brows wrinkled when she check the trio sitting besides him. She came over: "Excuse me, you are the people sent by Mel family?"

Dudian noticed the trace of contempt in woman's eyes as she was questioning them: "Are you the president here?"

"I am in charge." Woman's brows wrinkled up as she saw Dudian didn't answer to her question.

Dudian's face turned cold but he was lazy to pursue her: "I'm here to take a person who was assigned as a miner not long ago. Can you call the shots?"

There was an expression of displeasure on her face as she replied:

“All the miners have slave status. If you have a backing of an aristocrat then I can give them to you. Otherwise you must deliver high compensation to purchase. But even if you purchased them they will still be a slave. There won’t be any compensation in instance they are killed by others?”

Dudian took out his hunter medal: “Do you know what this is?”

Tall woman shook her head: “Never seen.”

“Then let your sub-president come!” Dudian said.

Tall woman stifled her anger as she spoke: “You are just a guard! If you weren’t working for Mel family’s main house, I wouldn’t even talk to you. The president is busy with the work and not every passer-by can meet him. You are a guard and have no right to interfere with out Chamber of Commerce. ”

Dudian looked at her eyes: “I can only tell you, as long as I say a word you will have no work to come tomorrow. You don’t qualify to know my identity, be sensible and call over you president. Otherwise, you will be shouldering all the risk and peril! ”

Tall woman was so angry that she wanted to laugh out loud at Dudian’s words. But as she looked at Dudian’s cold eyes, she suddenly thought of his cold tone. Maybe she really didn’t know his background so she said: “You should wait here while I help you to inform the president.”

Finished, she turned and left quickly.

Joseph and rest were shock at Dudian's tough and overbearing attitude. It was too different from the reticent boy that they remembered.

After a while, a middle-aged man in black suit following the tall woman came back. His brows wrinkled when he saw Dudian and the others from far away. But he still maintained the etiquette and endured the temper: "Hello, I am the president here. May I ask who you are?" He looked at Dudian. It seems that as long as he was not satisfied with Dudian's answer, they would be immediately thrown out.

Dudian naturally felt the questioning and intolerance in the other side's eyes. But was lazy to answer so he raised his hunter medal: "Do you know what this is?"

Middle-aged man's sharp eyes focused on the pattern on the medal. He eyes shrank as he watched Dudian in horror. He was quick to react as he bent over in respect: "I know."

"I want to mention a man named Barton. He is a miner who was assigned to you shortly before, and you will let him come at once," said Dudian.

Middle-aged replied: "Yes. Immediately. " He waved back at the tall woman, motioned her to deal with immediately.

The tall woman was stunned as he saw the president to act that way. President showed such attitude when General manager of the Chamber of Commerce came to inspect. She remembered Dudian's words as her hair slightly erected. She was fortunate in holding back the impulse or they were likely to lose their jobs.

Half an hour later, the tall woman came back with a boy who was as dark as a monkey. She was enduring the unbearable smell of the boy who was brought in front of Dudian: "This is the man misters wants."

Dudian had noticed the Baron since they entered the building. His lame legs made him look like an old man. Barton's body was very thing as rows of ribs could be seen from the side. His hair was messy and there was no trace of meat on his face, making his eye socket's deep into the skull.

Barton was shocked as his eyes fell on Joseph, Kroen and Barry.

Joseph was the first to recognize Barton so he jumped up from his seat and stepped forward: "Hey Barton, I, we came to get you."

"You, how come you are so lean?"

"Do not miners eat anything?"

The three looked at thin Barton in surprise as their hearts ached.

Barton throat was hoarse: "How did you come?"

“Dean brought us,” Kroen pointed to Dudian who was sitting on the couch and said, “Dean redeemed us all.”

“Di, Dean?” Barton looked at Dudian.

Dudian did not expect that a miner’s life of just one year would torture him into this: “I was late, you okay?

Tears flowed form his eyes as Barton said: “You also, you remember me, I thought, thought … …”

Dudian sighed and said, “I’ve been away for three years and I couldn’t leave, or else I could have redeemed you in advance.”

Middle-aged man was more convinced of Dudian’s identity as he heard Dudian talk. He respectfully said: “Mister Barton is the smallest miner here and he has been very well taken care of, but the living conditions of the miners are poor. So you know, so for him to change this way… we have no way to… its just above the requirements.”

“You shut up,” said Dudian, glancing at him.

Middle-aged silenced without showing slightest temper. He knew what kind of monster he was facing.

Tall woman suddenly thought that she had underestimated

Dudian’s identity.

“Let’s go.” Dudian got up. Although Barton had not been “well taken care of” by the middle-aged man, but at least there was nothing wrong with the other.

Moreover, the weak can only comply with the conditions.

Chapter 89 - Awakening

Dudian took Joseph, Barton and other with him as they left the Chamber of Commerce. They came to nearby tavern. The table was full of dishes, after all every was hungry.

“Di, Dean, this is so much. So much that we can not eat.” Kroen looked at the table full of dishes while he swallowed his saliva.

Dudian smiled and replied: “Eat on. ”

“We will.” Four of the couldn’t stop at gobbling up.

At this time, a waiter wearing a white skirt came over. Clutching her nose she looked at the other before talking to Dudian: “You owe us a total of 68 copper coins for these.”

Dudian frowned and said: “We have not finished yet.”

“Pay the bill and eat as much as you can.” Waiter girl spoke in cold voice.

Dudian was unhappy, but too lazy to care about. He took out a silver coin and put into the tray in her hand: “Three more of these.”

Waiter girl was surprised for a moment as she did not think Dudian would be so generous. She didn’t say anything as she

turned back to the kitchen to get the food.

“So expensive.” Barton, who heard the words of the girl, began to eat in embarrassed manner.

Dudian waved: “Money is not a problem, as I don’t lack any. Eat up as much as you want, if not enough we can continue to order more.”

Barton and the others saw that Dudian was really not distressed and care so they were little assured. They continued to wind and sweep to chew.

“Dean, your money is from … …” Barry was about to ask but saw the other guests come in the pub, suddenly shut up. He continued to eat the food in front of him.

After they were finished, Dudian took them out from the tavern and found a small back-alley near its vicinity. There were no people passing by so he was at ease while he talked to them: “What’s plan for the future?”

Barton and Joseph looked at each other. Joseph stammered: “I, I do not know, I think I can go and find a work. I should be able to find something with enough pay for food. ”

“Me too,” Barry said.

Dudian looked at Barton and Kroen as he saw the expression on

their faces he nodded and said: “I have redeemed you guys but you are free to do whatever you want. Naturally I won’t force anything upon you. Now, there are three options for you to choose from. First, I can find you jobs such as gardener and housekeeper. You can serve in these positions and help me look after my house. I will not really treat you as servants but on name only.”

“Commercial district house?” Barton and the rest stared on as if they were sheep.

Dudian nodded: “Yes, the second option is that I’ll give a sum of money to each one of you. Do whatever you want as I will not interfere how you spend it. While the last option is to be assistant. ”

“Assistant?” Barton questioned.

Dudian spoke in serious tone: “Yes, but things what I’m going to do are very dangerous. It’s a bit illegal and you may end up losing your life. ”

They were surprised at his words. There was a bit of hesitation as they thought about the options.

Barton kept looking down, and suddenly looked up to Dudian: “I chose the third option to help you do things! Just … … my legs are not good, afraid it won’t be enough to help you.”

Dudian looked at him as he nodded: “I value your abilities that’s

why I'm giving you guys the opportunity. Don't worry about that."

"I, I will also help you." Joseph stammered: "Without you, I would soon be sent to the mine to work. I would be dead anyway, so no matter what you want me to do I will listen to your orders!"

Dudian nodded slightly, said: "Let me explain a bit. If you choose to follow me it will be road of no return and there will be dangers. But I didn't redeem you guys because I wanted to force this upon you. Just know that you don't owe me anything. I helped you guys, because I wanted to return the care you had given me."

Joseph looked up at Kroen and Barry, thought, firmly authentic: "I am still willing to follow you. Although it is illegal but I believe that Dean your smart. I don't want to live the life of poor. I want to stand high. I want a lot of money!"

Hearing his words, Kroen and Barry who were hesitant changed their minds and resolutely said.: "We also want to join!"

Dudian did not think that Joseph had such thoughts. He took out four gold coins from his pocket.: "This is our current start-up capital. However we will have new funds after a period of time. I'm going to give you these four gold coins to you. My request is that you guys find remote place as soon as possible. More away from civilization more better. Afterwards build a secret small factory."

Barton looked at the four golden coins. His heart rate accelerated a bit. Kroen couldn't help but said: "Aren't you afraid that we would take the gold and run away?"

Dudian looked at him and said, “I trust you.”

Kroen eyes reddened.

“At the moment, there aren’t enough money on hand. Over time there will be more than enough. So when we have extra funds you can go to school to study. As for you bodies, I’ll find a way to look for treatment. “Dudian said.

Four of them startled with a bit of hope in their eyes.

“Now, you’d better find good clothing or with your current dresses people will think that you have robbed the gold.” Dudian smiled.

They looked at each other and laughed.

Dudian checked the sky to estimate the time.: “If you want to contact me put up a signal in front of the orphanage and I’ll come over. But remember, you can not expose our identities.”

“We know,” Kroen laughed.

Dudian looked at Barton and said, “I will try to help you recover as soon as possible.”

“I’m not worried,” Barton said with a smile on his face.

After leaving, Dudian hired a carriage and went back to residential district. It took him around an hour to return. Sky was dark by the time he came home.

Dudian came home to see Jura was busy getting the dinner ready.

At dinner they asked Dudian about what he did throughout the day but didn't go into details. After all, in their view, Dudian was approaching the age of marriage and was also a guard so naturally needed a bit of his own private space.

The next morning, Dudian got up on time and after the breakfast went out.

"The last alchemist base...I hope it hasn't been replaced..." Dudian thought out about the secret stronghold.

Chapter 90 - Black Cross

On an ordinary alley near the marketplace.

A handsome boy was walking on the street holding a piece of black bread. Accidentally the bread dropped to ground from his hand. He was surprised as he quickly bent over to pick it up. Dust covered the side of the bread that had fallen onto the ground. He was hesitant to pick it or not.

Pedestrians were rushing to work past by the street. Few of the passerby took a quick glance at him but nobody gave too much of an attention.

It seemed that boy was distressed about the bread but no one saw the his nose was sniffing the odors.

It was Dudian and his attention was focused on the sense of smell. He was taking gentle and short breath so that he could identify the details more precisely.

There were all kinds of complex smells in the street. But tracking the smell was like a physical instinct to him such as moving his arms. He didn't need to study it to be able to grasp it. Dudian concentrated his senses towards the odors coming out from the secret room in the back-alley. Various types of smells floated, showing a vague outline of the chamber.

"Sulfur smell, yellow phosphorus taste ... ... Someone? Three people? One of them has a light smell, it should be a girl." Dudian

was surprised as he did not expect anyone to be in this secret chamber at the moment. Are these alchemist apprentices doing experiments in here every day?

Dudian thought a little before concentrating on the rooms above the street. There was a pale smell coming from above. Most probably no one lives there and it had been like that for a long time.

“Alchemy lab is below the house... The owner of the house must be the master of the lab... Or maybe he was killed by the alchemists...” Dudian secretly thought. He picked up the bread and patted the dust above it. He slowly walked down the street. There were no hidden sentries checking out passerby’s nor the house in front of the secret lab had anyone in it.

Nevertheless, he had to be prudent at all times or face the consequences.

He left to another street and found a small tailor shop. Without wasting any more time he went inside.

Tailor’s apprentice was the first to come up to Dudian and spoke in polite manner: “Guest, May I know what you need?”

Dudian glanced at the clothing products hanged on the walls but didn’t find anything that was similar to his needs: “I need a spacious black robe and a mask.”

Tailor apprentice boy looked at him puzzled, but did not say anything:” What time do you want? ”

“When can I get it?” Asked Dudian.

“Tonight.”

“OK, this time tomorrow, I’ll come and collect.”

“No problem. You have to choose materials now. We have flax fiber, silk... ...”

“A solid cloth,” said Dudian, “how much is the deposit?”

Tailor apprentice thought about it before replying: “If you want it to be strong, then the best material would be linen fiber. It shall cost you seven copper coins. Deposit is usually half which is 3 copper coins...”

Dudian immediately took out a three coins and gave it to him: “Robe should be slightly larger.”

“Well,” the tailor apprentice smiled and agreed. He took take a ruler to measure the body proportions of Dudian, wrote them down and gave Dudian another note, “Tomorrow.”

Dudian took the note, left the tailor shop and murmured: “The next is the tattoo problem.”

He must prove that he is an alchemist so that he can get into the base. The most credible way is having an alchemy tattoo.

However, there are no lasers in this era so once tattoo is made it would be difficult to wash away. His body will be thoroughly checked up to prevent the viruses entering inside, every single time he comes back from the hunting. There will be no way to hide the tattoos.

He pondered a moment, eventually decided to take a risk.

...

There was a small raw material factory for ink at the eastern outskirts. It was in a remote location near the radiation zone.

Dudian came here and showed his guard medal to guards who were blocking the way: “I’m here to do business and check your routine production environment.”

They stared at him, before one of them turning to other and winking at him. Afterwards, that one turned to Dudian and said: “Please wait in here. I’ll help you by informing the higher-ups.”

Dudian nodded and stood by the door to wait.

A moment later, a stout middle-aged man trotted out with the

previous guard. Middle-aged man was stunned as he saw Dudian because he didn't expect to see such a young guard. He piled up a smile and politely spoke: "Hello. You should have said in advance that you will be coming to check the factory. Isn't Guike in control of check-ups?"

Dudian waved his hand: "I'm here looking for you do to business. Do you have iron gall ink in here?"

The middle-aged man was relieved as he heard Dudian: "The gall nut ink? That component was not very popular so it has been discontinued. Now, we all use carbon ink."

"That's good." Dudian nodded and said: "Give me raw materials for a bottle of gallic ink."

"Uh ... ..." middle-aged man suddenly choked, looked up and down at him, said: "A bottle?"

Dudian coughed in embarrassment. After all, it was a factory not a shop. But it was very difficult to find a shop that sold raw materials for the gallic ink so he had to come to the source.

"How much money?" Dudian asked the price directly and did not give him the opportunity to refuse.

Middle-aged was silent but still maintained the polite manner: " Tell me the address and it will be sent to you."

Dudian bluntly continued: “I’m tight on time so I would like to get it now. ”

“No problem.” Middle-aged man looked at him and said: “Money is not necessary … … what else you need?”

Dudian smiled and said: “Just that.”

Middle-aged was relieved as he knew it was a false alarm: “Alright, I’ll tell someone to bring it now” Then, turned and walked away. A moment later, a slim young man brought a bottle of dark ink to Dudian.

Dudian does not need to open the cap to be able to smell the ink. It was a gallnut ink. It was used by the people inside the wall but later they learned to use coal to produce carbon ink. The gallnut ink had high costs of production so it was expensive. That’s why gradually fewer people preferred it.

Dudian left with ink and went to the store to pick up a bottle of men’s fragrance. Afterwards he went back home and locked in his small room.

Gallic ink’s smell was much lighter than carbon ink. Carbon ink was widely used by the people so it’s smell was familiar. That was why Dudian took the trouble to buy gall nut ink.

“Unfortunately, there is no activated carbon or I could completely eliminate the smell inside.” Dudian thought. He poured

out part of the ink into a small bowl and added the light perfume inside it. The smell didn't become weird so he was relieved. Then he stripped the clothing on his body, revealing a wheat colored health body.

Dudian looked down at the magic marks on his chest: "I'm not sure if those alchemist apprentices would recognize the magic marks. In any case, I should as well hide them." He dipped the quill into the ink and began to paint the magic marks on his chest. As the cold ink fall on the magic marks, the section on his chest began to smear to dark.

"I got to cover up the dagger scars too. " Dudian used the quill to paint it along the dagger's scar. Magic marks were sideways while the dagger's scars were vertical. Soon, Dudian found out that there was a black cross on his chest.

Chapter 91 - Mixing Up

The next day.

Dudian came to the tailor shop to receive robe and mask. He put on the clothes and it just fit him. Afterwards he went to the street alley where the hidden chamber was. Suddenly he smelled two people inside, one less person than yesterday.

“Sure enough, there is someone here every day.” Dudian secretly thought. As he got into the alley he wore the mask and went towards the wall which was covering the entrance. His hand touched the fabric that was covering the wall. If ordinary people accidentally were aware of the fabric and tore it off they would still see a wall. But Dudian knew that it was entrance to the chamber as a glance was enough for him to see the gaps between the bricks.

Dudian picked up a stone and knocked it lightly.

There was no response.

Dudian once again gently tapped twice.

At this time, Dudian felt that the two people came closer to wall because of their smells. He waited for a moment but didn’t see that they were going to open the door. He knocked twice and said in a controlled low tone: “I’m your companion. I come with no malice as I’m also an alchemist seeking an organization...”

It seemed that the people inside were considering as there was no response.

Suddenly, Dudian sensed a weird smell. His brows wrinkled as a piece of brick was pulled out.

Whoosh!

As the brick was taken out something was shot from the gap.

Dudian had long been prepared so he escaped in time. But when it fell on the ground, he sputtered out and a few drops fell on his robe. The black robe was corroded to some color. “Sulfuric acid”, he murmured.

Dudian glanced back to the bricks and continued: “I really do not plan to do anything malicious. If I was I would have gone to Holy Church and informed them. A Knight of Light would be here to arrest you instead of me.”

Two inside didn’t think that their attack’s were not effective. As they heard Dudian’s words, both of them knew that initiative were in Dudian’s hands. If he had informed the Holy Church, then they would have been encircled.

“How do I believe you?” A female’s voice echoed out.

“How do you believe in me?” Asked Dudian.

They were silent for some time before the female's voice echoed out: "Please show your tattoo."

Dudian smiled: "Then you must let me in. It's too unsafe in here and after sometime I'll attract attention."

They heard Dudian's talk and felt that all that he said was reasonable. The wall was suddenly opened. Inside was dimly lighted but it didn't have the slightest impact on Dudian's vision. Two people wearing masks and robes were standing inside. From their body sizes, Dudian understood that they are teenagers. A man and a woman. He was attacked by the body. At the moment the girl was responsible for opening the door to the secret chamber while the boy was hidden in the darkness clutching a glass bottle. It was half-full with the sulfuric acid.

"Come in," said the girl.

Dudian nodded and jumped in.

There were a pair of vigilant eyes behind the boy's mask. He was staring at Dudian without blinking: "Now, you can show us your tattoo."

Dudian nodded slightly, lifted the black robe and exposed his chest where the black cross tattoo was: "see it?

The girl leaned over and looked, said: "He is really one of us.

Come with me.”

The boy sighed in relief while Dudian followed behind the girl.

Dudian followed them down the staircase to a secret room underneath the building where a spacious chamber existed. There were shelves of various mineral powders, metal powders, animal wrecks, eyeballs and other biological parts. As he had expected, they belonged to “Philosopher’s stone” faction whose main goal was refining out the ‘sage’s stone.’

“Come here,” the girl said while pointing to a table.

Dudian complied.

“I’ll see your tattoos again,” said the girl. Evidently at the dim light of the previous corridor, she has not clearly seen his tattoos.

Dudian nodded, revealing the black cross on his chest.

The girl and the boy leaned over, looked closely and confirmed the black tattoo. She suddenly leaned towards Dudian’s chest, gently sniffed and exhaled warm breath. Dudian’s chest slightly throbbed.

“The perfume smell?” The girl was in doubt. She could not help but looked up at Dudian and asked: “You are a boy why do you use perfume?”

Dudian dryly coughed: “Used to it.”

The girl looked at him bizarrely but did not say anything: “How did you find us? Our place is hidden very well and only by signals we have agreed before we use to go in and out. Even if you are an alchemist, you shouldn’t be able to recognize.”

“I saw a man in the fair with his wrist showing a torn tattoo and then tracked him over to find this place.” said Dudian.

The girl and the boy looked at each other while they said: “This stupid ‘mouse’. I had told him that his tattoos are too conspicuous on the wrist. Even the teacher told him! That idiot!”

At the moment, there was a boy who was accompanying his parents alone the street. He suddenly sneezed.

Dudian spoke in a sincere tone: “Can I join you guys? We can research together.”

The girl looked at him and said “Don’t you have your own circle? Don’t you have a teacher to show you the path? Our circle rarely accepts other unfamiliar companions.”

“My teacher is dead.” Dudian looked sad, “A few other companions who were doing the research together are all gone.”

Girl froze for a moment, whispered: “I ‘m sorry, I didn’t mean it.”

Dudian shook his head slightly: “are gone.”

The girl thought: “Well, if you are alone I can let you join but you definitely can’t bring outsiders with you. Not allowed! You know, the more people here, much easier it will be to be exposed.”

Dudian was surprised and even said: “Of course we have to be confidential.”

“Ah.” The girl nodded, there was a touch of smile on her face as she said: “My name is ‘Nightingale’, he is called ‘snake’. The idiot who is accompanying his parents today is called ‘mouse’. You have joined us so what’s you code? ”

Dudian could not help but wonder: “Isn’t code granted when we are officially recognized by the dark church?”

“Yeah, that is the official code, but also our alchemist status symbol.” Nightingale nodded: “But we also use nickname to call each other. We can’t use our real names in here. In case one of us is arrest, is there a guarantee that the others won’t be exposed? Did they use real names in your previous circle?”

“No,” replied Dudian. “All of them were replaced by different names.”

“That’s the code name,” said the Nightingale. “We’re using an animal instead, you think about it.”

Dudian thought a little and then said: “Dog... You guys should call me that. ”

“Dog?” Nightingale nodded: “OK, afterwards we will call you dog.”

Dudian nodded and looked around: “You do not have a teacher?”

Nightingale shook his head: ” My teacher rarely comes to this place as he is busy with his own experiments.”

The boy called the ‘snake’ smiled to Dudian: “The Nightingale is our teacher. Moreover she is about to hit to become an official alchemist. When she is officially accepted, she will become one of the youngest and powerful alchemist’s, right?”

Dudian surprised to see this girl as the leader of this small circle.: “That’s awesome. I hope I can a lot from her.”

The voice of the Nightingale was somewhat shy as she spoke. “He is exaggerating it a lot. There are so many wise men so I’m not the youngest.”

“Anyway, I think you are very powerful.” Snake spoke in sincere tone.

Dudian looked at him, thinking that this person's character with the 'snake' didn't have the slightest relationship. This nickname didn't suit him at all.

"Well, you have to get the alchemist's badge too. So busy yourself." Nightingale waved at him.

Snake laughed as he went to the next room and shut the door.

Nightingale said: "Our capacity is limited in here. There is a grocery room out there which is not used. Clean it and you may use it. If there is anything that you don't understand then you can always ask me."

Chapter 92 - Alchemy Symbols

Dudian looked at some of the bottles and jars on the table next to her. All of them were tagger but instead of words they had strange symbols painted on them. Some of them had sun, some had the sun and stars overlapping while the others had hooks and so on painted on the stickers.

“What’s this?” asked Dudian.

Nightingale saw the bottle which he was referring to and replied in confusion: “Don’t you know the signs?”

Dudian thought and shooh his head: “No idea.”

“Haven’t you memorized the basic alchemy symbols? How come?” Nightingale was stunned.

It was the first time that Dudian heard the phrase ‘Alchemy symbols’. He was slightly surprised but fortunately there was a mask on his face which didn’t let the others see the expression on his face. He knew that symbols are used to mark anything... Like the mathematical symbols...

There was no record of this in Rosyard’s alchemy notes. He guessed that it was mainly for juniors to know so there was no meaning in Rosyard using the symbols. So he said: “Yes. Ah, but unfortunately all my materials were lost when the damned Knights of Light raided my teacher’s den had killed him. Holy Church’s minions have seized everything so I’ve nothing to study on. Do you

have alchemy symbols book in here? May I borrow it to study?”

Nightingale was suspicious at first because of Dudian’s lack of knowledge regarding the basics of alchemy. However when she hear him condemn Holy Church she gave up on her suspicions. She pointed to a shelf next to Dudian. There was a thick book with black cover. “There, you can study it but remember not to break the book.”

Dudian nodded, “Thank you very much.”

He picked up the encyclopedia of symbols and was about to open it to study when he heard Nightingale say: “You should go and study in the room I’ve told you to before. This place is small and I’m going to be doing my own experiments.”

Dudian came over to the small warehouse she was referring to. It was slightly messy so the chamber had to be cleaned.

He didn’t care much about the dirtiness of the place as he cleaned a small place for himself to sit and read the alchemy symbols book.

There lines drawn on the pages of the book. On each line there was a symbol drawn and next to it a detailed explanation was given. Dudian saw the previous sun symbol. In the alchemist codex it represented gold!

“No wonder, the bottle was so small and weighted less. It had golden power.” Dudian murmured and continued to read.

Time went past unknowingly.

Dudian was completely immersed in reading and memorizing the symbols and meaning behind them. At the beginning of the book it was explained that most og the symbols originated from astrology. With the decline of astrology, astrological symbols gradually evolved into an independent system of alchemy symbols.

Usually a lot of alchemical symbols were piled together and was recorded in the content of the experiments done by the alchemists. It was written so that without having the knowledge of the symbols it was not possible to grasp the meaning behind the writings. As a result, the alchemy symbol encyclopedia was the basic requirement for every alchemist.

When he was almost finishing the book he heard nightingale's voice coming over form the door of the warehouse: "Where is the 'dog'? It's late and the sky is getting dark. We are ready to go back to our homes. Are you going to stay here all night?"

Dudian was surprised for a moment as he didn't expect the time to fly so quickly. He immediately closed the book, opened the door and saw Nightingale and Snake were standing by the widewalk. : "I'll go back to... Let's go together."

"Alright." The Nightingale nodded.

Snake glanced at the book in Dudian's hand and laughed: "Nightingale told me but I didn't believe it. I couldn't believe that

you still haven't memorized the symbols. Gee! You are an apprentice alchemist, ah! Hahaha...."

Dudian heard his joke and smiled: " It's a bit slow but I'm memorizing them."

"I see you are lazy." Snake nodded: "I understand you. I had headache while memorizing the symbols too. So I make all kinds of excuses to avoid reading the damned book. At the end, my teacher personally forced me to learn. That why I memorized somehow. But nightingale was smart. She only spent a week or so and was able to learn all of it. It took me six months! Ah!"

Nightingale smiled: "Don't exaggerate it! It took me around two week to completely memorize it."

"That is also out of ordinary." Snake said in authentic tone as if he was in awe of her capabilities.

Dudian put the book back in place, said: "Are you guys going to come over tomorrow?"

"Of course." Snake replied instantly.

Nightingale shook her head: "Most probably I won't be able to but I'll see the situation."

Dudian said, "I'll come tomorrow."

“Night,” said the Nightingale, looked at Dudian and the snake, “Who will go first?”

“I will be the first to leave.” Snake was a bit blunt as he waved to Dudian came through the corridor to the secret wall and climbed out.

“Wait a few minutes for us to go out again,” said the Nightingale.

Dudian nodded in understanding. He knew that she was worried about attracting the attention of people if many people went out at once. Moreover each person needed a bit of time to take of their mask and robes.

A moment later, Dudian was the second to leave. He went out to the alley. He noticed no one on the street so he put away his mask. But his face still was covered with the robe. He couldn’t wear the mask on the street, however he could mask half of his face with the robes hood as other will think that there is some kind of disease on his face. So no one would be willing to get closer to him.

Dudian wanted to take the shortcut to his home but suddenly sensed a familiar smell. He turned towards the other side of the street.

Not long after Dudian left a small boy’s figure appeared in the alley. He frowned while looking at the direction Dudian went away. He sneered as he whispered: “Even covering his face as he leaves the den...Too careful!” He didn’t think much but turned

away to leave to his home.

Shortly after his departure, Dudian looked from the corner of the street. He didn't expect the snake to be so crafty. He came out in advance but didn't leave. Snake was hiding over the corner of the street so that he could see Dudian's true appearance.

"The snake can not be taken lightly in the future." Dudian secretly thought. If they knew about his looks then they would be able to handle him in the future through various means.

Dudian looked back at the alley. He knew that nightingale was about to come out but he gave up on the opportunity to peek at her true face. After all, she didn't have any kind of bad intention towards him so he would leave her alone.

After a few street he determined that there was no familiar smell around so he came to a corner of the street. While there was no one around he quickly took off the black robe, rolled it and left on a detour to his home.

Chapter 93 - New Research

On the morning of the second day, Dudian had come to the secret alchemy lab. At the time of his entrance, Snake and Mouse were already here. The boy, Mouse, was listening to Snake as he entered the lab. When he saw Dudian he asked nervously: “Dog... Did you, you follow, so...you...have seen me?”

Dudian didn’t want to deceive him so he nodded and said: “I’ve seen but I will keep it a secret.”

Mouse was depressed as he said: “I’m exposed.”

Snake snapped: “Who told you to engrave a tattoo on your wrist? Sooner or later you will be caught by the Holy Church... I hope you won’t betray us. ”

“I will not betray you.” Mouse frowned: “My family told me that I’m going to get engaged. I now want to quit alchemy as my level of understanding is low and it would be very difficult to achieve anything. Alchemist’s badge is a dream that won’t come true. ”

Snake shrugged: “If you want to quit, remember to strip the tattoo.”

“I was afraid of the pain that’s why I have been hesitant.” Mouse said reluctantly.

Dudian was speechless. He looked at the nightingale’s alchemy

room, and asked, “She will not come today?

“Not yet....” Snake casually answered.

“Can I borrow her alchemy symbols book?” asked Dudian.

“That one should be alright but for the best don’t touch her other alchemy materials.”

Dudian nodded and went past the table where nightingale was doing her experiments over to the shelf where to books were stacked. Although he had a super-chip, which stored advanced chemical knowledge but the old does not mean backward. In this system, they still had many advantages worth learning.

Dudian as yesterday was silent all day in his room and was studying the alchemy symbols.

Another day passed.

Dudian studied about two-thirds of the book until the dusk. Snake was the first to leave but mouse stayed to be the last to go. As they didn’t trust the newcomer with responsibilities for closing the door.

Dudian came outside to see Snake hiding and trying to peep at him. He still used the method from yesterday to avoid him.

The third day when Dudian went to the alchemy lab, Nightingale was present. Finally, he was able to understand the experimental records written by nightingale and the others.

From the symbols, he could roughly guess what they were trying to accomplish. When he returned the book he quickly swept the Nightingale's alchemy platform. There was a sun sign, two water droplets, and a spoon symbol. He was surprised in his heart as he didn't expect Nightingale's ambitions to be so high. Her research was focused on gold, did she want to directly create the 'Philosopher's Stone'?

The fourth day.

Dudian, as usual, came to the secret lab. Snake was absent but the nightingale and mouse were busy. Occasionally Mouse would come out to ask Nightingale about the problems he faces. It showed that her alchemy level seemed to be the highest one.

"Aren't you going to read today?" Nightingale asked in a strange tone as she saw Dudian did not borrow books from her.

Dudian shook his head: "I won't."

"No?" Nightingale stared blankly: "What does that mean? Did you back down? "

"Well," said Dudian, nodding slightly, "I want to start experimenting."

Nightingale smiled: “It seems you have studied well as it would be very hard to work on experiments if you have no idea about alchemy symbols. However, if you want to do experiments you gotta buy your own materials. I have a surplus so I’m going to lend you today but by tomorrow you have to return to me.”

“Thank you!” Dudian answered. He glanced on the raw materials on the shelves. He saw that there were raw materials that could be turned to black powder. These types of raw materials were commonly used by the other alchemists. Actually, black powder was one of the oldest and earliest inventions by the alchemist.

“This, yellow phosphorus.” Dudian pointed to one of the bottles. Naturally, he wasn’t going to manufacture black powder in here. In this era, black powder was definitely an ‘explosive’ find and would be misused if he showed them the formula.

Nightingale looked, nodded: “OK, I have more of these.”

Dudian pointed to rubber, red scales and some other raw materials. He cleaned his room and suddenly found a problem... There was no alchemy station... He lacked all the tools.

He was dumbfounded. He had the complete formula for gunpowder so he could manufacture it at any time. However, he intended to study the ignition of the powder. The last time, when he detonated the bomb he had faced many inconveniences. Especially timing and sparking of the bomb had put him under pressure.

Dudian found nightingale and asked curiously: “Where could I get the alchemy station from?”

Nightingale was in deployment of raw materials. As she saw Dudian she was stunned for a moment: “I have forgotten to tell you this. You look for Mouse and see if he has time at night. You guys should go to the underground market to buy one for yourself. But the price is a bit high, so you should prepare enough money. At least two silver coins or more...”

“Underground bazaar?” Dudian was startled. Suddenly thought of Rosyard’s notes and it seemed he had mentioned this place.

Dudian found the mouse and told the problem to him.

Mouse did not think much as he promised to take him in the evening.

Dudian said to them that he needs to get money so he left the secret chamber. Moreover, he thought that it had been three days and he should go and check Barton and the rest. He immediately hired a carriage and went to the slums.

Dudian came to the dilapidated square which they had an agreement to meet in advance. Barton had left the secret signs and he followed them. He went along the signals and soon came towards a remote small shack where refugees had gathered.

Dudian had reached the shack when he heard Barton's voice from the shack next to the one signals pointed.

Dudian entered the shack to see Barton and others inside.

"We made the signs to show that shack while we rented one across for security reasons. " Barton looked at Dudian's expression and explained the details.

Dudian smiled: "Although you know that there is a very low probability of exposure, but I'm happy that you are so cautious and taking it seriously."

Chapter 94 - Alloy Experiments

Barton saw that Dudian hadn't mentioned the money so he was relieved as he said: "These last three days we searched everywhere but haven't found the right place yet. Today it is Kroen who is searching but he hasn't come back yet."

Dudian nodded. It was good to see that they haven't tried to run away with the money. Actually, deep down he wanted to test them by giving them the gold coins. After all, if he supplied them with lots of money the poor won't hesitate to rob or kill. However, Barton and others didn't run away but have decided on to follow Dudian for the rest of their lives.

Dudian was very satisfied with the result.

"Kroen has been away for a long time. He wouldn't have encountered any trouble, right?" Barry was worried as he checked the time.

Barton looked at his slightly changed face and replied: "No, nothing would happen. He is very smart."

Joseph nodded: "Maybe he had already found a place. "

Dudian looked at the surrounding environment and said: "You can find a better place to stay. Don't worry about the money, as I will earn more in the future."

“Great,” Barton laughed. “At least it is a lot better than the mine where I was living. At least I can see the sun. Moreover, the attitudes of the poor who live here are not so bad. ”

Dudian didn’t say anything as he saw their stance. Although Barton and the others were orphans the orphanage taught them some basic knowledge. Especially how to protect themselves in the society.

Even though they had physical disabilities, their minds were extremely sensitive. Not a bit inferior to those who are physically fit, even smarter and more cautious than ordinary people.

Dudian and the rest chatted in the small shack. It didn’t take long before Kroen came back from the outside while carrying three wrapped things in oil paper. He spoke as he entered: “I brought back some rice. Are you guys hungry?” He was surprised when he saw Dudian inside.

Barton said, “Did you find an abandoned factory or any other suitable place?”

Kroen put down the things and shook his head: ìI couldn’t find the right place. There were several factories for rent but not in remote areas. And the prices were a little high.î

Barton and the rest were a little disappointed as they looked at Dudian.

Dudian waved: “Don’t be so anxious. You guys eat first. You will find a place at some point. The most important thing is for it to be in a secluded area so that we can conceal some things from the surrounding environment.” He didn’t intend the place to be found right from the start. Nevertheless, the slums were very vast and it was very difficult to find the right place. Moreover, Barton and the rest were new to this world so it was mainly meant as an exercise for them.

Although, they heard Dudian’s words they still apologized for their incompetence.

Dudian accompanied them for a chat as he saw it was getting late, he left. He took a carriage and returned to the neighborhood where the secret alchemy lab was.

Nightingale saw Dudian enter the lab but didn’t say anything and continued with her experiment.

Dudian glanced at gold powder on the table and casually asked her: “Do you intend to directly produce a ‘Philosopher’s Stone’?”

Nightingale saw that Dudian was able to note down the aim of her research so she didn’t deliberately conceal anything. She shook her head: “How could I? it is our ultimate goal to make a ‘Philosopher’s Stone’. Even five-star alchemists can’t make it, how can I? I’m just researching the compatibility of gold. I want to see if we can use gold and mix it with other metals to produce more precious metals.î”

“Alloy?” Dudian surprised a moment.

Nightingale was a little surprised, “Alloy? It’s a good name. I will call my experiment alloy research, uh, do you mind? ”

Dudian coughed: “There is nothing to mind. Where are you going with this experiment. Do you want to get an official alchemist badge?”

“Well, if I get the results that I hoped for, then I should be able to get it,” the Nightingale nodded her head forcefully.

Dudian knew that the most famous alloy material of the old era was the aluminum alloy. But there was no gold in the aluminum alloy. Gold was too scarce. In addition, there will be other metal elements synthesized in gold jewelry because of its scarceness. Moreover, the aluminum alloy was used in many heavy industry products.

“However to create aluminum alloy first you need to do metal electrolysis. For that, you need to have electricity first.” Dudian was frustrated as he could see the limitations of the tools that were used.

Nightingale saw Dudian being silent: “What is the direction of your experiment?î

“Mine?” Dudian thought, said: “I am studying ‘electricity.’ ”

Nightingale was surprised as she looked at his eyes: “Aren’t you going to make some basic experiment to get more experience, before going with stuff like that?”

Dudian saw that she tried to persuade him as she was worried that his ambitions would be too high. In fact, this was a common problem for most of the alchemists. Some beginners directly wanted to create the ‘Philosopher’s Stone’ and get the ultimate alchemy treasure. However, it was a completely whimsical wish.

However, he was not ignorant and fearless. All the things that he wanted to create need the support of electricity. So the supply of ‘electricity’ was the first problem that had to be solved.

Moreover, the post-modern world has proved that without electricity the whole human society will go through paralysis. The existence of electricity brought humanity from the ancient age to the industrial age. It was a significant factor for the human race to improve and develop.

Dudian shook his head and said that he would adhere to his own experiments.

Nightingale saw his persistence, therefore, avoided talking more on the topic. As it wasn’t good to interfere with others experiments.

At this time, Mouse, who came out and saw Dudian and Nightingale said: ìWhat are you guys talking about?î

“The experiment,” Nightingale said casually.

Mouse did not ask about details but looked at Dudian: “Are you ready? I’ll take you to the market? Did you get enough money when you went back home earlier?î

“It should be enough,” replied Dudian.

Mouse nodded: “We should meet at 23 West street. Do you know the place? If you don’t then find someone and ask!î

“OK,” Dudian nodded.

Both of them left the lab.

He didn’t know the place so he hired a carriage to take him directly to West street. Because of the length of the journey, he paid a few coins extra as payment.

West Street was a more remote place. There were no shops on the street. There were only residential houses. It was a bleak street with a cold wind blowing past once in a while.

Dudian’s head was half-covered with a robe as he got off the carriage. He paid the fare and immediately wore the mask. He went to the front of the small building which had number ’23′ hanging outside of it. The house was covered in leaves and it gave a feeling that no one has lived in this house for ages.

However, he could smell that there were three or four humans inside.

Suddenly, one of the odors disappeared.

Dudian was startled. It was like the owner of the smell disappeared into thin air.

Dudian was puzzled but he didn't take the initiative to enter the small building. Instead, he waited in the vicinity adjacent to the door.

Mouse came up wearing a mask. He was astonished as he saw Dudian: "How come you are so early?"

Dudian knew that Mouse had run all the way because of his rough heartbeats and breathing: "I'm sorry that you had to run..."

Mouse waved his hand: "Small things mate. We are companions. Alright, I'll take you in". Then he walked to the front door of the house and began to gently tap the door.

Dudian noted that he knocked on the door with a certain frequency. All in all three taps. The first one was light, the second was slow and the third was fast.

Shortly after knocking, the door opened. A person wearing a

white mask and black robe looked at them indifferently and said: “Come in.”

Mouse went ahead and Dudian followed.

When both of them were inside, the tall figure spoke: “Please show me your tattoos.”

Mouse lifted robe over the wrist, revealing the black hook tattoo.

Dudian clawed his chest, revealing black cross tattoos. At this time, he suddenly felt that the tattoo which mouse had come with advantages. It was more convenient and easy to verify the identity of someone. Fortunately, if he could get to be an official alchemist, showing the badge would be enough for verification.

The Tall figure looked at their tattoos but didn’t say anything. He turned to the two people inside the building and got a bottle from them. It was filled with orange water: “The first thing is we going to help you eliminate the odor. So the dogs of the Holy Church wouldn’t be aware of your existence inside the place”. Then he drank a bit of the orange water and sprayed it on Dudian and mouse’s head.

Suddenly, Dudian sensed that the odor coming from him and Mouse were fading away.

“Go in.” The Tall figure said while pointing to the second door.

Two people who were standing in front of the door opened it, indicating them to enter.

Chapter 95 - Report

They went through a passage from behind the door. It was a dark, deep place. Dudian was somewhat surprised as he didn't expect this underground market to be so lively. He was able to identify hundreds of people from the faint smells. Although the special medicine could cover the odors, but couldn't completely eradicate them.

"Come with me." Mouse was very familiar with the place so he was in front leading the way.

Dudian followed him.

A brass lamp was lit on the wall at the end of the passage. Two guards were stationed there and their shadows were reflected on the wall.

Dudian and Mouse both reached the end of the passage and came towards another door. One of the guards opened the door and a large mysterious underground market was presented in front of them.

It was a huge underground place designed as a square. It was dim lit by the lamps that were on the walls. There were a wide variety of booths as well as large-scale shops. All kinds of things related to alchemy could be found.

Dudian was surprised. As he didn't think the scale of the underground market would be so big. Including the guests, buyers

and sellers there had to be at least three hundred people gathered in here.

It was also the first time for Dudian to see so many ‘evil people’ from the dark church. He was feeling somewhat strange. Mouse pointed in a direction: “There. Come with me.”

Dudian followed him while looking around the dimly light surroundings. Actually, he was able to clearly see as his vision was much more improved in comparison to an ordinary human. There were small shops, large ones, booths and there was even carpet down on the ground where people sold materials. There were a variety of bottles and jars, as well as peculiar things which he met for the first time. Actually, he even saw dark claws. He wondered which monster they took it from.

“Boss!” Cried the shopkeeper, “Check the alchemy stations! ”

A tall man wearing a dark red mask seemed to be the owner of the shop. He looked at Mouse and Dudian. From their height and voices, he knew that there were children and at most were apprenticed to an alchemist or potion-er. He was lazy to attend to them so he said: “Check, pick and pay!”

Mouse was accustomed to such treatment so he didn’t care much. He pointed to a platform made of stone and birch: “Dog, what do you think of this?”

Dudian looked, said: “The prices are different?

“Of course.” The mouse was very experienced: “This is the cheapest and costs two silver coins. It’s enough for my junior apprentice brother. Of course, if you are rich, then you can also buy high-end products. Such as this one which costs four silver coins. It’s more convenient, but also optimizes the usage of fire. And this one costs seven silver… ”

He showed the platforms one by one and his finger came to stop on top of a gold platform: “This is the best. It costs two gold coins. It has an automatic fire bolt and can clean the ash in the pot. There are two refining pools. For doing complicated experiments, it is an essential platform.”

Dudian glanced at it. It seemed to be cast in brass. The platform’s material and appearance were better and more stable than the rest. However, it cost two gold coins, and he had a single piece of gold coin on himself. He didn’t plan to spend all of it.

“That’s it,” said Dudian, pointing to two silver coin platform.

The Shop owner glanced at him. He seemed to be expecting the same answer: “Pay now and report the address. If it is within the residential district, the latest moment it would be tomorrow night when it will be delivered to you.”

“You also help us with transportation?” Dudian asked in surprise.

Mouse laughed: “Of course. We can’t move such a big thing because we would be easily exposed. They have hidden transport

channels. They can deliver it to anyone. Even if you are a noble. ”

Dudian was confused, did the dark church penetrate so deep into the society?

At this time, the mouse suddenly grabbed Dudian, pulled him aside, said: “Come here.”

Dudian was confused at first, but when he saw the two figures in front he understood why mouse acted so. There were a man and woman. They were wearing crow masks and were in front of the shop. There was a dark gold hexagon badge on their shoulders. They were actually alchemists!

“Official alchemist!” Dudian whispered. Both of them were official alchemists but the tall figure was wearing an alchemist insignia which had 3 small suns engraved on it.

From Rosyard’s notes, Dudian had learned that from the apprentice to the five-star alchemist, required a lot of hard work. Each one-star required a large number of alchemy points and would often need a lot of experimental results to be submitted for review.

A three-star alchemist was basically equivalent to Knight of Light from the Holy Church. It has to be noted that even a big noble family, such as Mel had to treat them with hospitality. (Knights of Light have to be treated that way)

“Boss, what good alchemy station do you have?” Three-star alchemist asked the shop owner. His voice was low, apparently, he was deliberately trying to change his tone.

The shop owner quickly stepped forward as he saw the badges on their shoulder: “We have a few which would satisfy someone of your position. This one, for example.” He pointed towards the platform which was the most expensive.

The male alchemist looked at the female one and asked: “What do you think?”

There were two suns on female alchemist’s badge but she was regarded as a number one figure. She looked at his eyes and shook her head: “Bad. There is no insulation pool, not good for decomposition.”

“That is.” Tall figure slightly pondered before saying: “Then you should look for one.”

“This.” This woman sighed, said: “This market should be a monopoly. We won’t find anything. What about this one?”

The tall figure hesitated for a moment, but said: “Well.”

They made the payment and left.

Dudian and Mouse looked at them live in a grand manner.

Mouse said with emotion: “We cannot afford stuff like that, we’re too poor. But it was good to be in little contact with them. Alchemy is so esoteric, ah! Unfortunately, they didn’t talk much or perhaps we could be inspired by their conversation.”

“Did she submit her experimental report to the dark church?” he said, “Why didn’t she submit after doing the experiment? ”

Mouse shrugged: “There are many alchemists who are worried that there will be someone else who would submit the same experiment before them. So the first thing they do submit the experiment and wait for the rating. Of course, you can submit it for review after doing the experiment but if someone else has the same inspiration as you and submits it faster than you? You know that you can lose points which are detrimental while moving up the ranks.”

Chapter 96 - Talent

“That’s reasonable!” Dudian eyes slightly shined. After all, he had seen the modern world. Aircraft, cannons, cars and many other modern products could be stolen or guessed by some other party at the experimental stage!

Moreover, these speculations could be realized at any given moment.

“Not as simple as you think.” Mouse noticed a change of expression on Dudian’s face. He shook his head and laughed: “The experimental hypothesis submitted requires a complete derivation, not simply a concept, but a relatively perfect alchemy formula. After all, if the chemical formula is wrong, it is only a guess. Just like our illusory fantasy. However, with the ascension of the alchemy at some point, all those fantasies may become a reality. Unfortunately, there is not any actual theoretical support at this point.”

Dudian nodded in agreement. His father had often told him that scientific truth required rigorous attitude. Everything had to be based on the experiments, scientific truths and empirical knowledge rather than whimsical inner fantasies. Even in the old times when there was a variety of ‘magical’ things, they were based on a certain scientific theory rather than fantasies.

Because the creator has not really carried out the relevant experiments, most of the propositions were close to ‘experimental guesses’ which were close to fantasy-based novels.

Thus, submission of a rigorous and qualified experimental speculation was not an easy task.

However, Dudian was still very excited. It may be difficult for another, but for him it was simple. As long as he copies few things from the contents of the super-chip would be more than enough for him. After all, there are lots of genuine scientific and technological formulas stored in it.

However, the premise that he had to overcome the problem of electricity.

Dudian and Mouse checked out other booths for a long time. Later on, Mouse noted that it was getting late and there was not much which could help them out with their experiments. So they left the dark underground market.

The sun in the sky had faded. Gray radiation clouds were covering the moon. So the curfew time would approach.

Dudian and Mouse parted ways, each going towards their house.

In the blink of an eye, another three days went by.

Using his own alchemy station in the lab, Dudian began to study the production of yellow phosphorus matches. After three days of consecutive experiments, he had a big harvest. He had mastered the initial manufacturing method. In fact, producing a match was nothing difficult. It was the same as gunpowder. The formula was

very simple. But the birth of early powder was obtained by the alchemists of the old times through an accident. Before that, no one would have expected that mixing few kinds of materials together would explode.

Many great inventions were often found after a coincidence.

It was the day Dudian had to report to hunter headquarters.

Jura and Gray had not yet dismissed their work in the residential district so they were still staying in there. They didn't follow Dudian to the commercial district as they were not anxious to move. After all, they had grown up here and there were many acquaintances that they had to say farewell to before moving out.

Da da da!

Dudian took the consortium's carriage to a remote suburb of the commercial district.

Several silent castles quietly stood here, surrounded by the mountains. The carriage stopped in front of one of the castles.

Dudian checked the dark environment. He didn't think that hunter headquarters would be in such a gloomy place. However, it was a good fit with the life of hunters who had to go through some rough stuff outside the giant wall.

"Please." Said the coachman respectfully while jumping out of

the carriage.

Dudian followed behind him.

Both of them walked by the hillside into the castle. The castle's door was opened as they reached it. A youth in a black suit came out smiling at Dudian: "Are you the recruit from the reports, Dean?"

"Yes."

"Come with me." The youth turned and walked into the castle. Dudian followed him and the castle door slowly closed.

They walked along the gravel path and reached the castle's lobby. It was dimly lit. A huge painting of a woman hung on the wall. Dudian's had seen the same woman's picture alongside with a man in Dayton's office in the scavenger's headquarters. He was surprised and curious at the same time but didn't ask about the identity of the woman.

"You have been already registered. So from the moment, you join us today you have to fulfil your duties as the hunter of the Mellon consortium. Do you know that the highest goal is to safeguard the interests of the consortium?" The youth said to Dudian.

"I know," said Dudian and glanced at his shoulder. However, he didn't see the medal, which identified him as the official hunter.

Youth noticed Dudian's eyes so he said: "I'm an associate trainee. By the way, even if you have magic marks, you are still considered as a hunter in training. Even if the other trainee hunters aren't as strong as you are, you will still be trained by the consortium."

"Trained by the consortium? " Dudian was puzzled. "Not in the hunter school? "

The youth smiled: "I had long heard about you. The consortium was going to arrange for your training in the hunter school, but you have magic marks now. So your physical strength is better than other people. However, there is unified training in the hunter school and they can not give you a double standard alone. That's why you will be directly trained by the consortium instead of entering the hunter school."

"But you shouldn't be worried as the consortium's training content was basically copied from the hunter school. It's roughly the same and you should have thought about and chosen your path by now. So you only need to have a special training."

"Of course, you may study the abilities of the other positions to have a better understanding of the hunting process."

Dudian saw that there was nothing that he could do since the top have set the program for him so he could only follow the orders.

"What career did you choose?"

“Archer.”

“Remote position. The consortium is indeed lacking archers, but there are not many people who are talented with bows and arrows. I hope you have good talent in this area otherwise, it would be difficult to get to the peak.” Youth informed Dudian.

Dudian’s heart beats accelerated as he heard the youth talk. He remembered his earlier shooting experience which was not fruitful at all.

“First, we are going to test all aspects of your talents.” The youth smiled and said: “We should go to the training ground.” He pushed open the door to a hall. There was a wide space behind the door. All kinds of training props, such as arrows, wood, shaking horses and a cage with the sharp swords were inside. Dudian sweated a bit at the sight.

“Since you want to be an archer, first we are going to see how good is your shooting talent.” The youth went towards the arrow target and waved over by motioning to Dudian to move over.

Chapter 97 - Two

“Use a few arrows and give your best.” The youth brought out a black bow and arrows from a column and handed them out to Dudian while encouraging him.

Dudian reached over and grabbed the bow. It was slightly lighter than the original hunter bow. But it would still be very heavy for most scavengers. He took out the arrow from the quiver and pulled the string. He aimed at the distant target.

The target was 30 meters away. The sharp arrow sped away and hit the target. It didn’t hit the heart but deviated almost half the way.

“Very good. Have you practiced before?” The youth looked at him as he was surprised.

Dudian nodded: “A few days.”

“A few days……” The youth whispered and nodded slightly. He handed out a black strap: “You should cover your eyes. Let’s see how you shoot blindly.”

Dudian nodded. He grabbed the bow after being blindfolded. He mentally searched for the location of the previous target’s position. Although he could use the sense of smell to help him easily find the target, he avoided doing so. He wanted to know what he was capable of. Was his talent as an archer good enough?

Whoosh!

An arrow rapidly shot past and nailed the target.

Dudian took off the strap and saw that the arrow had nailed to a similar location as his previous shot. The deviation was not significant.

“It seems that you have quite the talent as an archer.” There was a trace of a smile on the youth’s face as he spoke: “Although your constitution is over the top but it is extremely rare to get such results after a few days of practice. You should give best efforts maybe you will be the second hunter to reach the silver level as an archer.”

“Did a hunter reach the silver level in archery in the consortium?” asked Dudian.

“Well, there is a total of eight hunters who are silver level in the consortium. Two knights, three warriors, two scouts and one archer.” The youth continued: “There are few who choose to be an archer. Mainly because of poor combat capability. If there is no help to contain the prey, it is very difficult of archers to hunt. Most of them are too dependent on the team. Therefore, it’s rare for an archer to move up. You got to have excellent skills.”

“Archers have poor individual combat capability?” Dudian could not help but glance at him. His choice was based and fancied because in his perspective the archers had the most individual

preferences while hunting. So their combat capabilities had to be the best?!

However, he'd agree that archery skills were hard to amass.

After all, the warriors and knights often fought with monsters in the front so their abilities improved very fast. But the archer's were supported from the back. Practice makes perfect' didn't apply to them much like the other professions.

"Let's try your talent in other professions." The youth came up with Dudian to the second area. There were few wooden puppets in here. All kinds of different weapons were placed next to a shelf. There were swords, iron whips, hammers and other weapons of different length. Except for the spears. The spears were the exclusive symbol of the Knights.

"Attack the wooden puppets with different weapons until you break them. And find one which is suitable for you." The youth laughed.

Dudian nodded. He picked up the sword, came towards the wooden puppet, and began to hack it.

He felt awkward and uncomfortable as he continued to hack it many times.

Dudian immediately knew that the sword was not suitable for him so he replaced it with the dagger.

Relative to the sword, daggers are smooth. But he put it down to change it as there was no force behind a dagger. It would tire him down.

He tried other weapons. Iron whip, hammer, swords... One by one Dudian tried all of them. Ultimately, he felt that daggers and swords were more comfortable to be used by him rather than the other weapons. The youth also graded his performance and came to the same conclusion after the evaluation.

“Your warrior talent is also good, but your archer talent is even better. Let’s look at your knight talent.” Youth said.

Knights were totally different from the knights of the military. Although the fighting was similar but the knights of the hunter headquarters were more important as they fought outside the giant wall. They would undergo a rigorous examination and will be awarded the Order of the Knight. They are purely focused on combat outside the giant wall.

Dudian sat on a dummy horse and held a spear. It was constantly waving and he felt very awkward.

The youth looked and shook his head. He took Dudian for the last test.

A Scouts main ability was to hide and escape in time. There was a cage which had swords and spears in it. It was shaking and making all the weapons inside to move. There were no particular rules and

everything depended on person's reaction speed to determine if he was up to the job.

"Put this on." The youth handed a heavy armor suit to Dudian.

Dudian immediately put on the armor.

He went into the cage. He was encircled by swords and spears. The cage began to shake.

Dudian quickly dodged as his eyes swept around to check the motion of the weapons. There was a silver light caught his eye, so he quickly bent to dodge the stab. Everything was based on his instinctive reactions to the surrounding situation.

Nevertheless, there were two or three times that he was stabbed. There was the protection of the black armor which resulted in no injuries.

Soon, the test ended.

The youth opened the cage: "Geez! I did not think you have such a sensitive skills. Although your constitution has been modified because of the magic marks, but to have such a good reaction is awesome. You should switch to being a scout. Because of your latent, you can be a silver hunter very early on. After so many years of my experience, you are totally in top three of the scout talents that the consortium was able to grab. No, the top two!"

Dudian did not expect to get this evaluation. He was in joy, but it was not enough to change his mind.: “I still like to be an archer. I would want to kill the enemy from 1000 meters away.”

“This..... Okay.” Youth sighed in regret. He didn’t insist, as it was only a simple test. People could show some talents, but it was not entirely correct. Many people that were not good at first would improve later on. He had seen many examples such as that. Moreover, the key to everything was the interest shown by the hunter towards the occupation. That’s why consortium didn’t mandatory choose the occupation and let the hunters make the choice optionally.

“Although your archery and scouting talents are high, but do not be complacent. Next, you will be trained by the consortium and will be given a year to become a true hunter. ” Youth earnestly said: “Your training time will be only one-third of the other trainee hunters, but you have magic marks and all aspects of your physical condition have been enhanced. After a year, the consortium will send you over the giant wall to hone you in real combat, if you aren’t good enough by then.”

“However, you are more aware of the dangers of the world outside the giant wall than other trainees. So give good efforts. If you are lazy today, tomorrow you will be your dead.”

Dudian faced the youth and nodded: “I know.”

“Well, let’s go to the hunter training field. ” Said the youth.

Chapter 98 - Thousand Arrows

The Archers' training field was located on the other side of the castle near the river. It was a very wide place with nothing but grass. At the moment, there were five figures standing there. They had bows and arrows. The targets they shot at were 100 meters away from them.

Four of them were men while the fifth was a woman. Each had two servants by their sides waiting to deliver arrows or other needs.

The youth came to the venue and patted his palms. Five of them stopped and turned to look over.

"I'm here to introduce a new companion to you. Actually, in a sense your predecessor. " Said the youth as he pointed over to Dudian: "His name is Dean and he will be training with you from today onward."

All five of them checked Dudian. The first impression was handsome while the second was quiet.

"Instructor, he is a newbie right? How come he is going to be our predecessor? " One of the white skinned youth's frowned.

The youth smiled: "Dean used to be a scavenger but accidentally got the magic marks. He is a worthy hunter, but lacks vocational skills. He will study here for a year to graduate and naturally will be your predecessor unless you can finish your training before he

graduates. ”

All of them were surprised, they couldn’t help but take few more glances at Dudian.

The youth came towards a vacant shelf: “This is your position. Because of your physique, you have to shoot at least a thousand times before your training is over. You won’t be able to eat before you finish your training. So when a thousand shots are finished, then you end the training for today.”

Dudian nodded. He knew about the cruelty of the world outside the giant wall more than the others. So his purpose in training was not to simply complete the task given by the instructors, but to improve his own survival skills.

“For the first seven days, I won’t require anything but shooting 1000 times a day. However, afterward, there will be requirements such as exact hits.” The youth’s previous easy-going attitude had changed.

Dudian nodded.

The youth had apparently arranged for two young servants stand before the vacant track in advance. One of the servants handed over the bow with difficulty to Dudian while the other got the arrows ready.

Dudian took the heavy bow as it was lighter than a feather. He

aimed and started to shoot immediately.

The youth got bored with watching so he said to Dudian: “If there is anything you need tell those two. They are the servants who are responsible for catering your needs during the training.”

Dudian nodded slightly and continued to shoot.

The initial training was only repeated archery. Its aim was to improve the accuracy of the arrows. It was the most important way of an attack by archers. Because of an error, it may lead to companions tragic deaths in the claw of the monster. Therefore, the requirements regarding the accuracy were almost at the point where they wanted to archer to metamorphose with the bow and arrows.

13-year-old boys who was standing next to the Dudian looked at him curiously. He wanted to know what kind of powerful effects would the magic marks have.

Soon, the boy was disappointed at Dudian’s archery level was worse than him. After 10 consequent shots, Dudian hadn’t successfully hit the target even once. All of them were off target.

“It seems that hunter’s specialty is nothing more than physical buff, nothing special.” The boy wasn’t concerned about Dudian anymore as he continued with his own archery training.

Dudian repeatedly shot the arrows. He gradually grasped the

feeling after dozens of the arrows shot. He was able to understand the visualization of the target, grasping the distance with the actual position, the deviation of the arrows, injection of strength, the deviation of arrows, the angle changes and many other things as he practiced.

It would be extremely difficult to shoot a target 100 meters away in the old days. But Dudian and the five trainee hunters were not the same as ordinary people from the old days. Dudian knew that the trainees have received ‘blessings’ as they could easily pull the bowstrings.

The more you were able to pull the string the more benefits there were. First of all, you would be able to shoot farther. The second was that the accuracy would be higher.

The fundamental principle, the closer you shoot, the easier it is to hit.

“If an ordinary person shot fifty meters the arrows would decline as the strength weakens. Moreover, because of the airflow, there will be a deviation from the target. But in my hands, this heavy bow will have the same effect when the arrow reaches 80 meters as if it was 10 meters away from me. So the arrow will still be in a heyday of strength. Stronger a bow, much better it will withstand the tension. It seems I will need a good bow!” Dudian fumbled with the feeling of shooting but also thought of the future plan.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

He constantly shot the arrows while the servant at the side would help to fill the basket.

After two hundred arrows, Dudian's target hitting rate was significantly improved. Basically, he would hit two out of 10 times. But because of his improved physique, once he was skilled enough the target rate would increase rapidly.

However, it was the first stage and the target was entry level. So difficulty would increase as the time passed!

The boy next to him, took a break. Unintentionally he caught a glimpse of Dudian's target. He was stunned as 30 of Dudian's shots had already nailed onto the target. However, at the same time, the boy had only shot 160 arrows. Even if Dudian was faster than him, but there was a small gap. So even though Dudian couldn't be compared with him, but his skill was improving at an astonishing rate and was more than enough to reach the instructor's requirements.

"Change targets," Dudian said.

A servant immediately put on a black armor suit and carefully ran over to renew the target.

Dudian didn't take a break and continued to shoot.

He made a shot and it hit the target.

Dudian shot out and once again hit the target.

Dudian continued shooting.

Soon, five out of ten arrows were hitting the target. Although three out of five arrows are hitting the outermost edge of the target, but the results were very good.

Dudian thought of the undead outside the giant wall. He narrowed his eyes and aimed the target's head as it was the deadest part of the undead.

After four hundred continuous shots, Dudian felt soreness in his arms. He stopped to rest so that his arms could slightly restore.

Soon, at dusk, the sun went down.

Dudian had shot eight hundred arrows. However, his successful hitting rate was declining as the soreness in his arms increased each shot. He kept shooting as he was purely exercising his arms and getting the feeling of shots.

At this time, the five trainee hunters had already completed their respective tasks and were panting because of exhaustion. They said a few words to Dudian before leaving.

Dudian stood as the sun set. There were drops of sweat dripping from his face as he continued to shoot. After every shot, a voice emerged from his heart, advising him to stop and rest. However,

every single time he would think of the undead and the beasts outside the giant wall. He would think about their ferocious appearance and about the helpless feeling that he got when he was chased after by them. Then his blood would boil, and he would continue to shoot.

Inertness is innate, but insistence is your choice.

Chapter 99 - Over-Training

Dudian still had his bow and arrows. Each pull was extremely difficult, even painful, but he still shot an arrow. The two servants who stood beside Dudian looked at each other in amazement. They had given him the 57th basket of the arrows. Each basket had twenty arrows in it so he had already gone past the 1000 arrow mark given by the instructor.

“Your excellency, your one thousand arrows task for today has been completed.” One of the servants hesitated for a moment but interrupted Dudian’s training to remind him the instructor’s task.

Dudian said: “I know, continue to change the arrows.”

After finishing a basket he continued to pull the bow to shoot.

He was too tired so he took some time to rest and to restore some strength to be able to continue to shoot.

It was eight o’clock when Dudian’s arm shook as he couldn’t pull the bowstring anymore. He knew that he had to stop so he asked the young servant who was next to him: “How many arrows?”

“One thousand two hundred and ninety arrows,” replied the servant.

Dudian took a breath as he thought in his mind: “The difference is ten arrows to round it up.” He intended to rest for a while.

After the intermittent rest, Dudian spent a quarter of an hour of effort to finally shoot another 10 arrows. He was satisfied and ready to leave.

At this time, the instructor came over and asked in surprise tone: “Have you finished the task?”

“It’s done,” Dudian gasped.

The instructor looked at two servants who were close-by and they nodded slightly. They knew that Dudian was not fooling anyone. The youth smiled and said: “It’s time to rest then. These one thousand arrows were based on your physical stamina. Others have begun from three hundred arrows of everyday shooting and now have reached eight hundred arrows every day. After all, they have a weaker physique than yours. So we will gradually increase the amount in your training. Don’t neglect and be lazy! You got me?”

Dudian nodded.

“Go back and have a good rest.” The young instructor waved his hand to dismiss him.

Dudian handed the bow and arrow to the servant as he turned away from the lawn. He was so tired that both of his arms were slightly trembling.

He had to sleep at a place arranged by the consortium which was in the vicinity of the castle. Dudian went to the dining room. He knew a hunter's life was totally different from the life of a scavenger. Scavengers are going through hard training, life in poor conditions and eat poor food.

It was totally different for hunters. As long as the daily tasks were completed, the other aspects were very helpful.

A chef was ready to cook meals casually anytime before 9 pm. Moreover, there was no limit to how much you could eat.

Dudian arrived very promptly at 8.30. There was a freshly fried steak and a sharp-tongued foie grass ready for him. It was an aristocrat's favorite food.

After eating, Dudian returned to the room arranged by the young instructor to sleep.

The room was independent (not-shared) and very spacious.

The night quickly went by. The next day Dudian woke up on time and came to the hall below the castle. He saw lots of children around the age same as him. He saw the trainee archers there too.

"Good morning." The boy saw Dudian and frankly greeted him: "My name is Texon. I heard you came back late last night. The first day is very hard. Actually, they gave you 1000 arrows to complete. Indeed the people with magic marks have terrifying

requirements.”

“You’ll also get magic marks,” Dudian said politely.

The boy’s mouth was upturned into a smile but he didn’t say anything. He said goodbye to Dudian as he went over to get his breakfast.

Dudian also stood in the queue to get the breakfast. After a long night of rest, he still felt a sore feeling from his arms. He knew that today’s practice will be much harder.

After breakfast, Dudian directly came to the training area. The other five haven’t arrived yet, the servants weren’t here either. Though Dudian ignored all of it.

After about a hundred arrow shots, he saw the other five coming over. The young instructor was very free. As long as they completed the tasks given by him, he wouldn’t get to force them to train. It was up to them to arrange and manage their time.

They greeted Dudian and began to train.

The day-to-day life was extremely boring for children of this age because of only having a single training course. But Dudian was patient as he was aware of it and had the first-hand experience of the brutality and destruction in the world outside the giant wall. The desire for strength was getting stronger with each arrow.

This desire had overcome all the other interests that could bring him joy and fun.

It didn't take long for the day to end.

The young instructor had come several times to see the recruits train. He guided them with the basic positions of the archery, especially the way their shoulder, arms and other parts of the body played a role while shooting. However, he left as soon as giving them tips and tricks.

By eight o'clock in the evening, Dudian's arms were cramping again. He had to stop as he had done more than the task asked him to do. However, today he barely passed twelve hundred arrows which compared to yesterday was a hundred arrows less. The main reason was that he had over-drafted yesterday and the after-effects were still felt within his muscles today.

Dudian went back to eat dinner and sleep without doing anything at all.

The fourth day, Dudian still went back at 8 o'clock at night.

Moreover, the number of arrows shot had increased to 1500 arrows. After a good rest at night, his arms ache had gone and his body began to gradually adapt to the new conditions. By the fifth day, the number of arrows shot had reached 1600 arrows.

Because of high-intensity training, Dudian's body adjusted

quickly.

The target hitting rate was twice as high than previous results. Almost all ten arrows were hitting the target. Only one or two out of ten arrows would deviate from the target. Of course, these odds applied to the first few hundred arrows. As he shot more the lower the target rates become.

The other five recruits were surprised at his improvement in just a few days.

Dudian's improvement had left them to be more competitive. They took the training more serious as they wanted to catch up with Dudian at least with the hitting rate.

In a blink of an eye, a week has gone by.

Dudian's number of shots had increased to 1800 arrow a day.

"You should've adapted by now so from today onward your daily shooting requirement shall increase to 1500 arrows!" The young, instructor spoke in cold and strict tone: "Moreover, the arrow that hit the target must reach 300!"

Dudian nodded but didn't say anything. In fact, by now the number of arrows that reached the target had increased to 500. Almost double the amount set by the instructor. However, he didn't care much about the tasks set by the instructor as his goal was beyond his own limit. He wanted to squeeze himself to the

limit!

As for the completion of the tasks set by the instructor, he didn’t consider them as hard at all.

Chapter 100 - To The Extreme

Hard training continued.

Another seven days went by.

The young instructor seemed to set a seven-day period as a stage. On the eighth day of the archery training, he once again increased Dudian's indicators. The number of arrows he had to shoot increased to 1600 while the hits on the target had reached 400.

This time he didn't directly increase it to 500 as if taking into account the physical limits of Dudian's body. According to their previous studies and assessments, the limit for a hunter's physique was two thousand arrows. So from their perspective, completing 1500 arrows was a very difficult task.

His assessment was derived from a variety of information and seemed very accurate on the surface. But he didn't know that when he set the task, Dudian had already reached 2080 arrows.

And, this record was immediately broken in the next day, reaching 2112 arrows!

However, after this, it seemed that he had hit the physical limit as the quantity didn't increase as fast as before. His target rate had reached 700 arrows. In other words, he could continue to hit the target for first seven hundred arrows straight!

This was a good indicator as it meant that he was an entry level archer.

However, it was only just the entry level of archery. As shooting is stationary and the target area was larger. If he wanted to accurately hit a target in the head or in the heart of a smaller range, the difficulty would rise.

Arrows continuously flew out. Most of them hit the target while three arrows hit the red mark.

Dudian's actions were stable as his sore, tired arms from yesterday had recovered after a night's rest. His body has been fully adapted to such a high-intensity training.

The other five trainees joined him on the training ground after he had finished shooting two hundred arrows.

Dudian's rapid progress has impressed the other five. However, they still thought that the only reason for Dudian's performance were his magic marks. They felt envy and were a bit jealous.

It didn't take long for the young instructor to join them. He had always been easy-going as he looked at Dudian and chuckled: "Today, it's been a month that you have been training here. I believe that your arm has been able to adapt to the training because of the tasks that I have given you for the last month."

Dudian stopped and looked at him.

“Next, I’m going to teach you a few bow shooting skills. If you can master them you can be considered truly qualified as an archer!” The young instructor smiled as he picked up a black bow and a few arrows from the shelf. He said to Dudian: “Look carefully, this trick is called ‘alignment shooting'”

His fingers loosened and string ejected the arrow.

The arrow pierced into the middle of the heart of the target.

Dudian looked back at the young instructor but heard another arrow hitting the target. He was stunned to see the there is another arrow which had pierced the exact same point.

“You didn’t see it.” The young instructors smiled: “The so-called aligned shooting is firing the arrows in rapid bursts without a pause. The difficulty of this trick is to be stable and fast. Both arrows have to maintain a line. It can be lethal as if you meet a monster with strong defense, then the first arrow would tear the scale, the second arrow would pierce the flesh and blood while the third arrow will be able to take its life!”

Dudian looked and nodded: “I got it.”

“I’m going to give you half a month to master it.” The young instructor spoke in a cold tone: “If you can’t grasp it within the given time-frame a hellish training will be waiting for you!”

Dudian nodded slightly, that he had understood him.

“Remember, the key to this trick is stability. You got to be as stable as you can while pulling the string! ” The young instructor said again as to remind him.

Dudian saw in detail that the arrows were virtually shadowing each other. Almost at the same time when the first arrow was shot, the instructor’s hand was already grasping the second!

Dudian also began to practice this method.

However, he soon felt the difficulty. First of all, when he wanted to do the same as the instructor, he wasn’t able to grab the arrow as fast as he wanted. Occasionally he would catch them but in that case, his speed would slow down and won’t be able to ‘burst’ the way instructor showed.

The young instructor saw that Dudian was practicing and turned away to leave.

Dudian repeatedly practiced.

Another day passed.

He completely immersed himself in shooting direct arrows instead of practicing the way of ‘aligned shooting.’: “How many arrows were shot today?

“Two thousand five hundred and thirty arrows.” The servant replied.

Dudian was surprised as the number of arrows shot by him three days ago was around two thousand three hundred and fifty arrows. Today, he had reached two thousand and five hundred arrows. However, he seemed to be reaching the physical limits of his body.

“Too much input, but did not feel tired at all.” Dudian suddenly saw his fingers had worn blisters and a bit of watery liquid as blood flew out. He wrapped them and went back for dinner.

The next day.

Dudian, as usual, came early to continue to practice aligned shooting.

Dudian had more understanding about the aligned shooting after he did a number of times of exercises.

“The rapid shooting of the arrows. Although the continuous two arrows and even the three arrows are highly lethal but the shortcomings are obvious. Shooting rapidly will lead to the weakening of the strength each arrow will give. The real damage caused by the three arrows wouldn’t be fatal. This is not as good and effective as the normal method. Although it was slow in comparison to aligned shooting, but arrow’s strength and damage potential were much higher.”

“Moreover, an individual’s energy is limited while practicing aligned shooting takes too long and strains on brain power as there is much concentration to be taken into account. At the end of the day, I would be mentally exhausted.”

He decided to go to the extreme!

He had to achieve the ultimate.

Although aligned shooting looked good, fancy and seemed powerful but Dudian felt that it wasn’t worth wasting energy to study the technique. He must excel in the most destructive way which was the normal method that had higher penetrative power and more vital.

Dudian abandoned the practice of aligned shooting and continued to repeat the previous basic archery.

Moreover, he didn’t blindly pursue a number of shots made but instead focused on how to make each arrow’s destructive power even more.