

Another World 161

Chapter 161 - Storm

Zhao Hai wasn't in the mood to think about these matters as his attention was focused on the Carrion Swamp. Laura had told him that Buffy was heading towards the Carrion Swamp, and Zhao Hai had previously tasked Drunk to explore there. Unfortunately, they weren't that deep in the swamp. So long as Buffy entered the area, they would definitely be found.

This time, as Green had said, their goal was to catch Buffy off guard. People on the continent knew that the Carrion Swamp wasn't an easy place to explore, and even a Rank Nine expert would face dangers. Even if they survived and came out, they would be severely wounded. If Buffy came out from the Carrion Swamp injured, then Zhao Hai definitely wouldn't let him return to the Purcell clan.

Although Zhao Hai already knew that Evan wasn't the one who moved against them, the truth remained that the Purcell clan did attack them. They could let Evan go, but the enmity between them and the Purcell clan wouldn't be easily forgotten.

Moreover, Buffy had injured Green and even went to the Black Wastes to search for them. His aim was to eventually kill them, which then led to them retreating back into the Space. Such a big enmity, how could Zhao Hai not repay it?

Zhao Hai wasn't worried about what would happen to Drunk and his team. Although Drunk was a zombie that looked like a human, he could still be easily be found out by a Rank Nine expert's divine sense. Even so, if Buffy found them, he wouldn't be able to lift his hands so easily. After all, they were in the Carrion Swamp, an extraordinary place. If he did move, then it wouldn't be any different than courting death. Don't forget, probably more than two Rank Nine experts had died in the Carrion Swamp,

Since Zhao Hai wasn't sure when Buffy would be arriving in the Carrion Swamp, he didn't let the slaves leave the Space. Right now, all they can do was wait.

Zhao Hai wasn't worried, especially now that the land inside had increased greatly. Even if he obtained more than a hundred people, there wouldn't be a problem. Now, all he had to do was wait.

Fortunately, Zhao Hai was a patient person. They weren't aware that Buffy had already left Casa City and immediately came and searched Fort Iron Mountain to once again look for them. He's stayed for some

time at Fort Iron Mountain. After careful observations, he still found no one. Thus, he decided to enter the Carrion Swamp.

While Zhao Hai waited patiently, the situation in Casa City was different as it became very lively recently. The Second and Third Elders moved in all directions. They vied for the support of the large clans, and naturally, they even went to look for Laura.

However, this time, it wasn't just a single clan that was looking for Laura. Instead, all of the clans joined together to look for her. They wanted to force her to admit defeat.

It was very clear to these large clans that if they wanted to make their plans successful, Laura would have to be a part of it. She was the biggest hindrance to making the First Elder step down. If they couldn't convince her, then Laura would continuously provide food, thus making their plan impossible to execute.

So regardless of how they wanted to deal with the First Elder, they should first clear the hurdle that was Laura. That was why these clans joined up to look for her.

They thought that Laura would be difficult to persuade, but they hadn't thought that Laura would so easily agree. Of course it was relatively easy. Laura, however, had her own conditions, and that was to have a share in their success.

Laura wanted to get a share of the sales in the Purcell Duchy. Now, no matter who would sit at the top, she wouldn't be suppressed. Furthermore, she would also like to increase her share of the sales of daily necessities in the Purcell Duchy.

Such conditions were already expected by these big firms, but they were still surprised. They then thought they were the same people crossing the same river, and thought that Laura's decision to help them against the Purcell clan was so that she could reap the benefits. Otherwise, it would be in vain if she stayed with the Purcell clan. Now, with this failure of the First Elder, impending changes were at hand. Naturally, one needed to prepare a way out for oneself. Since she had helped the Purcell clan in the competition against the firms before, this was the condition she placed on them now.

These merchants didn't know that their actions were already known by Kaiser. Kaiser had managed the business of the Purcell clan for many years, which wasn't a joking matter. He had a very large influence

within the Purcell clan. This time around however, he suffered a major loss. Still, it wouldn't be easy to move him, even if the Second and the Third Elders make their move.

The actions of these large clans were reported to Kaiser at the earliest possible time. Kaiser saw the reports and immediately knew he was in big trouble. If he couldn't handle the large clans, then his position would really be taken away.

Kaiser immediately went to seek out these large clans and promised a lot of conditions in order to get their support. The problem was that during these past years, Kaiser had been too dominant inside the Purcell Duchy. He hadn't had much interactions with these large firms and he even suppressed them occasionally. Thus, these big firms were already offended. On the surface, they complied to his conditions, but deep inside they were snorting and laughing loudly. This made Kaiser somewhat depressed.

He really wanted to immediately extinguish these people. However, he only had Rank Eight experts and no Rank Nines. Moreover, these past few years, he had been too busy handling the affairs of the clan. This resulted in a stagnation for his own cultivation and he had only reached Early Rank Eight. These large firms also had their own Rank Eight experts, so even if he wanted to begin exterminating them, he feared that in the end he would just end up failing.

Since he was a greater elder of the clan, he could ask those other enshrined deities to move. These enshrined deities would at least be Rank Eight experts. There were a total of over thirty Rank Eight enshrined experts in the clan. A force of over thirty Rank Eight experts was an extremely powerful force.

In the end, he couldn't do it this time as he had just suffered a huge blow to his reputation, not to mention the Second and the Third Elders were ready to attack him. If he wanted to ask those enshrined deities, he would first have to convene the Elders Court and let them decide if they would allow it or not. However, if he really did decide to convene the Elders Court, he would only be able to gain the time needed to eat a turtle. If he couldn't succeed in convincing the elders of the Elders Court, then that would pave the way for the Second and the Third Elder to oust him by using the clan rules.

Having said that, even if he could ask those enshrined deities, he still wouldn't dare to do so. Behind those large firms was the support of large clans. These large clans didn't have poor relationships with the Purcell clan. If these large clans united to move against the Purcell clan, then he wouldn't just be stepping down as the First Elder. Instead, most of the lives within the Purcell clan wouldn't be saved. He didn't dare do such thing.

The First Elder paid attention to the movements of the Second and Third Elder and had actually ignored Evan instinctively. In fact, he really didn't mind Evan. Since the time Evan became the Clan Lord, he had been completely pressed and had become a complete figurehead. In his opinion, Evan was stupid, so there wasn't a cause for concern.

However, he had forgotten that humans grow. Evan was still young, but already a Rank Eight warrior. It was impossible to be stupid after reaching such a height. Though in the past he didn't have any experience in political struggles, after some time of being suppressed by this elder, he had grown. Adding his forbearance of having to painfully watch from the sidelines, he understood a lot. The present Evan, compared to the Clan Lord Evan of the past years, was completely different.

But however different Evan was, nobody had seen it. Everyone inside the Purcell clan had underestimated Evan. They didn't know that during these past few years, Evan had been secretly in contact with those centrist elders. Presently, his power matched equally with those of the Second and Third Elders.

These centrist elders couldn't get used to the First Elder being so rampant. They also didn't want to help the two other greater elders seize power. Therefore, they became centrist in the struggles. However, being a centrist would naturally push themselves on the opposite side of the three greater elders, which meant they didn't get anything good and were usually on the unfair end of deals. Evan, however, had observed them for a long time. He understood their situation and started to secretly meet with them to slowly increase his power.

Several people were preparing for the storm that will soon come to Casa City. This time however, Laura had gone out of the city and went towards Stony Mountain.

Laura's trip this time to Stony Mountains didn't have much of a reaction from the large forces of Casa City. They thought that Laura would once again talk to Zhao Hai about the increase in food prices, so naturally, they didn't stop her.

The previous time she went to Stony Mountain was three days ago. Laura had come to Stony Mountain that time to tell Zhao Hai of her plans.

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Zhao Hai really hadn't thought much of Laura's plan and also wasn't opposed to it. Although the plan would make the commoners of Casa City suffer, they would only experience it for a short time. As long as Evan regained his position, the storm would fly over, which would make everything better.

Moreover, it could be considered as giving back what they owed Evan. Helping Evan occupy the leading position could be considered as paying him back. Plus, this could only end up as good for them

Zhao Hai knew that this time, Laura helping Evan would be a favor. When Evan regains the leading position, he would then support Laura back. This in turn will allow Laura to sell more, which was good for him.

If Laura's sales increased, his income would also increase too. Then Zhao Hai would have more gold available for use.

Actually, Zhao Hai wasn't short on money. Zhao Hai had been the only one selling bamboo rice to the Purcell Duchy during this period of time. His income was around ten thousand gold coins. It could be said that he was the entire Purcell Duchy's food supplier. What this meant was that he had the monopoly of the business. This would obviously give him a lot of profit.

However, if these ten thousand gold coins were to be dropped into the Black Waste, he feared that not a sound could be heard from it. The Black Waste was too big and the foundations were too thin. There were many things that needed to be improved.

Zhao Hai found himself with more money. The problem was that the more money you thought you needed to spend, the more ways you needed to come up with to make money.

Chapter 162 - The Deity Presides

New Dynasty Calendar year 1637, 30th day of the Seventh Month. This day, with regards to the commoners of the Purcell Duchy, was not a calm day. The commoners had thought that the food crisis that occurred some time ago would have already passed. They were wrong. Perhaps, instead, the food crisis had just began.

On this day, all of the food stores within the Purcell Duchy suddenly began to increase their prices. The Higanbana and the Purcell Duchy public stores were the only ones who didn't immediately raise their prices. Over the past few days, however, their shops had also slowly sold out all of their stocks, which resulted in the current break out of the food crisis.

Those pseudo-aristocrats or full aristocrats were more fortunate as they had food of their own in storage. Unfortunately, this wasn't the case for the poor commoners. Since they didn't have enough money to buy food beforehand, they were now at risk of starvation. This was especially true with the rapid rise of food prices.

As the price of food increased, aside from the poor commoners, even those who had stored food began to worry. They were afraid that the prices would rise even more. If that were the case, they would also be starving soon.

Although the Higanbana and Purcell clan stores had put out word that they would soon have more shipments of food, the prices still continued to rise, and the crisis hadn't gone away. Commoners who had money to buy food had started to buy them now. They were stocking up and prepared for the oncoming famine.

This crisis that Casa City was currently experiencing was actually a larger version of the storm that was happening within the Purcell clan. Now that the Purcell clan was in such a mess, the Second and the Third Elders were ready to move to abdicate the First Elder. The First Elder didn't want to abdicate. Only, he didn't have any means to resolve the situation. Now, both sides were in a deadlock.

Both of these factions weren't aware that around this time, the centrist elders had begun to move. They reached out to each other and jointly united to increase their authority. Also, their actions were very covert. They evaded the detection of both of the other factions that were currently in a deadlock.

Kaiser, in particular, had seen that the results of their battle had finally come into play. Both factions had pulled in a large number of people into their sides. Inside the conference room of the Purcell clan, scenes full of deceit and political ploys were being done on the spot.

Finally, both factions in the conference room decided to set up votes to decide who would serve as the elders of which posts. They also knew that whatever the result would be, the Purcell clan would incur losses overall.

Both sides were confident and believed that they had the best chances for victory. The First Elder's forces were the largest; with one vote from each elder, he was assured of getting more than half the votes. An absolutely overwhelming superiority.

However, the Second and the Third Elders had also pulled a number of elders to their side these past few days. They had the confidence to defeat the First Elder, and both factions agreed on solving the problem by convening the Elders Court. Evan, the Clan Lord, was forgotten by them.

4th of the Eighth Month, the Elders Court was convened. After the elections in the Elders Court, Kaiser abdicated his position as the Purcell clan's First Elder. Now, not only were the greater elders able to do so, but even the ordinary elders were eligible to win his position and became someone to be worshipped within the clan.

Originally, after the first round of elections, the Second Elder should've been the one to take the post of the First Elder and temporarily resolve the current food crisis.

However, a problem emerged. The Third Elder refused to accept the decision, resulting in a confrontation between the two factions. They decided to convene the Elders Court again on the 6th day of the Eighth Month in order to elect someone for the First Elder's post. This time, however, knowing the significance of the next assembly, they decided to allow the Universal Origin Sword Saint, a Guardian Deity of the clan and a Rank Nine expert, to preside.

The Universal Origin Sword Saint was an existence on the level of a god for the Purcell clan. This was truly the case. No one dared to disturb him, so no one had been able to ask for him before. His fearfulness was way above Buffy's.

The Universal Origin Sword Saint had been a Rank Nine expert for nearly sixty years. Fifty years ago, the Purcell clan encountered a major catastrophe. The juniors of the clan who were outside to gain experience had met a black magician. These juniors of the clan then killed the black magician.

It turned out that this black magician was a disciple of the continent's infamously evil and wicked black magician, Bone Saint Anto. Anto was a Rank nine expert, justifying his title. The next thing that happened was straightforward. Anto began hunting and killing the juniors of the Purcell clan, which made these juniors unable to leave Casa City.

Finally, the Purcell clan decided to invite one of the two Guardian Deities of the clan during that time. A Rank Nine water magician, Blue Waves Law Saint, came forward to kill Anto. What they hadn't thought was that Anto would kill the Blue Wave Law Saint on the spot, placing the entire Purcell clan on the verge of life and death.

Around this time, an expert who had just become Rank Nine a few years ago, the Universal Origin Sword Saint, moved. Alone and with a single sword, he travelled thousands of kilometers to kill Anto. Finally, Anto's head was taken back to be displayed in Casa City. Thus, the Purcell clan averted the crisis safely.

This battle made the Universal Origin Sword Saint famous, making him one of the Rank Nine experts on the continent with a high prestige. Anto became a Rank Nine thirty years before, and adding to the fact that he was a black magician, he was a strong and renowned Rank Nine magician. The Universal Origin Sword Saint had just become a Rank Nine a few years ago, yet had taken his head off on the spot. This showed that his strength was a lot higher than Anto's.

Then for twenty years, the Universal Origin Sword Saint hadn't been seen since. After thirty years since the Universal Origin Sword Saint became a Rank Nine, another large clan's Guardian Deity issued forth a challenge to him. They met at Jade Belt River, and the battle was earthshaking. For three days, there was no flow of water in Jade Belt River due to their battle. That place later became known as Sword Saint Lake due to the damage the two of them made, and especially because of the winner, the Universal Origin Sword Saint.

Since then, there had been no challenges made against a Rank Nine on the continent.

Afterwards, the Universal Origin Sword Saint wasn't seen again. One could say that although no one could dare offend and be unreasonable towards Wind Saint Buffy in the Purcell clan, in reality, the Universal Origin Sword Saint held more respect from the elders. Precisely because of his rare appearances, no one knew of the real name of the Universal Origin Sword Saint. Now, his title of Universal Origin Sword Saint was regarded as his name.

This time around, the issue of the Universal Origin Sword Saint presiding over the Elders Court hadn't been met with any resistance. Everyone clearly understood that these were troubled times. But no matter where you went though, even if you withdrew, there would still be the fear of being killed by the Sword Saint.

The Elders Court was scheduled to elect a First Elder within the conference room. When these elders arrived, they found that the Second and Third Elders, along with Evan, were already in the conference room. On the seat that was originally for the Clan Lord sat an upright old man.

This old man was tall, the same height as Clan Lord Evan. His hair was white, as if it were dyed with snow without a trace of variation. Surprisingly though, his beard was yellow.

The old man sat with his eyes closed, seemingly asleep. Everyone saw this and couldn't help but slow their pace as they carefully walked to their seats and sat down.

Evan hadn't sat down, but instead stood beside the old man. Below the Clan Lord's seat were the three seats for the greater elders, wherein only two people sat down, the Second and the Third Elders. However, they both looked restless.

As soon as all of the elders arrived, Evan whispered something into the old man's ears. The old man then responded with a slight nod. Evan stood up and held the scepter in his right hand that symbolized the power of the Head of the Clan. He went towards the middle of the stage, looked around, and said, "The assembly of the Elders Court this time is witnessed by Sir Guardian Deity, and has now formally started. The election will now proceed. In this election, we will decide to relieve the Second Elder through an election."

After Evan said this, the elders of the Elders Court were surprised for a moment before giving an outcry. They had forgotten the existence of the Universal Origin Sword Saint. Right at this moment, they only had one thing in their mind: 'Evan was crazy'.

However, before Evan could speak, a cold snort was loudly heard. Everyone on the scene felt as though their heads were hit by a hammer and suddenly saw stars. Then they remembered that the Universal Origin Sword Saint was still sitting there; being loud was like asking for death.

Everyone calmed down while Evan stood on the stage with his unchanged expression and said, "The voting now begins."

The people in the conference room looked at each other. They didn't know what to do when suddenly, someone actually raised a hand.

The people in the conference room were surprised for a moment. They looked at the person that had raised a hand, and it was a centrist elder, Juan. Along with Juan, the other centrist elders also raised their hands. Then the loyal members of the First Elder's faction as well as the Third Elder's faction. Only the few loyal members of the Second Elder's faction didn't raise their hands.

Evan swept his eyes across the conference room, showing his gratefulness to the elders. With a cold voice, he said "Over seventy percent have voted. The Second Elder will now be relieved from his duties starting tomorrow. The next poll will decide if the Third Elder should be relieved from his duties. Those who agree, please raise your hand."

The people in the conference room weren't silly. Even a fool would know what Evan was doing. In one fell swoop, Evan had moved to relieve the Second and the Third Elders of their duties. This was equivalent to pulling out the entire root of the forces of the greater elders. As long as he controlled the Elders Court, his position as the Clan Lord would be held firmly.

If it were during normal times, the loyal elders of the Second and the Third Elders might have started trouble with him. Instead, as this assembly was presided over by the Universal Origin Sword Saint, should the Elders Court really dare to make trouble then death was the only thing that awaited them in the end!

The original members of the First Elder's faction were happy to see this development. In any case, the First Elder had now fallen. Whether it was the Second or the Third Elder, they wouldn't gain any benefits. If they supported Evan, however, then they might be able to rely on him to gain some benefits.

This time, undoubtedly, the results of the poll was a high number of votes. Starting today, the Second and Third Elders who were worshipped in the clan, lost their authority, be it within the Elders Court or in the entire clan.

Evan continued the elections. This time, for the position of the First Elder. Evan proposed Juan and the proposal was agreed upon immediately. Juan became the Purcell clan's First Elder. Evan proposed Wind Sue, a representative of the centrist elders, to be the Second Elder. The election for the Third Elder was very dramatic. Evan had unexpectedly proposed someone who had been a member of the First Elder's faction. He was the clan's Elder of Foreign Affairs, Stern. No one had ever thought of this, but the proposal was passed.

Chapter 163 - The Storm Calms

At this point, the Purcell clan's civil strife had come to an end and the storm passed. However, no one had thought that the winner in the end would unexpectedly be Evan, who had been low-key and someone they had looked down upon.

Furthermore, no one dared to challenge the result of this election as the assembly was witnessed by the Universal Origin Sword Saint. If somebody really dared to challenge the results, then it meant that they dared to challenge the Universal Origin Sword Saint. Within the Purcell clan, no one had the guts to do so.

Moreover, the loyal elders from the greater elders faction that were present had found that they'd never thought Evan would already have the same strength as them. Their defeat this time was justified because of that.

Lastly, the three new greater elders that were elected were also very interesting. There were the two centrists, who were the backbone of Evan's faction, while the last one turned out to be from the former First Elder's faction, Stern.

Everyone from the Purcell clan knew that although Stern was the Foreign Affairs head, he was also a close follower of the former First Elder, Kaiser. It was to the point that he'd always followed him in every situation. It was beyond everyone's expectation that he would now be selected as the new Third Elder.

However, they soon understood why Evan did this. Evan chose Stern as the Third Elder in order to quickly lead the former First Elder's faction to his side. Now, the loyal members of his faction had grown to sixty percent of the total number of elders in the Elders Court. This number was definitely scary; even the former First Elder didn't have this much authority and power.

This time, Kaiser and the other former greater elders understood Evan's powerful position. Just a simple elder position, which was under the influence of a former greater elder, had cut off a political veteran.

The result of this election of the Purcell clan's Elders Court had made those large firms stunned. They hadn't thought that the two people they supported would eventually collapse, and that unexpectedly, the forgotten Evan would suddenly resurge.

This caught the large firms off guard, leaving them startled about what had happened. After the elections in the Elders Court was finished, Evan suddenly announced that the Purcell clan had transported in a large amount of food and that the prices would be the same as before. When this news came out, the food prices fell.

Evan didn't lie because after he finished, they immediately saw a carriage transporting food commodities into Casa City. Although it was only bamboo rice, commoners had no problem eating them. There were also some aristocratic clans that would eat bamboo rice, so the commoners would also do so.

Those large firms calculated that the amount of bamboo rice transported by those carriages had brought nearly five hundred thousand kilograms into Casa City. There was a total of around 1.5 - 2 million kilograms transported all over the Purcell Duchy. Even if they wanted to increase the prices, they wouldn't be able to.

Everyone from the large firms understood that this time around, they had been played by Laura. This was an obvious matter. If they couldn't see it, they shouldn't be in the mercantile business.

However, they couldn't say that they were bitter. These firms initially accepted Laura's conditions, but their intentions weren't very good from the start. They were ready to support the people who held the superior position, and had collaborated with Laura just to rope her into their faction. What they hadn't thought was that Laura would move ahead of them, tying them all up.

These large firms also knew that if they continued to oppose the current situation, they might offend the Purcell clan, which they feared would make their days a lot more harder. So the moment the carriage went into the city, the price of food within the whole Purcell Duchy went down.

The crisis was started in the past by the pest infestation and led to a series of chain reactions. However, during this time, there were only two big winners. One was Laura, and the other was Evan.

Furthermore, no one knew that there was also another winner that had been hiding behind these winners and was actually the one who gained the most. It was none other than Zhao Hai.

Zhao Hai earned a total of 20,000 gold coins during this crisis. Moreover, he earned several hundreds of gold coins a day, which went directly into his pockets. The most important thing was that this time's crisis was something he could have been left out of.

When Zhao Hai received the news Laura had sent, saying that the storm had passed, he couldn't help but want to laugh. This was because this crisis had initially been started because of him. Now, with his help, they stopped it. Most importantly, he'd made money while helping Evan, whom had helped the Buda clan back when they were in a bind. A true good person with power, for Zhao Hai, was a very important thing.

With Evan regaining his authority, he would not move to attack the Buda clan, which also lifted them out of one of their crises. They almost didn't have to worry about the Purcell clan dealing with them.

Zhao Hai didn't think that the result would turn out to be this great. It was really a big surprise for him. And now, the matters in Casa City wouldn't need him to personally manage over. Even if he wouldn't be providing the food, the large firms in the Purcell Duchy would do so, thus lowering the food prices within the Purcell Duchy. With this, the food crisis was officially lifted.

This news was not necessarily a good thing for Zhao Hai. To be precise, when Zhao Hai sold food commodities, he gained several hundred gold coins each day. Now if the large firms sold theirs, then his income would definitely decrease.

However, Zhao Hai still received nearly 200 gold coins per day just for selling food. The consequences of what those large firms had done earlier had resulted in a negative status.

Commoners also held their grudges. When they were in a difficult time, they would remember those who helped them and those who had harmed them.

Due to this, there were very few people who would buy from the stores of the large firms. On the other hand, the Higanbana firm had gotten a large number of customers who bought from their stores.

It was then that those great businessmen became convinced that this time, Laura was a lot more clever than them. Even if it was invisible, the Higanbana firm had become the flagship firm inside the Purcell Duchy.

These large firms understood that the creation of such a flagship firm was not easy. So long as there were Higanbana signboards, it would surely represent a source of wealth.

Thinking about it now would be of no use, so what they did was try to find a way to pull people into buying from their stores. Therefore, to do so, they made some superior conditions. For example, discounts on certain commodities. Or if one buys a certain commodity, then they would receive an extra gift.

These large firms were in the business for a long time. Naturally, they were clear on how to deal with this. They had discovered these methods and were ready to exploit them.

However, even after doing so, there were only a few people who went into their stores to purchase anything. The commoners were still offended by them. Fortunately, they were large firms who were still rich. They could afford to lose for now. Given some time, they should be able to recover slowly.

But if they wanted to get back their former prestige quickly, it would be impossible. Laura wouldn't miss this opportunity. There was a saying that when machines dominated the market, even when they came back to life, they could only have a part of the soup.

The biggest issue to be considered this time was that these large firms had offended the Purcell clan. If they were supported by the person who had won, then it would be better. They wouldn't be in such a difficult situation and it might have also given them some benefits. However, they'd chosen to have little contact with Evan prior to this. Don't even speak about benefits, they were already lucky enough that Evan had given them face and hadn't pushed them out of the Purcell Duchy.

Zhao Hai didn't care about what happened in Casa City. He was now more concerned about the situation in the Black Waste and Carrion Swamp.

During the time when the Purcell clan's Elders Court was in assembly, Zhao Hai had received a message from Drunk. The news stated that they had been seen by Wind Saint Buffy, but there were no movements from him. Although Buffy was curious about these zombies, they were within the Carrion Swamp and he didn't dare deal with them.

Upon hearing that Buffy was really in the Carrion Swamp, Zhao Hai felt relieved. He let the slaves out of the Space and back into the castle, allowing them to work with the oil press as well as the millstones to

process the rice. This rice was generally comparable to bamboo rice and Zhao Hai had a lot of them on his hands. He intended to keep them as their own food.

The bamboo rice that Zhao Hai sold to Laura was bamboo rice that Green had originally bought. Remember, Zhao Hai's Space produced better quality bamboo rice. Zhao Hai couldn't bear to sell those good things, which was why he kept some of them for their own consumption.

Zhao Hai had also started to improve the soil in the Black Waste along with the surrounding areas. It was now the Eighth Month, and planting something on the continent right now would be late, so Zhao Hai didn't plant anything. He had also brought other seeds that were commonly planted on the continent and let the slaves try and experiment with growing them. For the coming winter, they also started stocking up on firewood, as well as produced cotton clothing for the slaves.

Zhao Hai stood around and thought that a person must feed their family. Currently, he had a hundred people counting on him and discovered that their needs were extensive. Preparing for them would really be tedious.

First was acquiring the firewood, which was an important supply to have during the winter. With it, less people would freeze to death. Also, there was still the cotton clothing, food, and other various things, which added up to a lot.

Fortunately, Zhao Hai had made a temporary transfer point inside Casa City. This transfer point wasn't placed by Zhao Hai, but rather, it was set up by Green. It was located in a remote area in Casa City where they had bought a house. The house was to be used as the entry point into the Space, so it had become the transfer point.

Zhao Hai had bought many things through this transfer point. However, he couldn't buy glass windows for the slaves as they were too expensive. He only bought paper windows along with a bed, cupboards, a table, four chairs, a brazier, a copper kettle, and a number of things to eat for each of the slaves.

Buying things like this and that, Zhao Hai had bought them unconsciously and hadn't realized that he actually spent a total of almost 5,000 gold coins. Spending money really was faster than making money.

Chapter 164 - A Trivial Matter

When the Ninth Month came, Casa City was already completely peaceful. Not only had the food prices become stable, but even the prices of other daily necessities were now a little cheaper compared to before.

The big firms had no other way but to do this. If they didn't reduced the prices, then nobody would be going to their stores to shop. As a result of them lowering the prices, there was a chain-like response that cheapened the prices of most commodities.

Of course, the Higanbana stores also reduced their prices. Most people bought food from them too. This wasn't only because the Higanbana firm had helped them during the crisis, but also because the food commodities they sold were of really high quality.

In the beginning, the Higanbana firm mostly sold normal commodities and when other stores reduced their prices, the people would then go and buy from those stores. The civilians now ranked food commodities among the stores . If the Higanbana store's food was regarded as first, then the other stores can only be regarded as ninth.

The main reason for this was because the food commodities being sold by the Higanbana firm were not only of high quality, but also because they had a very high quantity of magic elements within. An example would be the radish that they sold, which a lot of people bought.

Zhao Hai knew of this matter after Laura had informed him. He immediately made a decision. This decision was to create a trademark for his food products. From now on, they would then be called Taoyuan products.

On the Ark continent, nobody knew of Taoyuan. However, in China, Taoyuan was actually a place everybody knew of. When spoken from a foreign language, it could be called Utopia.

Zhao Hai's biggest desire was to build a new world within the heart of the Black Waste. A place that meant 'this was what everyone yearned for,' a Utopia.

Because of this idea, Zhao Hai had used Taoyuan. Zhao Hai didn't only think of this name, but also personally designed a trademark. This trademark was really simple as it was a drawing of a small bridge

over flowing water with a family on top. Even though it was simple, on this world it was a very refreshing idea.

Trademarks in this world just included a name and didn't have any formally printed seal on the commodity. It was usually just spread by word of mouth. Zhao Hai, however, actually made a trademark design this time. This was a big step forward for this world.

Laura was not stupid and after immediately seeing Zhao Hai's trademark, she'd quickly made her own decision. Later on, all commodities from Zhao Hai would be called Taoyuan commodities. Rice would be placed in a big box, wherein the outside of those boxes would have the engravings of the trademark. The other commodities, such as radishes and oil, would be done the same as well. Furthermore, they'd separated their other commodities from Taoyuan commodities in the shortest possible time.

In order to open up the market, the Taoyuan commodities hadn't experienced a rise in their prices. Instead, they were sold at the normal price. This had made the commoners really happy as the commodities that Taoyuan produced were really of the highest quality. This was especially true for those families that had a child that went to the magic academies. This allowed those juniors eat bamboo rice everyday and, sometimes, radishes.

The reason why the parents knew of the high magic content of these commodities was because of Julie. Julie was the first person who bought the radishes from the Higanbana store and her son, Ross, after eating it only once, had been able to become deeply learned in magic. He later became an official apprentice, and even acquired subsidies from the trade union for his studies.

As a result, their family's living condition became better. Although Ross was only a magic apprentice and couldn't receive much in terms of subsidies from the trade union, he still received a gold coin each month. For commoners, this was very good. A gold coin could be saved for spendings, and was almost enough to last for the month.

Julie was a very thrifty person. When the food crisis happened, she wasn't afraid because they had stocked up on food supplies. Julie had a habit of scooping out a small amount of rice before she cooks, every time, in order to save that rice in the family's rice jar. She had been doing this for a long time and, unknowingly, she had saved a cubic meter of rice. This was enough for their family to eat for several months, which was why Julie wasn't worried.

However, afterwards, the food prices didn't rise. Julie then decided not to use the rice in the jar and continued buying rice from the Higanbana store. Still, in order to cope with the next famine, if ever

there'll be one in the future, Julie started to be more thrifty. She made lunch boxes for Ross everyday to avoid letting him eat in the cafeteria.

One day, Ross' magic instructor had noticed the food he brought. The instructor couldn't help it and curiously took a look, then felt that the food that Ross ate had a sufficient amount of magic elements in it. The instructor immediately asked Ross where it came from. Ross naturally wouldn't deceive his instructor and said that the food was bought by his mother. He didn't know where she'd bought it.

Ross' magic instructor asked him to bring him to his house. He then asked Julie about this matter, and Julie told her everything honestly. She also asked why this rice was so different from the other rice.

Ross' instructor didn't deceive them either and told them that the magic element in the rice was very adequate and that eating it often would give advantages while cultivating magic. This matter had slowly spread since then.

However, during that time, the Purcell Duchy was under a strict food control. If they wanted to buy, then they couldn't buy too much. But now that the food crisis had passed, Taoyuan's bamboo rice ushered in a new wave of high sales in the city.

Nowadays, Taoyuan bamboo rice was very popular in Casa City. However, Julie didn't buy a lot as she heard that magic products would lose much of their magic elements when not consumed after some time. They feared that buying too much bamboo rice would just end up being stocked up and just turn into regular rice as time passed by.

Afterwards, Taoyuan oil products were also reported to contain high magic elements. The news spread fast and Taoyuan oil also became a hot commodity. Now, every commoner recognized the Taoyuan brand.

Zhao Hai didn't feel anything about this matter. If he planted bamboo rice everyday, he couldn't sell them easily. Afterall, in the entire Purcell Duchy, the food prices had already dropped. It was impossible that everyone in the duchy would eat his personally produced bamboo rice.

However, Zhai Hai hadn't thought that the magic academy and aristocrats of Casa City would buy several hundred thousand kilograms of Taoyuan bamboo rice. Moreover, the orders were for one year which made Zhao Hai's income very stable.

Laura, however, was thinking of another matter. Zhao Hai had previously asked Laura to look for a buyer of blue-eyed rabbits. Laura actually wanted to cooperate with Zhao Hai, which he approved. Laura then started selling blue-eyed rabbit meat with an affordable price. Moreover, the magic elements it contained was higher than that of the radish and bamboo rice. Furthermore, since the commoners could also afford to eat it, this time around the commodity sold with a blazing speed.

Needless to say, Laura received huge orders from the aristocrats. Yet, they didn't order much of the blue-eyed rabbit meat. Adding them all up, it would only amount to 3000 blue-eyed rabbits per month. This, in turn, made them rely heavily on the retail sales instead.

Nowadays, within the Purcell Duchy, if you hadn't heard about the Taoyuan brand then it meant that you were an outsider. Everyone in the Purcell Duchy knew of the Taoyuan brand. Right now, the Higanbana stores currently had four types of products from this brand which made their business hot.

Nobody even thought of faking Taoyuan products because the quality of those products compared to other products was too different. It would be easy to spot the difference. Even trying it once would let one know if it was a legitimate or fake product. This could easily ruin a store's reputation.

Laura was also prepared for such cases. She'd immediately taken measures to prevent it from happening, such as letting the buyers be presented with Taoyuan cards by store personnel in order to prove their legitimacy. Furthermore, these cards were exclusive only for Higanbana stores, so buying from other stores would mean that what you bought were counterfeit goods.

Taking advantage of the popularity of Taoyuan products made the Higanbana business prosper. Laura opened up a lot of store branches throughout the Purcell Duchy. Now, one could see a Higanbana store everywhere within the duchy. This resulted in increased demand for Taoyuan products.

Zhao Hai was happy to see this situation. Considering that he still couldn't plant high level plants in the Space, Zhao Hai had still been yielding an astonishing amount of products, enough to deal with the demands of the Higanbana stores. Given the situation, he was getting a lot more gold coins and this made him happy.

He also sent a lot of blue-eyed rabbits to Laura to be processed. This procedure separated the rabbit furs and meat. Laura would then sell the rabbit meat and send back the processed rabbit fur to Zhao Hai.

Zhao Hai had also told Laura to use the money from selling the rabbit meat towards the processing of the rabbit fur. He also gave Laura some rabbit fur as he believed that human relationships would have better sentiment if you gave them something.

Laura decided to accept it in the end. However, she thought it was somewhat unfair for her to get something while Zhao Hai didn't get anything in return. Lately, she had been too busy managing the Higanbana stores, especially the newly opened branches. Thus, she didn't have much time to collect the different magic plants and beasts that Zhao Hai needed.

Zhao Hai didn't care much about it because, at present, the Higanbana firm had increased their demand for food and oil commodities. He was now planting a lot of radishes and had no time to plant other types of crops. Additionally, Zhao Hai was also too busy managing the matters on Fort Iron Mountain recently. Thus, he didn't have much free time and he was not worried, but rather quite relieved as he waited.

Fort Iron Mountain was presently in very good condition. There was a lot of firewood, corn stalks, oil trees, and bamboo rice. As long as you dried them up, one could use these plants to make a fire, especially the oil fruit trees. Not only did it have many applications, it could also be used to make a fire last for a longer duration. A fifty centimeter long piece of the oil tree can last for a whole day. Zhao Hai had way too many oil trees, so this was something that would be useful for the winter. As long as you placed an oil tree in the brazier, the room would be warm for the whole night.

Zhao Hai had also improved the land in the Black Waste everyday. He then tasked the slaves to grow some vegetables. These vegetables would then be used as food during winter period. Zhao Hai had also wanted to observe if these vegetables would be able to grow properly. In the end, he wanted to see the results of his land improvement.

Chapter 165 - Travel Plans

Right now, Zhao Hai had insufficient land inside the Space. He now had oil trees, bamboo rice, corn, and radishes planted all over the Space which made it so that he couldn't plant any other types of crops anymore. Zhao Hai had also observed that the improvement of the soil within the Black Waste was very good. He could plant oil trees in the Black Waste which could help loosen up the land usage inside the Space.

Zhao Hai observed the improvement of the soil within the Black Waste when using the spatial soil. He saw that the soil in the Black Waste wouldn't be improved much by just mixing it with the spatial soil, thus, he concluded that using the spatial water to improve the quality of the soil was the best way to do so. He also feared that using the spatial soil would eventually lead to a thinning of the soil within the Space, which would lead to his demise.

He had observed that the spatial water was taken from the springs. There was a large number of these springs, with so much water pouring out that it seemingly wasn't going to dry.

Actually, Zhao Hai had guessed that the spatial soil could also be rejuvenated, and that the spatial land wouldn't have any issue of thinning out. However, in his heart, Zhao Hai decided that using the spatial water would be the best.

Zhao Hai was very busy these days as he improved the lands of the Black Waste while also doing things inside the Space. This gave him a substantial amount of work each day.

The main thing was that Zhao Hai had been waiting for Buffy to come out of the Carrion Swamp. If he sees that Buffy was injured, then he wouldn't be polite.

Actually, Zhao Hai's reason for dealing with Buffy wasn't only due to revenge. He also wanted to learn more information about the Carrion Swamp as Drunk's team was too slow in exploring it; they would need a lot more time to do so properly. Furthermore, there were a lot of magic beasts and undead that had their own territories. Drunk could freely explore some areas as they were undead, but they would need to carefully pass by the territories of the magic beasts and other undead. Otherwise, they would be attacked by them. With such a situation, they could only advance slowly.

Buffy was different as he was a Rank Nine expert. He could fly and avoid the attacks of the majority of the magic beasts and undead, which allowed him to go deeper into the Carrion Swamp. If he was injured while coming out of the Carrion Swamp, then Zhao Hai would immediately destroy him and turn him into an undead. Then he could directly ask Buffy about the situation within the Carrion Swamp. This information would enable him to better cope with the recurring magic beast riots.

Zhao Hai wasn't too worried about the Purcell clan, especially now that Evan was the one in charge. Evan didn't have any malice towards them and wouldn't send anyone to deal with them. Zhao Hai's only

worry was for the threat from the Carrion Swamp and, in fact, this was currently Zhao Hai's biggest worry.

He didn't want to live in the Black Waste his entire life. However, if the threat from the Carrion Swamp wasn't resolved, then he wouldn't feel at ease. Once this matter was resolved, only then could he be contented and travel with pleasure all over the continent. He wanted to see this unique world.

Although Zhao Hai was an otaku in his former life, his dream was to actually, one day, be able to travel all over the world. However, he really didn't have the money to do so back then. Travelling around the world would cost too much. Zhao Hai couldn't really afford to do it, so he could only stay at home.

It was different within the Ark Continent as he had the Space and a large territory. As long as he managed them properly, then he could afford to travel with pleasure around the world. Moreover, since he had the space he could travel back to his territory everyday, so he wasn't worried at all.

Unfortunately, now wasn't the time to do so. He should first resolve the threat of the Carrion Swamp. Green also didn't oppose his idea of traveling for pleasure since on the continent, no matter which of the respected clans, they would always allow their juniors go outside at a certain age in order to be informed and gain experience about the world. Zhao Hai should actually go too, but the time wasn't right.

The juniors of the aristocrats would have more knowledge for their travels upon leaving. It wouldn't only increase their comprehension and experiences, but they could also find several good friends. Along with these friends, they could explore the continent and understand the dangers within it. It was common knowledge that if the clans didn't let their juniors go out, then these juniors wouldn't ever grow up.

Green also wanted to quickly resolve the threat of the Carrion Swamp. However, he also knew that this problem wasn't easy to resolve. If it were easy to do so, then the Carrion Swamp wouldn't be given the title of one of the Five Restricted Areas.

* * * * *

On the continent, no one went to the Black Waste to observe anymore, even those from the great clans. This matter wasn't known by Zhao Hai. The reason why was because the Purcell clan had sent a Rank Nine expert to the Black Waste in order to chase them down and hadn't succeeded. What had made

them astonished was the fact that Buffy said that Zhao Hai absolutely wasn't in the Black Waste, nor even at Fort Iron Mountain.

People believed the words a Rank Nine experts said and they'd thought that the Buda clan had secretly moved out of Fort Iron Mountain.

Although the new King had ordered the Buda clan not to leave the Black Waste, everyone knew that if the Buda clan stayed there, they would only meet death. Therefore, secretly moving out of that place was understandable.

Adding to this fact, the Black Waste had always encountered magic beast attacks in the past, yet Green had been seen as safe and unscathed. It could only be explained that they haven't been living in the Black Waste.

Moreover, everyone thought that Zhao Hai hadn't left the Purcell Duchy since the Purcell clan had sent a Rank Nine to search Black Waste and hadn't found anyone. Furthermore, there was Black Mountain Fortress where a mix of good and evil people stayed. Generally, people thought that Zhao Hai would hide in the nearby areas of the Black Waste, which made them lose interest in searching the Black Waste in order to look for the Buda clan. Also, they feared that they might accidentally meet with a magic beast riot while they were searching, which would make them cry tears in vain.

Those great aristocrats actually felt quite relieved. Buffy, this time around, was a Rank Nine expert that had been used to get rid of a Rank Eight expert. That Rank Eight's cultivation would be slowly weakening, so he wouldn't be a difficult matter. Buffy had personally recognized this point. In other words, presently the Buda clan would only have one Rank Eight magician left to assume personal command. This meant they wouldn't be able to produce anything which could become a threat to them.

The great nobles wouldn't even think about what three ants could do to them. Thus, no one would look, and the Buda clan could be considered as forgotten.

The only one who couldn't forget the Buda clan was Evan. Evan had sent someone to search for clues of the Buda clan within Black Mountain Fortress. Sadly, he failed and wasn't able to find anything. Finally, he gave up.

They hadn't thought of sending people to the Black Waste to search there. Zhao Hai, on the other hand, had placed the undead around the perimeter to block any intruders. Even a Rank Eight expert wouldn't be able to hold its own against a large number of Rank Seven warrior undead. Furthermore, since the great aristocrats decided not to check on the Black Waste, there also wouldn't be any Rank Nine experts going there to check.

This situation had actually benefited Zhao Hai. He was busy preparing to deal with Buffy, who was still exploring the Carrion Swamp. If ever he arrived at Fort Iron Mountain, it would be catastrophic.

On the fifteenth day of the Tenth Month, Laura arrived at Stony Mountain. Zhao Hai, who'd been busy at Fort Iron Mountain, quickly rushed to Bluestone Villa.

By the time the undead had welcomed Laura into the mountain, Zhao Hai was already in the living room waiting for her. Green, Meirin, and Meg also came along and were curious as to why Laura had visited since there seemed to be no problem with their current cooperation. Nowadays, Laura had brought in around 10,000 gold coins of revenue to Zhao Hai, which was a very large help to him.

Green welcomed Laura into the living room. Zhao Hai then said with a smile, "Miss Laura, I'm really sorry for the lukewarm welcome as I had been handling some matters lately."

Laura smiled and replied, "Mister is too kind and polite. Laura only came out of habit, and I was presumptuous."

Zhao Hai smiled. "Miss Laura is too polite. Please, sit down."

Laura also hadn't been able to visit Stony Mountain lately as she was quite busy with matters from the new branches being opened up. There were a lot of issues that needed to be addressed.

After Laura sat down, Meg served tea to them, then stood back beside Zhao Hai and looked at Laura and Nier. Laura couldn't help but also look at Meg, and found that Meg was looking back at her too. She really felt that there was a hint of hostility coming from her.

Laura cannot help but smile bitterly in secret as she pretended to drink the tea. Zhao Hai hadn't paid any attention to these matters as he drank from his cup of tea and asked, "I wonder what Miss Laura wants to talk about this time?"

Laura put down the cup of tea and replied with a smile, "Mister, remember that you had asked me to look for seeds of different magic plants? I had found several types and today, I came specifically to give them to you." After clapping her hands, Searle entered the room and brought several small bags which he then placed on Zhao Hai's tea table.

Zhao Hai hadn't expected that Laura would come for this matter. For him, this was definitely very good news since the Space hadn't been able to level up for quite a long time. As long as the level rose to 11, he would be able to further open up the land. But if he couldn't raise the present level to 11, then he would be anxious.

Zhao Hai looked at the bags on the table and impatiently opened them. There were five bags on the table altogether. Each small cloth sack had about half a kilogram of seeds within it.

Zhao Hai opened all five cloth sacks and carefully looked at the amount of quality seeds. He saw that these seeds didn't seem anything special, and Zhao Hai didn't find any special seeds inside the five bags.

Laura looked at Zhao Hai's expression, smiled lightly, and explained, "Mister, these five bags contain seeds of potato, sweet pepper, red turnip, olives, and green lettuce."

Zhao Hai nodded and placed the five bags down. He turned his head towards Laura, smiled, and said, "I have let Miss Laura become a laughing stock. However, I do hope the Young Lady would still look for more magic vegetables or magic plants, along with magic beasts."

Laura smiled. "You're welcome Mister. I'm embarrassed that I can only give this much. Recently I'd been very busy and wasn't able to help Mister look for magic plants. I do hope Mister would forgive me. But Mister, please be assured that later, I will diligently look for the magic plants that Mister seeks."

Chapter 166 - Virtuous Phantasms versus Magic Pets

Zhao Hai lightly laughed. “Miss Laura is too serious. Later on, I will need much help from the Young Lady.”

After Zhao Hai said that, Searle, who had walked out of the room earlier, came back with a big box. This box was around a meter long, half a meter wide, and about thirteen centimeters thick. Moreover, Searle handled the box with care, as if he were holding a newborn baby.

Zhao Hai looked curiously at Searle, then turned his head puzzledly towards Laura and asked, “Miss Laura, what is this?”

Laura smiled. “This is the gift I prepared for Mister.”

Searle placed the box softly on the table and opened the lid slowly.

Zhao Hai looked into the box and saw that there was some hay inside it. There were five very large eggs placed on the hay, and each egg was around 40 centimeters³ long and greater than ten centimeters in diameter. What was more strange was that the color of each egg was different. Their hues were yellow, blue, red, green⁴, and purple.

Zhao Hai was puzzled as he examined the eggs while Green, startled, said, “Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs!”

Gawking, Zhao Hai asked, “Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs? What's that?”

Green looked at the five eggs and explained, “Virtuous Phantasms are special magic beasts and are very rare on the continent. This type of magic beast doesn't have any attack skills of their own.

“However, it has a very unusual ability. They can be used as an auxiliary. So long as a human obtains an egg of a Virtuous Phantasm, once they hatch, they can form a contract with the Virtuous Phantasm slowly. This is how you can use a Virtuous Phantasm. Moreover, they can help their master attract magic elements in order to aid them in battles. An adult Virtuous Phantasm can even turn into a weapon, helmet, or piece of armor. That's why on the continent, there is something known as biological magic staffs⁵ or living armor⁶.”

Zhao Hai was in a daze. He hadn't thought that there would really be something like this, and couldn't help but look at the eggs with a pair of shining eyes.

Laura, on the other hand, was surprised to find out that Green knew so much about Virtuous Phantasms. Anyone who knew so stuff about Virtuous Phantasms would definitely not be any average person. Low rank warriors and magicians didn't even know the existence of these beasts. She didn't think that Green would know so much about it, which made her a lot more curious as to what was Green's real identity.

Green carefully examined the eggs, sighed, and said, "I am sure that these are Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs. They are different from the other magic beasts eggs because the eggs of Virtuous Phantasms have a natal attribute associated with their color. These eggs should be of the earth element, lightning element, water element, wind element, and fire element, all of which are very rare. Just these eggs alone would have a total value of over fifty thousand gold coins. They probably wouldn't even have a real market price."

Zhao Hai was shocked. He hadn't thought that these eggs would be so unexpectedly precious. No wonder Searle had been so careful when handling the boxes. If these eggs were to be damaged, it would only mean that they were throwing away fifty thousand gold coins.

Zhao Hai gently covered the box and slowly closed his eyes. He sat in his chair and didn't speak for some time. Laura looked at Zhao Hai's appearance and her heart couldn't help but clench.

Within this period of time, she had a certain understanding of Zhao Hai's attitude towards receiving gifts. Since this gift was somewhat expensive, Zhao Hai might not necessarily receive it. Even if he did, she feared that he would also wish to return a gift to her. Looking at Zhao Hai's appearance, it appeared that he was satisfied with this gift and was already thinking about what gift to give in return. If he wanted to give a gift in return, it wouldn't be another Virtuous Phantasm colored egg. 7.

Laura didn't dare disturb Zhao Hai as she understood the temperament of Zhao Hai. She knew that if Zhao Hai didn't want to receive the gift, then she wouldn't be able to persuade him, so Zhao Hai would probably end up not accept it.

After some time, Zhao Hai breathed out. He opened his eyes and looked at Laura. "Miss Laura, your gift really is too expensive. I don't want to receive it, but this gift is very important to me, so I will take it."

Laura's face was like a blossoming flower as she smiled upon hearing what Zhao Hai said. She was afraid that Zhao Hai wouldn't receive the gift, but was glad he did and hastily said, "This is a gift prepared for Mister, so please don't be too polite."

Zhao Hai waved his hand, smiled, and said, "I accepted such an expensive gift from Miss Laura, so if I don't give anything back to the Young Lady, then it won't be justified. I know that Miss Laura is a knight, so I should give you something that a knight needs."

He smiled after saying it and Green knew what Zhao Hai wanted to give. Green hastily said, "Master..."

Zhao Hai waved his hand. "It's all right, Miss Laura is to be trusted. Moreover, she is a person that knows the severity of things. We are lucky to have Miss Laura helping us, so giving her something in return is normal."

Laura was actually shocked after seeing how they were acting. She didn't have any idea what Zhao Hai might be giving her in return, probably something of precious value comparable with the Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs that she'd given.

Waving his hand, Zhao Hai told Green to hand over the Magic Peach⁸ Core and then placed it in front of Laura. He said, "This little thing is what I'm giving to Miss Laura."

Laura looked puzzledly at the little thing. Even after careful observations, she couldn't find out anything different about it. Finally, she looked at Zhao Hai, confused.

Zhao Hai laughed. "No wonder Young Lady doesn't know about this thing. This thing is something I obtained and is possibly an ancient magic product⁹. To tell you the truth, Young Lady, its function is mainly as a Pet Jewel."

Laura, still puzzled as she looked at the item in her hand, murmured, "Pet pig?" She was still thinking about Virtuous Phantasms and not about jewels, thus, she thought it was a pig.¹⁰

Zhao Hai smiled upon seeing that Laura's expression wasn't right, then said, "It is a Pet Jewel, not a Pet Pig. This thing can help Miss Laura receive a Magic Pet, no matter what rank, no matter how large. So

long as Miss Laura wishes for it, you can rein them in by using this little thing. The method is very simple; just place a drop of Miss Laura's blood on the Pet Jewel, then collect a drop of blood from the Magic Beast and also place it on the Pet Jewel.

"Miss can also use the Pet Jewel normally. When in battle, the Magic Pet you subdued will be interlinked with the Young Lady's mind, and you can easily command them. Also, even if they are seriously injured, so long as they didn't die and as long as the Magic Pet touches the jewel in time, the Magic Pet can recover automatically."

Laura froze. A Magic Pet was an existence that was a lot more precious than a Virtuous Phantasm. Although it could be said that Virtuous Phantasms were very convenient as they could turn into armors and weapons, they also required some form of consumable in return. It wouldn't just be a common thing, but rather the battle qi of warriors or a magician's magic power.

Most importantly, Virtuous Phantasms fluctuated when changing into a weapon, which wasn't very good. The weapon would be of a very low grade. Even if it were finely forged and wielded by a superior warrior, the only advantage was that one could accumulate magic elements, enabling them to turn the weapon into a magic weapon.

However, magic beasts were different. Magic beasts had a high rank and a powerful strength. If one could get a big dragon to become a Magic Pet, that would almost be equal to being unmatched in the world.

Moreover, this thing, this Magic Peach Core, could cure the injuries of the magic beast and could also interlink the minds of the master and the Magic Pet. With regards to being a knight, there would be no hesitation upon trading five Virtuous Phantasms, or even ten for this thing.

Laura blankly held the Magic Peach Core. She didn't know that it was just a peach seed. Moreover, it was being regarded as an ancient magic product. The number of such ancient magic products on the continent was far too few and were even desired by deities. This was why Laura easily believed that it was an ancient magic product.

Green, who was beside Zhao Hai, wanted to laugh. He hadn't thought that Zhao Hai would say that it was an ancient magic product. Green laughed inside and thought that Zhao Hai was really talented. Nobody would suspect that this thing unexpectedly came from the inside of a plant.¹¹

After some time, Laura revealed an awed expression, as if she were holding something rare instead of just holding a Magic Peach Core. Her eyes were sad as she gently placed the thing on the table and finally said to Zhao Hai, "This is too unfair to Mister. This gift is too expensive and more precious than the five Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs. Thus, I cannot receive it."

Zhao Hai faintly smiled. "Miss Laura is too polite. Please accept it as this thing would be more useful to you. However, don't think that this is such a good thing. Be careful when using it, otherwise it will bring you a great deal of trouble."

Laura was not stupid and immediately understood. Just like what Zhao Hai had said, if she didn't use it carefully, this thing would become a curse.

Zhao Hai looked at Laura's appearance, smiled, and said, "For Miss Laura, this thing will be very useful. However, the danger it represents is very large. If Miss Laura doesn't want to receive it, then I will not force you."

Laura looked at the Magic Peach Core on the table, then looked at Zhao Hai and clenched her teeth. Finally, she decided to take the Magic Peach Core and carefully embraced it. Then she bowed to Zhao Hai and said, "Laura will have to apologize to Mister Zhao Hai."

Zhao Hai waved his hand and said, "Miss Laura is too polite. This was an equal exchange, thus, you don't owe me anything."

Laura smiled bitterly. How could she not owe anything to him? Although five Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs were precious, they could not be compared to the unique ancient magic products of the continent. The difference wasn't as simple as just being a few streets apart.

Zhao Hai firmly said to Laura, "Miss Laura, I do hope that you won't tell anyone that I am the one who gave you this Pet Jewel. Ok?"

Laura nodded and said, "Mister, rest assured that I will not say anything. But if one day, some people chase me down in order to kill me because of this Pet Jewel, I ask Mister to save me."

Zhao Hai smiled at Laura, and couldn't help but laugh as he knew that Laura was cracking a joke. Everyone knew about Laura. Don't even look at just his relationship with her, there was also Quinn John, who wasn't an average person. In addition, she was of the Markey Dell clan. On the continent, the number of people who dared to move against her would only be a few.

Chapter 167 - Biochemical Beasts?

Laura sat in her carriage, carefully examining the Magic Peach Core she held. She wasn't aware of where it came from. This thing just looked like a round ball of iron with a dot at the top.

Nier also carefully looked at the small ball. To be honest, even though she knew that Zhao Hai wouldn't deceive them, Nier wasn't able to believe that there'd be something like this on the continent.

After some time, Laura put away the Magic Peach Core. She took a breath, smiled, and looked at Nier. "What's wrong? Is it that surprising?"

Nier nodded her head and said, "Yes, I really didn't think that there would be such a thing. Young Lady, in the end, what do you think is Mister's identity? How can he just hand out ancient magic products?"

Laura smiled. "I really don't know Mister's origin and I've never heard of anyone like Mister on the continent. A person like Mister should've been famous throughout the continent. Except, there's never been any news of such a person. Isn't that too strange?"

Nier frowned and asked, "What do you mean, Young Lady?"

Laura shook her head and said, "I don't know how to say this, but Mister's body has too many things we don't know about. I don't want to find out what they are now, because that would be disrespectful to Mister. Anyways, Mister is our ally now. As long as we handle matters well, the commodities Mister produces will be sold by our Higanbana firm throughout the Purcell Duchy. That should be enough."

With that, Nier couldn't help but smile. She turned to Laura and said, "Young Lady, now that our store has branches open throughout the whole Purcell Duchy, would our clan still look for trouble against us?"

Nier was Laura's maidservant. Consequently, when the young lady marries, she would be part of the dowry. That's why Nier was so concerned about Laura's future. Of course, there would be an exception. That is, if Nier were to marry before Laura, then Nier wouldn't need to be a part of the dowry.

However, Nier's situation was a little rare. She hadn't been sold by a master and was actually a servant born within the clan. For a young lady from an aristocratic clan, having a maidservant would be an assurance. They could also make this maid her helper. As such, how could they easily give her up?

Laura looked at Nier and smiled. "My silly Nier, you think things are that simple? Our present status might be better, but in the eyes of those people in the clan, we're still nothing. What I can say is that we have more bargaining chips to negotiate with them. Adding to the fact that we have a very good relationship with the Purcell clan, even if they want to move against us, they would need a reason to shake our station."

Nier felt relieved and said, "That's good. Young lady, why don't you consider Mister Zhao Hai since Mister has such good skills. He's also good natured with a good heart, so I think in the future, he will certainly be good towards the Young Lady."

Laura looked at Nier with a smile. She teased, "You little girl, are you fancying Mister? So you think that I should marry him?"

Nier blushed. "It isn't like that. I won't speak irresponsibly."

Laura chuckled and told Nier, "Little girl, things really aren't so simple. The strength of Mister is too big, and he has too many good things in his hands. Yet, we still aren't allowed to see his true colors. This means that Mister is one with very powerful enemies. If they are against such a powerful strength, then I fear that Mister's enemies will also not be that easy. If I really married Mister, I fear that we will face a more dangerous situation than what we're currently experiencing."

Nier stared for a moment. Then she smiled and looked at Laura. "So the Young Lady wants to marry Mister Zhao Hai? Hee hee, the Young Lady always said that she has never thought of it. Deceiving people?"

Laura looked blankly at Nier, but didn't reply. She didn't really know why, but she really had thought about it. This might probably be because Nier had talked about such things too much lately. That's why she had such thoughts.

* * * * *

Zhao Hai didn't have time to think about Laura and he hadn't thought about what she might be thinking. To tell the truth, presently, he was a little anxious. He estimated that by now, Buffy had entered the Carrion Swamp for over a month already. Yet, till now, he hadn't come out.

In addition, there was the issue of eating and drinking. Thus, Zhao Hai wasn't really clear on how Buffy would live inside the swamp. Remember that all the plants there were poisonous. He was curious as to how Buffy survived this month. Was he able to eat or drink? He hadn't heard anything about a Rank Nine that could survive without eating. Ah...

Although Zhao Hai had now begun to improve the land in the vicinity of Fort Iron Mountain, he didn't dare to go too far. He only managed under 700,000 square meters, which was still a lot. Remember that there weren't many people in the fort, thus, there was a lot of land that they couldn't manage.

Fortunately, Zhao Hai had raised a lot of scaled wildebeests which the slaves used to help them when they were busy planting some common vegetables. Thus, they weren't that tired.

Zhao Hai hadn't changed the scaled wildebeests into zombies. Although it might appear that zombies were a lot more useful, Zhao Hai wasn't a genuine black magician, so he still preferred living things.

When Laura left Stony Mountain, Zhao Hai immediately took the several bags of magic seeds and placed them in the Space. Green naturally followed him as he also wanted to know if, this time around, the Space would be able to level up.

As soon as they entered the Space, they heard a beep from the Space and a tone that said:

[Discovered plant seeds.

Recording seeds.

Vegetable seeds - variant type. Seed evaluation is: Level 15 plant.

Extracting seeds, digitizing seeds.

Seeds can now be bought from the 'Spatial Shop'.]

[Discovered plant seeds.

Recording seeds.

Vegetable seed - variant type. Seed evaluation is: Level 15 plant.

Extracting seeds, digitizing seeds

Seeds can now be bought from the 'Spatial Shop'.]

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After five consecutive prompts, a little while later the space beeped and prompted in another tone:

[Because of the discovery of new plants, Space has reached the upgrade requirements and has upgraded to Level 11.

New land that can now be reclaimed is: Ten mu. Requirements: 3000 Gold Coins.

The level and gold coin requirements have been met, do you wish to reclaim this land immediately?]

Zhao Hai had been waiting for this level up, and he also wasn't short on money. This time around, the land that could be reclaimed was around ten mu. Thus, he didn't hesitate and said, "Immediately reclaim."

A white light flashed and ten mu of land appeared in the Space.

Green looked at the ten mu of land and didn't know what to say. These ten mu of land weren't a small quantity.

Zhao Hai hadn't expected that after passing Level 10, he could reclaim ten mu of land. This was a big surprise.

Zhao Hai saw the mu of land and turned to Green, saying, "Grandpa Green, I want to plant magic vegetables on these new mu of land. What do you think?"

Green recovered after hearing Zhao Hai. He looked at the new mu of land, then at the vegetable seeds in Zhao Hai's grip. Green nodded and said, "Alright. For these kinds of magic vegetables, after producing them we can take a part and add them to our food supply. Then we can save some until we have a large enough amount before letting Miss Laura help us sell them off so we can get some income from it. Also, I really didn't expect that this upgrade would give us ten mu of land. It seems that we must further upgrade the Space as soon as possible. "

Zhao Hai nodded, then he commanded the Space using his mind. Automatically, the lands were farmed and planted with these five vegetables. He planted each type over two mu. Before long, they were all planted.

After planting these ten mu of land, Zhao Hai took out the Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs that were still inside the box and went to the ranch. The ranch now raised blue-eyed rabbits and several windseeking horses in the Space.

Zhao Hai had purposely kept these horses in the Space. When they were travelling, they used the undead to hurry along. However, if they were going to Casa City, then they could only sit on the undead until they got to the entrance of the city. Afterward, they would have to walk inside, which wasn't convenient.

Also, for the scaled wildebeests, although they'd been improved, they were still too slow. In order to have a convenient means to travel within the city, Zhao Hai had raised these horses.

Although the speed of Alien was faster than the windseeking horses and could pull a lot more than them, Zhao Hai still decided to use the horses because if Alien pulled, then it would cause too much noise which would likely raise up a storm.

Moreover, Zhao Hai honestly envied the design of Laura's carriage. Before, he could only look at it. Now, however, he was wealthy and could make a carriage just like Laura's. Even if it wasn't the same, there mustn't be too much of a difference.

After Zhao Hai and Green entered the ranch and brought the box with the Virtuous Phantasm colored eggs, the Space beeped and intoned:

[Discovered new animals.

Biochemical battle beast - Can absorb pure energy to survive. Can assist humans in battle and help them exceed their shortcomings. Can only absorb pure energy and cannot be upgraded. To improve these deficiencies, the biochemical beast can properly absorb any form of a skill in order to upgrade.

Extracting animals, digitizing animals.

Animals can now be bought from the 'Spatial Shop'.]

Immediately after, another beep sounded and a tone prompted:

[Because of the discovery of new animals, ranch has upgraded to Level Three. It can now domesticate a hundred more animals.]

Then, there were no more voices.

Zhao Hai was very happy. He immediately took the five eggs to the hatching area of the ranch. Soon, the eggs cracked one after another. Then a fluffy little thing broke out.

As Zhao Hai saw these things, he was stunned for a moment. This was because he found out that these five little things looked like five little chickens. These were five different colored chicks.

Zhao Hai looked blankly at the five chicks. He murmured, "How could it be chickens? Did someone catch a chick in order for it to become a Chicken Virtuous Phantasm?"

As Zhao Hai said that, Green couldn't help but laugh. He said to Zhao Hai, "Master, these are not chickens, but Eagle class Virtuous Phantasms. They are a lot fiercer than chickens. Although they aren't as good as Magic Beasts, they can still transform into armors and weapons. Furthermore, they can also fly. Since they can interlink with their master, they can be used as an airborne scout.

"I hadn't really thought that Laura's gift this time around would be Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. These Eagle Virtuous Phantasms are really rare."

Chapter 168 - Buffy Comes Out

Zhao Hai hadn't thought that these five Chicken Virtuous Phantasms were actually Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. He turned around and looked at Green, asking, "Grandpa Green, are you sure you aren't mistaken?"

Green smiled and said, "Master, I can't be wrong. They are really of the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm class. There's no such thing as a Chicken Virtuous Phantasm. Moreover, in terms of ones that could fly in the sky, there's only the Eagle Virtuous Phantasm class."

Presently, the five chicks were running around and pecking at the grass, scrambling all over the place. They seemed quite healthy. Green frowned and said, "This isn't right, Virtuous Phantasms can only eat things that contain strong magic elements. How come these several little things are different?"

Zhao Hai chuckled. "It's not important since the Space didn't say anything. Oh, right, they had been improved. I presume that this is what it meant."

Green thought about it and nodded. "It seems to be the case. This is just great, with several of our own Virtuous Phantasms, we can reproduce a lot more of these Virtuous Phantasms."

Zhao Hai chuckled again. "Right. However, we can't reproduce too much. We also have the blue-eyed rabbits to maintain. We should first wait until the ranch in the tunnel can fully produce its own blue-eyed rabbits. Then we can raise other things in the Space."

Green nodded and both he and Zhao Hai returned to the inside of the Spatial Villa and sat down. Zhao Hai turned to Green and said, "Grandpa Green, I am ready to explore the Carrion Swamp after Buffy comes out. In any case, we should solve the threat of the Carrion Swamp anyway."

Green frowned and said, "Master, I fear that it won't be that easy to resolve the threat of the Carrion Swamp. For many years, a lot of strong experts had gone in, but only a few have come out alive. Although Master has the Space, it may still be impossible to solve."

"I don't intend to completely take care of the threat of the Carrion Swamp," Zhao Hai said, nodding. "I just don't want to yield to the magic beast riots that occur from time to time. Also, when Buffy comes out, so long as we exterminate him then we will be able to find out some information about what's happening inside. This should enable us to head deeper into the Carrion Swamp."

Green thought for a moment and nodded. "That's good. If we cannot resolve the threat of the Carrion Swamp, then we won't ever be safe within the Black Waste."

Green was now a lot more confident with the Space. He believed that there wasn't anything that existed inside the Carrion Swamp that they should fear. So long as there was the Space, Zhao Hai's security wouldn't be a problem. This was the main reason why he'd agreed to what Zhao Hai had proposed earlier.

Meirin smiled and said, "I heard that there will be a lot of plants there that aren't available within the continent. If that is the case, then Master will be able to upgrade the Space faster. "

Zhao Hai nodded his head, smiled, and said, "Yes, this time around, Drunk had collected many things. I believe that when they get back into the Space, it'll be upgraded. When that happens, the area of land would be even greater."

Green nodded and looked outside the villa window. With a low voice, he said, "As long as the land inside the Space gets larger, we will gain a lot more capital. When that time comes, don't even think of bullying us."

Zhao Hai just nodded. Then he froze for a moment and turned to Green. "Grandpa Green, Drunk had just sent a message stating that Buffy was coming out of the swamp. He also looks badly injured."

Green was surprised for a moment, then immediately turned to Zhao Hai. "Immediately ask Drunk how injured Buffy is. He might take several days before he arrives here from the Black Waste."

Zhao Hai nodded and immediately asked Drunk. Turning back to Green, he said, "Drunk reported that the injuries don't seem to be light and, evidently, he was flying as fast as he could. He should be coming out of the swamp within two days."

Green nodded his head and said, "The time is just enough. We will stop him in the mountains. Master, please take a look at the Virtuous Phantasms and see if they can be matured within a few days. These Virtuous Phantasms will definitely be able to help us. Even if Buffy can fly, we won't need to be afraid."

Zhao Hai nodded his head. He shifted a little and was now in the ranch. He examined the Virtuous Phantasms.

These Virtuous Phantasms were Level 10 animals, with a maturity time of 15 hours. They can produce an egg every 8 hours, and can lay eggs up to a maximum of 5 times.

This means that within two days time, they could reproduce enough. Almost a hundred Virtuous Phantasms could then be taken out. Thus, waiting for these Virtuous Phantasms to mature before the battle wouldn't be a problem.

Space animals had a spawning cycle. Granted, even though they will mature, they still needed to wait for a predetermined Space spawning time before they truly matured and could be placed inside the warehouse. If they do not reach the specified maturity time, then they cannot be moved through the warehouse. Of course, there was an exception to this rule. Newborn young animals were exempt because they could be directly placed into the warehouse as a source of income.

Seeing this result, Zhao Hai was assured that a hundred Eagle Virtuous Phantasms would be able to make a wounded Rank Nine expert fall from the heavens.

After Zhao Hai told Green the results, Green was very happy. They immediately moved to Fort Iron Mountain and prepared to deal with Buffy.

As a precaution, Green went to Casa City and bought several Strong Bows. Although a Rank Nine expert could fly, they couldn't fly too high. With a Strong Bow, they could be directly shot at. However, people on the continent didn't use bows and arrows to hit a Rank Nine expert because that would be tantamount to a death wish.

Meanwhile, Zhao Hai recalled some magic beasts from Stony Mountain and placed them on alert within the Black Waste. Since this time around they would be dealing with a Rank Nine expert, even though it was a wounded Rank Nine expert, a Rank Nine was still a Rank Nine. He shouldn't be underestimated.

Two days passed quickly and Zhao Hai's Space had a hundred matured Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. After they had grown up, their appearance, which was like that of a chick when they were young, was now completely different. They looked like what Zhao Hai had heard of before, golden eagles.

Grown up Virtuous Phantasm's open wingspan would be almost five meters long and their body was nearly two meters tall. They had a steel hook-like mouth and cast-iron talons. With beautiful eyes, they had a low and deeply hoarse cry that had an unusual penetrating power and an overwhelming strength behind it.

Zhao Hai was very surprised by what the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms were eating. When they grew up, they didn't eat the grass anymore, but rather the blue-eyed rabbits. They would eat a blue-eyed rabbit every time the Space produced a rabbit, which seemed like they were playing a strange game of switch up.

Zhao Hai couldn't really understand why this happened, so he asked the Space. However, the answer he got was that his level wasn't high enough. In the end, it couldn't be inquired about which made Zhao Hai depressed.

Anyways, the number of the blue-eyed rabbits in the Space didn't actually decrease, even though they were eaten by the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. These Eagles also maintained a strong aggressiveness, which was very good.

Zhao Hai had let these matured Eagle Virtuous Phantasms out of the Space since he'd feared that these matured eagles might not be of any use. However, the results were very good. These Virtuous Phantasms were very obedient, even when they were outside the Space. When they were told to attack, they would attack, and would also do it in formations. As Zhao Hai had managed these features, he'd made these Virtuous Phantasms go with a formation attack.

Green was very satisfied with the result. Even if the strength of these Virtuous Phantasms was very strong, they didn't only have strength but also a large stature. Compared to the normal Eagle Virtuous Phantasms, they were larger. This improvement was probably because of the Space.

Green estimated that the fighting strength of these Virtuous Phantasms would be equivalent to a Rank Six expert. When they fought in the air, they would be even stronger since, after all, they were born to fly.

Zhao Hai hadn't only fortified Fort Iron Mountain, but had also sent a lot of undead to the periphery of the swamp to scout in order to find Buffy in the shortest possible time.

However, to Zhao Hai's surprise, they didn't see Buffy two days later. Zhao Hai immediately sent orders to those undead inside the Carrion Swamp to look for him. Finally, they found Buffy on a small island. Buffy was wounded.

Knowing that Buffy was wounded, Zhao Hai felt relieved. He immediately ordered the undead to enter the swamp and attack Buffy.

Buffy looked seriously injured and unexpectedly didn't resist. He just flew out of the swamp. Zhao Hai couldn't clearly see the situation within the Carrion Swamp as there was a seven-colored smog covering it, so he sent the undead into the swamp to tell him about the situation.

Zhao Hai and Green now stood in Iron Fort Mountain. They looked at the sky and over towards the seven-colored smog that covered the swamp. Green took out his Spiritwind Sword while Meirin, who stood beside them, held her magic staff. Meg took out the Sealed Magic Iron Tome, while Woodhead and Stonehead each held a strong bow. Zhao Hai also took out his Ghost Cane and called out the stone giants, which were prepared to attack anytime.

Of course, Zhao Hai was the busiest among all of them as he was currently taking out the hundred Eagle Virtuous Phantasms while calling out ten stone giants. These stone giants were ready to throw rocks into the sky in order to attack.

Buffy didn't let Zhao Hai and the rest down as they'd only needed to wait for about half an hour before they saw a fluctuation inside the seven colored smog that covered the swamp. Then a humanoid flew out from the swamp.

Zhao Hai feared that Buffy might go back into the swamp. With the low visibility of the swamp, it wouldn't be an appropriate place to fight him. So as Buffy flew out of the swamp, they didn't attack immediately. Rather, they waited until Buffy was near Fort Iron Mountain before he suddenly ordered the attack.

The first to move were those Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. One hundred eagles, fifty in front of him, another fifty sealing Buffy's escape path towards the swamp.

With Zhao Hai's order, the sky was then filled with hoarse eagle cries. Then two teams of the eagles forming a half moon formation that flew forwards and pressed towards Buffy.

Buffy apparently hadn't thought that there would be a situation like this. His figure moved, then fell towards the ground.

Green shouted, "Begin!" He raised his Spiritwind Sword and rushed towards Buffy.

Buffy saw Green and immediately understood what was happening. His eyes flashed with a chill while looking at Green as he said, "So it's you? And you actually recovered. Well then, let us see. Since last time I had let you escape, this time around, we will see how you can run." Then he waved his hands and threw out several Wind Bladedges towards Green.

Chapter 169 - Besieging the Deity

However, at the same time, a few boulders were thrown by the stone giants towards Buffy.

Naturally, Buffy knew what this present situation was all about. He recited several incantations with a low voice and a surge of wind elements crazily flew around him. His form was like that of a leaf dancing in the wind as he drifted around randomly.

Each magician had their own way of fighting. For example, an earth element magician often reinforced their body with magic to boost their defenses. Because of the protection of their earth elemental magic, these magicians had the strongest defenses of all the other magicians. As a contrast, their attack speed was quite slow.

Water element magicians had their own shield revolving move. The water system didn't lack for skills and abilities and was even aggressive and varied in their uses. Later on, it was found that a water magic guard could be rotated, which increased the defensive power of the magic shield. Slowly, they developed the water system magic guard until it had the same rotational power as a whirlpool.

Fire element magicians usually focused on attack since the fire element had the most destructive power when compared to the other elements.

A wind element magician, among the other four elements of magic, could be considered the lightest. In a battle, wind element magicians would use their wind magic to make their bodies very light, making it easier for them to avoid attacks.

A magician's way of fighting had a direct or indirect relation with their magic attribute. Just like what the previous first on the continent and famous deity-level magic master, Johann, had once said, magicians would need a lifetime to study each spell.

This Johann was not your average person. He was the first magic genius on the continent a thousand years ago. This didn't mean that his talent was very good. On the contrary, his talent was quite poor. Children could start learning magic at the age of twelve, and some could even learn as early as the age of ten.

Johann, however, began to learn to meditate at the age of sixteen, yet such a person was called the Magic Teacher. He had a total of one hundred twenty disciples throughout his entire life. These one hundred twenty disciples, without exception, all became experts. A hundred of them became Rank Eight experts, while the other twenty became Rank Nine deities.

Such a teaching ability was unprecedented. Later on, precisely because of this, Johann became recognized throughout the whole continent as the Magic Teacher. His words became seriously studied since then.

Due to that, his words that stated that a magician would need a lifetime to study a spell became his most famous saying. This was due to those disciples of his. It was because of that phrase that he had gotten such results.

Buffy was a wind magician himself. Opposing the enemy with such a method wasn't entirely wrong. However, he changed his thoughts as he found that there was something wrong.

Who was Buffy? He was a Rank Nine expert, a person with the presence of a deity. This was a top existence on the continent. Other than when he fought against someone of the same rank, would he use the same style that a wind element magician would use to fight?

That's impossible. The presence of a Rank Nine expert already had its own devastating force. In order to hide against the attacks from a few stone giant, would he use his usual wind element magician's form of combat? If he said that to others, none of them would believe it.

His only explanation for doing so was because he was seriously injured and wasn't in good shape. Since he couldn't even fully use his strength as a Rank Nine magician, he had to use this way of fighting.

Seeing this scene, Green calmed himself down and dodged the Wind Bladedges. Suddenly, a Water Dragon appeared and hit several of those Wind Bladedges. With a loud bang, the Wind Bladedges and the Water Dragon both vanished.

Simultaneously, two powerful arrows from bows were shot directly towards Buffy along with a five meter giant Light Sword that slashed straight down from the sky, slicing towards Buffy's head. Meg and Woodhead had followed up and attacked him.

Buffy was a Rank Nine expert that wasn't to be trifled with. He moved and dodged several of the boulders and waved his hand, causing a light green shield to appear over his head. This shield didn't protect his back but rather just blocked the Light Sword that had been slashing down. He then cast two Wind Bladedges. The arrows from Stonehead and Woodhead missed their marks as they flew past his sides due to a cyclone. This cyclone surrounded his entire body and rolled dust up into the sky, hiding him.

This time, Meirin recited several incantations with a low voice and several Water Dragons appeared outside the cyclone. They seemed like iron chains as they wrapped around the cyclone.

Around the same time, several chunks of earth moved up from the ground to the sky, directly heading straight for Buffy's foot. It was Zhao Hai who had attacked this time.

The Ghost Cane could now use three different magic elements, namely the light system, dark system, and earth system. Zhao Hai didn't have much combat experience. Thus, he could only stay aside and act as a support.

Buffy was also worthy of being a Rank Nine expert. Even though he was injured and currently besieged by several people, he appeared to be at ease and didn't look distressed.

However, he'd really wanted to run, but couldn't. He was being blocked by the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms. If one compared these Eagle Virtuous Phantasms to the normal Virtuous Phantasms, then these had a higher fighting efficiency. While the common Virtuous Phantasms wouldn't leave the sides of their masters because their battle capabilities were lower, this wasn't the case for these Eagle Virtuous Phantasms.

After the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms had been transformed by the Space, they couldn't even be regarded as the same as the continent's Virtuous Phantasms. The Space had even called them biochemical beasts.

Due to movies and television, people on Earth usually thought of something dead or something toxic and such when they heard the word biochemistry. However, anything biological would fall under biochemistry. It could be said that humans were the main study of biological research.

Some people wanted to study biology for their own use. On the other hand, sometimes they also came up with something that would be used as a tool for killing.

Biochemical beasts had always been the vision that people would've liked to manufacture. A sort of strong combat beast that was capable of helping people fight. Furthermore, this beast could also absorb different genes to allow themselves to become stronger.

The Space could make such transformations. Once placed, the animals and plants, as well as the Virtuous Phantasms from the continent could be optimized. Doing these things to make biochemical beasts would be possible, but there were some shortcomings. Still, just with the Space's ability to improve, the Eagle Virtuous Phantasms had already become very strong.

Buffy now had a better understanding. He thought that last time, when he had injured Green, that it would be impossible for Green to recover. Even if he recovered from the injuries, he would at most be a Rank Six expert, which was an optimistic view. However, what he saw today was completely different. Not only was Green's injury cured, but his strength had been completely restored too. This made him very surprised.

Green was with Meirin, who helped him at the side. This couple, which was decades old, would naturally have flawless coordination. Adding in Zhao Hai, who would attack ruthlessly from time to time, and this all made Buffy feel unbearable.

Like Zhao Hai had guessed, Buffy really was injured. This time around, he had quickly ran out and was quite afraid of the Carrion Swamp. Although he ran out quickly, he'd still been severely injured.

He'd been temporarily suppressed due to that injury and couldn't fight a battle for a long period of time. It was precisely because of this reason that when he met the undead that Zhao Hai had ordered to attack within the Carrion Swamp, he didn't engage them and instead directly ran out of the swamp.

He hadn't thought, however, that upon coming out of the swamp, Green would be there to block him. Now that he wanted to get away, it seemed difficult. As Buffy attacked, he tried to think of a way to retreat.

In all honesty, Zhao Hai couldn't really help much in this battle. Even though he could use magic, his understanding of magic was still too small. He didn't know which kind of magic would be most appropriate to use. Most of the time, he could only act as a support.

However, Zhao Hai was ready. Even if his knowledge of magical application was not very good, he still had the Space. Although the Space didn't have much attack power and couldn't help much in a fight, it still had two abilities. One was the Fly Swatter function, and the other was the Capture function.

The Capture function was originally used for capturing animals for the Space in order to increase production. However, since there was already too much improvement done by the space to the animals, a large number of animals had already been raised. It was now impossible for Zhao Hai to use this function to move animals within the Space to increase production since he could do so with just a thought.

However, this function was still kept active and could even be used outside the Space. It could be used to grab people and catch animals outside the Space.

However, Zhao Hai hadn't used this function before. Still, he believed that this function should be easy to use. This was when it was compared to the Fly Swatter which had a lot of variables.

It was because of this idea that Zhao Hai didn't get fully into the battle. He was being very careful in watching Buffy. When required, he would be ruthless.

Green and the others had been battling with Buffy for an hour now, but they still couldn't defeat him. This made them understand what kind of strength Buffy had as a Rank Nine expert. Buffy was able to hold on for such a long time, showing and proving his might.

Zhao Hai, however, had observed that Buffy's face had become increasingly ugly. In the beginning, he was calm. Afterwards, he was now somewhat pale and flushed red from time to time. Zhao Hai was

aiming to attack Buffy's injuries, which was why he was paying such close attention to him. Lastly, he was afraid that Buffy might go all out.

As Zhao Hai had guessed, after such a long battle, Buffy had found out that his injuries would get really bad if the fight with Green and the others continued. Finally, due to his fear that this might happen, he prepared a desperate act.

After having cast a series of over a hundred Wind Bladedges, Green was finally compelled to draw back. Buffy quickly recited an incantation and waved his hand, causing a huge tornado to appear in front of him. It was a very strong tornado that sucked up a lot of dust and dirt. It even affected a few stones that were caught up in the wind, which made it more dangerous.

Buffy's voice came from the back of the tornado, "Crazed Wind Tornado, kill!"

That tornado spun directly towards Green. While Green dealt with this magic spell, Buffy made a quick movement and rushed towards the Carrion Swamp.

Chapter 170 - Flower City

When Zhao Hai saw Buffy release such a wide-ranged magic spell, he quickly felt something was wrong and avoided it by entering the Space. Immediately opening the screen, he saw the situation outside on the battlefield. Obviously, the red dots represented his side while that lone green dot represented Buffy. The magic that Buffy casted on the battlefield took away all of the attention, so it was harder to spot him.

However, this was enough. Zhao Hai managed to find out that Buffy was planning to head back into the Carrion Swamp. He understood Buffy's intent; allowing Buffy to escape and re-enter the swamp would make him difficult to find, even if they had the Space and weren't afraid of the poison fog.

Zhao Hai's hand pointed out at the green dot and he launched the Capture function. He immediately went out of the Space, wanting to see if the Capture function would be successful.

Upon leaving the Space, a large hand appeared in the sky. This large hand was white, a gleaming white that soared directly towards Buffy.

This large hand was very quick and Buffy couldn't escape the large hand, even though he wasn't slow. As it was about to catch Buffy, the large hand suddenly opened and Buffy was caught in its palm.

Buffy still hadn't understood what had happened before he was suddenly grabbed. He hastened to escape. However, at this moment, a large fly swatter appeared in the sky, targeting Buffy's head.

This fly swatter was fast and everyone could only see a blurred motion before the fly swatter slammed a total of twenty times onto Buffy's head. Buffy fell directly to the ground.

However, it was obvious that Buffy's strength was a lot stronger than Zhao Hai's, as he wasn't dead. At this time, a Light Sword flew out from the Space, cutting across Buffy's neck, cleanly separating his head from his body.

After Buffy died, the huge tornado disappeared. Green quickly ran towards Buffy and looked down at his corpse.

Taking a moment to breathe, Green said, "He was indeed a Rank Nine expert. If not for Master moving in during the final moments, he would've been able to escape."

Zhao Hai smiled and said, "It's nothing. Anyway, he wasn't able to escape. Grandpa Green, watch me."

After he said that, he picked up Buffy with his right hand and transformed him into a high rank skeleton.

It really was a magical thing, this black magic. Zhao Hai cast his Soul Trap technique and the head that had flown away now came flying back to Buffy's body. The disappearance of flesh followed quickly and a skeleton appeared in front of Zhao Hai.

With Zhao Hai's intent, Green, along with the others, returned to the Space. Upon entering the Space, the Space immediately gave Buffy upgrades. Buffy became a zombie and now looked younger many times over compared to when he was still alive. He now looked like a middle-aged man.

Zombies didn't necessarily decay or waste away when they died after a time. On the contrary, people who were turned into zombies would have their bodies strengthened. They would undergo transformations which would result in some changes. For instance, Buffy looked younger as an example of a change.

After being transformed into a zombie, a tongue would be reproduced and their consciousness would become their own once again. These zombies would then be able to speak like a normal person. This was the result Zhao Hai wanted. He wanted Buffy to tell him his knowledge of the Carrion Swamp. If Buffy were only a skeleton, then only Zhao Hai could communicate with him. Zhao Hai would then have to reiterate everything to Green and the others, which would be troublesome.

After Buffy was transformed into a zombie, the Space suddenly beeped:

[Discovered new magical energy.

Prompting energy.

Strengthening the Space's attack performance.]

Zhao Hai's attention was focused on the Ghost Cane's notes. He immediately understood what the Space meant. Right now, the Ghost Cane could use spells from a new magic element, that of the wind element.

Zhao Hai didn't care about this and led Green and the others back into the villa. He asked Buffy, "Buffy, tell us everything you know about the Carrion Swamp."

Buffy bowed to Zhao Hai and said, "Yes Master. This time around, I had gone deep into the Carrion Swamp, over 5,000 kilometers. Everything was going well then and I only encountered some poisonous plants and flying insect magic beasts, as well as other magic beasts. I didn't encounter too many risks during this time. However, as I went deeper into the swamp, after traveling around a 10 square kilometer area, I found a city."

Zhao Hai and Green seemed distracted for a moment. Then Green looked at Buffy and asked, “Did you just say a ‘City’?”

Buffy nodded. “Yes, it was a city, also a very large city. However, there was no one in the city, not even magic beasts or undead. The entire city was full of flowers though, a strange kind of flower.”

Green immediately asked, “What kind of flower?”

Buffy said, “This flower was very strange as it was like a vine that grew upright on its own. It had thorns on its vines, and the vines were dark green in color. At the top there was a fully bloomed flower with seven petals. Each petal had its own color. It was just like the different colors of the smog covering the Carrion Swamp and they were very bright.”

Zhao Hai and the others looked surprised as this was the first time they had heard about it. The entire city was full of flowers? What kind of situation was that?

Zhao Hai then asked, “How many people could live in that city?”

Buffy replied, “It is very big. Although it was a little smaller than Casa City, it is about the size of an average medium-sized city. So, around half a million people could live in it. Furthermore, this city had its own wall, and the walls were made of stone. However, the strange flower was odd. As it could give birth to vine roots, these roots attached themselves to the stone. I tried attacking it with my Wind Bladedge to move the flowers, but failed. The entire city was covered by this flower, which was very strange.”

Zhao Hai, Green, and the others were shocked. A city that could be populated by half a million people, on the Ark Continent, wouldn’t be small. Such a big city was covered by a strange flower, how large a flower could that be?

Moreover, the flower’s root could attach itself to the stone, which was amazing. What root of a plant could be this sharp? Most importantly, a Rank Nine magician’s Wind Bladedge couldn’t even cut or move the vines? In the end, what kind of flower was this?

Furthermore, there was one point that Green was mostly concerned about. Buffy had said that the color of the flower’s petals were the same colors as the smog covering the Carrion Swamp. Could there be a

link between this flower and the Carrion Swamp? Was the flower the cause of the smog, as well as the variation of the smog's color?

They really wanted to enter the Carrion Swamp, so these circumstances were very important for them. Zhao Hai turned to Buffy and asked, "What else is there? Tell us everything."

Buffy nodded his head and said, "Originally, everything was normal. There were many undead and magic beasts in the Carrion Swamp, and they had their own territories. The outer periphery had low ranks, while the areas nearer to the city had the higher ranking magic beasts and undead. During the four weeks that I had been exploring, I saw several Rank Eights and Rank Nines, but they didn't attack me. However, after I attacked using the Wind Bladedges to cut the flower, they suddenly attacked me. Thus, I ran away, finally escaping the battle."

Zhao Hai nodded and turned to Green. "Grandpa Green, how do you see this?"

Green nodded his head, saying, "It seems like that flower is very mysterious, If I guessed correctly, the seven colored smog that covers the Carrion Swamp should be related to the flower. Otherwise, those magic beasts and undead wouldn't guard the flower. As it is, Buffy wasn't a problem. However, once he attacked the flower, issues arose. Seemingly, this flower is the key."

"If this is the case, then it will be troublesome." Zhao Hai frowned. "We are separated by 5,000 kilometers, from here to there. That should also be the central area of the Carrion Swamp. If we want to solve the threat of the Carrion Swamp, then we must start with that flower."

Green nodded and said, "Buffy was not attacked when he explored the swamp, probably because he was quite strong. Those undead and magic beasts were Rank Eight and Nine and their intelligence wasn't any lower than that of humans, so they didn't want to mess with Buffy. However, Buffy attacked the flower which made them anxious. This shows the importance of the flower to them. Buffy, is there anything else to be reported?"

Buffy nodded and said, "There is another situation, but I'm just guessing and I'm not sure if it's accurate. I find it very strange that inside Flower City, the more I head towards the middle of the city market area, the more robust the flower vines became. The flowers covering the entire city is probably only one flower, and all the other flowers branch out from that main one."

After Buffy said that, Green was even more stunned. The flowers that covered the entire city was actually one? This argument was truly terrifying. What kind of flower could grow as much as this? Even the legendary Tree City of the elves wouldn't be this big, right?

Green looked at Buffy and asked, "Buffy, are you really telling us the truth? When you observed the city, the flowers that surrounded it really only branched out from that one flower?"

Buffy nodded and said, "This is just my hypothesis, but it seemed like it had its own consciousness. If I just touched it gently, there wouldn't be any reaction. However, if I attack using my Wind Bladedge, it acted crazily and even spewed smog from the colored flowers. Then the vine started attacking me. That flower vine is quite fast, although its strength couldn't be compared to a Rank Nine. Also, it seems like it couldn't leave Flower City. Thus, when I left the city, the flowers slowly retreated, but then the magic beasts began attacking me."

Green's face became ugly as he said, "It seems like the root of everything in the Carrion Swamp really is that flower. What is strange is why those that came out of the Carrion Swamp before didn't explain these things."

Green knew that there were some experts that had managed to escape from the Carrion Swamp before. They might have even said something about all of this. However, in the recent thousand years, no one dared to enter the Carrion Swamp. As such, these things had been slowly forgotten.