THE DARK KING

BOOK 03

Ancient Xi

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The Dark King

(黑暗王者)

by

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(古羲)

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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Chapter 201

Alex and Abel had an ugly look on their face as they looked at Vick who was taken away. For two days they tried to mobilize all their connections, but didn't expect that eventually, they wouldn't be able to change the outcome of the judgment.

Abel recovered his eyes. His middle-aged body was trembling. He looked at Alex.: "Father doesn't worry. I will take care of this. He would be released on bail as soon as possible."

Alex sit down. It was as if he got old in an instant. He slowly shook his head and spoke in a low tone.: "It's useless. He was charged for killing a deacon. He won't be released on bail. The magistrate will try every means to advance his crimes and execute him as soon as possible."

Abel slightly clenched his fists as he heard Alex's words. He painstakingly cultivated and nurtured his son to present. He was planning to make him the next chief of the Milan family. Now the kid ended up in prison. How could he be so willing to depart with Vick?

The old Deacon hit the hammer.: "We are beginning the second case which is related to the Milan family's Longshan ruby theft case. Mr. Dean, please come out!"

Alex and Abel were preparing to leave. But the Alex was startled when he heard the old deacon's words. The Longshan Ruby theft? When was their family's jewel stolen? How come he didn't know?

“The Longshan Ruby was stolen?” Alex couldn’t help but look at Abel.

Abel shook his head: “No … ” Suddenly he thought of the small matter that happened years ago. He had almost forgotten about the issue. At this time, Dudian entered the seat while his pace was calm and there was a smile on his face. It was as if he was entering a grand banquet.

“It’s him?” Alex was stunned as he saw Dudian. He had a positive impression about the boy. He looked at Abel.: “What the hell is going on?”

Abel whispered: “About three years ago when the Burong family and our family were getting ready for the marriage their daughter declined the offer. Rudolph’s daughter had taken a liking towards a civilian hunter kid. Rudolph didn’t want to trouble her daughter but wanted to break apart the relationship. He asked me to do so that as if the kid had stolen our Longshan Ruby. We paid a bit to Deacon Huey to make sure that the boy was thrown to Thorn Flower Prison and put him into an execution list for a few years later.”

Alex hadn’t intervened with the family business for a long time, so he wasn’t aware of the details.: “So, why did Rudolph’s daughter didn’t marry? Didn’t she believe you? ”

Abel sighed. “She believed. To make her believe in Rudolph, we paid a lot to Deacon Huey to make the judgment. The deacon’s

reputation was high so that no one would suspect anything. I didn't expect that his daughter would be so stubborn. No one could persuade her. In the end, she said that she would work as a judge and didn't want to marry. "

Alex heard his explanation: "It was an excuse! But it is also strange that Rudolph's daughter has such a temper. She is not worthy of our family." Alex looked back at him. "Did he get out on bail? Who is so bold and daring to bail the boy? Scott consortium?"

Abel shook his head slightly and said in a low tone: "The Ryan family from our consortium."

Alex looked back at him. "They were a brilliant family once upon a time, but now are on a decline. I didn't expect that they haven't learned their lesson. The hair has not healed, and they want to use the claws?"

The deacon looked at Dudian.: "What is the reason for the appeal? What evidence?"

Dudian nodded: "They said that I had stolen Longshan Ruby from the Milan family. As far as I know the gem is closely guarded by the knights of the Milan family. Moreover, at that time I was just a junior hunter and was dispatched by the consortium to take a task outside the giant wall. Many people in the consortium can prove this point if you do the investigation. Moreover, I was kept for seven days for infection check as I came back. There are medical records for that. The thing is that I was told the ruby was found in my house. How can I steal the ruby and bring it back to my house when I was outside the giant wall?"

The old deacon replied.: “Yes, let me see.” He beckoned to the knight who was next to him.: “Bring me the evidence of the investigation.”

The knight nodded and left. A moment later he brought back a roll of information.

The old deacon used a magnifying glass to check the information.: “Yes, you have been kept in the zone for infection check. Moreover, your peers have confirmed that indeed you were outside the giant wall.”

Abel’s face sank. He stood up.: “Mr. Deacon. Even if he was outside the giant wall, it does not prove that he hasn’t stolen the ruby. We found it at his residence. The evidence is conclusive!”

The thin old man looked at him.: “So, he stole it when he was outside the giant wall?”

Abel was stunned.

Dudian sneered.: “The patriarch of the Milan family argues that I stole their family ruby. I was just a junior hunter. How could I steal a tightly guarded ruby? Moreover, the moment I had gone outside the giant wall there was no news regarding the theft of Longshan Ruby on any newspaper. There should be some news about it! If the various new agency archives are checked. The deacon should know that the Milan family has never reported that their ruby was lost.”

Abel's face changed slightly. Indeed, at the time Dudian was only a small character, so they didn't elaborately plan when they framed him. They weren't planning to give Dudian any chance to be interrogated.

They have forgotten about this matter as the years has passed. Now Dudian was released on bail. But it would be difficult to patch the holes from three years ago. As Dudian had said through a normal search, everyone would know that the ruby was not lost and no news about that matter appeared in newspapers.

"We have found it and did not report it." Abel continued.

Dudian sneered: "Found? How long did it take to find it? If we take out the task time when I was outside the giant wall, then there is still seven days within the check up zone. How long did it take you to find the Ruby?"

Abel's face was gloomy. It was the first time he saw Dudian face to face. Originally the kid looked modest on paper, but he found the boy a bit unusual as he faced him now.

"I have forgotten, but it should be found quickly," Abel answered cleverly and did not give a clear date or time to prevent Dudian to find the relevant people to investigate the loopholes.

"You have forgotten, but some people remember." Dudian slightly sneered.: "You said that it was found in my home! I was directly escorted to a cell, then directly transferred to Thorn

Flower Prison. I was not interrogated!”

Abel knew that there would be loopholes that would be investigated by the magistrate.

“The case was already investigated, and your sins were brought up by the deacon. Don’t make any nonsense.” Abel didn’t give up as he tried to give Dudian a negative image.

Dudian saw that Abel tried to throw the blame onto magistrate. His face was cold as he replied.: “The deacon judge by the evidence! You have falsified all the evidence against me!”

The old deacon thought that Dudian would denounce the judgment casually, but didn’t expect him to say those words. He nodded in approval. The old man knew that Dudian was wronged. He didn’t think that a primary hunter would be able to steal the Longshand Ruby. If it were so easy to be accomplished, then Longshan Ruby would be stolen hundreds of times over.

“We will strictly review the matter! But also give you a fair judgment.” The old deacon said.

Abel didn’t say anything. He knew that because of today’s previous situation if he continued to argue he will only lose their demeanor.

“Deacon we have already investigated.” At this time Michelle’s voice echoed out. She had come back with the disciplinary knight

with the sword scar.: “This matter was indeed sentenced with injustice. The deacon Huey didn’t seriously review the case. His students have looked over the case, and deacon Huey had made the negligence when sealing the case.”

The old Deacon understood every as his face had turned ugly.: “I’m afraid there have been misunderstandings. The deacon Huey’s work attitude has always been serious and strict!”

Michelle opened her mouth to say something, but the knight behind her secretly pulled her sleeve and winked at her.

Michelle understood and continued.: “Yes, deacon. This time the main reason is that the Milan family had forged evidence, slandered and framed others.”

The old deacon looked at Abel.: “I need an explanation.”

Abel didn’t expect that there would be disciplinary intervention to such a small case. He knew that he would be unable to cover up anything. Even the money would not be able to block.: “The existence of misunderstandings may be true. We have troubled Mr. Dean. I’m sorry.”

Dudian’s eyes turned cold: “Do you think sorry will be able to solve everything that I have gone through?”

The old Deacon was touched. He looked at Abel: “I will carefully review this. We will make the decision at another date. But before

the Milan family must give compensation to Mr. Dean."

Dudian's face turned ugly. It seems the magistrate wasn't intending on pursuing this matter in depth! He understood that the Milan family belonged to the aristocracy. The deacon Huey's assassination was completely different to his case. He was just a little person, and they wouldn't waste their time to go against such a family for him.

He was silent down.

Fair and just?

Sure enough! He still had to rely on himself!

Chapter 202

Abel immediately understood the meaning behind the old deacon's words: "The deacon says that the matter will be thoroughly investigated. So on behalf of the Milan family, I will give 100 gold coins as compensation in the hope of making up for Mr. Dean's loss."

One hundred gold coins?

Dudian was about to give up, but when he heard Abel's claim, he went crazy: "One hundred gold coins. Can it make up for three years of the sentence in Thorn Flower Prison? Can it make up for my three years of losses? Can it make up for my reputation?"

A cold flashed passed by Abel's eyes. I thought you were a little hunter. What reputation are you talking about? But his face was still calm: "Since Mr. Dean is not satisfied I'm open to listening to you about the compensation."

"When I entered prison, I was the primary hunter. How much is a junior hunter earning in gold coins each year? Does a primary hunter earn 100 gold coins per year? Do you think that I am someone homeless from the slums so that you call such a shabby compensation?"

Abe's face sank and said: "Do not be too insatiable, this matter has not been thoroughly checked out. You still have the identity of a suspect!"

“Is it?” Dudian said coldly: “Then I hope the people from disciplinary committee could investigate until the end. I believe they can find a lot of things!”

Abel’s eyes turned cold as he understood the meaning behind Dudian’s words. His eyes swept of Michelle and the other disciplinary knight. He saw that they didn’t speak and were silent. Abel understood that they naturally would not publicly say, “We will not intervene in this case.” In this case the silence becomes a default. It was an opportunity for Dudian to use as a pressure!

“The magistrate will go through investigation even if you didn’t say” Abel quickly replied: “Out of goodwill I will give you ten times more money. It should be enough for the rest of your life.”

Dudian scornfully looked at him: “I think the patriarch of Milan family is bad at maths. In that case, I’ll make a calculation in your stead. An ordinary primary hunter in addition to hunting material would get gold awards. If you count six tasks per years and the income of lowest five hundred gold coins to highest 100,000 hold coins, and if you add good luck then I could earn 100,000 gold coins!”

“Even if by the lowest income I would get 1500 gold coins for three years. Isn’t your compensation is too ridiculous?”

Abel spoke in anger: “Note your rhetoric! A small civilian dares to speak to me?

Dudian sneered: “Patriarch Abel should grow up. Please note that we are in court! By the provisions of the magistrate, there is no distinction between nobles and civilians in here. The only distinction is you are guilty or not!”

Abel smiled and glanced at Dudian: “I will give you five thousand gold coins. Is that enough to make up for the loss?”

“Five thousand?” Dudian continued: “Five thousand gold coins? Abel patriarch, I just said that ordinary junior hunter’s annual income! It does not mean that this is my yearly income! My magic mark is from juranzhi! My perception and the role I play can’t be ignored in the team. I’m not slightly exaggerating, but it is not even a fraction of my yearly income!”

Abel stared at him in anger: “Mr. Dean, are you trying to blackmail me?!”

Dudian narrowed his eyes: “Blackmail? Would patriarch Abel want to gamble with me? I bet that 5000 gold coins would be a fraction of my yearly income! ”

Abel stared back at him: “Yes, since you are so confident we can make a bet. But the premise is that it must be effective within three years! If you delay the term to ten years, then the hunting efficiency naturally would be high!”

Dudian’s mouth tilted: “Since we are going to bet so big, then if I win your family’s Longshan Ruby will belong to me. What about it?”

Abel flatly refused: “No!” He was worried that other consortiums would secretly help Dudian and he would lose the ruby.

The old deacon said:” According to me, since Mr. Dean was wrong and sent to imprisonment and he was a hunter. So if we count ten thousand gold coins per year, then you should pay thirty thousand gold coins in total.”

Dudian frowned, thirty thousand gold coins? It was not as good as his goal.

Abel was about to say something when Alex cut him off: “So be it. Let the matter go away. We shall give thirty thousand gold coins.” He turned away and left.

Abel looked gloomy. He glanced at Dudian but didn’t say anything. He turned around and left the courtroom.

The judgment was over, and the people dispersed.

Dudian looked at two disciplinary knights: “Thank you two for the help.”

Michelle replied: “Justice does not need to gratitude.”

The other knight glanced at Dudian and turned away to follow Michelle.

Dudian watched them disappear. He turned to Old Fulin: “We should go back.”

Old Fulin sighed in relief: “You scared me! Five thousand gold coins was a lot! I didn’t expect that we can get thirty thousand gold coins. Although this money isn’t much for the Milan family. It’s like plucking a hair from the lion. But for us, it is a huge sum! We are a step closer to hire an underground passage!”

Dudian replied: “We are about to recover some money from the factory too.”

Dudian helped old Fulin to come outside the magistrate and sit in the carriage.

The Ryan castle was bustling with today’s news. Everyone rushed to visit Dudian as all of them were excited about the compensation money. They thought that their best days were coming. They were not aware that the money wouldn’t be used to better their daily lives!

Chapter 203

Pus Avenue. The Magistrate building.

A carriage which had the Burong family insignia stopped at the doorsteps of the magistrate building. The door opened and Jenny slowly came out from the compartment. Sh was wearing an official judge's uniform. She walked upstairs to the second floor. Most of her colleagues saw and greet her.

"Miss Jennifer." Said a co-worker: "I heard you were ill. Are you better now?"

Jenny was ashamed. The decision of taking the leave of absence and the reason was made up by her father.

"I'm good now."

"Jennifer, you are quite early."

Everyone who saw Jenny warmly greeted her.

Jenny looked around to see several colleagues standing together and whispering. She approached them: "Has there been any big case in recent days?"

These people were focused on chatting. The one who noticed

Jenny turned around: “Did you come to work? Aren’t you on leave?”

“Just arrived today.” Jenny looked curiously at several people: “What are you discussing about?”

One of the young judges said: “There are no big cases in our section. However, we were talking about the recent matter that happened on Artemis street. Haven’t you heard? Deacon Huey was assassinated, and his murderer was finally found. It was young master of the Milan family. Geez! You say that these aristocrats are not… … “The person stopped talking as he thought that Jenny too belonged to upper nobility.

Jenny was puzzled: “Why would the young master of the Milan family assassinate deacon Huey?”

“It is not known.” Another young girl shook her head: “It is said that the deacon Huey had helped the Milan family to deal with some shady cases. The family was worried that deacon Huey would expose them and affect their family, so they had secretly assassinated him.”

Jenny was startled: “Deacon Huey has handled so many cases! He was just and strict! How could he help out the Milan family…This … …”

“The sentence has already been given.” The previous youth shrugged his shoulder: “Most people say that deacon wasn’t able to resist the money. After all, deacons are also short on money.”

Jenny couldn't help but say as she heard his words: "Money isn't that important as when we become judges are not we supposed to punish the evil and reign the justice?"

The young girl looked at her and said: "You are a noble! You have never lacked the money from childhood. Naturally, you don't feel the charm of money ... ..." She saw the youth next to her wink, so she immediately stopped. She looked at the youth: "I have to deal with the case! Go away. I'm busy." Then, turned back to her seat.

The others also scattered.

Jenny's face turned ugly as she bit her lips. It was as if she felt a pain in her heart out of nowhere. She quietly returned to her seat, but couldn't afford to get the slightest passion for focusing on work. She thought about a way to recover time, so she glances across the table to see newspapers on colleague's desktop. She approached: "I'll take your newspapers to check."

This colleague saw her and smiled: "Take it."

Jenny whispered "thanks!". She took the newspapers and returned back to her seat.

"Deacon Huey's assassin was sentenced!"

"Vick Milan is in jail. Who is the Milan family's future successor?"

Jenny fingers gently shook as she read the titles on newspaper. She didn't think that murderer turned out to be Vick Milan, who wanted to marry her a few years ago. Although she didn't agree to marry, she had a good impression of him. She didn't expect that such a bright man would make such a heinous thing. He was a knight!

"He had killed deacon Huey's wife ..." Jenny felt pain in her heart as she read the following report. The Knight Hall certified him! How could he do such a cruel thing?

She clutched the newspaper. However, she accidentally saw a word. It was just a glance, but it made her heart beat inexplicably.

She saw a story in a corner.

"The Longshan Ruby of the Milan family was not lost! It was a misunderstanding. The magistrate ruling returned the trainee 'Dean's' innocence. The Milan family has given thirty thousand gold coins as compensation..."

As she read the story Jenny's brain went blank and her mind buzzed! She recovered a long time later! She once again looked at the newspaper. She read it three times to confirm that she didn't see wrongly.

Jenny's body slightly trembled as she remembered the scene in that dark prison three years ago. The despairing boy and his stubborn words at the moment they parted.

“Why should I admit? I have committed no crime!”

“I am not guilty …”

These words echoed in her ears as if she heard them yesterday. She could vaguely able to feel the grief and pain filled in them.

“He was not guilty … ” Jenny’s eyes reddened. Large tears fell out from her eyes and soaked the newspaper. “It was me who wronged him! I didn’t believe in him…” She remembered the sad and desperate mood on Dudian’s face. Pain suffocated her! It was as is a knife was stabbed into her chest.

…

The Ryan Castle.

Dudian and Old Fulin sat at the table and ate breakfast.

“Your report has been written so obscurely. There is no mention of the Milan family’s crime or about you being wronged. Instead, they have focused on writing about the Milan family compensation.” Old Fulin folded the newspapers and shook his head. “The Milan family seems to have spent a lot of money on it.”

Dudian nodded. The assassination of deacon Huey and the Milan family’s involvement was circulated and reported like a storm

within the giant wall. Their reputation was severely affected. This matter was a like a double-edged sword which affects both the Magistrate and the Milan family! But the magistrate was affected slightly while the Milan family got the heavy punch.

As for the influence of the whole aristocracy. It was negligible.

Not all civilians worship aristocrats. There are some who feel deep hatred towards them. All civilians are divided into two categories. However, no matter how much they loved or hated the rich the only option was to endure. They didn’t dare to show their hatred.

Chapter 204

“How’s the match sales? What does the Scott consortium say?” Dudian shut the newspaper and looked at Old Fulin.

“They have been discussing the operation plan after signing the contract. Moreover, they have gone to promote the ‘match’s role in all the industries within the commercial and residential district. The effect of the matches is really good. It is easy to fire. But the only problem is that consumption is too fast, and the price is a little high. The sales in the residential district are not popular, but the performance in the commercial district is over the top. The fame has spread all over the areas in the commercial district. These days all the financial newspapers report about matches all the time! They call it ‘magical fire.’”

Dudian nodded. Scott consortium was able to compete with an old consortium such as Mellon. They had the resources to expand in the market in this short period. Even if the other consortia found alchemists to deconstruct match and find the ingredients to produce it. They would be too late as Scott consortium would monopolize the market. At best the other would be able to seize 10 to 20 percent of the market share.

“How much can we get?” Dudian asked.

Old Fulin laughed: “The monthly statistics for the sales haven’t come out yet, but I guess we will get at least a thousand gold coins every month from it.”

Dudian knew that thousand gold coins per month were a good return from matches. Normally, ordinary citizens would be able to earn that much in their lifetime.

“If we count that and the compensation from the textile mills then in about six months we will be able to accumulate 100,000 gold coins and rent an underground passage!” Old patriarch laughed out loud. Once they leased the passage, then the wealth will flow. He would be able to nurture their scavengers to clean the areas swept by Dudian. The accumulations of funds will be enough to recruit hunters. The gold coins would roll like snowballs.

Dudian sighed as half a year was too long. He would be able to train himself properly as he hasn’t done anything in the last three years. He had to familiarize himself with the skills and upgrade them as soon as possible. That way the extent of his hunting would increase. Or else he would suffer outside the giant wall.

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The Burong family castle. Second floor.

Rudolph had his breakfast. He was sitting on the balcony while the maid kept massaging his shoulders. He tilted his legs and began to read the newspapers from various agencies. He was like a child doing his homework and preparing for school. This routine had to be done every day.

“Someone has framed the Milan family. I do not know who is the

real murderer ...” Rudolph murmured as he read the newspaper. He believed that the Milan family was not stupid to kill the deacon of magistrate. Unless there was a big secret, which he wasn’t aware of!

“Master.” The butler walked in a hurry: “We got a letter from the person who was checking on little miss. She had arrived at magistrate in the morning, but she left soon. She was alone as there were no colleagues with her.”

Rudolph frowned: “Where has she gone?”

“Temporarily we are not sure.”The butler shook his head: “However, it seems the carriage had gone to the west.”

“West?” Rudolph frowned as he thought of something: “Go to the Ryan Castle to bring back Miss immediately! If she shows resistance, force her back!”

The butler understood as he nodded and left in a hurry: “Yes.”

“The little devil!” Rudolph’s face was gloomy. He ordered the maid to bring a cup of hot coffee.

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The Ryan Castle, the training ground.

This training ground was used by knights and squires of the Ryan family for daily training. But it saw Dudian's training site. Dudian's health was nursed back to normal. He had almost healed fully. A servant was adjusting the target while he took a small break. Afterward, he kept shooting the arrows. Most of the time he would hit bulls-eye.

Some of the knights and squires would stay on the training ground to watch Dudian train. Their hearts are full of curiosity as they knew that hunters would go outside the giant wall and fight monsters. The moment Dudian shot the arrows they would cheer for him.

Also, Dudian has let the butler help him build spiral arrows with double bundles. The arrows were made of lead. They were denser than usual arrows. Moreover, heavy iron arrows would shoot further and had more destructive power.

Although the cold weapons were dominant in this era, everything wasn't about skills. It was a bit more complex. In a sense, it was not just arm strength, but the quality of the bow, string, arrow's weight, accuracy, distance and other stuff that influenced the quality of shots.

Dudian repeatedly practiced. Suddenly he heard the servant call out to him: "Mr. Dean, someone is waiting outside for you."

"Who?" Dudian did not stop.

"Miss Jennifer from the Burong family." said the waiter.

Dudian's finger released the string. The arrow shot away and hit the target and shook it.

Dudian slowly put his bow away as he went silent: "Tell her I don't want to meet her."

The servant was surprised. It was the little miss of the Burong family. Everyone knew about the power and strength of the Burong family! She had come to the doorsteps to meet him, but he refused! However, he still nodded and left. The servant knew that he was working for the Ryan family, so he naturally had to obey their orders.

After the waiter left Dudian picked up an arrow, and his fingers gently rubbed it.

A few moments later the servant returned: "Mr. Dean, she said she would wait outside until you meet her."

Dudian slightly frowned. His face was cold as he put down the arrow and turned away from the training ground.

Dudian came all the way to the gate. He saw an exquisite carriage parked outside the manor. A beautiful girl wearing formal uniform belonging to magistrate stood beside the carriage.

Dudian observed the girl from afar. In the past three years, the original childish look had gone. Her face contour was a bit more

mature. She had become more beautiful.

He stared at her for a moment and went straight towards her.

After three years, Jenny once again saw Dudian. In the last three years, the boy had grown tall but thinner. He looked more handsome. But he had a somewhat indifferent temperament. His black eyes were like the darkness of the sky at night. They seemed deep and cold. She looked at Dudian as he came towards her step by step. There was a complex feeling in her heart. There was guilt, sadness also self-blame.

“I’m sorry.” Her eyes reddened as she saw Dudian approach. She whispered: “I read the newspaper. You have been wronged, I … … I’m sorry!” She knew the scale of damage she had done to the boy. She was aware that it couldn’t be recovered with simple words.

Dudian quietly looked at her as he went silent for a moment. He slightly shook his head: “I don’t blame you for that. The past is in the past! Do you think a broken mirror can be repaired back to original? I received your apology, so we don’t owe each other anything!”

Chapter 205

The tears flowed out of Jenny's eyes as she heard his cold words. She tightly clutched at his chest while the sounds of sobbing echoed out: "I know that you can't forgive me for your injury! I-I can't forgive me! But I hope I can make up for you! I will give you all my future! I'll make up for you! Give me a chance! Please?"

Dudian quietly watched the girl who stood in front of him. He was in pain. But everyone would feel heartbroken and couldn't bear the sight if they were in his shoes. He was silent for a long time. He slowly opened his mouth: "I can't make up for some things. I don't have to make up for them. The past is past! You have don't anything wrong. I know you well, so I don't hate you!"

He continued in a cold tone: "I hope you can live a good life from now on. Cherish it!"

"No!" Jenny saw that Dudian was ready to turn back, so she quickly pulled Dudian's arm: "I know I did wrong. Give me a chance for me to make up for it. I want another chance! We were so happy together! We have common ideals... We... "

"Stop!"

A sound echoed from a distance.

Dudian saw a rapidly traveling carriage approach them. A tall man wearing a suit was pointing towards the location where

Dudian and Jenny stood.

Dudian's eyes were cold. He twisted his wrist and broke open from Jenny. He looked at the carriage.

"The little devil! Stay far away from the lady. You are not allowed to get close to our house's little miss!" The middle-aged butler jumped out as soon as the carriage stopped.

"Uncle!" Jenny wiped her tears: "How can you speak like that?!"

There was worry on the butler's face. He looked around her: "He didn't do anything wrong to you? Did he?"

"Uncle, stop the nonsense! He isn't what you think he is!" Jenny said in haste.

The middle-aged butler stood in front of her and angrily stared at Dudian: "Boy, if you dare come close our lady I will break your legs!"

"Don't use the lines you normally use to terrorize the ordinary people. I warn you if you continue to speak, I'll break your legs now!"

The middle-aged butler was stifled for a moment as he heard Dudian's words. However, he turned furious the next moment. But as he saw the chill and determination in Dudian's eyes he calmed down. He suddenly remembers that the juvenile in front of him

was a hunter. If he wanted to break his legs, it would be an easy task. He didn't look at Dudian but turned to Jenny: "Miss, we should go back. The master ordered me to come to pick you up!"

"No, I do not want to go back!" Jenny was angry as she broke away from his grasp.

The middle-aged butler thought of Rudolph's order and directly grabbed Jenny's hand: "Miss if you don't go back with me the master will send knights to take you away!"

"Let go of me. You let go of me!" Jenny lifted her other hand to hammer him. She struggled to break free, but with those slender arms how she could break away?

Dudian looked coldly at the scene: "You better let her go."

The middle-aged butler looked back at him: "Boy, you always confuse our family's little miss."

A cold light flashed pass Dudian's eyes. Bang! The middle-aged man loosened his fingers as a sharp pain came from his chest. He body involuntarily inverted as he dropped to the ground and screamed in pain.

Jenny broke free from the butler's hand and hurried to reach out to Dudian.

Dudian lifted his arm to block her hand. He looked at the middle-

aged butler who was moaning on the ground: “You can keep your legs to take you back home. But remember, if you provoke me once more, no one would be able to take you from my hands! Relay the message to your master that everything that has happened is in the past. If he doesn’t come after me, I won’t be interested in him either.”

The middle-aged butler was angry as he rubbed his buttocks. But he couldn’t do anything as he saw the sword-like stares of Dudian aimed at him.

Dudian looked back at Jenny and said in an indifferent tone: “I would be very grateful to you if you don’t come to disturb me from now on.” He turned back and went to the Ryan Castle.

Jenny stared at his back. She knew that the distance between them was getting bigger with every step that he took. Tears fell, but she didn’t notice them.

...

Dudian returned to the castle. Old Fulin , knights, squires, his children, in short, everyone was dispersed around the windows looking at the scene. Old Fulin looked at the indifferent expression of youth. He knew that everything was complicated: “Are you alright?”

Dudian quietly shook his head.

“The Miss Jenny is like a flower from the greenhouse. She doesn’t understand the true face and cruelty of the world. ” Old Fulin sighed: “I wouldn’t agree if my daughter wanted to marry a hunter. You are still young, and you will find your place in the future. Hopefully, you can get a status of noble. There will be many beautiful and kind girls that you will meet in the future.”

Dudian looked up at him: “If you want to happy, then you need to pay the price. Some pay with their lives! This world is not worthy of me to pay for everything! Giving up my career, ambition, pursuit, even my dignity for the sake of another side. Such a joke! I won’t do it the second time!”

Old Fulin deeply looked at him and sighed: “You are still young so don’t talk about absolutes. All of us are in pursuit of our happiness. Some seek love, some family, some happiness... For me, it is my family, my children. I want to see the Ryan family medal to pass from generation to generation. For this, I’m ready and willing to give up my everything!”

Dudian gazed at him: “But there is something that can’t be bought or paid for. The heart is the most difficult to predict. Wealth and power are stuff that you can get as long as you are willing to pay for everything.”

Chapter 206

In the blink of an eye, three days passed.

The Ryan castle has returned to its calm and peaceful appearance. Everything was orderly manner as usual. Miss Jennifer from the Burong family who came over three days ago had alerted and alarmed everyone in the Ryan castle. But eventually she was taken back by the butler. This matter was published by many news agencies. Some of them were trying to figure out if there was a co-operation between the Mellon and New World consortium.

The training ground behind the castle.

Dudian was learning spiral arrow shots. He had a grasp on method, but actual practice was extremely difficult. Especially the precision of the shots would significantly go down. He was able to adjust it by the next shot, but it meant that on the battlefield it would be hard to switch from one type of the shooting method to the other.

It was not acceptable from Dudian’s perspective. He knew that if he was given enough time to practice he would be able to switch between two different methods. He needs to fully grasp everything. But with the current situation, it was going to take up to six months to accumulate enough gold coins to rent an underground passage. Completely mastering the spiral arrow shot within that term seemed out of touch.

“Is it wrong to use such a method?” Dudian grew suspicious, but as he thought of bullets he was assured that his idea was on the spot: “It has to rotate. If the bullet does not rotate after being shot it will face friction from air resistance. Moreover, it would be slowed down significantly. The rotation is there to stabilize its trajectory!”

“It has to rotate, but the problem is I can’t control the direction of the wind so the arrows goes out of control.” Dudian held an arrow as he was lost in thought. He spun the arrow as his eyes were on its surface. He was confused as he saw slight differences. The ratios were not exact: “Is the spiral pattern not accurate?”

He picked other arrows to check their build. Dudian found that all of them had slight misadjustments. The spiral pattern on some of the arrows were a bit deeper while on the others was a bit larger. He suddenly understood that the spiral arrows weren’t mechanically made through machines but casted by hand. The slight deviations would be inevitable unless the proportion used in forging were exactly the same during the production. But in that case a top blacksmith would be needed to forge the arrows.

It would be very hard to find a top class blacksmith to produce the spiral arrows.

“It seems I wouldn’t be able to practice spiral arrow shots for some time.” Dudian sighed. He had to give up for some time as there was no point in continuing on. He stopped the practice and returned to the castle.

Old Fulin has sent a servant to find and call him to the study

room.

“The Mellon consortium is awake now.” Old Fulin looked at Dudian as the doors were shut.

Dudian’s arm were in pain because of constant practice. However the moment he heard old patriach’s words, Dudian narrowed his eyes and looked at Dudian: “What has happened?”

“Today few customers came over to cancel their orders.” Old patriarch deeply looked at him: “Mellon should have inquired about our new textile machine. Although they still can’t imitate it, but in the future our monopoly on these machines would be taken away. Our money making scheme will be interrupted.”

Dudian nodded: “The deposits should belong to us since the breached the contracts.”

Old Fulin smiled: “Yes! It’s good that we have taken so many orders. Even if they cancel the orders now, but can will earn a lot from deposits. However, it won’t take long before they get the details about new textile machines. Its manufacture means that they will get a bigger share out of this business as their resources are many fold of ours.”

Dudian’s lips curled up: “You shouldn’t be worried about this. Our consortium can’t control the new loom. It is like the matches. Sooner or later they will spread to all three districts. There is no way to keep it in our possession. However, if we sell the technology like we did with the matches, there is an opportunity to earn good

wealth.”

Old Fulin nodded: “I also had this intention, but I wanted to hear your thoughts on the matter.”

“However, this time don’t go less than 3 percent. Of course, if the other side is willing to pay one hundred thousand gold coins in advance then we can evaluate the rate of interest.”

Old Fulin was aware that this new textile technology was the last card in their hands: “I will talk to them. They would be certainly willing to give such an amount. If they replaced all of the old machines with the new ones, then the speed of money making will reach a new phase for them.”

Dudian slightly shook his head: “The potential of the new looms is unlimited however the market is limited. If there is too much output, then the prices will deflate. The demand within the giant wall will have a limit. So after the production level reaches that limit, then extra machines are nothing but scrap. That’s why you don’t ask for too much, but don’t go less than our bottom line.”

Old Fulin was startled: “I would have ignored this if you didn’t inform me.” He felt lucky that he had talked to Dudian in advance.

“You should get to work,” Dudian said.

…

The top conference room in the Mellon Consortium.

More than 20 shadows were sitting behind a huge oval table. Some of them were young while the others had white hairs. Some of them were leaning back in a rebellious manner while the others had a modest posture.

It didn't take long before two figures joined the conference room. One of them was a middle-aged man while the other was an old man. The badges were embroidered on their clothing showed that they belonged to the Mel and Buron family.

"Dear members." Rudolph said as he looked around the crowd. "The reason Geroge and I have called everyone together is that the consortium is ready to launch a new invention. A new type of textile machine. It is an improved version of the old one. I hope that all of you will promote this product in your industries. We need to seize all the markets!"

All the others glanced at each other. One of the old men sitting at the back spoke in a hoarse tone: "As far as I know it has been many years since any new improvements were made to textile machine. Mr Rudolph, this new machine of yours, how much it improve and increase the production? One-third? Twice?"

Rudolph looked at him and smiled: "You should add a zero. Maybe even two zeroes."

All of them were surprised for a moment.

George looked at the old man: “The production can be increased by a hundred or two hundred times with the new loom. In theory, there is no upper limit!”

Chapter 207

“A hundred times, two hundred times?”

Everyone present was shocked because of George’s reply. After a long while a dignified aristocrat lady said: “Mr. George, are you sure that such a machine exists?”

Old man George slightly smiled as he looked at her: “There is no doubt about the productivity of the new textile machine. I have contacted three inventors from the ‘Temple of Elements.’ They are secretly building it. The problem is that we have to react quicker that the other consortiums and fully occupy the market with the new loom.”

Everyone felt great and incredible at such news. They knew that it would be meaningless and pointless for George to deceive them. One of the middle-aged men said: “Firstly we have to contact all the textile mills as soon as possible. They have to get orders right now.”

“Yes.” The attendees of the conference agreed.

“I think with the introduction of this new textile machine we should let the ‘Temple of Elements’ present and honor us as the inventors of the machine. This way the trust that we will get from civilians would increase many folds.” An old man voiced out his opinion.

George shook his head as he looked at the old man: “The invention wasn’t made by our consortium.”

Everyone was stunned and puzzled.

“I believe all of you have heard about the recent application and creation of a new consortium called New World.” George slowly said: “This new textile machine was invented by them. They have submitted the application regarding the invention of the loom to the ‘Temple of Elements.’ At present, we are the first people who got the news regarding the loom. It seems that the New World Consortium isn’t able to swallow and grab over the market.”

Everyone glanced at each other as they heard the news.

“Mr. Rudolph, I have heard that your daughter is quite close with the New World consortium. Why don’t they make a partnership with us?” A middle-aged man asked.

Both George and Rudolph’s face change. Rudolph frowned as he said: “My daughter has nothing to do with the business of the consortium! Moreover, don’t be misled by the newspapers of other consortiums. My daughter knew the hunter as he was recruited by our consortium so when she learned that he was released from prison she had gone to visit him. It’s just an interaction between children that shouldn’t be considered as nothing more than that!”

The middle-aged man shook his head: “Even though it is friendship between children but we are facing a situation where the other consortiums mistakenly believe that we want to

cooperate with the New World consortium."

Rudolph frowned.

A few people saw that the atmosphere was getting stiff. One of them said: "It's better to cut them off and completely take them out of business as we have no intention to cooperate with the New World consortium. I don't know how Old Fulin dared to open a new consortium with the old bones of his. Does he want to return the Ryan family to their glorious old days?"

"Old Fulin is too greedy."

"Pity."

However, there were others who had different attitudes who observed in silence.

George said: "The New World Consortium had taken a lot of textile orders. We have sent people to grab those chances. The only thing that the New World consortium will get would be deposited. We will slowly stabilize the market with the new textile machine and slowly chew at the New World consortium."

"The Scott consortium has been checking us closely. If we make a big mess, then it will inevitably attract their attention. "

George said: "Now as I have convened the matter at hand we have to discuss how to deal with it."

…

Ryan Castle, that night.

The family carriage entered the estate.

Old Fulin got off the carriage with the help of a servant. He entered the estate and saw Dudian sitting in the hall. He winked at Dudian.

Dudian nodded but didn’t urge him to talk about details.

At the moment, family members were waiting for Old Fulin to return so that they could eat dinner. As Old Fulin took off his hat and coat off the crowd got seated.

Dudian and old patriarch went back to Old Fulin’s study room after the meal was finished.

“What happened?” Dudian asked.

“They agreed to pay us two percent of the future deals. However, in the afternoon, it seems they got a whiff of the news. ”

Dudian was relieved: “That’s alright. Did not they want to pay one hundred thousand gold coins?”

“No.” Old Fulin shook his head: ” Even a large consortium such as the Scott consortium can’t decide to give such a big amount of gold coins before discussion held their board of directors. Moreover, they took into account the market saturation so they didn’t give us too much. Tomorrow they will send us people to learn how to produce the new loom. You should give me drawings so that I can present it to them. Maybe they will come over tonight so that they can begin manufacture process.”

Dudian nodded: “Time is money. If their intelligence has gathered information about the new textile machine, then you should know that Mellon Consortium has news about it too.”

“I intentionally revealed hints during the negotiations so that they didn’t have time to consider. They signed the contract on the spot.”

Dudian gently smiled: “How much they are going to give us at first?”

“Ten thousand gold coins.” Old Patriarch smiled: “If we count the thirty thousand from your compensation and other earnings then we have close to fifty thousand gold coins.”

Dudian nodded as everything was within his expectations. Although they had sold ‘matches’ to Scott consortium, but they will have to wait until next month to get the results. The Ryan family businesses were made up of small shops in remote towns, so their revenues weren’t that much. It would take very long time for

them to establish their new business in the market.

“The shares that we will get from textile and match business will be out by the next month. We will see how much we can get.” Dudian said.

“According to my calculation if sales of Scott consortium are good, then at fastest we will be able to raise enough money in three months.”

Dudian was desperate to upgrade his strength so that when once again Mellon Consortium send an assassin he would be able to retort. Although they had two senior knights and the other one was a knight, but his fighting capabilities and strength would be stronger than a usual assassin. If he had the strength, then he would not need to wait until they sent the assassin, but could find the person himself and make sure that no future problems would arise.

“I have to practice a lot so that I can improve my skills,” Dudian said. He knew that his archery skills was stuck at primary hunter level. Unfortunately, the Ryan family was too poor to hire an instructor to teach him. There weren’t books about the methods, so the only way was to hire an instructor to pass the skills.

“I’ll handle the rest. You shouldn’t be worried about business for now and focus on training.” Old Fulin was worried as he looked at Dudian. Although they could rent the underground passage to the outside in few months Dudian was the only hunter hired by their consortium. If something had happened to Dudian outside the giant wall, then the Ryan family would be finished.

Chapter 208

Dudian focused on his practice from the next day on.

He would get up before the dawn and go to the training field to practice archery. As there was no guidance from the instructor, he would practice scattered archery that he had previously learned. He had to improve his arrow pulling speed and aim because of this. His range also had increased to two hundred meters. His rate of successful shots was high. About sixty percent of the shots would hit the target's heart.

The shots would deviate as he practiced for long hours, but there was no off-target shot.

There was 'luck' charasteric of archery. Even an ordinary person would be able to hit the bull's eye two or three times if they made hundred or so shots. But a hunter who would be walking by the edge of death couldn't rely on this 'luck' component. He had to control the unstable factors and make his shots as precise as possible. After 10 days of practice his single shots has stabilized at two hundred meters distance. However, when it came to scattered arrow shooting there would be some which will deviate from the target.

"Scattered shots are more suitable for hunting undead. I have to rely on normal archery if I hunt after large beasts. I can't have errors at important moments!" Dudian was practicing, but at the same time evaluating the options: "The beasts have better hearing and perception in comparison to normal undead. I can fully pull

open this intermediate knight's bow with my current arm strength. Moreover my highest range is 320 meters. It's unfortunate that I can't afford to buy a better bow. Even if I don't pull that bow to its maximum capacity, it would still be better than the one at hand."

"I have to increase my accuracy rate before working on improving my range. If I can't hit all the shots made from 200 meters, then there is no point working on 300-meter shots. Moreover, even if I can make a proper shot at 200 meters, I have to work on making the second and third shot accurately too."

He knew that a good archer had to be accurate. At a long distance, even a centimeter of deviation may change the result. Every point has to be included in the calculation.

"However, achieving such results in a short six months is very difficult." Dudian was very clear about his capabilities, and he knew that he lacked nothing but time.

"I have to increase my successful shot rate to ninety percent before considering to increase my range."

Increasing the rate of successful shots to more than 90 percent is an excellent result. It has to be noted that since the ancient times an archer with 100 percent shots was called strikers. A few people would be a striker even in a large country. Although he was a hunter with better physical strength than an ordinary person, it didn't mean that his perception and talent in archery was better than ordinary people.He was able to achieve excellent results in 100 meters range, but two hundred meters was a different matter.

The difficulty didn’t just double.

Whoosh!

Another arrow hit the target.

Dudian repeatedly pulled an arrow from the quiver put it in the bow and made the shot. The squire standing next to him handed out another bucket of arrows. At first, a normal servant was helping him out. However, as Dudian’s speed was too fast and increased as the time passed, so an ordinary servant wasn’t able to keep up with him. A knight’s squire from the Ryan family was attending him.

The squires were trained and fit. They were more capable than an ordinary person, but even their arms would get sore after helping out Dudian.

“Two arrows to shot a beast in about two seconds. My speed is too slow as the beast wouldn’t be sitting around and… …” as he practiced more, the archery skills were being carved into Dudian’s bones. He would visualize beast in target’s location and try to shoot accordingly.

Soon he finished shooting the target. The servant standing by stepped out to replace the target.

“At first I was thinking about using the gunpowder in arrows to enhance the lethality but not it seems that this approach is

impracticable. The gunpowder will seriously impede the accuracy of shots. Although if gunpowder is tied to the arrow, then there is no need for a precise and accurate shot. But the gunpowder will affect the speed of the arrow. Moreover the destructive power of the arrow will decrease by many folds. It wouldn't be as practical as a normal arrow."

"What could I use in addition to gunpowder to enhance the destructive power of arrows?"

"I'm temporarily unable to use spiral arrow shots. Should I replace the material used to forge the arrows?"

He was constantly pondering about solutions as he shot the arrows.

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

He would start accurately at 6:00 in the morning to practice. He would train for half an hour and go to eat breakfast for exactly 10 minutes. Afterward, he would come back to the training ground to continue his archery practice. In addition to eating and rest, he wouldn't do anything else until 6 o'clock in the evening.

After the archery training Dudian would practice and improve his close combat skills. It was to protect himself from the beasts which could close on him without him being able to perceive their existence. He had to be able to avoid such situations. However, he spent his time on archery the most.

On this day Dudian was practicing archery as usual in the training ground. It hasn't been long that he was practicing when a servant came over: "Mr. Dean, the master is asking for you."

"Ah?" Dudian didn't stop, but asked while practicing: "What's the matter?"

The servant said in a respectful tone: "It seems guests from the Scott consortium have arrived."

Dudian put away the bow and quiver. He went to the castle.

The servants were cleaning the hall as they wiped the dust. The children and grandchildren of Old Fulin haven't woken up yet. He came to the conference room. Old Fulin, the family butler, and three other figures were present in the room. There was a middle-aged man wearing a suit, a knight and a beautiful woman whose identity wasn't known to him. The knight had a badge from Knight Hall on his chest. It seems he was an intermediate level knight.

"We have guests."Old Fulin waved over to Dudian and smiled. Dudian came over to sit next to the table. Old Fulin introduced him: "This is Mr. Dean."

The three turned over to check Dudian. They were a bit surprised as they looked up and down at him.

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“Patriarch, I’ve been told that you have been looking for me.” Dudian came to a stop in front of Old Fulin and slightly bowed according to the ceremony.

Old Fulin replied: “Mr. Charles from the Scott Consortium has come to find you to chat about the new textile machine.”

Dudian had expected Old Fulin to say that so he turned around to the middle-aged man: “It’s an honor to meet Mr. Charles.”

Charles stroked the big emerald ring on his finger: “I have long heard about Dean’s age, but didn’t think that he would be so young. An outstanding talent!”

“You are over-praising me,” Dudian replied.

Charles laughed: “Mr. Dean, your textile machine and the ‘match’ invention are extremely amazing inventions. Especially the new loom. It is too great. I’ve come to find you to discuss our future cooperation.”

“Cooperation?” Dudian continued: “You mean?”

Charles was laughing as he continued: “The Scott consortium is ready to buy all our inventions from now on. We are ready to give higher price than others so I hope that any invention that you

come up with in the future, you would contact our Scott consortium first. ”

Dudian came to understand that the Scott consortium has tasted the sweetness of his invention. Right now he wanted to transplant this moneymaking tree into his estate. Although the inventors would not come up with inspiration to create many things, nevertheless there is a very low possibility that an inventor may come up with something new with high commercial value. The slight possibility was worth for them to contact Dudian.

Dudian modestly said: “You are over-rating me. I’m just a hunter. The inventions that I do are a hobby. I’m lucky that I could have come up an invention or two.”

Charles said: “Mr. Dean is too modest. Do you know that if people from ‘Temple of Elements’ heard your words, they would go crazy because of anger? If you invented something so great out of hobby then they must put your statue in ‘Temple of Elements’ to commemorate your honor for an eternity.”

Dudian heard exaggerated words of Charles and laughed: “You are overestimating me. Moreover, I can not call shots about this matter.”

Charles’s face was full of smiles. However, there was a slight worry in the depth of his eyes. He slowly said: “Mr Dean we have already cooperated twice. So you shouldn’t be worried about the intentions of the Scott consortium.”

Old Fun smiled: “Naturally, we are no questioning the credibility of the Scott consortium. Otherwise, we wouldn’t firstly come over to you for cooperation.”

Charles looked at Old Fulin as he knew that it would be very difficult to win over the old Fox. However, he was shocked to see that the riches didn’t move Dudian. Charles saw the polite smile on Dudian’s face, but he knew that it wasn’t from the bottom of his heart. In the end, he had to talk about a more practical thing which was money.

“Well,” Charles muttered: “We will give you five thousand gold coins to show the sincerity of the Scott consortium.”

Dudian looked at Old Fulin as he saw Charles finally talked about the main topic. Dudian and Old Fulin got along for days so they already understood the intention of each other from a glance. Dudian slowly said: “Five thousand gold coins is enough to show the sincerity of the Scott consortium. But we can’t make a promise to give exclusive rights to future inventions for that amount of money.”

Charles didn’t expect such a reaction from Dudian. So his face slightly changed: “Mr. Dean what do you mean?”

Dudian didn’t say anything but looked at Old Fulin.

“Mr Charles, we can’t refuse you since you are so sincere. But now we are short of money. Would you be interested in the buyout of matches?”

“A buyout?” Charles was stunned and shook his head: “The match is still in sales period. We can’t estimate the future market, so it will be hard to give a number about the cost of the buyout.”

“We don’t want too much. Its just fifty thousand gold coins. Afterward, the New World Consortium will stop match business and you will be the sole consortium dealing in the market. What do you say?”

Charles was startled about the amount. It wasn’t too much if you take into account current performance of the match sales. In time it would bring more than fifty thousand gold coins in profits. Moreover, it is not a product that would fade away as it was likely to replace the fire sickles.

He didn’t consider their New World Consortium’s sales performance as in reality it was commanded, and run by the Ryan family alone. They had several shops operating and selling the matches. They wouldn’t be able to get thousand gold coins even in ten years.

“I need to go back and discuss this matter.” Charles looked at Old Fulin after a moment of silence: “The family should agree so you should seriously think about our offer too.”

Old Fulin replied: “I will wait for your message.”

Charles looked at him and turned to check Dudian. He no longer said anything as he greeted them and turned to leave the hall.

Dudian and Old Fulin watched as the carriage of Charles disappeared beneath the hillside. Old Fulin withdrew his eyes and said to Dudian: “It is a sure business. They will agree.”

Dudian nodded: “It is so early in the morning. It seems they are worried that other consortium will come to talk to us.”

“They are not the only ones who have been able to distinguish the gold.” Old Fulin laughed.

As they expected not long after representatives of the Scott consortium left another giant consortium approached them. The Green consortium’s prices were more or less same as the Scott consortium’s offer. Old Fulin sent them off on grounds of ‘considering’ their offer.

Several other consortium came after the Green consortium.

“Only the Mellon Consortium and the Military haven’t sent representatives. It seems that the Mellon Consortium will take a stand as whole and won’t approach us.” Old Fulin looked at Dudian: “Now, you are a person with a bright future in front of the aristocracy. However, nobles wouldn’t dare to look for your cooperation alone as the consortiums would over-price them at all times.”

Dudian didn’t enjoy his words. He knew that hunters and inventors were valued by nobles and consortiums because of the wealth they could create.

The next day.

Charles from the Scott Consortium came over to Ryan Castle. He had fifty thousand gold coins and a contract.

“Patriarch Fulin, Mr. Dean this is the money for the buyout for match business. Please count.” Charles smiled as he handed the contract: “Our consortium values Mr. Dean’s talent. If there is no problem with the contract, then I wish us happy cooperation.”

Old Fulin and Dudian glanced at each other. They knew that the Scott consortium was aware that other consortium’s had come to visit them yesterday. They weren’t determined yesterday as there could be internal fights within the consortium if Charles went and agreed at that time. However, they were sure that contract was ready just about noon yesterday after the got whiff of their guests.

Old Fulin took out a magnifying glass as he checked the content of the contract: “No problem. If we look to cooperate with other consortium’s then the Scott consortium will be the first choice to contact in the future. Please rest assured.”

Charles nodded. He wasn’t worried about Old Fulin as he was aware of the credibility of his words. Moreover, they would always pay attention to movements of the Ryan family.

Chapter 210

After the carriage had left Dudian held Old Fulin's arm and helped him to walk back to the study room. Old Fulin put the contract into the drawer and looked at Dudian: "We have enough money to rent an underground passage to the outside. How is the state of your readjustment? When would you be in a good state to go out to hunt?"

Dudian thought for a moment and replied: "In a few days."

"Well, you get prepared while I go to see Holy Church and choose a channel which is close to our estate." Old Fulin slightly nodded: "But you have to consider this matter clearly. Once we rent the underground passage, this hundred thousand gold coins will be gone."

Dudian faintly smiled: "Why should I be reluctant?"

"I am reluctant." Old Fulin smiled and looked at Dudian's eyes: "It's a very big amount of money. I don't know it's right or wrong to bet on you. I hope I haven't chosen the wrong person."

"You have no choice, even if you had made the wrong decision." Dudian coldly said.

Old patriarch sighed and didn't talk anymore.

…

As they had the money to rent a passage to the outside, Dudian also began to prepare his equipment. He was going to use arrows and bow made for intermediate knights. ‘Temple of Elements’ sold armor for hunters. The price for armor for primary hunter was ten gold coins while it would cost a hundred gold coins to buy an armor which was suitable for intermediate hunters. The armors provided by the ‘Temple of Elements’ were standard black armors which would fit the body as if it was glued to it. It had anti-radiation protection too.

“I should get a bow, storage bags, folded bags and I should buy a set of advanced hunter armor. I will be able to take 20kg of gunpowder. The problem with gunpowder is that it’s still a bit weak, but the sound of an explosion is too loud. It would lead other monsters over, so it has to be the last resort. I have to rely on bow and arrows. Maybe I should get custom forged fine iron arrows.”

Dudian rode to a blacksmith shop in the Yard town. He ordered a set of arrows and wrote down the required materials to be used in forging them. He paid a deposit.

Afternoon.

Old Fulin’s carriage came back.

Dudian sensed his smell and rushed to the hall. He was about to ask him about details when he saw that Old Fulin’s face had turned ugly: “What happened? The price has gone up?”

Old Fulin looked at him in a complicated manner. He slowly shook his head and told him: “Let’s go upstairs.”

Dudian helped him to the second floor.

As Dudian closed the door, Fulin sighed deeply: “The price to rent the underground passage has not changed. The problem is that Holy Church has 18 underground channels that lead to outside. The other consortiums and the military have rented one or two, and some of them have even rented out three underground passages. Now there are only three passages left.”

Dudian was stunned as he didn’t expect that there would be not so many passages: “Three left. So they don’t want to rent them?”

Old Fulin smiled wryly: “It’s not that they don’t want to rent, but no one is willing to rent! All three of them are abandoned passages. First one has a lake outside of it. According to Holy Church that lake is full of ferocious monsters. Some amphibious beasts usually lay around just outside the iron gate. So you will be facing monster attacks as soon as you leave from the other side. No one is renting.”

Dudian knew that there was no way to hunt monsters underwater. Even poisoning the lake would be difficult. If the lake is too large, it would be almost impossible to find such a strong toxin to poison all the monsters. Moreover, because of poisoning some monsters could go through mutation and evolve into much better variation. There could be some powerful monsters which

are not afraid of poison. There had been animals such as toads and lizards back in the old era who were not afraid of poison. They would feen on poisonous snakes.

“The second passage leads to a wasteland. There is a mountain outside the channel. But all other areas are just plain desert. There is no good habitat for monsters to survive. The ones living in there are very poisonous ones which are very troublesome to hunt. So no consortium is willing to rent it. ” Old Fulin sighed: “As for the third passage. The Holy Church said that they would close it down for good.”

“Why?” Dudian asked the question.

Old Fulin smiled: “This passage leads to ruins as the others. But I was told that the monsters active in this region are at very frightening levels. They are comparable to area ‘zero of other consortiums. Unless a squadron of senior hunters is sent then something can be harvested from there. Otherwise, there is nothing but death awaits us there!”

“About ten years ago the Husheng consortium had rented this passage. They had sent a team consisting of three senior hunters and two intermediate hunters to hunt there. The result was unimaginable. Only one of the senior hunters was able to escape and return. However, his body was so seriously injured that he was considered to have a mid-level hunter’s combat power by the Huasheng consortium. It took the hunter few years to heal the injuries. Moreover, afterward, he never went hunting outside the giant wall, but preferred to teach at Hunter School.”

“This incident disturbed the Huasheng consortium, and since then there is no consortium to rent this passage. Additionally, the Huasheng consortium’s financial situation was affected by the incident a lot. Originally they were ranked one of the top three consortia’s, and now they are arranged at the bottom position!”

Old Fulin was depressed and sighed as he spoke of the incident.

Dudian’s face also changed. He was aware that some very frightening monsters had to live outside the passage so that one senior hunter was able to flee back.

“We can wait for some time and see if there would be a chance to rent another passage in the future. We can build up our resources slowly.” Old Fulin tried to sweet talk and persuaded Dudian.

However, Dudian was deep in his thoughts. It seemed he wasn’t even aware that Old Fulin was talking. A moment later he turned to Old Fulin: “We will rent the third passage.”

Old Fulin was surprised as his eyes went wide: “Y-you! What did you say?”

“Rent the third passage!” Dudian’s eyes were firm as he once more repeated his decision.

Old Fulin knew that he didn’t hear wrong words, but he couldn’t control his emotions as he almost jumped. He loudly said: “Didn’t you hear what I was talking about now? Do you think I was trying

to cheat you?”

Dudian waved and gestured him to be quite so that the servants outside wouldn’t hear them. He whispered: “This is the golden opportunity!”

Chapter 211

“Opportunity?” Old Fulin’s held back the anger in his heart. His face slightly changed: “What do you mean?”

“You remember that I had an alchemist friend. He had given me a recipe which is simple but has very strong destructive power. If we use this alchemy product then killing the beasts and clearing the area outside the passage won’t be a problem.”

“Alchemy?” Old Fulin thought of match. The recipe was given to Dudian by a mysterious alchemist. Old patriarch hesitated a bit: “Can you use it? Would he blame you if he knew that you had used his recipe to make the product?” the Ryan family has suffered because of the alchemists as they have destroyed the Ryan family’s fiefdom. The old patriarch had fear in his heart when the topic of alchemists was brought up.

“I have helped him a lot,” Dudian said: “He will not mind me using this product.”

Old Fulin asked: “Did you help him before you were jailed? ”

“For a long time.” Dudian said bluntly. Moreover, he added after a moment: “If the things go smoothly we have too few gifts for him because of his past help.”

Old Fulin nodded: “Yes, the gift can always enhance the good will, even if he does not mind them.”

Dudian replied: “I need a thousand gold coins to buy materials.”

Old Fulin was hesitant. In addition to hundred thousand gold coins that would be used to rent the passage, they will have extra 10000 gold coins at hands as surplus. It is all the capital their family had right now. He was going to bet on Dudian a bit more.

Dudian went downstairs to find Barton, Joseph, and Kroen as he got the money. He left the castle with them. As they drove the carriage, he checked if there was someone tracking them. After he was sure that there were no unwanted guests, they drove to other towns to buy sulfur and the other materials to produce the gunpowder. They transported the materials to the small workshop which they had initially produced the match.

After the signing the contract with the Scott consortium they had disabled the lease of the small workshop. The twenty slaves that he had bought were transferred to the Ryan castle as servants.

The gunpowder was totally different from match production. Although both of them were considered as alchemy products because of the destructive power of the gunpowder, it would be banned if it came to light. That’s why he only trusted Barton, Joseph, and Kroen with the production of the gunpowder.

“Wear your masks and gloves. ” Dudian began to teach them the production process as they had bought all the necessary materials and tools to produce gunpowder successfully.

…

A few days later.

Dudian returned to Ryan castle and found Old Fulin: “Now you can go to the Holy Church and rent the passage.”

“Are you ready?” Old Fulin asked.

Dudian nodded slightly. “It’s ready.”

Forin slowly nodded and said: “Well, I’ll go then.” He called the butler to prepare a carriage. Old Fulin returned to the castle in the afternoon. Moreover, he brought back the contract with him. Many regulations had to follow which were clearly stated by the Holy Church. The most important matter was to pay attention to the closing of the gate. If any monster broke into and came to this side than the loss caused by it would be beared by the Ryan family.

“The passage belongs to us from this day until this time next year.” Old Fulin had a tired expression as he looked at Dudian: “Although we have used a lot of money but don’t put much pressure on yourself. In a dangerous case where you see that you are not matched to the monster then escape. Don’t put much of a fight. The money is something that can be slowly accumulated.”

Dudian sighed and patted Old Fulin’s shoulder: “Don’t worry too much! Nothing will happen to me. If there is an accident, then just dissolve the Consortium and go under the wing of another

consortium. The income from the textile machine wouldn't bring Ryan family to its glorious period, but will be enough to rate you as a second-rate aristocratic family. You will be well better off."

"I believe you will be able to come back!" Old Fulin patted Dudian's back. He continued in a heavy tone: "You must come back!"

Dudian deeply looked at him. He pulled his palm, turned and left the hall.

Old afterward stood silently as he looked at the back of the boy. He felt a weird feeling when Dudian had patted him. As if he was the father of the kid. The moment Dudian had left it felt as if Old Fulin had sent him to the hands of the death alone. Old Fulin had gotten close to the boy in the last month. He would tell him about the details of the family business, and they would debate about the situation. He knew how much the kid had affected the Ryan family in the last month or so.

It was the first time that Old Fulin had encountered a talent which could earn over hundred thousand gold coins in a month's time. There was a difference of heaven and earth if Old Fulin compared Dudian to the young masters and misses of the aristocratic families who grew up in greenhouses. If the boy were nurtured well, then his future would be full of glory. Unfortunately, the Ryan family had nothing to help or support him with. He could only rely on his own to fight and break out.

...

Dudian packed the bow, arrows, and luggage. He rode the horse and came to the small workshop. The trio had been waiting for him for some time.

“Are you ready?” Dudian asked Barton.

Barton wiped the sweat from his forehead: “Everything is ready to go. We have packed them into the carriage.”

Dudian nodded: “Barton will follow me until the wall. The two of you shall go back to the Ryan Castle. Try to learn everything that you can whether it is just theoretical knowledge or doing things.”

Kroen and Joseph looked at each other and spoke in a worried tone: “I have heard that the place where you are going is extremely dangerous. Are you sure you want to go alone?”

Dudian looked at them and saw the concerned expression on their faces. His heart warmed: “I will take you if you are strong enough in the future. So make good efforts. Don’t be lazy because of ease. Don’t forget the humiliation you have suffered! Don’t forget the goals that you have set!”

The trio was startled. A moment letter they nodded in affirmation.

Dudian smiled. He whipped the horse and led the way in front.

Barton jumped into the driver seat of the carriage. He shook the horse's rope and followed after Dudian.

Kroen and Joseph stood on the street and watched them go away. Both of the waited there until the shadow of the carriage disappeared at the end of the street. Both of them returned to the Ryan family afterwards.

...

Dudian took out the map to check the route. They didn't stop as they rode all the way out of the commercial district and came to the wilderness. Occasionally they would encounter wild tigers and wolves, which he killed easily. At the border fortress, he showed his hunter medal and Ryan family's insignia to pass.

After the border fortress they went into the radiation zone.

After a few hours of riding Dudian and Barton finally reached the underground passage. The giant wall was standing like a link between heaven and earth. His eyesight was better in comparison to the first time that he had seen the giant wall so he could see that the top of the wall reached a thousand meter height. It was simply an appalling sight as there were only a few buildings which were a hundred meters high in the old era.

The tall buildings of that era were meant to be lived inside, so they were 'hollow' in a sense. But this wall was a perfectly build wall whose difficulty would be completely different to building a high-rise.

Barton was completely stunned at the scene. He didn't expect that the word he had heard –'the giant wall' would be literally giant.

Chapter 212

The other consortiums also received the news that Dudian had gone to the giant wall.

“Old Fulin has gone and rented the death passage?”Several elders of the Scott consortium were stunned as they received the news. They didn’t think that Old Fulin would dare to lease an underground passage. One hundred thousand gold coins a year is not something that can be afforded by anyone. Also, consortium’s would lease the passage to make quick money, but the New World consortium had only one hunter!

“It’s crazy.”

“Fulin is old and has gone senile.”

“Does he have a death wish?”

“It seems Old Fulin have sent the inventor we have signed a contract with!”

“I hope nothing will happen to the kid. Otherwise, we will have a big loss! The old man has gone crazy!”

The Mellon Consortium.

“Old Fulin rented a passage?” George fell into contemplation as he received the news. He said to himself: “The Huasheng consortium had suffered a major loss in that passage then years ago. No one dared to rent it because of that. Does he think that the habitat outside the passage will change as a decade has gone by?”

“Stupid!”

“Old Fulin took the stone to throw away, but instead has smashed his feet. ”

In addition to the Scott and the Mellon Consortium, the others got the whiff of the news. Everyone was inexplicably shocked. They knew that the New World consortium has recruited an intermediate-level hunter. According to their investigation, the hunter didn’t have ‘light physique’ which meant that he will have a limited number of time hunting. Even if he returns without any injuries, Dudian would ultimately die young because of the radiation. The problem with hunters without ‘light physique’ was that the radiation would accumulate in their bodies and begin to rot their internal organs.

“Ryan family has made a wrong move in this game of chess …” An old man sitting in the Huasheng consortium’s top office said and softly sighed.

…

Dudian saw that there were two Knights of Light before the passage. Although there was no one around, they didn’t slack and

stood tall. They had a solemn expression as if they were kings standing in front of their citizens.

“Please stop.” One of the knight’s shouted as he saw Dudian and the carriage approaching them.

Dudian pulled the horse’s rope and stopped before the two Knights of Light: “This passage has been rented by our New World Consortium. This is my hunter medal.”

He showed them his medal.

The knight took a glance and looked up at Dudian. He saw Dudian dressed in hunter armor. He looked behind Dudian to the carriage: “What is the carriage for?”

“There are some things that our consortium gave me for the hunt. ” Dudian replied.

The knight slightly frowned as he took back his eyes and glanced at Dudian: “Your teammates?”

Dudian answered: “I’m the only hunter in our consortium.”

Both Knights of Light were surprised. The previous knight looked up and down at Dudian and said in a solemn tone: “This passage is totally different from other entry points. It is equivalent to area zero of the other consortiums. You are just a junior hunter, so it’s best for you to go back. Don’t seek death on your own will.”

Dudian asked: “I heard it was like that a decade ago. Is it like that now?”

“Of course.” The knight said without hesitation: “The beasts are regional creatures. Occasionally we can hear the howls coming from the other side. They can’t be normal beasts. So it’s better for you to quickly go back.”

Dudian nodded and said to the two knights: “The consortium has sent me so I can’t go back. Thanks for your good will.” He recovered his hunter medal and looked at the two knights: “Would you please help my friend to go back so that he could avoid danger in the radiation zone.”

The knight frowned as he saw that his persuasion didn’t work, but he didn’t continue to talk about the issue: “He is an ordinary civilian so that we will protect him.”

Although the Knights of Light didn’t like hunters for some unknown reason, they had a very good attitude towards ordinary civilians. Especially towards the ones who were believers of Holy Church.

Dudian stepped forward and opened the heavy iron gate. He took the boxes from the carriage and transported them to the passage.

“What is this?” The Knight standing next to him asked out of curiosity.

“The God of Light inspired our consortium’s inventor had had created few things to help us out to hunt monsters.”

Knight slightly frowned, but didn’t say anything. There was no way to ask for in-depth information. As after all, it was the private matter of the consortium. They were only responsible for goods and materials brought back from outside.

It didn’t take long for twelve boxes to be transported to the passage.

“I’m going. You should follow them back.” Dudian told Barton.

Barton was worried: “Be careful, and don’t try to be a hero!”

Dudian smiled and closed the iron gate as he went into the corridor of the passage. Two cheap oil lamps were exuding faint light. There were pictures of the goddess of harvest and the goddess of hunting carved on the walls.

Dudian didn’t like how the hunters and scavengers prayed to them on every trip. Instead, he took the gunpowder boxes and came to the other side of the passage. He put the boxes over and tilted his neck. His ears were affixed above the iron gate as he quietly listened. The process lasted about fifteen minutes. He didn’t hear any movements from close by. He put the key into the door and unlocked it. Later on, he lightly pushed the iron gate.

Dudian didn’t fully open the gate ,but instead made a gap for him to observe the outside situation. This passage opened to a vast wilderness. He was able to see large rocks covered in moss and vegetation. It seemed that they were the remnants of a collapsed building.

This place was not a suburb, but inner city.

Dudian couldn’t help but think that when the giant wall was built, it chopped the city into two parts.

Dudian didn’t rush to go out, but instead took short and rapid breaths. Through breathing and inhaling, he could identify the monsters.

“The odor of rotten bodies?... ... undead?” Dudian sensed some sparse old rotten smell.

Dudian was surprised. Wouldn’t the monsters outside kill the undead? How could they survive if there were ferocious beasts in this region? Or did those beasts leave this place?

“It seems this place has undergone some changes in the past decade.” Dudian murmured.

He continued to sniff. In addition to the smell of the undead, some other strange smells originated from afar. At least twenty miles away. Although his body has gone through physical enhancement the sense of smell was not based on physical growth.

He could smell from far away, but everything depended on air. If the odor were mixed with other smells, then it would be very hard for him to detect the presence of monsters. Of course, unless his body had reached an extreme degree where he would be called inhumane. That way he could break the fleshly limits and detect everything within range.

Dudian firmly recorded the various smells in his mind. He gently pushed open the iron gate and transported all the gunpowder outside. He closed the iron gate and locked it. But he didn't carry it by himself to prevent losing it. Instead, he went seven or eight meters away from the gate and shredded a pit. He buried the key inside and covered it with weeds.

Afterward, Dudian looked back at the ruins which stood tall in front of him. His heart tightened as from this moment on he was on his own in this dangerous environment.

Chapter 213

Dudian opened a bag and folded the gunpowder boxes so that it could protect them in the case of rain. He held onto two gunpowder boxes and gently stepped on the weeds as he walked into the ruins.

As there was no one to clean the roads the ground outside was full of grass. There were some places which were mud pits. Dudian was very careful as he made every step. In the absence of information and maps, he could only rely on his groping and gut-feeling. Other consortia would send a scout to sweep the unknown areas and gather intelligence.

After all, the hunters were limited in consortiums. Even if they sent seven or eight intermediate hunters, they wouldn't be able to protect themselves from a herd of beasts.

Occasionally he would see some objects bulge in the grass. He knew that some places were not covered in stones, but rotten bones of some monsters.

As he was carefully going through the grass, he felt a very small rustling sound. It was as if the wind scratched. A chill rose up in his heart as he dropped the gunpowder boxes and turned back.

At the same time, a slender green shadow jumped from the grass toward Dudian.

Dudian quickly pulled out his dagger and made a wave.

The dagger blocked this slender green shadow. Its body flashed as it disappeared into the bushes without a trace.

Dudian's face changed. Although he wasn't able to see the complete body of the beast, he was able to see something similar to snake's tail as it disappeared within the bushed. It had green scales which were extremely similar to the color of weeds. It was a bit bright colored. From the look, it seemed to be a poisonous snake.

The most important thing was that he couldn't detect its odor.

"Fortunately, it's speed isn't very fast. It should not be a high-level monster." Dudian was glad as he secretly thought about the monster. He slowly moved the gunpowder box aside. He picked up gunpowder from the box and threw it in the bushes.

He inserted the dagger once more, picked out gunpowder and spilled the surrounding weeds. Suddenly the smell of gunpowder emerged.

Dudian eyes were cold as he looked around the area. His nose quickly identified all the smell in the surroundings. Soon he sensed the smell of gunpowder slowly moving. He put back his dagger and took out his bow. He acted as fast as lightning. He pulled the string and shot the arrow towards the predetermined location in the grass.

puff!

Suddenly violent waves began to surge within the grass.

The grass that was half a meter high suddenly split as a monster's body moved as if it was a sharp wind.

Dudian saw the body of a four or five-meter long python quickly twist and move. An arrow had pierced into its body. Because of its bright green scales, it was easy to confuse it with the grass.

Dudian aimed and went for the second shot.

puff!

The green scaled python had swirled for 50 meters when the second arrow shot it behind its head and crucified it to the ground.

Dudian was relieved as he put back the bow and pulled out the dagger. He slowly walked over. The poisonous phyton's body wasn't able to move forward, but its tail was still twisting around.

Dudian's attention was in the surrounding area to be sure that there was no other monster waiting for an opportunity to attack. Although he could smell most of the monsters some of them were good at hiding and attacking as they knew how to cover their body odor.

Dudian cut off the low-level monster's head. Its fangs were highly toxic. The normal adult python would be a level 12 beast, but this one was something in between level four to six. It was slightly stronger than undead.

Dudian squatted down as he pierced its body and quickly peeled its skin. Then he cut its head and removed its fangs. He used tweezers to pick the fangs and put them into his storage bag.

Afterward, he rolled the snake's skin and put it away. He picked up two boxes of gunpowder and carefully continued forward. He sensed the smell of undead.

Weeds were growing from the cracks of the asphalt. The street was in ruins. Dudian looked at a car covered in moss, staggered over the roadside. The smell of undead came over from the car. The moss and plants had crawled into the car.

Dudian put away the gunpowder boxes and looked around. Even though he couldn't pinpoint the location of the undead by smell but his vision was good enough to see it. He took out box and arrow and aimed at car's driver seat. He rapidly pulled the string and made the shot.

Kacha! The sound of broken glass echoed out.

Although it was hard to see inside the car because of darkness Dudian's vision was enhanced. He could clearly see the middle-aged undead seating at driver's position. It seemed to be in sleeping state. His arrow hit its throat, but didn't kill it.

He once again made another shot.

The middle-aged undead was struggling to wake up, but the second shot hit its head, and it died on the spot.

Dudian quickly stepped forward and pulled out the arrows. He cut and dissected the undead's head.

After the cold crystal was taken out the flesh and blood of the undead was affected by the temperature, and it began to decay at a very slow rate.

Dudian pulled out the cold crystal and looked at his left hand. Because of the excessive absorption of the cold crystals last time his arm had lost the nerves to feel the pain. He didn't know if he should continue to absorb the crystals directly.

He thought about it for a time. He decided to absorb small amounts every time.

Although there was some risk in the direct absorption of cold crystals, it was better than using 'blessings' as it promoted his strength much greater.

He used another clean dagger to make a small cut in his left hand. He put the cold crystal inside his palm. As if snow and water had met the crystal gradually melt and turned into a liquid which infiltrated through the wound.

Dudian felt no difference as he made the slice because his left hand had lost consciousness. However, he felt more vigorous as if the energy was powering up his body.

He was relieved. The left had stopped bleeding. However, he turned to look back to see another undead slowly came out from the corner of the street. It seems that fragmentation of the glass had attracted the undead from another area. He pulled out his bow and an arrow. Dudian was about to shoot, but suddenly his face slightly changed.

The body of the undead was extremely tall. Its height was about three meters. It had very long arms while its body was a thing. It waist looked similar to camels. He couldn't see its eyes as it seemed they were pure black. Moreover, there was a large sickle which looked like shark's dorsal fin that raised from its palm to the elbow.

It seemed that undead was a young man, but the skin on its skull was stretched out.

"A skeleton? No, a skeleton's body isn't so large, and it shouldn't have a scythe." Dudian's face slightly changed as he saw the beast's attention turn to him.

The distance was a weapon!

Whoosh!

The arrow flew out.

This enormous skeleton’s face was expressionless. Puff! The arrow pierced its face as it shot into its cheek, but got stuck in the bones. It slowly raised its hand to seize the arrow. The monster pulled it out. Its body shook, and it opened its mouth. The upper and lower jaw tore apart as if it belonged to a snake as its mouth made one hundred and eighty-degree curve.

Chapter 214

So fast!

At this moment he felt that his past training was ridiculous as he was shooting at a fixed target. Right now the skeleton was moving at high-speed. Moreover, its body wasn't like a normal human's, but twisted and turned into elusive postures as it moved. It was very difficult to predict its movement trajectory.

Cold sweat accumulated on Dudian's forehead as he looked at the swinging body of the skeleton. There was about 120 meters distance between them, and it was reducing very rapidly. Dudian couldn't find a logical trajectory to the skeleton's movement, but it had already run nearly of the distance between them.

Whoosh!

An arrow shot as the skeleton was about sixty meters away from Dudian. Puff! The skeleton was hit in its chest. Its body came to a sudden stop, and it opened its mouth to make a ferocious roar. However, the next moment the skeleton began to rush over Dudian again.

Dudian pulled the string and made the second shot. He turned back to retreat, however, he was still calculating an action trajectory to predict its movement. As the distance between them was about twenty meters, he made the third shot.

Puff! The arrow hit the skeleton's forehead. The arrow pierced several inches but was stuck in its head as it couldn't penetrate more.

"What is its head made of?" Dudian's face slightly changed. He quickly put away the bow and arrows and pulled out a dagger as he saw the skeleton was about to reach him. In about a second the distance between them was going to close. Dudian carefully looked at the skeleton's arms to see which way it was going to attack.

Roar!

The thick smell radiating from the skeleton's mouth rushed to Dudian's face. The skeleton raised its right arm, and the protruding sickle was coming toward Dudian.

Dudian bent as he went to kick the skeleton's lower leg.

However, he hadn't paid careful attention to this enormous the skeleton's legs. At the moment he saw that his feet and legs were covered with gray scales up to its knees.

Dudian's feet kicked its leg. However, it felt as if he had kicked a steel pillar. It felt very painful, but his strength was equal to an intermediate hunter. Because of the collision, the skeleton tripped over.

As the skeleton fell over Dudian did a somersault and rolled close to the skeleton. While at he pulled out his dagger and attacked its

neck to finish it once for all!

Puff! The blade of the dagger cuts the flesh and went half the way before it got stuck.

Dudian's face slightly changed as he didn't think that the skeleton's cervical vertebrae would be so hard. How come a dagger made out of the finest iron couldn't cut through?

Dudian was surprised, but he didn't doze over the issue. He saw that the enormous skeleton seemed to have a bit consciousness. It began to roar in pain. Although its body was lying on the ground its two-meter-long arm swept over to attack Dudian.

Dudian quickly loosened his grasp over the dagger and pedaled back to escape. He quickly turned over and glanced around but didn't find any tall buildings which would be the suitable terrain for long distance shooting. His face slightly changed. Instinctively his body had acted faster than his brain had made the judgment. He rushed over to the rubble covered in moss.

The skeleton rose up, roared and rushed after him.

Dudian was agile as he was able to open the distance between himself and the skeleton. He found that the speed and strength of the large skeleton were stronger than an ordinary undead, but compared to him it wasn't up to par. However, it was hard to parry against the skeleton as he wasn't good enough at close combat to fight against it.

Whoosh!

Dudian quickly ran.

The skeleton roared as it rushed after him. There were too many hindrances as the skeleton went after Dudian. Dudian expected that the skeleton was larger and stronger than an ordinary undead, but it had a great drawback in the sense of balance and flexibility.

Dudian ran two or three hundred meters through the ruins. Finally, he was able to open the distance. As he ran away, he also paid attention to the surroundings. Especially he tried to sense all the smells so that no other monster would attack him while he was running away. Moreover, he was focused on observing the posture and habits of the skeleton as it ran after him. He stopped and took out his bow and arrows and tightly stared at the skeleton which was getting close to him.

“I gotta hit it!”

Dudian’s mind was at peace as the distance had decreased to forty meters. At that moment he let go of the string.

Puff! Five seconds later the arrow had shot the skeleton.

The skeleton’s fast running body suddenly lost power. Its legs paused, and the skeleton’s upper body dumped and rolled over for four or five laps because of the initial inertia. Black blood scattered out.

Dudian was relieved and walked over. He saw that the arrow hadn't hit the skeleton's skull, but its eye! It had pierced all the way into its skull and destructed the intracranial tissues which had resulted in killing it.

Dudian adjusted his breath and checked the surrounding environment. He didn't feel any movement. He went back to the first fighting arena and picked up the dagger and gunpowder boxes. Dudian came back to the place where the skeleton's body lay. He used the dagger to cut its head.

It took him several times to cut off its cervical spine.

"I have never seen or heard of such a strange skeleton. There were no records about it in the atlas too. Is this a new mutation of the skeletons?" Dudian used the dagger to cut off along its jar join to pry open the skeleton's head. "According to its speed and strength, it should be somewhere along level twelve to fourteen monsters. Combat power-wise, this skeleton is comparable to an average intermediate level hunter."

It didn't take him long to empty the skeleton's head. The tissues of the brain were same with an ordinary undead. Everything was frozen and colored black. He took out the cold crystal. The color of the cold crystal was much deeper and purer in comparison to an ordinary undead.

Dudian left the place to avoid extra danger as he grabbed the cold crystal and his things.

Dudian leaned on a piece of moss by the boulder as he came to an open area. He took out the dark blue cold crystal. He was hesitant for a moment, but made a small cut on his palm and put the cold crystal into his palm. The cold crystal gradually melted and penetrated into his body through the wound.

Dudian's left hand didn't feel anything at first, but the next moment coldness flowed from his shoulder to his body. He was scared the moment that cold feeling dispersed in his head. However, it was as if his body was stimulated as his consciousness cleared up. It seemed his line of sight also become more increasingly bright and colored.

At the same time, the chill flowed all over his body. Dudian thought that the coldness has spread all over his body through the blood. His body became normal as the heat radiating off from his body neutralized the coldness. His body was full of strength. His loss of energy because of the fight with the skeleton was completely recovered.

Dudian knew that the experience of absorbing the skeleton's cold crystal was the same as the one from an ordinary undead. However, the effect was much more different.

"It's interesting. Because of mutation and evolution of the skeleton, the quality of the cold crystal has also changed." Dudian whispered. He cleaned his dagger and put it away. He took out the map and began to paint and draw the roads and places he has been too. As he was the only hunter under the command of the New World Consortium, so the depiction of the map had to be naturally

worked out with him. It was also to facilitate the future hunting to be more productive.

Dudian put away the pen after he finished mapping the area. He took out an arrow from the quiver. This one was colored dark silver. He held onto it as he looked at the gunpowder.

Chapter 215

Dudian sneaked around for five or six hundred meters along the neighborhood. It was at this point that he smelled other odors close to his location. However, he felt that they were aware of his location too and were closing up on him. He was alerted as he knew that it was not an ordinary undead which had detected his presence. “What kind of variation is it this time?” Dudian whispered.

However, this time he was ready. He found a relatively good location for shooting. He took out dark silver arrows and tightly stared at the front of the street. According to the sense of the smell he knew that it was about the time the skeleton’s would pop out from the corner.

It’s going to come out!

Dudian narrowed his eyes as he hand suddenly pulled the string of the bow and released it.

Whoosh!

The arrow shined as it pierced through the air.

The corner of the street was covered in moss and vegetation. The next moment a huge figure came out of the corner. It had long hands and legs. The skeleton’s back was curved as camel’s and the scythes were protruding from its arms. It was the same as the

previous skeleton. A mutation!

Puff! The arrow shot into its face the moment it ran out of the corner.

Dudian had long anticipated the timing of the skeleton and he had fired the arrow according to the previous skeleton's height. However instead of aiming at its forehead he had focused on mouth of the previous skeleton. He had made the shot according to his visualization of the target.

It seemed that the skeleton wasn't affected by the silver arrow that was covered with a special substance. It roared and rushed out. Nevertheless it didn't even ran out for ten meters that it slipped over the moss and fell to the ground. Its body rolled for a few times and came to stop.

Dudian was scared as he didn't expect that his own special silver arrow wasn't actually able to kill it directly. He took out an ordinary iron arrow, focused at skeleton's head and shot. He carefully began to walk towards its corpse as he saw that there was no response after the shot. He used the dagger to cut for several times before completely cutting off its cervical spine.

Dudian took back the iron arrow. However he was surprised when he pulled out silver arrow. It had bursted out and there was dark silver luster which was the mercury.

Dudian had envisioned many methods in order to enhance the destructive power of the arrows. He finally thought about

mercury. It was a highly toxic substance and in case it got into blood vessels then there was a high chance that it would kill the opponent.

Dudian took out his dagger and quickly dissect the skull. He saw that mercury had penetrated into the brain. Because of the endothermic effect of the cold crystal the temperature of the brain was low but mercury had gradually entered the head. Although because of cool tissues the effect didn't take instantly but mercury was enough to damage the intracranial tissues and kill it.

Dudian wrapped the cold crystal and stored it. He was planning to accumulate few more, go back to relatively safe area and absorb them.

"It appears that the undeads at this side of the giant wall have gone through mutations." Dudian had hunted down three undeads. Two of them were skeletons while the third one was an ordinary undead. Most probably it hadn't mutated or was eaten because it was trapped in the car. So it seems there was a factor which made them mutate.

"The squad of senior and intermediate hunters from Huasheng consortium who had entered the region ten years ago most probably had met lots of ordinary undeads. However, to hunters at that level they would never hunt ordinary undeads. They would look at disdain to these creatures as the cold crystals would be exchanged for a gold coin. So they must have gone deeper inside and have met something very ferocious." Dudian secretly thought about the possible situation. Most probably they have gone to hunt a more valuable monster to strip its body materials but have ended

up in demise.

“Now, ordinary undeads seems to be extinct here and the ones which are left are skeletons. So some kind of a monster has eaten them or the skeletons have preyed upon them. The first reason is unlikely as the monsters will migrate if they can’t find food. The second reason which involves skeletons seems more sensible. The question is do they really eat them?”

Dudian quickly analyzed the option.: “If it is the second case?! If skeleton’s prey upon ordinary undeads or each other then the ones who are left are extremely terrible level monsters.”

He knew that there were two factors. His face had turned ugly as both options were very dangerous. He didn’t dare to take either of these options as an easy way out.

He decided the old method to hide his body odor. He cut pieces of flesh from skeleton’s skin and attached to the surface of his own armor in order to prevent it from slip. He didn’t apply skeleton’s blood because he thought that the smell of blood may agitate some monsters appetite. Normally they wouldn’t attack skeletons but the blood may stimulate their hunger.

Moreover, the skin was enough to cover up his own smell. Although there was smell of blood that radiated from below the skin but it was inevitable.

Dudian quickly left the place.

The number of skeleton's was sparse in comparison to ordinary undeads that you could find in different regions.

However, soon he found out that another mutated skeleton which was about seven or eight hundred meters away began to approach towards him. It seems the method he used to cover up his smell has backfired on him. The odor of the mutated skeleton was quickly approaching him.

Dudian thought that if he hadn't used dead mutated skeleton's skin to cover his smell then using stealth methods he could get at 500 meters close to the other mutated skeleton before it was able to detect him.

It was too late to think about another method. He quickly took out a dark silver arrow and looked around to find a suitable location to shoot. There was two hundred meters of distance between them now.

Soon, the body of the enemy rushed out as it sliced the vines and vegetation that was covering its way. It roared and rushed at Dudian.

It was another mutated skeleton!

Dudian had long expected its movement trajectory so he had made the shot on time.

puff!

Arrow pierced its face.

Dudian face slightly change as the location which arrow had pierced was far away from its brain. It would take a lot of time for mercury to reach its intracranial tissue.

He took out another arrow. Because the mutated skeleton was about hundred meters away from him then he was going to use an ordinary iron arrow.

“Be calm, focus! …”

Dudian’s finger let go of the string.

Arrow shot and pierced mutated skeleton’s eye.

Dudian was relieved as he saw that mutated skeleton fell to the ground. He didn’t waste time and rushed out to cut off its head.

After he took out the cold crystal, Dudian took the gunpowder box and went to another location.

In the blink of an eye two days passed.

There was no rain in the last two days and the weather was a bit gloomy. However the conditions were perfect for hunting.

Dudian hunted at daytime but didn't dare to run around at night. Although he had dark vision but there were some monsters which preferred to hunt at night. Every night he would find broken ruins and sprinkle gunpowder around the place. The first reason was to use gunpowder to cover his own smell. The second was to make sure that in case a monster went pass that circle he would be able to smell the distortion.

There was no extra protection as he was alone out of the giant wall. He was risking his life.

He had killed twenty two mutated skeletons in the last consecutive two days. He had cleared our the nearby region. Right now he was considering whether he should go to a deeper area or retreat back to the giant wall.

He could smell odors of different species coming from further afar. Although the mainly there were mutated skeletons but he couldn't tell what kind of monsters the other smells belonged to.

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Dudian thought over the matter. At the end he decided that there is no option but to go forward and singlehandedly continue to delve into depth of ruins.

This time he decided to stop about three or four kilometers away from the monster. He unloaded the gunpowder box and began to arrange traps. He would make pits and fill them with powder or circle an area with it.

Dudian quietly sensed the smell as he finished making the traps.

The closer he got to monster more nervous he became. If the monster had a strong physique and was good at speed then he may not even have the opportunity to lead it to the trap. Although he had considered various combinations but nevertheless there was a low probability of such a situation which would put his life into very risky and dangerous situation.

Dudian saw that there was no reaction from the monster as he reached a thousand meter distance. However, the monster began to approach him at high speed as Dudian reached five hundred meters.

Dudian’s heart turned cold as changed his direction and ran.

He sensed the distance between the monster and himself. He sighed in relief as the monster was not the speedy type. He turned

back to check the monster after he passed the region with sparse weeds. It was a large reptile which had similarities both to a lizard and insects. He had seen the monster in atlas. It was a horned lizard which was graded as a level 12 monster.

It was an omnivorous monster that fed on grass and meat.

Dudian looked at the horned lizard whose appearance was similar to a crocodile. He took out iron arrows and began to shoot at the monster as it entered the 200 meter range.

Puff! Puff! Iron arrows hit its head and pierced the scales. However they stopped after they went in for several inches.

The horned lizard stopped as it felt the pain. Instead of continuing to follow after Dudian, it turned away and run toward the weeds.

Dudian began to ran and shot after it at the same time.

However it was very difficult to shot it as both of them were moving at high speed. Two arrows couldn't hit it while the third one was successful. He continued to pull the string and shot arrows as he caught up with the horned lizard. Moreover, the lizard's speed had increased as it ran for it's life.

There was about three hundred meters distance between them when the horned lizard that was fleeing stopped in front of the grasses to consider where to go next.

Dudian immediately seized this great opportunity as he quickly aimed at it. However before he was able to shoot the arrow, the scene and situation suddenly changed. It seemed the horned lizard got frightened as it stood frozen in place. The next moment a large mouth attacked it from the grass and bit it in one go. Horned lizard's body twisted and its tail kept swinging but the monster opened its mouth once again and swallowed it. Blood sputtered from horned lizard and dripped from the other monster's mouth.

Dudian was shocked to see that horned lizard was killed by a snake tailed crocodile! It was a level 19 monster!

Even the senior hunters had to be very careful if they met such an existence.

"Should I run away?", Dudian thought for a moment.

"I must!", he hesitated for moment. But in that moment he took out a silver arrow and aimed at snake tailed crocodile's mouth which was chewing the horned lizard.

Puff! The arrow shot and pierced its mouth.

The monster roared in pain and its eyes focused on distant Dudian. Before Dudian's shot the snake tailed crocodile was focused on eating the horned lizard. However after it felt the pain, it quickly swallowed the horned lizard and rushed after Dudian.

Dudian’s face slightly changed as he ran away.

boom! boom! boom!

The ground trembled as heavy footsteps of the snake tailed crocodile echoed out. Dudian’s face was ugly. He rushed past chaotic heaps of rubble. He was very flexible as he ran over the rocks. There was about 1500 meters for him to reach the traps. However, he could feel that the snake tailed crocodile was about 100 meters away from him.

Dudian’s body sweated a lot because of the stress. He roared and put all of his strength to run. His legs moved so that it seemed he was flying. The sound that was made when he moved seemed like a whistle.

“Not enough! Not fast enough!” Dudian panicked as he felt that there was about forty of fifty meters of distance. He was going to get caught before getting to traps.

Faster!

Faster!

Dudian’s cried in his heart. His blood was boiling as he desperately ran.

Gradually he heard the footsteps lagged behind. However he didn’t dare to go back to check. Finally he came to the area where

the traps were arranged. He was a bit assured as he heard the footsteps coming from few hundred meters away. He took out the match while he looked at the direction where snake tailed crocodile was expected to approach. He was that snake tailed crocodile was still approaching and was about four hundred meters away. However, it was just running a bit slower.

Dudian's eyes lit up.: "Is mercury taking effect and playing its role?"

He put the match box in his mouth as he took out another silver arrow and tightly stared at the snake tailed crocodile which was running towards him. The crocodile was running while seven or eight meter long snake tail was swinging at the back. It was used to balance its body while it run at high speeds.

Dudian had a sharp and cold look in his eyes. The moment snake tailed crocodile reached the two hundred meters range, he gentle released the string of the bow.

Whoosh! Arrow left the bow.

The snake tailed crocodile had rushed past another ten meters of distance when the arrow hit its eye!

"Roar!" The monsters body soared up and fall down. The crocodile had no vocal organs but in the process of mutation and evolution it had evolved and could make tiger like low roars.

Dudian was merciless as he went for another arrow. This time he used normal iron arrow. After all, the silver arrow were limited and couldn't be re-used again. However, he could fetch back the iron arrows.

IN the period that snake tailed crocodile's body fell, Dudian continuously shot six arrows! Six successful hits!

The snake tailed crocodile rolled on ground and screamed for a moment. But it gradually stopped its movement. The blood oozed out from its wound and reddened the grass. There were six or seven arrows that had pierced its head. Its scalp was tingling.

Dudian waited for a moment to see the monster to come to complete halt. He carefully went forward. He grabbed a stone and hit it when he was around forty or fifty meters away from the monster.

The snake tailed crocodile which seemed to be dead roared the moment stones hit its head. Its mouth bit but there was no catch.

The last bite seemed to be the result of its last strength that was squeezed out. Afterwards its head heavily knocked onto the ground and it once again stopped moving.

Dudian thought that he was fortunate as he tried the stone hitting method. The monster was cunning. However it lacked the patience that human hunter's had. For example bloody swordsman Linda was able to endure the pain until the last moment. The patience and tolerance seemed to be characteristic that belonged to

humans!

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He continued to hit the stones for several times to test that the snake tailed crocodile was dead. Dudian carefully approached it. He wielded the dagger and stabbed its eye. Puff! The dagger pierced the cuticle and the took out its eye. The was no response from the snake tailed crocodile. It was dead for good.

“I didn’t expect that I would be able to kill a level nineteen monster…” Dudian felt that his body was stiff and tired but his heart was full of excitement. Even an experienced veteran intermediate hunter wouldn’t be able to hunt a level 19 monster alone on his own. It was a level which required a senior hunter to act but he was able to do it!

“Mercury! It works!”

Dudian smiled. The human’s were weaker than the rules but they were the species that ruled on this planet. The main reason was that humans would rely on their brains to compete with the beasts instead of relying on brute force. Wisdom is the most dangerous weapon held by a human.

He rested for a moment, then boldy went forward to cut the monster. He used to dagger to slice off its mouth apart. He wasn’t experienced with the snake tailed crocodile’s anatomy so he went with general knowledge. At the beginning the process was slow but as he gradually mastered the texture of crocodile’s body the cutting spead significantly increased.

It didn’t take long for Dudian to open up snake tailed crocodile’s body. Gastric acids, flesh and bones of its previous preys in addition to horned lizard rushed out of its stomach. All of them were stained with gastric acid. Moreover the smell of stench gushed out.

Dudian endured the pungent smell as he completely cut it off. The hardest part was the scales on the monster’s back. He wiped the blood on weeds and folded them into his luggage. Moreover he took its claws. They were the excellent material that could be used to produce weapons. They could be even used in production of arrows.

Dudian didn’t collect anything from the horned lizard that was chewed by the snake tailed crocodile. Although there were few valuable parts that could be sold to factions in the dark church. However the prices would be very low. His luggage space was limited so he picked only the most valuable parts.

“Its very hard to make money inside the giant wall. You have to be a bit smart and mostly suck up to customers. However, its very easy to make it outside the giant wall. The hunters would be lazy to pick up the gold coins(he refers to cold crystals) that is infront of them. But in this case (outside the giant wall) the risk is too much as you could lose your life.” Dudian put the luggage on his back and looked at the corpse of the snake tailed crocodile. He sighed and shook his head. He recovered the iron arrows. The problem was that the tips of some of the arrows had gone blunt. He would be able to use them to hunt level 8 or lower monsters as they won’t be effective against higher level monsters.

Dudian knew that they have rented this passage so he would be able to come out any time he wanted. Hunters of other consortiums were very reluctant to come out. Most of the time consortium would put tasks for them to make sure that they implement them. However he was ready to come out any time.

"Oh?" Dudian's brows wrinkled as he was about to move forward. He sense the smell of an undead. Actually there were three other smells that he detected. It seems they were mutated skeletons.

Dudian's face change. He knew that the bloody smell exuding from the body of the snake tailed crocodile had attracted this monsters over.

"They are too far away for now. An ordinary undead wouldn't be so sensitive to the smell of blood. The beasts that are coming over should be mutated skeletons!" Dudian felt the smells of the fast approaching monsters. He looked back at the gunpowder box. They along should be enough to kill up to two or three mutated skeletons. However, he knew that if he used it against the snake tailed crocodile at best he would seriously injure them.

Dudian quickly brainstormed. He put away bow, arrows and dagger. He hid the luggage inside the nearby grass. The scales and skin of the snake tailed crocodile had stains of blood. It would expose his location.

Moreover, he wiped clean the blood from dagger using the weeds. Afterwards he turned around and fled to a distant location.

After a few minutes the surrounding grass rustled. The mutated skeleton which had four long legs came out form the bushes and went towards the corpse of the snake tailed crocodile. The rich blood smell had stimulated its brain and instincts. It roared in excitement and began to bit the body of the snake tailed crocodile.

As it was eating the body of the monster, three mutated skeletons appeared from different direction.

However, the moment these three began to close on corpse of the snake tailed crocodile they sensed the existence of each other. They roared and began to attack each other.

Dudian was stunned as he was lying on top of a moss covered rock and looking at the scene. The four mutated skeleton's began to attack each other in crazy manner. They tried to bit each other. Additionally they would use their scythed arms to attack. Soon one of the mutated skeleton's was able to cut the head of the second one. It grabbed its head and was about to eat it when the other one attacked and killed it.

There was only one mutated skeleton surviving after four of them battled. It held the heads of the three others and began to bite them. It ate the flesh on the skulls, eyes, ears and other bite. Moreover, after finishing it cracked the skull and began to swallow intracranial tissues.

Dudian was scared at sight.: "Do they kill each other?"

No wonder there weren't much mutated skeletons. They were each other's prey!

"They eat each other ..." Dudian's face turned ugly. He could understand why there were so little number of mutated skeletons and why they were distributed so sparsely.

None of them went to eat the snake tailed crocodile after they were aware of the existence of other mutated skeletons. "Are they cannibals by nature?"

He was surprised but still dazed in a sense as he was speculating about the sitution. He recovered when he heard a roar. The remaining mutated skeleton had eating the heads and bodies of the other mutated skeletons. It's mouth was open wide as it was roaring.

However what shocked and stunned Dudian was that it was evolving right in front of his eyes. Its mouth sprout of for several inches as its teeth got sharp. The bones were growing at eye sight. It was simply an incredible show. It addition to its body size the scythes it had on both arms got bigger.

What kind of a digestion system it had? Moreover how could it absorb the essence(cold crystals) of others at such a visible speed?

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Whoosh! Whoosh!

The mutated skeleton was still roaring in excitement as it has eaten the other three skeletons. At the same time the rustling sounds came of the surrounding grass. A giant rat with sharp hair similar to hedgehog's jumped out of the grass. It's eyes were dark red and there was bloodthirsty luster in them. It's aim was the fluttering mutated skeleton.

"Roar." The mutated skeleton noted the giant rat's attack on time and caught it using its hands. It immediately seized it and bit the giant rat's head. The giant rat issued a painful sharp call and violently struggled. But it couldn't withstand the bite of the mutated skeleton. Blood oozed out from its head and it stopped moving.

Dudian was startled and scared as he saw the scene.: "According to the atlas it is a level 8 rat. Although the rats rarely have a chance to evolve and power up but it was one of those ones..." For monsters to mutate and evolve they needed a virus or the worms that could make them move up the ladder. This way they would inherit new powers and abilities while keep the pre-mutation habits.

An ordinary 'bone rat' wasn't much of a hurdle for hunters. A hunter would disdain attacking an undead not to mention a 'bone rat'. However this 'bone rats' were the predecessors of this giant rat. It was extremely sensitive to the smell of blood and had night

vision ability. Additionally it had dynamic vision. In short this giant rat was the natural nemesis of the hunters. It was described in the atlas that if a senior hunter was caught unprepared then the probability of them to survive giant rat's attack was less than one percent.

"The giant rat wasn't afraid of the mutated skeleton so it means it doesn't see it as its natural enemy. If it is so then the mutated skeleton that is in front of me right now isn't its final phase, is it?" Dudian was thinking about the details. In the three years of the prison life he had learned to find information from subtle hints and clues. Most would be immersed in the bloody picture in front of them but he couldn't help me think about different things.

In reality there wasn't much of a difference between monsters and beasts. The first was the species that were original in creation. The second were the ones that had sprouted up after being affected by virus and radiation. They were more powerful and ferocious than the original. However they would still stick to their natural hunting habits. So they would be regional and they would have natural enemies.

"According to the atlas the natural enemies of the giant rats are 'stone snakes'. Their bodies would be colorless, tasteless and scales would be similar to a rock. Stone snakes would hunt like crocodiles. They would patiently wait for the giant rat to come. To do so they would open up their tail scales and emit bloody odor to tempt the prey. They are one of the most dangerous sneak attacking beasts. An adult stone snake would be level twenty-four to twenty-five... "

If there were giant rats over here then it was impossible for stone snake to appear as they would do their best to avoid them.

The mutated skeleton crushed giant rats body and tore its skin. It bit and began to drink its blood.

Dudian was startled. Does a skeleton have a digestive ability? An ordinary undead never had such a system. You could tore apart ordinary undead's stomach and all of its internal organs would fall but it would still be able to act. Although this variant skeleton's body was intact but did it mean that it had acquired new abilities? Could be able to absorb and digest the other beings... But then it meant that it was becoming similar to a living creature!

Dudian heard the sounds from distance. He turned to see an almost three meter high monster similar to a hound running at the variant skeleton. Its forelimbs were protruding out of its huge neck. It had slightly cracked mouth with full of large fangs.

Dudian had never seen such a monster in the atlas. Actually, the atlas he had read was three years ago before the jail time. Every month a new version of the atlas would be publish so even if there was information about this monster he hadn't read the latest version so he wasn't aware of details.

A python with dark gold colored scales which was about seven or eight meters long quickly swim behind this hound like monster.

"Arghh!" variant skeleton roared and rushed at three meter tall hound like beast. It waved its long arms that had scythes.

The hound roared in anger as it tried to bit the variant skeleton.

Variant skeleton moved sideways and avoided the hounds bite. It turned to attack the hound again.

There was a storm boiling in Dudian's mind.: "It knows that is should avoid the danger! Does it have consciousness?"

Dudian thought of the first arrow that he had used to shot the variant skeleton. The arrow had hit its face but it had used its hand to unplug it! An ordinary undead wouldn't be aware of the pain! It wouldn't bother to take it out at all!

"The undeads are evolving...The variant skeleton has consciousness..." Dudian's body slightly trembled. There was fear in his heart. No one would understand what kind of a danger it meant! At some point if it could think like a human being then there was unlimited potential for the undeads!

He recovered from his daze when the variant skeleton injured the hound and it fell of. However its other arm was bitten and the python wasn't affected at all.

It was about the kill the hound when the python's attack successful. It bit onto variant skeleton's arm, its fangs pierces and venom infiltrated the variant skeleton's system.

Variant skeleton roared as its arm was broken. It struggled to get

away from python's grasp while its arm was fractured.

The python began wriggle and wind up variant skeleton's body. It was going to take advantage of variant skeleton's weakness.

Dudian knew that he had got an amazing opportunity. He crawled and reached 200 meters distance and bent over the grass. He took out one of the silver arrow's and aimed. The next moment he released the string and arrow was shot.

The arrow shot and pierced python's neck. His purpose was not to kill it but seriously injure. The variant skeleton would run amok without the python containing it.

Dudian took out the second arrow and aimed at variant skeleton head. Puff! The arrow pierced its mouth and tore its face.

Variant skeleton's body lost the balance because of the arrow and fell down. The python's began to loosen its grip because of the pain.

Dudian took the third arrow and was about to kill the python. He was planning to kill it then fight the weakened variant skeleton. However, the skeleton roared loudly and his plan was interrupted. As the variant skeleton after issuing the loud roar, bowed its head and opened its mouth to bite the python's head.

Python twisted its body in pain and tried to tighten its grasp but it wasn't able to break out from variant skeleton's mouth. Python

struggled and swung its head but nothing changed.

Moreover, python's mouth loosened and the variant skeleton's arm quickly clung to its head. It began to bite the python with more force.

Python crazily twisted its body which led the variant skeleton's body roll on the ground. Dudian didn't know it was the affect of mercury or variant skeleton's bite but the python appeared to weaken. After few moments it gradually stopped twisting and its grasp over the variant skeleton's body loosened.

Variant skeleton's was still biting down the python's neck.

Dudian's face changed and he made another shot.

Puff! The arrow shot onto skeleton's face but didn't hit its eye. Two hundred meters was good for him but the probability of hitting skeleton's small eyes was very low.

As the arrows hit its face the skeleton raised its head. It's scarlet red eyes locked onto Dudian's body. It roared in anger. The next moment small bump began to pierce out of its forehead. A bone horn about half of a finger long protruded out of its head.

Dudian didn't expect that the variant skeleton would go through mutation once again. Its body was rapidly changing to a form which Dudian had never seen or heard of.

He aimed and made the third shot.

The horn was piercing out when the arrow shot onto its throat.

Dudian knew that it was a critical time and there was no meaning to save arrows as the future may never come. He caught the fourth arrow and made the shot.

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Woosh!

The arrow shot through the horned skeleton's neck. It cut a bit of flesh and passed out from the back and hit the rubble.

Dudian's eyes shrank as he quickly pulled out the fifth arrow.

Horned skeleton stood up. The fifth arrow hit its chest. The force was so strong that horned skeleton's body stepped back before it could stabilize its. It pulled out the arrow and its scarlet red eyes focused on Dudian. It stared at Dudian as if a snake was staring at frog. The next moment its feet pushed the ground and it rushed at Dudian.

Dudian's face turned ugly. The speed of this horned skeleton was faster than the previous variant skeleton. He quickly pulled out the sixth arrow and waited until horned skeleton reached 100 meters range. Dudian firmly locked onto it and released the string.

The arrow shot past as fast as a meteor.

Dudian didn't looked at the result but turned and ran in hurry.

The horned skeleton roared in anger and raised its hand to pull out the arrow. The wound that the arrow created had dark silverish fluid flowing out. It was the result of hot mercury

spewing out.

He ran at full speed for 100 meters before turning around to glance at horned skeleton. He pulled the string and made another shot.

Although the shot was made in hurry but didn't deviate. Because of his long time practice of 100 meter shots he was able to hit the target without problem. However, Dudian was still not able to hit the horned skeleton's eyes. Instead the arrow had pierced close to the previous injury.

Horned skeleton howled, pulled out the arrow and shot after him.

Dudian didn't give the chance to horned skeleton to move.

He made consecutive shots one after another. The horned skeleton began to move slowly because of the number of silver arrows shot onto its body had affected it. Dudian once again opened the distance as he turned away to run. After a few minutes he turned around to repeat the process. One arrow after another pierced horned skeleton's body. It didn't take long before it stopped moving and threw itself onto ground.

Dudian was relieved as he saw the horned skeleton fall down. His armor was soaked in cold sweat. Fortunately he had arrows mixed with mercury. If he had relied on normal iron arrows most probably he would be dead long ago.

“I have twelve more mercury arrows.” Dudian counted the silver arrows in the quiver. He would still be able to continue hunting.

He approached and decreased the distance between himself and the horned skeleton’s body. He used iron arrows to shoot at it. He was assured to see that there was no response. Afterwards he came over and squatted down to cut off its neck.

Kacha! The dagger got stuck.

After continuous effort he was able to cut off its head.

Dudian was not in rush to dissect its head. So inch by inch he cut off its neck to look at the body structure of horned skeleton. It’s aorta was more complete. Moreover in its throat there were black blood vessels which were as thick as a finger. He cut the skull but tried to not to fracture those black blood vessels.

He shrugged up those black blood vessels. Dudian was surprised to see that those black blood vessels were connected to fangs in horned skeleton’s mouth.

There were small, subtle holes in those fangs and insides were empty.

“Vampire teeth?” Dudian couldn’t help but think of the scene where horned skeleton was sucking giant rat’s blood off. It seems that the horned skeleton was using these fangs to do the bidding.

Dudian used the dagger to slice off its belly. A rich rancid smell exuded from the body of the dead horned skeleton. All the organs within the abdomen were frozen. There was no stomach but a mass of dark stenchy mucus.

Dudian felt nauseus as this pungent smell hit his nose. He carried the horned skeleton's head few meters away. Dudian looked at its horn raising from horned skeleton's forehead. It was sharp and had a small angle to its shape. It was similar to the horn of the rhinoceros.

Dudian used the dagger to slice off the skin from the forehead. Surprisingly the horn was directly connected to he skull and grew out form there. He didn't know how it was possible for such a change occur. The thing he was aware of that if he let the horned skeleton to continue to evolve then it was going to become a very big headache.

Dudian pondered a bit on the issue but recovered his thoughts. It didn't take long before he was able to take out the cold crystal from horned skeleton's intracranial tissue. The color of the cold crystal was dark blue. The density of the color was very pure and it was crystal clear.

The purity and the color of the cold crystal was much more cleaner than any cold crystal he had seen previously. He carefully put it into his armor and took out the other iron arrows. The sharp arrow tips had turned blunt which showed how hard the horned skeleton's skull was.

He put the arrows into the quiver and went over to pick the

luggage that had materials from snake tailed crocodile. Afterwards he took the gunpowder box and was ready to leave the place. Suddenly, he sensed a very pale smell quietly approaching the location. It was about hundred meters away from the place he was standing.

His pupils shrank as he immediately clenched the bow. However Dudian't didn't dare to move his body. He didn't know what kind of existence could sneak this close to him without making him aware of its position. His eyes swiftly glanced around. His eyes focused on the grassy area where they had fight moment ago. The light smell was radiating off from there.

Dudian's heartbeat increased as blood rushed into his head. All the muscles in his body tightened. He knew that it was not an ordinary beast which could sneak so close without alerting him.

rustle!

The wind whipped the grass.

Dudian's heart startled as he looked at the grass slowly pushed open. A humanoid body that looked similar to a child walked out. Its body was only half a meter tall. Black scales had covered all of its body from top to bottom. Its hand and feet didn't have fingers but sharp claws. Its face had facial features similar to a human but there were no eyebrows. Its eyes were dark red. It looked up at Dudian but turned to the corpse of the horned skeleton that was on the lying ground.

Whoosh!

In a sudden flash it appeared by the side of horned skeleton's corpse. It was as if it teleported from one point to the other. At first sight the beast looked like a well-behaved child with small mouth. However the moment it closed onto horned skeleton's corpse its mouth opened in an incredible angle. It bit the flesh and blood from horned skeleton's corpse and began to chew it.

Dudian's face changed as he looked at this little black figure.: "Ghoul!"

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It was a high level beast!

The ghoul was not a rare type of monster. But it was very rare to meet it during a hunt. A hunter who would go out for five years may not be able to meet juranzhi or ghoul which is why they were precious beasts.

However, Dudian wasn't excited because he had met such a rare monster. All the hair on his body was erect because of the cool. Dudian knew that it was an adult stage ghoul because of the previous movement of the monster. Normally, it would be classified as level 23 monster.

Run!

Dudian's palms sweated. He was aware that if he made a slight movement then the ghoul would be alerted. He would not be able to outrun it.

Nevertheless, standing still wasn't an option either. If it continued like this then it would rush over after it finishes with eating the horned skeleton's corpse.

What to do?

Cold sweat flowed down his forehead. He controlled his emotions

and calmed down. He was rapidly brainstorming as he thought about the information about the ‘Ghoul’s written in the atlas.

> Favorite meal: Eating undeads.
>
> Geographical habits: It’s dominant in dry places. Rarely could be found in swamps and other wet places.
>
> Weak parts: eyes, abdomen.
>
> Special reminder: Ghouls fear light and fire. If flame is used then there is a great chance to scare it away.

There was very brief information about ghouls in the atlas. After all few came back alive after fighting against it. So the intelligence gathered about it was very limited.

“Fire … …” Dudian’s body was tight and he was nervous as he thought about matches in his pocket. Dudian’s eyes were on ghoul’s body while his hand little by little was raised to touch his armor.

The ghoul seemed to be extremely hungry. It was focused on eating the horned skeleton’s corpse and didn’t care about Dudian’s existence.

Dudian didn’t dare to think that a rush movement from his side

would be overlooked by the ghoul. His fingers touched the matchbox and he carefully clipped it out from his pocket. The whole action seemed to take an eternity to happen. His eyes were focused on the gunpowder box on the side. He thought to lit the match, throw it on the gunpowder box and run the hell away.

"Its just too raw away. Even if it detonates it won't injure the ghoul much!" Dudian continued to think.: "If I ignite the weeds then it will take time for fire to spread. Moreover most of the grass is green and the ground should be muddy. A small match won't ignite a fire!"

"I'm in a difficult position."

"Explosives are too far away."

"I can't fight head on with the monster."

"Running away seems unreasonable."

Dudian came to a conclusion after racking his brain for sometime. There was a slim hope. However he was anxious. He looked at the corpse of the horned skeleton. Ghoul had eaten almost everything. Only the ribs and few internal organs were left. The ghoul was grabbing flesh and stuffing into its mouth. Dudian knew that his time was running out as the ghoul was almost finished with the horned skeleton's corpse.

"I gotta fight!"

He quickly opened the match box and took out matches. He began to friction them to ignite the matches. He fired the leads covered in gunpowder and continued to fire another four or five of them.

The ghoul noted Dudian's actions. Its face was stained with thick black blood. The scene made Dudian's heart go crazy. There was no human expression on child-like ghoul's facial features.

Whoosh!

The ghoul suddenly jumped as if its was a monkey. The action was as fast as lightning.

Dudian didn't turn to look back as he ran away.

Even if Dudian was first to leave the scene the initial distance between the two was a bit more than ten meters. It quickly shortened with ghoul's quick reaction.

Whoosh!

Dudian suddenly relaxed his hand as he pulled out the dagger and shot back at ghoul as if it was a javelin.

The ghoul didn't expect that prey it was going after would cast something to fight back. It was late to avoid the dagger and it hit

the ghoul's shoulder. A crisp sound echoed. Sharp dagger which was flying at high speed failed to pierce the ghoul's scales. It fell to the side after the dagger hit the ghoul's shoulder.

The ghoul didn't get hurt but was provoked. It issued a roar in anger and jumped again.

"Again!"

Dudian once again threw the dagger which was on his waist.

The length of this dagger was much larger in comparison to the other.

The ghoul was in the air saw the dagger shot at him. It raised its claw to block the dagger. The scale covered claw hit the dagger but ghoul's momentum was broken because of it. If Dudian hadn't attacked then ghoul would have reached him by now. Dudian used this opportunity to rush out of ghoul's range of attack.

The ghoul fell to the ground but its legs stretched as it made another jump.

Dudian was taken aghast as he the physical performance of the ghoul. His feet stamped the ground and his body rolled sideways.

The ghoul touched the ground Dudian was moments ago. It growled and turned towards Dudian's direction.

Dudian got up and saw the ghoul rushing back at him. He didn't continue to escape. There was about two or three meters distance between them. He would be caught anyway. Moreover it would be very dangerous if his back faced the ghoul.

Dudian took a deep breath.

The ghoul's body jumped toward Dudian face as if was a smart black monkey.

Dudian got angry, growled and raised his hand to catch the flapping arm of the ghoul. He smoothly used his palms to catch and grip its arm and used the ghoul's inertia to threw it to the rear.

Everything happened in the blink of an eye. The ghoul was caught off guard.

Bang! The ghoul's body hit the ground and rolled around as if it was a ball. The ghoul quickly stood up. It was not hurt but there was a grim expression on its child-like facial features. The original human like small mouth of the ghouls abruptly opened as if it was a highly elastic material. It's spike like sharp teeth were revealed.

"Argh!" It howled in anger and was about to rush over at Dudian when a giant force surged over its body. The ghoul's figure was swallowed in rapidly expanding fire.

Boom!

Sound of violent explosion echoed out.

The ghouls was thrown out of the place. Previously it was standing on the place where the gunpowder box was located.

Although there was a distance of seven or eight meters between the explosion point and Dudian but the burning hot heat blew all over his body. Moreover, dust particles covered the air and a distinctive smoke taste radiated off the air.

Dudian's chest violently pushed up and down. If he didn't grasp the change and threw the ghoul's body then he was planning to personally run to the gunpowder box and die with the ghoul.

Dust particles decreased.

Black smoke drifted around.

Dudian didn't have time to breathe as a shadow quickly jumped at him. Because of the raging power of the hit Dudian's body flew back. The armor on his chest was heavily hit by the punch.

Dudian's spine hit the grass. His eyes narrowed as he looked at the ghoul. A fear and panic gushed out in his heart. He didn't think that a box of gunpowder would kill ghoul. But he would never think that such a serious explosion wouldn't injure the ghoul at all.

The ghoul's mouth opened and its sharp teeth were revealed once again. Its head went down to bite Dudian's face.

In this time of life and death Dudian roared in anger and burst out with extraordinary power. He used his left hand to severely punch the ghoul's head.

Bang!

Sound of the impact echoed followed by slight sounds of cracking bones.

The ghoul's body rolled back for four or five meters.

Dudian stood up and looked at ghoul which slowly stood up. It's actions weren't clear as its whole body shook. It looked like a drunk person who wasn't able to stand still.

There was only one idea popping up in Dudian's mind as he saw the state ghoul was in. "KILL!"

He could survive and live on by only killing it!

He rushed on and kicked ghouls head. The ghoul fell down once again.

Dudian quickly grabbed from its arm and lifted ghoul's body. Although the ghoul looked the size of a child but its weight was

about two hundred pounds or so.

Dudian lifted his feet and hit its head. He was going to use his left arm to catch the other arm of the ghoul but he saw that the broken bones were protruding and piercing out from his left arm. Moreover blood was constantly flowing out.

Dudian understood why he was able to hit the ghoul moments ago with such a force. His left hand wasn't conscious. In a sense, his nervous system was not working at all. That's why in time of anger he had gone and punched the ghoul with all the power he could muster. But the outbreak of power was beyond the limits of his left arm. It was almost destroyed!

Dudian didn't feel any pain yet so he concentrated on hitting the ghoul's head down.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

After continuous trampling the ghoul's head was stuck deep into the soil.

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“Arghh!”

The ghoul roared loudly. Suddenly an amazing force broke out from its body and it was able to force Dudian back. It rolled for a few times and turned to sit a toad-like position. It’s dark red eyes were staring at Dudian. There were no emotions in them. It was a cold look of a hunter staring at its prey.

It jumped towards Dudian.

Dudian’s face change. There was no way back!

He clenched his fist and punched.

Bang!

Dudian’s left hand bounced out and hit the face of ghoul. The blood splashed out. It wasn’t ghoul’s but Dudian’s blood. More bone cracking sounds echoed out form his left arm.

The ghoul was hit and fell to the ground. It issued a scream and immediately stood up.

Dudian pulled out another dagger from his legging and rushed at the ghoul.

Puff! Dagger was able to puncture the ghoul's scale and pass through its cervial spine.

"ARGH ... ..." Ghoul screamed as it waved its claws.

Dudian saw that his attack was successful so he put the pressure of his body way to pierce the dagger deeper. Pop! A sound echoed out. Dudian knew that the dagger had pierced some kind of important artery within the ghoul's neck. He didn't daze but continued to put pressure.

"Ow ..." The ghoul screamed in pain as its body twisted.

Dudian tightly pressed the dagger. He changed the dagger's direction and cross-cut its neck. He made a proper cut and the blood began to spout of the wound.

The ghoul was not an undead but an evolved one. It had digestive system and awareness. Its throat was naturally one of its weak points.

As its throat was cut halfway the pain was so bad that the ghoul went mad. It used both of its sharp claws to sweep over Dudian's legs. Dudian was wearing senior hunter's armor but it was stil torn and there were bloodstains on the armor.

Dudian loosened the dagger and grabbed the ghoul's leg. He lifted its body up.

As Dudian's pulled its legs the small body of the ghouls was also lifted. Its body was hung in air as it swung around the claws. The blood gushed out from its throat as if water was dumping from a bucket. The ground was filled with red colored blood. The weeds were also stained.

It didn't take long when the ghoul's struggling weakened. Its head was softly hanging form the loose neck. It looked like it will fall down any time soon.

Dudian repeatedly hit the ground with ghoul's body. He pulled it up and hit the ground, continuously for a few minutes. The moment he felt that the ghouls was not struggling and reacting at all he stopped. The ghoul's body was not moving and there were no groans coming off from its mouth. It's claws were motionless.

Dudian's tight muscles loosened down. He felt that his right arm was extremely sore. There were claw marks on both of his legs which burned him in pain. He picked up the dagger and inch by inch cut off ghoul's head. He threw away the dagger and sat on the ground. Dudian's was taking big breathes.

After few moments Dudian's vigilance was raised as he saw the blood covering everywhere. He bit his lips. Dudian found the daggers, bow, arrows and as well as the luggage bag. After recovering them he looked around the blood pool to check for the parasitic soul worms. He couldn't find them so he took the ghoul's head and dragged its body along the direction of the giant wall.

After making enough distance from the previous battle ground Dudian found a stone to sit down. He unlocked his luggage and took dry food and water. He ate a bit to recover a little physical strength.

At the same time Dudian's eyes fell on the corpse of the ghoul. There was a daydreamy look in his eyes. Few minutes ago he was desperately running for his life but right now he was able to kill a ghoul!

"I was actually able to kill a level twenty three monster!" Dudian couldn't believe the situation. Even the experienced senior hunters wouldn't be likely to kill the ghoul along on their own. Glenn who was a top level hunter but still she would need someone else to distract the ghoul for her to successfully kill it.

Dudian suddenly though of his left arm. His face became ugly as he the state of his arm. It was miserable. The bones of the arm were split and broken into many parts. In about three or four places the flesh and blood were clearly visible because of the fractures.

"I had to pay some kind of a price ... " Dudian's mouth slightly twitched. He didn't feel any pain coming off from his left arm but still he took gauze from the first aid kit. He pressed back the bones that were protruding out and wrapped the wounds using the gauze. He winding up all of his left arm with the gauze.

He knew that if his left arm was conscious then by this time he should have fainted because of the massive pain.

“All I can do for now is to tie my arm... I will see what can be done after I go back ...”Dudian clenched his teeth. Although he has paid with his arm but he has saved his life. Which hunter haven’t been hurt? However, he couldn’t think of a future where one of his arms was disabled.

He was looking forward to see how advanced the medical technology of the giant wall was. Would they be able to heal his arm? He hoped that nothing serious would result and his superior body would be able to recover on its own.

Dudian restored some of his strength as he leaned against the rock and rested. He looked at the head of ghoul by his foot. His face was gloomy but still he took the head and put it upside down. He began to cut it from neck down to check the inside of the ghoul’s head. There was flesh and blood only. He used the dagger to to pierce the intracranial tissue. It didn’t take him long to find the parasitic soul worms. Their bodies were chubby.

“Parasitic worms from the ghoul ...” Dudian whispered as he looked at the worms. He raised it with dagger and pinched it with his finger.

Dudian picked up the parasitic worm. It was struggling but the moment worm was picked up by Dudian its body twisted and drilled down his finger.

Chapter 222

Dudian naturally wouldn't let it to succed. He rubbed it out before it got past the armor covering his finger. There was no blood and wound.

"If I take it back to the wall and hand it over to Holy Church then we will get compensation of fifty to eighty thousand gold coins for the ghoul's parasitic worm. Although it is an ordinary but it was a precious one. It was the same level as the magic marks Glenn got from the black weaver." He was thinking about the details. "According to the atlas the magic marks ability of the ghoul is the resistance to the virus of the undeads and eating them..."

In the book it was the only ability recorded. As the people who had consumed the parasitic worms haven't gone through the second evolution so they were not aware of what kind of ability would sprout out the second time.

Actually if he had such an ability he could hunt outside the giant wall infinitely. He could kill and eat the undead's the moment he felt he was hungy. He would have immunity towards the virus which meant he would have stronger resistance to the other plague diseases. Some hunters would die in the second quarter of the year at 'Black Death Season' because of the plagues.

"So if it drills into my body it will climb to my chest and replace the magic marks from the juranzhi to the ghoul's. The parasitic worm from the black weaver had replaced Glenn's previous magic marks by replacing them. It is not guaranteed that I'll keep my

previous abilities such as tracing or consuming the cold crystals. ”

Dudian’s eyes lit up as he recalled the words of young instructor who had taught him archery.: “If I want to stimulate my magic marks and make them evolve then I have to baptize it in the blood of other parasitic worms…”

It was called baptism but the process was a bit different to normal ‘baptism’ notion. You would have to use a syringe to inject the blood of the parasitic worm into his magic marks. The impurities would be extracted by the magic mark automatically while the rest of the cells will be moisturized by the blood. Afterwards the magic marks would go through the transformation.

Dudian didn’t intend to bring the parasitic worm of the ghoul back to the wall because of few reasons. First of all, the Holy Church had to assess the value of the parasitic worm and convert it to gold coins accordingly. For that the Holy Church was going to get a fee. This was one of the terms states in the contract. The Holy Church extracted ‘gate passing tax’ from all the consortiums. It meant that all the materials brought back through the passages would be priced and afterwards some amount from it would be taken by the Holy Church as a tax.

Once he took back the parasitic worm of the ghoul, all the other consortia will soon get the news. Right now all of them were mutually in a ‘wait and see’ position. The consortia were clearly observing them. Most probably the other consortia thought that either New World Consortium will go bankrupt or the hunter would die out of the giant wall. In the second case the Ryan family won’t be able to continue to support the consortium as they would

lack hunters. In both situations the moral of the story was demise of the New World consortium.

If these consortia knew that not only he returned back but brought a parasitic worm of a ghoul from the ‘death passage’ then most of the will be provoked. They may even try to find ways to occupy this passage.

As he thought about these issues Dudian looked at the parasitic worm of the ghoul in his hand. He was silent but the next moment he took out a small box from his backpack. He cut a bit flesh and blood form the corpse of the ghoul and put it inside the box. Afterwards he put the parasitic worm inside the box, at least for temporarily until he decided what he would do with it. He left a bit of gap for air to infiltrate the box.

“Something to inject …” Dudian glanced around the surroundings. Everything had long turned into dust. He wouldn’t be able to find any syringe. Neverthless, he racked his brains as he remembered knowledge about a certain grass which he had learned back from the scavenger days. There was a plant called ‘spear grass’. It would grow up in dry places. It was small and tubelike. Its insides were holloy while the tip of it would be very sharp and fine. Moreover, its juice contained anesthetic features. Most of the anesthesia juices would be extracted from this ‘spear grass’ within the wall.

He stepped onto the ground. It was a hard and dry place. He began to search for the area where the spear grass could be found.

It didn’t take long to find area with lots of weeds and grasses. He

had located a large spear grass.

Dudian immediately used the dagger to cut off a spear grass. He opened the box and saw the parasitic worm was lying inside box on the flesh. IF the host died for too long and the parasitic worm didn't find a new host then it was going to die.

However even if it died, it still could stimulate the magic marks. The main point was that it doesn't rot.

Dudian found clean and large leaves. He put them on top of the luggage and placed parasitic worm on top of the leaves. Dudian used the dagger to slice parasitic worm's body. A very viscous blood squeezed out from its soft body..

Dudian quickly crushed it and poured all the blood onto the larger end of the spear grass. The whole process was going extremely slow as he was using his right hand only. After he finished preparing the natural syringe, he took off the armor from his upper body. His chest was pale. A dark red vein like scar was on his chest. He pinched the tip of the magic mark and gently pierced the spear grass onto it.

Dudian felt sharp pain all over his body.

It felt as if his brain was going to burst out. The magic mark was very fatal and extremely weak location on any hunter's body. He didn't dare to penetrate too deep or else it was equivalent to suicide.

After the spear grass had entered a little he began to blow from the large end of the grass.

The air squeezed the blood of the parasitic worm along the spear grass and injected it into Dudian's magic marks.

Dudian felt that as if another foreign or alien form has invaded his heart. It was an extremely weird and painful process. He was sweating a lot.

After few moments he saw that there was nothing left within the spear grass and everything was already injected into his magic marks so he pulled out the spear grass.

Dudian looked down at his magic mark. The hole which was pierced by the spear grass was healing at a speed visible to the naked eye. Additionally he still felt bursts of pain coming off from the magic mark. It felt very strange. One moment he would feel that his body was frozen and the next it would be burning hot. He couldn't tell whether it was too cold or too hot.

Dudian felt very tired and exhausted. He leaned against the luggage to rest. The pain coming off from his chest gradually subsided. But an extremely hot feeling began to cover his body. It was as if hot magma was flowing inside his body. He used his finger to touch the magic marks. It seemed the magic mark was shrinking down... As if it was...digesting the blood of the parasitic worm.

Dudian felt very uncomfortable. The sharp bursts of pain tingled

his scalp. He shook his head to loosen the dizziness. Dudian stood up and took the luggage and began to walk towards the giant wall. A strong exhaustion and tire invaded every cell of his body after he made few steps. He knew that he was in wilderness and it was extremely dangerous but he couldn't resist the sleepiness. He softly sat down and closed his eyes.

Dudian woke up when he felt a cold breeze brushing his cheeks.

He instantly opened his eyes and stood up. There were red clouds hanging in the sky. The sun was setting in the west. It was evening.

Dudian sensed the smells in the surroundings. There were two monsters in the previous fighting ground. They should be attracted to that location because of the smell of the blood.
Cold sweat flowed down his spine. He knew that if he slept close to that location he would be dead by now. Fortunately, he had covered the smell coming off from his body and the luggage before injecting the blood of parasitic worm.

He remember the magic marks and looked down at his chest. He was surprised to see that the shape of the magic marks has changed a little. The length of the previous mark was about a finger long. Right now it hand increased for about one-third.

Dudian's hand touched the magic marks. He didn't felt pain but it was cold. He put on the armor. He knew that temporarily he had to stay here for the night.

Dudian had returned to a previously cleaned ruins by the time sun completely set off. He was hiding in the basement floor of a collapsed building. There were dust and vines all around the place. He picked a place to sit and put off the luggage. He picked dry wood and piled them up. After using the matches to ignite the flame the place got a bit warmer.

Dudian was excited to check his body. He knew that after the magic mark evolved his constitution would substantially increase. Moreover he may get a new magic mark ability or one of his previous abilities may strengthen again.

His running speed was much faster than the time before his magic marks evolved. It was a proof that the rough injection method had worked. Now, its time to check the abilities.

Chapter 223

“It’s seems the evolution of the magic marks hasn’t improved the range sense of smell.” Dudian’s eyes lit up. As a primary hunter he acquired three abilities from the juranzhi. First was his super smell, second was dark vision and the third ability was digestion of cold crystals! If someone had acquired magic marks from a ghoul then they would have 2 abilities. So in comparison it was the advantage and benefit of acquiring magic marks from a rare beast.

“I don’t know whether I’m going to get a new ability or the capacity of the previous abilities would increase.” Dudian ‘s heart was in peace. However he looked forward to get a new ability. However verification of the new ability would be a bit hard. As the resistance to the virus could be found out if an undead bit him or he had to eat the corpse of undead to know if he could do so.

He began to sense the smell around the surrounding area. He determined that the sense of smell wasn’t strengthened. Although there was a difference but it was due to strengthening of his constitution.

His sense range had to be at least doubled if his sensing ability was strengthened.

Verification of dark vision was much simple. He looked at the corners and saw that there was no difference in comparison to his previous sight. It seems there was no effect to second ability.

Dudian took out all the cold crystals that he had gathered in the last two days. There were total of twenty five cold crystal taken from the horned skeletons and stored in a small metal box.

The metal box seemed to be almost frozen. A white chill floated out the moment he opened the box.

He looked at a smaller cold crystal which he had acquired from a juvenile skeleton. Dudian checked his left arm which was wrapped in white bandage. He hesitated to use the cold crystals on his left hand as it was broken and he didn't know whether it could absorb cold crystals.

After a moment of hesitation, Dudian choose to test on his right hand. Because of excessive absorption of the cold crystals his left arm had became senseless so this time he was going to absorb only one.

He bit his finger and blood oozed out. He pressed his finger onto cold crystal.

The cold crystal began to soften. It didn't take long for it to turn liquid and get absorbed into his body through the wound.

Dudian felt cold liquid disperse into his body through the blood vessels on his arm. It quickly climbed over his shoulder and went back to his heart. The cold feeling invaded his heart and his body trembled a bit.

The next moment this cold feeling began to flow through the cardiovascular flow to various parts of his body. His body temperature rapidly began to decline.

But soon he felt like a boiling heat spread throughout his body. It was like a volcano eruption. It was like his blood was boiling and strong power flowed through his body. Some of his numerous muscles in his arm twisted.

“Very strong …” Dudian was shocked. It was the first time that he had absorbed the cold crystal from a variant skeleton. He didn’t expect the effect to be so significant. Noe only his energy recovered but his body was full of strength!

It was same as the feeling he got after he had absorbed about a dozen of ordinary cold crystal he got from normal undeads. This effect was a bit stronger.

After a moment the feeling gradually calmed down.

Dudian looked at the rest of the cold crystals and wanted to grab one to absorb again. However thinking of his left hand he didn’t continue to do so. It would be ver inconvenient in the future if his right hand also lost consciousness. This time when he fought against the ghoul, his left arm saved his life. Although he was able to burst out the ultimate potential of his limb but he had ended up damaging his body.

Moreover, if there was no perception then it would be extremely difficult to control the power of his arms and hands.

“I hope I will be able to recover my left arm … …” Dudian secretly prayed in his heart.

The next moment he thought back about his body. Because it was the first time he was absorbing the cold crystal of a variant skeleton it was very difficult to distinguish whether his absorption ability has strengthened. He couldn’t determine that it was the effect of his ability that he recovered his energy or it was the cold crystal that was powerful.

“I have to return to the giant wall at dawn. The first thing to be done is to recover my left arm! We have rented the passage so I can came anytime I feel so. It’s not like the previous time when Mellon consortium would decide when I should go out.” Dudian made up his made and leaned back on wall to rest. He closed his eyes and went into a shallow sleep.

At about eleven o’clock in the evening Dudian smelled two or three beasts in the vicinity. It seemed that they were just passing by so he didn’t care about them.

At dawn. Next day.

Dudian woke up. The fire has long been extinguished but the charcoal was still hoat. He took out dry food and water from the backpack to fill his stomach. His hand seized the metal kettle which had water. He was startled as he saw the size and shape of his fingernails.

He remember that he had cut his fingernails before he came out. It didn't take two days...Actually it was all good yesterday night. How could the nails grow so longer after a night? Moreover his original nails were oval but these ones were sharp like paws of the beast.

He suddenly thought of his magic marks. His three abilities were not strengthened but instead a new ability was developed!

However, rapid development of nails?

The joy in his heart immediately dispersed. After the second or third evolution sometimes an extremely powerful ability would develop from an ordinary magic mark. However, some rare magic marks like his would develop a very poor and ordinary ability after the late evolution.

A sharp nail?

After all, humans depend on armor and weapons. They would forge them out of furs and claws of creatures which would protect them.

"What the hell!?" Dudian was silent as he poked the metal kettle with his hand. The bitterness in his heart thickened. He sat in a daze for a long time before he grabbed the kettle to drink water. He shook his head as he didn't want to think about it anymore. Just by relying on dark vision and super smell he was comparable to an average intermediate hunter. The most critical point is that he had the ability to absorb cold crystals that would help him to evolve

quickly.

He comforted himself thinking about these. He raised the kettle but the next moment the water gushed onto his hand. He was scared as he looked at the broken kettle.

“Heavens are against me today…” Dudian thought. However the next moment his eyes widened as he looked at the kettle.

His fingers have pierced the metal!

Dudian was stunned. How could he pierce the metal?

He moved his finger along the kettle’s surface. The metal kettle felt like a piece of paper. His nails easily cut it off!

Chapter 224

Dudian knew that it wasn't an illusion. He verified it few more times. His nails were able to cut through indestructible metal as if he was cutting through a butter. He didn't put any effort at all.

Next moment, he tried to cut the linen bag but previously sharp nails failed.

Dudian was alarmed. He grabbed many things around to check if he was able to cut through them. At the end he came to understand that his nails would reveal this strange ability once they came in contact with metals only. If he tried to cut flesh, blood, hair or anything else they would be just like ordinary nails just a bit more sharper.

"The hardest is the medal out of all that I had tried." Dudian's eyes lit up as he was surprised. He had the scientist side to him which was pondering about the issue. The metal was absolutely harder and solid than fabric. After many experiment he saw that nails were effective only against the metal.

Is it about the particles?

In order to test different metals he took out his daggers and arrows.

He could pierce them without exception.

The nail's penetration rate was slower when he tried to cut through inner layer of the hunter's armor which was made of lead plates.

Dudian closely observed his nails while testing their piercing power. He found out that the moment his nails came in contact with a metal a shiny layer gushed out on top of his fingers. But when he tried to grasp or grab clothing or other things he couldn't see this shiny layer appear.

Dudian knew that this layer of luster was the reason why he was able to pierce through the metals. He thought about different elements that repulsed each other.

Perhaps it didn't have anything to do with sharpness of his nails but the secretion of the layer which made an unusual repulsion when it came to contact with the metals.

Dudian was relieved thinking about this point. It seemed to be the only explanation. Otherwise how nail would be sharp enough to cut metal if it couldn't pierce a fabric?

"Metal repulsion! It has to be the intermediate level ability that developed because of evolution of my magic marks. I can use to have surprise effect when fighting against other hunters but it wouldn't be much of an advantage when hunting monsters." Dudian slightly frowned. Although it was good ability as he could penetrate the metal but it didn't have much of a use. Of course, unless he was involved in melee combat with a hunter. The ability

wouldn’t play much of a role if he was against an archer or any other hunter who would put distance between them.

However, the life wasn’t perfect. He had many blows in the last few years so he was able to accept the reality of this ability. Moreover, he could use it in the future to carve metals. He may even produce some unique crafts!

He continued to study more but didn’t find any new role. Dudian gave up and began to eat the dry food. Afterwards he went out of the basement and breathed fresh air and continued to walk towards the direction of the giant wall.

It took him half a day’s time to return to the giant wall. He didn’t encounter any monsters on the way. Probably ten years ago there were many monsters in this part of the giant wall but now most of them have moved on because of food problem. In the short term they wouldn’t come back.

Dudian sighed deeply as he looked at the giant wall towering in front of him. He found ten boxes of gunpowder which were covered with the bags.

He planned to use explosive to create traps to hunt the monsters. Now it seems that this plan can be but into shelf to be used another time. He had to recover his body for time being. Afterwards he would go deeper to hunt for more monsters. Most probably at that time this gunpowder boxes will be handy. Moreover a box of gunpowder wasn’t able to injure a ghoul so he knew that he may meet a monster which won’t necessarily killed even if he used ten boxes of explosives.

“I’ll have to bring more the next time.” Dudian’s heart was in peace as this passage belonged to him and he could hoard gunpowder boxes without being afraid that someone else would find it out.

Dudian found the place he had buried the key. He dig it out and opened the giant iron gate.

Dudian suddenly thought about few things as he looked at the dark passage. There were twenty four cold crystals in the luggage. He pulled out twenty of them while he left the four of them into his backpack.

Dudian went in and closed the huge iron gate. After locking it with the key, he began to wrap it with thick chains.

Dudian came out from the inner door of the giant wall and saw two knights of light guarding the gate. Both of the guards were alerted when they heard the movement. They looked at the luggage at Dudian’s back. One of them said.: “Please stop! Don’t move!”

Dudian stoof by the gate.

The other guard took out a whistle. Moments later a black crow was summoned.

This Knight of Light took out paper and wrote something on it

and tied to black crow's leg.

Dudian knew that they had to let their headquarters informed about his coming. Moreover they had to prepare the place to check him. Both of them looked at Dudian with hatred in their eyes. After some time a team of knights came over. Most of them were squires who were wearing standard silver armor but there were two official Knights of Light leading them.

There was a huge carriage which looked like a portable prison cell.

Dudian looked at the carriage and thought about his days in the prison. If he had the nails piercing ability then he could escape from the prison in a more relaxed way.

"Onto the carriage." One of the knights looked at Dudian from the gap of his helmet and spoke in a cold tone.

Dudian sat in the carriage and said.: "Come on, I'm in hurry!"

"Well!" The Knight of Light narrowed his eyes in disdain. He waved his hand.: "Let's go!"

The team changed their direction and began to move.

They were going to the detention center which Dudian hadn't been to for a long time. In accordance with the rules he handed over all the materials to the Knights of Light. They would be

transferred to the ‘Temple of Elements’ for identification.

Chapter 225

In the blink of an eye seven days passed.

They let him out of the detention center as they saw no mutation had occurred on Dudian which meant that he wasn't infected. The carriage that had Ryan family banner was waiting outside as Dudian left the detention center. The driver was Barton.

"Your arm ..." Barton noticed the bandaged wrapped around Dudian's left arm.

Dudian got into the carriage and said: "Let's go back. We will talk on the way."

Barton raised the whip after he waited for Dudian to sit tightly. The carriage began to slowly drive away.

Dudian was sitting in the compartment. After they left the detention center he asked.: "What has happened in the Ryan family after I left the giant wall?"

Barton shook the rope and lowered his voice.: "Nothing. The second day after your departure Old Fulin called his third son Sander to his room and dispersed all the servants. That's why I'm not sure about the details of the discussion."

Dudian nodded in silence.

“Old Fulin was happy when he got the news that you were back..” Barton added.

Dudian nodded and didn’t ask questions any more.

It didn’t take long for them to reach the border fortress. Dudian showed them his hunter medal and the proof issued by detention center.

After a few hours of ride they were able to pass the wilderness and reach the Ryan castle.

The carriage followed the path through the hillside to the castle. Old Fulin his second son Jake, third son Sander were waiting for Dudian at the entrance. Moreover Old Fulin’s grandson Hugh and and Jake’s daughter Gina were present too.

Barton jumped off the carriage and trotter over to help Dudian.

Dudian waved at him indicating that he didn’t need help. In addition he didn’t want to displace bones in his left arm.

Everyone was gloomy as they saw the bandages covering Dudian’s arm.

Sander helped his father to move as he was worried that Old Fulin may fall down.

“Mr. Dean, your arm ... ” The first person to meet Dudian was Jake. His face turned ugly as he saw the bandage.: “Is it serious? Will you be able to fight later on?”

Old Fulin frowned and scolded him.: “Bastard!”

Jake recovered.: “Mr Dean you should quickly go to rest your body.”

Dudian looked at Old Fulin.: “I will bother you to find the best doctors to treat the shattered bones in my arm.”

Old Fulin’s face changed.: “You should go ahead to rest, I’ll solve out that matter.” Sander who was on side offered his help.: “Come Mr Dean.”

Dudian waved his hand to stop him and returned to the castle on his own.

Everyone greeted Old Fulin as he came to Dudian’s room on second floor. He ordered the others to leave and leaned against the bedside.: “Are you really hurt?”

Dudian replied.: “Do you not like the idea of me being hurt?”

Old Fulin saw Dudian admitting the injury.: “I knew it. I shouldn’t have rented this passage. The news of your injury will

spread to the ears of other consortia. It will be a huge blow to our consortium."

Dudian said.: "It's alright let them look at us with disdain for now. "

"I'm just worried that in the future your injuries will affect your hunting." Old patriarch voiced out his opinion.

Dudian told him.: "You shouldn't be worried about that. Even if my arm will be wasted, it won't affect me at all. I will be able to kill monsters. "

Old Fulin couldn't understand his words but didn't refute him.: "I will find the best doctor around so don't lose your heart and hope. You must be cured even if all the money we have had to be spent."

"I'm not frustrated." Dudian smiled.: "I won't surrender so easily."

Old Fulin's heart relieved and he laughed.: "How is the situation outside the passage?"

Dudian replied to his question.:" After so many years the number of the lower level monsters outside the passage aren't much. Only the ferocious ones are left. Nevertheless, most of the have migrated to other areas because of the food. But I haven't been to deep regions to I assume the situation is not optimistic. Perhaps I

will have to wait to become a senior hunter before going deeper to explore.”

Old Fulin was silent for a while as he was focused in his thoughts. He looked at the Dudian who was lying on bed.: “You are even younger than my grandchildren. It is hard for you to shoulder the problems of consortium on your own. We can recruit few hunters to help you out.”

“No need for that. We don’t need ordinary people as we are doing extraordinary things.” Dudian smiled.: “Do not forget about the alchemy products that we use outside the passage. If we recruit other hunters then they will inevitable be exposed.”

Old Patriarch sighed.: “The other consortia use hunter teams and there is a clear division of responsibilities. It will help us out to hide many things.”

“For the time being I will act alone. Afterwards we may think about options.” Dudian replied.

Old Fulin looked at him.: “What about those three little guys that you have brought with yourself?”

“They are out of question.” Dudian answered.: “Their physical fitness is not suitable for fighting outside the giant wall. We don’t have time to wait for you to raise gold coins and recruit some hunters. But you shouldn’t be worried as I’ll find evil wolves…”

Old Fulin was startled. He didn't think that Dudian had a great network. It seems he has again underestimated Dudian's capabilities.

Old Fulin changed the topic.: "We have about twelve thousand gold coins. The new looms are used in various place so the orders we got are very little now. Right now we rely on monthly dividends from Scott consortium and your hunting. The 'Temple of Elements' have identified and given the total value for your hunting materials. They will issue three hundred twenty eight gold coins and 17 silver coins. It's good to have such a harvest in the first exploration."

Dudian asked.: "Can we get four cold crystals form the hunt?"

Old Fulin was slightly surprised but he shook his head.: "I will be very difficult. Although the value of a cold crystal is a gold coin but it belongs to Holy Church now."

Dudian took note of his rhetoric.: "So, is there a way?"

Old Fulin helplessly replied.: "There is no way that we can't get our hands on them as long as we give the money. If you insist on it then I would be able to get four cold crystals. However the price will be great. Four cold crystals that you have brought in would cost us about two hundred gold coins."

Dudian immediately said.: "Then help me to get them. But tell them to give us the four cold crystal from my hunt. I have means to identify them so tell them that not to try to fool you."

Old Fulin was surprised.: “Are these four cold crystals so important?”

“You must get them.” Dudian said.

Old Fulin nodded in understanding.: “Alright, I will help you get them.”

“Thank you.”

“I have to thank you.”

…

The next day.

Old Fulin had invited a doctor. He brought him upstairs to diagnose Dudian’s condition.

The doctor was a middle-aged man. There was a beautiful girl who was his assistant and carrying his medicine box.

“Hello Mr. Dean.” Middle-aged man said and looked at the gauze wrapped around Dudian’s arm.: “I will have to open the gauze to check your arm’s condition. Please relax your body. If you have pain then let me know.”

Dudian nodded and raised his left arm.: “I’ll be bothering you.”

Middle-aged person politely looked at him. He waved the girl to take out small scissors from the medicine box. They carefully cut the bandage and removed the gauze. Dudian’s left arm was exposed.

There were four or five places where fractures were clearly visible. There were signs of inflammation.

Chapter 226

Neither Old Fulin nor middle-aged doctor expected Dudian's injuries to be so serious. Old Fulin thought that Dudian's previous claims about injury was just a light understatement. He was injured so badly but he could still talk and move so easily. What kind of willpower the kid had?

The girl who was holding onto medicine box was stunned. She didn't expect the kid who was similar to her age would have such a terrible injury. There was pity in her eyes as she looked at Dudian.

Dudian felt her gaze but didn't look at her. He said to the doctor.: "Can you fix it?"

Middle-aged doctor recovered from daze.: "I have to look carefully to know details about the fractures." Then he gently touched Dudian's arm. He felt the fractured bones under the flesh. It was like countless heap of stones inside his arm. He was shock as he looked at Dudian's calm eyes. How could he restrain his emotions? He said to Dudian.: "It's very serious. Curing our wounds would be very... difficult!"

"It's not a problem as much as there is a hope for recovery." Dudian looked at middle-aged doctor.: "What about surgery?"

Middle-aged doctor nodded.: "Yes we have to do surgery. We will need to peel the skin off and look at the degree of fractures. If there are no defects then we will fix them up. Hopefully it will be healed

back to normal in few years.”

Dudian nodded in understanding. In this era this kind of promise was already quite a good result. Because the level of medicine wasn’t up to par with the old era, he didn’t expect much from them.”

“Then I’ll rely on you.” Dudian said.

“I will do my best to help you.” The middle-aged doctor reached out to the girl: “The bandage.” The girl handed out new gauze and the doctor bandaged Dudian’s arm again.: “We don’t have required tools with us. I’ll come back tomorrow.”

“Alright.” Dudian nodded.

Middle-aged doctor bowed in salute. The butler of the house accompanied them out.

“Your injury was too heavy!” Old Fulin’s face was pale as he said after the middle-aged doctor left.: “I have some painkillers in my room. I’ll tell the maid to bring them over.”

“No need.” Dudian shook his head.: “The pain will make me stronger.” He didn’t want to tell Old Fulin that his left arm was numb. Actually he valued the knowledge about his physical condition a lot. He was very confidential about it and wouldn’t reveal it unless he was forced to.

Old Fulin deeply sighed.: “I will tell the butler to improve the quality of your food. You have a good rest.” Afterwards he left the room.

...

The next day middle-aged doctor came over with a large medicine box to make the surgery.

“This is the best anesthetic. It has long lasting effect. You will sleep and won’t feel any pain. ” Middle-aged doctor said to Dudian as he cut off the bandage. Although it was the second time that he met Dudian but yesterday’s performance made him to admire Dudian.

Dudian said.: “Don’t worry I won’t interfere with your surgery.”

They no longer went with the advice but began the surgery.

As they cut some parts of his flesh they saw that not only the bones were broken but blood veins were punctured too. It had caused the blood flow not to work properly which hand ended up in necrosis.

Middle-aged doctor was sweating because he was too nervous. They were homing the bones, meridians and the blood veins.

The surgery lasted for five hours. They used anesthetic for four times and each one was effective for about an hour.

The surgery was completely over by the afternoon. Dudian's left arm was stitched together. They had used plywood to make sure that his bones would fix together in the right direction. The middle-aged doctor almost collapsed after the surgery. He warned Dudian.: "You can't touch water with your left arm. IF there is an uncomfortable reaction then immediate inform me. I'll come to check once every week."

"Thank you."

Old Fulin came into the room after the doctor and his assistant left.: "Do you feel comfortable?"

Dudian smiled.: "Its to early to say anything. Is there any news about us in today's newspaper?"

"Look at you! You still care about this." Old Fulin didn't hesitate to scold him in elderly way but still continued.: "As we have expected the other consortia have been informed about your injury. The matter was highlighted in special newspaper about hunter. Actually, these days you can be considered a famous figure in hunter circle but not in a good way … "

Dudian said: "Let me take a look."

Old Fulin asked the butler to bring newspapers. He handed them to Dudian.: "Green consortium has hunted an unknown monster. According to 'Temple of Elements' the monster's bone marrow contains high fat. It can be made into a portable torch for

exploration ... ”

“Mellon consortium has completely cleaned out area no 6 under their command. There is a potential to make a lot of money in the short term ...”

“Scott consortium lost three primary hunters while cleaning area no 7. They have hunted a rare ‘corruptor’. Scott consortium hasn’t decided to sell the magic marks or use it themselves...”

Dudian read the article until the end. According to the atlas the ‘corruptor’ was ranked in top three. According to the assessment the monsters are divided into ordinary, rare and legendary. There were eight known monsters in the legendary rank. Only a handful of people have been able to consume magic marks from legendary rank monsters in the last two hundred years of the history.

The most recent hunter who acquired a magic mark like that appeared thirty years ago. The hunter belonged to Noel consortium. Single-handedly he had pushed Noel consortium to the top of the list . However later the legendary hunter died outside the giant wall and his body was not found. Since the Noel consortium had gone an economic downturn and now ranked as the third consortium.

“Young corruptor should be in the same level as a ghoul.” Dudian’s mouth curled up. He was lucky that he was able to consume magic marks from a rare beast.

“The New World consortium has dispatched an intermediate

level hunter to the ‘death passage’ that they have rented. The hunter has returned and his arm is seriously injured. The harvest is low… ” Dudian saw that they were highlighted in the newspaper. The layout of the column was relatively large. He knew that they were not concerned about New World consortium but were more inclined to report about them because of the ‘death passage’.

Chapter 227

The Butler gently knocked the door.

“Come in.” Old Fulin said while he pestled with crutch. He turned towards the door and looked at butler.: “What has happened?”

“Master, Mr. John came and is waiting for you in the hall.” The middle-aged butler said and bowed in respect.

Old Fulin nodded: “I’ll go and see him.” He asked Dudian to take care of his body while he reached out to butler to help him to leave the room.

Dudian continued to read other newspapers. It seems the Scott consortium and Mellon consortium were competing over various regions because of the new textile machines. Because of the limited supply there was a fierce competition in the market and their relationship has become more unfriendly.

“The inventor of the new textile machine Mr Dean has personally granted us the drawings to produce the looms. We are producing the machines according to the inventor’s original description and there is no faulty parts, damage or other issues... ” The Scott consortium was affirming their cooperation with him in their newspaper. Although copyright was something that was held true only by the dark church but it didn’t mean that people preferred fake over the original. Even the ordinary civilians would do their

best to buy the original as they would be the most sophisticated products. They would avoid buying imitations. This statement given by the Scott consortium in the newspapers affiliated to them undoubtedly was extremely critical and deadly hit to the Mellon consortium.

“It seems Mellon consortium is going to lose against the Scott consortium in this battle. Failure is a matter of time. Even if other consortia tried to support Mellon from the shadows at best they would be able to compete for small amount of market share and profits ...” Dudian could see the current trend. Scott consortium was the first to produce textile machines in batches because they had got the drawings from him. They were able to seize large share of the market. Because of this current statement as long as they didn’t have problems during the business process then they would be the ones to bite the biggest piece in the textile business. This market share had potential to become one of the major industries under the Scott consortium in the future.

At this time Old Fulin pushed the door and came into the room.

Dudian sensed the smell of the other party who was in the hall. He had gone out of the castle and used a horse to leave.

“Do you have any difficulties?” Dudian asked as he looked at the expression on old patriarch’s face.

Old Fulin sighed.: “Mr John is one of the newly established wealthy businessmen. He had started with mining. He wanted to provide 10000 gold coins for equipment production costs to our consortium while we provided the hunters. After the materials

were brought back he would get twenty percent and the rest would belong to us.”

Dudian immediately understood the situation.: “He came to withdraw the cooperation request, didn’t he?”

Old Fulin nodded.: “I’m worried about the news of your injury will spread wide. If he was the only person then I would dispel the idea but other people who were thinking about cooperating with us won’t even come out to light. Alone, with Ryan family’s industry funds and your hunting revenues it would be very hard to develop and improve.”

Dudian saw the dejected look on Old Fulin’s face and spoke out to comfort him.: “We shouldn’t focus and count on small timers such as him. Even with their cooperation the efficiency of money making will be very slow. Moreover if he wants to get twenty percent just by providing equipment... That’s a nonsense. He hasn’t been out of the giant wall and doesn’t know the danger! For him it is just an investment venture.”

Old Fulin smiled.: “Sand is small but if you got enough then you can make a tower. ”

Dudian slightly shook his head.: “Sand tower can not withstand the storm. Even a small storm will disperse a lot of sand. After my left arm recovers then I’ll make a lot of money through hunting!” He couldn’t help but look at his left arm. He was worried that it won’t be cured and his future combat effectiveness will be greatly reduced. He had spent several years training hard to master the archery. If he wanted to re-learn one hand fighting skills it would

take him another two or three years.

Old Fulin looked at Dudian's damaged arm. His face was bitter but he no longer said anything.: "You take care of yourself for now."

The next day Dudian still stayed in the Ryan castle but asked the butler to get him pen and paper. He began to draw and paint.

The drawings were scattered on the ground. Occasionally when Old Fulin came to visit Dudian he would see the drawings. Once he asked.: "What is this?"

"A rifle." Dudian replied briefly.

Old Fulin naturally didn't understand the meaning of the word but he knew that it was something weird. He looked at Dudian's facial expression and didn't ask for more. It was something profound which he was not aware of.

In addition to writing and drawing pictures Dudian would go out and walk around. He would visit training field once in a while and use daggers, swords, knives and other weapons.

"This kind of a cold weapon isn't up to par... " Dudian played around with a spear. Because of the knights the spear had become a sacred symbol. So no one tried to change or improve the structure of spears.

Although the results of the diagnosis has yet to come out and there was no definite answer whether his left arm would be healed. But Dudian planned for the worst. He was thinking about alternative routes for the future.

In the blink of an eye a month passed by.

The doctor had come over for four times. Every time he deeply sighed and left. According to the doctor Dudian's left arm had been through necrosis. The blood can't flow to every part of the arm so the healing process was very weak. In the long term there will be bones that will rot and ultimately won't be able to recover.

Dudian expected and was prepared for such a result however his heart was full of loss and pain.

Today he sat in the carriage and left the Ryan castle. He had told the Ryan family that he was going out to relax.

Old Fulin didn't think much and asked him to protect his left arm and not to bruise it.

Dudian came over to commercial district after leaving the Yard town. He hired another carriage and went to the town where dark church's division was located. Since ordinary doctors had no way to cure him he wanted to see if there was an alchemist from life faction that would be up to the job. Even if they couldn't restore his left arm then he was planning to replace it with a prosthetic arm or Rosyard style extension.

Chapter 228

Dudian wore black robe and mask after he came to the town. Once again he went to the entrance to the division which was camouflaged as an aristocratic manor.

Dudian took out his temporary identity certificate and handed it out to the guards at the door. Several guards questioned him before letting Dudian pass.

Dudian saw four attendants below the huge oil painting in the hall of the manor. After showing them the temporary identity certificate they let him pass through the secret door.

“I don’t know whether my last submission have passed. I was busy with consortium’s business so there was not enough time to come over to receive the results.” Dudian thought about his application as he walked through the dark passage. He came out to the underground square. It was lively this time in comparison to the previous visit. There were many people wearing robes and masks walking around the square.

Dudian began to check the shops selling services and products along the square. It didn’t take long for him to find a shop owned by an alchemist from life faction. There were pots and glass buckets where variety of biological organs were kept. One had a woman’s arm while another had baby’s head. There were liver, heart and other internal organs which were soaked in some kind of syrup to keep them fresh.

In addition to sales of alchemy materials the store was also selling few low-level alchemy formulas.

“Replacement of the biological eyes. Embedding someone else eyes and getting it work properly?” Dudian saw the description written by the alchemist. He was surprised as how these alchemist were able to do such a transformation with this level of simple technology. Even in the old era this area of technology had a superficial grasp on the issue. Replacing a heart or head was already the limit.

Dudian looked around but didn’t see anything about arm replacement. He looked at the shop owner and asked.: “Are there any ways to treat the shattered and fractures bones of the leg?”

The shop owner was a slender woman with brown hair. She suppressed her original voice and spoke in a low tone.: “The treatment is very difficult. We don’t have any ways to help you out with that but we can help you replace with a new thigh. We guarantee that there would be no side effects. Moreover, we can get high level thighs from hunters and ensure that it will be very easy to use and you will feel it as if it was your own leg. Do you want to try?”

Dudian was startled.: “How are you going to get hunter’s thigh?”

“This is our shop’s secret so please forgive me for secrecy.” Shop owner politely answered.

Dudian thought for a moment.: “Do you know any place where I

can get full treatment?”

Shop owner saw that Dudian wasn’t interest in a purchase so her tone changed.: “I don’t know. You should ask the alchemists from life faction. There will be clues.”

Dudian frowned and nodded.: “Thank you.”

“No need to.”

Dudian turned around and left the shop to look for other places. In addition to life faction alchemists he though about the potion masters. Although they mainly were involved in production of poisons but after all they were in contact with pharmacological aspects too. So they may had a way too.

“Huh?” Dudian heard a sound calling out to him.: “Hound? Oh no, the devil?”

Dudian looked back to see a pretty figure wearing an owl mask. Although the mask was different colored in comparison to the last time but through her body odor he knew that it was her.: “Nightingale?”

“Yes.” Nightingale saw that Dudian called her nickname so she was aware that it was Dudian.: “It has been so many days. Why didn’t you come over after three days to receive the medal?”

Dudian coughed: “I was delayed because of business. How did you

know that I hadn't come over?"

"Of course I know. I come over every day." Nightingale whispered.

Dudian smiled.: "You're hard working."

"No!" Nightingale looked at him.: "Did you come today to visit the object from the era of the gods?"

Dudian was stunned.: "the gods?"

Nightingale continued to talk as she saw his reaction.: "It seems you really don't know. Ah! Come over, I'll take you to see. You will be shocked!" She walked towards the front side of the dark hall.

Dudian was curious as he walked after her.

Dudian saw ten dark knights in front of the huge cage as they entered the hall. The steel columns were extremely sturdy. The bars were as thick as an adult's arm. His eyes narrowed the moment he saw the object inside the cage. His heart was shocked first but afterwards it was filled with ecstasy.

"Well, this is the object!" Nightingale dragged him to the front of the cage.: "Check it out! All the parts are made of a metal. It seems very rare compound alloys were used to construct it. It is simply a masterpiece. My alloy alchemy isn't worth mentioning if you compared it to this object."

Dudian wasn't listening to her as his eyes were concentrated on this familiar object. It was the frozen storage that helped him to survive for three hundred years.

Dudian's heart beat speed up and his blood boiled. He wanted to rush out and use the remaining energy of the frozen storage capsule to learn knowledge from the super chip.

Nightingale saw that Dudian didn't answer to her but was dumbfound looking at the object. She was quite satisfied.: "Isn't it very shocking?"

"Um!" Dudian recovered and nodded.

"Just look at this curve. I have never seen a large metal object shaped into such a model. It is very hard to imagine how it was refined. Moreover it hasn't decayed for more than three hundred years. So amazing!"Nightingale exclaimed as she couldn't stop expressing her feelings.

"How did thing appear in here?" Dudian asked.

Nightingale answered.: "It is said that it was moved here for exhibition. Do you see the gap in the middle? According to the speculation this thing is empty. However no one can find the right way to open it unless they brute force and destroy it. Dark church is brainstorming to find a solution so they are exhibiting it to see if there is anyone who knows a correct way to open it. Look there, there is a reward for anyone who is able to open it."

Dudian looked at the bulletin board Nightingale was pointing to. At the top column there was the reward notice. “Reward of 100,000 alchemy points will be given anyone who can open the object of gods.”

Chapter 229

“100,000 alchemy points?” Dudian was surprised. As far as he knew to be one star alchemist he needed to accumulate 100 points. One thousand points was required for two stars and 10000 points was required to be a three star alchemist. 100,000 alchemy points was equivalent to becoming a four star alchemist in one go. Normally, an alchemist would immerse in research for decades or even more to get this achievement. Now as long as a person was able to open the object then they would be able to get this much of alchemy points!?

Nightingale sighed.: “II would be able to know how to open this object if I learned some knowledge from the era of the gods.”

Dudian’s mouth twitched as he knew that it didn’t matter how much knowledge you learned it wouldn’t change anything. For this frozen storage capsule to unlock his fingerprints and eye verification was needed. In addition to him no one would be able to unlock the object. Unless they violently dismantled it.

“Is it going to be here for good? “Dudian asked.

Nightingale shook her head.: “I heard after a period of time it will be moved to another branch of the dark church. So while it is exhibited, watch and observe as much as you can. Maybe you will get some kind of inspiration. I heard from someone that the gods had found the mystery of the air flow. I hope we can find the secret behind it.”

Dudian wryly smiled. He knew that with today's technology and mentality they would never understand the concepts behind the frozen storage capsule. However his heart was moved as he thought about the reward of the one hundred thousand alchemy points. In Rosyard's alchemy notes it was written that after an alchemist gets more stars he would get the right to mobilize dark knights. As a three star alchemist, Rosyard had the right to mobilize dark knights from the dark church for his protection and for them to fight in his stead.

The lowest of these dark knights was comparable to a primary hunter in comparison of physical strength. A squad of dark knights was enough to fight against and cope with a group of Knights of Light.

However, the alchemist had to reach five star level to be able to mobilize a squad of dark knights.

In addition to being able to have dark knight the alchemist would receive a very high monthly salary. But the best benefit for the alchemist was the ability to get information from the intelligence network of the dark church.

Dark Church's intelligence network was extremely large and covered more area(it's not just physical) than Holy Church. It was intensive, wide and penetrated into various fields. As long as you could give the corresponding price then any information would be at your hands. Even some military secrets were not an exception!

"I had last seen the frozen storage about four years ago. So it must fall into the hands of dark church for a long time. They could

not break the password for so long on their own. If I opened the frozen storage then I would acquire unwanted attention of many parties. Maybe it would lead to an endless suspicion and interrogation! In such a long time period they must have tried all the possible solutions. Even if I had told them that it was a coincidence but the explanation... ”

Dudian’s eyes lit up as the stir in his heart calmed down. The reward was like a hidden sharps bars. The bait was very attractive and if he was tempted to bite then he would be caught.

He looked at Nightingale and said.: “Let ‘s go somewhere else.”

Nightingale saw that Dudian had lost the interest and didn’t want to continue to stay here so she didn’t urged him to stay. She had seen it for many times so she didn’t mind much.: “I’ll accompany you to collect your medal.”

Dudian nodded.

Both of the came to a counter before the hall. Dudian handed out his temporary identity certificate.: “I have come to receive my medal.”

There was an old man behind the counter who was responsible for registration. He didn’t wear a mask. The old man glanced at Dudian and lazily yawned. It seemed as if Dudian had disturbed his peaceful nap. He checked the temporary identity certificate and looked at Dudian.: “Boy you are brave but don’t forget to lay low. Such a code name! Be careful of the Holy Church.”

Dudian stared at him but didn't reply.

Old man saw Dudian avoided to reply his rhetoric. He felt that he was rude. He looked back at the wall and opened a drawer. He searched for a moment and found a box. He pulled string of keys from his waist and opened the box. Afterwards he took out few items from the box.

"This is your medal! This is your entry fee! This is the recommendation letter from the dark church to the alchemy college. I hope you will be able to live in the dark side. Welcome." The old man handed out medal, bag of gold coins and the letter. His previous bleary appearance disappeared. His face became solemn and pious as he stared at Dudian. He raised his hand to his chest and began to make the prayer in serious tone.: "After sublimation to the darkness even if you return back the sun will tingle your eyes! The darkness will make your eyes bright! From now on you will became the believer of the darkness and serve our lord! You will be subjected to purgatory in case of betrayal. Do you accept?"

"I understand." Dudian nodded as it was part of the ritual. The Holy Church believed in the God of Light while the dark church referred to demons as their gods. None of them recognized each other.

The old man's original appearance was restored the moment the ceremony ended. He waved his hand.: "No matter what you do, where you should go its up to you. DON'T DISTURB MY SLEEP!"

Dudian put away the bag with gold coins. He estimated that there were more few hundred gold coins inside. Although it wasn't much in his eyes but for an ordinary civilian they wouldn't be able to earn this much in their lifetime. Most of the wealth was concentrated in the hands of nobility and wealthy businessmen. There was a serious imbalance in distribution of wealth.

He checked his medal. There were 'two hands holding a stone' engraved on it. It was the symbol which referred to turning stone to the gold. It represented the faction of material alchemists.

If he belonged to the faction of life alchemists then two hands holding a head would be depicted on the medal on behalf of eternal life.

"Recommendation letter?" Dudian was surprised as he read the envelope in his hand. He looked at the old man.: "Alchemy College?"

Old man glanced at him: "Of course your friend should be attending it. Why don't you ask her? Do not bother me! Go! Go!"

Nightingale said to Dudian as she saw the old man not interested in them any more.: "Let's go, I'll explain to you."

Dudian nodded and followed the Nightingale out of the hall. Nightingale spoke as they walked side by side.: "Alchemy College is branch of Dark Church. It is like an ordinary college where all kinds of alchemy knowledge is taught. But the tuition fee is expensive. Of course, you will be exempt from tuition fees if your

results are excellent.”

Dudian was surprised.: “Would not the college easily exposed?”

Nightingale nodded: “Indeed the possibility of the exposure is relatively high but we are still under the protection of the dark church. Holy Church would not go into details unless there is too much of a trouble. So don’t worry the safety level is still relatively high.”

Dudian understood that the relationship between dark church and Holy Church was quite complex. They would mutually drum out each other while mutually act like parasites to feed on the same source.

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“It is recommended for you to attend college if your teacher doesn’t teach you much. This way you can learn a lot of knowledge. Occasionally there will be alchemy masters who would give lectures on different subjects. It will widen your horizon.” Nightingale suggested.

“I will.” Dudian nodded in confirmation. He could take a look at their libraries for a way to restore his left arm.

Nightingale’s eyes brightened as she saw his promise.: ” Since that is the case, then I’ll be waiting for you at the college. Speaking of which I can be your elder sister over there. Your code name is way too high-profile as I’m afraid you will get beaten…”

Dudian wryly smiled. He chose the code name on a whim and didn’t expect that no one had chosen it before. Now, as he thought about it, he didn’t choose the code name because of arrogance, but to remind himself not to be carried away with temporary comfort and be wasted once again.

“I’ll find you when I get there.” Dudian changed the topic.: “My friend’s leg was smashed by a rock. Do you know a way which can heal him?”

“Fractured bones?” Nightingale was silent for a moment.: “In addition to ‘fountain of life’ there seems to be nothing else which can treat such an injury. But the price of ‘fountain of life’ is too

expensive. A non-starred Alchemist wouldn't be able to buy as we don't have permission to purchase something like that."

"Fountain of life?"

"Don't you know?" Nightingale was surprised.: "Your teacher is way too lazy. He hasn't taught you anything! 'Fountain of life' is sold by the Holy Church too, but only their internal staff can purchase it. It is the best healing medicine that money can buy. It can recover bone fractures easily. It is said that it can regenerate a finger. Holy Church says that it is a gift from God of Light but in the face, it was developed by the dark church. They had stolen the formula." There was pride and disdain in her tone as Nightingale talked.

Dudian's eyes lit up.: "How much it would cost to buy one?"

Nightingale immediately replied.: "Dispel the idea! It is not something that can be bought with money. You will need five thousand alchemy points to get your hands on 'fountain of life'!

Dudian frowned.: "So expensive?"

"Of course. It is giving a second chance in life. " Nightingale said: "Moreover, as we haven't reached a star threshold yet ,then don't even think about getting one of those. Although your friend's leg is smashed there is nothing but him getting used to this new condition."

Dudian slightly shook his head.: “I will check the shops to see if there is a potion that can help him out.”

Nightingale sighed.: “Well, I have activities in the college, so I have to go back. I wish your friend a quick recovery.”

Dudian waited until she left. Afterward, he continued to ask the other shops. He made a full lap around the shops but couldn’t get any gains. He was told that in addition to ‘fountain of life’ there was a method of life faction alchemists called ‘regeneration’. They were able to heal any wounds, but the price was very high. Also, there was not a fixed market price.

Dudian had expected such an outcome as Nightingale had already told him in advance. So he was not too depressed. He exited the division of the dark church. After leaving the manor, he looked around and found a place where no one was checking up on him while he took off the mask and robe. Later on, he hired a carriage and returned to the Ryan Castle.

Dudian opened the envelope after he got into the carriage. The letter had lots of words. After reading carefully, it seemed as if it was a poem, but not one at the same time. There was no flow in it. At the end of the poem, there was a string of alchemy symbols.

Dudian understood the method to decrypt the message. He began to read the poem according to the method.

“Blood Reef Alchemy College … Address: Hongta Street No. 109 … ” Dudian read the message word by word and sorted out the

information. After confirming that there was nothing left out he took out a match from his pocket and burned the letter into ashes.

It was almost dusk by the time he returned to the Ryan Castle. After the dinner was finished, Dudian went back to his room. He used the pen draw on paper. It was a simple topographic map.

As he was half the way to finish the map, Old Fulin pushed the door open and joined the room.: “These are your cold crystals.” He handed out a small sachet.

Dudian’s eyes lit up as he took the sachet and opened it. There were four dark blue and round cold crystals. These were the ones he had hunted.: “Thank you.”

“Your business is my business. No need for thanks.” There was a faint smile on Old Fulin’s face.

Dudian looked at him.: “After a few days, I would like to go outside the giant wall.”

Old Fulin was surprised. ” You have just come back from outside. The radiation has been digested and discharged from your body. If you go out at this point, then the radiation content of your body will increase. And your arm is...”

Dudian shook his head.: “Ordinary medical treatment would not be enough to cure my left arm. I asked the alchemist friend and was told that there is a way to cure my arm, but we need too much

money.”

“Are you talking about ‘fountain of life’?” Old Fulin asked.

Dudian looked at him in astonishment. “Do you know about it?”

“Of course I’m aware of the thing. The only thing is that it is sold by Holy Church only to its members. Mellon consortium could purchase it as they had a member which was part of the Holy Church. Do you remember Melk the Knight of Light? He helps them to purchase stuff like that.” Old Fulin said.: “A few days ago I went to the Scott consortium in the hope that they could purchase on our behalf. But the price was too expensive, about fifty thousand gold coins. I asked them for a credit, but they didn’t agree.”

Dudian said: “Don’t worry about this matter. I’ll solve it myself.”

Old Fulin smiled.: “It’s getting late. You should sleep early.” He turned away and left.

Dudian’s eyes fell onto the four cold crystals in the sachet. He took off his shoes and sat on the bed. Dudian grabbed the knife from the table by the bedside and made a slice on his right hand. He took out one of the cold crystals and put it inside his palm. It didn’t take long for the cold crystal to dissolve into the silvery liquid. As if it was a living creature with consciousness, it began to penetrate into his body through the cut on his finger. After a moment his body felt bursts of coldness and extreme hotness. The feeling gradually faded away. Dudian felt that his physical strength

had grown up.

“I can’t be greedy. I can’t use more than one every time.” Dudian put away the remaining three cold crystals. He didn’t want his right arm to end up as his left arm.

Dudian continued to draw the previous simple map according to his memory. He felt tired after a long time and lied down to sleep.

The next morning Dudian got up early. He ate the breakfast and left the Ryan Castle. Once again, he came to the division of the dark church. He wandered around, but most of the time he stood by the in front of the cage frozen storage capsule was kept.

There were dozens of people who were observing the object, so his actions were not obvious to the eyes.

In the blink of an eye, two days passed.

Dudian was absorbing the third cold crystal. The extreme cold and hot feeling had gradually become dull because of regular absorption of the cold crystal. He was able to bear them easily. He was thinking about other things as his body was absorbing the cold crystals. He recovered the moment he heard ‘Kacha’ sounds.

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Dudian looked at his left arm. It was tightly bandaged and there were no abnormalities. There were doubts in his heart. He used his right hand to pinch his left arm. Dudian felt very coldness penetrate his right hand the moment it touched the left arm. It felt as if he was touching a block of ice. He immediately retracted his fingers. He remembers the first time when he had absorbed lots of cold crystals the same thing had happened. Coldness had infiltrated out from the pores of his arm.

He used a knife to cut off the bandage. After he unwrapped the gauze he almost fainted because of the scene. The surface of his skin had become light blue. There were faint silhouettes that looked like scales. Each of them was the size of a thumb that spread from his should to elbow. However, they didn't go down from there.

Dudian was startled. This light blue skin color seemed like ice.

Dudian was confused as he thought about the explanation. His left hand was in necrosis state. By absorbing the cold crystals through his right hand, the essence of the crystals should have spread all over his body. Did it accumulate and crystallized because of the state of his left arm it wasn't dispersed properly?

His guess was that the coldness constantly penetrated his left arm and condensed into blue ice scales. His face had turned ugly because of the sight in front of his eyes. If the coldness continued to infiltrate all the way, then the water in his arm would be turned

into an ice block. It would be very harmful to his body. The only hope of treatment would be to cut it off and replace with another arm completely.

“Damn!” Dudian clenched his teeth.: “Is prosthesis the only way out?”

The current technology had no way to change his arm into a prosthetic one unless they would transplant someone else’s arm.

He grabbed the quilt next to him and covered his left arm. He hoped to reduce the degree of condensation of the coldness in his left arm. Maybe he would be able to melt the ice.

Dudian pressed the quilt onto the crystal scales and tried to move it up and down to create friction. He felt something wrong as the crystal scales didn’t emit vapor after a long time. He checked them, and they seemed like flesh. He pinched and pushed the scales. Despite its flexibility was not on par with normal skin, it was completely different from ice.

“Is this not made of ice?” Dudian pinched again. It seemed that if he put strength onto his fingers, then he could pierce out the scales. It seemed that his skin had changed to soft scales. Unfortunately, his left arm had no perception of senses, so he couldn’t judge their reaction. However the end result was that these crystal scales were part of his body.

Dudian tried to bend his arm after he knew that these crystal scales were not made of ice blocks. Moreover, he was able to bend

his arm freely. It didn't seem like a frozen object.

"Did the accumulation of cold crystal's energy mutated my left arm? Are the scales result of a mutation?" Dudian's eyes flickered.: "Such characteristics only appear on a senior hunter's body. The magic marks go through evolution and as a result the human cell's structure changes. In a sense it derives genetic information from the residual gene of the parasitic worms and reforms the human's cell. Glenn should have such a special tissue, which is hidden from others."

"However, it is the first time that my magic marks had gone through an evolution. I have just become an intermediate hunter. Moreover the crystal scales does not have trace of a relationship to my magic marks. It is deeply related to cold crystals... There are too many unknown factors ..." Dudian was aware that he was very bold to consume them. However, there was no meaning to regret it now. To kill Linda he had relied on cold crystals to enhance his strength. Because of such a risky move his body also went towards an unknown direction of mutation.

"I'm lucky that at present only my left hand appears abnormal, but not the whole body."

Dudian continued to observe his left arm. He tried to gently move it. Although there were no perceptive capabilities, but he was able to move it freely. His left arm seemed to recover a lot. The shape of the arm seemed close to the original shape. The previous bloated appearance after the surgery have disappeared too.

"The materials making up the crystal scales seem to be close to

the stratum corneum. But it's softer than stratum corneum. Is it the biological result of the evolution?"Dudian touched his arm. He was anxious to dissect and open it to check. But in the end, he still held back. There was a hope for full recovery now! However, it's possible that the crystallization of my left arm spreads to my body in the future. What should I do then? How will I be able to treat it?

Will I be regarded as a human at that time?

"If I had 'fountain of life' then my mind could be at peace." Dudian secretly made calculations. He pulled the gauze from the drawer and wrapped around his arm. He decided to inform Old Fulin first thing in the morning so that he tells the middle-aged doctor temporarily not to visit him for check-ups.

"Five thousand alchemy points ... According to dark church's pointing system and compared to the prices outside, then it is equivalent to twenty thousand gold coins. Moreover, I will need a one-star alchemist to acquire it. So I will need at least thirty thousand gold coins to be able to get 'fountain of life'." Dudian calculated the amount that he would need to buy the potion.

He laid on the bed and looked at the ceiling. Dudian unwittingly fell asleep.

The next day.

Dudian ate his breakfast and was about to go to the division of the dark church. Suddenly butler came in and told the Old Fulin.: "Master, the person from the 'Temple of Elements,' has come

again. Would you like to see him?”

Old Fulin put down the newspaper and looked at Dudian who was sitting opposite to him.: “Call him up. We are waiting for him.”

“Yes.” The butler respectfully replied.

Old Fulin looked at Dudian.: “This person is here to talk to you.”

“He is looking for me?” Dudian was about to put his coat when he heard Old Fulin talk.

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After a few moments, a man wearing a suit was accompanied by the butler into the dining room. He was a middle-aged and courteous man. He took off his hat and saluted Dudian and Old patriarch.: “Old Patriarch how are you? This must be Mr. Dean!?”

Old Fulin smiled.: “Thank you. Yes, he is the person we talked about last time. This time you can personally talk with Mr. Dean. Although our consortium has recruited Mr. Dean, our contract doesn’t constrain his personal freedom.”

“That’s great.” The middle-aged man said in a delighted tone. He looked at Dudian.: “Mr. Dean you can call me Kerry. I assume you have heard of ‘Temple of Elements’ as you are a hunter. All the materials brought by hunters and scavengers from the outside are taken to ‘Temple of Elements’ for final assessment for identification and pricing purposes. I’m here on behalf of ‘Temple of Elements’ to invite you to join us.”

Dudian wasn’t surprised. He had seen newspapers refer to him as ‘inventor’, so he had a hunch that at one point ‘Temple of Elements’ will invite him to join their rows. However, he didn’t think that it will be this fast.: “I have heard a little about ‘Temple of Elements, ’ but I don’t know much. Can you talk about the details?”

Kerry was happy as he saw Dudian interested in the topic.: “This is my favorite topic. The members of ‘Temple of Elements’ are inventors like you. But also devout believers of God of Light. God

of Light's will and blessing have spread all over heaven and earth. Our job is to find his will and make sure that it is generously treated after being passed to public. So people will talents would work and invent things with the blessing of the God... "

"I am a pious believer of light myself. I will be faithful until the end of time. But I have a little doubt which I want to voice out. I hope Mr. Kerry would be able to answer it. " Dudian said as he squinted his eyes.

Kerry laughed: "Mr. Dean, please."

Dudian asked: "We are only finding out the blessing sent by the God of Light, but we are called inventors. Isn't it blasphemy?"

Kerry was stunned, but replied immediately.: "Mr. Dean you will be wrong to think like that. 'Temple of elements' is the creation of Holy Church. We not only find but also understand the will and blessing of the God of Light. By using the word 'inventor' we represent our gratitude and awe, but nothing more."

Dudian said: "This is the original interpretation."

Kerry smiled.: "Mr. Dean you shouldn't be burdened by such an issue. The inventor was used back in early periods and is a very backward call of the description of our job. We are all faithful followers of the God of Light. In the 'Temple of Elements' we prefer to call ourselves as the God's architects." (the original word was "shen shi" literal translation is God's makers. However, it can be translated as God's envoys, God's designers, God's Architects,

God's smiths, etc.. I have chosen the word – architect. Imagine the architect from the matrix.. hahaha)

Dudian nodded. "Mr. Kerry should be aware that I am a hunter. As a hunter, I am a pragmatic person who follows the personal interests and gains. What kind of benefits would I get if I join the 'Temple of Elements'?"

Kerry smiled.: "There are many benefits. The first is that Temple can provide you a housing in the commercial district. If you perform well and become a senior architect in the future, then the Temple will give you a fiefdom. Additionally, you will be given a hundred gold coins as a reward in the initial stage. The monetary rewards will increase as you status increases."

Dudian was surprised and was afraid at the same time. Could the holy church grant ordinary civilians a fief? Isn't it the sole right of the military?

Kerry continued to sweet talk and seduce him.: "In addition to these if you join 'Temple of Elements' not only you could get endless wealth but also supreme glory!"

"What are the requirements as there are so many benefits?"

Kerry was a bit surprised as he saw Dudian's calm expression.: "As long as you join the 'Temple of elements' and complete few tasks issues by the Temple there is nothing else."

“What tasks?”

“Small tasks such as identification of the value of materials brought in from outside the giant wall. You can be assured that there won’t be anything that will be unreasonable. Even if you can’t complete the tasks, you can apply to support other architects. “Kerry laughed.

Dudian understood the conditions.: “I will think about it.”

Kerry was stunned as he didn’t expect that he won’t get an instant reply. He was a bit hesitant, but ultimately said.: “Alright. I’ll be waiting for good news from Mr. Dean. However, I have to tell you that those evil alchemists like to attack God’s Architects. If you join the Temple, then we will provide you with safe protection, and you will be sheltered from the danger.”

Dudian looked up at him.: “Thank you for the reminder.”

Kerry no longer stayed as he greets Old Fulin and the butler sent him off.

Old Fulin looked at Dudian after he left.: “Do you want to join? There are lots of benefits by joining the Temple, but some disadvantages. You will be busy over there, so it’s kind of taxing on your time. However, it is worth joining the Temple. Others dream of chance such as this. The threat he was talking about was true too. Some dark church members may try to harm you. Although you are a hunter assassination methods are one or two. They may use poisons and other things and easily kill a hunter.”

Dudian understood that hunters were strong but not invincible. Obviously, any hunter could be defeated.

“Temporarily I will stay away from them, but I will consider the option.” Dudian continued.: “However, if I join the ‘Temple of Elements’ then I will be clear to buy ‘fountain of life’ as architects are members of Holy Church too. In a sense, it is a shield for our consortium too.

Old Fulin nodded in confirmation. He knew that Dudian was interested in the offer.: “You should consider options on your own. I believe you will make the right choice.” He picked up the crutch, got up and left the table.

Dudian didn’t stay too much. According to his original plan, he put on his coat and left the Ryan Castle. He hired a carriage and went to a division of the dark church.

Dudian was more cautious along the way so as not to be tracked. More than a dozen people were standing near the cage frozen storage capsule was put it and observing the object. Nobody could touch the object as it was quite a distance inside the cage.

Dudian also observed, but his attention was focused on the surrounding environment.

Another day passed in a hurry.

Dudian went back to the Ryan Castle. He finished his drawings and began to practice his left arm. He didn't dare to make difficult postures as there could be bones that haven't fully healed yet. He didn't want to fracture them again. Moreover, he didn't want to join the Temple because of the blue crystal scales on his left arm. If it was exposed, then the only option for him was to live in the darkness.

Chapter 233

Two days after Kerry invited Dudian.

As usual, Dudian ate the breakfast together with Old Fulin early in the morning. Afterward, he left the Ryan castle to another town. He got off the carriage and walked through the wilderness and reached the town where they produced gunpowder. They had purchased a small carriage which was parked in the yard behind the workshop.

The carriage seemed very ordinary. Dudian had asked Barton and the other two to prepare gunpowder in advance. They had produced seven boxes of gunpowder, which were moved to the compartment of the carriage. He drove out the carriage and went to the division of the dark church.

He stopped in front of the manor. Dudian showed them his alchemist medal. They made few tests to verify the validity of his identity. One of the guards checked the compartment of the carriage: “What are these?”

Dudian replied.: “Its products for sale.”

The guard didn’t talk anymore as he opened the door to let the carriage into the mansion’s yard.

Dudian parked the carriage in a remote place where another six carriages were parked. Dudian jumped off the carriage, tied the

horse to the column and entered the manor.

After passing through the check ups by the huge oil painting, he passed through the passage and came to the dark square. Dudian looked around and saw that there was nothing unusual. He went into the hall and observed for a while. Afterward, he came back to the square and went to one of the potion shops. There were many bottles and jars of different colors placed in the shop.

Potion masters were extremely high-ranking people. People would try to avoid provoking their wrath. Some of them were comparable to senior hunters regarding combat. By dropping a small venom, they would be able to kill the opponent easily. This was the most frighting point while fighting the potion masters. It was just hard to detect their attacks.

“Hey, Boss. The thing that I have ordered. Has it arrived yet?” Dudian asked the shop owner in a hoarse voice.

The boss of the shop was shrouded in a purple robe. She had a slender and slim figure. Occasionally her white wrist would be exposed when she moved around. There were several ugly black scars on her wrists that were very eye-catching. Most probably it was the result of erosion by the toxins. She looked at Dudian.: “It’s ready. After the deposit, you have to pay us two hundred and fifty gold coins. Have you brought them?”

Dudian nodded and took out a bag of gold from the robe and handed it out to her.

The purple robed woman poured out the gold coins from the bag onto the table. She randomly selected a few and tested them to check if they were genuine gold coins. Afterward, she slightly nodded and began to take all of them one by one to put back into the bag.: “Good, it’s the right amount. I’ll give you the bottles.” As she finished counting the gold coins, she put the bag inside a cabinet and locked it. Then she took out two green ink bottle and another small bottle from a drawer.

“These are the anesthetic poisonous fog, and this is the antidote.” The purple robed woman passed the bottles to Dudian. She looked at him.: “Please use with caution. A small drop of the poison is enough to make an adult wild boar unconscious. Moreover, one of these bottles is enough to make population a small town fall into a coma.”

Dudian carefully put away the bottles as he heard her words. He turned away and began to wander around the other shops.

Time passed and evening came.

The number of people in the square didn’t reduce but increased as the time passed. These people would be busy during the daytime with their things, but in the evening would have more time to spare for alchemy activities.

Dudian found a place to sit down and rest as he waited for the time to pass.

By seven o’clock the number of people in the square was very

dense. It was very lively as the people went left and right. After 12 o'clock in the night, the numbers gradually began to reduce as the people departed the division.

Dudian saw that the time was mature. He returned to the outside the manor and fiddled with the carriage for a moment. Afterward, he came back to the square and went into the hall. He saw the cage where frozen storage unit was held. There were hundreds of people who were looking at the storage capsule. The number of members of the dark church was not inferior to Holy Church.

Some people who were acquainted with each other pointed and whispered. They would voice out their opinions and discoveries.

Dudian's eyes lit up as he stood behind the crowd and looked around. He saw that no one was looking at him, so he slowly took out green ink bottles from under his robe and threw them out in different directions. Both bottles hit the stones and the sounds of glass bottles crashing echoed out.

People were scared because of sudden noise.

People saw dark green smoke rolling around the hall. The second bottle had hit the top and as a result glass fragments dumped onto the heads of some of them.

A woman screamed.

"It is poison!"

The scream was the source of the rapid uneasiness that proliferated the crowd in a matter of seconds. The other didn't have to react as they were scared and shocked the green mist which was infiltrated the place. The people began to run out of the hall in a hurry.

Because of dissent and panic, the people began to knock each other as they tried to get out of the hall. The ones who were knocked to the ground would be stepped over and trampled by the panicking crowd. People began to push each other and the numbers of people who stumbled and fell increased.

Green mist spread like boiling water.

Dudian took out the pill from the antidote bottle and put it in his mouth. His eyes were calm and quiet as he sticks to the wall. The crazy crowd was bypassing by him. He came to the front of the huge cage and saw that ten dark knights that were stationed there haven't moved yet. Their faces were pale, but continued to protect their positions.

In the end, they raised their hands to protect their mouth's as their eyes carefully looked around. They had pulled their swords from their waists. The dark knights would not hesitate to kill if they saw someone approach the cage. They were aware that the poison attack was made by the people whose goal was to snatch the object of the gods.

Green mist rapidly spread around the hall and shrouded the

place. The majority of the people inside the hall couldn't escape and were covered in green fog. One by one they fell to the ground.

The green mist interfered with Dudian's sight. He used a dagger to pierce through the dark knight who was close to him. The knight didn't have the chance to scream and alert his mates. But the sword that he held onto fell to the ground and made crisp 'ding dong' sounds. The attention of the other dark knights was concentrated on the location the sound echoed from. They knew that the invaders had begun to attack.

Dudian saw that his eyesight was low. Although he was covered in green fog at least, he was able to see dark shadows of the people. One of them seemed to rush over to him. As his left arm was injured, he hadn't practiced archery for some time, but focused on practicing melee combat using swords, daggers, knives and other weapons. Although he wasn't proficient he was not a stranger to their use either.

Because of the advantage of the vision, Dudian quickly stabbed three dark knights consecutively. The fingertips of his left hand were sweeping the sturdy iron column while he killed the dark knights that attacked him. He was convinced that because of the thickness of the iron columns it would take a bit of time to break them apart.

As he killed the third attacking dark knight, the others weren't able to stand against the poisonous fog as their bodies softly fell one after another.

Dudian immediately grasped the chance to use both his hands to

break the iron column as he saw there was no one to obstruct him.

Dudian was nervous as he was counting the seconds. Finally, after two minutes, he was able to cut off the iron pillars, and there was enough space for him to squeeze in. He was late for more than 10 seconds according to his calculations. He went towards the frozen storage capsule.

After passing the fingerprint verification, the dark hall was lit up suddenly. The light was projected from frozen storage. If someone else saw the scene, then they would think that it's a miracle.

"Iris verification ... " A female voice echoed out from the frozen storage.

Dudian brought his face closer to the capsule. He opened his eyes as he closely looked at the machine. His fingerprint may be copied and used to open the frozen storage. But eye verification was not possible to be replicated by others. At least it would be very difficult.

After the verification was completed the closed, frozen storage slowly opened. It has been almost eight years that he has gone out from the frozen storage because it didn't have any more energy to continue to keep his body in the dormant, frozen state. However, the frozen storage capsule had its solar function. After a long time, it would gradually restore the energy. Right now it had enough to operate the simple functions.

Chapter 234

Dudian couldn't wait for the frozen storage's door to open because of the thrill. Everything inside was as is the last time he had left it. There was a pile of rubbish on the sleeping mattress. It had dried up, and an unpleasant smell was emitted.

He wasn't going to clean the garbage. He quickly pressed the button inside the frozen storage, and the energy repository opened up. There were three round energy tubes inside. The one at the bottom had a light blue luster on it which looked like precipitated magma. The others were dull looking in comparison to it.

Dudian quickly removed the energy tube and dismantled the chip reader. His face changed as he quickly closed the frozen storage capsule. He rapidly went out of the cage and moved towards the outer edge of the hall. There were alchemists and potion masters who were lying down as they had lost their consciousness because of the green fog. Not many were successful at escaping the calamity.

Dudian hid the energy tube and chip reader inside his robe. He sensed quite a few people coming from square towards the hall.

Dudian immediately laid down on the ground and faked his condition.

Moments later a team of well-equipped dark knights came to the center of the square. There was a green mist floating around the

square. The team was led by a young woman and a middle-aged man. Both of them glanced at each other. Middle-aged man looked at the young woman.: “You should keep guard here and don’t let anyone go out! One of you should protect the passage!” He raised his hand and waved at two dark knights to step out and follow him into the poisonous fog.

It was obvious that they have taken antidotes. They ran at full speed into the hall. The first thing they did was to check the object of the gods. It was still inside the cage. However, there were pillars which had been destroyed. The middle-aged man sighed in relief because the object hasn’t been stolen. He looked at people who were lying unconscious in the hall. It seems the people who had run towards the exit didn’t want to be involved in such an attack.

The middle-aged man glanced around the fainted people and made a hand gesture towards the two dark knights behind him.

Both of them understood the meaning behind the gesture, turned back and ran outside. They came to the center of the square and looked at the young woman.: “Reporting to captain. The object of the gods is still inside. Captain Simon will be inside guarding it.”

The young woman was relieved. She turned towards the dozen dark knights and shouted.: “A team must stay on the outer edge. The two teams should immediately take the antidote and go inside for investigation. The attackers most probably are mixed with people lying inside. Check their bodies and see if they carry a weapon or a foreign object. Immediately arrest on the spot!”

“Yes.”

The two teams of dark knights by her orders began to act up quickly.

The young woman's gaze was focused on a particular dark knight.: "Tell the patrols to send people to clean the air. They should let the others evacuate and order them not to cause unnecessary casualties."

"Yes." The dark knight nodded in confirmation and left.

One of the dark knights began to give antidote pills to the other dark knights who were lined up. Afterward, they began to check the clothes of people who were lying unconscious on the ground in the square.

There was a cold look in her eyes as the young woman as she folded her arms across her chest and observed the place.

Boom!

A sound of the violent explosion echoed out. It was similar to the sound made when the thunder hit the ground. Even though because of layers of soil the penetrating force was weakened, but still, it was an unusual occurrence.

The young woman was caught in surprise. She couldn't help but look back at the passage.

The middle-aged man standing in the hall also heard the sound of an explosion. The sound seemed to be coming from above the manor.

What has happened?

Have the attackers already left the place and moving on the outside of the Manor?

Middle-aged man looked back at the cage. He clenched his teeth and looked at the dark knight.: “You stay here. I’m going out to see what has happened. If there is something unusual then immediately inform Captain Aisha.” He rushed out of the hall and came out to the square. After passing through the poisonous fog, he found the young woman.: “What has happened?”

Aisha was shocked: “There seems to be a big movement outside the manor. Do you think the attackers have mixed with the crowd and fled out?”

Simon’s face changed.: “Impossible! We have responded very fast. The attackers should have fought with the knights in the hall. Moreover, they had to destroy the pillars to enter the cage. It should take a lot of time. There is no way that they could do all of this and rush out to mix with the crowd in such a little period.”

Aisha looked at him.: “But you are saying that the object of the gods is still inside the cage. Most probably they were aware that they wouldn’t be able to break the cage and remove the object completely. They should have been scared of this and mixed with

the crowd to run away."

Simon thought about the traces of the destruction of the cage. The attackers seemed to have spent a lot of effort the destroy two small iron pillars. If they wanted to have enough space to remove the object, then they would have to spend several times more time and effort. His eyes lit up as he looked at Aisha.: "I will go out to check the situation. You continue to control the situation in here. Perhaps some of the companions were not able to escape."

Aisha's eyes were full of worry as she looked at the back of the middle-aged man as he departed.

Dudian slowly opened his eyes and looked around. He focused on the dark knight who was standing a bit away from him. In a flash, he quickly jumped up and rushed towards the dark knight.

The dark knight's reaction was slow and late. He felt the movement and turned around. But he was late as his eyes shrank. He wanted to pull out his sword while he wanted to shout and alert the others.

Whoosh!

Dudian's dagger pierced in the dark knight's mouth and interrupted his cry.

Dudian was like a panther when he made a move. He was grasping onto the handle of the dagger as he put a bit of force and

the dagger came out from the other side of the dark knight's head.

The dark knight's body went stiff, and his eyes turned dull.

Dudian pulled back the dagger and made sure that the dark knight's body softly fall to the ground. He rushed out of the hall into the square. He moved through the green fog to stay unnoticed as long as possible. His footsteps were so fast, and light that the others couldn't hear his movement until one of the dark knight's saw a shadow moving towards him. The dark knights were focused on searching the bodies of people in the square who had fainted. The dark knight was a bit slow to react. The first thought that popped into his mind was that the attack had appeared. The second was to protect himself!

The dark knights held onto their weapons and were ready to deal with Dudian. Dudian rushed out from the fog and moved towards one the dark knight's in a rapid momentum. The dark knight's heart was timid. They were comparable to a junior hunter regarding strength, but they didn't have ferociousness of a hunter.

The dark knight knew that he couldn't go back, so he made the judgment instantly and stabbed the sword towards Dudian's head.

Dudian's body suddenly made a turn and twist. The dagger in his hand stabbed from bottom to up along the dark knight's chin. It stabbed through the dark knight's head, and he pulled out the dagger.

Aisha reacted instantly the moment she heard the movement.

She didn’t think that an attack was still lurking inside the place. “What kind of stupid courage has he?” She quickly pulled out the sword from her waist. She tightly stared at the green fog. She was aware that the person(s) who dared to break into this place to grab the object of the gods were not of simple origin.

Whoosh!

Dudian used the green mist as camouflage. It didn’t hinder his line of sight. He had already seen the young woman and the team of knights following her.

Dudian had determined the woman as the strongest of the team. His eyes quickly fell on the woman. In a flash, he went all the way through past the fog towards her.

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Aisha tightly holds onto the sword as she saw Dudian rush towards her. The moment Dudian ran into her attack range she jittered the sword in an oblique way as she displayed her swordsmanship.

Dudian's eyes were fixed on her wrist. As he had expected, she was going to attack the upper body. He bent his body and put the force on his waist as he turned and kicked towards her abdomen.

Aisha's face slightly changed. She staggered back to escape Dudian's foot. She didn't expect to fail in her attack. She coldly looked at the eyes behind the mask. Even in a condition such as this, the eyes revealed killing intent and calmness. She clenched her teeth.: "If you dare to kill the innocent, then no matter who you are it won't be easy to leave this place!"

Dudian's spoke in a hoarse voice.: "Killing the innocent? The people of the dark church are claiming to be innocent? Don't try to delay time! Beat it!" Once again, his body advanced while this time he raised the dagger towards Aisha's cheek.

Aisha's face was ugly as she wielded the sword in haste.

The tinkling sounds echoed as Aisha's sword, and Dudian's dagger parried.

Dudian frowned as he didn't expect this woman to be so tough at

melee combat. Her physical strength was close to a senior level hunter. However, her combat experience was much lower than a senior hunter's as if it was so, then she should have ended the fight after two or three strokes. He sensed the smell and knew that more people were gathering outside. There was a trace of urgency and alertness in his heart. He no longer went easy and stabbed the dagger towards Aisha's chest.

Aisha tried to do her best to resist by using the sword. She knew that as long as she delayed the person, then there will be enough people to capture him.

Aisha raised her sword to resist Dudian's stab. However, the dagger retracted. It was a faint! He used his foot to kick Aisha's knee.

Aisha's face slightly changed as she hurried back.

Dudian continued with another dagger attack and Aisha once again tried to protect herself, but this one was a feint too. Once again he attacked with a kick towards her leg.

Aisha was prepared this time and immediately dodged.

Dudian threw the dagger out as Aisha dodged half the way.

Whoosh!

Aisha was shocked, but her body reacted on instinct. However, it

was not enough to hide from the dagger. It cut through her beautiful cheek and left a bloodstain. The blood began to ooze out from the wound.

Dudian took advantage of the opportunity and quickly bypassed her and ran towards the passage.

The dark knight behind the Aisha saw that their captain was injured. They were surprised to see Dudian rush towards them who were close to the exit. They didn't interfere in Aisha and Dudian's fight as they were worried that they would be hindering Aisha. After all, Dudian could attack them without fear, but Aisha would be worried about accidentally hurting them.

Dudian was like a desperate animal as he ran towards the dark knights.

The knights were frightened as they didn't expect Dudian to dare to attack them unarmed. The one in front used the sword to stab.

Dudian saw the dark knight had stabbed the sword out, but there was fright in the dark knight's eyes. He made a sideways move and escaped this attack. However, he used his hand and grabbed the dark knight's wrist. He made a hard twist, and the dark knight lets go of the sword because of pain.

Dudian released the dark knight's hand and quickly grabbed the sword. His body rotated and waved the sword to protect himself from imminent sword attacks.

Puff! Puff! One of the dark knights who tried to attack was accidentally stabbed in the face. He screamed out and covered his face while the one who had released the sword was killed on the spot.

Dudian's constitution was close to an intermediate hunter's before he was imprisoned. However, after his magic marks had evolved and physical transformation that happened because of absorbing the cold crystals of the horned and variant skeletons his body was almost comparable to ordinary senior hunters. Even if his close combat skills were poor, but he could rely on his physical advantage to easily fight against the dark knights who were comparable to junior hunters.

Dudian waved and swung the sword to block several other dark knights. The horror had invaded their hearts because of Dudian's extraordinary strength and agile actions.

Dudian broke through the encirclement as he didn't want the Aisha to catch up. He ran towards the exit and saw that the passage was overcrowded with people. Some patrolling guards tried to calm the crowd.

It had been a total of only three or four minutes since Dudian had broken the poison filled bottles. The people in the square tried to evacuate in panic, but the guards had blocked the passage and maintained the order. They let people out slowly one by one.

Dudian threw away the sword after he broke out of the encirclement. He noticed the guards in the passage, so he began to shout out loud.: "The poisonous gas is coming! Run! Run!"

Although he tried to change his voice and spoke in a hoarse voice, everyone had heard his shouts.

The crowd was scared and panicked because of his manipulation. Few of them wanted to look back and check the situation, but were pushed by the people standing behind them. The people began to fall onto each other and fell like dominoes.

“Stop! He is the attacker!” The guards pulled out their weapons as they looked at Dudian. Although they had not witnessed the fight between Dudian and the dark knights, they had already evacuated everyone into the passage. So it was obvious that this person was part of the attackers and tried to take advantage of the situation to run away.

Dudian had inquired and observed combat effectiveness of these guards. They were much weaker than dark knights. Most of them were apprentice knights. He didn’t pause, but rushed over.

The guards were furious as they roared and tried to attack Dudian.

Dudian closed the distance in a blink of an eye. The speed of their swords was very slow in his eyes. He easily escapes the first sword attack and hit the guard in his face. Bang! The guard’s body staggered backward and was entangled with the other guards.

The passage was full of people. It was very hard for guards to maintain the order, to begin with. Now the people were shouting and trying to escape in panic.

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Dudian's speed didn't diminish, but instead increased. He looked at the crowd in front of him, which was shouting and screaming. Without the slightest hesitation, he jumped up and stepped on the shoulder of the person in front of him. Then he moved to the next and so on. He was using people as stepping stones as he continued to run away rapidly. The chaos occurred as Dudian stampede the people.

Aisha was stunned as she saw Dudian's action. She thought that he would stop as he would reach the crowd but didn't expect that the latter would completely ignore the lives of these people and rush out at all costs.

"Bastard!" Aisha clenched her fists as she looked at Dudian who was trampling over the people. Dudian could make such a move, but she couldn't. It wasn't because she wasn't able to do so physically. But she was a Captain level dark knight appointed by the dark church. The reason and purpose of her dispatch of the dark church were to protect these people from the attacks of Holy Church. However, if she went along and continued to trample people as Dudian did, then there was no guarantee that someone would be injured or lost their lives. It was something that she couldn't afford to do.

Aisha raised her hands and tried to disperse and break the panicking crowd. Although she wasn't acting as violent as Dudian, she still managed to squeeze a bit with the help of guards.

Dudian was already at the front and jumped down while Aisha was still desperately trying to drill through the crowd. Dudian overturned the several people in front and created a gap. Then he jumped down and went out of the passage into the manor. At the moment lots of people wearing robes and masks were standing front of the manor. They were pointing towards a direction and whispering to each other.

Dudian squeezed through the crowd and dug out from the window. He jumped on the neat lawn and looked back. He saw that there were quite a figures gathered in the place where his carriage was parked before.

Dudian glanced around but didn't stay there for long. He bowed his head and moved towards the fence. The manor was surrounded by a high fence. As Dudian approached the designed part of the fence, he saw the guards, and they noted his presence. They came over to him.

Dudian didn't bother with them and leaped over the wall and jumped over to the street. It was a secluded street, and there was no one around. He quickly walked around the pre-designated trail and left the manor in the wilderness.

Although the wilderness was full of vicious animals at night, he didn't have anything to worry about.

...

One hour after the attack.

The potion masters dispensed the anesthetic green fog. The people were issued with antidotes, and most of them had already awakened. Some of them who were close to the fog had heart attacks because of continuous exposure to the green mist.

The main hall.

Aisha and Simon stood close to each other while there was another person close by to them. According to his armor he belonged to the same level as them. In front of the trio, there was a huge man wearing a black gown. His height was almost two meters tall. A black hood covered most of his face and exposed his thin lips which looked like cold daggers.

The man looked inside the cage. Afterward, he looked at the two iron pillars that were cut off. He was silent for some time.: “Do you know what would happen to you all if this thing was taken away?”

Trio’s face turned ugly, and their bodies trembled. They bowed their heads down.

Aisha clenched her teeth.: “Please give us the appropriate punishment as it is a dereliction of duty!”

The man didn’t say anything. After a few minutes he slowly talked.: “According to you people the enemy was not a person, but their numbers couldn’t be much. A single person wouldn’t be sent to steal away this. It would be impossible. Check the source of this paralyzed. It is likely that someone from our side has prepared the

theft plan. Be sure to check everything out thoroughly!”

“Yes.” Simon nodded and left.

Aisha hesitated.: “Commander there is something that I want to tell, but I don’t know the right way to tell it.”

“Well,” The stalwart person glanced at her. “Go on.”

Aisha bowed.: “At the time that I was fighting with the attacker, I told him that he was killing innocent people. He responded that: ‘The people of the dark church are claiming to be innocent?’. Listening to his tone, I think he was very hostile towards the dark church. I wonder if the man was from Holy Church.”

Simon and the other youth’s face changed as they were startled because of Aisha’s words.

The man was silent for a moment before he replied.: “Even though the knights of light are sanctioning us at every corner, but they would never use poison to attack us. It is against their honorable dogma. The enemy’s purpose is to mislead us with such words. Don’t you understand that it was unnecessary for the other side to wrestle words with you? But he did so. The man is a very cunning guy. Such a statement is enough to prove that he is one of us. Follower of the darkness.”

“Go to search the details. You have to submit valuable information by the dawn. Don’t come up with garbage! Go!” The

man said in an indifferent tone.

Aisha, Simon and the youth nodded and turned away.

“Brandon.” The man suddenly called the youth.: “What were you doing at the time of the invasion?”

The youth’s face turned ugly as his body trembled and cold sweat flowed down his spine.: “Co-co-commander…I was…drink …”

The man looked at his eyes.: “If such a thing happens again. Then I’m going to make sure that you drink a wine made out of your tongue and crotch.”

The youth turned pale.: “There won’t be.”

“Go on.” The man waved.

Time passed.

Five hours after the end of the attack. Early in the morning.

Aisha, Simon, and Brandon returned to the main hall. The man was standing in front of the cage.: “Commander, I found the source of the mist. It was a potion sold by a potion yesterday. The potion master said that the amount that she had sold was almost exactly that was diffused. She is sure that the attacker is the person who bought the poison from her.”

The man recovered his eyes from the cage and looked back at her.: “Who?”

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Aisha hesitated.: “It was an anonymous purchase. Alchemy points were not used for trade. But the transaction occurred in private currency and the shop owner didn’t know his code. However, I have seen the gold coins given by the buyer. There were numbering of the coins and after a small investigation through the bank we found that the money belonged to Mellon consortium.”

“The Mellon Consortium?” The man was slightly startled. He said.: “I will send someone else to investigate the Mellon Consortium. You go to the Inferno family and see what their reaction is.”

Simon looked at him and whispered: “Commander, the Inferno family has been low-key for many years. Why would they be involved in such a thing? Although it was indeed the inflammation method of the Inferno family that was used to cover up for the attacker. The military also can mass produce the same thing. If the Inferno family were really after the object of the gods than they would use other means to cover their tracks, wouldn’t they?”

The man replied in a cold tone.: “I know that you are affectionate towards the Inferno family because they have raised you up but don’t forget your current identity. Anyone who dares to go against the dark church is our enemy. Although they lay low the sleeping tiger is the most dangerous one. No one would be willing to stay dull and lonely for long. They are just waiting for a new opportunity to rise. Do you think that their family cares for secular wealth?”

Simon’s face slightly changed, and he did not dare to say more.

“They can dodge the responsibility because the consortiums and the military are aware of the method. That’s why I said pay attention to their reaction. ” The man continued in an indifferent tone.: “It’s impossible for masterminds to be easily suspected. However, this doesn’t mean that this logical can’t be used against us.”

Simon said. “I understand.”

“Go! I have to appease the old guys. Find the identity of the attackers as soon as possible. That way you will also make your punishment lighter.” The man said and left the place.

Simon, Aisha and Brandon’s faces turned ugly.

...

Night.

In the wilderness.

Gray clouds were stagnant and covered the moonlight. However faint light passed through the clouds and shined over the wilderness. There were howls and growls of beasts that were full of sadness and loneliness.

Dudian advanced rapidly in the moonlight. He stopped on a slope and tried to sense the smells. There were no pursuers. He fell onto the grass slope and began to take big breaths.

“Fortunately, the purple leaves’ burning was right according to my calculation. The timing was perfect...” Dudian was glad that the explosives on the carriage detonated on time. Purples leaves were by nature resistible to fire. That’s why they burned very slowly. After several experiments, Dudian had mastered and predicted the timing of the purple leaves burning speed. But flame, after all, was a difficult thing to control, and a slight error could lead to catastrophe. Fortunately, he was blessed by the heavens, and there were no accidents during the execution of the plan. Otherwise, he would be somewhere in a dark room right now. The members of the dark church would be torturing him.

This was a high-risk bet, but it was worth the energy tube and chip reader.

The main thing that gave him the courage for such an unbelievable feat was the flaws that he found during his check-up. The Dark Church’s main assurance was protection of the indestructible cage. The dark knights who supervision and protected the cage were relatively free, busy with their things or enjoying their lives.

This was the main reason that he was able to go on with the plan.

The enemy’s deployed strength was too weak.

“I can grasp a greater power if I become a senior hunter. They are already the top combat power within the giant wall. Professionally trained top fighters are sent to capture a single senior hunter in times of a misdemeanor.” Dudian secretly thought. He wanted to recover his left arm as soon as possible. The next time he goes out of the giant wall, there will be a substantial increase in his power. But he needs to absorb the crystals one at a time and can’t be excessive with that.

Excitement surged in his heart as Dudian touched the energy tube and chip readers under his robe. The remaining energy inside the energy tube was enough to learn how to make his energy source. Once he learns to manufacture generators, then there is an inexhaustible source of knowledge within the super chip. Afterward, he would be beginning to make real moves.

The cold wind blew, and Dudian’s thoughts gradually calmed down. He took off his robe and mask and went along the way to the Ryan Castle. Because of the curfew time, the guards were patrolling the area, but it was very easy for him to avoid them.

In the middle of the night, Dudian returned to the Yard town. The lights of the households were out, and the streets were dark. He didn’t directly go to the Ryan Castle but stayed in the forest for the night.

The next morning

Dudian woke up early and went to the Ryan Castle.

Old Fulin was eating when he saw Dudian appear. There was a trace of a smile on his face as he looked at Dudian.: “I was told that you have gone to the Red River. Although you are a hunter and have strong physique the women, there aren’t clean enough. You should go to the Moulin Rouge at Lido Avenue. That’s the best place.”

Dudian lightly said.: “You should go if you can do it.”

Old Fulin laughed.: “No man will admit that they can’t, no matter how old.”

“Last week, the Mellon consortium built a large market next to the town of Pinea. We will lose a lot of business.” Dudian said as he changed the topic.

Old Fulin sighed as he saw Dudian talk about business.: “Yes! The textile mill hasn’t received orders. These wealthy businessmen read newspapers every day. They know that we have a conflict with the Mellon consortium, so they don’t want to offend them. That’s why we haven’t been getting orders. We had lots of orders before, but that was because no one had new looms but us. Now, all we can do is sell our things in the Yard town.”

Dudian nodded slightly. Since the Ryan family has sold the mine, their main income is the land tax from this town. The purpose of the Mellon consortium for building such a large marketplace in the remote neighborhood was to pressure the Ryan family. Their aim was to take away the business of shops in Yard town. Some shops

have already moved out of Yard town as in the long run it seemed the place would become a desolate town. “

“They are trying to warn us. They want us to bow and take the initiative to contact them.” There was coldness in Dudian’s eyes as he looked at Old Fulin.: “How do you plan to deal with the problem?”

Old Fulin smiled.: “I asked help from the Scott consortium, but they flatly refused. They are way too lazy to fight the Mellon consortium in such a small-scale local battle. For now, we can rely on dividends from new looms, and for short term, we can afford to reduce taxes…”

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“From the Scott consortium’s perspective, we are a small consortium which has invested all our funds in leasing the passage through the giant wall. They know that we have offended the Mellon Consortium and in the future, we can only rely on them. So they are not taking us too seriously.” Dudian could analyze everything more in depth because of experiences of prison life.

“Even though I am hunter an inventor who can create more benefits than a hunter. They are too short-sighted as they can’t value the gift in front of them.” Dudian said.

He pulled a chair and sat on it: “They are not short-sighted, but they are considering other things. There is already a contract with them regarding the new looms. It would be very difficult to improve them in the future. A success of once or twice is nothing but a lucky blessing by the gods in their eyes.”

Old Fulin sighed: “We can only wait for your arm to heal. We have to save the dividends from the new looms to buy ‘fountain of life’ from the Holy Church to solve your arm for good.”

Dudian nodded slightly as his eyes swept over several newspapers. He grabbed one of them and asked: “Is there anything important on the news today?”

“The same thing. Nothing new about us or related to our consortium.”

Dudian read the newspapers and didn't see any news about the attacks on the dark church. Most probably the information was suppressed by the dark church. Most probably Holy Church would suspect that a beast invasion or attack has happened in that town.

Dudian read the articles and ate his breakfast. Afterward, he looked at Old Fulin.: "These days I will focus on resting. If there is nothing big, then don't let anyone bother me, including you."

Old Fulin laughed: "Do not worry, I will not bother you. You should take care of your health. I'll order the people in the kitchen to bring your meal to your room."

Dudian nodded and got back to his room.

Dudian took off his coat after closing the door. The energy tube was hidden in his left armpit. In addition to the energy tube, there was a large chip reader hidden in the inner pocket of his coat.

There was a wide smile on Dudian's face. He came towards the wardrobe and opened the bottom drawer. There were few clothes for summer and a jewelry box. In addition to gold and silver coins, there was the supercomputer chip inside the jewelry box.

Dudian always kept the supercomputer chip in the corner of the courtyard of the house assigned to him by the Mellon Consortium. The reason was that he was worried back then that a thief might sneak into his house and steal the safe. At the time when he was imprisoned Jura, and Gray were forcefully moved, and his luggage

was thrown out. However, the supercomputer chip was still hidden in the courtyard of the house. At the time when he assassinated the deacon Huey, Dudian passed by that house and dug out the supercomputer chip.

Dudian inserted the supercomputer chip into the card slot of the card reader. Then he plugged the card reader into the energy tube's jack. There were six jacks above the energy tube. In the middle, there was a rectangular groove which was aligned so that it could connect directly to the frozen storage capsule.

Dudian inhaled deeply as he clicked the reader.

The screen suddenly lit up, and a hologram popped up.

...

Mount Er. The Burong family castle.

Rudolph was eating breakfast while he was alone in the spacious dining room. Once in a while, he checked the daily newspapers. He was especially focused on economic news. He looked up at the butler: "Is little miss eating her meals on time?"

The butler respectfully said: "After you promised the little miss that thing, she has not longer gone on a hunger strike. She eats all the meals we give her every day. These days she is actively studying the law and intends to return to the magistrate in a few days. "

Rudolph nodded. “Make sure that people in the magistrate look after her carefully. She can’t pick up dangerous cases.”

“I will notify them.” Butler nodded in affirmation.

“What about the town of Song town?” Rudolph asked again.

Butler replied: “Everything is within the budget. It will be opened up in a few days. These days lots of businessmen are moving to Pine town, and several organizations are looking for the person in charge for cooperation. Song town is on the caravan line, I have heard that the prices of rent for shops have improved a lot.”

Rudolph nodded: “Make sure that little miss doesn’t get to know about anything. I don’t want to have trouble with her again.”

Butler looked at him and went silent for a moment. He was hesitant as he voiced out his opinion: “Master, Miss has finally agreed to no longer meet with the boy. The thing has passed. Why don’t we ignore the kid?”

Rudolph’s expression was indifferent as he pointed to the breakfast: “Look at the dishes. Bright. Delicate. My appetite increases as I look at it. However, if a fly flew over it. Would you eat it?”

The butler’s face changed slightly as he knew that the master was furious at him. He understood the meaning behind his words. Even

if the fly didn't eat the snack, but its appearance alone was enough to devalue the snack.

"She isn't a kid anymore..." Rudolph looked out of the window and spoke in a gentle tone: "She was supposed to marry the young master of the Milan family, but the kid ended up in prison. This time I have to make sure that she marries into the Parker family. I hope...I hope that in my lifetime, I can lead the Burong family and return to the inner wall. I want to complete my father's death wish. I also want to see... see the landscape!"

Butler looked at Rudolph's rigid face. He sighed and didn't say anything.

...

Time passed by.

The news of Dudian's wounded arm had spread wide. The Ryan family was back to its usual quiet life as they operated their own small business. The level of their life hasn't changed much, and some of the members of the family were not happy with all of this and weren't able to restrain themselves.

"Mr. Dean, when will your arm heal?" A pretty girl in her early twenties, spoke out loudly as everyone was seated at the lunch table.

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The buzz of knives and forks that touched the plates stopped the moment the girl spoke out. The eyes of all the members were focused on Dudian as they waited for his reply. The words said by the girl had been in their hearts for a long time. Even the quality of the dishes had gone down, so the dissatisfaction in their hearts had gone up during this time.

“Nonsense!” Old Fulin’s face sank.

The girl knew that she had done the wrong thing by talking out of turn as her grandfather got so angry. She bit her lips and bowed her head.

Jake, who was sitting next to Dudian talked out: “Father the child is young and not sensible so don’t be offended by her words. Mr. Dean, please take her words lightly. We will be waiting for your body to recover as long as it would take.”

Dudian didn’t reply, but smiled in response.

There was a trace of disappointment and anger in Jake’s eyes as he saw the indifferent reaction of Dudian. He looked at the angry face of his father and turned to look at Sander who was sitting calmly. Eventually, he held back the impulse to ask for anything else.

After the dinner, Dudian, as usual, went back to his room and

locked the door.

A few more days passed by.

On this day Dudian had breakfast in his room and afterward found Old Fulin.: “I’ll be late today. Maybe I won’t be on time for dinner.”

Old Fulin looked at him and sighed: “The members of my family are getting insensible these days. Don’t listen to them at all. We have to nurse you back to top condition before going out of the giant wall.”

Dudian smiled: “I’ll recover soon.” He got up and took his jacket from the chair. He bid farewell to Old Fulin and walked down along the wooden stairs to the hall. Hugh and several other members of the younger generation were chatting in the hall. The young girl from a few days ago was also in that group.

“Hello.” Dudian casually greeted them as they were on his route.

The others looked at him, but didn’t reply. Only Hugh squeezed out a smile and looked at Dudian: “Hey, Mr. Dean. Are you going out?”

Dudian nodded: “I have to make a trip to ‘Temple of elements’”

“The Temple of Elements?” All of them were surprised the moment they heard the name of the organization. Their eyes lit

up. Hugh came forward and asked: “Mr. Dean, are you going to join the Temple of Elements?”

Dudian smiled: “I’m going for tea, but I’ll see what happens there.”

One of the other youth said: “If you can join and make a friend then you could get some good objects from them. Afterward, we wouldn’t be worried about the future of the New World consortium.”

One of the girls was surprised as she uttered in exclaim: “I don’t have to worry about the new skirt.”

The previous girl dissatisfied with the Dudian also had a happy face. She looked at Dudian and tried to encourage him.

Dudian bid farewell to these few people and got out of the castle. He sat on the carriage and ordered the coachman to take him to ‘Temple of Elements.’

The structure of ‘Temple of Elements’ was totally different to the magistrate, the Holy Church, or consortia. They had no divisions or headquarters. All the architects were gathered in one place. They would communicate with each other on weekdays to try to inspire each other. It could be described as the holy land of learning and studying. Many alchemists and potion masters longed for a peaceful and stable learning environment such as that.

The Temple was located in the northern part of the commercial district, close to the direction of the inner wall of the giant wall. The Temple was located on ‘Church Mountain’ (TL notes: de ga shan – it doesn’t refer to a building (church) but to the idea [Catholic Church e.g., the body that controls the system]). According to the people, the word Church meant holy in the old era.

Church Mountain was very tall. Its foothills were surrounded by several small towns. All of the towns were under the protection of Holy Church. There were dozens of Knights of Light patrolling the area. Everyone was the believer of God of light as their robes and clothing were typical of members of Holy Church.

Dudian sat in the carriage for five hours. Finally, they came to the front of Church Mountain. They passed by the hillside to go to the first town on their way. There were eight Knights of Light wearing bright silver helmets stationed at the entrance of the town. There were solemn expressions on their faces as they coldly looked at Dudian.

“Stop.” One of the knights stopped Dudian: “Please show your proof of identity.”

Dudian took out the invitation letter: “I will be joining the Temple today. I came over to report.”

The young knight picked the letter and checked the badge above the envelope. He recognized it and nodded: “Go.”

Dudian took back the envelope and continued on the mountain road. Every 100 meters he met a team of patrolling knights. He submitted the invitation letter to confirm his identity three times. It was a proof of the level and strictness of defense of the area. Even a fly couldn't fly in, let alone enemies. Moreover, if the Holy Church was so focused on protecting this area, then it meant that there were quite a few important figures within the Temple. Even if senior hunters came over to attack the Temple, it would be hard for them to reach the castle.

After all, there was only one Temple of Elements. It was an important tribute that showed the power of Holy Church. If they faced losses here, then it would be a very heavy hit to Holy Church.

After a moment Dudian came to the top of the Church Mountain. He saw a majestic castle standing at the peak made out of white granite.

"Stop! Who are you?" The guard standing in front of the gates of the castle shouted as he saw Dudian approaching.

Dudian didn't reply with words, but instead gave the envelope directly.

Guard took the letter and confirmed that it was the real thing. He gave back the letter: "Please wait, I will announce you." He made a gesture to another guard and turned into the castle. After 10 minutes he came back while a middle-aged man followed after him. It was Kerry.

“Mr. Dean?” Kerry identified Dudian at sight. There was a little surprise on his face: “You finally came over! Please come in.”

Dudian said: “I was delayed because of business. I hope it won’t have any effect on the invitation.”

“There won’t be.” Kerry enthusiastically replied: “The doors of the Temple are forever open for such young and promising architects. Although you have just came over, your name is already spread wide in our ‘Temple of Elements’. Your improved looms didn’t only changed the efficiency of the textile machines, but opened up a new era. Many masters have been inspired by your work and had a great harvest.”

Dudian knew that true meaning behind the improvement of the loom was not to improve its efficiency, but to let people understand the concept of mechanical energy.

Chapter 240

“It’s good that you have come to join us at the ‘Temple of Elements’. We will award you with a medal.” Kerry laughed: “I have to tell you that getting a medal in the Temple is a difficult thing. The medal that you get this time is one of the highest level ones. Many architects struggle for their whole life to get this medal but they can’t. However, you were issued with one before you even were a member of the Temple.”

“There are medals!?” Dudian was slightly surprised, but didn’t care much about medals. Both of them entered the Temple together as they chatted about random things.

The spacious hall was lit by the most advanced light oil. A calming fragrance was floating in the hall. There were tables in the corner of the hall. A figure was sitting while he held onto a book and read it. Once in a while, he tasted the tea.

“Come on.” Kerry took Dudian to the office at the side of the hall. There were seven or eight desks. More than a dozen figures were sitting by the tables. There were documents on the tables, and the people were busy reading them.

“I’ll give you information,” Kerry said. He came to an empty desk and sat down. He took out a few documents and handed them to Dudian.

Dudian understood that Kerry had the same position in the

‘Temple of Elements’ as Peter had in the scavenger headquarters. Kerry should be responsible for personnel management. Dudian took up the contract and looked up through the content. It was almost the same as Kerry had told him about. He would be given a castle to live and generous monthly payment. Moreover, he would be able to freely enter the major libraries and could even join the libraries belonging to the nobility in the commercial district.

It had to be mentioned that his household registration status wasn’t stated as a noble. But all the aspects of life were at the same level with nobility. Of course, they could be compared to the lowest level of aristocracy. After he reaches a senior architect level, then he would be able to get a fiefdom, collect taxes, construct farms and be the lord of the land.

“I am an intermediate architect?” Dudian was surprised as he read the contract.

Kerry laughed: “Although you are a newcomer your textile machine is proof of your talent. Because of that, there was a special approval, which increased your status to an intermediate architect. If you had invented the loom after joining the Temple, then your status would be higher than an ordinary noble’s.”

Dudian understood the terms: “It’s written that there will be a severe punishment if I can’t finish the monthly task on time. What is the punishment?”

Kerry asked: “As you complete the tasks you will get reward points while the double amount of points would be deducted if you haven’t completed. Although you are an intermediate architect

right now if you don't work hard in the future, then you will get your points deducted, and you will be downgraded to a primary architect. Nevertheless, the castle will not be taken away, but other rewards such as your salary will be reduced."

Dudian was stunned. It was almost the same system as the dark church. Thinking about it, the Temple of Elements and the Dark Church do the same thing only the Temple is the legal version. Because of the long battle between the Holy Church and the Dark Church, it seems the Holy Church have reproduced the best sides of the Dark Church and made it legal.

He puts the ideas away and focused on contract. He had to confirm that there were no word games. Once he signed the contract, it would be effective. He wouldn't be able to overwrite or change the contract even if the magistrate was brought in.

Kerry smiled and put away the contract after he saw Dudian sign it: "Welcome to the Temple! Your medal will be produced in about three to five days after I submit the contract. I will be given to you in person as soon as the medal ready. This is your temporary proof of identity, and now I can take you to pick a castle."

Dudian nodded in confirmation. A castle was not something that could be bought with small amounts of gold coins. It was not something that you could build on your own too. Only the nobility had the right to build a castle. So if a rich businessman wanted to live in the castle, then they would spend double the price to ask an aristocrat to help them build a castle. Afterward, they would purchase the castle from them. However upper-class nobility was very distinct on the issue. For a long time, a castle has been the

exclusive symbol of aristocracy households. If such a thing occurred a lot, then the castles would pop up everywhere. That way they wouldn't be able to distinguish their identities from the civilians. However, it didn't mean that they control everything. Holy Church was able to directly award castles to people they wanted to.

He followed Kerry into another room. There was a table which was dozens of meters long. The entire commercial district was mapped there by using sand.

"The castles marked with green are available for selection," Kerry said.

Dudian was stunned. For a long time, he wanted to have the map of the commercial district or even the entire giant wall's map. But it didn't sell and wasn't available to the public. He didn't expect to see such a thing in front of him now. It was a large, intensive and complete mapping of the commercial district. There were four parts of the commercial area. Northwest and southeast of the commercial district were wilderness. The other areas that were 30 percent of the commercial district were meant for the population to live. Every town, villages and other areas were depicted in the sand map.

There was a long black line similar to a narrow wall referring to the border fortresses at the outermost parts of the map.

"There are seven or eight towns in the vicinity of Yard town." Dudian murmured as he found the location of the Ryan Castle. The area of the Yard town was the size of a small peanut in the map.

According to this ratio, he imagined what the few meters diameter meant in the map. The commercial district was a huge bustling place.

His eyes swept over and over again as he repeatedly looked at the map. It was a rare opportunity, and if he would record the map into his mind, then it would undoubtedly be a great opportunity to use in the future.

At the same time, he looked at the castles marked with green color. There were dozens of castles. He was surprised as he gained insight into the unfathomable strong power and capital of Holy Church.

“This one seems nice...But let me take a look again...” Dudian pointed above a castle. It seemed he intended to pick it, but there was hesitation in his words and facial expression. However, his eyes were scanning the entire sand table. He tried to memorize as much as he could.

Time passed.

The smile on Kerry’s face had become stiff. He had thought that they would be quickly done with selecting the castle but didn’t expect that Dudian would take two or three hours to select one. Though Kerry suspected that Dudian was interesting in taking the opportunity to check the map, Dudian’s hesitant appearance told otherwise. He quickly dispelled that idea. But thinking of Dudian origin, the kid was just an adopted orphan, and it was very rare for him to choose a castle for himself in the commercial district. So it was understandable to Kerry that he was so cautious in his choice.

“This one.” Dudian pointed to a castle which was located by a small river.

Numb eyes of Kerry brightened: “This one?”

“Ok.”

“Don’t you want to decide more?”

“No.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

After repeated confirmation, Kerry saw that Dudian had made up his mind. He immediately flipped the green flag from the castle and said: “I’ll help you with the check-in. From now on this castle is yours. It will belong to you for 50 years. It can neither be sold nor inherited.”

“Alright.” Dudian nodded.

Kerry went through the formalities in a rush. After a moment all the procedures were finished. Kerry's spirit was restored too: "I will take you to your workplace." They came back to the hall as they exited the room.

There were lots of people gathered in front of a wall in the hall.

Kerry noticed the turmoil and said to Dudian: "There seems to a task with a good reward. Let's go check it out."

Dudian looked up to the place where the crowd was gathered. There was a bulletin board, and dozens of announcements were written on top of it. The contents were a bit strange.

"Recruiting: Five water element primary architects, five wood element primary architects... ..." Kerry came and stood behind the crowd. He looked at the contents of the bulletin board as he stood on tiptoes. He murmured: "Turns out it is a recruitment notice by master Terence! It seems he has found a way to make a hydraulic machine!?"

Dudian was curious: "What is the water element?"

Kerry looked back at him and explained: "There are nine schools of study in the Temple. Gold, wood, water, fire, earth, wind, dark, light and lightning are the nine elements. Gold elements refer to anything from precious metals to base metals. Wood elements include from flowers to trees. The carpenters belong to the wood element division. The new loom machine that you invented

belongs to the wood element field."

Dudian was startled as he didn't expect the 'Temple of Elements' would classify the research areas. It was more meticulous that the way dark church approached to scientific research.

"Your medal is the Medal of Wood." Kerry said to Dudian: "If you have another research area, then a new medal will be issued to you. But it's good to stick to one area so as not to get lost. "

"I will." Dudian nodded.

"If you are interested then you can participate in the research of Master Terence. After the completion of architect's orders, then you will get corresponding reward points." Kerry continued: "It would be good for you to join another architect's research team. It should help you to get familiar with how things are done in here."

Dudian's eyes were caught by another humble notice. The paper was yellow and dilapidated. He read the content and asked Kerry: "As long as the rewards are there, then I can join any team. Can I?"

Kerry looked at the direction Dudian was looking at.: "Do you want to join them? But this is the lightning faction."

Dudian nodded.

Kerry went silent as he saw Dudian nod in confirmation.

“I suggest you not to get involved with them.” Kerry was patient as persuaded: “Lightning is too dangerous. It’s been several years since this notice was posted here. Many had taken the offer, but all of them failed. Moreover, two people accidentally lost their lives.”

“No wonder the notice didn’t mention factional requirements.” Dudian thought.

Kerry wryly smiled: “There are very few members in the lightning faction. They don’t dare to put way too many requirements.”

Dudian said: “I want to try.”

Chapter 241

Kerry was speechless: “This is a weak faction. Moreover, your talent lies in the wood element. Why are you bothering to set foot in another area? It’s not a good idea.”

“How would I know that I’m not good at it if I haven’t tried out?” Dudian asked.

Kerry looked at his serious expression. He thought that Dudian was able to develop a new textile machine because he took inspiration from his tailor father. Kerry thought that Dudian had no communication with the lightning element in his life so it would be very difficult to get started. However, he didn’t voice out his opinion as it was easy to offend people but hard to gain their favor: “Well, the choice is yours. But if you see that you are not successful, then withdraw as soon as possible.”

Dudian nodded and recorded the location assigned in the notice.

“I’ll take you over to see the other architects.” Kerry responded.

Dudian followed him.

Both of them left the castle and went to the rear of the Church Mountain. The mountain slope was rolling up and down like a dragon. There was another separate castle behind the main one. Both of them were looking at each other.

Along the way, Kerry explained: “The primary architects use the rooms close to the entrance while intermediate architects are using the ones in the middle. The senior architects work in the deepest part of the castle. It’s much quieter over there, away from the troubles. Intermediate level architects get separate rooms for themselves while primary architects share the rooms. So be sure to cherish your status.”

Dudian understood the implications behind his words. However, he had his plans and didn’t want to be mixed with them a lot.

After a moment, both of them were in front of the sixth castle.

Kerry said: “This is going to be your workshop. There are accommodation and working areas. You can move your things over. If you need anything else, you can order a servant to get it for you. Research materials can be bought in the material library, but you will have to exchange for them with reward points. Unless you have gold coins to spend, but it would be a bit expensive using actual currency.” They went into the castle.

The castle had a large area. There were farms and orchards within the castle. A few servants were slaughtering the poultry as Kerry and Dudian entered the castle.

There were several buildings within the castle. Some were for accommodation while the others were for research and relaxing.

The servants saluted in respect as Kerry and Dudian moved

through the castle.

Soon both of them entered a tall building. The first floor was empty. At the corner of the hall stood a thin young man.

The youth noticed Kerry and Dudian. His eyebrows wrinkled as he asked: “Someone was promoted? Is it the third of the month?”

Kerry recognized him: “You have to work hard. Smarter people are joining us. Be careful, or the younger generation will catch up to you.”

Youth grunted as he eyes looked up and down at Dudian’s body. There was a trace of surprise in his eyes: “So young. He a few years younger than me?”

Kerry laughed: “Mr. Dean is ranked third regarding age. He is only two years older than that little monster.”

“Two years older?” The youth saw that Dudian had youthful vitality. He sighed: “He is a newcomer, but who knows, maybe in a few years he will pass me.”

Kerry smiled: “Put in a lot of effort and hard work. Don’t you want to introduce yourself?”

The young man smiled: “Hello, my name is Bernard.” (T/n: wtf? The original name used by the author is actually a Western surname. We will change it to Bernard for the name to make sense)

“Dean.” Dudian raised his hand to shake his hand.

Bernard looked at him: “Are you the creator of the new textile machine? Are you that Dean?”

Dudian touched his nose: “It should be me if it is the new textile machine.”

Bernard froze up for a few seconds. His eyes glowed as he spoke: “I have long heard of your deeds. At such a young age, you were able to create a new type of textile machine which is same as opening a new epoch. You are the pride of wood element faction! I wouldn’t have expected that the young newcomer will be you! We are going to be classmates!”

Dudian smiled as he didn’t know how to answer.

Kerry laughed: “Don’t be so happy too early. Be careful, or Dean will overtake you in the future.

“It should be normal for him to pass me.” Bernard was indifferent.

Kerry turned speechless: “You lack fighting spirit!”

Bernard replied: “I don’t lack fighting spirit. What I lack is money! Others do a lot of experiments while with no money I have

to plan and formulate a lot before doing an experiment. The others are mixed with aristocracy while I'm on my own! I am not a fool!" His face was a bit sad.

Kerry knew about Bernard's situation. He looked at Dudian: "I'll take you to your room."

"I'll go too." Bernard joined them too.

The trio went upstairs.

They came to the fourth floor. Kerry told him: "You will be in this layer. If you want to change your room, then you need to make an application."

Dudian and Bernard followed after Kerry into the corridor. There were four spacious rooms. Each of them had special equipment for experiments.

"This one." Kerry took out the key and opened the door to the second room. It was about a hundred square meters. Inside were some small tools and a sawmill.

"If you think that there aren't enough materials, then you can make an application for them to be supplied or just buy them on your own." Kerry continued: "In addition to the monthly tasks, anything else you make will be evaluated by the temple according to the sales it makes. You will get a corresponding commission."

Dudian’s eyes lit up.: “Is my new textile machine included?”

Kerry shook his head: “You have signed a contract with the Scott consortium so we cannot give you dividends on that.”

Dudian regretted, but it was also within his expectations. He glanced at his study room.

“Hey, a newcomer?” An old man who was passing by the room saw the trio through the open door.

Chapter 242

Kerry looked back: “Oh, it’s the old man. Why are you going out?”

The old man glanced at Bernard and Dudian who were beside Kerry. He knew that Dudian was the new face: “Is this the new man who was just promoted?”

Kerry laughed: “Sorry, I have forgotten to introduce him. He is Mr. Dean the recent receiver of ‘epoch’ medal. He is also the creator of the new textile machine.”

Haisong slightly frowned as the gentle smile on his face slowly disappeared: “Is he? If I am not mistaken, then it has been a long time that the new textile machines have been produced. Why have you invited him now?”

Kerry immediately explained: “We invited Mr. Dean a long time ago, but he was busy and couldn’t respond. He came today and joined the Temple.”

Haisong looked at Dudian and spoke in a counseling tone: “I heard that you have grown up in a family of a tailor. Your father must have been an excellent tailor. We know that your father has been the main influence behind the machine. Your talent is good, but don’t be too proud. The mysteries of God are as deep as the sea. You can be successful only after hard work. Don’t waste your time and talent!”

Dudian frowned and did not say anything.

Haisong looked over at Kerry: “I will go to get some materials. I don’t want to disturb you people.” Afterward, the old man left.

Kerry recovered his eyes and looked at Dudian. “Don’t mind his words. The old gentleman said so because of kind intentions.”

Dudian shook his head: “Enough with this place. Let’s go. I’ll apply for that notice.”

Kerry wryly smiled: “Well”. He then led them out.

Bernard was surprised: “What notice? If they miss some then may I join the project? ”

Kerry snapped: “There is no need for you to participate! Dean is planning to join master Eivissa.”

Bernard was stunned. He looked at Dudian: “Master Eivissa?! Isn’t that lightning magic faction? Dudian, you belong to our wood element faction! Why would you join the lightning faction?”

“I’ll check it out first.” Dudian casually said.

Bernard wryly smiled: “The people of the lightning faction are crazy and careless. They come up with dangerous experiments. I’ll

pass…Yes, I will pass… If you want to go then go on…”

It didn’t take long before trio came out of the building. Bernard stopped: “I still have other stuff to do. I’ll go back so good luck. I’ll see you.” As soon as he finished, Bernard left away.

Dudian and Kerry continued to return along the same route. Soon they met the previous old man who was walking slowly. They caught up to him and passed. Kerry greeted him: “We are a bit in a hurry master Haisong.”

Haisong nodded slightly, but did not say anything.

Kerry went along the hillside with Dudian. After some time they reached the 12th castle: “This is the place.”

Dudian looked up at the castle and followed him.

The guard at the door recognized Kerry, so he didn’t stop them. Both of them entered the castle and Kerry went straight into the castle hall. He talked to Dudian as they walked: “Eivissa is a master at our Temple. Each master has a separate castle. Most of the time they won’t be interfered with by the outside world. If you had joined the Temple and created the new textile machine over here, then you would have the ‘master’ title too.”

Dudian faintly smiled as he knew that titles were nothing but sugarcoated words. The only reason Temple hasn’t issued him ‘master’ title for his new textile machine was that he had sold the

contract to the Scott consortium. The actual income is probably close to nothing, so they weren't promoting Dudian because 'masters' enjoyed lots of free resources that had to be provided by the Temple.

Kerry looked at the guard by the hall: "I want to meet master Eivissa."

"Wait a moment." The guard went into the hall and returned after a few moments. He looked at Kerry: "Please."

Kerry took the lead and entered a very spacious hall. Several maids were standing around the hall. One of the maids with a different clothing in comparison to the others came up to them: "Master is upstairs waiting for you two." She turned around and took the lead.

They came to the second floor. Kerry opened the room, and Dudian heard hearty laughter echoing from inside. Two men were sitting on the sofa and enjoying hot tea. One was middle-aged and wore casual clothing. The other was an old man with a white beard. Both of them were chatting and laughing.

Kerry was surprised to see the middle-aged man: "Master Terence?"

Dudian heard the name and felt that it was somehow familiar. He remembered that the man was the guy who posted up the notice. He was the person involved in hydraulic research.

“Little Kerry?” The old man looked back to Kerry: “Why have you come over here? Am I being promoted?”

Kerry wryly smiled: “Good day masters. Let me introduce you. This is Mr. Dean, the inventor of the new textile machine. We have come because Mr. Dean wants to be involved in your project and receive the rewards.”

Eivissa’s smiling face stiffened while the middle-aged Terence sharply looked up and down at Dudian. Master Terence’s eyes met with Dudian’s. He felt an unknown feeling that he couldn’t describe. It was as if a beast was looking at its prey. It made him feel uncomfortable.

Dudian’s eyes moved away and fell onto the old man Eivissa. He nodded and said: “Master, I want to receive your reward mission. I would be interested in researching bio-energy.”

Eivissa looked up and down at him while he measured Dudian: “Although the reward points are rich, the requirements aren’t low. Have you studied the art of lightning?”

“No.” Dudian shook his head.

Eivissa looked at him: “It is too regrettable, but you don’t meet my requirements. Sorry.”

Dudian frowned: “I can learn. I can definitely help you out.”

“I do not need it.” Eivissa shook his head: “This notice has been hanging for so long. I should withdraw it. You have talent as you can make the new textile machine work that way. I hope you continue to study the path of wood elements. Don’t cover over small profits and delay your future. Life is very long, and you are young. Sit down and learn.”

Dudian looked at Eivissa’s facial expression. His brows wrinkled as he saw that the old man’s had decided. He sighed: “Well, Thanks.”

Terence also added few words:” Occasional luck may not last for long. Only by mastering the elements can help you grow in the future.”

Dudian glanced at but kept his silence. He turned to Kerry: “I’ll go back. Goodbye masters.” He left as soon as he finished his words.

Kerry looked at them: “Master, I will also go back. I will show him the way so that he won’t get lost.” Then, he immediately chased out of the castle.

Terence frowned as he looked at Dudian’s back: “Blessed by the God. After all, he is a son of a civilian. He is too short-sighted. He doesn’t know how to evaluate a rare opportunity to study and became an excellent architect.”

Eivissa shook his head and sighed: “If his textile machine hadn’t come out for a while, then you would have got the medal. Your

idea of making hydraulic weaving machine has been there for a long time, but hasn't been completed so it can't be evaluated."

Terence's face turned ugly. This was the sore spot in his heart.

"Let's not talk about these unhappy things." Eivissa waved his hand as he saw Terence's facial expression.

Chapter 243

Dudian returned along the same route after he left the castle.

Kerry caught up with him. He patted Dudian's shoulder when he saw the expression on his face: "Don't be frustrated. Master Eivissa didn't accept you because he doesn't want to obstruct your talent. This may not be a good choice, so you should concentrate on the element of wood. You may re-recreate another textile machine. There is nothing that is impossible."

Dudian knew that he was talking out of kindness: "What is the task of this month?"

"The tasks are released at the beginning of the month. More than half of the month has passed, so you won't be given a task for the remaining time. You can have this time to study and learn so that you will be able to do next month's mission." Kerry answered.

Dudian nodded. His aim was to produce weapons so that he could hunt outside the giant wall. As he got the knowledge from the super chip, he was able to create weapons that were out of this era's reach. Now his main concern was to raise his physical strength to senior hunter's level. Maybe even higher than a senior hunter. He knew that he couldn't perfect the skills in a short time, so he had to rely on the physical constitution to make up for that.

His purpose in joining the Temple was to use his identity as an architect to buy materials that would be hard to get in normal

conditions.

“Now that you have joined the Temple, there will be a ceremony.” Kerry said: “After the ceremony is over we will help you hold a banquet. All the aristocrats will be invited so that you can receive your ‘epoch’ medal from the Temple. Moreover, you are the youngest architect to get ‘epoch’ medal in history. When you become a senior architect, the Temple will focus on nurturing you. They may send you to the inner wall to study.”

To the inner wall? Dudian’s eyes lit up as he was quite interested in the ‘inner wall.’

Moments after Dudian and Kerry left the Temple of Elements. They got a carriage and went to the castle Dudian had selected to complete the procedures for the transfer of rights.

A few days passed in the blink of an eye.

Ryan Castle.

Old Fulin looked at the telescope Dudian had given him: “Have you improved it?”

Dudian laughed: “Check it out.”

Old Fulin raised it and looked out of the window. He was astonished: “I can see the face of pedestrians on the other hillside outside the town.”

Shortly after the glassware was invented the people at ‘Temple of Elements’ had created telescopes. However, the distance wasn’t good. Telescopes had a long development history in the old era. The once famous Hubble telescope wasn’t even considered a telescope after advanced ones which could observe the end of the universe were invented.

“Geez! I didn’t expect you to improve the tools of other architects after joining the Temple for a few days.” Old Fulin was amazed. He knew that Dudian was smart and he had seen his performance before. “If you submit it to the Temple then you should be able to get a lot of points. Can’t you?”

“It won’t be enough to buy a ‘fountain of life’,” Dudian said. In fact, he had secretly made a telescope, which could observe ten times more than this one. He was able to look at thousands of meters away.

Of course, if there was an obstacle, then the telescope wouldn’t be much use. Actually, outside the giant wall, the environment had more than enough of such obstacles.

He didn’t intend to submit the tenfold telescope right now. Although he would gain enough points to buy ‘fountain of life’ but it would appear too abrupt. In addition to the telescope, he has prepared another item which he would exchange for points. But he had to wait for a few days so as not to provoke doubt.

“Tonight, I’ll be present at the banquet too” Old Fulin was

pleased to see Dudian's accomplishments: "I didn't expect for you to get 'epoch' medal for the invention of the new textile machine. If you didn't sign a contract with Scott consortium, you would have gotten thousands of gold coins from the Temple. Moreover, the Temple's dividends would be much more than Scott consortium's."

Dudian was stunned: "How much did the Scott consortium pay us for the dividends?"

"Three thousand gold coins. This is for the first month." Old Fulin said.

Dudian's face turned ugly.

Old Fulin saw his expression, so he asked: "What is the problem?"

"If I remember correctly, then we signed the contract five days before the beginning of the month. Did you receive dividends for that time frame?" Dudian questioned him. As he was fiddling with his research and was busy in the Temple, he didn't have extra energy to manage the business.

"Well," Old Fulin shook his head.

"You haven't checked the papers?" Dudian asked.

Old Fulin understood what he meant: "Do you mean that they

would falsify the accounts to give us less? It should be impossible. They would not care about such a little amount of money. After all, we are also a consortium. Moreover, you are an architect. They are not stupid."

"Money is something that it is never enough. They would dare to pull the hair from the tiger's head not to mention us. We aren't even considered as a mouse in their eyes. "

Old Fulin said: "Do you mean that the dividends are far bigger?"

"After a period, any new product's popularity will decrease. But the new textile machine is different." Dudian said: "Everyone was familiar with the improvement of the textile machines. The effects on productivity were significant too. The people with discerning eyes to understand this. The profit from the first month would be enormous. The most of the large profits would be gained in the first three months. Afterward, it will slowly decline as the demand is limited."

Old Fulin was stunned. Although he knew that the new textile machine was very valuable and had great influence, but the three thousand gold coins given by the Scott consortium was a lot too.

"I will go back and investigate." Old Fulin replied.

Dudian shook his head: "I'm not sure that they are greedy enough to do this. Even if they did, then they have covered up the numbers. I will casually ask someone in the Temple to do the estimate of the market value of the new textile machine.

Afterward, we can talk to the Scott Consortium about our two percent.” His eyes narrowed as coldness flashed past.

Old Fulin understood that even if they traced out the falsification, then there was no way for them to recover the money.

Chapter 244

“Do not be impulsive.” Old Fulin saw the expression on Dudian’s face. He sighed: “We have no evidence in our hands, even if we know that they have faked the books. There is no way to recover the justice. Moreover, you have the identity of an architect right now so we can’t lose face because of such a small issue. We must accumulate our power and take account when we are strong enough.”

Dudian saw the worry in Old Fulin’s eyes. He gently raised his hand and patted his shoulder: “Don’t worry, I’ll deal with this thing. People are fragile, whether it is a senior hunter or an ordinary person. It is the same. Don’t forget that to destroy a precise machine a big axe is not required. Sometimes pulling a piece as big as a hair will destroy it.”

Old Fulin looked at his eyes that were full of darkness. His heart trembled. It was as if he was not standing in front of a teenager, but a dark evil monster.

“Now, we should go to dinner.” Dudian’s face changed instantly to a smile. In the blink of an eye, his temperament changed to a gentle one.

Old Fulin was in a trance as he carefully thought about Dudian’s words. He recovered: “Yes….Yes…It is getting late. We should go. This is a rare gathering where all the aristocracy will attend. We should take this opportunity to win over other aristocrats.”

Dudian smiled and held his arm to help him to move.

The butler had already prepared the carriage. Both of them went to the venue where the ‘Temple of Elements’ held the banquet – St. Peters.

At one time St. Peters was a cathedral of the Holy Church. However, when the ‘Temple of Elements’ was established this venue was given to them as a gift because it was close to Mount Church.

Gradually the sun had set, and one by one stars popped up in the sky.

There were dozens of carriages parked outside St. Peters. They belonged to the aristocrats from the commercial district. Most of them were upper nobility, but some rising ones came over personally too. After all, this was a banquet held by the Temple to give the ‘epoch’ medal. Although big consortium’s such as the Mellon and Scott didn’t care or weren’t concerned about Dudian they didn’t dare to give face to the ‘Temple of Elements.’

Fragrant oil lamps lighted the road to the cathedral. They were fueled by liquid similar to sesame oil, which was taken from a beast’s body. Even some upper aristocratic castle’s used them only in study rooms and dining rooms. However, in here they were casually placed to light the road. Even the guards who were on duty felt fresh because of the fragrance emitted from the lamps.

Kerry and several other colleagues stood at the door and received

the guests one by one. Kerry was acquainted with almost everyone. He had a wide range of contacts. He had just sent away two nobles when a carriage came close to the door. Kerry's eyes lit up as he saw the banner above the carriage.

Dudian was first to get off the carriage. Then he helped Old Fulin to walk out of the carriage.

"Mr. Dean." Kerry immediately approached: "You are a little late. Don't forget that you are tonight's star!"

Dudian shrugged his shoulders: "The traffic."

Kerry helplessly smiled and looked at Old Fulin.: "Old patriarch Fulin. Your body is still healthy. By the way, you have picked up a treasure."

"Luck, luck." Old Fulin laughed.

"Please come inside. It's windy outside." Kerry immediately invited them and led the way in front.

The three people went into the St Peters. The door could accommodate ten people at the same time. The thick doors slowly opened and a golden light swung out from inside. The laughter echoed out. The place was extremely luxurious. Everything inside was a fine work of art. Even the chandeliers were made of the best quality glass.

Kelly laughed: “I have to receive the guests now. I’ll accompany you afterward.”

After Kerry had left, Dudian and Old Fulin came inside the hall. There was a massive table filled with all kinds of fresh fruit, pastries, wine and so on. Nobles stood in groups and chatted. They talked in whispers highlighting the behavior of aristocratic courtesy.

“I didn’t expect that I will have the privilege to come to St. Peters.” Old Fulin said with emotion: “My father had attended a party in the past. But I was too young, so he didn’t bring me. It’s thanks to you that I have the chance to visit this legendary place. It truly was crafted by the masters. Such a majestic atmosphere.”

Dudian grabbed a pastry with a low level of sugar: “Let’s go and sit.”

“Alright.” Old Fulin nodded as he sat on the sofa to rest. He looked at Dudian: “You go around and check the people. No need for you to accompany this old man. Take advantage of this opportunity and tried to hook up with the ladies.”

Dudian looked at him helplessly: “I won’t be able to find anyone close to my age.”

“So what if you can only find sixteen-year-old ones. There should be older ones too. It would be rare to find anyone older than twenty, but still, there is some.” Old Fulin smiled and pointed towards some girls.

Dudian looked at the direction where Old Fulin was pointing to. Few noble ladies stood together, chatted and laughed. He recovered his eyes and said to Old Fulin: “You have a good rest.” He came to the center of the hall and began to wander around. He could keenly distinguish their whispers. Although they weren’t talking about secrets he was able to hear what kind of things they liked to talk about in public.

“People from Burong family …” Dudian’s eyes fell on a middle-aged man. He was familiar with the face of this man. Although he had seen him only once, it was firmly engraved into his mind. It was Jenny’s father, Rudolph!

At the moment Rudolph was surrounded by few nobles. He had a glass of wine in his hand and would occasionally take a ship. The wine was a good additive to such parties. It would take the ‘embarrassment’ away.

“Little devil, do not look around.” Suddenly a voice echoed from behind.

Dudian looked back to see an obese middle-aged man. There were a few strands of white hair on his temple. He was familiar, but couldn’t remember from where. Suddenly he remembers the first noble he had seen when he had participated in the banquet held by the Mellon consortium back when he was a scavenger. After so long the man’s body and face have changed a bit, so it was hard to remember him.

“Mace?” Dudian looked at him and whispered his name. He had heard the name long ago, it was deeply engraved in his mind. He couldn’t forget it because of the deep humiliation back in that day.

“Huh?” The middle-aged man’s eyebrows wrinkled: “Do you know me?”

Dudian indifferently said as he saw the man admit his identity: “You have a good collar. It’s a shame that you won’t wear it for long.” Afterward, he turned away and left.

The middle-aged man looked at his exquisite men’s necklace that hanged about his neck. He specially asked a master to forge it for him. He looked back at Dudian, but he had left. He was furious, but at such an occasion he couldn’t directly shout out. He stared viciously at Dudian’s back as he memorized Dudian’s appearance.

Chapter 245

“De, Dean?”

Dudian was passing by a long table when a soft and weak voice called out to him.

Dudian was surprised. He looked back and saw a slim and beautiful woman. She was dressed in a light pink skirt. She had a gentle temperament. He couldn’t help but wonder: “Who are you?” It seemed that he had never seen this girl.

“I-I am Annia.” There was a trace of disappointment in the girl’s eyes as she saw that Dudian didn’t recognize her. But she still took the initiative to introduce herself. Her face was red.: “I’m from the Avril house. We had met when we were young.”

“We were young?” Dudian was stunned, but he suddenly recalled her.: “Is it you?”

At the time of the adoption, Jura and Gray wanted him to join the Avril house. Fortunately, the other side wasn’t satisfied with the blind date. He remembered the beautiful girl who said the words which were sharper than a knife to his face. It was back then that he had realized the reality. As a result, he had begun to learn to adapt to the conditions and self-improve.

“I am.” Annia cheeks flushed: “I didn’t expect that you will become so handsome.”

Dudian smiled didn't think that the beautiful girl had become a slim beauty. Her age should be just over twenty.

At the time of the separation, he didn't hate the girl but thanked her. Now they met again after a long time. There was a touch of nostalgia in his heart.

"I hope you are not offended by my words from back then." Annia slightly bowed and continued when she saw that Dudian didn't speak: "We were young back then, and my temper was more wayward. I had told you some rude words. I hope you can forgive me."

Dudian smiled: "It is all in the past. Moreover, I would like to thank you. Because if you had agreed to the marriage at that time, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Annia was relieved as she looked at Dudian's expression. There was no ridicule in his tone: "We all know about your talent! You are so young, but still were able to get the 'epoch' medal from the 'Temple of Elements.' In the history of the giant wall, few people were able to get that medal though they were a lot older than you. You are a master level figure, and your name will be immortalized at some point. Moreover, your future is limitless."

Dudian did not feel happy as he heard her compliment him. There was a faint aftertaste of the girl from back then. He knew that some things had to stay in the past and can't be brought back. The time and environment would erode the people beyond

recognition.

“You are flattering me,” Dudian asked: “What have you been up to?”

Annia was slightly startled: “Our Avril house had gone through a recession and declined. We are relying on our hotel, and our business hasn’t improved at all.”

Dudian gently drank the juice and put away the glass. He silently looked at her.

Annia again took the initiative as she looked at Dudian: “My life is a bit boring. But I’m very curious about you. I have heard that you are an architect and an intermediate level hunter. ”

Dudian didn’t elaborate much, but said to her: “If your family has difficulties I can help once or twice.”

Annia’s eyes lit up: “Really?

Dudian nodded slightly.

Annia spoke in a grateful tone: “Thank you for forgiving my ignorance because of the young age. If there is anything, I can do for you as long as you say the word I would be willing!” Her face reddened.

Dudian indifferently said: “I like the way you were back in the old days. You talked directly, but fairly simple. ”

Annia’s eyes lit up and whispered: “Although I have changed I am not as ugly as back then? Right?”

Dudian looked at her and shook his head in silence.

Annia saw him in a bad mood. She reached out and headed for Dudian’s arm: “Let’s go over there to talk.”

Dudian took away his arm: “You are married and shouldn’t be too close to others. People will easily misunderstand. It’s bad for your family’s reputation too.”

Annia pouted: “Don’t talk like old people. I have not married yet. Although I refused you back, then I always thought that you were very mysterious. I couldn’t agree to marry other men since then.” She glanced at Dudian with lust in her eyes.

Dudian frowned slightly. His nose was extremely keen. As they chatted, he sensed a smell of a man that was exuded from her body. She was living together with a man. Although the Avril house was on the decline, they were still nobles. Their children slept alone in their rooms. The parents, brothers, and sisters wouldn’t sleep in a crowded bed. This smell could be left by her husband or by another man.

Dudian looked at her spoiled expression. He didn’t speak his

heart out, but could see that the young, beautiful and pure girl that he remembered was already stained.

Annia saw that Dudian didn't speak. She quickly took note of his expression and saw that the boy frowned. She knew that she had put in too much of force. She quickly changed the topic: "I heard that you could write good poems. Can you tell me one?"

Dudian looked at her and nodded: "one line." He was about to read the poem when Kerry came in from outside. He was looking at the guests. Dudian looked at Annia: "Poem can wait for a while. I still have something to do." He left her and went towards Kerry: "Are we starting?"

"Heh," Kerry said. He had seen Dudian chatting with Annia. He laughed as he continued: "I didn't think you will use such an excuse to end the chat. I assume she was bothering you. Anyway, let's go."
Dudian nodded and did not explain anything.

Chapter 246

Kerry and Dudian came towards the steps in the middle of the hall. Kerry cleared his throat: “You-”. His high pitched tone attracted the attention of the nobles. The whispers quietened, and the hall fell into silence. There was a smile on Kerry’s face as he continued: “Welcome to St. Peters. As all of you are aware, today is a grand day! You all know that ‘Temple of Elements’ recently gave birth to a new ‘epoch’ medal winner. In the three hundred years of history, there were only seventeen people who won this medal!”

“Each of them was a character who had affected their own time!”

He faced the eyes of the nobles. His tone was graceful as he continued: “I believe that you have heard about the new textile machine! You have seen the masterpiece given by the God of Light!”

There were smiles on faces on most of the nobles: “I have seen. We use them!”

“That is a great work of art!”

“Praise the glory of the God of Light!”

Kerry continued: “The emergence of the new textile machines didn’t just improve the efficiency of the production, but the God of Light gave us an enlightenment! This is a huge blueprint. In the future, lots of new masterpieces will be based on it. Our lives will

be much better!”

Applause resounded in the hall.

Kerry smiled: “I’m not going to say too much as it is just a banquet tonight. I hope you will all enjoy yourselves. I would like to invite the hero of tonight’s gathering, the winner of the medal, the God’s architect, Mr. Dean!”

After he finished Kerry stepped down. Dudian who was waiting across the steps walked up. He was standing in the highest and most bright location. All the eyes were focused on him. He looked around and saw the aristocrats lined up. He remembered the party from many years ago when he was a scavenger. He remembered that Mel family’s daughter Sarah was in the spotlight while he was in a dark corner.

“Thank you for coming.” Dudian smiled as he calmly said. There was no timidness or weakness in his tone. The people began to clap to congratulate. If an average person were standing there, then they would lose themselves under this applause. But from the experience of hunting many monsters, Dudian’s instincts had become more sensitive. Rudolph was applauding and smiling at the same time as if nothing had happened between them. He could see the deep coldness under his smile.

Dudian removed his eyes and glanced at other nobles. Abel from the Milan family was here. The head of the Mel family was present too. There were about ten extraordinary people with the same temperament, standing in the first row. Behind them were the others. Dudian saw Old Fulin who was using crutches to stand up.

There was a pleasant smile on his face.

Mace was standing in the crowd and looked at Dudian. He didn't expect that this juvenile was the main protagonist of today's party and the winner of the medal. There was anger in his eyes, but he restrained himself as a smile appeared on his face.

Dudian looked around the crowd and saw Annia at the outside parts. There were a middle-aged man and a lady dressed in velvet close to her. Although she was dressed decently in comparison to other ladies, she seemed low-key because of her jewelry and clothes.

Annia's eyes met with his.

Dudian recovered his eyes and said: "I met a childhood friend and promised to tell her a poem. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity and say the poem. Please don't make fun of me.

Kerry was slightly surprised: "A poem?"

Many aristocrats were stunned. One of them immediately reacted: "It is a pleasure to hear the poem from 'epoch' medal winner. Mr. Dean is really versatile!"

"Young and promising ..."

The aristocrats at the back whispered to each other. But the top nobles at the first row slightly smiled and didn't speak.

Dudian looked at Rudolph and began to chant the modern poetry that he had learned from the supercomputer chip:

“If I love you -”

” I will never be a trumpet creeper Clinging to your body to highlight my height.”

“If I love you -”

” I will never be a bird Repeating the monotonous song for a green shade.”

” Nor a spring That brings perennial cool solace.”

” Nor a steep peak That increases your highness, reflects your eminence.”

“Even daylight.”

” Even the spring rain.”

” No, all these are not sufficient!

“I must stand by your side, A tree with roots clinched underground, And leaves touching the cloud...”

Dudian slowly read the poem. The restless hall had become quiet. Only his voice echoed out as it revealed the aesthetic poem.

Dudian didn't continue to read the second half of the poem. It was called Ode to the oak. The latter part wasn't good for the occasion, so he retained.

Everyone knew that the poem had come to an end after Dudian's voice no longer sounded for a long time. There was a surprise in their eyes. Most of them didn't understand poetry, but nobles liked drama, poetry, music and other forms of art. In the eyes of the nobility the etiquette, education, and art were more expensive than wealth.

"Good poem!" An obese middle-aged noble cheered.

Other aristocrats recovered and applauded.

Annia was shocked as she stood behind the crowd. The scene from many years ago emerged in front of her eyes. She remembered the cold boy looking calmly at her. The words "I will never be a trumpet creeper Clinging to your body to highlight my height" had affected her. Although she didn't know what trumpet creeper means, but she could understand the meaning of the verse. That stubborn kid was like that back then. The poem had deeply pierced her heart. She couldn't directly look at Dudian as her head was lowered.

Chapter 247

There was a flash of coldness in Rudolph's eyes as he heard sounds of warm praises around him. He could feel that this poem was meant as a counterattack. Stand together behind the tree? Humph! There was a faint smile on his face, but he sneered. If Dudian had reached today's achievements and identity earlier on, he might have considered him, but after today he would not! He didn't think that Dudian will be an obedient and well-behaved son-in-law.

Dudian looked around at nobles. He covered his chest and stood like a gentleman in front of the crowd: "This poem is called 'Oak'."

"Good poem, good poem!"

"Oak! Oaks seem to have disappeared a long time ago."

Nobles joined in to warmly applaud and praise him. In fact, they sincerely exclaimed when they heard Dudian say the name of the poem. They knew that it was not an arbitrary writing of the lyrics, but had an unusual meaning.

Oak was a long extinct old tree. He had borrowed the word oak to pay tribute to love. This kind of artistic expression was unique!

Poet!

The nobles respected poets and bards. For ordinary civilians, the poets were bards who made soul shaking poems. However, aristocrats loved this kind of poems. Especially the noble ladies.

Bards sang out beautiful stories, however, compared to traditional classic poets the bard's threshold was lower. The bard's combined poetry and story to give the hype. Their singing was mainly for demands of civilian appetite. Nobles were dismissive of this kind of poetry.

"Thank you." Dudian continued: "I don't want to disturb the banquet. Please continue." He made a gesture, and the aristocrats dispersed slowly.

Kerry looked at Dudian and laughed: "I was worried that you would be weak. But you are worthy of a hunter. Quite bold! If I didn't know you, I would doubt that you didn't grow up in an aristocratic family. Especially your poem. I like that part about dignity and pride. Too good!"

Dudian smiled and did not say anything.

Kerry looked at spread nobles and said to Dudian: "Few senior nobles will come to greet you. You have to deal with them for the sake of performance. They won't be rude. If there are nobles who want to ask you for cooperation, then decline politely. The Holy Church will take care of you. You only need to concentrate on studying your experiments. The Temple will manage every other aspect!"

Dudian nodded.

Soon aristocrats began to come over. The first to come was a tall, middle-aged man. He was holding onto a thirteen-year-old girl's hand. She was very beautiful and attractive.

"Mr. Dean, Mr. Kerry." The middle-aged man came towards Dudian and Kerry. He spoke in a polite tone: "I am Cole from the Kurt family. This is my little daughter Colley. I loved Mr. Dean's poem. It was stunning. I never heard that Mr. Dean writes poetry. You are very talented."

Dudian said: "Thank you." His eyes swept over them. His daughter was looking at him with strong interest which she didn't hide.

Dudian politely nodded at her and retracted his eyes. Cole laughed: "You are modest. I haven't seen anyone at your age with the same level of achievement."

"Haha … …" He wasn't finished when laughter echoed from behind. A middle-aged man holding a small girl's hand came over: "Cole, didn't you use the same words last year?"

Cole looked back at the person and smiled: "Why are you slandering me?"

The man shrugged his shoulder and turned to Dudian: "Mr. Dean this is a gift from our Hamm family." The man handed out a fine

gift box.

Dudian has long been aware of the gift box. He didn't think that it was meant to him: "It is too expensive, I can't accept it."

"Don't hold back." The middle-aged man laughed: "If you don't accept it, then we will be offended."

Dudian reached out, took the gift and said: "Thank you."

"Mr. Dean, why don't you look inside?"

Dudian opened the box as he heard him say so. There were a bunch of exquisite purple gems. By looking at the details, he knew that it was worth a lot of money. However, his face didn't change, and he smiled back: "This is for a woman. I have no wife. What am I going to do with it?"

There was a trace of surprise in the middle-aged man's heart as he saw Dudian's calm look. He smiled: "I know you don't have a wife, so I especially got this 'Purple Star Chain' for you. If you find the right girl, then give it to her." He finished and winked at Dudian.

Dudian smiled: "Thank you."

Another middle-aged man was coming towards him. Cole took the chance and immediately gave a gift to Dudian. It was a small gift box. There was a man's pocket watch inside. It had a delicate

built and seemed to be a valuable watch.

Dudian accepted it. The other nobles also gave gifts. Some were expensive some were not. Ordinary gifts clearly were symbolic. Dudian and the others were well aware of everything.

“This is the gift she has prepared for you.” Rudolph came towards Dudian and give him a box. He was smiling.

Dudian politely replied: “Thank you.”

Rudolph saw that Dudian’s expression didn’t fluctuate so he said a few words and left.

Dudian put away the gift box. Jenny’s smell wasn’t on the gift box. He understood that Rudolph tried to test his temptation. It made his heart, even colder towards him.

Chapter 248

The gifts given by aristocrats amounted to a small hill. Afterward, he began to chat with them. Such a grand banquet was a rare opportunity, and many tried to communicate with other aristocrats for interpersonal relationships.

Some time when by.

The banquet was half-way gone when someone suddenly trotted over and whispered something in Kerry's ear.

Kerry was stunned at the man's words. However, his face turned happy and a bit excited. He looked at Dean and whispered.: "Two masters have come. I'm going to meet them." He immediately rushed towards the door.

Dudian was slightly surprised at the moment. According to Kerry, the Temple wouldn't easily disturb master architects. If it were normal times, then the Temple would invite masters to the 'epoch' medal awarding ceremony, but because of special circumstances, they haven't invited anyone. Dean didn't expect that masters would voluntarily come to the party.

The castle's door was pushed open, and two old men went in as Kerry led them. They were wearing exquisite robes meant for master architects. Behind them, two middle-aged men and one middle-aged woman went in. The design, style, and color of their clothing were different from the ones old men wore. But Dudian

knew that they were dressed in robes meant for senior architects.

The aristocrats close to the door suppressed their voices and exclaimed in surprise the moment they saw the new guests.

The appearance of guests quickly spread through whispers to Rudolph, Old Fulin, and other nobles' ears. Everyone looked back as there was surprise on their faces. The aristocrats who were sitting on the sofas and resting stood up to show respect to the newcomer guests.

Dudian felt the weight, charm, and value of the 'Temple of Elements' as he saw the reaction of many aristocrats. He quickly went over to greet the masters. Both old men were smiling. There were wisdom and experience reflected in their eyes. They were dressed plainly, and at the edges, there was a bit of dust. It seems they were more concentrated on research rather than social life.

"Greetings Masters." Dudian went up to them.

The old man on the left slightly smiled.: "You are the creator of the new textile machine. Huh. You have got the 'epoch' medal before you joined the 'Temple of Elements'. You are the second one with such a feat. Hogan was awarded an 'epoch' medal 50 years ago because of inventing 'Hogan crossbow'. His weapon dominated the civil war."

"Thank you."

The old man on the right laughed.: “We have just learned the news about the banquet. We took the liberty to disturb you so please don’t take offense.”

Dudian saw that he was polite, so he replied.: “It is my honor that two masters are willing to attend the banquet. It’s my fault that I couldn’t greet both masters at the door as I didn’t expect for you to come. Please enjoy yourselves.”

“Get us two chairs so that we can sit and rest.” The old man on the left smiled and said to Kerry.

Kerry immediately replied.: “Of course, get two chairs for both masters.” He waved to the servants to immediately act.

The old man on the right nodded and turned towards the three behind them.: “You should chat with Mr. Dean. Although he is younger than you, he isn’t less knowledgeable than you.”

“Yes, teacher.”

“Yes.”

The two middle-aged men and the woman immediately replied with a respectful attitude.

The aristocrats surrounding them couldn’t help but look at Dudian. They didn’t think that a juvenile who has to joined the Temple for a few days could get such high evaluation from the two

masters. Some of them regretted that the gifts that they gave to Dudian weren't that expensive.

Rudolph's eyes were gloomy. His fingers applied a bit more force and tightly held the wine glass in his hand.

Dudian greeted the students of the Masters after both of them left.

"Hello, my name is Momo." One of the middle-aged men exposed a shy smile.: "It's our first meeting, but I haven't brought you anything. I'm sorry for that, but when we are back at the Temple if you lack any material I can get it for you. But it shouldn't be too expensive." His face reddened.

Dudian didn't think that the person who was so old would act like a shy boy.: "Thank you very much! If I face problems through my experiments, then I will look for your advice."

"I would like to discuss some topics too." Momo happily replied.

There was a trace of helplessness and disdain in the other middle-aged man's eyes. He looked at Dudian.: "Hello, my name is Jin. I am a major in military equipment and engineering. I heard that you are still a hunter. In the future, if you need equipment than I can give you several sets free of charge. I have improved bows and arrows of my own."

Dudian touched his nose.: "I will trouble you in the future."

“Mr. Dean.” The middle-aged woman called out.

The woman looked at Dudian and introduced herself.: “My name is Kim. Like you I’m studying on experiments that focus on civil issues. Your new textile machine has inspired me a lot. Thank you very much!” She bent on ceremony.

Such a move made many aristocrats gasp. They fancied Dudian’s new textile machine because of the monetary value and benefits it had brought. They didn’t think that such an invention would make even a senior architect pay tribute in such a manner!

Dudian was quite surprised. However, he had grown up in a family of scientists. He had seen lots of scientists and researchers. Normally they would be very excited when they saw extraordinary research material. Dudian was aware of the significance of the new textile machine more than anyone. It would open a new era. The era of steam machines would be steps away. Moreover, humanity’s conquest of the earth would begin from here on. It was an important starting point for humanity.

Senior architects were able to understand the significant importance of the new textile machines.

“No need for that...” Although Dudian was surprised, his hands quickly held up her and gently made her stand.

Kim saw Dudian’s move and nodded slightly.: “Let’s talk on the side.”

All of them nodded in affirmation and went towards the edge of the hall and found a sofa to sit down.

The trio understood that Dudian wasn't aware of the basic knowledge of the elements. However, they found out that Dudian wasn't ignorant either. He had his unique insights. Moreover, Dudian was confident and convincing in his speech.

The conversation touched more in-depth subjects as four of them talked about from one topic to the other. Unknowingly they had come to talk about high-level experiments.

Chapter 249

“I have recently improved the corrosive acidic mist. I have added red fruit and the venom of the crocodile snake. Theoretically, the red fruit is the best choice to reconcile the poison of the crocodile snake and achieve a strong level of corrosion. If I complete the project, then the corrosion of metal would be possible!” Momo excitedly said.

There was a smile on Dudian’s face. He saw Momo’s frantic expression which was opposite to his normal shy appearance: “The venom won’t be enough to corrode the metal. It is almost impossible to do it with two different substances. It would be good if you start from the metal itself.”

“From the metal itself?” Momo was puzzled.

Dudian said: “Under normal circumstances, the metal will corrode and rust. But it takes time. However, it’s not about the corrosion of the metal itself but the time for moisture, dust and so on to affect the metal’s erosion. In short, the process of erosion of the metal can be called ‘oxidization’.”

“Ox-what?” Momo, Kim, and Jin were confused as they had never heard of the word.

Dudian knew that it was very hard for them to understand. After all the periodic table has not been produced yet. They were not aware of the presence of oxygen let talk about oxidization. Dudian

said: “Normally the water slowly disappears the same applies to the metal.”

Kim thoughtfully said: “The water is absorbed by the temperature in the air and disappears. What do you mean? Will the metal be absorbed by temperature? Or will it be absorbed by the dust?”

Dudian saw that she touched the edge of knowledge: “The water is in a liquid state, so it disappears quickly. However, the metal is solid. It will take much slower for it to disappear. For example, in a few years, it will rust and rot. In a decade or hundred years, it will turn into a liquid state. But it would be incomplete. So after a thousand years that rotten state wouldn’t be left.”

Jin nodded and said: “Yes. So to speak the dust can even corrode the metal. It is amazing in a sense.”

Momo bowed his head as he contemplated on the issue. He muttered: “If it is so and the dust can corrode the metal... The dust is from the soil and the soil is made of rocks. The rock must have something to be able to corrode the metal.”

Dudian looked at him but didn’t continue to say that the most common thing to corrode the metal would be natural non-sulfuric acid. He could produce it, and if he submitted it, then it would get him very good award points.

“You carefully analyze everything.” Kim looked at Dudian.

Dudian smiled and replied: “Everything was made by the God of Light. That’s why I can get inspiration from everything that he gives us.”

“The teacher often warns us that we have to learn to observe the world. The truth is hidden in every corner of the world. Everything is in front of us, but we can’t see through the illusions.” Kim sighed as she said.

Dudian nodded slightly and felt the same way.

Time flew by and the night came.

The banquet ended in splendor. The guests began to leave one by one.

Dudian and Kerry stood by the door and sent the guests away. After the influential nobles left Dudian returned to the hall. The rest were bid farewell by Kerry as most of them were from smaller factions.

“We should get back.” Kim stood up when she saw Dudian come back.

Dudian asked: “Aren’t you going to stay a bit longer?”

“No, the teachers are tired.” Kim laughed: “The next time we can have a better chat. I believe that soon you will become a senior architect. Afterward, I can ask the teacher to let you work with us.

In that case, we can talk and discuss many things every day."

Dudian laughed: "Of course."

Both masters finished the tea in their cups and stood up. They saw the expressions of their students. The old man on the left said: "We will leave now. In the future, if you have a need for help don't be shy to ask any of my two students."

Dudian nodded in appreciation.

"I heard that you had gone and asked old Eivissa for the task. His studies are way too dangerous. One day he will kill himself. You should concentrate on the wood element." The other old man earnestly said.

Dudian nodded and said: "I know."

Both masters looked at him, but no longer said anything. They left as their students followed after them.

The other aristocrats greeted them, but both masters didn't even take a glance. They directly left the hall. The aristocrats who tried to approach them were embarrassed.

"Finally finished." Kerry returned to the hall: "It was nice to see that two masters and three senior architects came over to congratulate you. Although you are an intermediate architect, I believe that in their hearts you are not inferior to a senior

architect."

Dudian nodded. This was the influence of the masters. Just by appearing in the banquet they had improved his 'worth'.

"I was hard on you today," Dudian said to Kerry: "Next time the meal is on me."

Kerry smiled: "Alright, I will remember that."

Dudian knew that Kerry was involved in staff management, but his character was sleek and people appreciated him a lot because of his generosity.

At the moment, there were no guests left in the hall. However, servants were sorting the garbage and cleaning the tables. Dudian found Old Fulin who was sitting on the sofa: "Patriarch, I'll send you back."

"Alright." Old Fulin smiled and knew that Dudian had something to tell him in private.

Dudian bid farewell to Kerry. He helped Old Fulin to leave the hall. There was a cold wind blowing outside the manor. Dudian looked at the simple coat Old Fulin was wearing. He took off his coat and made Old Fulin wear it.

Sander saw Dudian's move, but he stayed silent as he followed Old Fulin and Dudian.

“Master.” The butler and coachman were standing in front of the carriage.

“We are going back.” Old Fulin ordered them.

Dudian helped him to get on the carriage. Butler and Sander used the second carriage.

It was late in the night, so the Ryan Castle was quiet. As Dudian and the others went into the castle, they saw a girl sleeping in the living room. She was Old Fulin’s granddaughter Lena. She was 14 years old. It seems she was waiting for them but fell asleep in the living room. Servants had covered her with a thin quilt.

“What happened?” Old Fulin looked at her.

One of the maids whispered: “Lena was waiting for you, sire. She fell asleep in here, and we didn’t want to disturb her. I will wake her up.”

Old Fulin looked at the sleeping girl’s face. He sighed and said: “Take her back to her room.” Then he relied on crutches to walk upstairs to the second floor.

Dudian helped old Fulin while he took a glance at the girl lying on the sofa. Barton and the others had given him full information about Old Fulin’s family. The girl was the daughter of Old Fulin’s fourth daughter. The fourth daughter had married a wealthy

businessman but died while giving birth to her daughter. Old Fulin took back his granddaughter and took care of her for her mother's sake.

The maid woke up Lena. The girl opened her sleepy eyes and looked around. She saw Old Fulin and Dudian walk upstairs. She bit her lips and wanted to tell something, but was stopped by the maid. The maid whispered: "The master is tired and asked us to take you back to your room."

Lena looked at her. She was slightly bitter but didn't say anything. She got up and left for her room.

Chapter 250

Dudian smoothly closed the door as they went into Old Fulin's room. Dudian sat down on a chair and looked at him: "Attendance of two masters in the banquet should make the others aware of our consortium's existence. From today on we should no longer be a small consortium in their eyes, but a threat with a great potential. The original balance of power will be destabilized because of us. It is not a good thing for us, but neither a bad thing. In any case, we will have to take other consortiums into consideration a lot from now on."

Old Fulin nodded: "I'm aware of that. They will pressure us, but we have only you to rely on. However, if you become a master in the 'Temple of Elements', then we will have a strong foundation. At least we will be able to win over one or two allies. The future of our consortium will be fixed. As long as no major event happens, we won't be suppressed."

Dudian's eyes lit up.: "I believe we will encounter trouble sooner than we expect. But it does not matter. You take care of your health. I have something in my mind!"

Old Fulin nodded: "I will."

"You should sleep early." Dudian got up and shut the windows to isolate the cold wind: "I have some stuff to solve out, so I'll go back." He turned away and left the room. In the corridor, he looked at another room. However, he recovered his eyes and went downstairs. He took a carriage and went back to his castle.

In the blink of an eye, two days passed.

After the banquet in St. Peters everything was as usual in the commercial district. Only the group of high-level nobles knew what had happened in there. At the same time, there were small waves set off in the art scene.

“Oak …”

“If I love you -”

The beautiful poem was chanted everywhere. The servants often heard the young ladies, and young gentleman read the poem in the castles. Even the ordinary people in the commercial district were aware of the poem. Some brave boys would boldly recite this poem to their beloved for confession.

In addition to the eloquent poem, its structure and content were analyzed by well-known poets. Some couldn’t find the meaning of the phrases ‘trumpet creeper’ and the ‘spring rain’. Some said that it was very strange as they had heard only of ‘disaster rains’. One poet even evaluates the phrases as ‘randomly fabricated’ words and accused that original writer knew nothing about poems.

The day after the poem was spread classical poet, master Taiza made an evaluation and analysis of the poem. According to him ‘trumpet creeper’ was a flower which had been extinct for a long time. The word ‘spring’ in the phrase ‘spring rain’ belonged to a season which didn’t occur anymore after the great disaster. The

writer of the poem according to master Taiza had great knowledge of the history.

All the people realized after the analysis of master Taiza that these two unfamiliar terms had such a far-reaching origin. Moreover, author of the poem was a well-learned man who would use such words to describe the feelings.

Some poets asked questions and comments about the poem, but the arguments were vague and objective. No one was willing to negatively criticize the poem after it was confirmed that those phrases had such an origin. No one wall willing to be in an awkward position.

Dudian didn't expect that his reputation would quickly increase in the poet and aristocratic circle because of the poem.

Mount Er. The Burong family.

"Even the rain... even the sun ..." Jenny was sitting close to the window as she read the verse from the letter in her hand. Her eyes moistened, and large tears began to fall. The tears slid down her cheeks and soaked the paper.

The warm sun shone from the window. A pigeon was standing on the windowsill. It was combing its soft feathers. A reel was tied to its legs. 'Sarah Mel' was engraved on the reel.

...

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

“Divine mission -”

“Improve ‘snake crossbow’!”

At the beginning of the new month, Dudian also received a task from the ‘Temple of Elements’. ‘Snake crossbow’ was invented in the year 263. Its origin was dating back for forty years. Snake crossbow has to be improved in a few areas. The pulling system had to be eased up. The new version should take wind’s velocity into account so that it would be difficult for an enemy to track... ... ”

Dudian carefully read the content of the task. He gradually understood what kind of a crossbow they wanted to create. In general, they wanted a crossbow with a more innovative structure. According to the requirements, it didn’t have to be a complicated crossbow. However, according to Dudian, there was no need to make any improvements on ‘snake crossbow’. If he wanted to make it flexible, then the arrows strengths would be much lower compared to an ordinary crossbow. Although it would be seemingly advanced and easy to use, in fact, it would not bring any advantages. The idea, to begin with, was wrongly positioned.

The arrow is all about shooting to kill. Its speed and strength had to be enhanced up. Why would someone care if the enemy could see where it came from? As long as the enemy couldn’t escape and then died, it would successfully do its job. Improving the snake

crossbow wasn't going to bring up any of these effects. The architects were sitting and engaging in research in the Temple. Most of them would never personally experience battle, so their views and perception of weapons didn't cover in-depth knowledge about their practical use.

Because of this, naturally, the development of the products may bring the 'easy to use' ability but won't have any real effect in a battle.

Dudian noted down this as his first task. He wasn't only concerned about the factions in the Temple, but he knew that other consortia would pay close attention to him too. So he was going to do his best.

He put away the drawings and looked at the snake crossbow. He wasn't going to modify the finished product, but would directly produce his own. He directly went back to his research room and began to make another crossbow.

In the blink of an eye, a half day passed.

Dudian came out of his research room in the afternoon. There were two crossbows on his shoulders as he went to the mission center.

"Dean?" As he was outside the castle, he saw Barnard calling out to him. There was a roll of drawings in Bernard's hand. He was surprised to see Dudian with two crossbows: "What have you been up to? "

Chapter 251

“I’m going to submit the task.” Dudian looked at him and said: “What about you?”

Bernard was stunned: “Submit the task? The tasks were released today. You! … Did it take you half a day to complete it?”

Dudian replied: “The task asked to improve the ‘snake crossbow’. I have an improved version. I just don’t know if it will meet the requirements of the task.”

“Improved ‘snake crossbow’?” Bernard saw two crossbows on his shoulder. He was stunned: “Is it the first time you have received such a difficult task?” Bernard saw the puzzled express on Dudian’s face, so he continued: “It is one of the most troublesome tasks out there. The task itself is not high level, but the creator’s student Tiffany is a problem. If there is not a good or small change, then she would even deduct points.!”

Dudian’s brows wrinkled but he didn’t reply.

“Is this your improvement? The shape seems to be very different to the ‘snake crossbow’.” Bernard looked at him and smiled: “This is a fundamental change. It will be very hard to pass. You should go and recreate it.”

Dudian shook his head: “No! I improved this to serve the public rather than the person who would be examining my product.” He

went towards the Temple as he finished talking.

"I'll accompany you," Bernard said and followed behind Dudian.

There were more than a dozen figures in the mission hall of the Temple. Some were selecting tasks while the others are hanging tasks or modifying them. One of the counters was used to sell materials to architects. They could be bought with points. If the task failed, then not only, they would deduct points, but the materials purchased for completing the task would be lost too.

It was made this way to maintain the level of usage in the Temple difficult. This way gaining a firm foothold and progress in the Temple would be only through hard work. After a significant contribution was made then architects could move up a level, get a medal or became a master.

"I am here to submit a task." Dudian came to a stop in front of a counter. No people were queuing in this counter. However, the people who stood by the other counters to receive the tasks were lined up. All of them looked at Dudian.

A chunky middle-aged man froze the moment he heard Dudian's words. He looked up and asked: "You want to submit a task?"

Dudian nodded in confirmation.

The chunky man blinked his eyes. Since he started working here, he had only seen three times when the task was submitted on the

first day of release. He sat up.: “Give me the task notice and results.”

Dudian handed over the notice card and two crossbows.

Middle-aged man looked at crossbows and then at the notice card.: “Alright. The task was to improve the ‘snake crossbow’. The audit time is one to three days. You should go back. I’ll give you notice when the result is out.”

Dudian nodded slightly.

Bernard looked at Dudian as he submitted the crossbow: “I wish you could pass the task.”

Dudian didn’t reply.

Dudian came over to the commercial district after leaving the Temple. He went through some shops to get metal materials. He was ready to create his second item – the lightning rod.

Time flew by.

In the blink of an eye, two days passed.

On this day Dudian was fiddling with a lightning rod in his room which was meant for the wood element. There wasn’t a furnace for melting, which caused him to manufacture the lightning rod very

slowly. He had to go back to his castle for smelting. However, the tools in his research room were excellent. He had used them to make a mold.

Knock! Knock!

A sound from the door echoed out.

Dudian stopped the work in his hand and approached to open the door. He looked out and saw a youth wearing apprentice knight of light's uniform. There was an envelope in his hand. Dudian asked: "Is it the reply for the task?"

The youth was a bit nervous as he saw Dudian: "Yes, yes."

Dudian took the envelope: "Thanks." He shut the door and opened the envelope. He took out the letter and read the content. There were lots of polite words, but the meaning was straightforward: "Unqualified!"

Dudian's eyebrows lifted as anger surged in his heart. He knew from Bernard that such a thing might occur, but he still hoped for a rational answer. He hoped that they would understand the value of his military crossbow. Although it was not a surprising development, there was a great progress. Apparently, the other side couldn't appreciate the value of this military crossbow. Otherwise, there wouldn't be such a result!

Dudian's eyes turned gloomy as he opened the door and quickly

went down the stairs. He walked towards the mission hall of the Temple.

The apprentice knight heard the footsteps and looked back. He saw Dudian coming quickly, and there was anger on his face. He was stunned as his legs trembled. However, soon he found that Dudian wasn't looking for him. The apprentice knight's face showed relief.

Dudian's eyes swept away the mission hall. He went towards the counter and found the chunky middle-aged man. The man was reading a book. He stated with an angry tone: "I want a review! I don't agree with the audit of the examiner."

The chunky middle-aged man was stunned but immediately recognized Dudian. He frowned: "The audit is done by a senior architect. You should go and check your problems."

Coldness flashed by Dudian's eyes as killing intent radiated off him: "There is a provision that if I'm not satisfied with the review result that I can debate in the Temple! I have the right to see the examiner!"

The middle-aged man saw Dudian's 'cold as knife' eyes. His face slightly changed: "I will give you the notice. You should go back."

Dudian looked at him coldly but did not say anything. He turned and left.

The chunky middle-aged man found that there was a bit of cold sweat on his spine after Dudian had left. He hesitated for a bit but took a stack of stationery from the drawer and began to write quickly.

Ninth castle. Temple of Elements.

A woman was sitting on the third floor by the desk. She was sorting out the information about her research. The conditions of a senior architect were much different to an intermediate architect. The senior architect would get a separate building in the castle. The environment would be quiet. There would be no one else to do experiments in different rooms so they wouldn't be disturbed by anyone.

A pigeon flew through the window and stood in front of the woman. She took out the letter and read it. The original calm face slightly changed: "Not convinced?"

Chapter 252

The news of Dudian making a plea for his defense in the mission hall had spread to the ears of everyone in the Temple and consortia. The success or failure of the task was a trivial matter. Normally an intermediate architect would not cause such attention. But Dudian was the person who had acquired the ‘epoch’ medal. Moreover, he was the figure most closely watched by the masters of the Temple.

“Is he the architect who got the ‘epoch’ medal?”

“I heard that his first task was to improve ‘snake crossbow’. He took only half a day to complete the task. The speed is fast but didn’t pass. Oh! He should see what real architects are. He should know that he can’t create miracles with a bit of knowledge and luck.”

“He was just a tailor’s son. It was the influence of his father that he was able to create such a new textile machine. It’s only been a month or so that he has joined the Temple. However the ‘snake crossbow’ is a different object. This is a military product and wasn’t meant for civilians. He wouldn’t understand its structure in such a short time. Although it is under the wood element faction, it doesn’t mean that it is an easy job to do! Moreover, Tiffany, the examiner for the ‘snake crossbow’ is known as a cold person. She respects the object created by her teacher a lot. It wouldn’t be easy to change her mind unless the improvement would be very extraordinary.”

“Yes. The newcomer has bad luck!”

“Don’t say so. It shows that in Tiffany’s eyes the man who won the ‘epoch’ medal is not worthy. It is a good thing that she suppressed the arrogance of the newcomer. He has to understand that making progress isn’t easy!”

“Haha, I still don’t understand why they have given the ‘epoch’ medal to a tailor’s son! Talk about it!”

Some senior architects talked about the newcomer in their castles at the Church Mountain. They were extremely concerned as the ‘epoch’ medal was one of the most heavyweight medals given by the ‘Temple of Elements’. It was an achievement which could not be reached by most in their lifetime.

It represented a change of the era for architects every time the medal was given.

Mount Er. The Burong family.

“Defending his case?” Rudolph swept over the content of the letter which was handed to him by the butler. He sneered: “The higher he gets, the harder the fall will be. Only one day to improve such an item? He doesn’t know how to stay low-key. He didn’t even take the advantage of the rest of the time to complete the task but has asked for a plea! Most of the masters will be watching the show too!”

Rudolph knew that Dudian's father was a tailor so he should come in contact with the textile machines a lot. But the snake crossbow was not a civilian product. Although he knew that Dudian was a hunter that was just a career. If all the hunters knew how to invent, then all the hunters would be master level architects for military products.

Mel family.

In the garden of the castle, a middle-aged man was leaning back in the chair. He was sitting lazily and enjoying the tea. His belly was full as he had eaten the lunch. The gestures made by the man showed that he was part of a contemporary aristocratic family. His name was Mark. Mark Mel once led the consortium like a tiger. He had created a business miracle when he was young. As a result, the weak family had risen under his leadership. Mark was considered as a role model and a target of worship by many wealthy businessmen because of his feats. A 16-year-old slender girl with beautiful cheeks and small mouth was standing opposite to him. She was Mark's only daughter. Sarah Mel.

Sarah was much more beautiful, lively and elegant in comparison to a few years ago. She gently tasted the tea in the cup and put back the cup on the table.

"Father, I know Jenny's temper. She has brains but is not a social person. I just secretly sent the news of that person to her so that she will never forget him. In this way, she will never promise her father to marry into another family." Sarah's lips curved up into a smile:" Her mother died after she was born. Afterward, the relationship between her father and Jenny had become unstable,

and there is a barrier between them. Instead of cherishing her the relationship between the father and daughter had ruptured."

Mark listened to his daughter's words. There was a smile on his face: "So her relations with her father aren't good."

Sarah sighed: "In fact, Jenny is a good playmate."

"If you don't have the heart, then I can handle this matter." Mark smiled.

Sarah looked at him and shook her head. At this time footsteps echoed and the butler quickly came over to them. He saluted and handed over an envelope: "Master, it's from the 'Temple of Elements'"

Mark took the envelope and tore the cover. He grabbed the letter and pulled it out. He glanced at the letter. "The little guy. He has failed the task. But because of his age can't have the sufficient strength to bear the shame. You always have to pay the price when you get things that don't belong to you. "

Sarah's voice resounded: "Is that little the poet?"

"Well, his poem is good." Mark smiled: "At least it is at a higher level than his architect knowledge." After reading the letter, he gave it to Sarah. He never prohibited her daughter from being involved in the family business. On the contrary, he would always take the initiative and made Sarah deal with small things. He was

nurturing her from the earliest age to be able to deal with this aspect of life.

Sarah took a glance and shook her head: “So impetuous. I wouldn’t expect from someone who had written such a beautiful poem. Well, his poetry is full of arrogance and stubbornness… ”

“He is not mature enough… He shouldn’t be humiliated with such a result…” Mark sighed deeply and said to his daughter.

Chapter 253

The study room on the second floor of the Ryan Castle.

Old Fulin held the letter in his hands for a long time without uttering a word.

Sander was standing on the other side of the table. He saw Old Fulin's facial expression and asked: "Father! Has something happened to Dean in the Temple?"

Old Fulin was silent as he handed the letter over to him. Sander reached out and took the letter. He couldn't wait to read it. However, as he read the content, his expression changed. He said in a hurry: "He wants to debate? The senior architects are more knowledgeable than him. How is he going to defend himself in front of the public? It's been less than a month that he has joined the Temple of Elements... This, this... "

Old Fulin was thinking, so he didn't reply to Sander.

"We should contact him and ask him to withdraw the plea," Sander said to the Old Fulin.: "It was the first time that he had done a task in the Temple, and it was natural for him to fail. Since the last time that he had received the 'epoch' medal, many wealthy businessmen have come to join our consortium. Although we have rejected all of them, we still maintain a business relationship. Moreover, if he can't do anything in the debate, then the fame and prestige we have established will be shattered!"

Old Fulin slowly asked: “Do you think he is someone that is impatient?”

Sander was stunned at the question. He thought about Dudian. He remembered the calm smile on the boy’s face. The first time when Sander had met him the boy gave a kind of unfathomable feeling. The anxiety in his heart disappeared, but Sander still continued: “Father, after all, he has joined the Temple of Elements. He didn’t have contact with such knowledge before. Even if he is calm and clever, but it doesn’t mean that… Unless he has a plan of his own!? I was just worried that he got awarded with the medal and would act on impulse as he would be afraid to lose face.”

“A man who has been able to make a perfect jailbreak would never act on emotions and impulses. Unless he faces a crisis of imminent death.” Old Fulin continued to speak slowly: “Although I don’t know the purpose of his action I know that certainly there is a plan. The kid is a daredevil. After a few years, the old foxes controlling those other consortiums would not be his opponent!”

Sander saw Old Fulin’s relaxed expression.

“You send someone to notify him that if he needs our help, we are ready at any time.” Old Fulin ordered.

Sander hesitated, but still confirmed: “Yes.”

…

All the other consortiums had gotten the news. Most of them thought that Dudian had acted on impulse and pleaded for a debate as he failed to complete the task. For them, the knowledge was gathered through a long time of studying, research, and failure. The mind needed to grow with the accumulation of knowledge and experience. They could understand and accept it even if Dudian failed his first task. He would be considered a genius if he could complete his first task successfully.

The Temple of Elements.

Dudian was in his research room continuing the production of a lightning rod. In the blink of an eye, two days passed. Dudian's lightening rod was almost finished. He had made almost everything. Now he had to assemble the parts and melt the iron pulp and pour it into the mold.

Knock! Knock!

Dudian sensed the smell of the previous apprentice knight. He opened the door and saw the youth standing at the door. The apprentice had a cautious look on his face. There were a card and an envelope in his hands. The youth was scared when he saw the door suddenly open. : "This-this is for you."

Dudian nodded and reached out to grab them. The card was his pass (ID) from the Temple. He opened the envelope and checked the contents of the letter: "Tomorrow morning at seven o'clock...." He smiled and threw the letter into the trash box.

Dudian packed up his materials and called a carriage which was standing outside the castle and went back to his castle.

This carriage was for his exclusive use. It was free of charge and arranged by the Temple of Elements. It was one of the small advantages of being the member of the Temple.

“Black Death Season” April 22nd.

Six thirty in the morning.

Dudian’s carriage drove through the Church Mountain. It was headed over to the Architect’s Hall, built in between tenth and eleventh castle. It looked like a classic cathedral but covered an area of thousands of square meters. It was an extremely spacious and huge place. There was an eight-meter tall statue in front of the hall. It was holding books in his hands. It referred to the dedication of the architects towards improving people’s living environment.

Dudian saw dozens of carriages parked outside the hall as he got off the carriage. There were some carriages which had banners and flags of different noble families on them. Most probably they had spent a lot of money only to come here to watch the debate.

Dudian narrowed his eyes and patted his clothes. Afterward, he calmly walked towards the hall.

“Look, that is Dean, the creator of the new textile machine!”

“It’s him!”

The nearby architects began to call out and tell his name as Dudian stepped out of the carriage. It would give him more recognition.

Dudian was surprised as there were no cameras in this era. Moreover, newspapers would only have text, but no pictures. If there was big news that needed an illustration, then they had to ask a painter to sketch the outline of the appearance. In such circumstances, he didn’t think that there would be so many people who knew his appearance. The charm of the ‘epoch’ medal was unbelievable.

Dudian didn’t stay long and quickly entered the hall as he saw these people gather over.

The hall was extremely spacious. There were rows of neat seats. The front was an open place meant for the people to defend themselves.

At the moment, half of the seats were occupied. There were about two or three hundred people. Dudian estimated that people sitting in the final row would be from an ordinary background as they wouldn’t hear the arguments spoken in the front.

He went straight to the middle of the aisle and sat down on the

left side. There was a desk where his name was written. Moreover, the military crossbow made by him was placed on that desk. On the other desk, there was the snake crossbow. However, the other side hasn’t appeared yet.

Chapter 254

Two people appeared side by side at the entrance of the hall.

“Is it that little guy who had complained?” The handsome middle-aged man on the right side looked at Dudian and said: “I did not expect that such a juvenile created the new textile machine. How unfortunate!”

“He may have invented a new type of the textile machine. It may be his ability. But the knowledge of wood elements is profound. There is no end to the amount of knowledge to be studied. However, he wantonly blasphemies the product of my teacher! Arrogant! Very arrogant! His future won’t be a good one! ” Step by step they went into the hall. Both of them were nearly one meter and eighty centimeters tall. They had bright silver robes draped on them. The attention of the surrounding people was attracted over to them.

Dudian heard the excitement of the crowd at the rear and slightly looked at sideways. He saw two people with extraordinary temperament walking along the steps. His eyesight was excellent, so he read the name plates on their chests. Afterward, he resumed his normal stance and looked at his front.

Tiffany and the handsome middle-aged person came to the appeal stage. The middle-aged man stopped by the stage and sat in the front row. Tiffany quietly looked at Dudian. She saw that the boy was not even looking at her. Her eyebrows wrinkled in anger, but she didn’t say anything. Tiffany grabbed the chair and sat by

her desk. She looked at the ‘snake crossbow’ invented by her teacher. She gently stroked it and looked up at the youth in front of her. This time their eyes crossed each other. There was indifference in her eyes as if she was overlooking everything around her.

The youth sitting opposite to her had a dull face. His eyes were as dark as a deep pool. It was difficult to see through.

Tiffany slightly frowned. She snorted and recovered her eyes.

After a moment, the discussion between the architects got a bit more heated. The voices echoing in the hall got bigger and almost filled the whole hall. You would normally see so many people gathered only when a senior architect and a master would debate.

Three figures slowly came to the seats between Tiffany and Dudian. They were led by an old man whose hair had whitened. He was wearing a master medal on his chest. The two in the rear were senior architects.

“It is master Celsus!”

“Geez! I would have never thought that a master would rule over such a debate!”

“I’m jealous of the little guy who got the ‘epoch’ medal!”

The audience in the rear was talking non-stop.

“Quiet!” The middle-aged man who sat on the right side of master Celsus hit the table with a hammer and shouted. The audience suddenly quietened down.

“We are here for the case of Mr. Dean. His task was to improve the ‘snake crossbow’. The architect may begin his argument. Please speak Mr. Dean.” Master Celsus said, as his eyes fell on Dudian’s body. He was interested what the little guy who got the medal would do.

Dudian nodded and stood up. He grabbed the military crossbow and directly looked at Tiffany: “My task was to improve the snake crossbow. It is the work of Miss Tiffany’s master. I only needed to meet two requirements. However, after successfully completing the task, I didn’t get the right result from Miss Tiffany. Please give me an explanation!”

The audience was surprised. “Give an explanation!?”

Tiffany’s eyebrows lifted as she slowly stood up and spoke in a cold tone: “Unqualified. I have already given an explanation to you! Although your crossbow has gone through a transformation, it is less than original. Anyone can do that. The task was that the effect of transformation had to be higher than that of the snake crossbow. Do you think that thing in your hand meets this point?” Her tone wasn’t polite.

Everyone turned towards Dudian. Their eyes fell on the crossbow in his hand. There was a curiosity in their eyes as they wanted to

hear his explanation.

Dudian quietly looked at Tiffany. However, he didn't show the military crossbow in his hand. Instead, he asked: "Of course I was satisfied with that point. Why else would I submit the crossbow?"

"I know that you had invented the new type of the textile machine and won the 'epoch' medal. But you still need a bit of modesty." She said in a relentless tone.

Dudian sneered: "I don't understand why you are talking about something which has nothing to do with the crossbows. Today we aren't here to talk about textile machines. I'm asking you again. Did you try to use my crossbow? If you tried, please indicate which parts were defective?"

Tiffany's face slightly changed. She didn't carefully check the crossbow given by the Dudian. It was very different from the snake crossbow invented by her teacher. It was a completely different crossbow. Especially the moment when she had heard that it had taken only half a day to produce the crossbow, she was lazy to check anything. Some people couldn't produce such a thing after a month, how was the kid going to succeed in half a day?

Dudian saw that she delayed and didn't speak, so he sneered: "In my opinion, you simply didn't carefully review and examine my work. You just directly gave a negative result because the shape of my crossbow and the one made by your teacher is different. Did you think that I'm destined to fail because I'm a newcomer? Pride, prejudice, and arrogance make people look stupid. The world is very large, and nothing is impossible. Today I'm here to plead and

to tell you that my work is qualified more than enough. It is a child made by me! I won't allow anyone to underestimate it and have contempt for it. Especially someone like you. Today I'll be naming it under everyone's attention." There was hatred and killing intent in his eyes as he talked.

Tiffany smiled in fury and anger: "Pride? The arrogant one is you! "

Dudian indifferently looked at her as he raised the military crossbow in his hand so that the audience could see. His loud voice spreads all over the audience: "This is my work, and its name is 'military crossbow'! I admit that my crossbow does not have any relationship to the snake crossbow. It isn't an improvement of the snake crossbow, but it's a new type of an original work! And I can very directly say that I didn't choose to improve snake crossbow because it is too backward and should have been eliminated a long time ago! There is no need to improve it as its starting point was wrong. Putting effort, energy, and resources to improve the snake crossbow is nothing but a waste!

Chapter 255

“Shut up!!”

Tiffany shouted in anger. Her face was red because of her fury: “Do not think that if you got the ‘epoch’ medal, you can do whatever you want and despise everything? How long has it been since you have joined the temple? The snake crossbow made by my teacher was assessed by the masters of the temple as a three-star item. Do you dare to say that it should be eliminated?”

“Yes!”

“The snake crossbow was made by a master. How could it be eliminated?”

“This new man is way too arrogant! He had accidentally made a new textile machine and thought that he could do anything!”

“Way too proud. But no wonder at this age if he gets such a big vanity, he would inevitably float up one day.”

Dudian looked around the audience as his face looked cold as frost: “First of all, I do not deny the contribution and the authority of the master. But since the snake crossbow has only been rated as a three-star item, not a five-star one. It is not a legendary item. So there is room for improvement!”

He looked towards the audience and said: “My military crossbow may not be beyond the snake crossbow, but it would never be inferior to it!”

Tiffany laughed because of anger: “Do you mean that you only used half a day to produce a crossbow which is equal to my teacher’s snake crossbow? You could reach a three-star level in that amount of time?”

Dudian looked at her indifferently: “What you can’t understand is what I want to express.”

Tiffany laughed and said: “The result of ignorance is sadness and hate!”

“I think so too,” Dudian said aloud: “but I will not hate.”

“You will regret it.” Tiffany looked deeply at Dudian and said: “Originally, I respected you because you were able to create a new textile machine and did a great contribution. But because of your arrogance, you have to pay the price! If you say that your crossbow is not inferior to my teacher’s snake crossbow, then please show all of us! Let us all see.”

Dudian indifferently said: “The crossbow is a weapon, not a tool for a performance show. I don’t need to show anything. Since you all believe in the authority of the master than in the presence of all the people, let the master identify the quality of my crossbow.” He looked towards the master Celsus and said: “Master, please verify the design of my crossbow.”

Celsus looked at the boy. The kid was confident against Tiffany's tough posture, and he relentlessly and proudly protected himself against audience's pressure. The boy was calm and mature. He wasn't affected by the Tiffany nor by the audience's negative comments. Celsus was quite surprised in his heart. Not everyone could do such a thing.

"I'll take a look," Celsus whispered.

Dudian handed out the crossbow and the drawings.

The people were whispering.

Tiffany turned and looked at Celsus, waiting for his results.

Dudian stood and waited, but there was no anxiety in his face.

Time passed by.

After half an hour later Celsus slowly raised his head and put away the magnifying glass. He looked a little hesitant and complex. He looked at Dudian then turned to look at Tiffany. After thinking for a while, he said: "According to my initial point of view, this military crossbow is more innovative and suitable for short-range combat. Its lethality and speed are also better. According to my personal view, it would not be a problem to rate it as a three-star item."

As master Celsus's words echoed the whole hall was silenced. Everyone's face was stiff. They suspected that there was a problem with their ears.

Tiffany quickly reacted after a brief moment of absence. She could but say: "Master you...Did you say that this thing is a three-star level project? How could that be...? He only spent half a day... this..."

Celsus saw her pale face. He sighed: "It's my personal assessment on behalf of my personal views. The specific value will be out after the evaluation by the Temple. But one thing is guaranteed. If the task was about 'improving the snake crossbow', then this military crossbow is fully qualified. It is a pass!"

Tiffany's face turned ugly. It was the same as giving her a slap on her face.

Dudian was calm as he had expected such a result.

The people in the auditorium looked at each other. They clearly heard that master Celsus evaluated it as a three-star item. Dudian was a newcomer, and he had completed a project which had such an evaluation from master Celsus. He was a rare genius!

"No!"

"Isn't it too exaggerated?!"

“Is there a thing called ‘talent’?”

“Master Celsus would never lie, or he would not have face in the future. Even if this crossbow is not a three-star item, then it is a two-star item. An intermediate level architect would work for so many years, but wouldn’t be able to produce such an item!”

“The kid is too arrogant, but he has the capital to act so!”

“How many stars will the Temple evaluate the item at?”

Everyone in the audience was in a heated debate.

“The results of the complaint have been set. Mr. Dean wins. End of the meeting.” Celsus looked at Tiffany and shook his head. Afterward, he turned away and left.

Dudian saw that Celsus took the drawings and the crossbow. He had already assessed the crossbow on his own. The fire rate and speed of the arrow would be faster than the normal ones. Moreover, he would get a lot of benefits after the Temple evaluates the crossbow.

“Impossible, impossible …”

Tiffany whispered as her face was pale and bloodless.

Dudian glanced at Tiffany and then approached her. He was one

meter and seventy-five centimeters tall, but in front of this woman, he was still a head shorter. He looked up at her.

Tiffany saw the eyes of Dudian and recovered. She clenched her teeth and looked at him: “What do you want to say? Do you want to laugh at me?

“I’m not here to laugh.” Dudian smiled: “That is what a child would do. I just wanted to tell you that the best way to pay tribute to the master is not humbly bowing, but doing things beyond that! “Afterwards he turned and walked down the steps.

The people in the audience stopped talking and looked at Dudian. They had different expressions on their faces.

Chapter 256

“Mr. Dean, I’ll take you.”

Dudian was about to reach the door of the hall when an eager face reached out to him. There was excitement in his eyes. Sander didn’t expect that Dudian would so easily resolve such a big crisis. Moreover, he had become famous once again.

Dudian looked at him: “Old patriarch?”

“Father is resting at home. He is too old to attend.” Sander replied: “Old patriarch is going to give a celebration dinner and will be waiting for you back at the castle.” Although Sander’s age was more than Dudian’s, he was very polite as he talked with Dudian. He was even respectful. This scene made many people surprised. But taking into account his identity and relationship with the Ryan family, Dudian’s heart was relieved.

Dudian felt the attention of the people around him. He slightly frowned and said to Sander: “Let’s go back and talk.”

“Good.” Sander sighed and took the lead in front.

Dudian got into the carriage and whispered: “You should come with me too.”

There was a hint of joy in Sander’s eyes. He quickly agreed and

got into the carriage. After they firmly sat inside the compartment, Dudian told the coachman to return to Ryan Castle.

The carriage drove by the hillside, and the ground was slightly uneven and bumpy.

Dudian firmly sat on a chair and waited until the distance from the Temple increased. He looked at Sander who was sitting opposite to him: “Was Old patriarch aware that you were coming here?”

Sander didn’t think that he would ask such a question. He was slightly startled. After a moment of hesitation, he honestly said: “I made the decision on my own. It was to give you momentum.”

Dudian said indifferently: “You should talk a lot and learn from your father. Although he is old, his eyes are never wrong.”

Sander was embarrassed as he understood the meaning behind Dudian’s words: “I will …”

“Moreover pay attention to your attitude towards me on the outside.” Dudian continued: “My identity has risen from a hunter to an architect. You are the future successor of Ryan family. Don’t reveal and expose our deep relationship. The more enemy understands about us, the more the power to fight against them gets smaller.”

Sander’s face was red. He knew that he couldn’t refute Dudian’s

words: “I know. I will.”

Dudian looked at him but didn’t continue to say anything. He opened the curtain and looked out at the scenery.

Dudian from far away could see that Old Fulin was standing at the door waiting for them. There was a warm coat covering his shoulders. He looked deeply and sighed. As soon as the carriage stopped, Dudian pushed the door off and looked at Old Fulin.: “It’s windy outside. You didn’t have to wait for me at the door.”

“All right, I just came out.” Old Fulin smiled.

The main maid who was standing by Old Fulin replied to Dudian: “Mr. Dean you have finally come back. Master has been waiting at the door for a long time. We advised him, but he didn’t listen…”

Old Fulin slightly waved his hand and interrupted her. He smiled as he looked at Dudian: “I knew that you wouldn’t do anything without a plan.”

Dudian held onto Old Fulin as he helped him move: “It’s good that you know it.”

Old Fulin saw Sander behind Dudian. He sighed as he said to Dudian: “Let’s eat first. It is not early, and everyone is hungry. Sander, you tell everyone about things that happened in the Temple.”

Sander bowed his head: “Yes.”

The servants began to put the dishes on the table after Old Fulin’s words.

Dudian and Old Fulin moved and passed the other. They passed by Hugh, Lena and the others from the younger generation. Sander told them that Dudian won the case in the Temple. The people began to vigorously applause.

They were eating up when the butler suddenly came in. He bent down and whispered to Old Fulin.: “Master, people from Scott consortium have come over.”

Old Fulin looked at Dudian and said to the butler: “Let them in.”

The butler nodded and left. After a moment he led a young woman wearing an exquisite dress and brightly lit jewels. The young woman came towards Old Fulin and Dudian. She smiled and saluted them: “Hello, old patriarch. You look so healthy.”

Old Fulin looked at her and smiled: “Are you the old Chai’s child?

There was a trace of surprised in young woman’s eyes: “Old patriarch, your memory is really good! I’m his fourth daughter. My name is Rosie. I’m sorry that I have disturbed your meal. This is a little gift as an apology.” Afterward, she took out a fine small box and opened it. Inside was an exquisite platinum necklace for women,

The few women sitting in the middle of the table stretched their necks to check the box. Their eyes glowed with excitement.

Old Fulin smiled: “I won’t be offended by a member of the younger generation.”

Rosie saw that the gift didn’t tempt him. She looked at him and put the gift on the table: “Old patriarch younger generation is here to find Mr. Dean. Mr. Dean is a member of your consortium, so I’m going to be straightforward. I have heard that Mr. Dean created a new weapon called ‘military crossbow’. We as Scott consortium are interested in buying the sales and production rights to it.”

Dudian was surprised as he didn’t expect the Scott consortium to get the news so soon and rush over to talk about business. Although Scott consortium was one of the three major consortia but being able to get information out of ‘Temple of Elements’ wasn’t an easy feat. It seems Scott consortium’s efficiency was fast and the information channels were deep.

Old Fulin glanced at Dudian and said to Rosie: “It is Mr. Dean’s private affair. He has the right to decide so you should talk directly with him.”

Rosie was relieved to know that Dudian wasn’t bound by the contract to the Ryan consortium. Otherwise, it would be hard to grab the piece from old fox’s hands. They would undoubtedly pay a bigger price to get their hands on the new weapon.

“Are you aware of the value and the assessment given by the temple to this crossbow?” Dudian asked. When he had come up with the new textile machine, the other consortia were able to copy it free of charge. However, after he joined the ‘Temple of Elements’ he knew that protection of property rights existed. There were patents. However, this only applied to the members of the Temple. Ordinary civilians would not have such a luxury.

Chapter 257

“We have heard of this.” Rosie laughed: “According to the master Celsus your crossbow has potential to be ranked as a three-star item. Although the Temple has yet to give a formal identification and evaluation, but we as the Scott consortium believes in master Celsus’s eyes and your talent. So we intend to follow and offer the price of a three-star item to buy the rights for it.”

Dudian looked at her. He didn’t expect that Scott consortium would be so generous because of the assessment of master Celsus since that was quite risky. Because when the Temple assessed the items, then quite a few professional masters examined the product. Sometimes disputes would arise, and the final result would be determined by voting. Scott consortium’s move, in this case, was a bold one.

However, because of the dividends from the new textile machine, Dudian didn’t trust Scott consortium. He pondered a little as he looked at Rosie: “I’ll consider as I’m not in a hurry.”

Rosie laughed: “Mr. Dean the sooner your crossbow is mass produced, the higher the results from sales would be. I believe that we have offered the reasonable price and the other consortia would offer something within this range. They would offer a lower price but not a higher. Also, we have had cooperated in the past, so we have more trust between each other. If your New World consortium wants to produce the crossbows, then it would be very difficult. After all, your relationship with the Mellon consortium is not good.”

Dudian knew what she meant: “I know all of that. But I need time to think about it, and I don’t want to decide in haste.”

Rosie’s brows wrinkled: “Mr. Dean we have offered you the price of a three-star item. Even if the Temple evaluated it as a two-star item, then you won’t suffer but earn twice. Why do you… ”

“Thank you for the trust. If I have any intention to sell the rights to a consortium then…” Dudian continued. “you will be the first to be notified about the issue.”

“Anyway, Scott consortium will always be your best ally, and I hope that the future will be a happy one for both sides,” Rosie said as she stared at the boy.

“Goodbye.”

After bidding farewell, Rosie left the dining room as she followed after the butler.

Dudian didn’t speak about the issue and glanced at Old Fulin for a moment.

Jake who was sitting close to Dudian and Old Fulin seemed like a kid who was tempted by the sweets in front of him: “Mr. Dean this is a rare opportunity. Why are you delaying? The chances will decrease as the time passes. Why don’t you directly agree?”

Dudian cut a piece of steak and put up into his mouth. He gently chewed it and looked up at the man: “The best time to eat the steak is when it’s hot. Not when the steak is warm. Or else you won’t taste the delicacy. Some wolves are attracted to the smell of steak. In this case, there will be lots of hungry wolves who will be attracted to the smell and will come to snatch the steak. In the end, the one who pays the most will get the meat.”

Jake was startled and speechless.

Dudian helped old patriarch to get up and go upstairs after the lunch ended. They were half the way when the butler trotted over and whispered to Old Fulin.: “Master the Huasheng consortium came over.”

“Huasheng?” Old Fulin looked at Dudian and said to the butler: “Let them come in. I’ll be in the study room.”

The butler acknowledged and stepped down.

It didn’t take long before the butler came into the study room and a dignified middle-aged man followed him inside. The middle-aged man glanced at both of them. His eyes lit as he said: “I didn’t expect Mr. Dean to look so young. He looks as handsome as the rumors say…Lucky day…”

Dudian smiled: “If you are looking for the old patriarch then I will go out. If you are looking for me, then Miss Rosie has offered us to purchase the crossbow according to three-star item price. I’m still considering it, and I won’t accept any offer below that price.”

Middle-aged man's smiled stiffened. He didn't expect that Dudian would be so direct and the Scott consortium to act so fast. He laughed: "Mr. Dean is straightforward. I have come over regarding the manufacturing and sales rights of the new crossbow but didn't expect that Miss Rosie would be so fast. It seems that Huasheng consortium has no hope as we would offer the price of a two-star item. However, if you work with us then I will give you very helpful gift."

"Oh?"

The middle-aged man continued: "This gift may not be useful to others but would be valuable to you. It is the map of the area outside the 'death passage'! I assume you know our consortium originally leased that passage. The senior hunter had mapped the areas that they have explored. Although it is not complete but it should be of help if it's used properly."

Dudian's eyes lit up: "I know, I will think about this."

The middle-aged man nodded. The moment Dudian had told Rosie's name he knew that there was little hope in having talks and he didn't want to waste time.

After the middle-aged man had departed, Old Fulin asked Dudian: "Which consortium are you planning to sell the new item? If we rely on ourselves, then the efficiency would be very low because of our limited resources."

Dudian knew that current financial resources of Ryan family were not enough to invest in large-scale crossbow manufacturing. There were two choices, and those were to sell it either to the consortia or the Temple. The price would be naturally higher if he sold it to the consortium rather than the temple. However, he could get points if he sold the Temple. He would be able to buy materials that are rare, and even consortia can't afford to buy.

However, there were no absolutes. Any rule had loopholes. Moreover, there was the underground black market where he could get more than enough.

Therefore Dudian didn't intend to sell the crossbow to the 'Temple of Elements'. Although the points would help him to achieve senior architect or master level but for him, the scariest right now were gold coins. He could buy the 'fountain of life' with gold. The level of an architect was a virtual status which didn't interest him much at this time. Moreover, he was aware that to climbing the ladder wasn't going to be easy as there will be people on top at every step who would be interested in pushing him down.

As long as he earned more money than a master, he didn't care whether his title was an intermediate level architect. He didn't care even if they called him an incompetent architect.

"My crossbow is not inferior to the snake crossbow. Without a doubt, it is at least a three-star level item. If I'm lucky, it would be a top grade three-star item. As long as it gets me enough money I don't care much. " Dudian continued: "I can work on other projects and sell again."

Old Fulin looked at him:”Are you confident in your abilities?”

Dudian shrugged his shoulders. He was confident that as an intermediate level archer his understanding of bows and crossbow was much better than the group of researchers in the Temple. Maybe the design of his crossbow wasn’t as good as the snake crossbow, but in actual combat, it was better than the snake crossbow.

Chapter 258

The Mellon Consortium, the conference hall.

A dozen figures were sitting across the table. They represented the various upper-class aristocratic families of the consortium. Mark and Rudolph were sitting in the middle. They were the two men who had created their own brilliant strategies and plans and had conquered the business world of the commercial district. Both of them were operating their own business dynasty which commanded many industrial complexes in three regions and thousands of small towns. Even the people in the Meishan orphanage were aware the status of Mel family eight years ago. It was a clear indication of how far-reaching their influence was.

“The convention is happening this time is mainly to discuss the news my assistant has already passed to you. We have acquired news about the new military product, crossbow.” Mark gently leaned against the chair. He was a bit fat but not bloated. There were dignity and pride in each word he had used:” According to the news received from the Temple this divine product has been submitted by master Celsus to the Temple for assessment. The initial knowledge we have about the crossbow is that there is more than a 70 percent possibility the cross would be evaluated as a three-star item!”

“We are aware of this knowledge so I assume Scott consortium and military should have gotten the news too. We must grab the chance to win the rights for production and sales. The recent war with the barbars is getting tight. If we could acquire the crossbow, then we can get miraculous results in the war. The actual benefits

acquired from this crossbow should be worth up to a four-star military product!”

“Moreover if this new crossbow can replace the snake crossbow then our consortium will have the upper hand in the future of warfare.” Mark’s fingers gently tapped the table. He smiled and said in an authentic tone: “Snake crossbow was already bought by the Green consortium years ago. However, if the new crossbow really does as it is predicted then we will get the chance to squeeze Green consortium out from this business and get a massive market share.”

Mark looked around at everyone and smiled: “Now, I would like to hear your thoughts. What would be the appropriate price for the product? What is our bottom line?”

A lady with a graceful temperament spoke out: “We are talking about possibilities right now. So if it really overlaps with a three-star item, then I think the minimum price offer should be a three-star evaluation. After all, seventy percent chance is a good pre-evaluation.”

Many nodded in confirmation. Her words made sense.

“I second that.”

“Agree.”

“The recent offense by the barbars increases the consumption of

military weapons. Although it may not reproduce the results of the snake crossbow from that battle, but I assume the return will be great for any possible outcome. I recommend that we should grade it as a top three-star item."

"Yes, I agree."

Everyone voiced out their thoughts and made statements.

One of them asked: "I heard that the young man who has invented the crossbow has a conflict with our consortium. Would he even think about our offer if we go to find him?"

The rest of the people sitting around the table were stunned: "A conflict? What kind of conflict? Why would we have a confrontation with an architect?"

The former man shook his head and looked at Rudolph: "Patriarch of Burong family has more information on this issue than me. I have just heard few rumors."

The eyes of the audience gathered on Rudolph.

Rudolph glanced at the man then swept around the crowd. He spoke in an indifferent tone: "Years ago this person was a hunter under the banner of our consortium. He had committed quite a few sins including hatred to the nobility. I severely punished him. Afterward, he abandoned our consortium. The kid found and mislead Old Fulin for support but also attempted to revenge out

consortium. My opinion is to refuse all kinds of cooperation with him!”

Soon after the speech everyone regained their usual calm and looked at each other. One of them spoke out: “An expression of total despise and disdain for the aristocracy cannot be tolerated. The humble civilian has forgotten his identity. I suggest that all kinds of cooperation not to be taken into account with this person. Moreover, New World consortium should be taken as our enemy and target. Now this person is part of the Temple. If he grows up, then he would be a hidden danger to the consortium in the future. Early eradication of the problem is in the interests of the consortium!”

“Well, I also agree with that.”

“Even if we cooperated with such a rebellious person then he would have inevitable bite back at us in the future.”

There were four or five people who agreed with such a stance.

Mark’s eyes lit up as he looked at these people. His facial expressions were unreadable.

Others looked at each other. There was regret in their eyes as they shook their heads but avoided talking about the plan. Some people have been offended, but the potential business was going to be taken away by other consortia or military. They could raise the price because of the previous conflict... But their side was not planning to compromise so they could only give up on such a tasty

piece of cake because of a conflict.

Rudolph slowly got up and said: “The loss of interest happening today is because of the Burong family. Please forgive me.” Afterward, he slightly bowed.

The people who were not decided up to this moment were shocked. Nobody would think that man such a Rudolph would make a public apology. Most of them rushed up to persuade him.

Mark’s eyes narrowed as he quickly stood up and patted Rudolph’s shoulder: “Brother no one blames you for this thing. It is just you have gone too soft. You should have directly executed the kid back then rather than letting him live until now. In short, from now on the New World consortium will be included in ranks of hostile parties. They will be killed in the cradle before they grow up. Paying a price of three-star item is nothing much. Hopefully, master Crowe will come up with new products and our consortium will usher to glory once again!”

“Yes!”

“Let’s make sure to pressure them from the economic side. The New World consortium has rented the ‘death passage’. We will see how they will be able to stand up to us! ”

“I have a plan that can be used to wreck them!”

“Oh, go on, let’s listen.”

...

In the blink of an eye, three days passed.

In the castle by the river.

Dark red curtains covered the light trying to pass through the window. The breeze would fluctuate the curtains one in a while, and a white shadow could be seen from the gap. That shadow was Dudian. He looked around the middle of the room where the tall mechanical assembly was placed. He inspected it from all angles so that nothing would be left out. He had integrated all parts of the lightning rod. The only drawback was that the wires were not long enough. It was only enough for a three-story castle.

“The cost of the plastic materials have to be taken into the account in the future when the lightning rod is mass produced ...” Dudian murmured. He checked the parts once more to confirm the rod. Then, he dismantled them and packed them into a few suitcases. Afterward, he came towards the window and opened the curtain. The sun rays spilled onto his body.

“It has been three days.” Dudian looked at the sky. “It is rare to see such a good weather in the sky. The Temple assessment should be out. What kind of evaluation have they given?”

He pulled the window and closed it. He turned and lifted the suitcases and went downstairs. He was only one person in the entire castle. That’s why it was dark most of the time, and the

castle had a gloomy atmosphere. He wasn't afraid though since as a person of scientific background he didn't believe in spirits and ghosts.

Dudian put all the suitcases into the carriage and went to the Church Mountain.

Chapter 259

The Church Mountain. The area between the tenth and eleventh castle.

It was dawn. Hundreds of people had surrounded the door to the hall. Half of them were architects who wore their robes, but the rest had more clean and decent clothing. They were outsiders who got permission through relationships to get to this place. Naturally, these people belonged to the consortiums and noble families and were here in their stead to check the results. Some of the masters have sent their students out of curiosity to come and observe the primary architects and report on the results too.

“Hey, how are you?”

“Thanks. Haha. It seems everyone is here to check the bulletin board. The assessment by the Temple will be out today. I’m craving to learn how many exchange points will be given for the crossbow.”

“Certainly it will be a lot. After all, in the worst case, it is a two-star item. If it is a three-star product, then it will be much more… ”

“Are you here for checking the tasks?”

“Don’t make a joke. I’m here to see the description of the weapon. I would love to see how powerful it is according to the evaluation.”

“Hey, me too.”

Everyone whispered as they stood before the entrance to the hall.

As the first rays of the sun shone from the corner of the building and pierced the place, the eight-meter tall giant doors of the hall slowly opened. A pale old man was standing in front of the door. His eyes swept over the crowd, and his eyelids drooped down. He turned and staggered into the hall.

“On time!”

“Go fast! Go.”

The crowd waiting in front of the hall immediately went into the building.

Everyone was crowded in front of the bulletin board. On the first day when a new evaluation is made it is posted on the bulletin board for a day as free publicity. However, after that day the knowledge about the product or research will be listed in exchange book. The architect himself had to look for the evaluation.

On the first page of the announcements about the evaluation of the research, the crowd saw two familiar words: Military Crossbow!

It was the piece of work by the architect which had brought such an uproar in the last few days.

The eyes of the people moved from the huge name to the level of assessment. The hall instantly went silent.

“Four-four stars?”

After a short silence people began to swallow their saliva and tremble in excitement.

The ice-like silence was broken in an instant as everyone broke into an uproar. They were shocked to see the evaluation. The four dazzling purple stars were extremely eye-catching and firmly sucked in everyone’s attention.

“Purple stars! This is not just an ordinary four-star item but a top grade! Have the assessment criteria of the Temple have been reduced? How can it be?”

“It is too exaggerated! Was it done by that newcomer? According to the rumors, it took him only half a day to produce it!”

“The newcomer is a legend!”

The detailed functions of the crossbow were described below the assessment value. The people who read them got shocked again.

“Oh my God! It is actually a melee weapon!”

“Can you even use a crossbow in melee combat?”

“This research has broken the record! How can a melee crossbow actually get a top grade four-star assessment? Has Temple made a mistake?”

“Look at the details! The arrows maintain their trajectory for about 100 meters. No wonder it is evaluated as a melee weapon. Amazing! What is the crossbow made out off?”

The utility and functions of the crossbow had shocked people. One architect who was within the crowd squeezed out and went to another station. He found the old man who had opened the door to exchange points.

The people sent by nobles and other consortia noted down the functional effects and flew out of the hall and left back.

...

“Four, four stars! Top grade?”

Old Chai who was sitting in the conference room of the Scott consortium as he opened the letter and cried out in surprise. He was shocked by the news.

Rosie who was sitting at the table was surprised as she didn't expect such a result too.

...

Ryan Castle.

Sander ran into the study room in a hurry. He almost fell at the door. He opened the door and went in. His face was flushed, and his body trembled slightly because of the excitement: "Father! It is four stars! Four stars!"

"Four Star?" Old Fulin was surprised too, but he had a smile on his face.

...

Mellon Consortium. Conference hall.

The Mellon consortium did not deliberately hold a meeting today to wait for the results of Dudian's work. It was time for a weekly meeting to discuss their financial situation. Mark patted the book in front of him as he reported the review of the financial income from their industries. His speech was halted when the door was knocked on intensively.

"Come in," Mark said with patience. But everyone knew that he never liked to be disturbed during his speeches.

The door opened, and a youth dressed in a suit came in.

Mark saw the youth and indifferently said: “We were in the middle of an important talk. If what you are going to inform is not important then I assume you are aware of the consequences.”

The youth panicked as he saw Mark’s blunt expression: “Patriarch, I came to report on the evaluation of the Temple about the new product of the architect Dean …”

Mark replied: “That has no importance to us! Get out!”

A middle-aged man sitting next to Mark smiled: “Mr. Mel let him say the news since he has come over. We are interested too. Did the product made by the little guy really get three-stars?”

“Yes.”

“Let him say and leave afterward.”

Few others advised.

Mark looked at the youth: “You have ten seconds.”

The youth’s face was pale: “The results came out. It is a four-star item and functional in melee combat…I-I…” The youth was worried about the ‘ten seconds’ that Mark had set. The youth was

nervous as he talked. He stopped and looked at Mark.

Rudolph was sitting beside Mark. His expression turned gloomy the moment he heard the news.

…

Temple of Elements. Ninth castle.

A young man wearing an architect's robe went into a room in a panic. He saw the beautiful Tiffany sitting by the piano near the windowsill. She was not playing it.

She was stroking the keys. The moment she heard the boy's rapid breathing she turned over. The clouds in her heart which was suppressed became heavy as she saw the state the boy was in. She slowly took away her fingers from the piano and calmly asked: "Is it really a three-star item?"

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The youth's face was complex as he said: "It is not a three-star item. The results of the evaluation are surprising as they have concluded it is a top grade four-star item!"

Tiffany's heart was relieved as she heard the first part. But the second part shocked her.

"Top grade four-star?" Tiffany looked at the youth who was meters away from her. She suspected that she misheard him.

The youth smiled: "Yes it has already spread around. This is the first military item in the last five years to reach the four-star category. Moreover, this crossbow has reached the highest level of craftsmanship and can be used in melee combat."

"Melee combat?" Tiffany's brain was in chaos. She remembered the proud youth who was standing opposite to her a few days ago on the stage. Although she couldn't remember his face but those pair of deep dark eyes she couldn't forget. They were like two demonic stars that could be seen in cold and gloomy nights.

"Four-star top grade ... ... close combat crossbow ... ..." Tiffany whispered.

...

The news of the military crossbow swept the major consortia and all the castles of the Temple of Elements like a hurricane in just half a day. After all, a top grade four-star product was invented. Although it wasn't a legendary item that could reform the world but it would promote a large influence in the military sector. It may even create a new strategy.

Moreover, the top grade four-star item was invented by the winner of the 'epoch' medal. He was the most prominent newcomer to the Temple of Elements. In a sense, the architect was in no way inferior to the masters who had produced five-star items.

On the slopes of Church Mountain.

A carriage slowly drove through the mountain road.

Five young men dressed in robes assigned to primary architects were walking and eagerly discussing things together. The carriage passed by them. They didn't recognize the insignia on the carriage or the owner of it.

"Huh?" Dudian's hearing was good enough to understand what they were talking about: "Four-star top grade?! Crossbow?" The primary architects were walking back from the hall. Dudian expected that the military crossbow would be very practical but didn't expect that the Temple's evaluation of the crossbow would be so high!

"Top grade four-star crossbow. Even the senior architects would

be facing hardship to produce such a thing. After all, a senior architect would be eligible to upgrade to a master level if they produce two top grade four-star products. But the premise was that both of those products have to be exchanged to points in the Temple." There was a trace of a smile on Dudian's face. He was certain that his crossbow was going to achieve an ordinary or top grade three-star assessment. This range was within his expectations. Now it seemed that the value of the crossbow was much higher than his own assessment!

Moreover, in addition to the new type of a textile machine, this was his first official work after joining the Temple. It was enough to suppress all criticism. Although he didn't care much about the gossip of others, but such valuable products would increase his status too. However stepping so high was not good news for him. Because of this military crossbow, there won't be a transparent air around him. The consortia would note such a harvest and on the surface would praise and tout him. But there would be knives accompanied through the darkness.

However, everything was within his expectations. He had refused the invitations by the nobility for entertainment and dinner and tirelessly buried himself in his castle to produce the lightning rod.

Dudian ordered the coachman to change the direction. He didn't continue to go to the Temple's hall as the place would be overcrowded. There will be a tumult if he gets recognized there. Moreover, he didn't want to waste time by trying to get out of the limelight.

Dudian went back to the seventh castle where his study room was located. There were six or seven figures standing by the gate of the castle as his carriage closed on. Dudian saw Bernard within the

crowd but couldn't identify the rest. He was slightly stunned but immediately guessed the reason of the visit. He jumped off the carriage and took a few suitcases out of it. He was going into the castle when Bernard and the others recognized him and came over to greet him.

"Dean, Dean!"

"Mr. Dean!"

Bernard took the lead and enthusiastically said: "I came over to help you." He raised his hand eagerly to take one of the suitcases from Dudian. However, his arm sank the next moment. He was speechless: "What's inside the suitcase? It's so heavy! Is it metal?"

The others also caught up with them. There was a tall white skinned woman who was part of the same castle. Her eyes shined as she stood behind everyone and carefully looked at Dudian.

"Let me help you."

"I will."

Several young architects enthusiastically came forward to help Dudian.

Dudian was afraid that they would ruin the parts inside the suitcases: "No need! I'll carry them on my own. Thank you very much."

The architects stopped as they saw that Dudian was not planning to let them carry the suitcases. They turned to look at Bernard who was struggling to carry a suitcase: “Little B, you seem very tired.”

“Little B is acting.” Another youth laughed.

The blue veins had popped up on Bernard’s arms and neck: “Is that sarcasm?”

The youth smiled at Bernard’s comment. They saw that the atmosphere was warm, so one of them said to Dudian: “Congratulations Dean! You are really worthy of the ‘epoch’ medal! You have created a top grade four-star item! Praise the God of Light!”

Dudian looked at the youth. It seems that it was the first time Dudian was meeting him. He replied in a modest tone: “It was luck.”

“Dean it wasn’t luck. I’ve seen you going to the library every day. Architects invent through the accumulation of knowledge. That was why you were able to create a four-star item!” Another one pretended to correct his words.

Dudian smiled but didn’t say anything.

The others followed them all the way into the castle and praised Dudian’s accomplishment. One of them asked: “Dean did you sell

the crossbow to the Temple or a consortium?”

Others watched Dudian in envy as they heard the question. If he sold it to the Temple, then he would immediately become a senior architect! If he sold the rights to the consortium, then it meant a huge amount of wealth!

It had to be noted that most of the architects weren’t from noble origin but from ordinary families. They were selected to the Temple of Elements because of their hard work and knowledge. They would step by step climb the ladder. Moreover, even a noble family would be envious of the wealth that could be acquired from the sales of a four-star item. For them, it meant that their lives would be worry free.

Dudian looked at him: “I’m still considering the options.”

“I suggest to you to sell it to the consortia. As far as I know the Green consortium would be willing to give a good price for the product. If you want I can help you with contacting them. ”

Dudian asked: “Do you have a relationship with the Green consortium?”

The youth saw that the others looked at him with surprise in their eyes. There was a trace of pride in his face as he continued: “My uncle works as a coachman for the Glendon family’s patriarch. The family is under the Green consortium. If my uncle pulls strings then through the Glendon family you could get a good price.”

Bernard laughed: “Why would Dean be worried about getting an offer that he wants when his product is a four-star top grade item?”

The young man’s face reddened: “Of course he would be able to sell, but if there is an acquaintance then the price will certainly be better.”

Dudian saw through the youth, so he replied: “I’ll contact you if I need to.” He brought back the suitcases into the building. Suddenly he saw an old figure coming down the stairs.

Haisong also saw Dudian enter the building. He was a bit surprised to see the crowd surrounding him. There was a bit of embarrassment on his face as he looked at Dudian: “So many boxes! Are you working on a new project?”

Dudian nodded and did not say anything.

“Congratulations … …” Haisong said in a bitter tone as he passed by them.

Dudian smiled. “I was lucky.”

The others observed the dialogue between Haisong and Dudian. They thought it was weird and speculated in their heart, but their facial expressions didn’t change. However, they were eager to know what the matter was about.

Dudian bid farewell to the others and brought the suitcases back to his research room. He shut the door, grabbed the pen and began to draw the design of the lightning rod on paper.

However, as he was preparing the drawing the door once again was knocked on by a guest.

Dudian was able to sense the smell and knew that it was someone who he was familiar with. He opened to see that it was Rosie who he had met a few days ago. She was wearing a black low-cut dress which radiated the mature woman's charm off from her.

"Mr. Dean." Rosie's eyes lit up as she saw Dudian open the door. She earnestly smiled: "It has been a long time. I'll bother you again."

Dudian slightly smiled: "You aren't disturbing."

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Rosie giggled: “Mr. Dean I took the liberty to come over to mainly greet and congratulate you. You have just joined the Temple but were able to create a top grade four-star item. It is a creation that we at the Scott consortium admire and respect. We were misled by master Celsus’s evaluation and thought that your work is a three-star research. But we didn’t think that master Celsus’s eyes had become old and can’t see the real value. He has underestimated your work.”

Dudian smiled: “I would not dare to say so. Master Celsus didn’t check the research in-depth but took a look and evaluated in less than an hour. Being able to assess the work and giving such an evaluation is the thing that we should admire.”

Rosie looked at him: “Mr. Dean didn’t promise to sell the rights to me earlier which was a wise move. Right now we as Scott consortium have come to a decision to offer you a price of a top grade four-star item for the military crossbow. What do you think?”

Dudian didn’t expect her to give the highest possible price: “But your consortium is going to suffer from this transaction.”

“We are not going to make a loss.” Rosie laughed: “We will just earn a bit less. Moreover, we are showing our sincerity as a consortium. We have cooperated in the past, so we are old acquaintances. A small concession will not hurt us.”

Rosie had natural abilities that made people quite relaxed and feel good just by talking. However, Dudian still hadn't forgotten about falsification of accounting books by the Scott Consortium. So he wasn't at ease: "I will think about the offer."

Rosie was confused: "Are you not satisfied with the offer?"

Dudian slightly shook his head: "I have to discuss it with the old patriarch of the Ryan family. I was previously employed as a hunter by their family. Moreover, they bailed me out from the prison. Although according to the terms of the hunter contract they don't ask for the right of my research, but I can't forget the kindness they have shown towards me."

Rosie had full information about Dudian's background. She was well aware of the few years of experience he had in prison. After she had heard his argument, she knew that he had told the appropriate thing. For a moment she couldn't find the right words to speak. After thinking for a bit, she quickly said: "Mr. Dean you should be aware of the financial situation of the Ryan family better than us. Even if you gifted the product to them, they don't have the ability to produce the product in bulk. Ultimately they would be looking for business partners for cooperation to manufacture the crossbow. I can promise you that if you sell us the right for sales and manufacturing of the crossbow, then we can give a share to Ryan family from the future profits."

Dudian didn't think that this girl had so much authority in the consortium that she could promise such a big concession on the spot. He pretended to be pondering the issue and after a moment said: "I don't want to be rude, but I'll talk this thing out with Old

Fulin and afterward decide the issue."

Rosie didn't expect that Dudian would hesitate even after such a condition was presented. Her face slightly changed: "That being the case if the old patriarch agrees to a sale then Mr. Dean, please consider the Scott consortium as the first option. If you have any other needs, then let me know. I can go back to the consortium and make sure that they are satisfied."

"Thank you," Dudian replied.

Rosie saw that there was no intention to agree on Dudian's face. She knew about the matter which could affect their deal, but she wasn't able to do anything to change the predicament. However, she wasn't going to throw the towel just like that. Rosie continued: "Mr. Dean, please tell Old Fulin that if he agrees then our consortium is willing to make an alliance with New World consortium."

Dudian's eyelids twitched for a moment, but his heartbeat quietened down as he thought through. Alliance was certainly the most powerful form of cooperation that New World consortium needed. But in practice, Scott consortium would not ally themselves with New World consortium on equal rights. If it were going to be an unequal treaty, then the meaning of the 'alliance' would lose its purpose greatly.

"I'll make sure that Old patriarch of the Ryan family is aware of Scott consortium's intentions," Dudian answered.

Rosie sighed, but she suddenly thought of something. She whispered: “By the way, I would like to reveal some news to you that I got my hands on. The market in the Pine town is not founded by Mellon consortium but Burong family alone. Its purpose wasn’t to pressure New World consortium, but they are plotting against you. The market in the Pine town would suppress you through economic means, and they intend to find an insider who would get close to the Ryan family. Afterward, their aim is to trap you and make sure that your reputation is damaged.”

“Reputation?” Dudian eyes lightly looked at her.

“As Burong family would use the economic means through the Pine town to pressure on Ryan family some other wealthy family will step up to help the Ryan family. They will get to have a close relationship with Ryan family and you. Afterward, they will design a series of traps for you to fall in. As far as I know you and Burong family’s young Miss Jenny have a history. The purpose of the patriarch Rudolph’s move is not to frame and imprison you but to discredit. He wants his daughter to give up on you completely.”

Dudian silently looked at her: “Scott consortium is quite well-informed. Your intelligence network is top notch!”

Rosie smiled: “We are enemies with the Mellon consortium, so naturally we check their every move. In the future regardless if you are willing to sell us the right for the crossbow I will pass you the information if Burong family tries to frame you or Mellon consortium tries to suppress New World Consortium.”

Dudian looked at Rosie. She was sent to do business in Scott

consortium's stead, and she indeed had a commendable ability. Although he took into account that Scott consortium had falsified books, but her current behavior influenced him too. He was no longer a child. He knew that any goodwill shown to him had to be repaid with kindness. It was the rule of the jungle, and the fittest survived in these conditions. But fittest doesn't mean the one who got the most benefits on the spot.

"Thank you!" Dudian once again thanked her.

Rosie was about to leave, but she saw the black metal objects at the back of the room. She hesitated: "Mr. Dean, are you creating a new item?"

Dudian saw that she had noticed the lightning rod. He replied: "Yes."

Rosie surprised: "Those seem to be ... metal bars. Are you not from the wood element faction? Are metal elements used your new item?"

Dudian smiled: "You will know when it is out."

Rosie saw that Dudian wasn't going to disclose the details: "Mr. Dean, can I book the rights to buy this new item at the price of a three-star item?" However, there was regret in her heart as she uttered the offer. Although Dudian had produced a four-star product but who knew what the new item was? Even the most famous masters would produce one-star or two-star items most of the time. Occasionally their research results would be assessed as

three or four-star items. As for the production of a five-star item that is a rare creation a master produced once in a decade.

Dudian shook his head: “The price is too low. If you offer the price of a five-star item, then I promise that Scott consortium will get the product.”

“Uh, oh…” Rosie almost choked. She smiled: “Mr. Dean, you are humorous.”

Dudian shrugged his shoulders.

Rosie bid farewell and left helplessly.

Dudian closed the door and narrowed his eyes as he thought about the information that Rosie had provided. He didn’t expect the purpose of Pine town market was buried so deep. It was possible that it was made up by Rosie after all he couldn’t verify the validity of the information. But the plan seemed like the style of the Burong family. From an objective point of view, he could fully understand the way Rudolph acted. But from his own perspective, he couldn’t tolerate such a move again.

“The Mellon Consortium, the Burong family and the Mel family.” Dudian gently rubbed his fingers as he thought about the issue.

That night

Dudian's carriage went back to the Ryan family.

Old Fulin asked: "You have refused Rosie. Did you tell her about our assumptions about the false accounting of the revenue of new textile machine?

"No." Dudian leaned against the chair and rubbed his temple. "There is no meaning to fiddle in the past."

Old Fulin was relieved: "We have no evidence, and it's only guesses. Even if we voice out our suspicion, we won't get compensation. It is pointless."

Dudian closed his eyes: "What about other consortia?"

"In the afternoon people sent by the military, Green consortium and Huasheng consortium had come over to discuss the rights for your crossbow. The prices and conditions given by them were almost same as with Scott consortium. After the assessment had been made, they didn't have a choice but to increase the price of their offers. Moreover, I have inquired about the battle that is happening in the border. The barbarians are very active, and your crossbow will come handy in such a situation. Most probably your crossbow got top grade evaluation because it was produced at a time when the war was getting more intensive."

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“The frontier war?” Dudian was surprised. He had faintly heard the words before but didn’t have an in-depth understanding. He asked: “Does it refer to the war outside the wall?”

Old Fulin nodded: “It mainly refers to the war outside the three districts. The war is happening in the radiation zone. The area is massive and the population is big. In addition to the infected beasts there are some deported barbarians. In a sense, they are no different than beasts. They are hairy, warlike people who like to drink blood … Moreover, they even eat their own kind if there is a food shortage. They are very cruel!”

“The barbarians have repeatedly tried to invade into the residential district to plunder resources. The army is on duty to guard the borders through the border fortresses. They fight both against barbarians and monsters.”

Dudian wasn’t aware that were still people living in that piece of the desolate area.

“The barbarians…They should originate from the same ancestors as we are… I mean they couldn’t be descendants of someone else… “Dudian wondered while his heart was still in doubt: “But the offspring of the survivors should be born within the small walls and live at ease and comfort after the new era. Why would they deport their own descendants outside the border into the radiation zone?”

He brainstormed a lot but he couldn't come up with an answer since he had no clues relating to the question. Although three hundred years was not a long term for humanity but weren't a short period of time either. Perhaps the ancestors of these barbarians weren't the people who lived within the wall but survivors who fought for rights to enter and live in here. That was a possibility too.

"What about their population?" Dudian asked Old Fulin: "It should be very difficult to survive in the radiation zone where the radiation is too high. Even sterilization is possible after a long-time life. After such a long time of fighting, how could they have survived?"

Old Fulin shook his head: "According to that reason their population had to be extinct by now. But in fact, they have grown more and more after each passing year. It was too late the moment when military realized and was aware of the potential threat. Their size had become so big that the military couldn't easily exterminate them. It is so bad that the military is bitterly struggling to defend the border fortresses. It has become an extremely troublesome matter. Moreover, military and other consortia are secretly involved with the dark church to make sure that the advance of barbarians is delayed."

Dudian frowned: "Why does the Holy Church not intervene to solve the problem?"

"The Holy Church and military are wearing the same pants but different legs. They naturally help them but Holy Church is at the same time fighting against Dark Church for self-preservation.

They don’t supply forces or troops to reinforce the borders.” Old Fulin sighed: “Actually military has forcefully conscripted soldiers for six times in the last few years in the slums and residential district. The people are getting angry and there have been few riots regarding the matter.”

Dudian secretly contemplated in his heart: “The Dark Church should be aware of this problem as their intelligence network is wide and deep. Moreover, they are having problems with the human research as the Holy Church has prohibited any kind of such experiments. Most probably military has secretly commissioned the alchemists from life faction of the Dark Church to help them within the radiation zone. Those alchemists would be interested in finding the breeding grounds of barbarians and experimenting on them. The bodies of these barbarians should have some kind of mutation that protects them from radiation. If those antibodies could be found and sold in large-scales to people in slums and residential district then the profits would skyrocket. The alchemists of the dark church should be involved in this problem behind the shadows.”

“Moreover it is also useful to me.”

“I don’t have a ‘light physique’. If the radiation content increases in my body more than four points then it is already a risky situation. I would still go hunting outside the giant wall but after two or three times the radiation content would soar to more than ten points. It would obviously cause damage to my body. It is possible that my skin would deform or there would be some kind of physical deformity as a result. The only way to solve that out would be to buy the ‘fountain of life’ from Holy Church but that is a very expensive item.”

“If the barbarians really have the constitution that resists high radiation then it is kind of an inexhaustible source of ‘fountain of life’ for me. Furthermore, it means that these people have the ‘light physique’. “

Dudian’s eyes lit up as he dazed into thought.

Old Fulin saw that Dudian was contemplating about something so he didn’t bother him. Dudian recovered after a while and asked Old Fulin: “Has anyone from Mellon consortium came over to offer us anything for the military crossbow?”

Old Fulin didn’t think that Dudian would change the topic and jump to the business of the consortium: “No, they should be aware of the relationship between you and the Burong family. They would give Rudolph some face…”

“It shouldn’t be as simple as that…” Dudian looked back at Old Fulin: “They may have already started their plan.”

Old Fulin’s face changed: “You are famous and it is a sign of warning for them. They should plan to eradicate you in the cradle as it would be the most resource-saving process. They have been pressuring us within the cotton industry and the market at Pine town. The Yard town’s economy is in a critical situation. I have decreased the taxes to almost nothing. Right now we are relying on the dividends from the Scott Consortium. You can sell the crossbow to support us for the time being but by filling the water into the dry well, fundamentally nothing will change.”

Dudian deeply looked at him: “Cotton industry, Pine town and Yard town, are small industries. Even if everything is completely plundered it won’t be one-tenth of the dividends from the new textile machine.”

Old Fulin’s face turned ugly: “Do you mean that they would contact Scott consortium? They are enemies! They would not act against us together! ”

“We are a thorn in their eyes. But Mellon and Scott consortium would not join hands to act against us. We are not big enough to have such an effect. However, Scott consortium will take the advantage of this opportunity to make sure that they get our products.” Dudian slowly continued: “An old consortium such as Mellon won’t use regular commercial means to suppress us. It will be a very slow move and it will be hard to do it directly. However, they can rely on dirty tricks to crush us. We are nothing more than ants in their eyes right now.”

Old Fulin’s mouth twitched and his face turned ugly. It was the deepest worry in his heart and he was reluctant to put it forward before. But at the moment Dudian had clearly stated it and Old Fulin was aware that there were some things that were inevitable. The big consortium’s such as Mellon couldn’t reach the point they are today by simply relying on financial resources and businesses. They would always use dirty tricks behind the shadows. They would use their personal connections, assassinations and other means to crush the opposite party.

“They sent someone to assassinate you the last time so they

won’t use this approach again. Moreover, they are aware that I am an old man so they won’t try to kill me either. They should be aware that consortium’s burdens are on your shoulders. The one who is a threat to them is you but not me.” Old Fulin slowly said after a moment of silence.

Dudian narrowed his eyes: “There are way too many means to deal with us and we can’t waste our resources to prepare for each and every occasion. Actually, there is no point in trying to go on defense. Right now the best defense is the attack.”

Old Fulin was shocked: “Are we going to go on the offensive against Mellon consortium? This is same like fighting a rock with the eggs!”

Dudian slowly replied: “Although Mellon consortium is a giant in comparison to us but it doesn’t mean that it is indestructible. Furthermore, the structure of the consortium is not a whole. There are many parties with different interests than Mel or Burong families. If we think of a Mellon as a single body and attack it from outside with a dagger then we wouldn’t be able to kill it. But if we could let it swallow a rusty metal then we will have its life. Moreover, we won’t even use our own strength. It will destruct from inside.”

Old Fulin stared back at him: “Since you have expected this then I presume you have already prepared a plan and were ready to talk to me. How can I help?”

There was a trace of a smile on Dudian’s face: “After I get the money you will need to help find a few helpers.”

“Helper?” Old Fulin was surprised: “Where are we going to find them?”

“The place where the thorns are blooming.”

Chapter 263

As Dudian's carriage returned to his castle by the river he saw from a distance an exquisite carriage parked outside the castle. There was a black serpent pattern engraved on the family flag which was stuck to the carriage.

There was a butler standing by the carriage. The moment he saw Dudian coming over his eyes lit up. He turned to the compartment of the carriage and whispered. A soft 'ah' sound echoed as the curtain slowly was set aside. A beautiful woman with a graceful mature temperament looked at Dudian who was approaching them. Her jade-like eyes were focused on Dudian's body. She was surprised as the kid didn't have the high-spirited feeling of a rising star but rather a charm of darkness. It seems that the hotness of 'black death season' didn't affect the coldness radiating off him.

After a deep look, she slowly opened the door. The carriage was standing on a stone road. Her black shoes stepped on it. She was wearing a black skirt which covered her whole body. She was standing by the side of the door and quietly waiting for Dudian who slowly approached them. She softly said: "You must be Mr. Dean. I've taken the liberty to disturb you."

Dudian was long aware of the lady's existence even before she got off the carriage. She seemed to look like a twenty-year-old girl but her dress made her look to be in her thirties. She had a refined temperament and there was a very light smell of a man exuding from her body. It could be seen that she was a clean woman maybe even single. His eyes were calm as he quietly asked: "Hello, how may I help you?"

“Can we go to your castle?” The woman whispered.

Dudian guessed the purpose of her visit: “If you want to talk about the purchase of the crossbow then let’s be straightforward and don’t waste time. The price is already set and I assume you are aware of it. So if you are here to change my mind to leave New World consortium then I don’t have such intention.”

Granita didn’t expect Dudian to be so direct and even a bit rude. She was slightly startled but she still mildly said: “Mr. Dean I represent Krylov consortium. I’m assigned by the consortium to find you and talk to you about a few things. I know that Mr. Dean has received kindness of the Ryan family but their resources are limited. Moreover when the sun sets then there is a lofty light where you can survive on the shoal. But the moment it rises again the one on the shoal will be the first to be burned.” She paused for a moment then continued: “Whatever Ryan family provides you with, we can also give. Actually, we can support you with resources that they would never even imagine providing. I hope that Mr. Dean will consider my offer with an in-depth analysis as it is both good for you and the Ryan family.”

Dudian stopped the carriage and sat down on the board. He looked at her quietly for a moment and then slowly said: “The only way for your consortium to have a closer relationship with me is through cooperation with the New World consortium. I will never withdraw from the New World consortium.”

Granita saw that Dudian didn’t have the slightest intention of leaving the New World consortium. He didn’t even hint on any

demands. She frowned slightly: “Mr. Dean, as long as you are a part of the New World consortium then the enemies they will have and the troubles they will face will increase many folds. They won’t be able to protect you from everything.”

Dudian replied in an indifferent tone: “I hope that Krylov consortium won’t be enemies with New World consortium.” He went silent for a moment then continued: “at least not now.”

Granita sighed: “Since Mr. Dean is determined then I will no longer insist. But please rest assured that Krylov consortium will have goodwill towards you at all times. You are welcome to join us anytime you want.” Afterward, she thought of something and opened her handbag. She pulled out an emerald colored card and handed it out to Dudian: “This is my personal business card. It is a VIP card which can open the doors of any industry under Krylov consortium. Please accept it.”

Dudian took the card and looked at the name written on it: Granita.

“This name … it is a little familiar.” After a glance, he put it away.

Granita was a bit regretful as she turned back and went into the compartment of her carriage.

Dudian didn’t continue to stay here. He shook the ropes and the carriage moved into his castle.

“Lady.” After Dudian left, the butler asked: “So what is the result?”

“He will come after Mellon or other consortiums begin their attacks. We should go back.”

...

Dudian sat in front of his desk. There were papers and they had depictions of many drawings. If there was no chance to acquire the ‘fountain of life’ then he was planning to produce firearms. However, now there was hope of rehabilitation. He would still continue to produce cold weapons. As for the firearms, their production had fewer benefits than threats.

The destructive power of bow and arrows would increase with the quality of the bow and arrows as well as his own physical strength.

The firearms had a constant output. So the power output would be the same if a hunter used it or an ordinary person. He thought that if he reached the physical limits of a senior hunter then the arrow’s destructive power would not be inferior to a bullet. Its shooting range would be more than a bullet shot from the rifle. As for the arrow’s destructive power. He had the supercomputer chip and he could work on improving it. He may add additional things that could make an arrow as powerful as a bullet.

If the speed of the arrow and destructive force exceeded that of a firearm then he planned to delay the manufacture of firearms.

After all, if the firearms were born then they would be copied by other consortiums or the Holy Church. If they produced them secretly in large-scale and gave it to hunters then a massive chaos would happen.

Moreover, the hunter profession would lose its meaning. Additionally, the magistrate would lose its power in front of firearms. Once there is no discipline and rule then the rule of law won't apply anymore. The giant wall would fall into chaos.

Therefore even though it would be easy to produce guns and firearms but it would be difficult to control their spread. He didn't want to worry about the loss of life and riots. He didn't want to see a world where ordinary people lurked around to kill others.

"If the firearms come out then the pattern of life within the giant wall will completely evolve. There will be a chaotic struggle which is not a good thing." Dudian's eyes lit up. He didn't want to see disorder. He preferred to lurk in the darkness and to destroy the current order and slowly create his own.

"Not just gunpowder but anything with great destructive power is banned." Dudian gently tapped the desktop as he thought about the future: "After the production of lightning rods then I will have enough wealth accumulated to re-create other things. But if I cause too much suspicion and the momentum of my rise is too swift then I hope all of the other consortiums will feel the fear. They will ruin themselves from inside."

"The next step is to consider the power of New World consortium."

“There isn’t a senior hunter in the consortium which is one of the reasons why the other consortiums look at us in contempt. A senior hunter is a deterrent which will make the other consortiums somewhat afraid. It is kind of equivalent to a nuclear weapon of the old era. If there would be too much pressure then a senior hunter could assassinate the high-level people of the enemy. Although the magistrate will hunt down the senior hunter but it would be enough for the consortiums to get enough acknowledgment from the others. No one would be willing to use their own lives to exchange with a hunter’s.”

Dudian contemplated: “If we have a big enough number of hunters then the other consortia wouldn’t easily dare to offend us. Because of our current financial situation, it would be very hard to recruit hunters from the hunter school. Moreover, it would be very difficult to purchase magic marks. They are just too expensive the only option is to hunt outside on our own for us to be self-sufficient.”

He began to draw on the paper.

Two days passed.

Military crossbow’s sales and manufacturing rights haven’t been sold yet. In two days, except Mellon consortium, all others including the military had come over to talk with Dudian or Old Fulin. The price offered by the military was one-third higher than other consortia.

After careful considerations with Old Fulin Dudian eventually selected Huasheng consortium. He took into account that they had the map of the area outside the ‘death passage’.

However, neither Dudian nor Old Fulin didn’t let go of this bitter chance to make a fortune. They made sure that they extorted as much money as they could from Huasheng consortium. Moreover, they got the map as a free gift. They agreed on a cash price of a four-star item but Ryan family would receive regular dividends from several industries under Huasheng consortium’s command.

The contract was finalized and both sides were happy.

Dudian and old patriarch knew that although they had forced the other side to give them discounts during the negotiations and seemingly they got a great degree of benefits, but to Huasheng consortium these seemingly important industries weren’t that much of an importance. They could actually discard and abandon them at will and wouldn’t make a loss. Even if they had a falling out with Old Fulin then they could use other methods such as kicking him out of the board of directors and cutting off the dividends.

“Four hundred sixty thousand gold coins …” Old Fulin repeatedly said the number of gold coins they got from the deal. His face which was wrinkled because of the old age was blooming like a flower. Even when he was a youth and witnessed the glorious period of the Ryan family, he had never seen such a large amount of gold coins as their savings.

Dudian smiled. This was the value of being an architect. It was

also the charm of a top grade four-star military item. If it was a one-star item then it could be sold up to thousand gold coins. Two-star items could reach somewhere between six to ten thousand gold coins. Three-star items could reach fifty or one hundred thousand gold coins. The lowest price to acquire a four-star item would be two hundred thousand gold coins. The beauty of the military crossbow was that it was not only just a military four-star top grade item but it was invented at a time of war. The price was higher because it was going to be used in an actual war and not stockpiled.

Last but not the least, five-star items would be priced over million gold coins. It was not something that would influence an area but they would influence and affect the life of three districts and the inner wall.

“In a matter of moments, we have reached a level where we are comparable to a top second tier noble family such as Milan.” Old Fulin smiled. Although they had the money but they couldn’t match with Milan family. The latter’s real estate business would be more valuable than the wealth Old Fulin and Dudian had acquired from this deal.

Dudian smiled: “We have enough money to recruit people.”

“It is more than enough.” Old Fulin had a wide smile on his face: “We can buy a ‘fountain of life’ to cure your arm. Moreover, after some time you can become a senior architect. After the success of the military crossbow, we would completely turn over the situation. You wouldn’t need to go outside the giant wall.”

Dudian smiled: “The money is not valuable if it’s not put into use. The foundation of any consortium is the number of hunters they have. We can’t catch up with other consortiums in short term as they have been involved with the business and industries for decades. It will be very difficult to overcome that problem. However nurturing several senior hunters would be much easier in comparison to that.”

The smile on Old Fulin’s face faded away: “Are you planning to assassinate people from Mellon consortium after becoming a senior hunter?”

“Do I look like such a stupid person?”

“Don’t forget that assassination of a high-level person of any consortium will lead to the collective panic. They would use all the connections they have with the magistrate to investigate the matter. It would be very difficult to protect or hide you. Even if you assassinate someone, it doesn’t mean that you will destroy Mellon consortium. Their business empire isn’t built on one person. Even if a director from the board dies it won’t collapse. If by chance the consortium collapses the other consortia would try to eat up the pieces of the cake. We aren’t big enough to swallow such a cake.”

Dudian shrugged his shoulders. He knew that assassination wasn’t a reasonable choice. Of course, unless he had the ultimate power of a senior hunter. However, so far he didn’t know whether the power of a senior hunter was the limit of human evolution.

Therefore ultimately they had to rely on commercial pressure to

destroy such a giant consortium. They had to put pressure on all of the industries that were related to them. However, the enemy was like a giant towering tree of hundred years with dense foliage and roots that had penetrated in all directions. They had connections to all walks of life. So wanting to pull them down meant that all of the roots had to be decimated. The need for powerful strength was self-evident.

However, it had to be noted that a single consortium was the product of dozens of families working together for decades. There was countless wisdom and experience gathered together through several generations. Standing alone against such power was in itself an extremely difficult thing.

Same day.

Dudian returned to ‘Temple of Elements’ and found a senior architect to buy a bottle of ‘fountain of life’ on his behalf. He owed a favor to the person and had to pay thirty thousand gold coins.

The ‘fountain of life’ was stored in a small glass bottle. It was a green colored liquid. Dudian shook it few times as he was curious about the details and ingredients used in its production. This era was totally different from the old era. They didn’t prescribe the raw materials used to produce the vial at the back of the bottle. Even if he tried to inquire about the recipe then his name will be blacklisted by the Temple because of the misconduct.

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Dudian opened the cap of the bottle. He followed the instructions and dripped the liquid on his left arm. He used his right hand to smear the mucus-like liquid evenly over his left arm. The ‘fountain of life’ exuded a smell which was similar to flowers however there was a bit of a very vague smell of blood. Ordinary people wouldn’t be able to detect the blood’s smell. Moreover, there was this little rancid odor. It seemed that those particles were especially scarce. Even for someone like Dudian with an extraordinary sense of smell, it wasn’t easy to feel it.

“The ordinary people would need to apply the liquid directly to their wound. Fountain of life would be absorbed through the skin and will grow the flesh and heal the wound. A bottle of ‘fountain of life’ can be used up to ten times.” Dudian poured out half of the bottle over his whole left arm. He applied a layer over his fingers too. There was a shiny layer over his skin which exuded rich aroma.

Dudian was worried as he looked at his left arm. The ‘fountain of life’ was absorbed and evaporated at speed visible to the eye. However, he wasn’t sure about its effects as his left arm was unconscious.

This was the worst part of his left arm. He didn’t know how much strength he should use so that he doesn’t break his arm. Dudian thought that if he didn’t want to go through such an experience again he had to avoid close combat unless a life and death situation occurred. He would have to specialize in remote archery and perfect his style as soon as possible. Moreover, he had

to perfect the control over his left arm even if there was no perception touch or pain.

"Archery... Even if I'm perfect at it but the archery will be mainly used outside the giant wall to hunt. If I'm in a situation where someone wants to take my life through assassination then I have to rely on close combat!" Dudian wasn't worried about the dangers that he could face on the outside of the giant wall but the hidden ones inside of it. He was going to exercise and strengthen himself as soon as his arm rehabilitated.

Three days later.

"Are the bones completely healed? Is there a possibility that some internal injuries will be left? "Dudian looked at the middle-aged doctor and his fifteen-year-old girl assistant who were standing close to his bed.

The middle-aged doctor was preoccupied with Dudian's left arm. He replied: "I have checked thoroughly. The cracks have completely healed. Now the problem is that you have to wait until the newly formed bones adapt to your constitution. It is best not to be involved in violent activities for some time."

Dudian nodded in confirmation. If an ordinary person wanted to confirm the recovery rate of their arm then they would understand through the feeling of pain. However, his perception of his left arm wasn't working and he could only ask the doctor who had checked his bones through testing. The doctor had cut his arm in few places and checked the bones. Right now some parts of his arm had nothing but stitches.

After some time the operation on Dudian's arm was finished. The middle-aged doctor put away the bloody gloves and needles back in the box. He erased the sweat on his forehead and looked up at Dudian. He saw that the youth was calmer than himself. Although Dudian's shouldn't have felt pain because of the anesthetics but the bloody scene of the surgery should scare the hell out of anyone. He wryly smiled: "Make sure that your left arm doesn't come in contact with water. If the wounds itch then try to hold back and don't scratch them. The wound may get infected with another disease. I'll come regularly to check the situation. However, if there are other abnormalities then you have to immediately notify me.

"Good." Dudian leaned against the bed.

The middle-aged doctor put back the tools into the medicine box and left the room with his assistant.

The next day.

Dudian's left hand was bandaged. He came to the Ryan castle and went to the second floor. After the surrounding servants left the room he looked at Old Fulin: "Have the procedures been taken care of?"

"Yes." Old Fulin took out a pile of envelopes from a drawer and handed them out to Dudian: "All of them are in here. None of them have tried to jailbreak so it was easy to bail them out. Now you have to go and take them out."

Dudian nodded and reached out to take the stack of letters: “I will go alone. The distance is long so it won’t be convenient for you to travel.”

Old Fulin looked at his hand. “Your arm…”

Dudian smiled. He put the envelopes away and went downstairs. The carriage had long been prepared for his usage. He sat in the carriage and ordered the coachman to drive.

…

There was a low-lying shelter a bit far away from the border of the commercial district. The periphery of the place was full of thick jungle. After the thick jungle was a lush green grass plain. At the center of the plain, there stood a ten-meter high castle. The castle was surrounded by a spacious blue lake which reflected the silver-gray radiation clouds in the sky.

This was the most notorious prison of the Silvia. Thorn Flower Prison.

On the top of the castle in a spacious office.

The warden Jones and his butler Peter were standing on the balcony observing the plains and jungles outside the lake. Warden Jones whispered: “Do you remember the little devil that escaped from here?”

Peter replied: “I don’t think anyone in this prison will forget him.”

Jones couldn’t see through Peter’s emotions: “Do you remember how long it has been since the jailbreak?”

“Two-quarters…” Peters said: “I have heard that he had joined the New World consortium of Ryan family. Moreover today he is coming over to take five dirty pigs that were bailed out!”

Jones nodded: “In these two-quarters of time Burong family couldn’t get rid of this kid. But he had joined the ‘Temple of Elements’ which is under the Holy Church’s protection. We had made a big mistake when we took the kid into the prison. His strength should be close to an intermediate level hunter or even close to a senior hunter’s.”

Peter was startled but soon understood why Warden Jones said so. Because if the little devil didn’t have such a strength then he should have been the target of an assassination a long time ago.

“Was he just thirteen years old when he entered the prison?” Peter couldn’t help but ask. Although it had been over five years that the little devil entered the jail but he was clear about the records of every criminal who had entered the prison.

Jones nodded in affirmation: “The Burong family shouldn’t have known that a thirteen years old kid would have such a strength. The little devil had camouflaged himself very well. Now, after the

baptism of Thorn Flower Prison if he can survive for another ten years then Burong family won't have a future."

Peter was surprised: "No, that's not possible. It doesn't matter how smart or cunning the little devil is. The Burong family has established itself over various industries for a long time. If he is clever enough then he would reconcile with the Burong family. Otherwise..."

"Reconciliation is impossible." Jones whispered: "You should be aware better than anyone what the kid has gone through in the prison. If by chance the little devil becomes a senior hunter then the Burong family's neck would hang by the blade of his sword."

Peter nodded: "It's way too hard to become a high-level senior hunter. Moreover, the hunter's life is very hard to predict. Even a senior hunter's chance of falling dead outside the giant wall is possible. So speculating at this point is a bit senseless."

Jones saw that a little black spot appeared outside the plains. He whispered: "Let's go."

...

Dudian removed the curtain and looked around the plains. He recalled the original rainy day as he fled away from the prison. His heart was filled with emotion.

It didn't take long for the carriage to reach the lake.

“Stop! Please show the proof of your identity!” The guard by the bridge shouted out. If he didn’t saw the flag of the noble family on the carriage then the carriage would have been attacked from the observation tower a long time ago.

Dudian opened the door and got off the carriage. He handed out a letter.

The guard reached out and grabbed the letter. After a moment of reading, he looked at Dudian: “Follow me! Don’t look around as we pass the aisle!” He went straight to the prison.

Dudian saw that a shadow about ten meters long swam across the lake as they passed through the aisle. Even if a senior hunter would be dismembered and face a tragic death if they fell into the lake.

Suddenly, he felt that as if someone was observing him. He looked up and saw two figures standing at the top of the castle. There was an extension which seemed to be a balcony. There was a middle-aged man wearing a black suit. There was a man with white hair behind him.

Dudian guessed that these two should be the warden of the Thorn Flower Prison and his butler.

When he was doing his time in the jail he had heard from prison mates that warden ‘Jones’ had personally killed a senior hunter. He had strong combat ability. Moreover, Warden Jones had connections in the magistrate. As a result of such connections, he

was able to suppress the voices that were against such a brutal prison.

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Dudian retracted his eyes and followed the guard all the way to the jail's entrance through the stone road which was covered by lake waters on both sides. Once in a while huge waves would hit the road and water would splash and pour onto the stony road.

It didn't take long for them to reach the entrance of the prison. The guard approached a guard by the gate and said a few words. Afterward, he handed out the envelope given to him by Dudian. The other one checked the content of the letter and opened the door as he indifferently looked at Dudian.

"Please." The guard turned back to Dudian and said as he led the way.

The hall at the entrance was as lively as a tavern. Many guards were sitting inside and drinking tea and chatting. The topic of their conversations was about prisoners and women.

The jail guards sitting inside paid attention to Dudian but the excitement in their eyes calmed down the moment they saw that there were no shackles on hands or feet of Dudian. One of the guard's blinked the moment he saw Dudian. He felt that this cleanly dressed youth was familiar but couldn't remember where he had seen him.

"Old man there is someone to bail out people." The guard called out to the man who was sitting at a counter at the back of the hall.

Few guards were playing cards behind the counter. The guards who were playing cards looked back at them. One of them responded the moment he saw Dudian. There was a trace of surprise in his eyes as he said: “The little devil…”

“Black chicken, do you know him?” The guard next to him asked.

Black chicken rubbed his eyes and cried out: “That is the kid who made the jailbreak!”

The guard who had found Dudian to look familiar was stunned. The hall soared up into an uproar.

“No wonder he felt a little familiar!”

“Does he actually dare to come back here?”

“He is dressed like a gentleman so I almost couldn’t recognize him!”

The middle-aged man who was called ‘Mad dog’ reacted the moment he heard the words of others. He put down the cards into his pockets and got up to walk towards Dudian. He stood in front of Dudian and said: “Little devil, are you, Dean?”

Dudian heard his words but didn’t reply. Instead, he suddenly kicked his knee. Bang! Kacha! The knee is the hardest bone in the

human body, but after Dudian's kick it broke as the sound of shattering bones echoed out. Mad dog's body leaned forward as he threw himself at Dudian.

Dudian lifted his right hand and grabbed the man's body: "I don't need a welcome back gift." Afterward, he threw his body sideways.

The guards who were chatting about Dudian were shocked the moment they saw what had happened. Nobody would think that Dudian would dare to hit a guard in the jail. Moreover, the middle-aged man was not an ordinary guard but the director of the first layer. In prison attacking him was equal to a small level riot.

"Stop!"

"You little devil! Do you want to break the law?!"

All the guards stood up and walked towards Dudian.

Dudian's eyes swept the audience: "It seems that your food is not good."

"Bastard! Sneak attacking a guard?!"

"You are a dead man!"

"Quickly! Call a knight of the magistrate! Inform them now!"

One of the guards turned away and ran out through the side door. Apparently, he went out to inform the knights.

Dudian smiled and walked towards a nearby table. The three guards standing by the table hurried to walk backward. Their legs tripped, and they fall.

Dudian didn’t even spare a glance at them. Instead, he bent over and grabbed a chair. He patted the dust above it and sat down.

After a few moments sounds of iron, boots echoed as the door was pushed. The guard had come back with a dozen of knights from the magistrate. The guard saw that Dudian was sitting on the chair, he pointed at him: “He is the one! He is the one who attacked a guard and prepared to rob the prison!”

The team of knights looked at Dudian. Afterward, they turned towards the guard who stood up as he trembled. The middle-aged man’s leg was fractured, and he couldn’t even stand properly. The young captain pulled out his sword. The knights behind him pulled out their swords too as they saw their captain act. The sound of dozens of swords scraping their scabbards echoed out. All of the swords were pointed at Dudian who was sitting on the chair.

Dudian smiled: “Why are you acting like this before hearing me out?”

The young captain said in a cold tone: “He didn’t break his own leg, did he?”

Dudian shrugged his shoulders: “Maybe!?”

“Nonsense!” The youth exclaimed: “You have attacked a guard. I advise you to lift your hands so that we can capture you. If you resist then your crime will increase!”

Dudian asked: “You said that I had hurt him but you haven’t personally seen it. You didn’t even ask him. Are you directly convicting me just like that?”

The captain asked the middle-aged man: “Mad god, did he hurt you?”

“He did! It was him!” Mad dog leaned onto the table and moved towards the young captain. After he was far away from Dudian, Mad dog pointed at him and growled: “He is the one! That little devil! He attacked me! Kill him! ”

The young captain stared at Dudian: “Do you have anything to say now?”

Dudian shook his head: “Nothing.”

“Well, give me handcuffs!” The young captain waved his hand.

“I have something to say.” A gentle and dignified voice echoed out from behind the hall. An old man dressed in a suit walked down the stairs. The guards who saw him were surprised and bowed in respect: “Butler…”

Peter didn't pay attention to the guards on both sides as he went straight towards Dudian. He looked at Mad dog who was standing by the young captain: "Your legs were broken! Why do you falsely accuse Mr. Dean?"

Mad dog was shocked.

The guards were stunned as they looked at each other in surprise.

The young captain was startled too.

Peter's look implied warning as he turned towards the young captain: "It only a misunderstanding. You can disperse now. Mr. Dean is here to bail people out. How can we accuse him of misconduct?"

The youth looked at Dudian who was smiling. He turned to look at Mad dog. After a moment he bowed: "Yes, sire." He sheathed his sword back into the scabbard and waved the others to follow him.

After the knights had gone away, Mad dog felt the temperature in the room became chaotic. He looked at Peter: "Butler, this kid obviously..."

"Ha?" Peter looked at him as he cut Mad dog's words off.

Peter turned towards Dudian. There was a gentle smile on his

face: “Mr. Dean, you have become an architect of the ‘Temple of Elements.’ Your every move represents the will of the glorious God of Light. Why would you care about these small characters?”

Peter’s eyes lit up: “Mr. Dean would you let us know which people you would bail out? Should I lead the way?”

“No worries.” Dudian stood and patted his pants: “I remember the way.” He went towards the door at the side of the hall. It was locked with an iron lock. His right hand lightly pulled the lock. This thin iron lock broke down, and the door gently opened.

The guards in the hall looked at Dudian who easily broke the lock of the door. Afterward, they recovered their eyes and looked at Peter.

Mad dog bit his lips: “Butler, this kid is too arrogant. It doesn’t matter that I was hurt and lost face... But... ”

Peter snorted: “Even if we detain him, he will be released by the end of day. However, if he sues you for slandering then you will be locked up then. Who do you think has more power? You or him?”

Mad dog was startled: “Butler, this kid ...”

“You are an idiot. Once in a while read a newspaper instead of sticking to playing a game. That way you may rub off the feces in your brain!” Peter’s eyes were cold as he said. Afterward, he turned away and walked upstairs.

The atmosphere in the hall was frozen after the butler Peter departed. Everyone looked at each other when one of the guard's exclaimed: "I have read about the kid in the recent newspapers! He is Dean who is an intermediate architect in the Temple of Elements! Moreover, he won the 'epoch' medal! Oh my god!"

"What?!"

The others were shocked.

Mad god was stunned.

He never liked reading newspapers. Although he would occasionally hear the news from the mouth of other guards but he would never think that both of those names referred to the same person. One of them was a hunter who was imprisoned, and the other one was the architect of 'Temple of Elements'! The difference was like that of night and day!

There was cold sweat flowing down Mad dog's spine as he thought about butler Peter's words. Even the pain from his leg was forgotten. He knew that if they really caught Dudian today, then the only one who would go to jail would be himself.

He remembered the cold and calm look at Dudian's face. Maybe Dudian really planned to attack him so that he would bring people to arrest Dudian.

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Dudian stepped down along the wooden stairs. He entered the torture room. A young guard was sitting behind the counter and reading a paper book. There were six of seven meters of distance between them, but Dudian was able to see that it belonged to a category of indecent books about love between men and women. He frowned slightly.

The young guard heard the footsteps and folded the book in a hurry. He thought that his colleagues had come, but as he looked up, he saw a strange boy. He stuffed the book into the drawer and took out a whip with a bit of excitement. However, he suddenly found out that there were no handcuffs on Dudian's body and there were no knights of the magistrate who escorted him.

"Who are you?" The young guard frowned.

Dudian glanced at him: "I'm going to bail out prisoners."

"Bail out?" Young guard thought about the notice that was posted today. He didn't expect that the person who was going to bail out the prisoners would be such a young man. He put away the whip and pulled out the keys from his waist: "Follow me." He thought that the boy might be the person who was sent by the noble family to do the dirty thing in their stead. The guard walked in front and opened the heavy iron gate for the first layer of the prison.

Dudian entered through the door. It was the same pattern, and nothing had changed. It was a familiar corridor which was dimly lit. The smell of urine and human feces was floating around. He looked around and saw many familiar faces.

The young guard walked through the promenade and stood in front of a cage. He used a baton to hit the iron pillar and cried: “23rd there is someone here to bail you out!”

The whole prison felt into a short silence after guard’s words. However, in the next moment, an uproar which burst out to sky echoed out.

“Bail out?!”

“I have seen few times people getting bailed out!”

“Is it actually possible to be bailed out from this place?”

“Lord I beg you! Please bail me out! I’m willing to follow you with loyalty! ”

“Sire, bail me out!”

Some of the prisoners who were a bit more cunning than the others had noticed Dudian. They immediately appealed to him as they used emotional gestures.

Dudian quietly looked, but he didn't reply. He went to the cell where the guard was standing. His eyes swept over the prisoners sitting inside the cell. He saw the stunned blonde youth sitting with four other prisoners. Apparently, the youth hadn't expected that someone would come over to bail him out.

"Jin have you already forgotten me?" Dudian smiled.

The blond youth looked at Dudian as he tried to search his memory. But he had never seen such a man before: "Y-ou... Do you know me?"

Dudian replied: "It hasn't been long that I broke out of the jail. How come you have forgotten about me?"

Prison break?

The blond youth's pupils shrank as he heard Dudian's words. He was lost: "Are you D? The one who escaped from the prison?" Dudian was nicknamed 'D' in prison.

The prisoners in other cages suddenly turned silent. Everyone was shocked to see the tall and well-dressed youth was the 'D' they remember who had escaped from prison.

The young guard standing by them was stunned too. He had spent five years working in the Thorn Flower Prison. He had heard about the kid who had escaped from the prison, but he wasn't working in the first layer at that time, so he didn't recognize

Dudian. He didn't think that such a person would appear here again and even stand in front of him!

He has escaped from the prison and now dares to come back?

Moreover, he wants to bail out other prisoners?

The young guard was startled and stood frozen on the spot.

Dudian smiled: "Has there been anyone else who broke out of this jail after me?"

The blonde youth looked at the appearance of Dudian which was lit with weak oil lamps. There was a difference compared to the original skinny youth, but the eyes and lips were the same. Especially the tone and smile were exact. He seized the pillars of the cage in excitement: "Of course not! You are the most ruthless person I have ever seen in this life!"

The people in other cells also reacted.

"D you came back! Bail us out too!"

"D we are old acquaintances! Bail me out too!"

There were at least few in other cells which were begging him.

Dudian slightly raised his hand, and everyone went silent. They looked forward to him and didn't dare to cause unhappiness.

"This time I can only bail out five prisoners." Dudian looked calm: "Bailing out a prisoner is not an easy task. I have to ask a noble family to vouch for the prisoners. Also, it costs me fifty thousand gold coins."

"Fifty thousand gold coins?"

The prisoners in the cells were shocked. The majority of the prisoners except a few haven't seen tens of thousands of gold coins. The Piggy who was originally a cell mate of Dudian's was once a wealthy businessman. However, his assets were only close to twenty thousand gold coins. Fifty thousand gold coins for them was an astronomical figure.

"D you will do well in the future ..."

"D ..."

Some of them still kept begging Dudian. Although they would never be able to come up with that amount of gold coins to repay Dudian but they still kept pleading as they didn't want to lose hope.

Dudian raised his hand and interrupted the prisoners who kept pleading: "Gentlemen the quota for bail has already been set. Naturally, I will bail you out in the future if I can raise money."

The young guard's eyelids twitched as his heart bled. Fifty thousand gold coins to bail one of these garbages!?

Dudian looked at him, and the young guard immediately reacted. He took out the key and opened the cell. He looked at the blonde youth: "Come out! Sire Dean has bailed you out! Show him loyalty."

The blonde youth went out of the cage. He had heard young guard's words and couldn't help but look at the boy in front of him. He clenched his fists as he deeply took a breath: "D, you let me regain my freedom. I know that you have bailed me out not because of my face or past friendship. But you need me, but you can rest assured that I will plead my allegiance to you forever!"

Dudian indifferently replied: "I believe you!"

The blond youth's head was down.

Dudian turned away and walked through the promenade. The blonde youth followed after him. The young guard quickly locked the cell and caught up with Dudian. He said in a ridiculing tone: "The second one is number 36." He trotted over a cage and spoke up: "Thirty-six get up. Someone is here to bail you out!"

A tall, burly man sat on a mattress in a dark cell. He looked at the boy who walked and stood in front of the cage. He was shocked the moment he heard the young guard's words. Blood rushed up into his brain. Although he wanted to request bail from Dudian, but

didn’t go for the chance because of his pride. He didn’t expect that he would be one of the five that would be bailed out!

Chapter 267

“Scar!” Jin was surprised as he heard the young guard’s words. He looked at the burly man inside the cell. There were few people who Jin was in contact in prison and, the Scar was one of them.

Dudian stood in front of the cell and looked at the burly man. He smiled: “Scar, come out.”

“D ...” Scar looked at him as there was a complex expression on his face. This sudden bailout was a big surprise to him. He felt as if he was dreaming. He recovered and stepped out of the cage. He looked at Dudian: “Thank you...”

Dudian smiled: “You have to be psychologically prepared as there will be lots of hard work to do.”

There were no expressions on his face as Scar said: “I’m willing to do anything as long as I can leave this damned place.”

Dudian nodded: “If you follow me you will bleed, but there won’t be tears.”

Scar deeply looked at him: “I believe you!”

Dudian smiled: “Now we have to and get the other three partners. They are in the other layers.”

“The other sections?” Jin and Scar were confused.

The prison stirred up as they heard Dudian’s words.

“Don’t go!”

“D, take me! I beg you bail me out! I will do whatever you want me to do!”

“D …”

Dudian step by step went towards the exit. Suddenly he thought of something, and his eyes swept over the cells. He looked back at Scar: “A young person should be sent to here a few months ago. He should have claimed to be a noble from Milan family. Was there someone like that?”

“A few months ago?” Scar thought of his words and nodded: “There was such a person. He yelled the word ‘Milan’ right and left when he came in. The man was sent to Piggy’s cell. He was bailed out, but until that time Piggy roughed him up few times. D, was that person your friend?”

Dudian slowly replied: “An enemy.”

Jin immediately replied: “If we knew that he was your enemy we would have asked Piggy to make sure that he wouldn’t stay sane for long. His family would bail out only his body but not his soul. ”

The prisoners were begging and pleading. Dudian spoke out in a loud voice: “I have said early that the quota is limited. In the future, I’ll take into account your performance in prison. If you have something that I appreciate, then I will give you the priority.”

The young guard led the way.

Scar and Jin followed behind Dudian as they left the first section and headed for the second section of the prison.

After a few moments, they came to the second floor of the prison. Four young guards were sitting in a small room outside the section. They were drinking and playing cards. They stood up the moment they saw Dudian, Scar, and Jin. They were alarmed as they saw Jin and Scar who were wearing a prison uniform. One of them ran towards the side in a hurry to seize the bell.

The young guard who was leading the way said in a hurry: “Stop! This is Mr. Dean, and those two are the prisoners bailed out by him.”

One of the four guards looked at him: “What about proof?”

The guard turned to Dudian: “Mr. Dean ...”

Dudian handed out the envelope: “Are you worried that I will mix it up with prisoners?”

The guard opened the envelope and swept through the content. He gave the envelope back to Dudian: “Alright, follow me.” Afterward, he took out the key and opened the heavy iron gate.

“Mr. Dean, you follow him.” The young guard who had led them into the second section stopped at the entrance.

Dudian nodded and followed the brown haired guard into the dark passage. The place was ten meters long, and at the end of it, there was another iron door. There were two knights of the magistrate in front of it.

Dudian looked at them. The jail was part of the military, but it seemed that there was some cooperation with the magistrate.

“Open the door.” The guard said.

Both of the knights looked at Dudian, Scar, and Jin. They slightly frowned but didn’t say anything. They opened the iron gate, and crazy laughter and cheers echoed from inside.

“What are these crazy men doing?” The guard’s face sank. He took out the baton from his waist.

Dudian, Jin, and Scar were curious. All three of them had stayed in prison for several years but never came to the second section of the prison.

The structure of the prison was totally different from the first

layer. The corridor was not straight but seemed like a circular hall. The cells were close to the wall. Each cage was separated from the other by a few meters.

Bang! Bang! Sounds mixed with laughter came out from the cages from their right.

Dudian's eyes narrowed as he looked at the dark cells. There were two people. On was as tall as two meters and had a sturdy constitution. The other had long hair which lost all over his body. He seemed like a woman. Both of them kept hitting their heads onto the pillars of the cell.

Dudian's eyes lit up as he looked around toward their direction.

The guard saw both prisoners hit the cage, so he roared: "Bastards! Immediately stop! Do you want to die?"

"Yo, yo!"

"Look at this fool who has brought up three newcomers!"

"Ha ha ha ..."

The young guard waved the baton and hit the cage. He roared: "Stop right now! If you don't stop, there will be three pins per person!"

Both of them stopped the moment they heard the word ‘three-pins’. The sturdy man whose head was full of blood grinned from ear to ear: “Little devil I got hundred and thirty-seven. You lose!”

“Alright!” The man with very long hair spoke in a hoarse voice: “If this fool didn’t stop us, we would see who would be laughing in the end.”

“A loss is a loss, ha ha … …” The burly man spoke.

The guard’s face was ugly, but he didn’t continue to care about those two. He turned back to Dudian: “which one do you want to bail out?”

Dudian pointed towards the deepest corner and said: “Number 7.”

The guard’s voice changed: “Give me the letter so that I can check the file again.”

Dudian saw the expression of extreme fear on guard’s face. He smiled and handed out the document to him: “Rest assured! I’m here, so he won’t dare to hurt you.”

The guard was embarrassed. He quietly looked at the document to confirm the ‘number’ of the prisoner. His face was gloomy as he said: “Come with me.” They walked straight towards the end of the section.

The sounds of laughter and chatting immediately quietened. Someone cried out loud: “Bail? Did I just heard ‘bail’?”

“It is bail!”

“Is seven getting bailed out?”

“Damn the kid is definitely a noble. I would show him what a noble is if he was given to me!”

Chapter 268

Dudian didn't care about the noise. He walked towards the deepest cage. Inside there was a fragile old man. He was leaning against the wall. His thick prison uniform was washed spotless, and he was not unkempt like other prisoners. The old man didn't participate in the laughter and cheering and had quietly leaned against the wall as if isolating himself from the crowd.

Dudian knew that the old man had been looking at him since the moment he had entered the place.

"No. 7, someone is here to bail you out." The young guard came and stood about two meters away from the cell.

The old man didn't reply to him but indifferently looked at Dudian: "Do you know me?"

Dudian smiled: "It is our first meeting. My name is Dean. Frankly, my purpose to bail you out is for you to work for me. I need someone with good management ability and experience."

The old man looked back at Dudian: "You should know that my master didn't have a good end if you had really investigated my past."

Dudian smiled: "They were just ordinary mortals."

“Oh.” The old man’s lips curled as he sneered: “Kid, you seem to be very confident.”

Dudian stared deeply into his eyes: “I have to live up to your expectations.”

“Will you?” The old man slowly stood up and patted the dust off his body, said: “Would you be able to sleep well at night if I work for you?”

Dudian quietly replied: “I will protect you and not suspect you. But I hope that you won’t let me down.”

The old man looked up and down at Dudian as he inspected him: “You aren’t big, but your courage isn’t small. The power behind you should be great so that you can come over to bail me out. I cannot control who you trust. But I can do a thing or two for me to prove my loyalty.”

Dudian smiled: “Come out.”

The old man smiled: “I have something to deal with before I go out.” Afterward, he looked at the young guard with brown hair: “I had said that wait for me as when I come out, I won’t let any of you stay alive.”

The guard shouted in anger: “Do you dare?!”

“My hands are already stained with more blood than there is

flowing in your body. Why wouldn't I dare?" The old man sneered.

The guard's body overflowed with cold sweat. He took two steps back and looked at Dudian: "H-e-He is a madman. Do you still want to bail him out? You can change your choice."

Dudian patted his shoulder and said to the old man: "You are a wise man and you should be aware of how a wise man acts."

The old man looked at him and nodded: "Alright."

"Are you going to open the door?" Dudian looked at the young guard.

The young guard's face was pale as he looked at the old man. He bit his teeth as he opened the cell's door.

The old man indifferently smiled as the guard opened the door. He looked at the young guard and softly said: "Take care."

The guard's face was ugly: "You crazy old man! If you dare to break the law and come back, then it won't be so simple the next time."

The old man laughed. He came over and stood in front of Dudian as he deeply looked into his eyes. He said: "Was your arm injured? Kid, it seems you are quite a troublemaker."

Dudian looked at him and didn't say anything. He turned towards the young guard: "Take me to the bottom layer."

The guard locked the cage and led them.

The old man saw that Dudian didn't care much about his existence. After Dudian had turned around, he sneered in ridicule. The old man looked back at Jin and Scar: "You have also bailed out two guys from the first layer. A lot of resources...A lot... Although they are not up to standard but at least can be useful for small jobs."

Scar and Jin looked at each other. Scar looked back at the old man: "Old man, what do you mean?"

The old man stared into Scar's eyes: "I didn't know that IQ of the people from the first floor is this low. Do you need a translation?"

Scar's face changed as he clenched his fists: "The moment you try to misuse the chance given by Dean then you are a dead man!"

"Is that so?" The old man laughed: "That is what I wanted to say."

Dudian stopped and looked back at them. He said to the old man: "Do you want to test my tolerance?"

The old man looked back at him: "I just want to make a suggestion or two. You have bailed me out. Don't you want me to

give you advice?”

“I believe you are well aware of and clear about what advice I need.” Dudian indifferently glanced at him. He turned back and continued to walk forward.

The old man’s face changed as there was a flash of coldness deep in his eyes.

Everyone followed behind the brown haired guard. They walked along the steps to the bottom of the prison. After several check-ups, they ultimately reached the bottom level.

Dudian felt that the air at the bottom was much colder in comparison to above sections. The light was weak, and few lamps were in the corridor. It was a ghostly quiet place. The cells were separated from each other by concrete walls.

“Please, this way.” The guard said in a trembling tone. Dudian felt from the guard’s subconscious little moves that he was afraid and full of dread as he was leading the way in front.

This section of the prison was totally different to the second layer. It was extremely quiet. It was so silent that the footsteps of the crowd echoed out.

Dudian looked around the place. Each cell had thick steel cast plates as a door. The pillars were bigger in comparison to the first and second layers of the prison. Dudian saw a face revealed from

behind one of the cell doors. The man had an extremely hideous and twisted face. There were lots of scars, and only one of his eyes was working. The man was looking at him.

Dudian suddenly stretched out his tongue.

Bang!

The man attacked the steel door. The dust burst out of the wall because of the shock from the steel door.

The guard was scared. He pulled out his baton in a hurry and looked at the cell. He was relieved when he saw the iron gate was safe.

The man didn’t speak but stared at them.

The guard felt uncomfortable as the devil stared at him. He turned towards Dudian in a hurry and said: “Mr. Dean let’s continue.”

Dudian nodded and winked at the prisoner. He thought secretly in his heart about the condition of the senior hunters. Even though they have gone through hellish torture in prison but they were still strong enough to show such a reaction.

Dudian couldn’t help but look forward to the two prisoners he was going to bail out.

After a moment, the guard stopped in front of a cell and said: “Number 3, stand up. Someone is here to bail you out!”

The sound of an iron chain being dragged resounded. A person with scattered hair all over his face stood in front of the iron cage. His sharp eyes lit up as he swept over the people. He looked at Dudian, old man, Scar and Jin: “Bail me out? Who?” His voice was husky.

Dudian replied: “My name is Dean. I only ask for loyalty. Would you be able to comply?”

“You?” The man’s eyes lit up as he looked at Dudian: “Alright, I will.”

Dudian smiled: “I hope you will comply with your promise in the future.”

“I will, I promise,” the man replied.

Chapter 269

Dudian looked through the door and said to the guard: “Open the door.”

The guard hesitated, but still pulled out a key and unlocked the door. The heavy iron gate opened, and the crowd saw the appearance of the person. He was about one meter eighty centimeters tall. His upper body was naked, and his muscles were visible. There were deep knife scars around his chest. Both sides of the scapula were punctured with spikes. But the spikes used on him were totally different to the ones used in Dudian, old man, Scar, and Jin. These spikes resembled claws of an animal. Moreover, iron chains were barbed around the body over the spikes. Also, two sturdy chains were fixed onto the tips of the spikes and fixed on the rear wall. The chain sounds that had resounded earlier on were the result of this. In short pulling out the spikes was impossible.

“Unlock them!” The brawny man grinned from ear to ear. There were two incomplete rows of yellow teeth shown as the man smiled.

The guard looked rather confused. He pulled out the keys and carefully went into the cell. He unlocked the chains, and with double ‘bang’ sound both chains fell to the ground.

The brawny man licked his lips. Afterward, he twisted his neck, and the sound of cracking bones echoed out. He slowly went out of his cell and looked at Dudian: “Kiddo, let’s get out of here. Uncle

doesn’t want to stay here anymore.”

“But you will have to wait a little longer.” Dudian looked at the guard: “I’ll have to trouble you to help me out to take the number 1.”

Number 3’s face slightly changed as he heard Dudian’s words: “Number 1? Do you have to bail out number 1?”

“Do you have a problem with that?” Dudian looked back at him.

The brawny man was stifled. He squinted his eyes and laughed: “Of course not. Whatever you say.”

Dudian recovered his eyes and looked at the prison guard.

The guard locked the prison cell and walked in front of the crowd. After a corner, they came to a dead end. There were two cells, and he went to the one on the left: “Number one, there is someone to bail you out. Get ready.”

There was no response from the cell.

The guard went to the side of the aisle and picked up an oil lamp. He went to the steel column and checked the inside of the cell. He was relieved after he saw that there was nothing strange inside the cell. He put back the oil lamp into its original place and opened the iron gate.

Dudian saw that guard was acting very strange. He looked through the darkness. His vision was not affected, so he clearly saw that there was a cross at the end of the cage. Many chains and spikes had locked a slender, slim figure to the cross. Her hair was very long and hung down to her knees. Most of the clothes on her body were torn, and large pieces of skin were revealed. There were bloodstains even on her knees.

Although Dudian had expected that number one would have extraordinary ‘care’ but he didn’t expect such cruel treatment. Her whole body was pierced with spikes. She couldn’t move or lay down.

It was no wonder that the guard dared to open the door calmly after he didn’t get a response from inside.

The guard was the first to enter after the heavy iron gate was opened. Dudian and the others followed after him. The old man picked the oil lamp from the wall. The crucified figure suddenly attracted the crowd’s attention.

“Number one, number one!” The guard came up to stop three meters away from the cross and shouted.

The figure pierced to the cross slowly raised her head. There was a faint smile on her face as her hair scattered away. The pair of dark eyes gazed at them. Dudian felt a sense of inexplicable danger. He hadn’t felt such a feeling even from other senior hunters. However, he was happy. The situation was much better than his

expectations.

“Someone is here to bail you out.” The guard whispered.

She slowly said: “Unlock.”

The guard hesitated: “I will but don’t be foolish. Mr. has come to bail you out if you do something else there would be no one to bail you out ever.”

The woman didn’t respond instead looked at Dudian’s body. It was obvious from the clothing that Dudian was not a prisoner.

Dudian also looked back at her. He was able to clearly see the pair of black and white eyes full of coldness and hostility staring at himself.

The guard stepped forward to unlock the chains that were hanging over the spikes. The spikes were all over her body. They were pierced through her hands, scapula, abdomen and so on. It was hard to imagine what kind of pain had to be endured when the spikes were pierced into her body. The unbearable part was that she had to sustain and maintain such a position for a long-term. How did she eat, sleep and excrete!?

Scar and Jin were shocked as they stood behind the crowd. They thought that the spikes puncture onto their scapula were the most dangerous and despicable means of the prison guards. They didn’t expect that there were tortures which were tens or hundred times

worse than they had gone through.

“Hello, my name is Dean.” Dudian told her: “I know that you have quite a few enemies. I can help you with that. ”

Crash!

The chains were unlocked from the cross.

The woman’s body was released and restored action. But the spikes were still all around her body. Her eyes focused on Dudian: “When?” Her voice was eerily beautiful.

Dudian replied: “Not yet, but in the future.”

The woman retreated her cold eyes and looked down.

Dudian didn’t say anything as he turned around and left the cell. Minutes later everyone came out to the hall outside. The guards sitting in the hall were back at their original seats after the butler Peter had left. They were eating and playing cards, but the topic has changed and focused on Dudian. They were talking about the recent fame of the military crossbow.

The civilians rarely would have heard about the military crossbow, but the guards belonged to the military system. Everyone had seen the article in the military newspaper about the military crossbow and were aware of its existence.

The guards looked at Dudian the moment they entered the hall. Their faces changed the moment they saw the old man, brawny man, and the woman. They were aware of the sins committed by them. They were bound to fall into the darkness after they went out.

The warm sun shined onto the crowd. Scar and Jin took a deep breath. Their eyes were full of excitement. They wouldn't even dream of seeing the sun after a lapse of several years. It was a scene which was forgotten in the depth of their memory.

The old man, number seven, was silent and low-key.

Brawny man, number three, looked around and seemed to be thinking about something.

The girl, number one, was walking at the end. Her face was covered with long hair, and nobody knew what she was planning.

As they passed through the long aisle, they saw weird fishes leaping out through the waters of the lake.

Number three whistled a few times as he saw the underwater monsters.

Everyone came towards the carriage near the lake. All of them looked at the banner stuck on top of the carriage. There was a trace of surprise on number 7's face: "The Ryan family?"

Dudian looked back at him: “Your memory is quite good.”

The old man frowned: “If I am not mistaken Ryan family is a declining noble family which belongs to the Mellon Consortium. They are tier-three minority shareholders of the consortium. If the power behind you is Mellon consortium then why has the Ryan family sent a carriage?”

Dudian indifferently replied: “Mellon Consortium is our enemy.” He set a foot into the carriage. He had prepared a large carriage for this trip which could accommodate five people in the compartment.

Scar and Jin took the lead, but Dudian said to both of them: “Both of you go to the front and accompany the coachman.”

Scar and Jin were startled but suddenly thought of something and Scar said: “I should stay here.”

Dudian shook his head: “Go ahead and do what I tell you.”

Both of them didn’t reply and got on from the other side. They squeezed themselves on the coachman’s seat.

The old man smiled as he saw the scene. He grabbed the handle of the door and got into the compartment. He sat on the side opposite to Dudian. The number three sneered and got into the carriage. He sat opposite to old man close to Dudian.

Number one also got into the carriage. She shared the chair with number seven. The smile on number three's face faded away.

Chapter 270

“Let’s go!” Dudian ordered the coachman.

The carriage moved slowly. The road was bumpy, so the carriage slightly shook the people sitting inside the carriage.

The carriage followed the trail along the plains and came to the outskirts of the Thorn Flower Prison. There was a team of knights of the magistrate patrolling the road. Once in a while, the guards who squatted and were hidden in the grasses in the jungle were seen.

After the jungle, the carriage went through the desolate zone.

Dudian was silent all the way: “We are fully out of the prison’s area of protection. If you want to hijack me or leave, then you can act now.”

The quiet atmosphere in the carriage was broken as the number seven looked at Dudian: “Little brother, you don’t seem nervous as you are together with five notorious criminals. You can bail us out so it means that you have the capital to do so. Curing our injuries won’t be a problem as you would be able to get ‘God’s blessing’ from the black market. By the way, the injury to your left arm. Was it caused by a monster?”

Number 3’s eyes narrowed and focused on Dudian as he heard the old man’s words.

Dudian smiled: “Why should I be tense? I used to be a member of the Thorn Flower Prison, though I was acquitted.”

“You were?” No. 7 was surprised. Moreover, the old man seemed to be interested in the full story: “It seems the power behind little brother is quite big. If you were imprisoned even with such a big background, then the enemy has a much larger background. Is it one of the six consortiums?”

Dudian smiled: “The word ‘one’ is extra there.”

Both the old man and number 3 were confused.

Number one’s face was covered with hair, and she was sedentary like a stone.

The old man quickly reacted: “Little brother, do you represent the military? I haven’t heard of any force who could be enemies with six consortiums.”

Dudian lightly replied: “You haven’t heard because I hadn’t created it.”

“You? Created?” The old man laughed out: “Little brother, I know that your age is small, but it is not a good habit to brag. You have bailed us out, and I would be glad to help you with your shady business. But if your enemy is all the six consortia then I think it’s better to send me back to prison. I would rather spend my last days

in peace.”

Dudian shrugged his shoulders: “If it’s your decision, then I can send you back now.”

The old man smiled: “I don’t want to go back now. Look at me, I’m a dragon eagle. Why would I return to the cage? ”

Dudian faintly glanced at him: “In front of me, there is a dragon eagle but without any wings. If you want to get them, you have to step onto the head of the camel!

Old man narrowed his eyes: “I would like to try.”

Dudian indifferently replied: “Please, go on.”

The old man squinted his eyes, but the next moment number one, who was silent said to Dudian: “If you can help me return to the inner wall then I can help you.”

The old man’s face changed as his eyes were full of surprise. He noted that the latter said ‘return to’ rather than ‘into’. It meant that number one originated from the inner wall!

Number three’s face also changed and turned gloomy.

Dudian quietly looked back at her: “The only way for you to go back to the inner wall is to listen to my words. If you try anything

funny then don’t even think about the inner wall, your movement in the residential district would be way too hard.”

Number one stared at him as she said word by word: “I am afraid you cannot go back.”

Dudian sighed but didn’t reply.

The old man’s face relaxed the moment he heard number 1’s words. He sneered as he looked at Dudian: “Do you think the three of us will let you get back? Now, obediently confess to us who your patron is. Even if you don’t say anything we will inquire from the coachman. If not, we will find the Ryan family! I will count to five, if you don’t reply by then you will be taking a big risk!”

“Five…”

Dudian looked back at him: “I think from now on you will be nicknamed ‘old crow’. I didn’t think that you were such a deep thinker.”

The old man’s eyes were gloomy: “It seems you don’t want the opportunity that we gave you!” Afterward he looked at number 3: “I am old, so I may not be able to cope with this kid. I will rely on you.”

Number three looked at him and grinned: “Why should I help you?”

The old man replied: “If that is the case then we will accompany the kid together and return to his headquarters. I’m too old anyway, so it is not a big problem to pledge allegiance to a kid. I don’t want to be tossed around!”

Number three sneered as he tapped the chair: “Old man be careful of your tone when you talk to me. I don’t have that ‘respect the old’ mentality! ”

The number three slightly stifled.

Number three looked at Dudian: “Imp! I endured you in the prison. But you have to know that when I was hunting outside the wall right and left you were still in your mother’s stomach. I will give you two seconds to consider and tell us the patron behind you. After we enter through the border fortress you will be listening to us. If something that I want doesn’t happen, the first to die will be you!”

Dudian faint smiled: “IF that was the case, then when I was born your grandfather wasn’t even a drop of liquid.”

“You are seeking death!” Number three punched out a fist towards Dudian’s cheek.

The smile on Dudian’s face disappeared as his right hand quickly stretched out as he avoided number 3’s punch and hit him in his armpit.

Bang! The pain from the attack to his armpit made number 3's growl. However, Dudian didn't stop, but caught on number three's clothing and pulled his upper body. Although Dudian didn't completely pull over number three's body as his body stabilized, he let go and punched number 3's face.

Number three caught the edge of the carriage with his hand and dragged his body back to open the distance. He looked back at Dudian in shock.

The old man didn't expect that situation would be reversed. The boy had skill and strength!

Dudian sat back in his chair and didn't move. Although number 3 was a senior hunter, but he was detained in Thorn Flower Prison, and as a result, his constitution was not in a top condition. There were spikes on his scapula which had increased the pain from Dudian's punch. Moreover, he was caught by surprise. If they fought head on then it would be hard for Dudian to win.

Moreover, if there was no injury on number 3's body, then Dudian wouldn't be his opponent.

Even then Dudian would have other means to suppress him.

"This is the first offense." Dudian indifferently glanced at the old man and number three: "You have two opportunities to try, but after the third try there won't be any chances. I believe you will kneel in front of me to beg and cry."

Old man's face turned ugly as he heard Dudian's confident tone. He looked at Dudian then looked back at his knees.

"Were you the one who escaped from prison?" Number one suddenly asked.

Dudian looked at her: "Have you heard of me?"

Number one glanced at him, but didn't reply. She turned her head.

The old man and number 3 were stunned. They looked at Dudian in awe. They had long heard the chatter of guards that one of the prison mates had jail-broken. Moreover, they would never think that the person who was able to escape from the Thorn Flower Prison was sitting in front of them.

Their hearts turned cold. Back when Dudian had told them that he was a prisoner too they had thought that Dudian was bailed out. But he had broken out of the jail!

Chapter 271

Dudian's eyes swept over the old man and number 3. He indifferently said:" Nicholas Donald. This year he is going to be fifty-eight years old. He has been imprisoned for nine years. His father was an arrogant noble's butler and died early because of kidney problems. At seventeen years old Nicholas began to manage the noble family's affairs and assets. At the age of twenty-three, he had secretly transferred all the property of the aristocrat's family and resigned. He was sued by the noble family, and his assets were taken back by the magistrate. At twenty-five years of age, he was employed by a wealthy businessman. In about three years all the industries under that businessmen were transferred to his name. In a day he changed from a servant to a well-known and rich businessman. But he didn't have a good reputation in the commercial district."

"You were always concerned about the hostility and exclusion of aristocracy, so you tried to buy your identity with gold. You were successful in joining a noble family but was betrayed by the son and daughter-in-law of the family. You were detained by the magistrate and sent to Thorn Flower Prison. Life imprisonment!"

The old man's face slightly changed and he said in a gloomy tone: "You were quite careful in your investigation."

Dudian turned towards the brawny man. He looked at number 3: "Sergei... Thirty-two years old. You have been imprisoned for seven years. You were a senior hunter under the command of Krylov consortium. You had graduated from Hunter College with brilliant records. During the 16 years of service to Krylov

consortium, you had brought them good wealth. You were able to kill seventeen high-level monsters. You have assimilated the magic marks from a rare beast which is ranked in top ten. The ‘Steel dragon.’ You were a knight as a hunter and had a bright future. However because of repeated offenses against the first beauty of Krylov consortium, Granita. You were arrested, charged with ‘attempted rape’ and were thrown in the Thorn Flower Prison. Term: 30 years of imprisonment.”

Number 3 looked back at him but didn’t speak.

Dudian indifferently continued: “I have spent one hundred thousand gold coins to bail out both of you. Now that you are bailed out, I’ll become an enemy with Krylov consortium because of ‘conspiracy’. You guys need to make up for that price. ”

Nicholas sneered: “You know my past. In addition to falsification of accounts, I haven’t done anything. Moreover, even before I was in jail, I wasn’t able to earn hundred thousand gold coins. Now I’m old and don’t have the ability even if I tried… ”

Dudian indifferently replied: “That is not a matter that you should be worried about. You just have to listen to my orders and complete the tasks on time.”

Sergei looked at the girl who was sitting opposite to him. He turned towards Dudian: “She…The inner wall… What did she do?”

Dudian lightly said: “She was a member of the organization which caught and imprisoned you.”

Sergei's pupils shrank: "Was she a disciplinary knight?"

Nicholas was startled as the only organization that he was afraid was the magistrate. Everyone within the wall was afraid of them. He didn't expect that the woman sitting on his side was a former member.

Number 1's hair shook, but her expression didn't change.

Dudian slowly said: "Gwyneth. This year she is going to be seventeen years old..."

"Seventeen?"

"Seventeen!"

Sergei and Nicholas cried out in surprise before Dudian was able to finish. They would never imagine that the slim figure sitting close to them would be a 17-year-old girl!

Dudian paused for a moment then continued: "She was honored with a Sun Medal by the magistrate. She was hunting down senior-level criminal hunters. There is no information about her parents, birthplace or family. She has been imprisoned for three years on charge of 'murdering the nobility'"

Sergei as a senior hunter was informed about the disciplinary

knights of the magistrate. They were terrorizing existences that were seasoned in imprisoning hunters. Normally, silver medal disciplinary knights would hunt after senior level hunters. Even for a seasoned senior hunter, it would be very difficult to escape silver disciplinary knights if they encountered them. The golden disciplinary knights were very rare. Escaping away from them was impossible for senior hunters. According to the rumors, they were existences which had passed the limits of human evolution."

However, even such a person was imprisoned.

Moreover, she was so young. Did she begin to practice combat the moment she learned walking?

Dudian looked at Gwyneth and calmly said: "I have investigated the aristocratic family you had a conflict with. The Porter family is still within the inner wall. Their business interests extend to the outer wall area of the commercial district. I can help you if you want to destroy their family, but you must first help me out. If you listen to my orders, then it's not a dream but will become a reality. Also, even if you killed me and escaped you will be caught before you know. Neither magistrate nor nobles would allow an existence of such a level to lurk freely outside.

Gwyneth was silent as a stone sculpture.

Nicholas and Sergei glanced at her but kept silent.

The carriage came to the border fortress. Coachman handed out the clearance letter from the prison, and they smoothly entered

the commercial district.

Dudian looked at the trio: “It seems that your fates are connected to mine. I wish for a happy future cooperation for all of us.”

All three of them bowed their heads and were silent.

Nicholas sighed: “I didn’t expect such an outcome. It seems I am really getting old.”

Dudian smiled in return.

Nicholas shook his head and no longer said anything.

Dudian directly went to his own castle by the riverside. He looked at the others and focused on Nicholas: “You will be my butler from now own. But you should forget about your playful identity from the past or else make sure that I don’t find out anything.” Afterward, he got off the carriage.

Everyone followed him into the castle.

“Before beginning to work with me, you are going to solve your own trouble,” Dudian said.

“What trouble?” Sergei frowned.

Nicholas's eyes lit up: "Do you mean that we have to wash white our identities?"

Dudian nodded: "Yes the eyes of the major consortiums would be staring at me. The information about your bailout will be leaked, so they will use tricks to play you to fight against me. You should be prepared to face the first wave of problems."

Sergei sneered and said in an arrogant tone: "I would like to see who dares to attack us!"

Dudian sternly looked back at him: "The assassination techniques of number 1 and yours won't work. Don't even think about that! "

Sergei frowned as he looked at Gwyneth: "Hey. Did you try to assassinate or killed the noble?"

The wind slightly blew Gwyneth's long hair, but she acted as if she hadn't heard him.

Sergei's face slightly changed but didn't react anymore.

Nicholas stared at Dudian: "We have been detained for too long, and as a result, we are out of touch with the outside world. Moreover, it is impossible to fight against all the six consortiums at the same time. How would we accomplish something like that?"

Dudian indifferently smiled: "I will see your performance first.

Moreover, it's your first day out of the prison. You should go wash and rest for now." Afterward, Dudian looked at Scar and Jin: "You guys should rest too. I'll help you to pull out the spikes."

Sergei frowned: "What about me?"

"You and number one should keep them for now. It is best not to pull them out without authorization from me. Just to let you know, I don't mind nailing them again."

Sergei's heart sank. He knew that Dudian was afraid of his strength, so he was going to keep spikes to contain them. After some time when Dudian would come up with new methods, then he would make sure that the spikes are pulled out.

Same night.

Dudian had hired a cook to make some dishes. Moreover, he had brought the youngest two maids from the Ryan family to serve them. Both of them were standing by the table. Dudian took the lead and sat in the top seat. He could sense through smell that Nicholas and Sergei were together while Gwyneth and others were in other parts of the castle. They were rushing over.

Jin and Scar were the first to join him at the table. Jin was a Knight of Light, but because of his family's mistakes he was exempt from the duty and imprisoned for the atonement of his sins. Scar was a primary hunter. The cause of his imprisonment was regrettable. One time when he had returned to his house from hunting Scar had found an aristocrat from the consortium had

forced and raped his wife and daughter. Under rage, he had killed the noble and was imprisoned for murder.

Fortunately, this family wasn't an influential one. The death of the member of the aristocratic family didn't cause a great sensation, or else Scar would be dead by now.

Both of them came over and sat a bit away from Dudian.

Dudian looked at them but didn't say anything.

After a moment, Nicholas and Sergei also joined them. After wearing new clothes their looks and temperament were totally different to their previous looks. Nicholas was tortured and became skinny, but his gaze was like that of a hawk's and seemed like a quite capable person. He was wearing a butler's dress. Sergei was wearing a guard's uniform. The strong muscle lines of his body were highlighted even after years of torture and 'diet' of the prison. The body muscles haven't shrunk and which were the results of 'Steel dragon's magic marks.

Chapter 272

Nicholas sat down a seat away from Dudian. Sergei's size was huge, so he sat opposite to Nicholas and was able to cover the space of two seats. He looked at the table full of dishes. He was drunk in excitement and reached out to grab roasted chicken in front of him.

Whoosh!

A silver knife shot and nailed onto table half an inch from his hand.

Sergei's face changed as he turned and looked at Dudian in anger: "What are you doing?"

Dudian indifferently said: "This house has its own rules. If you are eating on the table, then you must comply with my rules. Additionally, it is the second time I forgive you." Afterward, he looked at the maid: "Give me another knife."

"Yes." The maid replied in a quiet tone.

Sergei recovered his palm and said: "You have got quite some rules. It is best for you to write them down and give them to me. I am a rough man. I don't want to destroy something else when I break the rules incidentally."

Dudian indifferently replied: “It is actually very simple. I have only one rule. Be ‘good’. You only need to comply with this point.”

Sergei frowned but didn’t continue to argue.

At this time the sound of footsteps echoed from upstairs. A girl slowly walked down the stairs. A trace of surprise flashed in Dudian’s eyes as he looked up. The girl was as beautiful as an elf. She had a very pale complexion which made her look somewhat weak. She had a pair of silver-like eyebrows with dark black eyes. Her pupils were like deep pools which had nothing but coldness and death. Her body was wrapped in a lose red robe. Her long hair was tied at the back of her head and waist. She looked like a charming dark spirit.

Sergei, Nicholas, Scar, Jin and others looked up too. Sergei was especially attracted to her. After being imprisoned for several years, even her waist hadn’t gained a bit of fat. Sergei’s fingers tightened as he grabbed the silver knife. He wasn’t aware that this little action was seen by the Nicholas who was sitting opposite to him.

The girl was Gwyneth. She silently went down the stairs and sat near Nicholas but close to Dudian. There was no gratitude on her face as she looked at Dudian: “I am hungry.”

Dudian laughed: “Everyone is here so let’s eat.”

Nicholas laughed: “Aren’t we going to pray before eating?”

Nicholas was clutching the knife and was ready to plug it into the wild pork but still controlled his emotions and looked at Dudian.

Dudian said: “I assume none of us believes in God.” Dudian picked up the knife brought by the maid and took a piece of steak from the table. He began to slowly eat: “Sergei, tomorrow get up early on as we will go after some work. Nicholas, the castle is under your care. If someone comes over to find me, then refuse them by telling them that I’m busy with work. Remember, don’t reveal my whereabouts.”

Nicholas glanced at him and nodded: “I know.”

Sergei talked as he bit onto the leg of chicken: “Where is the workplace?”

“You will know when we get there.”

Gwyneth cut the foie gras on her plate and asked: “What about me?”

Dudian looked at her: “Your task is very simple. There are ten pots behind the yard. Help me and take care of them. Don’t let them whither.”

Gwyneth’s brows wrinkled and stared back at him. Afterward, she bowed her head and kept eating the foie gras.

Scar and Jin looked at Dudian: “What about us?”

“The spikes have just been pulled out. So recuperate for now. ” Dudian didn’t want to overwork them.

After dinner, everyone returned to their assigned rooms.

The next morning when the sun was raising Dudian got up on time. However, the maid went to wake up Sergei who was still sleeping. Nicholas made sure that the carriage was ready to leave the castle at any given time.

There was a trace of coldness in Nicholas’s eyes as he looked at the back of the carriage which gradually went away. He turned back to the castle and carefully checked the two young maids. He confirmed that they were working on their respective jobs and didn’t have any extraordinary power. He went to the second floor and deliberately made the footsteps heavier so that everyone would think he is going to his own room. As he approached the door of his room, he bent over and took off his shoes. He was only wearing his socks as he swiftly went over the carpet. The figure flew through the corridor and reached the room where Dudian slept.

He took out a handkerchief from his pocket and grabbed the handle of the door. He gently twisted and found that the door was not locked. After a little pull, the door was opened. He looked inside and was surprised to find another shadow standing by the desk in the room. His eyes were looking at the eyes of the other. The latter was Gwyneth.

Nicholas's heart which was tightened moments ago filled with relief. He quietly came in and locked the door: "It seems our purpose is the same."

There was no slightest emotion in Gwyneth's eyes. She indifferently looked at him and didn't reply.

Nicholas coughed: "Are you looking for the bail documents? Did you find them?"

Gwyneth looked back at him and replied after a moment: "I just came in."

Nicholas smiled: "We will find them. But try not to leave any smell or fingerprints. The power behind the guy is not small, and we have to prevent any clues that will lead back towards us."

Gwyneth was silent.

Nicholas used her silence as a confirmation. He came to the room and looked around. He opened the wardrobe and other places. After a moment at the bottom of the wardrobe, he found an unregular place after knocking for few times. He took away the clothes and saw that there was a small gap. He split it open and found a secret drawer.

He spoke in a hurry: "Found it."

Gwyneth came over in a hurry.

Nicholas saw that there was a keyhole. He reached into his pocket and took out a small iron needle. He put it inside the keyhole and began to toggle. Soon the drawer loosened. There was a trace of smile and happiness on his face. He took out the drawer but found only papers in the drawer. There were sketches and models with weird patterns but no documents that he was after.

He carefully wiped his hand with a handkerchief. Nicholas frowned as he found that everything was drawings which were very hard for him to understand.

“There is an envelope next to them.” Gwyneth who was silent all the time said.

Nicholas’ eyes fell onto the envelope which was on the side after he heard her words. He has long been aware of this envelope’s existence. But looking at its size and thickness, it was obvious that it didn’t contain bail documents. But now, as he had gone through all other documents there was no meaning if they didn’t check it. He twisted the envelope and found that the veil was not smeared. It was very strange, but he carefully opened the envelope and poured out the note.

“Do not squander my things! Go back to your original tasks.”

Nicholas was startled.

Gwyneth slightly frowned.

Chapter 273

As they left the castle by the river, Dudian ordered the coachman to travel to the closest raw materials bazaar from their location which was called Eastern Market.

“What are we going to do there?” Sergei who was sitting in the compartment looked at Dudian in surprise.

Dudian glanced at him: “What do you think people do at the raw material market?”

“Buy raw materials?” Sergei was displeased and puzzled: “Aren’t you going to take me out for a hunt?”

Dudian looked at him in disdain: “If you go alone without any weapons, how many monsters can you kill?”

Sergei grunted and proudly said: “I can kill hundreds of monster under level 20 in a day even if I’m unarmed. If my body recovered…hm… ”

“Too little.” Dudian shook his head.

Sergei was stunned: “Why?”

“Poor little monsters. What are we going to do with them?”

“…”

It didn’t take long for them to reach the Eastern market. The market was very large. Its size was almost as big as a small town. It had a different section for raw materials. The roads within the market were built with the highest quality so that the carriages could shuttle to different sections without any problems.

It was too early, but a lot of people had gathered at the market and were waiting in front of different chambers of commerce. These associations had discount today. Therefore groups of people were attracted to come early and get everything they could at lower prices.

Dudian commanded the coachman to drive directly to the steel market.

There were sections for coal, minerals and other raw materials. The belonged to the category of new materials created by the ‘Temple of Elements’. ‘Plastic’ was called an artificial raw material which was found a few decades ago. Although the history of steel was lesser than coal and other raw materials but the demand for it was in no way inferior to them. The sales of steel were very large in volume. Every day tens of thousands of units of steel were traded in the market.

Dudian knew that such traffic of trade was caused by the transformation of the living environment within the giant wall. However current smelting technology had its restrictions. The texture of the steel within the market wasn’t up to his demand. The quality was very far away from his standards. He could use it

to create ordinary firearms as well as artillery weapons. The texture and quality of steel were lacking if he wanted to manufacture tanks or armored vehicles.

Therefore Dudian was planning to refine already refined steel to improve the purity. However, for the quality that would satisfy Dudian, he would need an environment where he could use electro-slag remelting. That method required the use of electricity.

Dudian had planned to move up to next stage. However, he wasn't planning to introduce modern motor but had the drawings of an early hand-cranked DC motor.

Dudian got off the carriage and went into the Chamber of Commerce as he was thinking about options. Sergei followed after him. The patron of this Chamber of Commerce which was selling steel was the Huasheng Consortium. It was good that they had good relations with them. Although they had made sure to get the best possible return and benefits from the sales of the military crossbow from Huasheng consortium. But that was a part of a business deal.

"Unfortunately, we don't have a Chamber of Commerce which belongs to the New World consortium ..." Dudian looked at the giant door of the building. He went inside.

"Welcome." The maid at the door said.

Dudian entered the hall of the chamber. The magnificent hall would make people feel small, but he had long been accustomed to

luxurious dresses and spacious halls. He calmly looked around as he scanned the place. Soon a beautiful middle-aged woman quickly approached them. Her eyes swept over Dudian and Sergei who was behind him and was wearing a guard's uniform: "Master, how may I help you?"

"What is the best steel model you have?"

"The best steel is the x30 type." The middle-aged woman replied with a smile.

Dudian nodded. "Alright, I'll book ten tons."

"Ten tons?" The middle-aged woman was surprised: "No problem. Do you know the price?

"Um." Dudian nodded.

The middle-aged woman said: "Please wait in here, I'll be back." She went away in a hurry.

Dudian was quietly waiting in the hall when Sergei asked him: "Why are we buying steel? We should get the best craftsman and that way we will save money. Why are we even here?"

Dudian whispered: "Shut up."

Sergei's eyebrows wrinkled as he overlooked the boy. He grunted

but didn't continue to talk.

"Hey, this man is … …" A sound echoed out.

Dudian looked sideways and saw a teenager girl who was approaching himself. She was dressed in a plain robe, but Dudian saw the medal on her chest. It was a hexagonal shield which belonged to the 'Temple of Elements'. However according to the pattern on the medal she belonged to the gold faction.

"He is!" The girl saw Dudian's face and seemed to know his identity. She pleasantly ran over: "Are you, Dean? The architect?"

Dudian didn't expect to meet an architect from the Temple at this place. Moreover, he didn't expect anyone to recognize him. It seems his fame has increased a lot: "Yes. Hello."

The girl was surprised: "Hi. I'm Eli. I'm honored to meet you!"

Dudian smiled: "You are way too polite."

The girl said in a surprised tone: "If I am not mistaken then you are an architect of wood faction. Why are you here to purchase steel? Is it for your new invention? Is it going to have properties of steel?" There were traces of excitement and worship in her eyes. The 'military crossbow' invented by Dudian belonged to wood elements however it had many properties of gold elements too.

IT is possible for an architect to use different elements on their

own and create a great invention. But it is difficult to come up with the idea. Such an invention was a proof of talent and attainments.

Dudian smiled: “Maybe my new invention will belong to the gold element.”

The girl grinned from ear to ear: “You are joking. If that was the case, then you are a dual element architect who is very powerful!”

Dudian smiled but didn’t say anything.

“Eli, who are you talking to?” A voice resounded from behind.

Eli looked back and saw a young, tall noble dressed in a suit. There was a medal on his chest which showed that he was a member of the Temple too.

The young man approached Eli but looked at Dudian with hostility. If he hadn’t noticed the two-meter high guard (Sergei) standing behind Dudian, he would have said a few bad things.

Eli looked at the youth and said in excitement: “He is Dean. The youngest genius who won the ‘epoch’ medal! We are sure lucky to meet him in here.”

The youth was startled, but his hostility didn’t fade away. He looked at Dudian and then turned to Eli: “Eli, let’s go. I have something that you have to check.” He grabbed her, and they left away.

Eli was at a loss but showed no resistance.

Dudian quietly watched them walk away. Both of them went to a corner, and the youth said in a low voice: “Don’t get too close to that person. He is too dangerous.”

“Dangerous?”

“You don’t understand these things. This man is not just talented but very arrogant too. He had offended quite a few consortiums. Our family would be in a difficult situation if it was known that we have been in contact with him.”

“Ah, are you serious?”

“Yes. Do not get close to him later! Praise to the God of Light, I hope no one saw you with him …”

Dudian’s eyes lit up as he heard the youth’s speech.

Sergei was shocked as he looked at Dudian. At last, he had learned the kid’s identity. It turned out that the kid was an architect in the Temple of Elements. From the appearance of the other two, it seems that the kid’s level was very high. No wonder he came here to buy raw materials.

Chapter 274

After a while, the middle-aged woman returned. Dudian negotiated and paid a deposit. He was given a receipt which included the date when the goods will be ready. They left the Chamber of Commerce and came to the other parts of the Eastern market. Dudian checked the current prices and purification degrees of other raw materials.

At noon.

Dudian and Sergei came to the Ryan family.

Old Fulin saw Dudian enter the dining room. His eyes were attracted by the burly body of Sergei, who was walking behind Dudian: “Welcome. We were about to have a meal. Join us.”

Dudian smiled: “It’s my honor.”

“Who is this?” Old Fulin looked at Sergei.

Dudian smiled: “This is senior hunter Sergei. Formerly, he used to work for Krylov consortium. I had consulted you about bailing him out.”

“Senior Hunter?” The people who were sitting on both sides of the table were surprised. Jake and Sander were a bit excited, but there was a trace of awe and faint fear in their eyes. Even the third-

generation children of the family who weren't involved with the daily business of the family were aware of the value that senior hunters represented.

Lena, who was sitting at the end of the table looked with the same expression as the others. She was curious about Sergei.

Dudian turned towards Sergei: "This is the patriarch of the Ryan family. He was the one who bailed you out so you should show him your gratitude."

The moment Sergei entered the dining room, he quickly glanced around the place. This castle whether it was about external or internal decoration was extremely rough and simple. He saw that people inside the dining room were dressed in simple clothing which meant that the family belonged to a declining aristocracy. Even the guards of the family were only apprentice knights. There was laziness in his eyes as he looked around. How could they have the money to bail Sergei and the rest out when they didn't even have a proper castle?

He suddenly remembered the confident and mysterious style of Dudian when he had conversed with them back then after exiting the Thorn Flower Prison. There was a faint smile on Sergei's face as he looked at Old Fulin: "Hello, old patriarch! I'm Sergei Khach."

There was fear in the old patriarch's heart, but he looked very calm on the surface. Old Fulin slight nodded: "Maid, get a seat for Mr. Sergei."

The middle-aged maid who was standing next to the old patriarch immediately gestured and another young maid brought a thick chair for Sergei.
Normally, Sergei would have long ago sat down and began eating. In the old days, he wouldn't care about the existence of such a noble family. He had seen every type of aristocrats back then when he worked for Krylov consortium. Most of the nobles would try to flatter and please him, which Sergei was accustomed to. However, at the moment, Dudian was standing up, and he also had to hold back and not sit down. But he was unhappy in his heart. He wanted to get out from being under the control of this kid and become completely free.

Dudian went through formal procedures and only afterward sat by the table. He casually chatted about interesting things until the end of the meal.

Afterward, Dudian let Sergei stay down in the hall while he followed Old Fulin upstairs to his study room.

Dudian winked at Old Fulin as they entered the room. Sander who was helping old Fulin left as did all the servants.

"Is there a movement from Mellon consortium's side?" Dudian sensed no other smells around the place, so he casually asked Old Fulin.

Old patriarch shook his head: "No. I have seen the resume of the five you have bailed out. These people are not small time prisoners. They were jailed because of specific crimes and purposes. So Mellon consortium wouldn't bluntly try to

assassinate you anymore. However, the one you had brought today. He seems like a dangerous individual, and you should be careful as well."

Dudian nodded in affirmation: "I will, but I still can't believe that Mellon consortium hasn't made a move in this amount of time. It is a bit unusual. Maybe they have already acted, but we weren't able to find out. We have to find leads as soon as possible to that we can deal with them." Mellon consortium was a thorn for Dudian. He had to pull it out as soon as possible, or it would be an infection which would cost him a lot.

Old Fulin sighed: "We don't have many resources and are slow in investigating. You shouldn't expect much at this point."

Dudian knew that Old Fulin lacked manpower. He pondered a little and said: "Send Barton and the other two to investigate this matter."

"Them?" Old Fulin looked at him: "Can you trust them?"

"You can believe in their reports." Dudian continued: "It's been a long time that they have been here with you. By now they should be accustomed to the lifestyle of the commercial district. They will find ways to accomplish the task."

"It's good to have people who you can trust." Old Fulin said. Dudian hadn't let him down from the first time they began cooperating. So Old Fulin was inclined to the choices made by Dudian.

“You have brought one of them with you today. The other four are in your residence. You have to be beware of them.” Although Old Fulin knew that Dudian had taken security precautions, but reminding him wasn’t going to cost anything.

Dudian nodded and continued to discuss other things for a while. Then he left downstairs to pick up Sergei. He saw that Sergei was sitting in a chair opposite to Hugh, Jake and several other third-generation juniors were sitting close by to them. It seemed that they were involved in a chat. There was a kind expression on Sergei’s face.

“Mr. Dean? He was also bailed out by my grandfather.” Hugh smiled and replied.

Dudian heard Hugh’s words as he slowly went down the wooden stairs. His eyes lit up, but he tried to keep quiet so that he didn’t disturb them. However the next moment Sergei turned towards the stairs and looked at Dudian. There was a faint smile on his face.

Hugh and others closed their mouths the moment they saw Dudian appear.

Dudian went straight towards the exit as he said to Sergei: “We are going back.”

Sergei smiled and got up. He looked at Jake and the others: “I have to go back. See you guys later.” He caught up with Dudian

and went out of the castle to the carriage.

Sander and Jake went out to send them off.

The carriage slowly left the castle.

Sergei leaned against the carriage and smiled at Dudian: “Masquerading and disguising everything is a cooperative relationship? You have hijacked the family after your jailbreak. The children think that you are loyal to their father and haven given their family your allegiance. If you change your mind and want to get rid of them, this old man can help you out!”

Dudian was silent as there was an expression of indifference on his face.

Sergei thought that he had hit it on the spot. He laughed: “I didn’t expect that such a young person would be able to escape from the prison. However, you have additional extraordinary skills. An architect of the Temple of Elements. So you never had a backer who was supporting you from the shadows. As a result, you have bailed us out. Are you going to use our help to get your revenge?”

Dudian indifferent replied: “Speaking of skills… I have to consult you. After we get back to the castle, you should make sure that the training ground behind the castle is similar to the fields in the hunter college. I want you to be my instructor from tomorrow on for the time being.”

Sergei saw that Dudian changed the topic. He thought that he had guessed everything, so he felt a bit more proud than usual: “My training will be very strict. I’m afraid you will cry like a child.”

…

At dusk as the sun faded away.

Nicholas, Gwyneth, Scar and Jin were sitting by the table in the dining room. Jin looked at the vacant seats and asked Nicholas: “Isn’t master coming back tonight?” They had decided to follow Dudian, so they decided to no longer address him as ‘D.’

Nicholas gave him a stern look: “How should I know? I heard that he was an inmate at the same level as you guys. Tell me, how was he able to escape from the prison?”

Scar snorted: “D … You better behave well as the master has bailed you out at this old age. You may have a few more years to live, and there is such a stable condition. Why are you tossing around?”

Nicholas’s face was cold: “I know that I am old. You don’t have to remind me that. But you should show some appropriate attitude towards the elderly too.”

Scar laughed: “Do you think that we are nice guys who are obedient to the elders?”

Nicholas looked back at him with a sullen face: “True, you aren’t.” He continued to eat.

At this time, hoofs and footsteps of the horses resounded.

The maid by the door cried out in surprise: “Master has returned.”

Scar and Jin immediately put away the knife and fork. They got up and went out to greet them. Nicholas also got up, but only Gwyneth didn’t move and continued to eat her food.

Dudian patted Sergei’s arm as he affectionately smiled: “Today was a hard day so you should go and rest early. Tomorrow, try to work on the training field. If there is not enough manpower, then get some slaves.”

Sergei sneered. Do you want to win me over by acting warm? Isn’t it too late?

However, there was a smile on his face: “It’s a small matter. There won’t be that much trouble.”

Dudian smiled. It seemed that he was in an excellent mood, so he turned around and went towards the castle. He saw Jin and Scar had come over to greet him. He looked at them: “Haven’t you eaten yet?”

Nicholas said in an embarrassed manner: “We were just eating. I though you won’t return.”

Dudian smiled: “Let’s go and eat together.” He took the lead as he looked at Nicholas’s smiling face.

Gwyneth saw that Dudian had entered the hall. She whispered: “Master.”

Dudian nodded in silence and sat in his place.

Chapter 275

“Tell the cook to add a steak for the master,” Nicholas ordered the maid after they returned to the castle.

“Yes.” The maid rushed to the kitchen.

Dudian called out to the maid: “Tell him to fire up a few more as I have a good appetite tonight.”

“Yes.” Maids quickly replied, turned and walked away.

“I did not expect that you would come back tonight.” Nicholas sat on his chair: “If I knew then I would have ordered the chef to prepare in advance.”

Dudian smiled: “Are you used to living here?”

Nicholas thought of Dudian’s note he had dug out in the morning. His heart was beating fast, but his facial expressions were as usual: “At least it’s much more comfortable and better than the prison life. The river scenery outside is good too.”

Dudian smiled, but didn’t respond. A moment later a maid handed out him the dinner. He began to eat and chat with them about different topics. After the meal had finished, he went back upstairs to his own room.

Dudian glanced at his wardrobe. He went to the desk next to it and lighted the oil lamp with the match. He took out a small dark knife and a piece of wood from the drawer. He grabbed the knife with his left hand and began to carve the wood gently. He was checking the contours to determine the strength exerted by his left arm.

Dudian quietly practiced control of his left arm, while he thought about something else.

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The next day.

Dudian woke up early as usual but found that Nicholas was already awake. Nicholas saw that Dudian had come downstairs, so he smiled: “Master, you are quite early. Hot water has been prepared for you.” His attitude and appearance was similar to a real butler.

Dudian smiled as he used the hot water to wash himself and towel to dry. He sat in the dining room: “Today you are in good spirit.”

Nicholas respectfully nodded.

Dudian looked over his shoulder: “How’s the wound? Is it healing?”

Nicholas smiled: “I’m too old. The healing speed of wounds is not as good as for you young people.”

“Sometimes when the wound is healed too quickly the pain is forgotten way too early.” Dudian smiled: “If I’m not mistaken, you have bought blessings by relying on your wealth and your physical strength should be at an intermediate hunter’s level.”

Nicholas looked at his eyes: “I am just on a primary hunter level. There is still a long distance for me to reach intermediate hunter level.”

Dudian smiled: “A primary hunter can’t get rid of two teams of knights of the magistrate while killing four of them.”

Nicholas wryly smiled: “Misinformation! Those are nothing but rumors to make sure that my crime became way worse. I can’t kill a knight of the magistrate.”

“Maybe.” Dudian faintly smiled.

The sounds of hoofs echoed from outside. Nicholas said: “It should be the postman who has brought up the newspapers. I will go out to check.” It didn’t take long for him to bring back two newspapers and hand them out to Dudian: “Master, your newspapers.”

Dudian nodded slightly and reached to take them.

Nicholas slowly retreated while the maid brought milk, an omelet and other sweets for breakfast.

Dudian ate and read the newspaper at the same time. His military crossbow had taken a large layout in the financial newspaper. The news mainly focused on the recent war on the border. The information about the status of warfare, mobilization of the army and so on were written.

“Is the Mellon Consortium going to attack after the limelight is gone? Are they waiting for this to pass? ” Dudian looked at the newspaper published by the agency backed up by the Mellon Consortium. They mainly reported about the mining and medicine industry. These two were the most powerful weapons in the hands of the Mellon Consortium. Because of the rivalry with the Scott consortium they didn’t have much of an influence in the mining business. Moreover, Scott consortium was the largest operator and still held on to a vast majority of the market share. But Mellon consortium could be described as ‘invincible’ in the medicine industry.

The Mellon Consortium occupied more than 70 percent of the market in all three districts. Moreover, six of the top ten hospitals belonged to the Mellon Consortium. The other four were formed as a partnership between Mellon and Green consortium. But it seemed that sooner or later they would be fully annexed by the Mellon consortium or taken over.

“The medicine is the biggest weapon of the Mellon Consortium and the main reason for its rapid rise.” Dudian whispered. If he was able to get into the health care industry, then it would be a

massive hit to the Mellon Consortium.

He secretly thought as he quietly read the newspaper.

As the time passed, Sergei, Scar, and Jin gradually woke up and came down to eat breakfast.

“Master in the training field I won’t be calling you young master,” Sergei said as he chewed a big piece of meat.

Dudian put down the newspaper: “Do not eat such greasy food in the morning.”

“I like it this way.”

Dudian and Sergei came behind the castle after the breakfast finished. Sergei had a circle of stones piled up to make the training ground. There were different training tools and equipment.

“I have heard that you are barely comparable to a senior hunter strength wise. However, your magic marks haven’t evolved yet. Instead of going through simple things we will directly focus on nurturing you.” Sergei grinned: “I heard that you have chosen to be an archer. So your eyesight, arm strength, and endurance have to be tested. This morning we will go through some strength exercises. Be careful about your arm so that you don’t break it again.”

Dudian indifferently smiled. His left arm should have already

recovered. The places where the stitches had healed.

Sergei smiled as he saw that Dudian didn't respond: "Do you know the frog pose? The first lesson will be simple upright frog posture. Bend your arms at the elbows at ninety degrees. Put your legs close. This way you will exercise your balance."

"You should know that I have a way to go to Hunter school and check their training classes. If you're teaching differs from the hunter school know that there will be consequences."

Sergei stiffened, but in the next moment he sneered: "Go and inquire. I don't have any problems with that." However, in his heart, he was secretly glad that he was cautious with the task. Frog posture was in the hunter's school training.

Dudian looked at him and did what Sergei said.

Sergei slightly sneered: "Your body hasn't been improved. The best training time is two hours. But I assume you could go through three or four hours of training. Right?"

"You can go and expand the training ground at this time."

Sergei shrugged his shoulders: "Don't be too lazy. I will check in on you." Afterward, he turned and left.

A carriage came to the entrance of the castle while Dudian was training. It had Green consortium's banner stuck on it. A middle-

aged man got off the carriage and was greeted by a maid. She immediately entered the castle to inform Nicholas.

Nicholas was watching the training through the window from the second floor. He immediately went down when the maid reported him about the guest.

“Hello.” Nicholas had a wide smile on his face while his gestures and expressions were polite: “I am Mr. Dean’s butler. Who are you?”

The middle-aged man laughed: “I represent the Green consortium and have come to visit the architect. Is he inside?”

“Architect?” Nicholas was startled: “He is not available now. If the message is not of importance, then I can tell him on your behalf.”

Middle-aged man smiled: “It is an important talk. It’s better if I talk to him face to face. I can wait for him.”

Nicholas replied: “Alright. Please come inside. ” He invited the middle-aged man into the living room and told the maid to bring tea.

“I didn’t expect the castle of the architect Dean to be so frugal.” The middle-aged man’s eyes swept over the castle as they went inside: “If he doesn’t have enough money, then architect Dean must tell Green consortium.”

Nicholas smiled while his eyes were cold: “Master has always been in favor of saving. He wouldn’t bother Green consortium for a thrift amount of money!”

The middle-aged man waved his hand: “We would never be bothered or troubled by architect Dean. As long as he is willing to sell the new inventions to our Green consortium, we can even give him a new castle. It is only a small thing.”

Nicholas was shocked. In the past, he had mixed with the rich and wealthy. He had met nobility too. He knew about the identity of the architects, but he didn’t think that Dudian had such an extraordinary background that Green consortium would send someone to take the initiative to please him.

Nicholas had checked the castle from top to bottom, but hasn’t seen any inventions: “The Young master’s new invention isn’t ready yet. You should wait for him to finish it before talking about these matters.”

The middle-aged man gave Nicholas a strange look. He didn’t expect that people working for Dudian would be so loose even to dare to get involved in business without authorization. However, even if the man was a butler, he wasn’t planning to speak coldly to him. He was closer to Dudian than the people from Green consortium, and this butler may sabotage them in the future. Even though the middle-aged man didn’t like the butler’s attitude, he put away the displeasure and said with a smile: “Green consortium is willing to purchase the invention even if it is not ready. The architect will definitely be satisfied with the price.”

Nicholas had worked for many years. Even though there was a little smile on the middle-aged man's face, Nicholas was aware that his heart was full of disgust towards him. He no longer asked anything but Nicholas was extremely surprised. Are they willing to buy in advance? Could it be that Dudian's inventions would never be worse? Where does this confidence come from? Or was it that Dudian had already made an invention and given it to the Temple for evaluation and the Green consortium secretly got wind of it?

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The training field.

Dudian was standing in an inverted frog posture. The fingers of his left-hand gentle rubbed the sand on the ground. Although he couldn't perceive the sensations from his left arm but he could visually grasp them. He would use his fingers and feel the movement through his eyes. Although the effects of such an observation didn't bring a good result, but it was much better than blindly continuing to exercise.

The hardest problem that he faced in the absence of perception was that he couldn't determine the state of his own arm. He couldn't even feel a punch or hit. The only option was to rely on visual aids. But how could he watch an enemy's action and look after his left arm as well if he was on a battlefield? How could he have spare time to pay attention to his arm? Therefore he had to exercise to the degree that he would feel the activities of his left arm on instinct.

Time passed.

The gray radiation clouds covered the sky. The sunlight barely passed through the clouds. They were about to enter the black snow season. Everything was in a depressed state. Even the monsters outside the giant wall would be dormant in their nests and rarely go out. However, this was the peak season for hunters to act. They wouldn't have to worry about a tide of monsters attacking them.

In the blink of an eye, it was afternoon.

Sergei was tired and sweating because he was expanding the training ground. Moreover, he felt faint pain from the spikes on his shoulder. He didn't dare to act violently and tear at the wounds. He looked back at Dudian who was standing in an inverted frog pose. He was surprised to find that the kid was like a stone-like sculpture. His right arm would tremble slightly once in a while his left arm was still.

There was a trace of appreciation in Sergei's eyes. As he was expanding the training field, he would supervise Dudian from time to time. But he always found him practicing without taking a break. He never imagined that the kid would have such a degree of self-discipline. Moreover, the kid had strong endurance. According to Sergei's original speculation, even a senior hunter couldn't adhere to a five-hour training. It could be considered a very difficult thing to overcome. Moreover, the whole body weight was placed on the arms and the longer the activity took, the harder it would become.

Dudian was checking Sergei too. He saw that Sergei was resting so he shouted: "Don't' try to laze around. Seize the opportunity and time to expand the field!"

Sergei's eyebrows wrinkled: "Don't waste your concentration by trying to monitor me!"

"It would be much more efficient if you talk while you work."

Dudian indifferently said.

Sergei's face muscles twitched. He turned to carry the stone to make a pair.

Half an hour later Dudian stood up and checked on his swollen right hand. He looked at Sergei: "Let's go to eat. We will continue after the meal" He turned away and left.

Sergei spat and wiped the sweat off his forehead. He quickly caught up with Dudian.

Dudian was surprised to find a refined middle-aged man in the living room of the castle: "Who are you?" He had already sensed the man's smell as the middle-aged man had arrived in the morning. It seemed that he was a lobbyist for one of the consortiums.

The middle-aged man saw the sweaty figure of Dudian but still stood up from the chair. He smiled and said: "Architect Dean nice to meet you. I'm here on behalf of the Green consortium. I want to talk to you about the sale of the new invention."

Nicholas, who was close by ordered the maid to bring a towel for Dudian to clean off the sweat.

Dudian nodded slightly as he walked towards the dining room. He got a cup of tea: "New invention. What about the price you want to offer?"

The middle-aged man didn't think that Dudian would be so direct, but it already saved him wasting time on meaningless talk. He replied: "Our price will absolutely satisfy you. We want to offer the minimum price for a three-star item. What do you think?"

Green consortium was on bad terms with the Scott consortium. So Dudian didn't think that they would dare to open with such a high price. However, this also was proof of his value. The situation right now was totally different to the time when he had escaped from the prison. He had to run around and spend a lot of effort and energy to earn 100000 gold coins to rent the passage. However, right now he was sitting at home, and the people would come to offer money to him.

He clearly understood the situation too. First of all, he had only produced a total of two inventions. First one was a new type of textile machine which was a legendary level item. It reformed the thought style of this era. The second one was a top grade four-star item. It laid out his identity that he was not simply relying on luck. These two items gave a guarantee and strong confidence to these consortiums to come up with such a high price.

"Three-star item ..." Nicholas's pupils shrank. He had reflected on his previous chat with the middle-aged man. He knew that Dudian was not an ordinary architect. But didn't think that he was higher than he had imagined! Such an offer was the proof of Dudian's attainments. Was he a master?

If Dudian was thirty years old, he would think so. But the kid was a teenager!

Dudian slowly shook his head: “Thanks for the good intentions from Green consortium, but you should forget about it.”

The middle-aged man didn’t expect that such an offer would be rejected. He couldn’t help but say: “Why? Mr. Dean, have you already signed a contract with another consortium?”

“No.” Dudian bluntly said as he saw the man to be so persistent: “I can’t accept the offer because my invention is about to be completed but for an advance booking you have to offer the price of a five-star item.”

“Five-star item!” The middle-aged man’s eyes widened, and he almost bit his tongue. He looked at Dudian: “Dean, Mr. Dean. Did I hear it wrong?”

Dudian solemnly replied: “No, a five-star item’s price.”

The middle-aged man was convinced that he didn’t hear it wrong. He was startled for a moment: “Mr. Dean…Even if you want to refuse, you don’t have to say it so. Alright, what about top grade three-star item’s price?”

Nicholas’s heart almost broke and jumped out of his body. Was Green consortium giving a reserve price of a top grade three-star item? Is it so easy to earn money?

Dudian slightly shook his head: “Anything less than five-star

item’s price won’t work.”

The middle-aged man helplessly smiled as he saw the resolute manner of Dudian. He thought that with that price it would be even possible to buy the devil himself!

However, he didn’t dare to say the words out loud. There was no reason to offend the other party. He shook his head and turned away.

Nicholas saw the man’s reaction and looked at Dudian’s eyes. He thought that Dudian was putting on pressure on the man and tried to squeeze a bit more.

Dudian’s saw through the intention behind Nicholas’s eyes. He shook his head.

Nicholas saw that Dudian didn’t prefer the blackmailing. There were doubts in his heart, but on the surface, he responded rapidly. He went with the middle-aged man to send him out.

Dudian had ordered the maid to put the dishes on the side and prepare the lunch before Nicholas returned.

Nicholas was sitting in his usual position and watched Dudian casually eat steak. He couldn’t help but ask: “Master. Are you a master at the ‘Temple of Elements’?”

Dudian didn’t think that after racking his brain so much Nicholas

would come to such a conclusion. He smiled: “Would I live in such conditions if I was a master?”

Nicholas continued: “Why did you refuse the Green consortium if you are not a master? The offer given by them was already a high number. It is close to two hundred thousand gold coins. Has your new invention already been submitted to the Temple and evaluated? Is it already confirmed as a five-star item?”

Dudian smiled: “I don’t have such a strong relationship with the examiners, but I’m quite confident of my invention.”

“Confident?” Nicholas murmured. Confident?

Gwyneth, Jin and other saw the surprise on Nicholas’s face. Scar swallowed his saliva: “What about two hundred thousand gold coins? What is a five-star item?”

Sergei knew that Dudian was an architect as yesterday they had gone to buy raw materials. But he didn’t expect to see such an outrageous claim. Even if Dudian weren’t a master, he would be something very close to it if he really could produce a five-star item.

Gwyneth’s eyes lit up as she silently watched Dudian.

Dudian rested for a little after the lunch. Later he returned to the training ground with Sergei. He was still practicing the inverted frog pose, but he allowed Sergei to stack a few pieces of lead on his

feet. The pieces of lead were almost half of his weight and would greatly improve the effect of exercise.

About two hours later Dudian felt the pain as his right hand trembled. He knew that the additional weight had increased the effect of the training.

Sweat began to flow down his nose to the eyebrows. After passing the eyebrows, it went to his hair. Soon the sweat accumulated on his hair and began to drip down. The sand was soaked from drops of his sweat.

Dudian couldn't think about anything else. The sense of time began to become slow. Every minute lasted for a long time and was difficult to endure. He focused his attention on his training. Regardless of the pain in his right arm, he didn't feel the slightest pain from the left one. However, he was aware that the strain on his left arm was the same as on his right arm. If he overworked himself, he would damage his muscles.

Sergei sneered as he looked at Dudian's trembling body. He knew that he had reached the limit.

The sun faded away, and the training field became dark.

Sergei was tired and sweating. He looked back as he wiped off his sweat. He was surprised to see Dudian still maintain the inverted frog pose. Dudian's body was trembling slightly more than the previous time, but he was still able to control his posture.

“Damned little devil!” Sergei clenched his teeth as he began to think about other difficult training methods.

After a moment Dudian flicked his feet and stood up. He was taking big breaths as he looked at Sergei: “Let’s go and have dinner.”

Sergei was dissatisfied: “I didn’t say that you could stop! Who let you make that decision? Wasn’t I the instructor in the training field?”

Dudian was startled: “Do you want to continue?

Sergei grunted: “Of course.”

Dudian looked at him: “Alright!” Once again he stood in inverted frog pose. Sergei came over and put the lids on his feet. “You should go now too. Don’t stop.”

Sergei clenched his teeth and continued to build the stone pier.

It was dark, but both of them were training in the field. Nicholas had come twice to call them over, but was ignored on both occasions. At about seven o’clock in the evening, Sergei felt wet on his shoulder. He reached out and found his hand touching a sticky fluid. Although it was dark, and he couldn’t see the color, but he knew that it was the blood from his scapula. The blood was oozing out from the wound on his shoulder.

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“Damn it! The wound has gotten worse because of this stupid rivalry.” Sergei’s face had turned ugly. He covered the wound with towels, but he could still feel the bursts of hot pain from his scapula. He frowned but still didn’t give up.

Dudian had already sensed the smell of blood oozing out from Sergei’s wounds and the moment he saw Sergei covering his wounds his mouth curled into a smile.

Sergei looked at Dudian. He saw that Dudian’s arm was shaking badly, but he was still able to stabilize his body. Even the angle of the elbow didn’t change. Sergei was anxious. He wanted to announce the end of the training so as not to worsen his wounds, but his lips didn’t move. Sergei thought that if he was the one to throw the towel in first and if Dudian afterward saw his wounds then the kid would certainly think that Sergei had retreated because he feared to injure himself!

Thinking of this Sergei changed his mind. He wrapped towels around his chest and continued to carry the stones to build the pier.

Dudian saw that Sergei didn’t say anything, so he didn’t open up the conversation either. Half an hour later Dudian felt that his arm has reached the limit. Moreover, Sergei’s breathing got heavier too. The white towels which were wrapped around his chest were dyed red from blood. Dudian knew that if Sergei continued this way at the end, there would be big damages. Dudian said: “Today

we are going to finish here."

Sergei's heart was relieved. He thought that he finally won the bitter struggle, so he sneered: "What? Can't you hold on anymore?"

Dudian's eyebrows wrinkled: "I'm afraid you won't be able to continue."

Sergei replied: "me? I'm not affected at all, even if you are exhausted."

Dudian coldly looked at him: "So you are not affected? Alright, let's continue!"

"Yes, let's continue!" Sergei sneered in ridicule: "Don't shake your feet too much or else the lead plate will fall out."

Dudian didn't answer, but instead, his fingers firmly buckled the sand. He forgot the soreness and continued to stand in inverted frog pose.

Time passed slowly.

The training lost its purpose as it had turned secretly into a rivalry between Sergei and Dudian. Jin, Scar, Gwyneth, Nicholas and the others were standing behind the windowsill in the castle and watching the two stubborn men continue to practice.

At about nine o'clock Sergei's bleeding was so much that he couldn't physically support his body. He lost control of his body as he sat on the ground. He was pale as a white paper. His body sweated a lot as his hands and feet gently trembled.

Nicholas immediately ran towards him while he ordered the maid to prepare new towels and hot water. Nicholas helped him back to the castle.

Dudian knocked the lead pieces from his feet and spun his body. He stood straight on the ground. Scar and Jin rushed out of the castle to help him.

Dudian saw Nicholas using the medicine from the box to help Sergei. The man's body was soaked with blood as he laid on the sofa. Sergei's face was weak and sluggish.

Dudian sat down on his chair as his hands trembled. However, he still maintained the ninety-degree posture as he sat. However, he couldn't straighten or bend his right arm. In such a case an extremely strong pain would hit him. The left arm didn't have consciousness, but he had to take into account that Nicholas and others weren't aware of this secret. So he maintained the same position as that of his right arm so as not to expose this secret.

"Today ... I ...." Sergei obliquely looked at Dudian as he panted. He didn't have the power to move his head.

Dudian was exhausted, but his body was not damaged. He looked

at Sergei: “Senior hunters are so so…”

Sergei’s mouth twitched, but he didn’t refute.

Nicholas finished bandaging Sergei’s wounds. He looked at him and smiled: “Why did you do such a harsh training on your first day of training? Look at your body…”

Dudian breathed slightly and said: “I’m hungry. Let’s have dinner.”

Nicholas slightly smiled and commanded the maid to prepare the dinner.

Dudian made hand gestures for Scar and Jin to help him out to the table.

He was fed by the maids as his arm was in pain and he didn’t want to expose the capabilities of the other arm.

Dudian felt that he had recovered a bit of strength and the pain in his arm was also reduced a lot after eating the meal. He walked upstairs and used his shoulder to knock open the door. He took out the knife and wood from the drawer. Fortunately, his left hand didn’t feel any pain, so he began to carve the wood slowly.

After few hours of exercise, he fell asleep.

The next day.

Dudian woke up on time. But the first feeling he felt was the soreness coming off his right arm. Even after a night of sleep his body still failed to recover. The continuous training had gone beyond the limits of his body.

Dudian sat up and put on his shoes. He came downstairs to the dining room to find that Nicholas has long awakened from sleep. He used hot water to soak his arms to soothe the stiffness of his bones.

By the time he finished the breakfast, newspapers were brought.

Dudian's arms had been soaked for almost half an hour in hot water, so the soreness had eased a lot. Bending the arm was no longer unbearable. He took the newspapers to check them.

"Military newspaper!"

"The effect of the 'military crossbow' in the border war is surprising!"

"The first batch of the military crossbow produced by the Huashen consortium was only numbered at two thousand. However, it played a surprising role in a defensive battle at the snow-capped mountainous border. Its close combat effectiveness was good enough to keep off the barbarians from a successful attack and make them retreat!"

“The following piece is the interview of the army colonel Bruno, who was responsible as the chief of the…”

The headlines of the military newspaper were related to the battle that happened yesterday.

Dudian didn’t expect that the size of barbarians was so large that they would even dare to attack a border fortress. It was lucky that he had brought up ‘military crossbow.’ Its invention coincided with the war which was really lucky for him. The war had brought up its value too.

He continued to read other newspapers.

“Temple Daily -”

“The youngest architect to get ‘epoch’ medal in the history had already invented a top grade four-star item. He is in the preparation of creation of his next item. How amazing it will be?”

“… Green consortium has reported that the architect Dean’s new invention has been deemed by himself as a five-star item at a pre-sale offer …”

Dudian had become the focus of the Temple of Elements. Moreover, he was observed by the major consortiums. In one of the newspapers, his recent bail of Sergei and others were mention too. However, it was declared that it was Old Fulin who had bailed,

but he had involvement in the process.

The content of the news was an attempt to destroy his reputation.

Dudian was relieved to see that this piece of news was written by the newspaper which belonged to the Mellon Consortium.

The newspapers belonging to the other consortiums mainly speculated and made assessments about his upcoming invention because of Green consortium’s reports.

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The newspapers belonging to the other consortia mainly questioned the price set by Dudian. However, the newspapers under the wings of Mellon and Krylov consortium directly called it outrageous. They used extremely sharp words such as ‘arrogant’, ‘young and frivolous’ and other words to describe Dudian.

Moreover the offending didn’t end by just those simple words. One of the newspapers took the initiative to describe Dudian in a way that would invoke people’s hatred. Their comment was: “For architect Dean put forth such a price is mainly because of the ‘epoch’ medal. He doesn’t put the masters in his eyes and thinks that his research can go beyond the work of a master!”

Dudian indifferently smiled as he read the newspaper. In a few days, this so-called ‘beyond the work of a master’ speech will be a slap in their face. After the truth is published, no one will be able to ignore him. Although he had expected to get negative comments from the Krylov consortium, but he didn’t think that they would go to such lengths.

He thought about Granita who had come over not so long ago. Dudian thought that the woman was familiar, but he couldn’t remember exactly who she was. Right now it was clear that Krylov consortium was angry at him because he bailed out Sergei.

Granita was the famous beauty who was almost ‘raped’ by Sergei. Many painters have drawn her portraits. All those pictures are in the collections of many wealthy businessmen and nobles.

“However, it’s unlikely that Sergei would be enough for Krylov consortium to be enemies with me. Perhaps the source is the conversation with Granita. I think they are angry that they weren’t able to get the rights for the military crossbow.” There was a faint smile on his face as Dudian put the newspaper down. He began to rub his fingers as he delved into thoughts gently.

Nicholas who stood beside Dudian swept over the newspaper. Although the newspaper was upside down, but it didn’t obstruct him to quickly and accurately read the information written in it. His pupils shrank when he read the two words: ‘epoch’ medal. He didn’t think that Dudian’s identity would be so high in the Temple. No wonder, the consortiums tried to pay close attention to him and tried to get close to Dudian.

Nicholas secretly looked at the boy as his fingers gently gripped his sleeves.

Sergei, Gwyneth, and the others came down.

Sergei’s chest was wrapped in white gauze. The place where the spikes were nailed were a little dark, but the blood hadn’t spread around the other places. Nicholas’s eyes lit up as he looked at Sergei. The healing ability of the magic marks from the ‘Steel Dragon’ were amazing.

Sergei’s eyes swept over the dining room. His eyes narrowed the moment his vision fell on Dudian’s body. His footsteps paused for a moment before continuing to step down the stairs.

“We will exercise this morning and rest in the afternoon.” Dudian indifferently said as he looked at gloomy Sergei.

Sergei was stunned as the gloominess in his eyes was replaced with happiness. However, he soon realized his expression, so he spoke in an arrogant tone: “You are quite lazy.”

Dudian glanced at him: “Am I?”

Sergei saw the faint smile on Dudian’s face. He sneered and sat on a chair. He shouted at Nicholas: “Stupid old man! Where is my breakfast?”

Nicholas slightly stifled as his lips twitched. He turned towards the maid: “Get him his breakfast.”

“Yes.” The maid replied immediately.

After the breakfast, Dudian went back to the training ground to exercise. Scar and Jin joined up with him up. Scar said: “We are idling all the time and are scared that our bones are going to get rusty.”

Dudian didn’t stop them, but still reminded: “Don’t overdo your training. We will soon be going outside the giant wall to hunt, so I hope the both of you will be in top condition.”

Both of them nodded in confirmation. However, they didn't practice the way Dudian did. Instead of reverse frog posture, they used other exercises to strengthen their legs, arms, and flexibility.

Although a 'blessing of God' was able to strengthen them physically in one go more than ten years of practice could, but through exercise they were able to master various parts of their body. Moreover, they were able to temper their willpower.

Sergei didn't care much about Scar and Jin. His obligation was to teach Dudian. He was too lazy to teach the others and would ignore them at all costs.

In the blink of an eye, the time passed. It was afternoon.

All four of them came back to the castle as they were all tired. After lunch Scar and Jin went back to the training field to exercise skills that they had learned in the past.

However, Dudian, Gwyneth, and Sergei moved the steel to the basement. The order was scheduled to arrive this morning, and it was brought on time. There were several basements under the castle meant for storage of goods. Dudian had used one as an alchemy room.

Dudian let the others leave after the materials were stored in the new alchemy room. Dudian warned Nicholas that no one should disturb him during his research time.

After the door was closed, Dudian began to carve the generator's parts and make their molds from wood. He used a knife with his right hand to make precise molds.

He felt that the flexibility and control of his right hand had increased a lot after the previous experiences with the left hand.

...

Shortly after Dudian entered the alchemy room, Nicholas, Gwyneth, and Sergei went into another quaint room in the castle. Nicholas said: "We three are in the same boat. The other two have been in the same layer as the little devil back in prison. Their relationship is extraordinary, and they are meant to follow the little devil for good. We can only unite and hope that we can recover our freedom from this little devil's hands."

Sergei looked at him with interest: "Do you have a plan?"

Nicholas looked at him: "At present, we know nothing about his background. So making any plans is nothing but a waste of time. First of all, we have to find the bottom line of this little devil. As far as we know, the kid is not only a hunter but an architect too. From these two identities, it can be inferred that the little devil's family is civilian. However, they have to be a wealthy one."

"But if the little devil is a hunter then it means that there is no force behind his family. Moreover, at one point his existence was irrelevant to the aristocracy."

Sergei chuckled: “Is this all?”

Nicholas spoke in a ridiculing tone: “Yes, it is all. You should talk now. The day before you went out with him. Don’t tell me that you didn’t get any harvest.” There was a trace of coldness in his eyes.

Sergei lightly sneered: “At least I know more than you. The little devil took me to raw material market to buy steel the day before. At that point, I knew that he was an architect of the Temple and his position is quite high as Green consortium personally sent a messenger to invite him yesterday. I estimate that even though the little devil’s status is not of a master in the Temple, but it is something close to it.”

“The most important thing is that there is no power behind the little devil. He is the mastermind!”

“No one supports him from behind the scenes?” Nicholas was slightly startled.

Sergei answered: “The little devil took me to the Ryan family. According to the rumors, the Ryan family is a declining noble family. So there is no way for them to have enough money to bail us out. The source of the money is certainly the products sold by the little devil. According to my guess, after the jailbreak, the kid has hijacked the Ryan family. Afterward, using his hunter identity, he has signed a contract with the Ryan family. On the surface, everyone thinks that there is some shady figure in Ryan family who is pulling strings, but in fact, the little devil is the one who is controlling the Ryan family. Moreover, who could help him out to escape from the prison? It’s his own effort!”

Nicholas looked at him and nodded: “That’s pretty good, but we have to get more information. Be cautious.”

Sergei grunted, but didn’t reply.

Nicholas looked at the time: “We can’t stay together for long. The servants would be aware of our meeting.”

“Alright, I’ll go out first.” Sergei shrugged his shoulders as he left the room.

Nicholas came towards the door and put his ear to listen to outside. The footsteps echoed gradually from far away. He turned back to the silent Gwyneth: “What do you think about his speech?”

Gwyneth looked at him quietly: “What do you think?”

Nicholas touched his chin: “The little devil was too friendly with Sergei as they came back from the market. His attitude had a big change. It makes it impossible for me to trust Sergei.”

“That alone is not a definite proof,” Gwyneth whispered.

Nicholas nodded: “Yes, but there are many things that Sergei said where it isn’t clear whether they are true of false. Maybe he was already bought up by the kid while they were out. Let’s say everything Sergei said is true. The little devil is really the

mastermind which lurks in the shadows. Let's assume that he hijacked the Ryan family. Then where did he learn the ability to invent things? Civilians can enter the libraries, but they don't get their hands on valuable information. Moreover, it is just impossible to escape from the prison alone without any backing. It is likely that one of the six consortiums is behind him. Even if it's not a consortium, then it is one of the top noble families. "

"Moreover, how could the Ryan family shelter the imp on its own?"

Gwyneth replied: "Sergei could have been lying."

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Nicholas's mouth curled up slightly as he heard Gwyneth's words. He whispered: "We must first try to know whether the kid bought him. If Sergei has swayed, then the little devil will use him to pass wrong information to us. However, we can also use him to pass wrong information to the little devil."

Gwyneth nodded.

"I will go out to avoid suspicions." Nicholas opened the door and went out.

Gwyneth's eyes lit up as she looked at his back.

...

Temple of Elements. Thirteenth castle.

Two figures were sitting at a table and drinking tea. There were few newspapers on the table. One of them had a large portrait depicted on it. It was Dudian's picture. He had a smile on his face.

"The little kid hasn't produced the invention, but he dares to price it as a five-star item. He is crazy..." Master Eivissa glanced at the newspaper and slowly raised his eyes to look at master Terence's face who was sitting opposite to him: "I didn't expect that the little guy who wanted to be my assistant had come to this

position. The new textile machine and the military crossbow are a proof that his inventions are not results of luck. He is a rare talent, but he is too arrogant."

Terence said: "Genius? Haven't we seen people like him? He is young and fit. That's why he is proud of the moment, but ultimately he will fall. It will be worse than anyone else! He won't be able to afford to climb for long. The more glory he has now, the harder the stabs will be!"

Eivissa's eyes lit up: "But he has talent too. If the new invention isn't five-star item, then it would be at least a three-star even a four-star item. Or else he wouldn't boast the way he did. I don't think current small achievements will cover his eyes."

"Hmph!" Master Terence faintly snorted as there was a trace of disdain on his face.

Eivissa seemed not to be observing Terence's facial expression: "If it is like this, then I have to congratulate you. Your wood element faction is going to have another master in the future. Maybe his record will be better than yours. He may become the youngest master in the wood element faction. It's a pity that your hydraulic weaving machine wasn't produced earlier on. In that case, it wouldn't be evaluated as a four-star item, but a five-star one."

Terence's eyebrows wrinkled: "The youngest master? How can he be the same as you or me? Sometimes the blessings of god aren't transmitted. The inspiration is not there. He has to move slowly, step by step, like you and me. But he is different. Because of his age

and ‘pride’, once he falls, he will be ruined!”

Eivissa sighed: “Yes. I hope he can learn to face failure.”

Terence lightly sneered, but didn’t continue to chat.

Eivissa finished drinking the cup of tea: “It’s getting late. I should go back as there is no one to supervise. Those little kids will be lazy if I’m not over there.”

“Alright, I’ll send you off.” Terence got up and walked him to the exit of the castle.

Terence slowly recovered his eyes as he looked at the carriage which Eivissa got on: “Old fox, do you think that I don’t know Krylov Consortium is backing you! Are you trying to use me to attack the little kid? Hmpf!”

…

Three days passed in the blink of an eye.

Dudian didn’t leave the castle. He was training in the morning. After lunch, no one would be able to see his silhouette. He would rush back to the basement after the meals.

Sergei was the one who felt Dudian’s overwork the deepest. He knew that the morning training alone would overextend the

physical condition of a teenager's constitution. According to Sergei, Dudian should be exhausted and tired after the morning exercise. Even though the production and research of the inventions didn't consume any physical energy, but it exhausted the brain. He knew that a tired state of the brain was more painful that the soreness of the body.

Scar and Jin would relearn the skills they had studied back in their time. They wanted to ensure that they would be in good condition for the hunt outside the giant wall.

In the basement.

Dudian looked at the machine that he assembled. His eyes lit up as he looked at the hand-cranked DC generator. It was very simple in comparison to a modern generator. However, he still spent three days to produce it from scratch. As of now, he had mastered electricity!

"It should be assessed as a legendary item if I submit it to the Temple." There was excitement on Dudian's face. Legendary items were priceless. They could be sold for millions of gold coins and cause chaos within the giant wall. Only top consortiums would have the ability to buy such an item. Moreover, there was a rule that if an architect produced a legendary item, the Temple would automatically get the rights for manufacturing and sales. The architect's benefits and rewards would be a lot, but it was a mandatory rule which bound them to the Temple.

Although the Temple would get a share of the cake, but the legendary items were able to dominate the field. The revenue

would be so high that the architect wouldn't care if the Temple took a piece.

However, Dudian restrained his impulse. Currently, he had just entered the research state in the lightning element faction. Firstly, he was going to introduce lightning rods as a guide item. If he directly handed over this DC generator, then it would have an extraordinary reaction, even from the senior representatives of the Holy Church which he tried to avoid at this point.

Moreover, because of his current vision and understanding of the world, he didn't know and couldn't estimate the chain reaction and effect the introduction of power generation would bring. He was temporarily going to use it by himself and release the invention at the right time.

"Science and technology are advancing very slowly. No product has the technology, which the concept of the new textile machine had brought up. It seems I'll have to push things up again." Dudian looked at the generator as he dazed into his thoughts. Moments later he put the DC generator aside and took out another drawing. He was going to build a cannon!

"This hand-cranked DC generator should be able to output one hundred watts of electricity. It won't be able to move even the smallest type of the electro-slag remelting furnace. Moreover, Mellon consortium hasn't made a move yet. Certainly, they are secretly doing something. I must enhance my strength first." Dudian gave up the idea of creating modern artillery, power station and others. The more Mellon consortium was quiet. The more his heart became uneasy. The only guarantee of his

protection was the enhancement of his strength.

Eight days passed in the blink of an eye.

Dudian came out from the basement for dinner. He looked at Nicholas: “Prepare suitcases and make sure that they are by the door of the basement.”

“Suitcases?” Nicholas asked: “Is the new item finished?”

Dudian nodded slightly. After eight days he finally produced the things he wanted.

Sergei and others looked at each other in surprise and were full of curiosity. They wanted to see how the item looked like as there were consortiums who were ready to pay an unimaginable amount of money for it.

Dudian went to the basement after the dinner. He put the assembly parts on the floor. The huge base and barrel could be only carried with a cloth.

Nicholas and the others were surprised to see a huge metal tube on the ground. This thing looks like a chimney! Does he dare to call it a divine item?

After packing all the parts, Dudian looked at Scar and Jin: “Sleep early tonight. Tomorrow we will go outside the giant wall.”

Nicholas was surprised: “Aren’t you going to give the new item to the Temple to assess it?”

Dudian answered: “Have you ever seen such a rough item? It is a weapon that is specialized for hunting monsters. It’s just you don’t know how to use it.”

“Ah …” Nicholas was speechless.

Sergei was stunned: “This … Are we going to hit the beasts with the tube?”

Gwyneth was silent as she looked at Dudian’s every move.

Dudian almost choked as he heard Sergei’s words. However, it was the era of cold weapons, so it was normal for Sergei to have such a perspective: “You will know when we use it. It’s alright not to know about the details for now.”

Sergei’s face was gloomy: “Do we also need to learn how to use it?”

Dudian recovered his eyes and didn’t reply.

Dudian went back to his room after sending them off. He did the carving exercise and went to sleep.

The next day.

Dudian put on his hunter armor and went down to find Nicholas: “Prepare dry food for five people so that we can eat outside the giant wall.”

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“Bacon and dry food had already been packaged for five people. It’s enough to survive for half a month.” Nicholas respectfully replied.

Dudian looked at him. Nicholas was very qualified if you measured him from the perspective of a butler. Dudian didn’t have to worry about anything: “Make sure that they are awake and here in five minutes.”

“Yes.” Nicholas went upstairs.

Dudian came to the hall and checked the parts of the cannon in the suitcases.

It didn’t even take three minutes for Scar, Jin, Sergei and Gwyneth to join him. Although Dudian was usually a little severe in his attitude, but he would normally act mildly with them. However, they were clear that his character hasn’t changed and that it was a test.

Dudian looked at the four who were wearing the intermediate hunter armor that was bought from the Temple of Elements a few days ago. This armor was an exclusive product of the Temple of Elements and sold only by the Temple. Other consortiums were prohibited from production or sales of these suits. You could buy them also occasionally at underground black markets.

“Both of you are going to go outside the giant wall for the first time. If there is something that you don’t know then don’t be shy but ask Scar or Sergei.” Dudian told to Gwyneth and Jin.

Gwyneth nodded.

There were nervousness and faint excitement in Jin’s facial expression. Although he was a Knight of Light in the past, but he had never been outside the giant wall. In prison, he had heard many stories from Scar about the outside world. He knew of the dangers of the outside world, but he yearned to see it too.

“Eat breakfast and get ready to leave,” Dudian ordered them.

Nicholas commanded the maids to prepare the breakfast. They quickly finished it and loaded the luggage, suitcases and the barrel of the cannon on the outside of the carriage. Dudian sat inside the compartment while Jin sat on coachman’s seat. The others rode the horses.

“Refuse everyone who asks for me.” Dudian warned Nicholas: “Do not reveal my whereabouts.”

Nicholas respectfully nodded.

The smile on Nicholas’s face slowly faded away as he watched them leave. He sneered as he looked at the back of the carriage.

...

The carriage traveled through a remote path so that Dudian wouldn't get recognized. After some time they put the Ryan family's banner on the carriage and went towards the border forts. Three hours later they reached the wilderness. Dudian sensed a smell of a group of people.

"Other consortiums?" Dudian was puzzled.

It didn't take long for the source of the smell to appear in his sight. It was actually a group of soldiers wearing uniforms belonging to the army. They quickly caught up with them and passed by. They didn't even check the presence of Dudian's carriage as they rode past them and soon disappeared from their view.

Dudian slowly lowered the curtain after he had a look at the border fortress. The war seemed to be more problematic than it was reported in the newspapers.

After a moment they reached the gates of the fort.

Dudian noted that the number of the soldiers in the fortress wall were several times more than in the past. The soldiers were crowded on the walls checking the other side. The others were practicing in the open ground. Some of them were similar to Dudian as they looked like fifteen-sixteen-year-old boys. He saw that the soldiers were unfamiliar with the drills. Their limbs appeared weak. It was a result of lacking exercise. It seemed they weren't regular soldiers trained in the barracks.

Dudian frowned as he remembered the mandatory conscription.

“Stop!” A soldier shouted at them as they approached the gate: “This is the border fortress! If you don’t have official permission, then get back! ”

Dudian pushed the door and jumped out of the carriage. He took out his hunter medal and said: “We are hunters of the New World Consortium. We are going to go outside the giant wall.”

The soldier looked at his medal, then turned to look at Sergei and others: “What about them?”

Sergei took out his medal and threw to the soldier: “Look carefully.” Although his original hunter medal has been confiscated long ago, but Dudian had asked Old Fulin to re-submit an application to the Temple to get a new Hunter medal for all of them.

Soldiers checked each of them and confirmed that all of them were hunters. He looked at Dudian who was in the carriage: “Anyone else inside the carriage?”

Dudian replied: “No one, just some tools for the hunt.”

“Let me see.” Soldier said.

Dudian shrugged his shoulders and let him check.

The soldier turned behind the carriage and saw the suitcases and the barrel that was rolled up in cloth. He inspected them and didn't find anything suspicious. He turned back to Dudian: "Do you use these to hunt?"

Dudian faintly smiled: "Do I have to report to you the way we hunt?"

The soldier's face changed, but he still turned back to the team and gestured his companions to open the gate.

Dudian returned to the carriage. They passed through the passage of the gate and entered the desolate era. According to Dudian's instructions, Sergei and the other two lead the way while the carriage followed after them.

Dudian opened the curtain again after they left the passage. There were hammers, swords, and knives scattered along the plains. There were faint footprints on the ground and dry blood.

"It seems that a battle happened here recently," Sergei said as he calmly observed the place.

Scar, Gwyneth, and Jin were also aware of this.

Dudian suddenly saw something and ordered: "Stop."

Jin pulled the ropes of the horse and made it come to a halt.

Dudian pushed open the door and jumped down. He ignored the others as he went straight for ten meters and picked up a knife. It was a strange knife which was stained with blood. It had weird patterns engraved on its handle.

He frowned as he carefully inspected the knife. He closed his eyes to search his memories. He had checked the soldiers on duty in the fortress. Although they had short knives on them, but the size seemed to be slightly longer, and the handle was totally different. His eyebrows wrinkled as he was puzzled.

“What?” Sergei approached him as he rode the horse.

Dudian recovered and shook his head: “Nothing.” He put away the knife and returned to the carriage: “Continue.”

...

Two hours later.

Everyone finally saw the giant wall which towered like the mountains and blotted out the sun. Dudian jumped off the carriage as they reached the passage. The Knights of Light were present as always. He handed them his hunter medal so that they let them use the passage. Sergei, Gwyneth and the other transported the suitcases to the passage.

Both Knights of Light saw that these things looked different, but they didn't come forward to check or inspect. They were only responsible for inspecting the materials brought from outside. They would normally ignore the things taken out, though.

Dudian handed the carriage and horses to the knights of light and entered the passage.

Sergei saw that Dudian was already going to the other side: "Aren't you going to pray?"

"I have already said. I don't believe in God."

Sergei was stunned but still turned towards the wall where the Goddess of the Hunt was engraved. That beautiful face and the enchanting body was the place where all the hunters prayed for prosperity and luck. He closed his eyes for a moment to make the prayer. He saluted and rushed to catch up with Dudian.

Dudian pushed the heavy iron gate and looked outside the giant wall. He didn't see or smell any monsters close by. Before they went out, he looked at the gunpowder boxes from the last time. They were covered well, and they shouldn't be wet.

"Wow!" Jin went out of the passage and looked around. He was surprised. Is this the scenery outside the giant wall?

Gwyneth also looked around the place which was covered in

vegetation and moss.

Dudian opened all the suitcases and removed all the parts. He worked fast, so it didn't take him more than a few minutes for him to assemble the cannon. The base of the cannon had a rolling turret. The diameter of the barrel was twenty centimeters while the length was hundred and sixty centimeters. It was the kind of cannon, which was used in forts in old times.

Sergei, Gwyneth, and the others were very curious as Dudian assembled the cannon.

"Is it a catapult?" Sergei was puzzled: "Strange... There is no elastic rope."

Dudian didn't answer his questions and asked the others to bring the gunpowder boxes and follow him.

Sergei and other had long been aware of the existence of the gunpowder boxes. Sergei checked inside one of the boxes when he saw that Dudian wasn't paying attention. From the edge of the box, he took out a handful of gunpowder. He saw that it had an unpleasant smell.

"Is it poison?" Sergei asked as he carried the six gunpowder boxes.

Dudian replied: "If you eat it."

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Sergei's mouth twitched as he put away the idea of exploring the gunpowder boxes. His eyes swept around: "If I'm not mistaken this place... it is the exit of the death passage that was originally rented by the Huasheng consortium." He glanced at Dudian to see his reaction.

Dudian indifferently replied: "It seems your memory is good."

Sergei slightly frowned as he saw Dudian admit his speculation. His fingers tightened onto boxes he was holding onto.

Scar who was moving the cannon was stunned as he looked back at Dudian: "Is this really the exit of the death passage?"

Gwyneth and Jin who saw the reaction of the two suddenly thought about the meaning behind two words. Their faces paled as they looked over Dudian.

Dudian saw the surprise in their looks: "Why are you afraid of death if you have come out of the giant wall to hunt?"

Jin and Scar wryly smiled.

Gwyneth saw that Dudian wasn't going to explain the reason why the place was called the death passage so she looked around at the surrounding environment. Her empty hand quietly affixed on the

hunting sword which was on her waist.

It didn't take long for them to to walk about seven miles from the passage.

Dudian took out the map to check the place. The outer area of the giant wall was depicted in details. There were eight different badges marking the areas. They belonged respectively to six consortia, military and Ryan family. The place which belonged to them had a small circle covering it.

Scott consortium and Green consortium occupied left and right sides of their location. Their hunting grounds were divided into small areas and coded from zero to ten. The hunting ground that belonged to New World consortium was colored in gray representing unclean area.

The consortia had reached a contracted after a long run to update the map in unity so that they could easily identify each other's areas.

Dudian took out another map which was supplied to them by Huasheng consortium after the military crossbow deal. The paper was yellow in color and it was rough. The papermaking technology wasn't very advanced ten years ago. There were some blurry lines depicted by the pencil. The hunting ground was divided into three areas. The first forty miles from the exit of the death passage was first area. According to the information on map it was the habitat of the monsters from level twelve to twenty-five.

The second area was extremely wide and about seventy miles in length. There were giant boneworms living in that area. According to the atlas they are monsters which reach level thirty seven when they mature.

Even a senior hunter would have to run away if facing such a monster. There would be no room for a battle.

Huasheng consortium's hunters had gone up to outermost part of the third area but weren't able to explore. There were no records but only a black colored 'X' logo.

Dudian had seen the map before within the giant wall. At the moment he looked at the map and tried to confirm approximate range of the current position. About four miles away there had to be a small lake. Level nineteen crocodiles should be living in there. This one was an amphibious monster which had excellent latent ability and amazing night vision. It's perfect hunting time was at nights where it could attack even senior hunters. Once it bit then it would be hard to get out of its grasp.

Dudian knew that according to the Huasheng consortium's map the last time he had already been into the second area. But the problem was that he had only encountered variant skeletons and monsters which were lower than level 20. Ten years ago the members of the team sent by the Huasheng consortium should be killed in area 3 or when they returning from there. So at the worst case they were ambushed by the monsters at second area. However after a decade the number of the monsters have decreased a lot. The traces of the monsters has long disappeared from first area. It should be result of migration or cannibalism.

In any case, the overall result was that the safety factor in the area number one and two was much higher than it was ten years ago.

This would be an excellent news for the others but Dudian didn't feel happy.

"Follow me." Dudian took the lead as he went towards the lake.

Along the way Dudian didn't sense the smell of monsters lurking near by. However, what Dudian was most concerned was that even after walking for about three miles he still couldn't see the shadow of the lake. Did Huasheng consortium cheat them? But the drawing date of the map was not new either.

He paused a moment and ordered the Scar to stop in place. He asked Gwyneth and Jin to stay by Scar's side to protect him. Sergei followed Dudian after he put down the gunpowder boxes. He slowly went forward as Dudian drilled through the grasses. Dudian was on alert at all times as he felt that a monster would attack him anytime. His muscles were tightened as he knew that he couldn't detect the presence of some monsters.

It didn't take long for them to reach a basin. The place was covered with aquatic weeds and there was a little water at the bottom of the basin.

Dudian's eyes narrowed as he gently put his toes on the ground. He felt that the soil become soft so he stepped back. Was this place

a lake a decade ago? How come such a lake would turn into a basin of water in about ten years?

Sergei's face slightly changed as he went back and said to Dudian: "Get back!"

Dudian was surprised as he rapidly stepped back. He checked the place but he couldn't detect anything: "What?"

Sergei pointed towards a place about ten meters away from them: "Do you see those branches? Can you see the eyeballs?"

Dudian looked at the direction Sergei's fingers were pointing to. He saw that rotten brances had falled onto water. The place below them was dark but it didn't affect his vision. There was indeed a jade-like mottled ball. It looked like a moss on the ground.

Dudian whispered: "Let's check it out." He bent over and pulled a piece of mud from the ground. He threw it past to the place.

The mud hit the death branches. Bang! Water spilled around. At the same time the whole place shook up and that thing made a 180 degree twist and went into the other side of the basin.

Dudian took a deep breath. He didn't think that in the dry parts of the lake there would be potential monster which would be very dangerous for them. The scent exuded from its body was very light and it was completely covered by the various scents coming out of the basin of water.

“Sure enough …” There was a trace of relief in Sergei’s eyes as he saw the figure to twist and run away: “This things are a little hard to kill. However once their camouflage is exposed then they will usually escape. They won’t attack unless they are too hungry.”

Dudian’s eyes lit up: “There has to be lots of prey so that they won’t attack unless they are too hungry. Most probably they live in flocks…”

Sergei was startled to see Dudian’s speculation about the monster just by seeing it once. He nodded and said: “They are not weak beasts. There could be monsters which could kill it only by one attack but it doesn’t mean that they would be successful. These things are capable of killing level 7 or 8 monsters.”

Dudian nodded. The fur and claws of the monsters advanced as they went through evolution. However human wore only hunter armors. They mainly isolated radiation but played small amount of role in protecting their bodies. The armors worn by the hunters were nothing but a joke in front of a level 20 monsters. IT could tear them apart with a simple claw attack.

“This is the place where we will hunt.” Dudian looked around and made his mind.

Dudian turned back and went to the place where Gwyneth and others were waiting for them: “There is a water source near this place. Monsters should be coming over so we have to make traps near this area. Gwyneth you should be the fastest in our group. So

after the traps are arranged you will be responsible for luring the monsters."

Gwyneth frowned and looked at Dudian.

Dudian also stared back at her. The girl slowly recovered her eyes and didn't say anything.

"How are we going to set traps?" Jin wasn't aware of the methods.

Dudian showed him the boxes: "Go around and dig small pits. Afterwards bury them."

Gwyneth snorted: "This should be mix of sulfur powder and other materials. If I'm not mistaken it is a poison and if the monsters don't eat them then they are useless. Why should we bury them under the earth?"

Dudian replied: "This is a weapon not a poison. You just do as I say."

The others looked at each other. This powder is a weapon? Why would you bury a weapon under the earth?

However they didn't continue to discuss as they saw the firm look on Dudian's face. Sergei and Dudian discussed the potential places according to a hunting plan. Afterwards, they dig the pits and buried the boxes of explosives in them.

The weather got dark while the traps were properly arranged.

Dudian went back to the ruins with the others. He found a small shelter within the rubble of concrete and they used it as a base. They began to eat dry food and rest.

Jin looked around the creepy place: “Would monsters come around at night?”

Dudian threw a bottle of undead powder at him: “No. As long as we don’t burn a fire nothing will happen. Most of the monsters are cold-blooded animals and are sensitive to the heat.”

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Jin's face changed the moment he heard Dudian's words. He wanted to propose to use flames to disperse the monsters that were possibly lurking around.

"Tonight Scar will stay up as a watchman. Sergei and Gwyneth will have a task tomorrow so have a good rest." Dudian said.

Scar nodded in confirmation. Out of five's fighting capability and strength, he and Jin were at the bottom. He was going to take the initiative to stay as a watchman for the night even if Dudian didn't say.

Sergei and Gwyneth didn't comment instead leaned against the wall to rest quietly.

Dudian also leaned against the concrete wall. Because of friction and pressure, the concrete wall turned into chunks of powder and fell from the wall. After three hundred years solid concrete had faced endless rain and extremely hot air corrosion. It made him think about the giant wall. According to the information from the history records in the library, the giant wall was built three hundred years ago but still stood today as if it was built yesterday. He had to admire the technology and materials used while building it.

A cold breeze was stroking the weeds and grasses in ruins, and rustling sounds echoed out. It was accompanied by a smell of plant

juices with a touch of an astringent taste which filled the air.

All five of them were sitting in the shelter. Jin had taken out his sword and tightly held it in his arms. He did so that in a case of a sudden danger he wouldn't be too late to pull it out.

Scar's face looked dignified as he patrolled around the place. He used both visual and auditory detection to feel and hear the signs of trouble in the surrounding area. Weak light from the moon and the stars lit the area.

The night passed.

Dudian, Sergei, and the others slept until dawn. They didn't encounter any monster attacks during their sleep. It was not because of their good luck, but Dudian had previously picked the place after sensing the dangers. Most of the monsters were far away from their location which was why they had avoided encountering them at night.

Dudian woke up when the sky brightened. He saw Scar sitting outside the stone shelter. Scar was looking around and didn't look tired.

Dudian took out dry food and water to eat up. He made sure that Sergei, Gwyneth, and Jin are awake too.

Scar was relieved the moment he saw Dudian wake up: "Why so early?"

“I’m used to it.” Dudian waited for others to eat and restore their spirits.

“Time to set off.”

Dudian packed the dry food and led the way in front. It didn’t take long for them to reach the location where they had left the cannon. It was still isolated in the grasses. There were no footprints of any monsters close to the cannon.

Dudian looked at Sergei: “Because of your previous experience you should know how to lure monsters, don’t you?” Dudian didn’t intend to expose the abilities of his magic marks in front of others if it was not necessary. Although they would be able to find out which magic marks he had but the timing of sooner or later decided a lot of things.

Sergei shrugged his shoulders: “Those monsters from yesterday are no different from normal beasts. Luring them out is pretty simple. We can use sound or smell. But you should know that monsters are more inclined to come out if they smell the taste of blood. In this case, we can’t rely on magic mark abilities but can rely on the most primitive approach.”

Dudian nodded: “The efficiency of attracting with sound is going to be low. Firstly we will lure to the monsters from yesterday and kill them. Afterward, we will use their blood to attract the other monsters.”

Sergei replied: “It’s very hard to lure out those monsters. They don’t easily set foot out from their habitat. It’s their slaughterhouse. Moreover, they prefer to be hidden when attacking and most of them aren’t physically strong. Additionally, their endurance is poor. So even if you try to provoke them to come to shore, they won’t come out.”

“If they won’t come out on their own then we will force them out.” Dudian looked at Gwyneth: “You wait for us to come back. Don’t forget to protect them both. If you see that there is no reply from us in a long time, then take both of them and flee back to the exit of the giant wall and wait for us.”

Gwyneth nodded in confirmation.

Sergei saw that Dudian wasn’t planning to give up: “We shouldn’t mess with such a troublesome thing. It’s tiring to fight against monsters which can drill into the soil.” He complained but helplessly followed after Dudian.

Sergei and Dudian returned to the swamp basin from yesterday.

Dudian glanced over the plants of the swamp. They were so dense that at first glance you would think that it was a flat ground. However, there were no other plants other than a long grass which reached his waist. It was easy to get stuck in there.

“How can we force them out?” Sergei looked at Dudian.

“Is it me or are you the senior hunter?” Dudian glanced back.

Sergei’s face was gloomy: “Anyway, I don’t want to mess with this kind of troublesome monsters. It’s just too dangerous. ”

Dudian pulled out the bow and arrow. He looked at the basin while he held the bow in his left hand and arrow in the right. He aimed and shot.

Puff! The arrow didn’t enter the soil but paused a bit over the basin. A low roar echoed as the water surface twisted. The grasses slightly shook, and the arrow sunk inside and disappeared.

Dudian could clearly see the huge outline that just emerged. It was about ten meters long. It seemed close to the crocodiles from the old era.

Sergei saw the movement too: “It’s useless. Even if you attack and inflict pain on it, the monster won’t come out but instead drill deeper. Would an assassin come out to fight you head on if you had exposed him?”

Dudian didn’t reply but instead focused on the area. Soon he made another shot.

Another low roar echoed. Arrow seemed to have stuck onto soil but then suddenly sank. It was as if soil dragged it inside.

Dudian sneered as he saw Dudian was not planning to give up.

His brows gradually wrinkled as he looked around the place.

From time to time he would pull out a bow and shoot. Some would end empty while the others would hit the target.

In about half an hour all the arrows brought by Dudian were shot. His face was dignified as he checked the basin. He didn't expect that the number of monsters lurking in this marshes was more than he had imagined. There were at least twenty of them.

"It seems that the first batch of our hunt targets will change." Dudian put away the bow.

Sergei replied: "You won't be able to kill all of them inside the basin. It is a joke. Don't be tempted by them. Moreover, after you get inside all of them will rush out at the same time. Additionally, they won't come out because you and I aren't enough for them. Of course, if we had removed my spikes then I would return to my top condition. In that case, I would freely kill these small time monsters."

"Don't blow it." Dudian interrupted Sergei: "Go back and inform Gwyneth to come over. I'll take these guys, and she will lead them back to the previous place."

Sergei snapped: "You weren't able to attract even one of them in the last half-day…What are you talking about?"

"Who said that I was trying to attract them?" Dudian gave him a

stern look “Are you going back or are you going to talk some more?”

Sergei grunted in anger: “Alright… I’ll see how you attract them. But remember I was not planning to accompany you to death!” He left the place.

Dudian took out his sword after Sergei left. He began to cut the yellow weeds next to the swamp.

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The sharp sword chopped off the weeds, dry leaves and so on.

It didn’t take long for Dudian to cut down those dry weeds and trees. He threw the weeds and branches into the basin. He tried to scatter them around the wetlands as much as possible.

Gwyneth reached over and looked at the swamp in front of her: “According to Sergei you want me to lead the monsters over to initial location but do you expect me to go inside?”

Dudian nodded: “No, wait for them to come out. Make sure that you lure them to the place we agreed yesterday and act as planned.”

Gwyneth frowned: “But how are you going to lure them out?”

“Simple.” Dudian lit up a match. He had prepared a barrel of kerosene. If there were more than one, the effect would be much greater.

The match ignited, and Dudian grabbed a knot from the weeds and lit it up. He threw it into the marsh, and the flame began to spread around quickly. The fire burned, and the heat wave began to increase. The smoke rolled.

It didn’t take long for a raging fire to cover the swamp while the

heat rapidly increased. Dudian was staring at the grasses when he said in a low tone: “They are about to come out.” He turned and ran away as soon as he reminded Gwyneth.

Gwyneth’s face changed as she stared at the swamp. One of the places where the fire burned began to bulge. The large mouth of a monster came out first. Its fangs were as sharp as the steel spikes. It bit the grass and sputtered the mud as it went out of the basin.

Gwyneth’s heart went cold as she saw the dark figure which was more than ten meters in length. She didn’t think that hunters would face ferocious monsters such as this. No wonder all of them were as cunning as a fox and as brutal as tyrants.

She bent over and picked up mud. Gwyneth threw it past. The muscles of her body were tightened as she was ready to escape any moment.

Roar! Roar!

Seven or eight dark shadows roared and drilled out from the flames. Their cold eyes fell onto Gwyneth’s body who was standing by the shore.

Gwyneth didn’t have any experience with fighting monsters or hunting them. All her skills were nurtured so that she could hunt down human hunters. So without the slightest idea of what to do, she turned back and ran.

...

Several corroded buildings were crushed by the vines over time and had created a small hill.

Jin, Scar, and Sergei were standing over the hill and observing the direction of the swamp. Sergei's face slightly changed when he heard the faint beast roars. He didn't think that Dudian would have a way to lure out the monsters from the swamp. His eyes lit up as he looked at Scar and Jin, who were at a loss: "He is coming back. Get ready!"

Jin and Scar weren't aware how he knew about Dudian's actions, but they knew that Sergei wouldn't tease or lie to them on such an occasion. According to Dudian's instructions, they went to a high slope near the hill. There were few stone rocks there which were about four meters in diameter. They were real rocks, not the concrete stones that had resulted from the collapse of the buildings.

Whoosh!

Dudian quickly rushed out of the bushes.

"Come on!" Dudian cried out as he quickly ran to the front of the hill. However, his footsteps slowed down as he was puzzled. He looked around and turned to his left side. There was a damp atmosphere over there.

“Is there another monster lurking in the vicinity?” Dudian was startled. He hadn’t noticed the smell exuded by the monster earlier on since its smell was very similar to the soil. However, the monster made a slow movement which caught his attention. He knew that something that exuded such a smell couldn’t move and if it moved it meant that it was a monster. Moreover, the monster seemed to move a bit further away, however the smell diffused was far behind from its actual movement.

His eyelids beat up as he got nervous. There was an unknown and dangerous premonition in his heart. He stayed still for a few seconds and turned towards the hill. He ran to the place of ambush and said to Scar and Jin: “You will help Gwyneth flee away. I have a premonition that there is another dangerous monster lurking by. Be very careful!”

Sergei didn’t ask him the method used to lure the monsters out from the swamp. But he had a dignified expression in his face: “There is a kind of a gripping feeling. I instinctively think that there are other hunters in ambush or there is a terrible monster that was lead here by you.”

Dudian took a deep breath: “Go on! Follow the second plan.”

Sergei stared at him for a second and then turned away. He ran down the hill and went into the bushes.

Dudian stood in front of the cannon. There were three artillery shells ready to be shot. He had yellow powder only enough to produce three shells, so he didn’t make too much bulk. Moreover, this was the first experience and was meant to test the destructive

power of the cannon.

Whoosh...

Suddenly a few black spots appeared within the grasses. The first was Gwyneth, who foolishly ran straight on. Behind the girl, there were three long shadows which were more than ten meters long. They seemed like huge crocodiles. Their bodies were flat and had short limbs. However, their jaws were very big, and their grip would have an immeasurable power. Their necks and spines were covered in cuticle armor. It had a weird pattern. It seemed that their skin armor could protect them and withstand the attacks of most monsters at the same level or below as them.

They were a level 19 monster, mutated crocodiles!

Dudian tightly stared at them as he held a match in one hand while the other hand clutched onto the cannon as he adjusted the aim.

On an arc-shaped open space in front of the hill, there was word ‘ten’ engraved onto the weeds. It was the marking which he had engraved previously, and Gwyneth had to lure them here.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The sound similar to a low thunder echoed out as the crocodiles, which weighed several tons trampled the ground. The places where their claws touched resulted in winds which made the

weeds to sway to their sides.

Gwyneth leaped through the weeds. Her body was strong enough to bypass the weeds, and it seemed that they couldn't block her. She ran in a straight line. The spikes which were pierced onto her arms, scapula, and ribs were rubbing the hunter armor she was wearing.

It didn't take long for Gwyneth to reach the open space in front of the hill. It was a street from the old times. The asphalt had long lost its effect and was covered in weeds. Gwyneth was sweating and struggling to run past.

Dudian lit the match and fired the cannon. The muzzle was already directed and aimed at the three mutated crocodiles.

Boom!

A deafening sound echoed out and violently resounded in their ears. The base under the cannon was pressured into a concave as the fire burst and flashed out from the barrel's muzzle. The shell bypassed the first crocodile, but hit the second one.

Bang!

It was like if an invisible hand had lifted and forced the second crocodile's body to fly away. It flipped around two times and hit the third crocodile.

The first crocodile’s tail was also affected by the explosion. It lost its balance, but was still able to control itself.

Scar and Jin, who heard the amazing sound and saw the effect of the explosion were stunned. They couldn’t believe their eyes.

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Gwyneth's cheeks had gone pale because of the frightened state she was in as she ran in front. She didn't look back at the monsters, but looked up at Dudian who was on the hill. There was doubts and curiosity in her mind about Dudian's plan. Moreover, she wanted to see how he was going to use that strange weapon to fight. However, she didn't expect to see an unforgettable horror scene.

Dudian didn't falter, but quickly stuffed the second shell into the cannon. He lit the lead, aimed at the first mutated crocodile and shot again.

Boom!

Smoke burst out of the muzzle of the cannon.

After the first had missed shot, Dudian had mastered the usage of the cannon. The second shot hit the first mutated crocodile.

The mutated crocodile was about to chase after Gwyneth when the second shell fell from the sky and hit its neck. Although the hard armored skin protected its neck, but the shell had successfully hit and damaged it. Crocodile's body twitched in pain as it slowly tried to climb. Blood oozed out from its body.

Dudian pulled arrows which he had prepared in advance. There were two quivers full of arrows close to cannon. One of them was

full of high-quality iron arrows while the other quiver was full of arrows with mercury heads. He used the arrows with mercury to shoot at mutated crocodile's eyes. There was about one hundred and fifty meters distance between them and Dudian's accurately aimed at his target.

Puff! The arrow pierced the mutated crocodile. It began to howl and shake its head in pain.

Gwyneth was relieved as she saw the first crocodile was injured, but when her eyes fell onto the body of the third crocodile, she panicked again. This one wasn't injured at all, and it was about to run after her.

Whoosh!

Gwyneth turned around and began to run around the hill. She was afraid that the moment she went too far the crocodile would be out of Dudian's shooting range. In that case, she would have to fight the crocodile by herself.

Dudian aimed the arrow and shot.

Bang!

The arrow couldn't pierce through the armor of the crocodile.

Dudian continued to shoot without stopping.

One after another arrows were hitting the crocodile's body. Finally, one of them pierced the crocodile's eye. It began to roar and grimace in pain.

All of them sighed in relief after spectating the scene. However, a burst of shrill screams echoed out from the distant grasses. Gwyneth, Scar, and Jin were startled as they listened to the roar that seemed to belong to a mutated crocodile.

Dudian looked at the bushes as he thought of the previous monster that smelled like the soil of the earth. There was a small difference between that odor and the smell of earth. At the moment this odor was mixed with a bloody smell. The odors were mixed into the air and drifted into his nose. The source of the odors was the place where the roars sounded.

Dudian's face turned ugly as he thought about the possibility of his misunderstanding about the mutated crocodiles. Although they had evolved from normal beasts, but no doubt that they were fiercer than normal ones hundreds of times. Previously, when they were provoking the mutated crocodiles from the shore, they thought that crocodiles didn't want to consume them...But...it wasn't because they didn't want to, it was because they were afraid to come onto the shore because of the predator waiting for them.

Now, this monster has appeared.

After they had used the flame to force the mutated crocodiles out of the swamp, this thing also dived out to hunt.

Dudian sucked in cold air as he shouted at Gwyneth in a hurry: “Come here! Hurry! Don’t wait over there!”

Gwyneth recovered her eyes from a distance and saw the anxious expression on Dudian’s face. She rushed up the hill.

Dudian loaded the last shell into the canon as Gwyneth climbed the hill. He was staring at the bushes in front. The smell of the blood began to disappear and be covered with the odor of the soil. However, the monster seemed to be staying at the same place without movement.

“Is it eating?” Dudian didn’t dare to relax as he stared at the bushes. Occasionally he would look at the three seriously injured crocodiles. They were slowly gathering around the hill.

“How should we deal with them?” Jin asked as his body slightly trembled. Previously, as a Knight of light, he had always despised hunters who wandered outside the giant wall. He would never imagine that a hunter would live and fight in such a dangerous place and deal with such monsters all day long.

Dudian slowly shook his head as he stared at the bushes. He couldn’t help but glance at the three crocodiles as they suddenly quietened down. His pupils shrank as he saw three of them round together and shiver. They were looking straight at the bushes.

It would be difficult to imagine these monsters will show such a cowardly and helpless gesture if Dudian personally didn’t see it.

Dudian vigilantly looked around. Suddenly he saw a glimpse of a thing, and he saw shocked at the sight. A monster poked through the bushes. Its body was nearly thirty meters long. It had short limbs, but the claws were extremely long and sharp. A terrifying thing about the monster was that it had two heads!

“Twin headed snake lizard!” Dudian was stunned as he saw the level 27 existence in front of the bushes.

He had hunted a level 26 black weaver with Glenn, but at that time Glenn was almost killed. Moreover, the only senior hunter in their crew who had experience in fighting against monsters was Sergei. However, he was not necessarily Glenn’s opponent. After all, because of several years spent in prison, he had become ‘rusty.’

“It turned out to be this monster. No wonder it dares to capture mutated crocodiles as food …” Dudian clutched onto the cannon as he intensely stared at the newcomer.

Jin and Scar also noted the monster which lurked within the grass. It was similar to a prehistoric beast. Jin also shouted out loud because of fear.

The crocodiles were uneasy, and one of them began to growl. This low roar wasn’t meant to scare the twin headed snake lizard, but it seemed to convene message to its companions.

Dudian stood on the highest hill as he looked at the twin-headed snake lizard. There were nervousness and fear in his heart, but at

the same time an inexplicable excitement burst out.

Whoosh!

The twin-headed snake lizard rushed out from the bushes.

It was like a tiger preying a rabbit. There were about hundred meters of distance between the bushes and the crocodiles. In less than a second, it had crossed over 50 meters. The next moment it was in front of the three mutated crocodiles. Dudian's pupils shrank as he observed the predator in action.

The mutated crocodiles roared in horror as they saw the twin-headed snake lizard appear. One of them used its tail while the other two used their mouths and claws to attack it.

Twin-headed snake lizard was extremely flexible. It easily resolved the first wave of attacks and its two large snake heads bit onto the mutated crocodile. One of the heads grabbed onto its neck while the other bit its forelimb. The next moment the second head let go of the claw and began to wave right and left in front of a crocodile's head to attract its attention.

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Dudian and the others were surprised to see the twin-headed snake lizard tries to embrace the mutated crocodile. The other two mutated crocodiles didn't take the opportunity to run away, but blatantly went towards the predator. They tried to bite onto its body and force it to let go of the crocodile. Even though the twin-headed snake lizard was a level 27 monster, it wouldn't be unscathed after being bitten by two mutated crocodiles.

It didn't mean that those two crocodiles would be able to kill it by biting it, but a good predator would always minimize the damages through the hunt. It had to ensure its survival as long as it could.

Twin-headed snake lizard overlooked the three mutated crocodiles as they were facing off each other. After a brief confrontation with the other two, it attacked the first targeted mutated crocodile.

The crocodile opened its mouth to bite the oncoming twin-headed snake lizard.

However, the predator's heads were extremely flexible. One of the heads curved around and bit into its forelimb. The mouth of the snake's head didn't have two fangs, but instead had a row of dense and sharp fangs. It pulled back the mutated crocodile as its body twisted around it. It rolled around and swept over it.

Bang! The snake tail began to force down and press on the

crocodile's body.

Both heads made rapid offensive attacks as they bit and tore the crocodile's body while it winded itself around it. The crocodile's tail began to tremble more as its body was wrapped tighter. It fluttered its claws to help itself out.

Afterward, both of the heads were lifted and stared at the other hostile crocodiles.

Both crocodiles seemed to realize that it would be difficult to save their companion, so they gradually lost the fighting morale. They slowly moved back.

Dudian and the others were shocked as they witnessed the battle between high-level monsters.

Dudian awakened the moment he saw that twin-headed snake lizard had tangled up the crocodile. He immediately turned the muzzle towards the body of twin-headed snake lizard. Without waiting for another moment, he lit the lead. After a brief silence, a loud noise echoed as the shell flew out.

Boom!

The shell hit the twin-headed snake lizard body and tore open its skin. The scales covering that part of the body dropped down.

Dudian frowned as he narrowed his eyes and concentrated on

twin-headed snake lizard's body. The site where the shell had hit its body was bloody, and a large area was injured, but its body still tightly held and been wrapped around the crocodile's body. The attack didn't cause a serious injury let alone repel it. But after being hit up by the shell, the twin-headed snake lizard's body constricted even tighter.

Dudian moved away from the cannon and once again took the bow and arrows in his arms.

Gwyneth, who was silent most of the time was shocked the moment she saw Dudian's actions. She gently whispered: "Don't attract its attention. Otherwise, it will come after us."

Naturally, Dudian was aware of this, so he didn't immediately shoot but waited.

Because of the sudden attack the other crocodiles, which confronted the twin-headed snake lizard panicked. They recalled the pain they had felt as they heard the violent sound. Subconsciously they began to distance themselves away from the twin-headed snake lizard.

Twin-headed snake lizard looked around and found Dudian and the other three standing at the top of the hill. Its eyes detected the four small heat waves. However, Dudian and the rest didn't attract its attention. Instead, its tight body suddenly loosened and it rushed out towards of the fleeing mutated crocodiles.

It was a sudden attack. The previous wrapped crocodile's body

fell to the ground and raised a large cloud of dust while its body was motionless.

Roar!

The crocodiles growled in horror as the twin-headed snake lizard was rapidly approaching.

Dudian took the opportunity and made a shot.

Whoosh!

The silver arrow easily pierced through the place where twin-headed snake lizard's body was previously wounded.

Twin headed snake lizard cried out in anger, but didn't stop its offensive attack. Soon it caught the struggling crocodile and wrapped around its body. The other crocodile was about to attack the lizard, so it didn't have time to protect itself from Dudian and the others.

Dudian seized the opportunity and swiftly attacked.

A silver arrow was shot. In about three seconds he made eight shots. Two of those arrows didn't hit the wounded part of twin-headed snake lizard and were easily blocked.

The twin-headed snake lizard howled in pain because of the six

arrows which pierced into its body. However, it's still wrapped itself tightly around the crocodile's body. The crocodile's body armor was tough and could resist attacks. But it was very difficult to bear the squeezing force. The sound of bones shattering echoed as blood began to ooze out of its mouth and eyes.

The last crocodile saw that its companion was killed by the twin-headed snake lizard. It didn't attack, but instead turned around and began to flee.

The twin-headed snake lizard stared in the direction of its departure, but didn't catch up with it.

Dudian looked at the battlefield. He knew that they were the next targets. He turned towards Scar and Jin: "Wait for my gestures. Get ready to attack!"

Jin and Scar's body were overflowing with cold sweat. Their armor was soaked in it. However, their heart calmed after they heard Dudian's words. They took deep breaths and went towards the big rocks.

Dudian began to shoot the arrows. There were no more mutated crocodiles, which could be used to fight against the twin-headed snake lizard. From now on he could only rely on pre-arranged traps and geographical advantage. He wasn't going to retreat!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Twin-headed snake lizard seemed to feel the oncoming danger. Its body twisted and the previously wounded parts were covered. The arrows hit its head and body. The tinkling sounds echoed. However, the arrows burst the moment they hit its body. The mercury sputtered and went into its body along the gaps in its scales.

Dudian stopped when there were only two mercury arrows left. He did not intend to use those two arrows for something else, but he stopped because of habit just for staying on guard for an unimaginable situation.

Twin-headed snake lizard roared and began to rush towards the hill the moment it saw that arrows stopped.

“Attack!” Dudian shouted.

Scar and Jin pushed the first boulder.

Rumble ~!

The rock rolled down the slope.

Twin-headed snake lizard twisted up its body and avoided the boulder. At this time Jin and Scar pushed the second boulder. The twin-headed snake lizard wasn’t injured, but its movement was blocked.

Dudian frowned, but he was aware that these slowly rolling

boulders wouldn't be able to hurt the twin-headed snake lizard.

Gwyneth's face was pale as she looked at Dudian: "We should withdraw now! If we wait for it to climb then, we won't be able to get away. "

Dudian replied: "We are not in a hurry."

Gwyneth's face was ugly as she looked at the boy who was as tall as her: "Do you have a way out? It is not an existence that we can fight against."

Dudian didn't speak, but he concentrated on the twin-headed snake lizard which was below the hill.

Jin and Scar looked at twin-headed snake lizard after four boulders were pushed down. They rushed back and asked: "Now... What are going to do now?"

Dudian's finger clenched as he stared at the foot of the hill.

Twin-headed snake lizard saw that there were no more boulders coming down, so it tried to climb the hill.

Boom!

The whole hill shook as a loud sound echoed.

Jin almost fell to the ground.

A sharp and painful roar echoed. All of them looked at the footsteps of the hill. The twin-headed snake lizard's body had fallen to the side of the ground. At the initial place where it was standing there was a huge pit. Smoke billowed out of it.

Gwyneth and the other two were shocked as they looked at the giant pit. They remember that it was the exact place where they had buried the powder boxes yesterday.

Dudian frowned as he looked at the body of the twin-headed snake lizard. It was seriously injured, but it was not a deadly wound.

"It would be much simpler to hunt if we had a catapult ..." Dudian whispered. But at the moment there were no tools at hand. He pondered a little and said to Gwyneth: "Get ready to fight."

Gwyneth was mesmerized by the scene. However the moment she heard Dudian's words she remembered the plan they used to lure of the monsters from the swamp. She understood what Dudian meant and turned away.

Sergei ran from behind the hills and caught up with them as Gwyneth left. He looked at Dudian with excitement: "It's incredible! I had lit the fire, and such a destructive power was expelled."

Dudian smiled. They had used thin tubes to stretch out the fuse to another place. It was the original method used in the early days to explode the landmines: “It’s hurt now. We have to kill it before its wounds are healed.”

Sergei nodded in confirmation: “Moreover the bloody smell it exudes now will lead other monsters to here. We must act quickly, otherwise… ”

Dudian didn’t even want to think about monsters which preyed on an existence, such as twin-headed snake lizard. It was very hard to cope with it, let alone something which was a natural predator of the twin-headed snake lizard: “Gwyneth has already gone… We are going to use fire.”

Sergei’s eyes lit up: “Fire?! Good method!”

Dudian looked back at the twin-headed snake lizard. He didn’t know whether the mercury arrows would be able to poison and kill the monster.

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Dudian stood on top of the hill as he watched the twin-headed snake lizard's movements. Perhaps its wound was so bad that it couldn't get up. Maybe it was paralyzed and was unable to twist its body. From the twin-headed snake lizard's actions, it seemed that it was dying.

However, Dudian was aware of the cunning side of monsters from his past experiences. Dudian wasn't going to be confused by its appearance, whether it was true or false. (The lizard's acting) He would only believe it if there was no doubt that it had really died.

The flames began to cluster the weeds circling the place. They quickly spread to the surrounding area at an amazing degree. The smoke billowed sheltering over the grassland. The waves of heat swept through the area.

The open space in front of the hill was covered in an instant with a sea of fire.

The twin-headed snake lizard's body shrank in fear.

Dudian was sure that the injury was not as serious as it looked on the surface of the twin-headed snake lizard's body. The peristaltic movement of its body was a proof of that. He pulled out iron arrows and began to fire at its body. Dudian's aim was its eyes.

Whoosh ...

There was a rain of arrows.

The heads of the twin-headed snake lizard swayed around as the arrows hit it. However, its skin was so hard that the arrows couldn't penetrate through and just hit the corners of the stratum and fell.

In a matter of seconds, dozens of arrows were shot. However, scales were easily able to resist them.

Dudian's face was gloomy. He knew about the destructive power of his shots at 100 meters distance. They failed to pierce the snake lizard's scales which showed how hard the biological structure of the scales was. Moreover, it seemed that internal distribution of the particles of the scales had evolved into an unimaginable level.

"It's no wonder that the bodies of these monsters are taken back. Some of them could be made into weapons and armors that humans would never be able to create." Dudian put away the bow and went down the hill. He took a boulder and threw it over at the twin-headed snake lizard.

Whoosh!

Boulder flew away and fell.

Twin-headed snake lizard entrenched its body in surprise and

rushed to move up. Its body twisted and swung. It was able to avoid the rock which swept over the sea of fire.

Dudian continued to raise rocks and throw them over. He lacked the tools, so he was going to fight with the things at hand. However, tools and equipment were the epitomes of human wisdom. It was a unique power which no other animals were able to acquire.

Whoosh!

Twin-headed snake lizard again twisted its body and avoided the second stone that was cast at it.

Gwyneth, who came back joined Sergei to help Dudian.

Even if this level 27 monster was seriously injured, it was extremely risky to engage with it in close combat.

Gwyneth and Sergei followed after Dudian and began to throw the rocks. However, they secretly cursed at the cunning monster.

All three of them were raised and throwing boulders. The twin-headed snake lizard was frightened as it didn’t expect such a shameless enemy attack.

It was very difficult for it to twist its body. Although it still had a lot of energy, but the wound in its abdomen was too large. It was very inconvenient for it to move and dodge. One of the boulders

hit its tail. It roared in pain as it quickly retreated outside the hill.

However, the bushes outside were still in flames. Although many of them were green weeds and burning slowly but the fire was strong. It couldn't easily pass through them. So the twin-headed snake lizard shrank next to the flames and tried to stay away from Dudian and others.

"It's trying to open the distance." Sergei breathed deeply as he saw the position of the twin-headed snake lizard. He wanted to give up.

Dudian immediately said: "We will get it at all costs."

Sergei smiled wryly.

Jin and Scar were responsible for bringing boulders while the other three were using their bodies as stone throwing machines.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

It was very difficult for twin-headed snake lizard to avoid three boulders at the same time. The boulders that hit its body would smash and crack its scales.

Twin-headed snake lizard was scared because of the continued boulder attacks. Moreover, the ground was full of blood which was leaking out of its body. However, the weeds at the outer part of the open space had been burned to ashes, but the temperature was still

hot. The twin-headed snake lizard moved towards those areas where the flame was extinguished. Its body twisted up as the exposed flesh and blood was affected by the hot flames and waves of heat.

Dudian saw that it was opening the distance further. He looked at Sergei and Gwyneth: “Get ready. We are going to fight it in close combat.”

Gwyneth and Sergei were shocked. Although the twin-headed snake lizard was heavily injured because of the cannon, the explosion and the boulders and its body seemed in a horrible condition but it still had a strong momentum. However, the moment they saw the determination in Dudian’s eyes they knew that there was no room for discussion. Both of them nodded in confirmation.

Dudian took the lead as the other two followed after him.

Jin and Scar saw that three had gone to attack the twin-headed snake lizard. They were aware that they would be able to help them out, so they just prayed for them on the hill.

Dudian caught up with the twin-headed snake lizard. He pulled the bow and arrows and began to shoot to attract its attention.

The arrows were shot at its wounded parts. Twin-headed snake lizard noticed Dudian because of the pain. Its body retreated as its two snake heads ferociously rushed over at Dudian.

Dudian didn't think that it will burst out this way. He hastily went back while he shouted at Gwyneth and Sergei: "You attack it from sides while I attract its attention!"

Sergei and Gwyneth separated. Sergei pulled out his spear while Gwyneth used a sword. One from the right and the other from the left began to attack the twin-headed snake lizard.

Twin-headed snake lizard's tail was swung around a lot, so they didn't dare to get too close to it.

Dudian saw that both of them weren't really attacking the beast, but acting so because of his orders. There were anger and helplessness in his heart. He gave up on attacking, turned and ran back to the direction of the hill.

Twin-headed snake lizard wanted to catch up with Dudian, but it changed its decision the moment it saw Dudian heading over to the hills. It seems that it subconsciously was vigilant of the place because of the boulder attacks.

Dudian stopped to see that Sergei and Gwyneth were not willing to attack. He quickly pondered about other ways to solve out the problem. He loudly shouted out: "Both of you hold on while I get some helpers."

Sergei and Gwyneth were confused and doubtful about his words. However, before any of them could ask a question, Dudian had already left away.

Both of them thought that he had retreated as the reason given by the Dudian wasn't logical.

Assistance?

Where would he find helpers?

Sergei was speculating while he tried to cope with twin-headed snake lizard.

Dudian sensed the smell and swiftly ran in one direction. After about seven or eight corners he finally saw the aimlessly wandering figure. It was one of the mutated variant skeletons which he had hunted the last time. Its body was extremely large.

Dudian shot an arrow. He turned back and ran.

This mutated skeleton roared as it was attacked and ran after Dudian.

It didn't take long for Dudian to return to the place where the twin-headed snake lizard was. At the moment Gwyneth and Sergei were harassing the twin-headed snake lizard from time to time. If twin headed snake lizard was attacking Sergei, then Gwyneth would try to grab its attention while harassing it from the other side.

Both of them were relieved to see Dudian come back. Also, they saw a huge and ferocious looking human body roar and run after

Dudian. Its arms had scythes.

"Hide!"

Dudian yelled: "Make sure that it stays within this place while I continue to find some more assistance!"

Gwyneth and Sergei were shocked. They found it funny, but in a dumb way. Although it was a very simple method, but it doesn't mean that it didn't have an effect. At such a moment no one would think of such method. Even if they thought about it, there would be no one with the courage to do it!

After all, they were dealing with a monster. Why would you lead other monsters towards yourself too?

Dudian ran towards the twin-headed snake lizard. The grasses which were on fire had covered the twin-headed snake lizard in a shape which was looking similar to letter 'c'. The snake lizard was in the middle.

The variant skeleton was attracted by the strong smell of blood as it lost the figure of Dudian from its sight. It blatantly roared as it rushed at it.

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Dudian didn’t stop but continued to lure monsters as he found them by sensing their odors.

Time passed.

Dudian went back and forth for many times. He was able to attract six variant skeletons which were wandering aimlessly. He would find the previous variant skeleton dead whenever he led a new to twin-headed snake lizard. Most of the time he would see that upper body of the variant skeleton would be completely bitten off leaving only the lower body. Some of them even completely disappeared. He regretted knowing that twin-headed snake lizard ate them. He knew that the cold crystals in their heads were lost if he couldn’t get twin-headed snake lizard killed.

Dudian tried to lure other monsters over in addition to variant skeletons. He would parry with such monsters and agitate them. Afterward, he would run towards the twin-headed snake lizard.

Variant skeletons, demon spider, blood wolf…

Dudian attracted one monster after another. None of these monsters were over the level 20. Out of all the monsters, only the ‘swamp lizard’ was a level 18 beast whose habitat was the swamps. If the previous basin were not occupied by a group of mutated crocodiles then by now swamp lizard would be the overlord of that area.

The twin-headed snake lizard's wounds began to increase as Dudian continuously attracted monsters. Especially the demon spider was effective against the twin-headed snake lizard. Although it was a level 15 beast which could be easily overpowered and killed by Dudian, it was a very troublesome monster. It was highly toxic. The spider silk, which it spat out contained deadly venom. The beasts which were higher level than it, would often not be able to catch the demon spider because of this.

Although the twin-headed snake lizard was able to kill the demon spider successfully, but it was affected with lots of wounds caused by poisonous silks. Especially, its scales were affected as they would fall off as the toxin spread over them. It had resulted in an advantage for swamp lizard and blood wolf, which were lured afterward.

Dudian looked at the dying twin-headed snake lizard. He was not planning to lure any more monsters. In fact, there were no monsters around. If he wanted to attract more of them, he would have to travel a long distance. Moreover, long trips such as those would wear and tear his physical endurance. It was not worth attracting any more monsters. The continuous fights had weakened the Twin-headed snake lizard, and they had learned its abilities and tactics while observing it fight the other monsters. Dudian believed that Sergei, Gwyneth and himself would be able to kill it at this point.

In fact, if Gwyneth and Sergei were in their top condition then they would be able to behead the seriously injured twin-headed snake lizard.

Sergei looked at the pool of blood where twin-headed snake lizard was slightly twisting its body. His eyes were excited as he clenched his long spear. He took the first step as he went closer to the twin-headed snake lizard.

Gwyneth no longer stayed away either. The twin-headed snake lizard was like a tiger without its teeth. It had lost the deterrent.

Dudian had spent a lot of energy, so he didn't go for close combat, but instead used his bow and arrows. He aimed and waited for Sergei and Gwyneth to act.

"Eat it!"

Sergei shouted as he threw the spear. It flew past and pierced into the injured part of the twin-headed snake lizard's body. The beast roared in pain as it twisted its body. Both of its heads were lifted from the ground as they tried to bite Sergei.

Sergei used the other spear to fend off as he rapidly moved back.

Gwyneth began to attack from the other side. Her sword stabbed the twin-headed snake lizard. One of its heads turned over to bite her.

Dudian grabbed the opportunity and shot at it.

Puff! The arrow pierced through the head of the snake, which was previously bitten by a blood wolf. Although the damage caused by the arrow was not big in comparison to a blood wolf's attack, but the snake head roared in pain.

Gwyneth seized the opportunity to attack.

Dudian supported both of them by diverting the snake heads. The fighting efficiency of the hunting team was in top condition.

The twin-headed snake lizard, which was weakened, couldn't get any results from its attacks. Moreover, its physical strength had gradually depleted. One of the snakeheads softly went down as Gwyneth's sword attack made a large cut. A lot of blood spattered.

Twin-headed snake lizard finally died after a few minutes. Both of its heads were cut off while its tail gently twisted at the back.

There was a pond of blood.

The trio was relieved. Although their hearts tired their bodies were full of excitement.

Dudian deeply breathed as he looked at Sergei: "Are you alright?"

Sergei clutched his wounded shoulder and shook his head: "Nothing to be worried about. Little thing." Previously Sergei was accidentally hit by the head of the twin-headed snake lizard. Although he was able to resist using the spear, but his shoulder

was injured.

Dudian retracted his eyes: “Let’s get the materials and leave as soon as possible. The smell of blood will attract other monsters.” He came to a stop in front of the dead body of the demon spider. Its body was pierced by the claws of the twin-headed snake lizard. The intestines and other internal organs were flowing out from its stomach. The place was covered in a green fluid which gave off a very unpleasant odor.

Dudian took out his short dagger and began to cut off its valuable parts. As a member of ‘Temple of Elements,’ he would be able to study these materials and make them into useful items for future hunts.

All of them were huge monsters. Although some parts of their bodies were destroyed in the battle, but there were still many precious organs and parts that remained. Dudian and Sergei cut them off.

Gwyneth’s heart was filled with unspeakable feelings as she watched both of them fiddle with the bodies of the monsters. She looked at Dudian and Sergei’s bodies which were full of blood. The people who had come out of the giant wall to fight in life and death struggles to get materials from the monsters.

She stood silently in the pool of blood. There was spilled blood on her face, so it was hard to guess what she was thinking.

In about ten minutes Sergei and Dudian cut off all the valuable

materials they would be able to carry. One of the most precious ones was the silk sack of the demon spider and swamp lizard's sharp teeth. Twin-headed snake lizard's heads were too big so they would not be able to carry them. But its claws and scales were very valuable.

Dudian cut off its stomach. Gastric juice and other fluids flew off as the heads and upper bodies of the previous variant skeletons fell onto the ground. Because of its stomach juices, their skin was already dissolved. The sight in front of them was ugly and disgusting.

Dudian endured the strange smell and removed their bodies. He split their skulls and removed the cold crystals.

Gwyneth frowned because of this pungent smell. She looked at the cold crystals in Dudian's hands: "What is that thing? Is it a gem?"

"It's the raw material for 'God's blessing'," Dudian replied as he looked at her.

Gwyneth was startled. Although there was no mirror, but she knew that her face had turned ugly. She felt nauseous: "Blessings of God are made from that thing?"

Dudian nodded and put away the cold crystals.

Gwyneth knew that there was no reason for Dudian to lie. She

would never think that the vials used by her when she was a kid to increase her strength were made from these crystals. ‘God’s blessings’ were known as glorious items. She would never expect that they were made from parts of such ugly monsters. It was blasphemy! However, she was not a simple girl that she was in the past. The prison had taught her many things. Although it was difficult to accept, but she didn’t doubt the truth of the matter.

All items were brought together. Dudian was ready to take the storage bag when he heard footsteps echoing from the back. He turned to see the blonde youth rushing over as his face was full of panic.

Dudian’s heart jump: “What has happened?”

Jin shouted out: “D, Dean…bad…Scar was dragged away!”

“What!?” Dudian asked: “Why didn’t you help him?”

“I-I-I tried to help. But Scar said that it wasn’t something that I could cope with. Moreover, it was too fast. It dragged him and ran away. I couldn’t catch up.” Jin’s face was anxious: “Dean, you have to help old Scar…Please…”

Dudian saw the concern and distress expressed on Jin’s face. He knew that both of them had been close friends for a long time and Jin wouldn’t leave Scar in a normal case. He sensed the smell and looked at Jin: “Which direction?”

“Straight up behind the hill,” Jin replied.

Dudian looked at Sergei and Gwyneth: “Pick these things up and wait for me at the entrance.”

“I’ll go with you!” Sergei added.

“No!” Dudian refused immediately. His sense of smell was going to be exposed which he didn’t want at this point. Moreover, Sergei was wounded and wouldn’t play much of a role in a fight. Gwyneth was also exhausted. Although her strength was stronger than Sergei, but the number of spikes pierced into her body greatly affected her combat effectiveness. She wouldn’t be much of a help

“I … …” Jin was about to open his mouth, but Dudian already ran away. He was tracing the smells as he ran in the direction told by Jin. Soon he tracked down Scar and other strange smell. “To the west”, he murmured.

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Whoosh!

Sounds of winds whistled in Dudian's ears as he sprinted. He climbed the hill and passed over it. He was concentrated on the smell as he chased. He saw weeds along the way which had blood spilled and scattered on them. He didn't know whether the blood belonged to Scar or the unknown monster.

His eyes were gloomy as he clenched his fists. He passed through the bushes where he saw a bunch of giant monster bones and collapsed buildings buried under the ruins. He was getting closer to the smell of Scar, and the monster as their odors became thicker. His heart was cold. He increased his speed as he chased over.

In about seven or eight minutes Dudian finally saw a shadow which was about four or five meters tall. It was jumping from one place to the other. It looked like a wolf, but there was no hair on its body. Instead, it was covered with green skin like scales. There were black spots all over its body. There was a cluster of sharp hair on its head, which looked like needles. Its limbs were thick while its tail was long and thin. It was a like a rope which extended from its buttocks.

Although Dudian was looking at it from the back, but he was able to see that there was a thing dangling from its mouth. The two arms shook up and swayed as the monster moved.

Scar!

Dudian’s eyes shrank as killing intent filled him. He took the bow and aimed at the upper body of the running monster.

Whoosh!

The arrow jerked and pierced its buttocks where the tail was connected.

The monster jumped up for a few meters because of the pain. It stopped in front of the grasses and immediately turned towards Dudian. Dudian saw that Scar was unconscious and grabbed by his shoulder. His head was shaking as the monster held onto him.

Anger gushed in his heart as Dudian saw Scar. He also recognized the monster. It was called spotted dog which lived in jungles. They lived in small groups. The spotted dogs were an extremely cunning monster type. The stereotype of foxes from the old era applied to them.

Even though the spotted dog was cunning its level was not high. At the adult stage, it only reached level fourteen. It would be capable of fighting against intermediate level hunters.

A growl came out of spotted dog’s mouth while it tightly bit Scar. It showed hostility against Dudian.

Dudian didn’t have the patience to play hunting games with it, so

he quickly aimed and shot.

However, the spotted dog didn't jump to avoid, but instead used its head. Puff! Puff! The arrows pierced Scar's legs and body.

Dudian's blood boiled and anger burst out of him as he saw the scene. He put away the bow and pulled out the dagger from the waist. He rushed over.

The spotted dog loosened its mouth and threw Scar onto the ground. Its limbs bent down as its posture changed.

Dudian saw that spotted dog was planning to attack him, so he prepared for defense. There were about six meters of distance between them when the spotted dog jumped.

Dudian instantly changed into a defense posture and raised his dagger to pierce its abdomen. However, in the next moment spotted dog's limbs turned as it used its long tail for a sweep attack. It used its tail like a whip and took advantage of the moment. A loud whistle resounded as it swung its tail.

Dudian's pupils shrank as he bent over in a hurry to avoid the attack.

Whooosh! The beast's tail swept over the bushes close by. The weeds were cut off as if a blade was used to mow the lawn.

Dudian pedaled with his feet and sprang towards the spotted dog.

He stabbed the dagger towards the neck of the monster.

The monster didn't seem to think that its attack wouldn't succeed. Nevertheless, its response was not slow as it tried to jump to avoid Dudian's attack. But was it wasn't enough to fully cover its body. Dudian saw that he wouldn't be able to pierce its neck, so he stabbed the dagger on the scales on spotted dog's chest.

The spotted dog retreated.

"Die!" Dudian roared loudly as he sent a punch towards its head. At the same time, he stabbed the dagger once more.

The scales on spotted dog's chest seemed soft but were amazingly tight. Nevertheless, Dudian stabbed the dagger up to its handle.

The spotted dog screamed because of pain. Its limb violently struggled, and its large body caused chaos. Dudian couldn't grasp onto its smooth body. A bit of distance was created, and the spotted dog used the opportunity to run away.

Dudian wanted to catch up, but suddenly thought of Scar. His body abruptly stopped as he returned. He saw that Scar was lying over the weeds as pale as a white paper. He looked like he was in a coma and his condition was bad. The spotted dog had bitten onto his carotid arteries.

Dudian's eyes shrank as he clenched his fist and slowly squatted down. His hand reached onto Scar's chest, and he didn't feel his

heart beat. The huge bite of the spotted dog had almost covered half of Scar's neck. It seemed like his neck could fall off at any time. It was obvious that he was not alive.

Kaka ~!

Dudian's fingers cracked his clenched his fist. He was blaming himself. Dudian didn't expect that he would lose a person in their first expedition. Although it was very dangerous outside the giant wall, but he had underestimated the sinister and cunning living environment. His sense of smell, perception and visual aids, were much more developed in comparison to his teammates. He didn't think of them.

He knew that Scar and Jin were ready to follow after him after being bailed out. They trusted him, but such a thing happened at the first time they went out of the giant wall.

Dudian bit his lips as he picked up Scar's body.

The next moment he slightly sniffed. His face changed as killing intent poured into his eyes.

He slowly put Scar's body on the ground.

Dudian pulled out a dagger from his leggings and tightly stared at the grass behind him.

Shshsh ~ ~!

Eight figures rushed out of the bushes. All of them were spotted dogs!

The spotted dog that was previously stabbed by Dudian was standing in the middle. It's bleeding had stopped. At the moment its pair of dark red eyes were staring at Dudian coldly, grim and full of anger.

Dudian's eyes swept over eight spotted dogs. The cold blood in his body began to boil. He was like a madman who was after revenge. He knew that he would be seriously injured in the end or maybe even die, but he was going to avenge Scar. He thought about the prison life. Once the Scar had told him in a mocking manner about his dream of hunter days: "In the past I hoped that after death someone could give me a proper burial. I wanted to be buried as a normal person within the wall instead of my body stuck in the wilderness. I didn't want to be fed to those beasts. Now, in prison, my mind is at peace about that..."

Dudian didn't forget those words and Scar's facial expression, even after years.

He had brought him out, and Scar was dead now. He would take his body back at all costs!

It was the only thought in his mind at the moment. He was angry. The flames of anger had affected his usual calm judgment.

The eight spotted dogs didn't attack head on but scattered

around Dudian. In a matter of seconds, they had surrounded Dudian in a circle. It was their hunting habit.

The spotted dogs began to snarl after the encirclement was finished. It was like a wolf was roaring.

Dudian clenched his dagger as he stared at the spotted dog which had killed Scar.

Nevertheless, the next moment the spotted dogs stopped roaring. Instead, it seemed that they had detected something else.

Dudian frowned as he sniffed the air. There was a very light smell close to their location. Is it another monster?

All eight of them suddenly turned to look to the left. It seemed that they had perceived something. The circle which they had formed disintegrated the next moment. They began to run away.

Dudian's face was gloomy. He didn't know what kind of monster could make those eight cunning spotted dogs run away directly. He put away the dagger as he thought that it would be a level 20 monster which he could run away from. He picked up Scar's body and was about to run when a shadow shot out from the bushes as if it was a missile. It stood about ten meters away from him.

Dudian was taken back as he saw the giant shadow. He almost dropped Scar's corpse because of fear. It was an extremely strange monster which looked like a giant mantis. However, it didn't stand

upright as a mantis, but like a group of twisting seaweeds. All parts of its body had the shape of scythes. From the appearance alone, it could be observed that it was a high-level predator.

Dudian's mind buzzed and went blank as he saw the monster. Although it was the first time that it had met it, but he had a very deep impression of this monster. It was clearly described in the atlas. It was one of the eight legendary monsters. It was the monster which was at the top of the records!

It was called 'Splitter'!

An adult 'splitter' was a level 68 monster!

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Dudian was dumbfounded as he stood still.

He stood up like an idiot. Even his heartbeat was still.

The ferocious figure that had appeared in front of him had brought chaos into his mind. Normally, even if a level 30 monster appeared he would be able to think of a way to counterattack it. But his one was a monster which existed in the legends. Its presence was overwhelming as the darkness itself. He was almost suffocated.

The ‘splitter’ whose body swayed like seagrass looked at the little ‘ants’ in front of it. It didn’t pause for long as it suddenly rushed out. Its scythe-like limbs swept over Dudian.

Puff! Puff! Puff!

First Dudian felt the wind. Afterward, it was like electricity hit him. His body and mind were late to respond. At the same time, he felt that he was flying. The next moment pain flowed from all over his body.

Dudian’s body turned 720 degrees, and his eyes buzzed. He lost consciousness.

Bam! Bam!

His body felt the violent bumps which brought some sense to him. Dudian slowly opened his eyes while he coughed a few mouthful of blood. Smell and sense of pungent acidic fluids made him nauseous.

Dudian gradually recovered. The first reaction that went through his mind was: “Am I dead?”

Although he was in a dark place, but it didn’t affect his vision. He saw the horror full hell-like scene in front of him. There were broken limbs of different monsters, bloodless corpses, and a variety of distorted organs laying around. There were few hideous looking heads of monster staring at himself.

Bam!

A head of a jungle lizard rolled down.

The jungle lizards were the most common type of the monsters to encounter at this part of the ruins.

“Where am I?” Dudian whispered.

Dudian blankly looked around, but couldn’t locate his position. He looked up at the weak light coming off from above. He saw the jagged limbs of the splitter. A creepy feeling accumulated in his heart as he looked at the monster which was far away from him at the top of the pit. Did it bring me here in its mouth?

The idea emerged in his mind, but it faded away the next moment. Why didn't it chew and eat me? Is it 'splitter's eating habit to accumulate a certain number of victims and swallow them afterward?

He understood that no matter what the reality was it wouldn't play into his hand. He suddenly thought of Scar. He looked down and around. He checked carefully around the circle. There were a few monsters in the stump. Scar's body was lying on them. However, one of his arms was missing while there was a large wound on his chest.

Because of fear and adrenaline rush, Dudian had totally forgotten to check himself. He remembered that when the 'splitter' attacked them, he felt pain. He bowed down to check his abdomen where the pain was originating from. There was a finger long wound that had pierced his hunter armor. Blood was slowly oozing out from it, but he was able to endure the pain. Most probably he didn't feel much pain because the scythes of the splitter had toxins which could paralyze its prey.

In addition to the abdomen, there was a huge wound on his left shoulder. His arm was almost cut off.

Dudian quickly reached for the first aid kit which he carried in his back pocket.

He unlocked the first aid kit and took out disinfectant and gauze. He was about to wrap around the wound when he was thrown to

the ground. His cheek almost collided with a broken limb of a monster. The limb was stained with sticky blood. It exuded a fishy smell.

Dudian was surprised as he hung the first aid kit in haste. He lied around like a frog to stabilize his body while he nervously watched the organs scattered around. Some kind of juice was dropping onto his neck. It was cold and slippery with a pungent smell.

Roar!

He heard the shrill screams that echoed from outside.

Because of the roar, the anxiety in Dudian's heart loosened a bit. He speculated that splitter wasn't going to eat them immediately as it was hunting other monsters.

It didn't take long for few elephant-like huge figures to fall from the top of the pit.

Dudian was scared as he moved to the side to escape the monsters that would be thrown in the future. His body wouldn't be able to stand such a pressure if any of those huge monsters fell onto him.

Bam! Bam!

Huge shadows fell and hit the position which was close to Dudian's original location. Scar's body was smashed under one of those huge shadows. The blood splashed around as Scar's body submerged inside the corpses. Most of them looked like mud and

were beyond recognition.

Blood rushed into his brain, and Dudian's face turned very ugly as he observed Scar's body disappear into nothingness. He was angry, but he clearly understood that in the absence of power, tenacious will and confidence was just empty talk. It was just a joke.

At this time few more crooked limbs and distorted organs falling from the top.

Although he wasn't outside and couldn't observe the splitter, but from these several actions, he speculated that the splitter was in a hurry.

Dudian looked at these few shadows which just fell. They were the spotted dogs that had fled at the earlier time. However, it seems the splitter caught only four of them while the rest were able to escape.

It seems that it was able to kill those four spotted dogs in just a few breaths of time.

There were some sharp scars on their bodies, and all of the attacks were made on fatal points.

Sounds of bumps stopped.

The bodies of the monsters suddenly rolled. Dudian's body hit

another monster which was covered in blood.

It didn't take long for another body to fall. It was a spotted dog.

Dudian was scared. It seems that not one of the cunning spotted dogs would be able to escape this predator.

The last spotted dog which was thrown in was alive too. It wasn't hit in fatal points, but there was a huge scar on it, and most of its bones were broken. It was very difficult for the spotted dog to move in this sealed environment.

Dudian was staring at it when the spotted dog noticed Dudian's existence.

One human and the other mutated monster. They stared at each other, but no one dared to speak out.

The sound of bumps continued as several more monsters were thrown into the pit. Some of them were large creatures. These large ones had some fatal injuries. Few of them were dying while the rest have long been killed. In addition to them, there were few injured variant skeletons which were thrown inside. They immediately began to bite, chew and eat flesh as soon as they landed.

How much is it going to eat?

The dark sealed place became more crowded as the bodies of

other monsters were thrown in. The blood smell was more concentrated. Dudian was getting nervous as he constantly adjusted his position so as not to be hit by the bodies of the monster falling. Moreover, he had to be careful and guard against the ones who had a drop of life in them.

The spotted dog that was alive had long been smashed down by the huge body of another monster.

Dudian wasn't happy to see this cunning monster die. He felt sad as he saw it get killed. The truth was that at this moment he was no different than that monster. All creatures were food in the presence of the absolute masters of this jungle.

The bodies of the monsters began to hoard and filled the pit.

Dudian adjusted his posture as he hid in the edge of the jagged place. He was quietly waiting for an opportunity that may arise at any moment.

He expected that at some point splitter would stop hunting and bringing other monsters when it thought that it was enough. It was bringing dead bodies at a constant rate. After some time no further violent fluctuations occurred. It was obvious to Dudian that the storage capacity was full. Perhaps it was time for the splitter to return to its nest.

Dudian was nervous as fear began to nurture in his heart. He knew that 'black snow season' was coming. The beasts usual collected food in advance for the winter. They would hoard them

in their caves like some cold-blooded animals, eat them afterward and hibernate. Maybe the ‘splitter’ had such a behavior! Maybe it really prepared for the black snow season, and that’s why it didn’t eat the monsters on the spot but brought them back to its nest.

Countless ideas stormed in his mind in this dark and smelly place. The more he thought the further, he fell into despair.

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Dudian quietly lurked around in the silent and dark place. Every second of every minute felt like a century-long. He hoped that the bumps would continue forever.

But he was aware that he would have to face reality and struggle to live. He didn't continue to shy around and sit still. He began to think about ways to survive. He thought that if the food was poured into the nest then at the moment they were close to the surface he could escape. However at some point because of the weight of the monsters, they would fall to the depth of the pit. So if he continued to sit still, then he would be buried alive.

He knew that he had to come up with a solution. He pulled the dagger from his legging and began to rummage through the bodies of the monsters. Soon he found a mutant crocodile's body. Its claws were stained with mud. It was not one of the three that they had killed but a mutated crocodile from the swamp.

Even the monsters who hid in their own territories couldn't escape from the splitter.

Dudian used the dagger to cut off through the cracks on its abdomen. Afterward, he began to clean out the internal organs. He made sure that nothing was left inside the stomach of the crocodile. Later on, he went into crocodile's body. His hands clutched onto its flesh on the edges as he nervously waited.

In about ten minutes the timing of the bumps gradually slowed down.

The muscles on Dudian's body were tight because of nervousness. The time of life and death seemed to come.

The bumps stopped, but he didn't wait for long as the jagged organs began to loosen below him. He felt a huge force which pulled them down the hole.

Bang!

Dudian also fell while he was wrapped inside the mutant crocodile's corpse. Dudian felt bursts of pain from his bones after he heavily hit the ground. Bang! Bang! Continuous sounds echoed, and the blood, viscera, intestines and other organs spilled out and smashed onto the crocodile's body. A full corpse of a spotted dog hit the crocodile's spine. Dudian felt like he was hit by a boulder and he almost suffocated. Fortunately, the armor covering the crocodile had evolved and had strong defensive properties. Thanks to this Dudian didn't die on the spot.

The bodies of the creatures continued to be dumped and were piled up.

The blood that penetrated from the upper layers began to soak the ground.

The world was dead silent.

Dudian felt that the pressure was too hard and he almost couldn't breathe. Luckily there were still gaps between the bodies of the monsters so the pungent air could circulate.

Dudian didn't dare to make a sound. His body was tight and like a sculpture. He feared that the splitter wouldn't eat but swallow the food. Although there was a very low probability of it happening but when it came to his own life even a 10% chance of such an occurrence would make a man very nervous.

He pushed his ears close to the sticky flesh and blood of the crocodile's belly. He tried to listen to the movement happening outside.

A few minutes later he heard the ground slightly tremble in a high frequency, and then it quickly fainted down. He thought about a possibility. The splitter went out to hunt!

Dudian didn't dare to wait anymore and seized this rare opportunity. His hands struggled to break apart crocodile's body and climbed out.

However, Dudian's heart sank after pushing for several times. The weight on top of the crocodile's body was more than he imagined. It was pressing down on it as if it was a mountain.

"Damn it!" Dudian felt anxious. If splitter decided that it had amassed enough food for the winter, then it wouldn't go out. Moreover, once it noticed that there were living creatures inside

the nest, then Dudian wouldn't be able to escape his death. There was an opportunity in front of him which he couldn't use. "Am I really going to be buried in here?" Dudian whispered as his heart was full of panic.

He clenched his teeth as he made every effort to push, but there was not the slightest change. Anger and anxiety filled his heart, and they gave birth to trace of fear. But Dudian didn't give up instead he calmed his mind. He thought of another way. Dudian planned to crawl through the crocodile's body and drill out from its mouth.

Dudian was able to move through the sticky and bloody flesh quickly. It didn't take long for him to reach the crocodile's neck. There was a trace of joy in his heart as he saw that his actions were fruitful. There was a sharp wound in crocodile's neck caused by the splitter. It was a fatal injury to the crocodile.

Dudian clutched the wound, squeezed his upper body and tried to push out from its palate. However, there was no effect. The hope that was ignited in his heart was once again extinguished.

His body was sweating while he deeply breathed. He was in a sealed place, and there was a thin air which made his strength become weaker.

He was exhausted and was anxious to lie down here to sleep. He adhered to his hopes as he repeatedly tried to push its jaw open. There were no results, so he decided to change the method. Dudian opened both of his hands and began his struggling to shake the crocodile's body.

His body did swing up after a while and made the crocodile's body slightly shake. He continued to do so and felt that the pressure was getting smaller in comparison to before. He was happy to see that his idea was succeeding. After all, the bodies stacked on top of the crocodile's corpse weren't arranged solidly. Moreover, there was lots of blood which made them slip and fall.

The more he shook, the more the pressure decreased. About seven or eight minutes later he once again tried to push open the jaw of the crocodile. At the end he was successful.

Dudian was overjoyed as he went out of the jaw of the crocodile.

Dudian saw the accumulated wreckage of various monsters. The blood flowed down through the remnants of their bodies. It seemed like the scene where a chef added tomato sauce into the delicious food.

Dudian crawled out as he pushed away or squeezed through the corpses of other monsters. He didn't forget to tightly pull the first aid kit which was in his pocket.

After few minutes of struggle, he was able to withdraw from the amassed bodies of the monsters. He saw that he was inside a dark cave. The air was full of strange pungent smells. The cave was about ten meters tall and could accommodate the splitter.

There were rough chopping marks all over the walls. Even a manmade apparatus couldn't carve such long cut marks.

Dudian raised his hand to wipe off the blood on his face. He sniffed and captured a lot of smells in the air. He simply couldn't rely on his sense of odors to determine the position of the splitter if it came back.

He realized the flaw of the sense of smell in this situation. He squatted down and pressed his ear to the ground to listen. He didn't hear any vibrations. His heart rejoiced as he stood up and began to run through the cave.

After seven or eight steps Dudian stopped. He thought of Scar and looked back at the mountain of corpses. He didn't see the slightest shadow of Scar's corpse. Dudian bit his lip and turned to leave. His pupils shrank as he saw the scene farther away.

There was a huge oval boulder!

Not a boulder…The proper words to describe it was…a huge egg!

Dudian was startled on the spot but soon recovered. It was not the time to think whether it was an egg or something else. He ran.

After about 20 meters he passed through a corner and looked forward. Dudian's body froze up like an ice statue.

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Dudian saw the exit of the cave, which was supposed to lead to the outside. However, it was closed down with huge rocks and boulders. The cave was blocked. Sunlight penetrated down from a few gaps.

Dudian rushed to the exposed places. But he wasn't able to squeeze through the gaps. They were extremely tight. It seems that the monster was worried that some other beast would come in and steal its eggs while it was out on a hunt.

"Damn it!" Dudian found a slightly larger gap at the mouth of the cave. He tried to move the boulder. 'Kaka'. Gravel rolled down from upper places. The rocks and boulders were not fixed.

Dudian was desperate when he felt slight trembles.

He quickly jumped down and crawled onto the ground. He pushed his ear and listened to the high-frequency earthquake like trembles. It was similar to the vibration he felt last time when the 'splitter' left.

"It's back!"

Dudian's pupils shrank as he quickly climbed and ran back to the cave.

As he was running towards the corpses he heard the rolling sound of boulders from the exit. It was a like a mountain was moving and changing its place. He quickly rushed to the pile of corpses. Dudian picked up limbs and organs of a few scattered monsters and covered up his own body. He covered his face with a broken hairy limb of a monster. There was a small gap which Dudian used to observe the movement in the cave.

At this time the sounds of rocks rolling down stopped. The ground trembled, and Dudian saw the ferocious figure coming towards him. Its body was covered in sharp scythes which made it look like a super cutting saw. Every part of its body was similar to a weapon. The splitter was simply a well-built super war machine!

The ‘splitter’ stopped in front of the monster corpses. Dudian was not able to see where its head or eyes were. However, the middle part of its body spun, and bodies of the monsters fell. Some of them were amassed over the place where Dudian was hiding in. The gap which he used to observe the ‘splitter’ was covered too.

After a while, Dudian felt that the ‘splitter’ had left. His body was covered with fewer monsters in comparison to the previous time, so he was able to detect the movements through his ears. He heard the sounds of boulders moving so he knew that ‘splitter’ had gone outside.

Dudian’s heart sank, but he was also relieved. Even the idea of coexisting in the same cave with the ‘splitter’ was creepy.

He struggled right and left. Dudian and was able to dart out from the heap of monster corpses. He came to the entrance of the cave

once more. The dense rocks and boulders still covered the exit. However, he was still holding to a glimmer of hope. He looked at a large place from where shiny sunlight was penetrating in. He tried to squeeze out, but the monster hasn't left him such a lucky gap to pass through.

Dudian was in a despair. He had to check the boulder one by one to see which one was loose from the outside so that he could open it up.

"If I had the magic marks of a black weaver then I could drill a hole and leave ..." Dudian would love to have another magic mark's ability, but unfortunately, everyone could have only one magic mark.

Half an hour passed as he tentatively tried to push the massive boulder. The vibrations resounded once again. The splitter was returning.

Dudian was scared as he thought about 'splitter' hunting speed. It was not hunting, but harvesting fruits from a tree! It was indeed the overlord of this area. No monsters would be able to compete with it, and it will always be able to pick up a snack.

Dudian ran past the corridor created by the monster. He squeezed in back to the original place and tried to not cause too much of a change. He was afraid that it would catch the 'splitter's attention. After all, there were not many records about this legendary beast. There was only a sketch as well as simple information. They roughly made a judgment on its hunting level. Its preferences, IQ, life habits and so on weren't known.

Dudian felt that if the monster had a high IQ, then he would be dead meat sooner or later.

However, as he took its current performance into account, he thought that the monster wasn't a high IQ beast or else it would never have this kind of physical strength and massive body. It seems its brain wasn't developed and it acted on instincts.

Rumble

The boulders broke apart again as the seaweed like the body of the monster rushed back into the cave. It once again brought back the monsters that it had captured. These bodies rolled down the mountain of corpses and slipped. A huge humanoid creature which was about three meters in height fell. It was a large variation of a skeleton.

This variant skeleton had a huge wound on its chest, but it was not a fatal injury. It stood up and began to bite the other monster corpses as soon as it landed.

Puff! It wasn't even able to bite a few mouthful when a cold light passed. Dudian wasn't able to see when or how the 'splitter' acted. But he clearly saw the head of the variant skeleton roll on the ground while its body fell. Black blood spewed out from its neck as if it was a hot spring. Its head rolled and stopped close to Dudian. He was able to see the variant skeleton's lifeless eyes staring at him while there was a piece of flesh still in its mouth.

Dudian saw the wound at the neck of the variant skeleton. He determined that the ‘splitter’ had acted out of instinct and killed the variant skeleton. It seems that ‘splitter’ was aware of the vulnerable part of a variant skeleton’s necrotic neck and accurately attacked that part instead of tearing at its whole body.

The ‘splitter’ once again left as it dumped the bodies of the monsters. Obviously, a number of monsters in here was not enough to pass through the black snow season.

Dudian was in relief as he saw the monster leave. He climbed out and went towards the exit once again. There was still hope in his heart that the ‘splitter’ would leave a gap enough for him to squeeze out. The other was a monster and would inevitably make a mistake.

However, after a lap of observation Dudian’s hope was ruthlessly torn. The gap between the boulders was only the thickness of an arm. His body wouldn’t be able to squeeze out.

He understood that these boulders were massive rocks for him, but in ‘splitter’s perspective, they were just small stones. It could easily put them away in one swoop and unseal its own cave.

Dudian tried to push the boulder, but felt abdominal pain. He looked down at the wound of the stab. There were traces of complex feelings in his heart. If he didn’t pick up Scar’s body the last time, then perhaps his own body would have been punctured two or three times. The tip of ‘splitter’s scythe was enough to tear through his chest.

They were small prey, so the ‘splitter’ hadn’t even tried to kill them but just made sure to catch them. It seems while it had attacked them, its scythe had pierced and cut off Scar’s arms while the smaller tip had pierced his abdomen and left shoulder.

After a moment of silence, Dudian pulled out the first aid kit. He took off the armor from his upper body. He sensed the strange blood scattered on his wounds. The blood had penetrated into the wound.

Dudian’s face changed as he used the disinfectant to wash the blood off that had been scattered over and near the wound. He used a small piece of gauze to wipe the wounded area and wrapped it with the rest of the gauze.

In addition to the abdomen, Dudian made sure to clean the wound on his shoulder and scratches on his legs.

As he was about to finish dealing with the wound Dudian heard the vibration again. He quickly put on the armor and cut off fur of a monster. He covered his armor with the fur so that the blood of other monsters wouldn’t infiltrate the gauze and infect his wounds once again.

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Soon the splitter once again drilled into the cave.

Dudian also went into the hiding within the monster corpses. He held his breath as he waited for the ‘splitter’ to come over.

He heard the influx of the monster bodies that were thrown by the ‘splitter’. There was rough rustle as the sounds of bodies crashing echoed. A large number of monster bodies were dumped this time.

Dudian felt the pressure on his body increase as it continued to dump the corpses of monsters. He was relieved as more the pressure on his body the higher the sense of security he felt.

After pouring out the monsters the cave was silent. Dudian’s heart tightened. He felt that as if fierce brutal eyes of the monster was staring at his hiding place.

He held his breath.

Silence continued for two or three minutes.

Dudian knew that if he held his breath for too long, then there would be a bigger chance to expose himself. So he breathed in through his nose while he kept the previously inhaled air into his lungs in his mouth. He slowly pushed them out through his lips.

He was extremely careful through the whole process as not to make the slightest sound.

The cave was dead silent.

Dudian's ear only heard his own heartbeat. He got more nervous as he couldn't detect any movement but his own.

After a minute.

Dudian's tight muscles slowly relaxed. He still replaced his breath very carefully. Because of the silence he even suspected that the 'splitter' had left.

After a long time Dudian heard a slight friction. It was like a razor was cutting a stone. His heart was tightened as he waited for few moments. There was no follow-up movement. He speculated that the 'splitter' is tired of hunting and is sleeping near the heaps of monster corpses. He didn't know the sleep schedule of the monster. If it sleeps for a few days then it would be Dudian's bad luck.

Dudian couldn't stay tight and on alarm in this long silence. Moreover sleepiness and dizziness gradually hit him too. Although he knew that he was not snoring in his sleep but he didn't dare to sleep in this dangerous environment.

However the fear was overcome by the sleep and exhaustion.

Dudian had fought for a day against mutated crocodiles and twin-headed snake lizard. Moreover he had run back and forth and lured other monsters to help me to consume the strength and energy of the twin-headed snake lizard. Right now his body was injured and he had lost a lot of blood. He was physically and mentally exhausted. He adhered to stay awake for an hour but finally he slept as he was too drowsy.

He saw a nightmare in his sleep. There were countless of rotting faces growling and stretching out their hands towards him in the darkness.

He was awake once again.

Dudian's eyes were open and his body subconsciously flicked. It was just a jitter but all the pores on his body shrank because of shock. Time stopped for a second or two for him. He felt no movement from outside so his body relaxed as he was relieved. It seems that he hadn't disturbed 'splitter' even though he had slept.

Dudian was secretly glad in his heart as he evenly breathed while he laid within the dead corpses. He felt the cold and hard bodies of monsters all around him. He would have never imagined that at one time he would have to stay in such a purgatory for so long. Moreover he was creeped because of the ferocious monsters that were all around him.

"Its no wonder that hunters want to retire and live a normal life within the giant wall once they had earned enough money. No one

wants to make half a step outside the giant wall even for sweeping through clean areas. Those places are relatively safe and the coefficient of danger is reduced to 10 percent or less. However it means that once out of ten times they will encounter a danger and they may die ... " Dudian sighed. He felt that he should always stay in the 'Temple of Elements' and engage in research. He could earn more than a hunter would. Twin-headed snake lizard was a high level monster but hunters would get only thousands of gold coins after bringing the materials from their bodies.

The hunters could get good money if they hunted high-priced monsters. But it was depending on pure luck. On a few experience and season hunters would find set of way to track and hunt such monsters. The most dangerous part of the hunt was not combat with the monster but tracing and tracking it. They would have to pass through dangerous areas which would be territories of other monsters.

Dudian's mind turned calm as he thought of this. But he knew that Temple was not the perfect opportunity to increase his own strength. If he had a second chance to choose then he will choose to personally come out of the giant wall. However the next time he had to more considerate and cautious. He had to come up with more methods to avoid encountering monsters that would be very dangerous to face.

"People have divided the ground out of the giant wall into areas and zone. But in the eyes of the monsters there is no such distinction. The whole wall is a hunting area ..." Dudian's heart was bitter as he secretly sighed.

Waiting for such a long time in a silent place was boring. But people would usually ignore that if their lives are on stake. He didn't know how long it took but Dudian began to feel hungry. There were bursts of itching that came from hi wounds. The paralytic effect of 'splitter's toxins have lost their effectiveness.

In about ten hours Dudian's hunger was so bad that he felt pain. He was quite patient but he knew that if he continued to stay hungry for long his belly will become numb and he will feel very uncomfortable.

The hunger disappeared but would occasionally burst again from time to time.

Dudian knew that the 'splitter' was still in the cave. He woke up for so long but he didn't dare to move out as he was worried that something wrong may happen.

Time passed slowly as he waited in patience.

Two days later.

Dudian felt that the 'splitter' was still in the cave and haven't woken up. It made him flustered. Has it finished hunting for good? Did it go into hibernation state?

After two days of patience he felt that he was not hungry. But in the place where the wound was in his abdomen there was a strange feeling. He couldn't tell what it was but it was a different kind of

feeling.

Dudian was hungry because of dizziness. He twisted his head slowly and face an unknown monsters body which was next to him. He gently bit out a small cluster of flesh and blood. He slowly chewed as not to make a sound. Afterwards he swallowed the meat. His tongue didn’t feel any taste. However the flesh and blood made his appetite to grow.

Dudian felt like he had turned into a degenerate and a savage as he drank the blood.

Kaka!

On the fifth day the silence in the cave was abruptly broken by a burst of crisp sounds.

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Dudian carefully listened to the sounds.

Kacha ~

The crisp sounds got louder and continuous.

At the same time, the silence in the cave was broken by rough friction which became louder and more vibrant than the first sound. Dudian panicked as he knew that the ‘splitter’ was moving. As for the previous cracking sounds.

Could it be that the eggs hatched?

The cave slightly trembled as it seems that the ‘splitter’ was crawling. This crispy cracking sound from before stopped, but a sharp voice similar to a crow’s sounded. It had a weak and immature feel to it.

Dudian’s mind sank. He knew that he wasn’t wrong, a new child was born.

His body shrank to deeper parts as he felt strong danger.

At the moment he began to hear sounds of biting, chewing and swallowing echoing from a bit away. From the sounds, Dudian

understood that it was the newly born ‘splitter’ which was eating.

The only hope in his heart was extinguished as he thought about the situation. Perhaps the ‘splitter’ never needed to stock food. Because of its body structure most probably it didn’t even fear black snow season. Most monsters would enter their nests and hibernate through the winter so they would be less active. However, with its abilities, the ‘splitter’ could easily hunt plenty of food. It didn’t need to eat in advance to pass the black snow season.

This was the difference between an ordinary beast and the top monster. The whole region was its hunting ground, and all the monsters were more or less its grain storage!

Apparently, these monsters that it caught, were stocked for its newly born children.

Kacha, Kacha.

The sounds of chewing and swallowing constantly rang in his ear. It seemed that the newly born splitter was quite hungry from the sound of eating.

Dudian face was gloomy: “How long will it take for it to reach me?”

The newly born splitter ate for ten minutes and stopped. Dudian heard a slight vibration coming off from the surrounding ground. The newly born splitter was doing ‘after dinner’ activities.

Dudian continued to squeeze inside while he thought about the records from the atlas:

The young splitter at larval stage is a level 23 monster. Its blades can cut down a vast majority of monsters weaker than level 30. It's aggressive by nature, and its attack strength is strong.

"Legendary monster … …" Dudian's heart was bitter. This was just a newborn splitter at a larval stage. Even if its level was not level 23, but it was close to it. The early growth period was very fast for splitters. It would take half a month cycle. By that time the bones and scythes would become completely solid. Their skin would be comparable to steel. Its scythes would be much sharper than the sword.

In other words, it meant that in about half a month this newly born splitter would be a class 23 monster. It will be able to rely on their own unique advantages of its body to hunt anything below level 30 without a restraint. It will be beheading and killing as if using a knife to cut through butter!

Moreover, the growth and maturing period of the splitter was very fast. It would take it two or three years to completely mature. It would reach the pinnacle of combat effectiveness and became a level 68 monster in such a short amount of time. It would sweep through everything and stand at the apex! The assessment was given according to the general knowledge within the wall. So it was not absolutely accurate. But take one or add two, it didn't make much of a difference.

Even if it were a level 60 monster, there would be no chance for Dudian if he was going against its scythes!

The experiments which the newly born was doing, didn't last for long. Dudian didn't know it was tired or bored. However, eating and chewing sounds echoed once more. But this time it was not savagely devouring the food in front of it. It would eat and stop for a while. Dudian would hear the sounds of friction coming off from the walls. Dudian speculated that it was honing the razors of its scythes by using the walls.

Dudian understood the difference between mankind and beasts. Human beings need time to learn. Sometimes it would take generations of knowledge to be transmitted so that some kind of change could be seen. Moreover, humans were social animals. However, beasts inherited everything through genetics. Especially the ones like newborn splitters which were terrorizing monsters that could hunt in a matter of months. Even a normal wolf who lived in a flock knew how to bite the moment it was born.

He silently leaned against the bodies of the monsters. Perhaps his death was near, but the contemplations that he had thought about made him 'grow'. These were the things that he had never thought about before.

The rough friction stopped for a while, and the cave delved into silence.

In about seven or eight hours later the rhythm of eating sounds echoed again. It was like the young splitter was eating a delicious and juicy meal.

This time the chewing sound came from quite close to Dudian. As it was constantly eating, the sound was getting closer to. Gradually he felt that the distance was so close that he had to do something. His hands quietly touched the dagger in his leggings. He was ready to attack. Dudian was going to let it suffer even if he died in the process.

However, the sound of chewing stopped. The little guy seemed to eat enough.

Dudian was relieved, but there was no joy in his heart. Sooner or later his turn was going to come.

He gently bit flesh and blood of the monster that was close to him. He chewed it slowly and swallowed the flesh. Dudian was trying to restore strength. He didn't care whether the body of this particular monster had a virus, radiation or other kind of toxins. As long as he could make a little recovery of strength, then it was much better than fighting like a dead man. Moreover, it would be much more comfortable for him to directly get poisoned than dying at the hands of the young splitter.

The friction sounds from the rocky wall echoed. Dudian heard the twists and turned as an immature sharp call full of excitement resounded.

Dudian listened to the movement sounds. Did it mean that the 'splitter' went out hunting?

There was excitement in his heart as he thought about it. It was likely that the splitter was sleeping in the cave not because it was tired, but it was roughly making the calculation about the needs of its future children. Now the first child was born, and it went out to hunt. The splitters were different from humans as the newborn would need lots of food to eat. The previously eaten amount of food wasn't enough for the newborn splitter to strengthen the razors of its scythes.

According to Dudian's guess, the splitter had left the cave, and there was a tender cry followed after its departure.

Did it take its own child for life experience?

There was a new glimmer of hope in Dudian's heart. As long as the cave was not blocked, there was a chance for him to live through and survive.

Soon the sharp call paused as the sounds of rolling rocks echoed.

Dudian calmed down. The young splitter didn't go away. Dudian knew that he hoped for the impossible.

"However, it is still a rare opportunity. At least it is a heavenly situation. Although eventually I may be killed by the youngling, but at least I'll have a fair chance to fight with the young splitter..." Dudian whispered.

Soon the sounds of rolling rocks calmed down. The high-

frequency vibrations gradually faded away in the distance.

Afterward, Dudian heard the sounds of friction echoing from the ground. The young splitter was coming back. Coldness flashed pass through Dudian’s eyes as he clutched the dagger in his legging.

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The silent cave may become the last battlefield in his life. But regardless of the outcome, Dudian was planning to go all out.

Sounds of rough friction approached from afar. The young splitter stopped in front of the corpses of monsters. It began to chew and swallow the dead bodies. ‘Kaka’. It seemed that the young splitter was biting onto a hard bone as it tenaciously chewed it.

The young splitter was using the bones of the prey to hone its own teeth!

Dudian deeply breathed as he carefully turned his head. He looked out from a small gap. The young splitter was eating the dead body of a monster. Its body was swaying like seaweed. All of its limbs were similar to the front limbs of a mantis. At the moment, its small front scythes were picking up a corpse. The lower part of young splitter’s body looked similar to a crab shell. It looked like a hard armor that protected the young splitter.

Dudian identified its head.

He quickly visualized the battle in his mind. He was thinking about how to get near to it and cut its head with the dagger. He was ‘exercising’ in his head and simulating the process.

At this time, the young splitter which was eating the corpse

suddenly stopped chewing. It slowly turned around and looked at the place where Dudian was hiding. It hesitated, but after a few seconds the young splitter began to move over slowly. All of its scythe-like limbs were raised as it stood in an offensive position as it looked at Dudian.

Dudian didn't expect that the young splitter would be so sensitive. He hadn't moved at all and was just quietly looking at it. It was strange that it was able to detect his presence.

Suddenly, he thought of another problem. Since this young splitter was aware of his own existence, then the adult splitter should also know that he was hiding here! But it didn't kill Dudian.

"Was it...Did it plan to use me as a whetstone for its child?"

Dudian knew that there were beasts which discarded their children in the early days. But it seems splitter took another approach. The mutated crocodile's body armor was tough, so it would be hard for the young splitter to chew it at the beginning. Some monsters were highly toxic for the young splitter at this point. So the child had to experience all of this and find what is good for itself.

As he thought about the details, Dudian understood that his survival was not the blessing of the heavens. He was just a weak food source from splitter's perspective. Dudian was left alive, so that the splitter's child could practice before eating the bones of other monsters.

Many thoughts flashed through his mind as the young splitter approached him step by step. Its posture was still the same as one of its front scythe-like limbs wandered over his body.

Its scythe-like arm pierced over the corpses, but there was no movement.

The young splitter was confused. It lifted its other front limb and moved it towards Dudian. It's rough and wide scythe mercilessly cut off the flesh of other monsters that were close to Dudian's body. The temperature in the cave was very low. So the place was cool, and the corpses of monsters didn't seriously rot.

Dudian was almost cut in half, but he still didn't move. There were cuts and scars all over.

The young splitter stopped as it seemed puzzled. It was inexperienced, and Dudian was the first lifeform which it had seen alive after its mother.

The young splitter stretched both of its front limbs and pierced into the body of the monsters. Puff! Awl-like sharp points of the scythes passed through the body of the monster.

Dudian felt pain in his chest. One of the sharp scythes had pierced a bit into his body. The hunter armor was easily punctured. Fortunately, the body of the monster in front of him was thick, and he wasn't deeply injured.

Dudian tightly clutched onto the dagger as he patiently waited.

The young splitter took back its front scythes and grabbed the body of the monster. It wanted to turn over when a silver light flashed and shot at it.

The young splitter was shocked as it didn't think that 'dead' would suddenly come alive and attack it. It was caught off guard. The young splitter tried to move its front scythes to block the silver light with the body of the monster. However, it was late.

The young splitter was startled.

At the same time, Dudian rushed out through the front limbs of the young splitter, and his hands tightly clung to the place where he had identified as its mouth.

He was glad that he had chosen to throw the dagger instead of stabbing it himself. Because if he tried to go with the second option most probably, he would be cut into strips by now.

Dudian hugged onto the head of the young splitter as it screamed in horror. Dudian no longer planned to take the possible injury to his left arm into account. He roared as he used all the power possible to twist its head.

Dudian was aware that all parts of young splitter were weapons. He didn't know whether its scythe-like arms could turn 180 degrees and reverse attack him, but intuition told him that it was

possible. Once the young splitter reacted, he would be instantly cut. The outcome of this battle was lying in his hands at this moment. Because of strong fear his left arm burst out with the greatest power he had used in his life. He twisted as hard as he could.

Kacha!

The sharp sound which was coming off the young splitter stopped instantly. Puff! Blood splashed out as if it was water. Dudian felt that his body was light the next moment. The young splitter had tried to throw him off at the last moment, so its body was uplifted before its death. Dudian flew out and fell towards the ground. He somersaulted for seven or eight times to decrease the momentum and stop his body. His body hit the wall of the cave. His head was heavily knocked onto the stones. He almost fainted on the spot.

He struggled to keep himself conscious as he knew that if he fell into a coma, then it would be his end. Soon the buzzing in his head stabilized. His mind was clear again. He saw that the body of the young splitter was stiff and frozen in front of the other corpses. The blood kept flowing down from its body as it stood motionless.

Dudian couldn't help but look at the triangular organ in his hand. It was extremely hard, and there was soft meat inside.

"Is it the head of the splitter?" Dudian whispered.

"Did I just break away its head?"

Dudian sat on the ground as he stared at the body of the young splitter. In about ten seconds its body lost balance and slowly fell.

He believed that the young splitter would never disguise itself and it was really dead.

Dudian held its head and slowly got up. He saw that blood kept flowing out of its head as bright red blood kept oozing down to the ground.

“It is dead ...” Dudian’s tight muscles loosened. The whole process was completed in an instant. If he had fought the young splitter head on then, he would never be able to win. His body was weak, and there were many shortcomings in comparison to the young splitter. Fortunately, God has given humanity an intelligent brain to make up for that.

He recalled the lightness he felt at the moment of life and death. The blood in his body was boiling.

He gradually calmed down as he ran through the corridor towards the exit. He saw that boulders were packed closely. He looked around as this may be the only chance he would ever have.

“Gap!”

“I got to find a gap!”

Dudian’s eyes were wide as he stared at every possible place.

He looked from top to bottom, from left to right. He looked once again, but wasn’t able to find a gap big enough to squeeze out his body. Dudian’s heart sank as his body went cold.

Chapter 295

Dudian felt bitter.

He had to admit that the splitter's ability to seal the cave was good. No matter how many times he had come over to check there wasn't a single omission! Every time it has strictly closed the place. Dudian thought that not even humans would be able to maintain the consistency of this monster.

Dudian's palm was placed on a boulder as he tried to push it. As long as he was able to escape from this place he would have a chance to live. He was able to live through the life and death battle, but these layers over layers of boulders were just too much.

Dudian was frustrated because of lack of power. He was clutching the head of young splitter while the other hand was pressed against the boulder. He planned to put away the young splitter's head to use both hands to push the boulder when an idea flashed through his mind.

The splitter was a legendary monster so it had to have worms that he could use to get magic marks.

If he used it to replace his own magic marks, then maybe he would be able to break out from the place.

Immediately, he used both hands to pick the head of the young splitter. He touched along the shell as he looked for the parasitic

worm. He couldn't find it, so he rushed back to the cave. He checked its body and the blood that had flown down to the ground.

The parasitic worm wasn't in its head.

There were no parasitic worms in the corpse either.

Dudian bent over and looked through the blood that was flown to the ground. His heart was tense as he checked the place. He knew that when the child is born there is a parasitic soul worm, but it sleeps within the body. After the larval stage, it would begin to absorb the nutrients from the body of the host and learn its genetic characteristics. Afterward, it will begin to change the genetic fragments of the host's body giving it magic marks. However, it wasn't guaranteed that the process was as such, it was just an assumption.

Moreover, it has been only five days that the young splitter had hatched from the egg.

The parasitic worm was likely to be in its body. At the moments of its death, it should have aborted out.

Dudian carefully searched through the place. The longer it took him, the more distant the hope of finding the parasitic worm became. He searched back and forth for several times but still couldn't find the shadow of the parasitic worm.

The last trace of the hope ignited in Dudian's heart was sadly

extinguished.

Kacha!

As he was sitting in the blood as he heard crisp sounds coming off from the cave. Because of the silence of the cave, the sound echoed loudly.

Dudian was confused as he quickly got up and walked around the corpse of the young splitter. He followed the source of the sound. His face was shocked when he saw the sight. There were many huge bones scattered around. They looked like a weed nest, but made out of bones. There were six white oval eggs in these.

The sounds were coming off from one of the eggs. It was fragmented at this point.

There was a broken eggshell which belonged to the young splitter which he had killed. Now there were another six! Moreover, one of them was hatching right now!

Dudian wryly smiled as he stood there like a sculpture for a long time. The vast majority of the beasts were different from humans. A pregnant woman would give birth in nine months. She would occasionally give birth to twins or maybe to triplets. But beasts giving birth to seven or eight offspring was very normal. Moreover, some fish gave birth to thousands, but the number of surviving offspring would not be much.

Such birth habits of the beasts apparently had been transferred to the monsters. The monsters would be at their weakest state in their pregnancy. They would lack food and security. It seems that by multiple births the splitter tries to enhance the survival rate of its kind.

“Should I fight?” Dudian was silently watching as he stood still. Although it was the best moment to attack, but he knew that even if he killed this little thing his situation wouldn’t change much. His last day would come when the adult splitter comes back. The adult had prepared him as a whetstone for its child. However, this whetstone had killed its children. It naturally wouldn’t let other children encounter such a danger.

However, he would die if he didn’t fight!

Dudian looked at the egg and sighed. There was a proverb that if a person was able to live another second, then it was an additional second of life. Moreover, if he were able to kill this monster, then the future hunters would be more secure. Even if he died in here, but Old Fulin could recruit more hunters in the future to come out to hunt in this region. However, if there were some splitters in this region then this place was really going to become a ‘death passage.’

Dudian picked up his dagger and touched the egg.

Kacha!

The egg was completely cracked.

There was a figure wrapped in a viscous liquid. It opened its eyes and curiously looked to the outside world. Its scythe-like limbs contracted. The first thing it did was to focus on Dudian who was next to the egg. It's long and sharp scythe arm stretched out towards him. Although it was just moments ago, but its limbs were very sharp.

Dudian didn't think that the newborn would hatch out from the egg and stay in a defensive posture. Moreover, compared to the previous young splitter this one was a bit light colored.

He stopped moving as there was no chance of winning against it.

The newly born splitter went out of the eggshell and rushed towards Dudian.

Dudian hurried back as his face slightly changed.

The young splitter saw Dudian running away, so it followed it. However, its green eyes blinked as it looked at Dudian. They had reached the place with monster corpses. It suddenly raised one of its scythes and grabbed part of a monster. It threw it away at Dudian.

Dudian made a few steps backward so that he would not be hit by the part of the monster.

The young splitter blinked its eyes few more times before it no longer looked at Dudian. Instead, it bowed its head and began to

eat, chew and swallow the corpses of monsters.

Dudian was startled. He didn't think that the young splitter wouldn't attack himself. Does it feel that his body isn't as delicious as the bloody corpses of these monsters? Or does it want to eat first and then deal with him?

In any case, there was a great opportunity in front of him. He quickly threw out the dagger and rushed at it.

Whoosh!

The dagger was shot, but the young splitter which was focused on eating waved one of its limbs and shot down the dagger.

The young splitter growled as it raised its scythes.

"Good reaction!" Dudian's face slightly changed as he stopped in a hurry. The same trick had failed. The previous one didn't have time to respond since the distance wasn't as big. However, now there was a big distance between them, and as a result, the young splitter had sufficient time to respond to his dagger attack.

Dudian ran up the mountain of dead bodies.

The young splitter saw that Dudian ran away, so it stopped concerning itself with him and bowed to eat.

Dudian saw that the young splitter didn't care about his existence. He began to think about other methods to deal with it.

The young splitter had devoured enough food. It shook its body as it waved its scythe-like arms. The young splitter seemed excited as it went towards the walls to grind its blades on them. Dudian thought that it had completely forgotten about his existence.

Dudian had long come up with a plan as he thought that the young splitter would come over to attack him. He was shocked to see that it didn't.

"Why? What's going on?" Dudian was at a loss: "It seems that it is not hostile towards me…How…why?"

His facial expressions were funny as he stared at the young splitter: "Does it… Does it treat me as its sibling? Does it think that I'm its mother?"

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Dudian looked at the young splitter which was honing its scythes in front of the wall of the cave. So did it take him as a similar being because he was the first existence that it saw after it was born?

Too unscientific!

“There should be other reasons. This reason alone is too unreasonable …” Dudian face changed. His mind told him that it would be too simple to explain everything just like that. Otherwise, humans would tame such ferocious existences? They would steal their pups and show themselves to it at the beginning. Wouldn’t it be too easy to tame that way?

No, it was too unreasonable.

Dudian thought of something as he looked down at his body. The hunter armor was full of blood. Previously, when he was searching for the parasitic soul worm, he had stained his armor with the blood of the splitter. Perhaps because of the smell of the blood, the young splitter took him as its own brother… But that ‘mother’ idea was nonsense.

“I believe that it temporarily mistook me. But after a long time, it would naturally be able to distinguish. If I wait for long, then I will die …” Dudian’s eyes lit up as he looked at the young splitter. He made a few steps and saw that the young splitter was still concentrated on honing its scythes. He thought of an idea.

His eyes shined, and his blood boiled as he thought of the idea. Once again, he felt hope.

“Come, come over.” Dudian picked up the dagger from the ground and came close to the young splitter. He shouted out to call it. Though he knew that the young splitter might not be able to understand his language.

The young splitter turned back at Dudian. Its green eyes focused on him. The young splitter seemed to be confused.

Dudian didn’t have experience in taming beasts, but he had met people who had tamed puppy. He waved: “Come, come here...”

Dudian went sideways while he gestured at the young splitter.

After a moment the splitter slowly began to move towards Dudian.

Dudian was delighted as he saw that his actions were bringing effect. He guided the young splitter back to the entrance of the cave. In his heart, he was calculating the time that the adult splitter took to hunt. Normally it would be just over thirty minutes. So he had about 15 to 20 minutes left before the adult splitter comes back.

However, it was possible that it would come back in a few minutes.

If he couldn’t get out in twenty minutes, then his death would come.

Dudian was calm as he looked at the gap between the boulders. He pointed towards it and tentatively said: “Hit it! Hit!” His hands shot towards the rocky wall.

The young splitter looked at him as it was motionless.

Dudian was very nervous as he saw no response from the young splitter. But he tried not to show the anxiousness to it. There was only one way, and that was to guide it slowly. He was patient as he repeatedly said: “Follow me! Hit! Hit it!” He beat the rocks with his hands.

The young splitter didn’t respond as it quietly looked at him.

Dudian was becoming impatient as he shouted in anger: “Come on! Just chop it!” He continued to tap the rocks with hit both hands while he looked at the young splitter.

The young splitter looked for a while, then slowly raised its scythes and began to cut the rock wall. The rough and harsh sounds began to echo out.

Dudian was relieved as he saw the young splitter comply with him: “Harder! With all your strength!”

The young splitter saw him stop, so it discontinued too.

Dudian was stunned. He began to beat the rock with both his hands continuously.

The young splitter saw him, so it immediately lifted the scythe like forelimbs and cut the rock.

Puff! Puff!

The scythes were able just to scratch the massive boulder.

Dudian saw that the young splitter wouldn't be able to cut through the complete boulder even if it took a whole day. However, just half a meter away from that place there was a gap. He thought that if he could direct it to cut and enlarge that gap, then there would be a chance.

"Come on, follow me, take three steps ..." Dudian tried to guide the young splitter.

However, the young splitter ignored him and continued to cut the boulder in front of him.

Dudian increased the pitch of his voice to catch its attention. He moved back and forth for a while.

About a minute later the young splitter also learned to move like

Dudian. It was standing in front of the gap.

Dudian was speechless. He wanted to give warm applause to himself: “Come on! Do it with vigor! Put all your strength and effort!” Afterward, he began to punch the rock.

The young splitter continued to act the way Dudian demonstrated. Its scythe-like arms were cutting the sides of the gap, and lots of small stones were extracted.

Dudian was excited. Indeed, it was a legendary monster. It’s learning ability was terrifying. It was much amazing than a human baby.

“Hurry up!”

Dudian pretended to hit faster. Moreover, he knew that it couldn’t understand his own words.

Bang! Bang!

The young splitter was cutting the gap and enlarging it.

Dudian saw the gap was big enough for him to squeeze through, so he shouted: “Stop! Stop!”

The young splitter heard the sound and looked at Dudian. It saw that he had stopped, so it didn’t continue to cut the boulder.

Dudian saw that it was standing in front of the gap, so he quickly rushed back to the cave: “Follow me! Come here!”

The young splitter saw him run away and took back its eyes. It continued with the previous cutting exercises.

Dudian was angered as he saw the young splitter not following after him. He picked up a claw of a monster from the ground and threw at it. Bang!

The young splitter raised its front limbs in rage and turned its head. It rushed over to the cave.

Dudian rushed into the mountain of corpses. He threw their bodies at the young splitter to divert its attention.

Afterward, Dudian ran back the entrance of the cave. He squeezed into the big gap drilled by the young splitter. He took off his hunter armor as some parts of the armor were too hard. He was accounting for space right now.

There were only shorts on him as his upper body was bare. He drilled into the gap.

The gap was too narrow. He was able to squeeze his head freely, but his shoulder was stuck because the gap was several inches too narrow.

Dudian clenched his teeth as he knew that he couldn't back down in here and leave to die. He forced himself out as the stones rubbed his flesh and penetrated it. There was pain coming off from his right part of the shoulder. His skin should be bleeding.

Dudian crept inside like a bug. After he was able to pass his shoulder, the following parts were much easier.

Dudian moved inch by inch as his palms caught onto the rocks. The little gap in front of him was the hope that he was clinging onto.

His shoulder bumped into numerous rough stones as he crawled. Half the way trough he felt a sharp pain in his shoulder. A stone tip had pierced into his body.

Dudian growled in pain. He clenched his teeth and forced his body out. He felt that his shoulder was torn. It was the same feeling as being pierced with a spike.

Dudian roared and pushed forward.

His palms caught the outside part of the boulder. He burst with strength as his body squeezed out and fell to the ground.

Hiss~~!

A faint and anxious call came from behind the gap. It was the young splitter.

Dudian didn’t care much about the young splitter which had come back. He looked at the sun and identified the direction. He had to go to the right!

Bang! Bang!

Dudian was running, but he still couldn’t help but look back. He saw that boulder which was located ten meters above the ground was shaking. He didn’t think that the power of the newborn was so terrifying. However, there was no point at looking back. He ran away as fast as he could.

Chapter 297

Run! Run! Run!

Dudian fled away like a fool. He would be willing to put up wings on his spine at this moment. His body was exuding the smell of the young splitter's blood, so if the adult splitter sensed him, then it was bound to track him.

The only way for him to keep his life at this moment was to get out of its perception range as soon as possible!

"Damn it! I'm not sure which area I'm located at right now! It had caught me and brought me into its nest, and I'm unaware of the location." Dudian's face was ugly. The only thing that made him slightly less nervous was that the splitter's nest was an area where monsters don't dare lurk around. However, it also meant that if he were to encounter a monster in this area, then it would be a very dangerous one. As a monster which preyed upon the eggs of a splitter, wouldn't be an ordinary one. Especially its hiding skills would be out of this world.

In the span of about few minutes, Dudian had run out for more than a dozen miles. He was running through the bushes right now.

"It's a ruined city which is completely buried under and overgrown by moss and vegetation. There isn't an iconic building or terrain which I can refer to..." Dudian pulled out the map and looked at it. Previously, he took off his hunter armor, but he didn't

abandon the map. The ruins were vast, so he had to do something before the adult splitter caught up. If he didn't refer to the map, then he would lose his path and stray into the area of another dangerous monster.

He firmly remembered the main landmarks drawn on the map and was about to move forward.

Rustle~~

The sounds of grasses swaying echoed.

Dudian's face slightly changed as he looked back. He saw a terrifying figure catching up to him as it passed through the bushes on the ragged asphalt. It was moving like a spider while its front two scythes were cutting off the bushes in front.

However, it was not the adult one, but the newly born small splitty. (t.n: I read through the comments and saw people referring to the young splitter as splitty. I like the way it sounds, and I'll be sticking to it.)

Small was a metaphor because splitty was as big as an elephant.

"Damn it!" Dudian's face turned ugly. He turned and ran. Dudian wanted to curse out loud on impulse. How could splitty break open the boulders? Did it drill out?

The most dangerous and critical part was that it was pursuing

Dudian!

Dudian was going to mad. At the time when the adult splitter returns to its nest, it wil see one of its children dead and the other one missing. It will certainly pursue him. There is going to be a chase. If the splitty stayed back in the nest, then the adult splitter may stay in the cave as a guardian. The possibility of a chase would reduce by a lot.

However, right now Dudian could give out a 99% guarantee that the adult splitter would be tracking them!

Moreover, it had to be noted that even the mutated crocodiles were hunted and killed by the splitter in their home ground in the swamps. It showed just how terrifying a predator was!

Whoosh!

Dudian sprinted as fast as he could. He wanted to get rid of this little ancestor.

The sounds of splitty chasing after him didn’t pull away. As time passed, it got faster and faster. It seems that splitty was getting used to its body, and the limbs were adapting to the environment. The coordination between its limbs was getting better.

Dudian looked back to check on his pursuer. He secretly speculated about trying to fight it head on. But he knew that he might not be able to kill it. Previously, he relied on surprise and

environment factors to kill the young splitter. How was he going to lay out such a situation at this point?

Once the adult splitter returns to the cave, it will immediately chase after them. The latter is not something that he could play around with.

Hah! Hah!

Dudian's breath was getting hard as he ran. Nevertheless, the human's physical fitness is limited in comparison to the monsters. He was getting slower, and the splitty was catching up with him. Dudian stopped as he held onto the dagger. He turned around and stared at it.

Splitty saw that Dudian stopped, so it quickly reduced its speed. It came to a stop at a few meters away from Dudian. It cried out as it hissed. Its vocal cords were not matured yet so it couldn't growl or call out.

Dudian wryly smiled.

Splitty stood still as its emerald green eyes blinked from time to time.

Dudian made a few steps back.

Splitty slowly moved.

Dudian made few more steps backward.

Splitty moved forward.

Dudian immediately stopped.

Splitty also stopped.

Dudian went crazy as he wanted to pick up a stone and throw it at it. But he changed his mind immediately. He thought that such a behavior might have a counter-effect. Splitty won't be able to pick up a stone, but instead, would want to 'exchange the communication' by using its scythes. Dudian didn't want to get sliced into two in this place.

How can heavens justify such a physique in a newly born monster?

"It is a second generation monster which was just born. I assumed that humans are... " Dudian felt bitter in his heart. He thought of a way. Since he couldn't outrun it, then there was one way he could use to get rid of it. That was to trap it somewhere or else both of them would be stuck together.

Dudian pulled out the map and looked at it while he vigilantly checked on the splitter through looking at it sideways. He was worried that it would suddenly rush out at him. Although he only glanced at the map, but he remembered approximate surroundings

of the area by the death passage. However, there was a big mountain and a great lake by their current location.

He looked at the vicinity of the death passage on the map again. He saw a few large lakes. Dudian's eyes lit up as he saw the description on the map. He confirmed his current location within the map. Right now he was in an area occupied by the Scott consortium. It was the closest area to the death passage. It was described as area no 'o' by the Scott consortium and was colored in gray!

If he traveled in a parallel line, then he was going to reach area no three outside the death passage.

Finally, he was able to pinpoint his location. He quickly selected a route and ran.

Splitty saw that Dudian began to run, so it immediately began to follow after him.

Dudian's eyes were gloomy as he secretly prayed that the adult splitter wouldn't catch up soon. His muscles were tight as he felt a feeling of death.

Whoosh!

Dudian ran out from the wilderness and sprinted through a relatively safe route.

In about two or three minutes Dudian got to understand that the little ancestor had no malicious feelings towards himself. It would slow down when Dudian felt tired and slowed down. Splitty didn't intend to attack him, but instead moved correspondingly as Dudian did.

It made his heart ease up a little as he wryly smiled.

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Whoosh!

Dudian was rushing through the grasses when his foot kicked a hard object. His body stumbled as he almost fell. He used his hands to press to the ground to go forward while he heard a low roar coming from behind. He couldn't help but look back.

He saw that a monster looking like a turtle with a very long tail poked its head through the grasses. Its body's scales looked as rough as a rock. It seemed that it was taking a nap in the grasses. The turtle was awakened and shook its body. Its head turned towards Dudian and then quickly turned back to the other side.

Splitty was standing a bit away from them. It stopped as its emerald green eyes looked at the stone turtle with ferocious and bloodthirsty killing intent. Both of them were confronting each other.

Dudian didn't stop for long as he turned around and ran.

He had recognized the monster. It was called a stone turtle. At adult stage, they reached level twenty-two. The stone turtles had a strong defense. Even a senior hunter would find it difficult to leave scars on its armor. The only way humans were able to hunt it was using methods such as fire, anesthetic poison and so on.

Dudian heard a roar that came from behind him after he ran for a

few hundred meters. It seems both monsters were fighting each other. He didn't hope that the stone turtle would be able to kill the splitty, but Dudian hoped that it would rely on its hard defense and delay it for him to run away.

"The little ancestor is relying on the smell of blood from my body to track me. If I can use the blood of other monsters or even mud to eliminate the smell then maybe I can get rid of the..." Dudian's eyes lit up as he remembered the stone turtle. He was beginning to think of a different way out from this situation. He saw small water basins. He carefully checked around to confirm that no monsters were lurking inside. Dudian used his palms to grab mud from the swamp and smear it on his body.

As Dudian was about to finish half of his body was when he heard the rustling sounds of the grass. He turned back to see a black spot sweep through the bushes. It was splitty!

"Really?!" Dudian's eyes shrank. Did it take it half a minute for it to finish the battle?

Dudian's face changed as he saw the scythes of the splitty stained with blood. He changed his mind about continuing to smear mud on his body. He knew that if he completely covered the blood stains with the mud, then he would be the target of its hunting. He began to run as he thought about the map.

It didn't take long for him to reach area no. 2 of the death passage. He was calculating the time in his mind. Thirty minutes had almost passed. Most probably on the other side, the adult splitter was in a horrified state in the nest. If it maxed out its

speed, then the adult splitter could reach his location in about five minutes. According to his estimates, Dudian had a life expectancy of five minutes left.

“It’s too short. I need at least fifteen minutes to reach the entrance of the giant wall.” Dudian’s face turned ugly as he thought about the mutated crocodiles in the swamp. He changed his direction and ran towards the swamp.

He reached the swamp in about two minutes.

However, he was shocked when he saw the scene in the basin. Previously the swamp was covered in dark green plants and bushes. It was a great place for mutated crocodiles to use their camouflage ability. However, the place was a mess at the moment. There were scratches which were seven or eight feet large. There were blood stains scattered all over the mud. The claws of the crocodiles were scattered around the place.

Apparently, the adult splitter had come over here to hunt the mutated crocodiles. Last time he was able to lure out three mutated crocodiles while the others seemed to have gone back to the swamp because of the fear of the twin-headed snake lizard. However, the brutal end that they had was no different. The area was swept clean by the adult splitter.

Dudian’s eyes recovered as he looked around the area. He found some vines and pulled them off. He wrapped the vines tightly over a collapsed boulder. He held onto them as he ran into the basin.

Splitty who had reached the place hissed and rushed in after Dudian. There was a trace of a low roar as it followed after Dudian.

Dudian continued as he saw splitty rush after him.

After seven or eight steps Dudian saw his feet get covered and entangled in mud. His speed sharply dropped, and each step felt deeper and harder. After sixteen steps he was unable to rapidly move as he was drenched almost to his knee in the mud. He pulled the tight vines as he crawled out from the other side.

Hiss~~

There was a low cry with a trace of fear in it.

Dudian looked back and saw the splitty's body had fallen into the swamp. Its huge body, and sharp scythes made it fall deeper than himself.

Dudian was relieved as he climbed out of the swamp using the vines. He climbed out to the dry shore and shook off the mud. He heard the panicked call from behind. He looked back and saw the splitty had half of its body submerged in the swamp. It was agitated as it tried to use its scythes to move fast but instead sunk deeper. It seemed that splitty was calling out for help.

Dudian's face slightly changed, but he continued to run away.

There was urgency in his heart as he sprinted.

In about two minutes Dudian reached the outer edge of the area no 1. He didn't encounter any monsters on the way. It seems that the adult splitter had preyed upon all of them. Or his fire method had killed them.

Buzz~~

A voice echoed from behind.

Dudian's heart jumped in shock as he looked back.

He saw a figure chasing after him.

How did it climb out?

How can it be?!!!

Dudian was shocked, but he soon noticed the transparent wings behind the splitty's 'spine.' They were vibrating as it moved. Acually, Splitty was moving much faster than before, and it seemed that it would fly up at any time.

Does it have wings?

Is it a flying monster?!

Dudian hurriedly ran forward as fast as he could.

It didn’t take long before splitty was running side by side with Dudian again. Its head, which was protected by the edge of its scythes turned over as it hissed in a low tone. It seems splitty was greeting Dudian.

Dudian was not amused, but fell relieved to see that it didn’t have any intention to attack him. However, he was on constant alert as he ran. Because monster’s behavior was just too unpredictable.

Splitty’s wings trembled as the mud on them shook and twisted. The wings looked like the ones you could see on normal insects. It didn’t take long for it to be able to fly. It flew by Dudian’s side. Afterward, it began to make circles around Dudian.

Dudian had a headache, but he didn’t dare to speak. He couldn’t wait for the moment when he would kick the hell out of the splitty.

In about seven or eight minutes Dudian finally reached the heavy iron gate of the death passage. He was relieved. Moreover, the adult splitter hadn’t given chase yet. It seemed it was sheer luck for it to take longer to hunt prey in comparison to previous hunts.

However, Dudian didn’t dare to stay here for long. If he didn’t get through the gate, he could be killed after a minute or two.

He quickly raised the gate and went inside.

Hiss~~

Splitty made a sharp call in an anxious tone as it saw Dudian go inside.

Dudian didn’t dare to let it inside as he pulled down the iron gate in haste.

Bang! Bang!

The violent kicking sounds echoed as he pulled down the heavy iron plate.

Dudian’s face turned ugly as he was about to run through the passage. Suddenly he thought that if the adult splitter came over and saw the splitty’s naughty actions then it will be aware that this iron gate was something abnormal. If the adult splitter attacked it, then the iron gate was bound to be cut off!

In that case, the secret passage will be exposed.

“If the adult splitter comes inside then … the entire giant wall will be its feeding ground!” Dudian continued to brainstorm: “Although the life of others doesn’t have anything to do with me but teams would be sent to capture the splitty and the adult splitter. Moreover, if they manage to capture the adult splitter they would get all the benefits!”

He hesitated as he thought about everything.

If at this point there were others who would observe the logic of Dudian then they would be vomiting blood in anger. Dudian was planning to resolve a crisis by putting the foundation for another but bigger one!

Dudian decided: “I got to take the risk!”

As he was in the passage the security of his life has also greatly improved. The first thought that came to his mind was to find a way to kill the adult splitter. After all, it is a legendary monster! It would be more than ten times harder than killing a rare monster! Moreover, if it intruded into the giant wall, then it would be bound to be encircled and hunted!

Moreover, Dudian believed that there would be powers in the inner area who would have conceived the possibility of this kind of a monster barging into the giant wall. So there has to be a scout which observes such situations. Even if they won’t have a way to suppress the monster they will rely on tactics to kill it.

Dudian knew that giant wall of Silvia can’t be terrorized by monsters even if they are able to burst inside. Or else the system couldn’t survive for three hundred years!

But he wouldn’t get any benefits at all if the splitters were killed at the hands of others!

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Dudian bit his lips as he heard the sounds. Bang! Bang! He pushed the iron gate a bit to open up a gap.

Sharp scythes pierced through the gap and opened the iron gate in an instant. Splitty was excited as it saw the heavy gate open and immediately drilled into the passage.

Dudian had retreated the moment its scythes had opened the gate. He looked back at splitty with vigilance.

As Dudian slowly retreated backward,

Splitty looked at him and slowly walked forward.

Dudian walked all the way to the other side of the passage. He removed the hook of the iron gate and slowly opened it. Sunlight penetrated from the gap.

Dudian looked back and saw that splitty's body was close to him. The sharp scythes could instantly cut him, which made his mind a bit tense. He took a deep breath, pushed the iron gate and climbed out.

Two knights of light were outside the passage because of their duty.

Both of them looked at the gate as they noticed the movement of the iron gate. They were stunned as they saw Dudian's naked upper body. Furthermore, in the next moment, a terrifying figure rushed out after him. Their eyes widened, and faces turned white as they saw the ferocious beast.

Dudian saw that splitty was attracted by the two knights of light. It hissed in excitement and rushed out at them.

Dudian turned and slipped back into the passage. He quickly ran to the other end of the passage. Dudian cut the weeds and pulled out mud. Then he crushed weeds for them to emit juices so that it would interfere with splitty's smell remaining in the air.

Dudian didn't know how much of effect it would have, but he did everything that could clean their tracks. At least the adult splitter wouldn't be able to trace or pinpoint the exact location of the gate. He closed the iron gate and came back to the inside of the giant wall. At that time, splitty had already killed both Knights of light. It was currently eating the upper body of one of the knights of light. The blood was splashed and scattered all around.

Dudian didn't feel any remorse as he looked at the sight of this tragic death. His heart was as cold as stone.

He climbed out of the passage and locked the gate. Dudian stood before the splitty and 'hissed' at it. He waved at splitty indicating for it to catch up with him.

Splitty heard Dudian's call and looked up. The next moment it

bowed its head and continued to bite at the hands of the knight of light. Soon the first Knight of light was completely eaten down. Afterward, it used its scythes to pierce the other knight's body and stuffed it under its own body. It began to bite the knight's head. Kacha! Splitty chewed and swallowed the head.

Dudian's eyes twitched at sight. He didn't want to stay here any longer, so he turned and quickly ran away.

Dudian heard the sound coming from behind as he ran for tens of meters. He knew that they were the sounds of splitty's footsteps without even looking back.

Dudian was relieved to see that his 'charm' was still there. He looked back and saw that splitty's scythes were full of blood. They exuded the smell of human blood.

"There are many knights of light stationed along the perimeter of this place. Their job is to be the first line of defense in case the monsters were able to drill through the giant wall. Now, this little ancestor has killed their people. I need a place to hide it, but where? Its mother is outside the giant wall, and the Holy Church is almost everywhere inside the giant wall..."

Dudian ran while he thought about splitty. Although it was a cub, but after all, it was a legendary monster. After few years of nurturing you can kill it to get its magic marks. Moreover, estimated value of a legendary magic mark would not be less than that of a legendary item. It would be almost as costly as a city.

“The knights of the Holy Church are stationed in the vicinity of the giant wall. The only place to hide such a monster is the radiation zone. There are only mutated beasts and barbarians over there. It won’t cause too much of an attention even if it’s exposed there.” Dudian’s eyes lit up: “But how am I going to get it to radiation zone without the Holy Church knowing about it?”

He looked around the desert as he sniffed the air. Dudian’s eyes carefully focused.

Regarding the speed of perception, transmission of the smell was the slowest. Visual perception and hearing were much faster. However, the sense of the smell had the farthest detection. It would constantly drift, and you could detect things within the range of tens of miles.

To trace the source of the smell you had to know the smell of the object. Even though the wind will blow the air, but the smell is sticky. This is how dogs rely on the sense of smell to track escaped prisoners.

An ordinary person wouldn’t sense any scents in the desert. But Dudian’s nose could distinguish millions of different scents. He was able to analyze all of them and find the one which he was searching for. He was like a humanoid hound. He was better than hounds!

Dudian found the smell emitting from the body of the former knight of light. It was coming off from several directions. He followed the smell as he traced it to its source.

Dudian saw a fortress which had a banner of Holy Church struck on top of it after a short while.

Dudian looked at the place as he tried to see the distance between the barriers. Dudian had to be quick in measuring as if there was a Knight of light with an ability similar to his then he would be in a problematic situation.

However, not everything went according to his plan.

Dudian was stunned as he watched splitty rush out and headed towards the fortress.

“Idiot!” Dudian’s face changed. He wanted to catch up and block splitty, but its speed was too fast. He gave up and turned to another place. He found a block and began to brainstorm: “The people in this fortress are finished for good. Holy Church will send someone for investigation, and they will find that it was the job of a monster after searching through the clues.”

“They will certainly use different methods to identify the culprit. However the most probably they will bring someone with smell detection ability. Moreover, they may use cognate worms too…”

Dudian’s face changed for a moment, but he thought that he could eliminate his own smell. In that case, the other side wouldn’t be able to detect it or trace it back to him. It would be hard for them to get proper clues.

As Dudian was thinking through the solutions, Splitty had rushed out to the fortress. A knight of light was using a telescope as he was checking the surrounding area. The knight was horrified as he saw the terrifying figure rushing at the fortress, so he rushed out to ring the bell.

Splitty was moving at fast speeds. It was attracted to the loud sound of the bell the moment the knight rang it. It jumped up and climbed over. Splitty used one of its scythes to grab the knight of light and instantly cut him into pieces.

Splitty began to bite the body of the knight of light after killing him. It had long been hungry and running at fast speeds which had consumed a lot of its energy.

“Beast!” A sound burst out.

A middle-aged Knight of light wearing a silver armor rushed out as he angrily looked at the knight who was shouting. He was holding onto his spear.

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Splitty stopped biting onto the knight of light as it heard the shouting. It turned and looked at the middle-aged man who was wearing silver colored armor. The man rushed at splitty as he raised his spear. Half of the spear was solid while the upper part was cold, shiny and trembling (t/n: close to the tip). It was difficult to figure out which type of specific attack the knight was going to make.

However, the middle-aged knight of light didn't take into account that splitty was not a human. All parts of his body were razor sharp weapons. As the knight's spear was stabbing onto it, splitty released the knight of light it had killed, and all of its scythes attacked the middle-aged knight from all sides. It appeared as if splitty was embracing the man from all sides like a spider.

Ding!

The spear was cut in half. To make it more flexible, the spear was not made of metal.

"What!" The middle-aged knight was shocked and wanted to turn around, but it was too late.

Puff! Splitty caught up with him and waved its scythes around the man's body. One of the scythes passed through his upper body. The man's head was cut off from the ear up. The upper half of the head dropped down. The blood gushed out as his brain fell to the

ground.

“Knight Long!”

“Beast …”

The group of knights of light who were rushing out and were behind the previous middle-aged man was shocked. The previous courage was lost as they saw this scene.

Splitty wanted to take a bite of the middle-aged knight, but was distracted as it saw the team of knights of light. It growled twice as it cried out in a low voice. It was no longer ‘hissing’ as it did previously. Its body went into motion as splitty bounced out. It was as if hedgehog made out of razors fell into the middle of the team of knights of light. In an instant, the bodies of two knights of light were cut up. The fear in their eyes was still there as their bodies fell to the ground.

The knight of light standing behind the team trembled and turned to run away.

Splitty was as fast as lightning. It caught up and killed him too. Another handsome knight of light tried to escape in panic, but before he could get away, his helmet fell onto the ground. The scythe had pierced through his chest.

“Ah ah ah … …” The knight screamed out in pain.

Splitty used its other scythe-like front limb to cut his body into little pieces. The screams stopped abruptly as the knight's body parts fell to the ground.

In about a minute this small fortress had turned into a purgatory from hell.

Dudian was relieved as he saw the scene from outside. He had used ropes made out of grass and twisted them under his feet. Dudian was trying his best to avoid leaving his footprints close to the fortress. He was planning to disguise the attack to the fortress as if done by monsters. Even if the little splitty were found in the future by the Holy Church, there would be no proof that would implicate his involvement.

Moreover, it was a fact that he didn't kill anyone.

Dudian went through the barrier to the radiation zone. There was no bloody smell in the area. It seems mutated beasts rarely wander close to this area.

Dudian turned and looked at the fortress as he quietly waited.

As he had expected the splitty jumped out from the fortress and chased after him.

"We have a terrorist ..." Dudian looked at the blood stained scythes of the splitty. The head of the guard team should have had a physique which was on par with senior hunters, although

compared to hunters, they lacked combat experience and their skills were far worse. However, splitty didn't have much of experience too. It was a bit over an hour since it was born!

Dudian turned and ran as he saw splitty was about to catch up with him.

"Holy Church would certainly pay great attention to this battle! They will guess that a strong monster had attacked the group. They will send people with smell detecting abilities to investigate, but the radiation zone is now ruled by the barbarians. Holy Church wouldn't send people to the radiation zone..."

"Unless they send an elite team composed of senior hunters. However, in that case, Holy Church will need to cooperate with the other six consortiums. The Knights of Light aren't responsible for fighting against monsters. At least not in the time of peace."

"There are not many senior hunters in the six consortiums. At least not on the surface. But as long as we go into the depth of the radiation zone with their tracking abilities, it would be much less probable that they can find us."

Dudian glanced at his side where the splitty was running by. This little guy will create trouble out of nowhere if I can't find a solution.

Hiss~~

A dark green snake whose body color was the same as the grasses on the ground jumped out.

Whoosh!

Splitty who was running beside him jumped up. Its head, which was close to its belly, grabbed the snake as it landed back on the grass.

Dudian didn't expect that splitty's digestion would be so fast. It hadn't even been half an hour since it had eaten in the fortress.

After seven or eight minutes of rapid running Dudian saw lush woods in the mountains. It seemed that there were vague outlines of a building. It had a gray appearance and was covered in shades. He was startled for a moment as he thought about the possibility: "Is it a barbarian house?"

His heart rapidly beats up as he thought about the claims about barbarians. He was curious as he didn't think that they would be able to build such a strange house. There were many doubts in his heart. He had many speculations about the origins of barbarians. Especially after he saw that knife. He had a creepy feeling in his heart about them.

Dudian didn't stop or take detours. He directly, but quietly went to the place.

However, splitty didn't care about Dudian's secretive acts. It was

happily running side by side with him.

Dudian wryly smiled, but didn't dare to voice out his opinions. Although splitty didn't have hostility towards him, but who could predict the actions of a monster? Splitty was good towards him this second and in the next Dudian may end up as its food.

He reached the trees at the foothill of the mountain. He was on alert because of a possible attack by the splitty while he looked at the suspected building behind the woods. He confirmed that it was a building behind the forest. However, its style and material seemed very different to the houses in the residential district. It seemed like concrete constructions from the old era.

Dudian carefully passed by the trees.

Kaka!

Nevertheless, the splitty wasn't as careful as Dudian. It had been swaggering from the start as it went through the trees. Because of it freely waving its scythes it cut off a few trees which were close to it. Trees fell down and crashed onto the other ones.

Dudian silently looked at the splitty which was freely cutting off trees. He had a headache because of its actions.

However, he remembered splitty's attack on the small fortress of the Holy Church. If there were living beings in this building, then they should have been attacked already. It hasn't sensed any 'food'

inside so that should be why it hasn’t attacked yet.