

Affinity 151

Chapter 151 - The Sacrifice

A chill ran down the spines of everyone when they saw the Silver Horned Apes coming out of the forest, especially those from the Azure empire, they felt their legs almost giving way due to fright.

'How can one person provoke so many of them?'

This was the question running through the mind of everyone.

The Twelfth Prince's group couldn't help but feel lucky that Grey didn't come towards them, if not, there's no way they could fight against such a large number of Apes. Doing a rough estimation, they felt the Silver Horned Lightning Apes numbered more than thirty.

"Who are you?! What the hell are you doing?!" The young lady yelled at Grey.

She could tell that Grey was purposely attracting the Apes towards them, and from the look of things, he had already successfully done that.

When she sensed the stages of the Apes, she almost fainted from fear, she didn't have an ounce of confidence in being able to escape the pursuit of a Fourth stage Origin Plane Purple Horned Lightning Ape, not to mention the one in the Sixth stage.

"What do you mean what am I doing? I brought the item you sent me to steal." Grey yelled making sure the Apes heard him clearly.

When the leading Purple Horned Lightning Ape got close, it attacked immediately. It wasn't like it could talk to these humans, and even if it could, it would still prefer attacking. They had already offended its clan, so they must die!

"Run!" The young lady yelled while sending out an attack to block the one the Ape sent their way.

Even though she knew the chances of them escaping were low, they didn't have much of a choice. It's either they tried to escape, or, they stayed and fight, which is nothing more than a death wish from everyone's point of view.

Boom!

Both attacks collided sending out a shockwave that pushed the young lady backward. She was naturally weaker than the Ape in the Sixth stage.

"What are you all still doing here? Run!" She screamed when she saw the others foolishly staring at her and the Ape.

"And you! You will pay for this!" She yelled looking at Grey venomously.

If looks could kill, then Grey would have died over a hundred times already from her gaze.

Void had already left her arms and was currently sitting on Grey's shoulder.

'What do we do now?' He asked Grey when he saw the group was trying to escape.

'Isn't it obvious? We've already delivered the goods, but leaving the group now might draw the Apes back to me, so we'll follow the group.' Grey snickered while dodging an attack from one of the Purple Horned Lightning Apes.

The Twelfth Prince's group had already made a break for it when they saw the Ape attacking the moment it got close, they ran towards the north, but they were unfortunately still followed by a small group of six Silver Horned Lightning Apes. Even if the group caught up with them, they were confident in being able to fend them off.

They were quite lucky since most of the Apes chased after the group from the Azure empire who were running towards the west.

Just as they were about to leave the field and enter into the forest.

"Ah..."

A scream of terror was heard by everyone.

But other than Grey who was having a relatively easier time running, none of the others could afford to turn back and see the cause of the shout.

Looking back, Grey noticed one of the youths from the Azure empire had been caught by a Purple Horned Lightning Ape, and his head was ripped off his body.

'Damn, such a nasty way to die.' Grey shook his head while continuing his escape, not forgetting to dodge the attacks that came his way.

The one chasing him was in the Fifth stage of the Origin Plane, but if Grey decided to stop and fight against it, he knew he would be able to kill it quickly, even killing the leader wasn't a problem for him.

'*Sigh* Is it just me or is this group dumb?' Void sighed while looking at the others who were trying to escape.

'Huh!' Grey exclaimed lightly not getting what Void was getting at.

'They could've easily run separately that way they'd be able to divide the Apes, yet, they all foolishly choose to run in one straight line.' Void said.

'Oh, I'm waiting for that as well. If they don't separate, they will all die while we're still being chased, that would mean my effort would be in vain.' Grey replied to Void before sending a fireball behind him.

'Oh well, most of the Apes are focused on them, so I can make my break away anytime soon.' Grey said.

The only reason he followed them was so that the Apes wouldn't suspect him, but now since he had followed them this far into the forest, he wouldn't draw too much attention if he decided to head off on his own. But things would be better for him if the group could all scatter.

'Haish, maybe I'm overthinking this and the Apes might even let me be if I decide to escape now.' He thought.

He had once again created a good distance between himself and the others, and since most of the Apes focused on the group from the Azure empire, things became easier for him. He even rarely attacked, and just dodged the attacks sent his way.

'Since I'm such a nice person, I should give them a suggestion.' Grey thought.

If the group separated, then one person would have to attract most of the Apes, but since the person wasn't him, he didn't care.

"If we continue running in the same direction, we wouldn't be able to escape them. We all should run in separate directions." He yelled out loud so the others who were slower could hear him properly.

When the young lady heard him, she felt dejected.

'What we? Since when did he become a member of our group? How could he be so shameless? I swear if I survive this, I'll find him and kill him.' The young lady thought, but she still followed Grey's suggestion since she knew he was right.

Escaping individually would give them a better chance than doing so with the entire horde following behind them.

When she studied the group properly, she realized the youth who screamed previously was the injured one because he was the only one who wasn't present.

Just like her, the others also quickly scattered since staying together was a bad decision.

Of all the people, the tall youth was the most unfortunate one since the strongest Purple Horned Lightning Ape followed him, accompanied by two others and over ten Silver Horned Lightning Apes. It felt since Grey had passed the treasure to him, he should be their main target.

He couldn't even go far before he was surrounded by the Apes, he wasn't that fast anyway, and being targeted by the strongest and fastest Ape, it was impossible for him to escape.

'*Sigh* So he's the sacrifice.' Grey shook his head when he saw the tall youth being surrounded.

Chapter 152 - Size Doesn't Matter

After seeing the tall youth surrounded, Grey didn't dare to stay any longer and quickly fled the scene with fewer 'escorts' compared to when he came to this place. If he stayed here any longer, he was afraid the Purple Horned Lightning Apes would come for him after killing the tall youth. After all, the only reason he brought up the suggestion to them was so that he could create a better opportunity for him to escape.

'How many are following us?' Grey asked after running for about ten minutes away from his previous location.

While running, he didn't have time to check out how many Apes followed him since he focused on leaving that area first, all he knew was that one of them was a Purple Horned Lightning Ape in the Fifth stage of the Origin Plane.

'Six. One Purple Horned and five Silver Horned' said Void.

Since he was sitting in Grey's shoulder, he naturally saw how many Apes followed Grey when he was leaving that area. Although currently, the Apes were some distance away from them.

'So, what's the plan now?' Void asked excitedly.

'Taking them out.' Grey replied.

After being chased for so long, he held a little grudge against the Apes, but the real reason he wanted to fight against them was that he hadn't fought against them before, and lightning attribute beasts are quite rare, so he wanted to test out how strong they were.

'Well, that's boring. How about we go steal something else?' Void suggested.

'No.' Grey refused instantly.

'Can you hold off the five Silver Horned Lightning Apes coming our way?' He asked Void.

Since he wanted to check out their strength, he naturally wanted to fight against the strongest one, if the Silver Horned Lightning Apes weren't kept in check, then they would interfere with his fight.

'For a while.' Void replied after a brief wait.

His strength had also seen an increase over the past two months, but he was still only a Peak Early-stage Rank Four magical beast which according to the human system, he was at the Third stage of the Origin Plane.

Grey still hadn't gotten used to the system of magical beasts, he still preferred using the human system even after being corrected by Void on multiple occasions.

Given Void's stage, it was surprising that he confidently said he would be able to hold off five magical beasts even when some were in the same stage as he was, while the others were just a stage below.

'Hmm, that's good. Guess we'll be having one of the Apes for dinner.' said Grey.

He had been running for almost one hour because of the Apes, now after dealing with these ones, he wanted to eat and rest. Even though he could still go on physically, he was feeling exhausted mentally from the constant running, not just that, he had also used a huge amount of his elemental essence. If not for his massive reserve, the thought of fighting the Apes wouldn't have crossed his mind.

'Dinner is here.' Void announced albeit Grey not seeing any beast present.

But it didn't take long before Grey saw the Purple Horned Lightning Ape charging towards his direction.

'Okay Void, keep the others busy. Remember not to destroy their horns.' Grey reminded Void before he disappeared.

'More like remember to stay alive.' Void thought internally after appearing on the branch of a tree in the direction the Ape came from.

He remembered telling Grey he could only hold them off for a while, yet Grey was telling him not to destroy their horns. How could he possibly destroy their horns when holding them off was already a big task?

Bang!

The battle between Grey and the Ape quickly started, and Grey gained the upper hand from the first strike.

'My physical strength alone can rival the strength of a Fifth stage Origin Plane Elementalist, if I boost it with the elements, I should be able to go toe to toe with this Ape.' Grey thought looking at his fist.

The Purple Horned Lightning Ape was just over four meters tall, yet it was engaging in hand-to-hand combat with a human that looked so small compared to its size.

The shocking thing was that the four meters tall Ape was being manhandled by a human who wasn't even two meters tall, yet.

Bam!

Grey's fist connected with the large hairy body of the Ape and it growled in pain, clearly, the strike was too strong for it to handle.

"Wow! To think my physical strength is this powerful after boosting it with the elements." Grey exclaimed looking at his fists in shock.

His look of shock slowly turned into one of ecstasy, because he rarely used his physical strength despite training it frequently, he didn't know just how powerful it was.

Void stared at Grey's battle and felt the situation was quite weird, it was rare to see a human manhandle a magical beast, especially one like this Ape which possesses immense physical strength.

'Well, that's it for me, time to work.' Void stood up and looked at the Apes coming his way.

Their huge bodies rushed through the forest quickly.

Void instantly sent out an attack that blocked the path of the incoming Apes. He disappeared, and appeared in front of the Apes, staring at them.

When the Apes saw a small cat appearing in front of them, they were a little stunned since the size difference between them was massive. Void was like a small ant standing in front of a towering giant.

The Ape at the front looked at Void with eyes of disdain and stretched out its huge hand in a bid to slap Void against the ground.

This Ape was unaware of Void's ability since when Void attacked previously, he only attacked the ground. Also, other than the Purple Horned Lightning Apes, the others didn't know of Void's capabilities.

'Heh! It's underestimating me.' Void smirked and allowed the Ape's hand to get close to him.

Seeing that Void didn't even try to escape, the Ape felt even greater contempt towards Void. Being creatures that enjoyed fighting, it naturally hated anything that would give up without a fight.

Bam!

The Ape's hand connected with the ground, but it was surprised other than the hard ground, it didn't feel anything else.

It slowly raised its hand and stared at the place it just smacked. Other than its handprint, there was nothing else. Confusion was soon written all over its face.

'Hi.' Void appeared on its huge palm and attacked the unprotected face of the Ape.

Before it could react, the attack had already reached its face, almost blasting off its head. Most of its face was burnt to crisp.

'*Sigh* I really shouldn't have attacked its face.' Void felt a little heartache when he realized he had lost one of the horns.

Thud!

The body of the Ape landed heavily on the ground.

The other Silver Horned Lightning Apes were stunned, but they quickly regained themselves and attacked Void with lightning.

Void agilely dodged the attack before sending out an attack of his own.

If one looked at the battlefield, then one would realize that size truly doesn't matter.

On one side, an Ape that was more than double the size of a human was being manhandled by a young man, while on the other side, a small cat was single-handedly fighting against four Apes that were more than a hundred times its size if put together.

Chapter 153 - Getting Carried Away

After Void killed the first Ape with the sudden attack, the remaining Apes were able to quickly figure out how he moved so fast. Although they couldn't keep up with him, they could protect themselves from his abrupt attacks that seem to always appear out of nowhere.

On Grey's end, he was still beating up the Purple Horned Lightning Ape. Since he was smaller and faster, the Ape was having a hard time hitting the target whenever it strikes. While Grey who had such a large target placed in front of him was having a hard time missing any of his attacks.

Bam!

His fist landed on the chest of the Ape after he dodged the blow it sent his way, after punching it, he held its outstretched hand with both hands and tried to throw it with his pure physical strength.

"Ah!" He yelled powerfully.

Focusing all his force on his arms, his muscles suddenly swelled and his veins bulged out. An amazing scene followed right after his powerful yell, he lifted the over four meters tall seven hundred pounds Ape off the ground and swung it a round before letting go of the hand.

Crash!

The Ape crashed through a couple of trees breaking through three in the process.

It slammed into the fourth tree almost also passing through it. When its body slammed into the tree, it created a hole in the almost three meters thick tree that left Grey puzzled as to how the tree was still standing.

Growl!

The Ape growled in pain while shaking its head to try to clear it from the spin and the hit it received. It looked at the little human coming towards it and couldn't help but feel a little fear.

There was no way it would have believed a human this small could lift it off the ground, not only that, but also throwing it successfully, yet, it happened to it. But being an Ape, one of the best fighting class magical beasts, it quickly regained its cool and even looked a little excited.

Grey dashed towards the Ape who was still sitting in the hole its body created on the tree during the crash, he wanted to end things with it quickly so as not to allow any unforeseen events to take place if the battle were to take too long.

He leaped off the ground and shot towards the sitting Ape, preparing to deliver a fatal blow towards its head.

Swoosh!

The Ape abruptly swung its left hand at Grey , not giving him a chance to dodge it.

Smack!

Bam!

Grey slammed into a nearby tree, creating a hole that went through to the other side of the tree which he came out of.

Crash!

He crashed into the ground after passing through the hole in the tree, it was only after sliding a distance of almost fifteen meters did his body stop.

'Hiss.'

Grey hissed from the pain he felt all over his body.

'Damn it! I got carried away.' He complained while dodging the lightning bolt the Ape sent towards him.

Crack!

After dodging the lightning, the earth armor he had on his body slowly started falling apart.

Just as the battle was about to start, he made sure to create an earth armor in case any of the Ape's strike lands. Although his physical strength and defense are miles better than that of other humans, it hadn't gotten to the stage where it could ignore the attack of a Fifth stage Origin Plane magical beast, especially one that excels in physical strength like this Ape.

The Ape immediately left its previous spot, running in Grey's direction. Since it pursued him here, it naturally wanted to kill him.

When Grey saw the Ape coming in his direction, he hurriedly used the water element to create icicles that instantly came out of the ground trying to pierce the leg of the Ape.

Roar!

The Ape roared angrily after two amongst the numerous icicles pierced one of its feet making it difficult for it to advance any further.

Of all Grey's elements, the water element was the one he used the least, while in the past two months, the fire element was the one he used the most. They were the only elements he hadn't learned any technique for, so he didn't have any particular flashy moves when using them. But he didn't have any problems with using the basic attacks of both elements.

When Grey saw that he had successfully stopped the Ape from advancing towards him, he dashed forward while covering his right hand with an earthen glove.

Seeing the human coming towards it, the Ape sent out a punch in Grey's direction, and to its utmost surprise, Grey met its fist with his.

Bam!

Both fists collided and the sound of flesh hitting stone rang out.

The Ape roared, surprised that the human wasn't sent flying like its prediction, instead, he stayed in the same position mid-air with both fists still together.

Grey who was still mid-air felt his entire body vibrate from the inside out.

'Damn it! I got carried away again.' He complained internally before swinging his right foot at the body of the Ape.

Grey's foot connected with it pushing it back by three steps.

With everything set, Grey went on a flurry of attacks, moving agilely and smoothly, he delivered one blow after another on the body of the Ape.

Before long, the snow-white hair of the Ape was almost covered in blood from head to toe. When Grey was fighting against it the first time, although Grey's blows were effective, they couldn't hurt it. But now, with the spike-covered earthen glove, he was able to wound the Ape with each blow that connected.

'Aren't you done yet? I can't hold on any longer.' While Grey was studying the injured Ape, he heard Void's voice.

Being carried away by the battle, he had forgotten about Void.

'Almost.' He replied before swiftly attacking the Ape once more.

Within one minute, the body of the huge Ape landed on the ground with a 'thud'. After killing it, Grey kept the corpse in his ring and went in Void's direction.

Since he wanted to cook one of the Apes, the strongest one was naturally the best choice.

'Where's the fifth one?' Grey asked on seeing that Void was only entangled with four Apes.

'Dead.' replied Void.

'Oh! Where's its corpse then?' Grey enquired looking around.

'It should be about fifty meters in that direction.' Void replied pointing towards the south while dodging an attack.

'Hey! Where are you going?' He asked hurriedly when he saw Grey leaving.

'To get its horn.' Grey answered while quickly heading in the direction of the south.

The horns of these beasts were treasures that could be used to forge elemental weapons, there was no way he was going to leave it behind.

'Where's the horn?' Grey yelled on seeing the faceless, hornless Ape lying on the ground.

'About that... I might have accidentally burnt it.' Void said nervously.

Grey stared at the Ape and felt slightly rueful about the loss of the horn.

Chapter 154 - There's Something Here

Grey shook his head while staring at the dead Ape, but since there was nothing he could do about the lost horn, he went back and assisted Void in fighting against the remaining four Silver Horned Lightning Apes.

Before he joined in on the battle, he created an inscription since he would be fighting against multiple opponents. He also planned to end the battle as quickly as possible.

It took the duo almost ten minutes before they were able to kill off the remaining four Silver Horned Lightning Apes. Dealing with these ones was easier for Grey compared to when he was previously fighting against the Purple Horned Lightning Ape.

When the last Ape died, Grey heaved a sigh of relief, because now, he could finally get the rest he wanted. He didn't forget to take the beast core of the Apes as well as their horns. Only the corpse were left alone, due to their huge sizes, he couldn't keep them all, and even if he could, he wouldn't bother. He already had the Purple Horned Lightning Ape in his storage ring, so he was content.

The beast cores of these Origin Plane magical beasts would earn him quite a lot. Compared to most of his friends, he was poor, in fact, in his group, he could be said to be the poorest. So since an opportunity just presented itself to him to make money, he grabbed it with both hands. He would sell the cores as well as the horns once he left this place.

'Where to now?' Void asked after seeing Grey keeping the last of the horns.

"Uhhh." Grey brought out the map he acquired from Quinn and studied it, he soon realized this part of the trial land wasn't recorded on it.

"Because we were on the run, there was no way for me to look at the map previously. The Lightning Apes are located here, and we came from this direction, so we obviously can't head that way anymore. We'll have to explore this part without the use of the map." Grey said after examining the map carefully.

He felt a little regretful that he didn't obtain the lightning attribute plant that took him to the Lightning Apes territory, and going back in that direction was something he didn't dare to do. If the Apes were to accidentally see him again, then they'll try to kill him using whatever means necessary given they grudge they held against him. He decided the horns and cores he collected from the Apes were his compensation.

'Aren't we going to have a meal before resting?' Void asked when he saw Grey was about to go to sleep after he finished setting up the defensive array.

'Nope.' Grey replied and immediately went to sleep.

Void couldn't help but grumble inside, but since he couldn't prepare the meal himself, he had to wait till Grey woke up before eating.

One week later.

Grey was currently looking at one of the few buildings he had come across since entering this place that was still intact.

'Hopefully, I find something good here.' He thought before stepping into the building.

Since the time he stole the Great Earth Essence Liquid, he felt his luck ran out because he hadn't gotten anything good ever since. What was annoying was that he had been chased by magical beasts on numerous occasions, but none made him feel as dejected as his encounter with the bunnies.

'*Sigh* Going to search another building, again.' Void thought while staring at the building.

He looked on without much interest, he was starting to get bored by this place because all they did was repeat almost the same routine daily. Train, search for treasure, and maybe fight against some magical beasts. He rarely got excited now, since he could almost predict what would happen next. If they couldn't find anything here, then they would continue looking for more buildings to search.

He knew training was good, but being in this place without having much contact with the world made life too boring from his point of view. On one occasion, he had even asked Grey if they could leave this place ahead of time, which Grey affirmed to, but after pleading with him, he refused.

When he asked the reason for his refusal, Grey told him this was a place of opportunities for them, so leaving ahead of time was something only a few people had done since this place was discovered. With a dejected and lonely look, he could only hang on and pray the last two months they had here run out as quickly as possible. They didn't even have up to two months left, so he felt a bit hopeful.

There were times when he actually missed Grey's friends, even though he didn't communicate with them, at least then he had some company other than Grey alone. He couldn't help but feel sorry for them since they were alone, unlike Grey who still had him to talk to.

Grey was naturally unaware of Void thoughts and was currently cautiously entering the building.

'Oh! This is expected.' He thought looking at the empty hall in front of him.

Even he was starting to feel a little tired of this place, maybe very soon he might just agree to Void's demand and leave this place. He had already gotten a major boost in strength anyway, if not for the fact that the elemental essence here is richer than the one outside, then he would have probably left after not being able to find anything good all this while.

Luckily, he stole the c.h.e.s.t from the clutches of the Twelfth Prince and found Void, or else, life here would have been pretty boring.

Still being a little optimistic, he decided to search the rooms in this place. There were two hallways in the building, with each having more than fifteen rooms. He entered the hallway by the right and started looking through the rooms, it didn't take long for him to look through eight rooms, where he found nothing.

'Since I've already started searching, it would be bad if I don't look through the other rooms.' He encouraged himself and continued searching through the other rooms.

'There's something here.' Void who hadn't shown any reactions since they entered the building said after Grey entered the hallway.

Grey looked at both sides, and other than seeing walls, statues and doors ahead of him, he couldn't see anything else.

"Where?" He asked.

From the time Void hatched until now, Grey knew he had never sensed anything wrongly. Whenever he said there was something anywhere, it always tends to be true.

'I can't pinpoint it, but I can sense it.' replied Void.

Getting confirmation from Void, Grey felt a little better since this time, his search might actually yield a reward. What got him excited was that whatever Void sensed had never turned out to be ordinary, take the space element technique he got for example, and also the time he entered the castle where the expert's inheritance was.

At that time, although he sensed something, it was a little vague, it was only after Void sensed it did he decide to stay and search for the passageway that led underground.

Chapter 155 - Searching For The Hidden Passage

When the thought of finding something good came to Grey's mind, he was instantly rejuvenated and the thought of leaving this place early was immediately thrown out of his head, and he started searching through the rooms with more zeal.

After ten minutes.

"Well, there's nothing in any of the rooms, that means there's a secret passageway either in the hallway or in one of the rooms." Grey said.

He was currently walking out of the room at the end of the hallway, he had searched through the other rooms and didn't find anything. Normally, he would've found a box or something by now.

"Can you try to at least estimate which area the treasure might be?" He asked.

Since he couldn't find anything in the rooms, that means the treasure was either hidden somewhere in the rooms or the hallway, or there was a secret passageway in either of them.

If he had to scrutinize each room, it might take days before he might find the treasure or passageway since he had to go as far as analyzing the smallest detail in the room, and there was also the possibility of not finding anything in the rooms.

Even though Void sensed it while they were in the hallway, it wasn't precise enough, so there was a chance the treasure was hidden in the hallway or the rooms.

'I don't think so, but I could try, maybe I might be able to get an accurate position.' Void replied after some deliberation.

Grey nodded and kept silent so as not to distract Void, this was the first lucky break he was about to have in a long while now, and he didn't want to miss it.

Void closed his eyes and sent out his spiritual sense trying to find where the feeling was coming from.

Three minutes went by with the duo not making any movements.

'I have nothing.' Void shook his head slowly.

He tried to get the rough location of where the treasure might be, but unfortunately, he couldn't.

'Hmm, how about this, take me to each room once again, then I'll try to feel it. I should be able to know if it's not there.' He suggested.

Grey could only nod and accept his suggestion, assuming that Void can sense if the treasure or passageway was not in any of the rooms he entered, it would save him the precious time of searching that place.

He went back to the room he just came out of.

"Here?" He asked.

'No.' answered Void after he used his spiritual sense to check the room.

They left the room and went to the next one.

"Here?"

'No.'

They continued like this until they went through all the rooms, and surprisingly, Void didn't sense it in any of the rooms.

'This means it's in the hallway.' Void said confidently.

Since he couldn't sense it in any of the rooms, that leaves only the hallway.

"Yeah. What do you think the treasure might be?" Grey asked in enthusiasm while slowly studying the hallway.

'I have no idea.' Void replied.

They continued talking about what they might find while Grey was studying the hallway.

Rumble! Screech!

Grey was currently standing in front of the statue of a dragon, which first pushed itself forward from the wall and dragged along the ground causing a grating sound while also opening a passageway.

"This should be it." Grey glanced at the statue once again.

Most of the statues in the hallway were that of animals, but what Grey found odd was that over eighty percent of the animal statues were of reptiles, there was that of snakes, lizards, frogs, and most important of all, dragons. He felt maybe the owner of this building had a thing for reptiles.

When he stepped inside, his nose was assaulted by a foul stench, and he couldn't see anything. He quickly created a fireball that floated in front of him, lighting up the way for him.

Crack!

When he took the first step downward, he stepped on something hard that made a cracking sound, he looked at his feet and found out he stepped on the skeleton of a human.

Looking further, he realized almost half of the skeleton's ribs were missing. He guessed this would probably be the cause of his death.

Grey increased his vigilance and slowly continued walking further. Before taking another fifty steps, he saw another skeleton, this time, the skeleton was missing its entire head.

Void's expression slowly started turning serious the further they advanced. From what they were seeing, there was something in here that was killing all the people who entered this place.

By the time they passed the hundredth step, they had seen twelve skeletons.

"Can you see the pattern?" Grey suddenly asked.

'Of what?' Void looked around trying to figure out what Grey was talking about.

"From how all the skeletons are positioned, it looked like the people were all killed while they were ascending the stairs." Grey pointed at the most recent skeleton that had one hand on the step ahead of it, it seemed to be trying to crawl upwards.

'Oh!' Void exclaimed slightly.

He truly didn't take note of how the skeletons were, all he knew was that people died, and nothing else.

"There's also a possibility that I'm wrong though, but we should be extra careful since what killed them might still be here." Grey added.

'Uh! Whatever it is, it should be dead by now. There's no way all these people were killed during one of the times the trial land opened because finding this passageway is very hard.' Void said.

He didn't think what killed the people was still alive.

"You remember you stayed in an egg for hundreds of years, right?" Grey asked looking at Void weirdly.

Void smiled awkwardly in reply.

While they were speaking, they soon got to the last step. There was a total of one hundred and fifty steps, and on those steps, they saw twenty-three skeletons in total.

Ahead of them was a tunnel that led further underground.

Chapter 156 - Underground Lab

Grey stood at the end of the stairs for a while thinking if he should advance further or not. The truth was, after seeing multiple skeletons, he was starting to have second thoughts about going further.

He was curious about what killed them, and also what this place was. Not just that, there was also the treasure that brought him here in the first place. He thought about everything properly before deciding to continue heading deeper.

If he didn't check it out, he might miss out on an opportunity of a lifetime, there was also the chance of his life being in danger because of this. But he knew if he didn't dare to take risks, then there was no way he could stand at the top someday.

Had Constantine Gale not taken the risk of spearheading the rebellion, he wouldn't have been adored by the millions of people in the Qilin empire today. Not just Constantine Gale, he was living proof of taking risks, supposing his dad did not take the risk of putting the pearl in his body, there was no way he would have inherited such an amazing legacy.

But he also knew that reward wasn't the only thing that came with risk, there was also danger. In fact, if one decides to calculate the rate of rewards and dangers that came with risks, then, danger would take up at least sixty-five percent of that ratio.

"Huuu."

Breathing heavily, he walked into the tunnel.

With the fire floating ahead of him, he didn't have an issue with seeing, he would occasionally make more fires and send it forward to see what lies ahead.

After walking further down the tunnel, he started seeing claw marks on the walls of the tunnel, huge, deep claw marks. There was one in particular that caught his attention, it was over five inches deep and three meters long when most of the others were just over one inches deep and half a meter long.

Grey placed his hand on the claw mark, slowly feeling it as he continued walking further. He continued on his journey vigilantly. If he said he wasn't nervous, he was lying.

He walked for about twenty minutes before he got to the end of the tunnel, normally it wouldn't take him that long to walk here given the distance from the foot of the stairs to the end of the tunnel, but since he had to remain cautious, he couldn't rush here.

The first thing he saw when he entered the place was a table, he increased the flame so he could see the place properly.

After creating a bigger fire, he was surprised by the sight he saw. There were other tables, chairs, a book stand, cages, and multiple platforms that had numerous chains on them.

"It's like a lab." Grey said after seeing the place.

This was the first time he was personally seeing a lab, but he had read and heard of people who have places like these that they use mainly for studying things, especially magical beast.

When he looked around, he estimated that the place was about three hundred meters wide, and he also noticed there were four doors in the place, two were on the left, and two were on the right .

The lab was disordered with books lying all over the floor, the tables weren't arranged with some being upside down, and the place looked like a battle took place here.

He held it in his hands and walked forward, picking another book in the process. This one, contained details of snakes.

Without knowing it, Grey had unknowingly spent almost thirty minutes here, and the only thing he did was pick up the books on the floor and flip through its contents.

"It's all about reptiles." Grey said.

He didn't really read them in detail, but from the drawings as well as most of the topics, he could tell they were about reptiles, all kinds of reptiles. The one he focused more on was the book about dragons.

In the library at the Lunar Academy, no book really had much about dragons. Other than myths, there wasn't any that mentioned the types of dragons. But in this one, Grey had seen at least three types of dragons, which were Wyverns, Basilisks, and the normal Dragons he had seen in their books.

He kept the books in his storage ring, but since they were much, he didn't keep all of them and only kept the ones he felt were more important.

After keeping the books, he started studying the place once again. He still hadn't seen anything here, so he was less hesitant now.

He walked towards the platform and picked up the eight inches thick metal chains there.

"Could it be that dragons were studied here?" Grey muttered while holding the chains.

While thinking of the possibility of dragons being here in the past, another thought came to his mind.

'What if it's the one who killed all those people, and it's still here?' He thought and hastily looked around with a grave expression appearing on his face.

This thought frightened him, just as much as it excited him. What are the chances of seeing a dragon in this place?

Thinking about dragons, he remembered Brown. Just like Dragons, Griffins were also rare legendary magical beasts.

'What if I tame it?' Grey thought and a grin unconsciously appeared on his face.

Void looked at him weirdly, amazed by the multiple expressions he had on his face.

'Are you okay?' He asked.

One moment Grey was tense, the next, he was smiling like a moron.

Void's question brought Grey out of his bewildered state.

"Huh! Yes, yes." Grey nodded before dropping the chains.

Clang!

The sound of the metal chains landing on the ground echoed in the whole lab.

Somewhere deeper inside the lab.

Unknown to Grey, the metallic sound continued ringing deeper underground to a place he didn't know existed here, and the closed eyes of a sleeping creature opened.

Growl...

A low growl escaped the creature's mouth.

Chapter 157 - Shiny Blade

Grey and Void continued looking through the place, with Void being the one on the lookout. Although they hadn't come across any creature yet, it didn't hurt to keep a lookout though.

When Grey finished studying the lab, he carefully headed to the first door on the left.

Creak!

He went in and created a fireball that lit up the room, the room was about fifty square meters, and other than beds that had leather straps on them, there was nothing else. The beds were ten in total.

'What are these things used for?' Void asked.

"I think for restraining animals, or people." Grey speculated.

He hadn't seen these sorts of beds before, but since this was a lab, and from how strong the leather felt, he guessed maybe that was its use.

"There's nothing here." Grey said before walking out of the room.

The moment he left the room, the fire extinguished. The flame in the lab was still burning brightly because he didn't put it out when he was going into the room.

Opening the other door on the left, he saw the same things without seeing any supposed treasure.

'There are still two doors left.' He comforted himself.

He quickly got to the right side of the lab, after opening the door, he created another fire. The moment the fire lit the room up, Grey was happy not to see the same sight of beds.

This time, what he saw were clothes, and pieces of equipment used in the lab. There was also what looked like a snake kept in a six meters long glass tube, but the tube had a crack on it and what was left of the snake were its bones.

The glass tube containing the snake wasn't the only one he found, he also found one that had a strange species of lizard that he had not seen before, but just like the one of the snake, the glass was broken but unlike the snake, the scales of this lizard was still intact.

"Hmm, what a strange lizard." Grey voiced his surprise and went closer to the glass tube.

Getting closer, he started examining the lizard properly. The lizard had three eye sockets, although, its eyes seem to have been removed, it had one horn just above the third eye in the middle, it had razor-sharp claws on the end of its three toes on both its forelimbs and hind limb and lastly, it had two tails.

Grey's curiosity kicked in, and he kept the entire glass tube in his storage ring the next second. He had never seen this beast before, and he would like to study it more.

After keeping it, he saw other glass tubes, but none of them had their scales intact like that weird lizard he kept.

'There's nothing here as well, that leaves the last room.' He said before walking out of the room.

Going back to the lab, he didn't look around and just walked straight to the last door. He had unknowingly spent over one hour here, most of the time was spent on checking out the books, after that, the room he just left took up the other time.

"Haha, success." He laughed happily.

Ahead of him, were multiple weapon racks, but only the one at the middle caught his attention, it had a single short curved blade. Even from where he was standing, Grey could feel the energy it contained.

The next moment, Void who was previously sitting on Grey's shoulder jumped down quickly and dashed towards the blade.

Before Grey could react, Void had already gotten to the weapon rack.

"Void, what are you doing?" Grey asked slowly approaching Void.

Void was currently looking at the blade with glistening eyes.

'So...shiny.'

This was the only statement Grey heard.

"Shit! Void don't you dare." Grey immediately cursed out.

The moment he saw Void's reaction, he already knew what was going on, Void wanted the blade, not for any other reason other than it being shiny.

Void threw a glance at Grey stretched out his little hands, and grabbed the blade. The blade was about twenty inches long, including the hilt.

Grey looked at Void and was left speechless. One has to remember that Void was only seven inches long when he came out of the egg, even after staying for over two months, he had only added three inches.

Void stood on his hind legs and started running with the sword that was two times his length, hugging it tightly.

Grey chuckled when he saw this scene because he found it quite comical, he still couldn't help but feel Void's love for shiny things was too much.

"Void drop that blade, it's mine." Grey immediately chased after the little guy.

After chuckling, he quickly chased after Void who for some weird reason hadn't kept it in his storage space yet. But Grey felt grateful he hadn't, because if he had, then getting it back would be almost impossible.

'No.' Void answered while running on his two short legs.

"Give it to me!" Grey ordered.

'No, it's shiny, I want it.' Void said.

"Damn it! You can't have every shiny thing." Grey complained while giving chase.

While chasing Void, they scattered the entire place, but Grey still wasn't able to catch Void.

"How is he so fast with those short legs of his?" Grey was left dumbstruck by Void's speed.

This was the first he saw Void' running instead of using the space element, he found it quite bizarre given Void's usual ways.

Void ran out of the room and entered the lab, trying to look for a way to escape.

'Damn, why isn't it working?' He complained inside.

Just when he wanted to collect the blade, he noticed he couldn't use the space element for some strange reason, but being occupied with the thought of the blade, he decided to get the blade first before telling Grey about it.

Grey soon exited the room chasing after Void.

Chapter 158 - Is That What I Think It Is?

"Void, stop!" Grey yelled while chasing after Void.

Void heard him, but paid no heed to his command, he wanted the blade, it was shiny. Although he didn't know what he wanted to use it for, but since it's shiny, he wanted to keep it, he'll think about its use later on.

'Damn it! Of all the things to be obsessed about, it just had to be shiny things?' Grey thought angrily.

From how strong Void's obsession was with shiny things, Grey had already concluded he would never take him close to the castle in the Capital after they left here, otherwise, given Void's guts, he might probably steal the crown off the head of the emperor.

While the two were playing cat and mouse, with the cat surprisingly playing the role of the mouse, they didn't realize that they were being watched.

Growl...

The creature growled gently. It was currently hidden in the shadows, and other than its somewhat faintly glowing green eyes, none of its other features could be seen.

It stepped out from a hole that neither Grey nor Void saw in the wall facing the tunnel they passed through, it nimbly climbed the wall, making sure to avoid entering the area the fire covered so as not to be seen. Before long, it had gotten to the top of the lab, staring down at the duo who were still running around.

"Haha, where can you run to now?" Grey grinned widely while staring at the cornered Void who had his back on the edge of the wall.

With nowhere to go, Void was like a cornered rat, but even when he was cornered, he still refused to let go of the blade, instead, he held it tighter.

"Just let it go, I'll find you something shinier to play with later on." Grey persuaded.

Void shook his head while tightly holding onto the blade, he also looked around, seemingly scanning the area for an opportunity to escape.

"Come on Void, give it to me. You should know because of you we got careless." Grey said while walking closer to Void.

When he was chasing after Void some moments ago, he had completely forgotten about where they were, it was only now did he remember they were in a place where there's a likelihood of something old being here.

Seeing that there was no way for him to keep the shiny blade this time, Void begrudgingly handed it to Grey.

When Grey held the blade, he couldn't help but praise its craftsmanship. The blade not only looked good on the eyes, it also felt great.

It had a silver hilt with dragon carvings around it, and a snakelike creature that had legs, four to be precise, that ran from the start of the blade to the tip.

"What an exquisite blade." He said out loud, not hiding the joy in his voice.

During the time Grey was looking at the blade, Void suddenly recalled something.

'I forgot to tell you earlier, I can't use the space element.' said Void.

"What?! What do you mean you can't use the space element." Grey asked, confusion evident in his voice.

He had never heard of an Elementalist not being able to use their elements before, unless they ran out of elemental essence, and that rarely happened. But he knew Void hadn't been using his elements, so there was no way for his elemental essence to run out.

'When I wanted to take the blade, I noticed I couldn't use the space element.' Void explained.

"And you're only telling me now?" Grey's face slowly turned serious.

This was a major issue, and Void felt getting the blade was more important than telling him about it sooner.

He tried keeping the blade in his storage ring, but just as Void said, anything related to the space element seemed to be blocked by something.

'I'm sorry.' Void apologized when he realized the severity of the matter.

Since he could use his space element previously, and it was then suddenly blocked, it meant that it was caused by someone, or, something.

Grey's thoughts went into overdrive, trying to think of a possible solution to the matter. He tried using his fire element, and it worked, not just that but his other elements as well, and they worked perfectly.

"We should leave this place." He quickly came to a decision.

He had already acquired this blade anyway, and from the look of things, there was nothing left for him to search here, leaving this place was the best choice for them.

Just as Grey came to the decision, he realized Void who was still in a standing position was staring behind him, intently.

"Void, what are you looking at?" Grey asked, not daring to turn around immediately.

'Behind you.' Void said timidly, pointing behind him.

Grey's heart raced when he heard this, and he was suddenly gripped by fear.

Gulp!

He gulped in fear, the scariest thing was the unknown, now, the unknown was behind him, but he didn't want to know it. If he was given an opportunity, then he wouldn't ever hope to know it.

He steeled his mind, and took a step forward, after walking to the edge of the wall, he slowly turned around, placing his back on the wall just like Void with his head looking at the floor.

After placing his back on the wall, he gradually raised his head. The first thing he saw was the almost seven inches sharp claws that protruded out of the toes of the creature, it had five toes on each limb. Looking higher, he realized the creature had two forelimbs, and two hind limbs which were covered entirely with armor-like scales, there was also the long tail that was behind it, but Grey couldn't get a clear view of it from his position.

The creature had powerful muscular hind and forelimbs that were almost three meters in length, Grey wasn't even two meters yet! His head was slowly but gradually starting to face upwards.

The muscular shoulder of the creature was at least half a meter wide, and its neck was over one meter long, and positioned at the top of the neck was what looked like the head of a dragon, only without horns.

'Is that what I think it is?' Grey transmitted his thoughts to Void, not daring to speak out.

He was literally almost scared shitless right now. For the first time in his life, he was dead scared.

Chapter 159 - Where Is It?

The creature before him looked so much like the drawings of dragons depicted on the books he had read, and even some statues of dragons he had seen, but, there were some slight differences between them, an example is that it didn't have any wings, unlike those he had seen on books.

'It's not a dragon.' said Void.

He knew what Grey was thinking about, but he was confident it wasn't a dragon. Although he hadn't seen or been in contact with a real dragon before, as a unique magical beast, he knew some things about high-class magical beasts.

Currently, Grey had his back against the wall, Void was also in the same position, and they were both staring at the creature vigilantly. They could feel an intimidating aura from it, and knowing that the creature had lived for hundreds of years, and maybe even thousands, they were very wary of it.

'It's not? Then what is it?' asked Grey.

The creature was presently staring viciously at the two, and from how its eyes are glowing, Grey felt it might attack them anytime soon.

'I should rephrase my statement to help you understand better, it's not a dragon, yet.' said Void.

'Wait, I don't get it, it's not a dragon, but you're saying it would be?' Grey asked, a little confused by what Void said.

'Yes, actually, it should be going through an evolution process if I'm not wrong. It's originally not a dragon, but some other reptile. My best bet is that it's a lizard.' Void speculated.

He didn't know what type of lizard it previously was, but he was at least sixty percent sure it was a lizard.

'Evolution?' Grey got more confused with what Void was speaking about.

'Yes, evolution, and from the looks of it, it actually failed in the process. You see, high-class magical beasts go through evolution. I'll also evolve someday.' Void said proudly.

'High-class magical beasts? You're getting me more confused.' Grey felt like his head was spinning.

'How do you even know about all this? You know what, forget about this for now, what we should be worried about is how do we deal with this guy' Grey brought Void back to the matter at hand.

'How should I know?' Void cluelessly replied.

'But you're the one speaking about high classed magical beasts a moment ago.' said Grey.

'It doesn't mean I know how to deal with them.' Void retorted.

Their conversation seemed long, but it only happened in a matter of seconds since transmitting thoughts is way faster than when speaking.

"Hi." Grey raised his right hand to wave at the creature.

Roar!

Grey and Void rolled underneath the huge body of the creature.

'I think it likes you.' Void said sarcastically.

'You think?' Grey scoffed as he stood up and dashed towards the tunnel.

The energy level he could feel from the creature was intense. But what gave him a little hope was that the power level the creature was emitting was actually still in the Origin Plane. He could tell the creature was above it, but for some odd reasons, its level is lower than its real stage. That's good news for the duo though since they couldn't fight against it in its full strength, even fighting against it now was almost impossible.

Realizing Grey and Void rolled under it when it didn't see them, the creature raised its tail and swung it down fiercely.

Bang!

Grey who saw it when it was raising the tail quickly shifted to the side to escape the tail. The tail slammed into the ground fiercely, causing a huge disturbance in the lab.

He took a peek at the creature and was amazed by its size, he had seen the height of the creature previously, but not the length. Grey estimated the creature was at least six meters long, and its tail was also around that length, if not longer.

Just as Grey was about to reach the entrance to the tunnel, the creature turned its huge body agilely and opened its mouth, and almost like a real dragon, it spat out fire in Grey's direction.

'Look out!' Void was the first to sense the attack and instantly warned Grey.

Grey looked behind him and saw the fire that was two meters wide coming towards him, he quickly dropped to the ground to avoid it from burning him, up.

The creature continued breathing out the fire and when it saw Grey dodge it, it aimed at him.

'I thought you said it's not a dragon?' Grey asked as he ran to the left, trying to escape the fire that was literally chasing after him.

'It's not, it's like a quasi dragon.' said Void as he joined him.

'Well, this quasi dragon wants my life, our life! Can't you talk to it?' Grey panicked when he sensed the heat coming off the flames behind him.

Being a Fire Elementalist, he shouldn't be afraid of fire. But he hadn't gotten to that stage yet, also, even though he's a Fire Elementalist, the flames of his opponent would still burn him, especially if they're stronger than he is.

'You've tried that before.' Void replied.

'Damn it!' Grey looked behind him and couldn't help but curse out.

The quasi dragon had been breathing out fire for almost ten seconds none stop now.

Boom!

The fire hit the wall and instantly destroyed it, it continued going forward and passed through the platform, but it couldn't destroy it.

Grey who was hiding behind the platform saw the fire going over the top, and the two sides of the platform, but it didn't touch him.

Another five seconds went by before the quasi dragon stopped breathing out the fire.

Grey's heart rate was beating quickly as he held onto Void, he encouraged himself to try and calm down.

Breathing heavily, he slowly got up and looked over the platform, and to his surprise, the quasi dragon was gone.

"Where is it?" Grey unconsciously blurted out.

Chapter 160 - Going For A Spin!

Grey instantly turned around vigilantly to see if the beast was behind him just like the last time when it silently appeared behind him, but to his surprise, when he turned around, he didn't see anything.

'Where could it be?' He thought looking around the lab.

'Can you sense it?' Grey turned to Void for help.

Over the past two months they had spent together, he had come to know that Void's senses were sharper than his, so asking him in a situation like this was the only thing he could think of.

'No.' Void shook his head.

Grey's heart dropped on hearing this, if even Void couldn't sense the beast, doesn't this mean that the beast could appear and attack them without them knowing where it would appear?

'We need to leave this place.' Grey said, but he didn't immediately rush to the tunnel.

He could tell the beast was intelligent, and would definitely not allow him to leave so easily.

'Why are beasts so unreasonable?' He couldn't help but complain.

'What do you mean by that?' Void asked, clearly displeased by Grey's statement.

He was a beast after all, so cursing all beast was the same as cursing at him.

'Can you explain why it's attacking us? If that's not unreasonable, then what is?!' asked Grey.

All they did was come into this place, other than collecting the blade, and that glass tube that contained the strange lizard, he didn't take anything else, yet, the beast wanted to kill him. Could it get any more unreasonable?

'We trespassed into its territory.' replied Void.

'Oh! Why didn't it put a 'do not trespass sign' so we would know?' Grey asked mockingly.

'Because...'

'I don't have time to argue with you, after we've left this place, then we'll talk.' Grey cut him short, ending the argument.

He was currently too preoccupied with trying to stay alive, maybe after passing through this hurdle, he might bring this topic up once again.

Grey stayed in the same position for almost two minutes, after not seeing or sensing the beast, he decided it was time to make a move. If he could slowly push forward, then leaving this place would become easier for him.

'How can something so big appear and disappear so easily?' He asked himself while carefully walking towards the tunnel.

When he came here the first time, he remembered carefully looking around the lab, yet he didn't find any living thing, there were only four rooms in the lab, which he also checked. How come he didn't see the quasi dragon in any of them?

Swoosh!

He was actually calmer when the quasi dragon was previously attacking him, than how, when he couldn't find it. At least then he knew where the attack was coming from and could prepare accordingly, but now, he was like a blind man.

'Be prepared to attack.' He said to Void.

Void was just as anxious as he was, with his space element blocked, his greatest reliance when it came to escape was gone.

The duo continued forward while staying in full alert mode. Whenever they heard any sound, they would instantly turn in that direction. What was worse was that the previously quiet lab suddenly turned noisy to them, and they could hear noises from different places.

While the duo was getting closer to the tunnel, a tail was slowly slithering like a snake towards them. Even in their full alert mode, they couldn't sense it still. This didn't mean their senses were weak, it's just, their opponent is not only stronger but was also an expert in hiding.

When the duo got to the entrance of the tunnel, Grey swiftly turned around, carefully observing the lab once more, but he still couldn't see the quasi dragon.

He turned around and assumed there was a possibility it had left the lab and was waiting for them in the tunnel, besides, none of the skeletons they found was in the lab anyway.

The moment he turned around, three meters before him, the tail of the quasi dragon suddenly appeared once again and moved towards Grey faster.

Just as Grey created a fire in the tunnel.

"Huh!" He exclaimed unconsciously.

He suddenly felt something wrap around his right leg, he looked below him and was shocked to see the tail of the quasi dragon around his leg. Before he could do anything, he felt a strong pull, and he fell face first.

He quickly used his hand as support so he wouldn't hit his face on the ground. Just as he got to the ground, he was dragged by the tail towards where the creature previously was and suspended mid-air, upside down.

While struggling, he saw a scene that sent a chill down his spine.

"Camouflage." He muttered underneath his breath.

Now he knew the reason they couldn't find the creature previously, it could camouflage perfectly with its surroundings. That wasn't its only ability, it looks like the tail of the quasi dragon was also extendable.

'But, why didn't it attack me the first time I entered this place? Why wait till now?' He asked himself puzzled by the quasi dragon's ways.

The quasi dragon growled softly and slowly opened its mouth.

When Grey saw the red light forming on it, all his hairs stood on end and without thinking, he created a huge hammer with the earth element, coat it with lightning, and swung it at the head of the quasi dragon.

Bam!

Grey heaved a sigh of relief when he saw this, had he been slow in reacting, then the quasi dragon would have lit him up!

"Attack!" Grey yelled at Void who just got to where they were.

Buzz!

Lightning was already dancing around Void's body when Grey was still saying this, giving him a strange but mythical appearance due to his black color.

Creak!

Void sent a huge bolt of lightning at the quasi dragon just after Grey's words died down.

Bam!

The lightning bolt crashed into the body of the quasi dragon. It staggered when the attack hit it, still grabbing onto Grey.

Grey who was already aiming an attack towards the tail holding onto him felt his head suddenly spin.

The quasi dragon first slammed him on the right, then the left, and then the right again before spinning him three times and throwing him in the direction of the wall.

Bang!

Grey's body crashed into the wall, creating a crevice in it.

Thud!

His body fell from the wall.

'What just happened?'

This was the question reverberating through the muddled head of Grey.

He could still feel his head spinning from the quick swing he got from the quasi dragon, and his body was aching. He managed to muster a little strength and supported himself with his hands.

The moment he got into a kneeling position, he felt the metallic taste of blood in his mouth.

He couldn't hold it in and vomited a mouthful of blood.